

## THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS

### Ch. 1. Ahaziah's Illness

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*2Ki. 1.* After the Moabites had rebelled against Israel, Ahaziah became sick in consequence of a fall through a grating in his upper room, and sent messengers to Ekron to consult the idol Baalzebub concerning the result of his illness. By the command of God, however, Elijah met the messengers on the road, and told them that the king would die (vv. 1-8). When Ahaziah sent soldiers to fetch Elijah, the messengers were miraculously slain on two successive occasions, and it was only his humiliation before the prophet which saved the third captain and his host from sharing a similar fate; whereupon Elijah went with him to the king, and repeated the threat already announced on account of his idolatry, which was very soon fulfilled (vv. 9-18).

*2Ki. 1: 1-8.* After the death of Ahab, Moab rebelled against Israel (v. 1). The Moabites, who had been subjugated by David (2Sa. 8: 2), had remained tributary to the kingdom of the ten tribes after the division of the kingdom. but when Israel was defeated by the Syrians at Ramoth in the time of Ahab, they took advantage of this defeat and the weakening of the Israelitish power in the country to the east of the Jordan to shake off the yoke of the Israelites, and very soon afterwards attempted an invasion of the kingdom of Judah, in alliance with the Edomite and other tribes of the desert, which terminated, however, in a great defeat, though it contributed to the maintenance of their independence. For further remarks, see at 2Ki. 3: 4ff.

*2Ki. 1: 2.* Ahaziah could not do anything to subjugate the Moabites any further, since he was very soon afterwards taken grievously ill. He fell through the grating in his upper room at Samaria. הַשָּׁבֶכָה, the grating, is either a window furnished with a shutter of lattice-work, or a door of lattice-work in the upper room of the palace, but hardly a grating in the floor of the *Aliyah* for the purpose of letting light into the lower rooms, as the Rabbins supposed. On account of this misfortune, Ahaziah resorted to the Ekronitish *Baalzebub* to obtain an oracle concerning the result of his illness. בַּעַל-זְבוּב, i.e., Fly-Baal, was not merely the “avertter of swarms of insects,” like the Ζεύς ἄπομῦθος, μύιαγρος of Elis (Ges., Winer, Movers, *Phöniz.* i. p. 175), since “the Fly-God cannot have received his name as the enemy of flies, like *lucus a non lucendo*,” but was Μῦια θεός (LXX, Joseph.), i.e., God represented as a fly, as a fly-idol, to which the name *Myiodes*, gnat-like, in Plin. *h. n.* xxix. 6, clearly points, and

as a god of the sun and of summer must have stood in a similar relation to the flies to that of the oracle-god Apollo, who both sent diseases and took them away (vid., J. G. Müller, Art. *Beelzebub* in Herzog's *Cycl.* i. p. 768, and Stark, *Gaza*, pp. 260, 261). The latter observes that "these (the flies), which are governed in their coming and going by all the conditions of the weather, are apparently endowed with prophetic power themselves." This explains the fact that a special power of prophecy was attributed to this god.<sup>fi</sup> *Ekron*, now *Akir*, the most northerly of the five Philistine capitals (see at Jos. 13: 3).

**2Ki. 1: 3, 4.** But the angel of the Lord, the mediator of the revelations made by the invisible God to the covenant nation (see *Comm. on the Pentateuch*, vol. i. pp. 185-191, transl.), had spoken to Elijah to go and meet the king's messengers, who were going to inquire of Baalzebub, and to ask them whether it was from the want of a God in Israel (מַבְלִי אֵין) as in Exo. 14:11; see Ewald, § 323, a.) that they turned to Baalzebub, and to announce to them the word of Jehovah, that Ahaziah would not rise up from his bed again, but would die. "And Elijah went," sc. to carry out the divine commission.

**2Ki. 1: 5-8.** The messengers did not recognise Elijah, but yet they turned back and reported the occurrence to the king, who knew at once, from the description they gave of the *habitus* of the man in reply to his question, that it was Elijah the *Tishbite*. מַה מְשַׁפֵּט הָאִישׁ: "what was the manner of the man?" מְשַׁפֵּט is used here to denote the peculiarity of a person, that which in a certain sense constitutes the vital law and right of the individual personality; *figura et habitus* (Vulg.). The servants described the prophet according to his outward appearance, which in a man of character is a reflection of his inner man, as שֹׁעָר בֶּעַל אִישׁ בֶּעַל, *vir pilosus, hirsutus*. This does not mean a man with a luxuriant growth of hair, but refers to the hairy dress, i.e., the garment made of sheep-skin or goat-skin or coarse camel-hair, which was wrapped round his body; the אֲדָרֶת שֹׁעָר (2Ki. 2: 8; 1Ki. 19:13), or אֲדָרֶת שֹׁעָר (Zec. 13: 4, cf. Mat. 3: 4, Heb. 11:37), which was worn by the prophets, not as mere ascetics, but as preachers of repentance, the rough garment denoting the severity of the divine judgments upon the effeminate nation, which revelled in luxuriance and worldly lust. And this was also in keeping with "the leather girdle," אֲזוּר עוֹר, ζώνη δερματίνη (Mat. 3: 4), whereas the ordinary girdle was of cotton or linen, and often very costly.

**2Ki. 1: 9-16.** After having executed the divine command, Elijah returned to the summit of the mountain, on which he dwelt. Most of the commentators suppose it to have been one of the peaks of Carmel, from 2Ki. 2:25 and 1Ki. 18:42, which is no doubt very probable, though it cannot be raised into

certainty. Elijah's place of abode was known to the king; he therefore sent a captain with fifty men to fetch the prophet. To the demand of the captain, "Man of God, the king has said, Come down," Elijah replied, "And if I am a man of God, let fire fall from heaven and consume thee and thy fifty." (The expression **וַיֵּלֶךְ**, and if, shows that Elijah's words followed immediately upon those of the captain.) This judicial miracle was immediately fulfilled.

**2Ki. 1:11, 12.** The same fate befell a second captain, whom the king sent after the death of the first. He was more insolent than the first, "both because he was not brought to his senses by hearing of his punishment, and because he increased his impudence by adding *make haste* (**מְהֵרָה**)." — C. a Lap. For **וַיֵּלֶךְ** the LXX (*Cod. Alex.*) have **καὶ ἀνέβη καὶ ἐλάλησε**, so that they read **וַיַּעַל**. The correctness of this reading, according to which **וַיֵּלֶךְ** would be an error of the pen, is favoured not only by **וַיַּעַל** in vv. 9 and 13, but also by **וַיֵּלֶךְ** which follows; for, as a general rule, **וַיֵּלֶךְ** would be followed by **וַיֹּאמֶר**. The repetition of this judicial miracle was meant to show in the most striking manner not only the authority which rightfully belonged to the prophet, but also the help and protection which the Lord gave to His servants. At the same time, the question as to the "morality of the miracle," about which some have had grave doubts, is not set at rest by the remark of Thenius, that "the soldiers who were sent come into consideration here purely as instruments of a will acting in opposition to Jehovah." The third captain also carried out the ungodly command of the king, and he was not slain (vv. 13ff.). The first two must therefore have been guilty of some crime, which they and their people had to expiate with their death. This crime did not consist merely in their addressing him as "man of God," for the third addressed Elijah in the same way (v. 13), but in their saying "Man of God, come down." This summons to the prophet, to allow himself to be led as a prisoner before the king, involved a contempt not only of the prophetic office in the person of Elijah, but also of the Lord, who had accredited him by miracles as His servant. The two captains who were first sent not only did what they were bound to do as servants of the king, but participated in the ungodly disposition of their lord (**συμβαίνοντες τῷ σκοπῷ τοῦ πεπομφότος** — Theodoret); they attacked the Lord with reckless daring in the person of the prophet, and the second captain, with his "Come down quickly," did it even more strongly than the first. This sin was punished, and that not by the prophet, but by the Lord Himself, who fulfilled the word of His servant.<sup>12</sup>

What Elijah here did was an act of holy zeal for the honour of the Lord, in the spirit of the old covenant, under which God destroyed the insolent despisers of His name with fire and sword, to manifest the energy of His holy majesty by the

side of the dead idols of the heathen. But this act cannot be transferred to the times of the new covenant, as is clearly shown in Luk. 9:54, 55, where Christ does not blame Elijah for what he did, but admonishes His disciples, who overlooked the difference between the economy of the law and that of the gospel, and in their carnal zeal wanted to imitate what Elijah had done in divine zeal for the honour of the Lord, which had been injured in his own person.

**2Ki. 1:13, 14.** The king, disregarding the punishing hand of the Lord, which, even if it might possibly have been overlooked in the calamity that befell the captain who was first sent and his company, could not be misunderstood when a similar fate befell the second captain with his fifty men, sent a third company, in his defiant obduracy, to fetch the prophet. (חַמְשִׁים **שְׁלֹשִׁים** is apparently an error of the pen for **שְׁלִישִׁי**, as the following word **הַשְּׁלִישִׁי** shows.) But the third captain was better than his king, and wiser than his two predecessors. He obeyed the command of the king so far as to go to the prophet; but instead of haughtily summoning him to follow him, he bent his knee before the man of God, and prayed that his own life and the lives of his soldiers might be spared.

**2Ki. 1:15, 16.** Then Elijah followed him to the king (**מִפְּנֵיו**, before him, i.e., before the king, not before the captain; and **אָתּוֹ** for **אֵתּוֹ**, see Ewald, § 264, *b.*), having been directed to do so by the angel of the Lord, and repeated to him the word of the Lord, which he had also conveyed to him through his messengers (see vv. 4 and 6).

**2Ki. 1:17, 18.** When Ahaziah died, according to the word of the Lord through Elijah, as he had no son, he was followed upon the throne by his brother Joram, “in the second year of Joram the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.” This statement is at variance both with that in 2Ki. 3: 1, to the effect that Joram began to reign in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat, and with that in 1Ki. 22:52, viz., that Ahaziah ascended the throne in the seventeenth year of the reign of Jehoshaphat, which lasted twenty-five years, and also with the statement in 2Ki. 8:16, that Joram of Judah became king over Judah in the fifth year of Joram of Israel. If, for example, Ahaziah of Israel died after a reign of not quite two years, at the most a year and a half, in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat; as Jehoshaphat himself reigned twenty-five years, he cannot have died till the seventh year of Joram of Israel, and his son Joram followed him upon the throne. The last of these discrepancies may be solved very simply, from the fact that, according to 2Ki. 8:16, Jehoshaphat was still king when his son Joram began to reign so that Jehoshaphat abdicated in favour of his son about two years before his death. And the first discrepancy (that between 2Ki. 1:17 and 2Ki. 3: 1) is removed by Usher (*Annales M. ad a.m.* 3106 and

3112), Lightfoot, and others, after the example of the *Seder Olam*, by the assumption of the co-regency. According to this, when Jehoshaphat went with Ahab to Ramoth in Gilead to war against the Syrians, in the eighteenth year of his reign, which runs parallel to the twenty-second year of the reign of Ahab, he appointed his son Joram to the co-regency, and transferred to him the administration of the kingdom. It is from this co-regency that the statement in 2Ki. 1:17 is dated, to the effect that Joram of Israel became king in the second year of Joram of Judah. This second year of the co-regency of Joram corresponds to the eighteenth year of the reign of Jehoshaphat (2Ki. 3: 1). And in the fifth year of his co-regency Jehoshaphat gave up the reins of government entirely to him. It is from this point in time, i.e., from the twenty-third year of Jehoshaphat, that we are to reckon the eight years of the reign of Joram (of Judah), so that he only reigned six years more after his father's death.<sup>B</sup>

We have no information as to the reason which induced Jehoshaphat to abdicate in favour of his son two years before his death; for there is very little probability in the conjecture of Lightfoot (*Opp.* i. p. 85), that Jehoshaphat did this when he commenced the war with the Moabites in alliance with Joram of Israel, for the simple reason that the Moabites revolted after the death of Ahab, and Joram made preparations for attacking them immediately after their rebellion (2Ki. 3: 5-7), so that he must have commenced this expedition before the fifth year of his reign.

## CH. 2. ELIJAH'S ASCENSION TO HEAVEN. ELISHA'S FIRST MIRACLES.

*2Ki. 2: 1-13.* ELIJAH'S ASCENSION TO HEAVEN. — Vv. 1-10. *Journey from Gilgal to the other side of the Jordan.* — Vv. 1, 2. When the time arrived that Jehovah was about to take up His servant Elijah in a tempest to heaven, Elijah went with his attendant Elisha from Gilgal down to Bethel. בִּסְעָרָה, in the tempest or storm, i.e., in a tempestuous storm, which was frequently the herald of the divine self-revelations in the terrestrial world (vid., Job. 38: 1; 40: 6; Eze. 1: 4; Zec. 9:14). הַשָּׂמַיִם is the accusative of direction. *Gilgal* and *Bethel* (*Beitin*, see at 1Ki. 12:29) were seats of schools of the prophets, which Elijah had founded in the kingdom of the ten tribes. It is now generally admitted that *Gilgal*, from which they went *down* to Bethel, cannot be the place of that name which was situated in the Jordan valley to the east of Jericho, but must be the *Gilgal* upon the mountains, the elevated *Jiljilia* to the south-west of Silo (Seilun, see at Jos. 8:35). On the way Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, I pray, for the Lord has sent me to Bethel;" but Elisha declared with a solemn oath that he would not leave him. The Lord had revealed to both that the seal of divine attestation was to be impressed upon the work of Elijah by his being

miraculously taken up into heaven, to strengthen the faith not of Elisha only, but also of the disciples of the prophets and of all the godly in Israel; but the revelation had been made to them separately, so that Elijah had no suspicion that Elisha had also been informed as to his being taken away. He wanted, therefore, to get rid of his servant, not “to test his love and attachment” (Vatabl.), but from humility (C. a Lap. and others), because he did not wish to have any one present to witness his glorification without being well assured that it was in accordance with the will of God.

**2Ki. 2: 3.** In Bethel the disciples of the prophets came to meet Elisha, and said to him, “Knowest thou that Jehovah will take thy master from over thy head to-day?” לָקַח מֵעַל רֵאשׁׁ expresses in a pictorial manner the taking away of Elijah from his side by raising him to heaven, like *ἐπαίρειν* and *ὑπολαμβάνειν* in Act. 1: 9, 10. Elisha replied, “I know it, be silent,” because he knew Elijah’s feeling. The Lord had therefore revealed to the disciples of the prophets the taking away of Elijah, to strengthen their faith.

**2Ki. 2: 4-7.** In Bethel, and again in Jericho, to which they both proceeded from Bethel, Elijah repeated the appeal to Elisha to stay there, but always in vain. The taking away of Elijah had also been revealed to the disciples of the prophets at Jericho. Thus they both came to the Jordan, whilst fifty disciples of the prophets from Jericho followed them at a distance, to be eye-witnesses of the miraculous translation of their master. The course which Elijah took before his departure from this earth, viz., from Gilgal past Bethel and Jericho, was not merely occasioned by the fact that he was obliged to touch at these places on the way to the Jordan, but had evidently also the same higher purpose, for which his ascension to heaven had been revealed both to Elisha and to the disciples of the prophets at Bethel and Jericho. Elijah himself said that the Lord had sent him to Bethel, to Jericho, to the Jordan (vv. 2, 4, 6). He therefore took this way from an impulse received from the Spirit of God, that he might visit the schools of the prophets, which he had founded, once more before his departure, and strengthen and fortify the disciples of the prophets in the consecration of their lives to the service of the Lord, though without in the least surmising that they had been informed by the Spirit of the Lord of his approaching departure from this life. But as his ascension to heaven took place not so much for his own sake, as because of those associates in his office who were left behind, God had revealed it to so many, that they might be even more firmly established in their calling by the miraculous glorification of their master than by his words, his teaching, and his admonitions, so that they might carry it on without fear or trembling, even if their great master should no longer stand by their side with the might of his spiritual power to instruct, advise, or defend. But above all, Elisha, whom the Lord had appointed as his successor (1Ki. 19:16), was to be

prepared for carrying on his work by the last journey of his master. He did not leave his side therefore, and resolved, certainly also from an inward impulse of the Spirit of God, to be an eye-witness of his glorification, that he might receive the spiritual inheritance of the first-born from his departing spiritual father.

**2Ki. 2: 8.** When they reached the Jordan, Elijah took his prophet's cloak, rolled it up (עָלָה, ἀπ. λεγ. *convolvit*), and smote the water with it; whereupon the water divided hither and thither, so that they both passed through on dry ground. The cloak, that outward sign of the prophet's office, became the vehicle of the Spirit's power which works unseen, and with which the prophet was inspired. The miracle itself is analogous to the miraculous dividing of the Red Sea by the stretching out of Moses' rod (Exo. 14:16, 21); but at the same time it is very peculiar, and quite in accordance with the prophetic character of Elijah, Moses, the leader of the people, performed his miracles with his shepherd's crook, Elijah the prophet divided the river with his prophet's mantle.

**2Ki. 2: 9, 10.** After crossing the Jordan, Elijah allowed his servant and companion to make one more request before he was taken away, in the full confidence that the Lord would fulfil it in answer to his prayer; and Elisha asked, "Let פִּי־שְׁנַיִם בְּרוּחֶךָ, διπλᾶ ἐν πνεύματί σου, i.e., a double portion in (of) thy spirit be granted to me." This request has been misunderstood by many translators, from Ephraem Syrus down to Köster and F. W. Krummacher, who have supposed that Elisha wished to have a double measure of Elijah's spirit ("that thy spirit may be twofold in me:" Luther after the Vulgate, "*ut fiat in me duplex spiritus tuus*"); and some have taken it as referring to the fact that Elisha performed many more miracles and much greater ones than Elijah (Cler., Pfeiffer, *dub. vex.* p. 442), others to the gift of prophecy and miracles (Köster, *die Proph.* p. 82), whilst others, like Krummacher, have understood by it that the spirit of Elisha, as an evangelical spirit, was twice as great as the legal spirit of Elijah. But there is no such meaning implied in the words, nor can it be inferred from the answer of Elijah; whilst it is impossible to show that there was any such measure of the Spirit in the life and works of Elisha in comparison with the spirit of Elijah, although his request was fulfilled. The request of Elisha is evidently based upon Deu. 21:17, where פִּי־שְׁנַיִם בְּ denotes the double portion which the first-born received in (of) the father's inheritance, as R. Levi b. Gers., Seb. Münt., Vatabl., Grot., and others have perceived, and as Hengstenberg (*Beitr.* ii. p. 133f.) in our days has once more proved. Elisha, resting his foot upon this law, requested of Elijah as a first-born son the double portion of his spirit for his inheritance. Elisha looked upon himself as the first-born son of Elijah in relation to the other "sons of the prophets," inasmuch as Elijah by the command of God had called him to be his successor and to carry on his work. The answer of Elijah agrees with this: "Thou hast asked a hard

thing,” he said, because the granting of this request was not in *his* power, but in the power of God. He therefore made its fulfilment dependent upon a condition, which did not rest with himself, but was under the control of God: “if thou shalt see me taken from thee (אֶלְיָהוּ, *partic. Pual* with the א dropped, see Ges. § 52, Anm. b; Ewald, § 169, d.), let it be so to thee; but if not, it will not be so.” From his own personal inclination Elijah did not wish to have Elisha, who was so closely related to him, as an eye-witness of his translation from the earth; but from his persistent refusal to leave him he could already see that he would not be able to send him away. He therefore left the matter to the Lord, and made the guidance of God the sign for Elisha whether the Lord would fulfil his request or not. Moreover, the request itself even on the part of the petitioner presupposes a certain dependence, and for this reason Elisha could not possibly desire that the double measure of Elijah’s spirit should be bestowed upon him. A dying man cannot leave to his heir more than he has himself. And, lastly, even the ministry of Elisha, when compared with that of Elijah, has all the appearance of being subordinate to it. He lives and labours merely as the continuer of the work already begun by Elijah, both outwardly in relation to the worshippers of idols, and inwardly in relation to the disciples of the prophets. Elisha performs the anointing of Jehu and Hazael, with which Elijah was charged, and thereby prepares the way for the realization of that destruction of Ahab’s house which Elijah predicted to the king; and he merely receives and fosters those schools of the prophets which Elijah had already founded. And again, it is not Elisha but Elijah who appears as the Coryphaeus of prophecy along with Moses, the representative of the law, upon the mount of transfiguration (Mat. 17: 3). — It is only a thoroughly external mode of observation that can discover in the fact that Elisha performed a greater number of miracles than Elijah, a proof that the spirit of Elijah rested doubly upon him.

*2Ki. 2:11-13. Elijah’s ascension.* — V. 11. While they were walking on and talking to each other, “behold (there suddenly appeared) a fiery chariot and fiery horses, and separated the two (by driving between them), and Elijah went up in the tempest to heaven.” As God had formerly taken Enoch away, so that he did not taste of death (see at Gen. 5:24), so did He also suddenly take Elijah away from Elisha, and carry him to heaven without dying. It was בַּסְעָרָה, “in the tempest,” that he was taken away. The storm was accompanied by a fiery phenomenon, which appeared to the eyes of Elisha as a chariot of fire with horses of fire, in which Elijah rode to heaven. The tempest was an earthly substratum for the theophany, the fiery chariots and fiery horses the symbolical form in which the translation of his master to heaven presented itself to the eye of Elisha, who was left behind.<sup>f4</sup>



The ascension of Elijah has been compared to the death of Moses. “As God Himself buried Moses, and his grave has not been found to this day, so did He fetch Elias to heaven in a still more glorious manner in a fiery chariot with fiery horses, so that fifty men, who searched for him, did not find him on the earth” (Ziegler). This parallel has a real foundation in the appearance of Moses and Elijah with Christ on the mountain of transfiguration, only we must not overlook the difference in the departure from this life of these two witnesses of God. For Moses died and was to die in the wilderness because of his sin (Deu. 32:49ff.), and was only buried by the hand of the Lord, so that no one has seen his grave, not so much for the purpose of concealing it from men as to withdraw his body from corruption, and preserve and glorify it for the eternal life (see the Comm. on Deu. 34: 5, 6). Elijah did not die, but was received into heaven by being “changed” (1Co. 15:51, 52; 1Th. 4:15ff.). This difference is in perfect harmony with the character and position of these two men in the earthly kingdom of God. Moses the lawgiver departed from the earthly life by the way of the law, which worketh death as the wages of sin (Rom. 6:23; 7:13); Elijah the prophet, who was appointed to admonish for future times (ὁ καταγραφεῖς ἐν ἑλεγκμοῖς εἰς καιρούς), to pacify the wrath before the judgment, to turn the heart of the father to the son, and to restore the tribes of Jacob (Ecclus. 48:10), was taken to heaven as the forerunner of Christ (Mal. 3:23, 24; Mat. 11:10, 11) without tasting of death, to predict the ascension of our Lord, and to set it forth in Old Testament mode; for as a servant, as the servant of the law, who with his fiery zeal preached both by word and deed the fire of the wrath of divine justice to the rebellious generation of his own time, Elijah was carried by the Lord to heaven in a fiery storm, the symbol of the judicial righteousness of God. “As he was an unparalleled champion for the honour of the Lord, a fiery war-chariot was the symbol of his triumphal procession into heaven” (O. v. Gerlach). But Christ, as the Son, to whom all power is given in heaven and on earth, after having taken away from death its sting and from hell its victory, by His resurrection from the grave (1Co. 15:55), returned to the Father in the power of His eternal deity, and ascended to heaven in His glorified body before the eyes of His disciples as the victor over death and hell, until a cloud received Him and concealed His figure from their sight (Luk. 24:51; Act. 1: 9).<sup>f5</sup>

**2Ki. 2:12.** When Elisha saw his master carried thus miraculously away, he exclaimed, “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and horsemen thereof!” and as he saw him no more, he took hold of his clothes and rent them in two pieces, i.e., from the top to the bottom, as a proof of the greatness of his sorrow at his being taken away. He called Elijah אֱלִיָּהוּ, “my father,” as his spiritual father, who had begotten him as his son through the word of God. “Chariot (war-chariot) and horsemen of Israel,” on which the Israelitish kings based the might and security of their kingdom, are a symbolical representation

of the strong defence which Elijah had been through his ministry to the kingdom of Israel (cf. 2Ki. 13:14).

**2Ki. 2:13.** He then took up Elijah's prophet's mantle, which had fallen from him when he was snatched away, and returned to the Jordan. The prophet's mantle of the master fell to Elisha the disciple, as a pledge to himself that his request was fulfilled, and as a visible sign to others that he was his divinely appointed successor, and that the spirit of Elijah rested upon him (v. 15).

**2Ki. 2:14-25.** Return of Elisha to Jericho and Bethel, and his First Miracles. — Vv. 14, 15. Having returned to the banks of the Jordan, Elisha smote the water with Elijah's mantle, saying, "Where is Jehovah the God of Elijah, yea He?" and the water divided hither and thither, so that he was able to go through. **הוּא־הוּא־יְהוָה**, which the LXX did not understand, and have simply reproduced in Greek characters, **ἄφφω**, is an emphatic apposition, "yea He," such as we find after suffixes, e.g., Pro. 22:19; and **וְהוּא־יְהוָה** is only a strengthened **וְהוּא־יְהוָה**, which is more usual when emphatic prominence is given to the suffix (vid., Ges. § 121, 3). The Masoretic accentuation, which separates it from the preceding words, rests upon a false interpretation. There is no need either for the alteration proposed by Ewald, § 362, a., of **וְהוּא־יְהוָה** into **וְהוּא־יְהוָה**, "he had scarcely smitten the water," especially as not a single analogous example can be adduced of the use of **וְהוּא־יְהוָה** followed by a *Vav consec.*; or for the conjecture that the original reading in the text was **הוּא־יְהוָה** (Houb., Böttch., Then.), "where is now the God of Elijah?" which derives no critical support from the **ἄφφω** of the LXX, and is quite at variance with Hebrew usage, since **הוּא־יְהוָה** generally stands immediately after **וְהוּא־יְהוָה**, when it serves to strengthen the interrogation (vid., Jud. 9:38, Job. 17:15, Isa. 19:12, Hos. 13:10). This miracle was intended partly to confirm Elisha's conviction that his petition had been fulfilled, and partly to accredit him in the eyes of the disciples of the prophets and the people generally as the divinely appointed successor of Elijah. All the disciples of the prophets from Jericho saw also from this that the spirit of Elijah rested upon Elisha, and came to meet him to do homage to him as being now their spiritual father and lord.

**2Ki. 2:16-18.** But the disciples of the prophets at Jericho were so unable to realize the fact of Elijah's translation, although it had been previously revealed to them, that they begged permission of Elisha to send out fifty brave men to seek for Elijah. **וְהוּא־יְהוָה**: whether the Spirit of the Lord has not taken him and cast him upon one of the mountains, or into one of the valleys. **וְהוּא־יְהוָה** with the perfect is used "where there is fear of a fact, which as is conjectured almost with certainty has already happened," like **μή** in the sense of "*whether not*"

(vid., Ewald, § 337, *b.*). רִיחַ יְהוָה is not a wind sent by Jehovah (Ges.), but the Spirit of Jehovah, as in 1Ki. 18:12. The *Cheth-b* גִּיּוֹרֵת is the regular formation from גִּיּוֹ or גִּיּוֹ (Zec. 14: 4); the *Keri* with the transposition of ג and י, the later form: גִּיּוֹרֵת, Eze. 7:16; 31:12, etc. The belief expressed by the disciples of the prophets, that Elijah might have been miraculously carried away, was a popular belief, according to 1Ki. 18:12, which the disciples of the prophets were probably led to share, more especially in the present case, by the fact that they could not imagine a translation to heaven as a possible thing, and with the indefiniteness of the expression לָקַח מֵעַל רֵאשִׁיף could only understand the divine revelation which they had received as referring to removal by death. So that even if Elisha told them how miraculously Elijah had been taken from him, which he no doubt did, they might still believe that by the appearance in the storm the Lord had taken away His servant from this life, that is to say, had received his soul into heaven, and had left his earthly tabernacle somewhere on the earth, for which they would like to go in search, that they might pay the last honours to their departed master. Elisha yielded to their continued urgency and granted their request; whereupon fifty men sought for three days for Elijah's body, and after three days' vain search returned to Jericho. עַד-פֶּשַׁע, to being ashamed, i.e., till he was ashamed to refuse their request any longer (see at Jud. 3:25).

The two following miracles of Elisha (vv. 19-25) were also intended to accredit him in the eyes of the people as a man endowed with the Spirit and power of God, as Elijah had been. Vv. 19-22. *Elisha makes the water at Jericho wholesome.* — During his stay at Jericho (v. 18) the people of the city complained, that whilst the situation of the place was good in other respects, the water was bad and the land produced miscarriages. הָאֲרֶזֶץ, the land, i.e., the soil, on account of the badness of the water; not “the inhabitants, both man and beast” (Thenius). Elisha then told them to bring a new dish with salt, and poured the salt into the spring with these words: “Thus saith the Lord, I have made this water sound; there will not more be death and miscarriage thence” (מִשָּׁם). מִשְׁלַכְתּוֹ is a substantive here (vid., Ewald, 160, *e.*). מוֹצֵא הַמֵּיִם is no doubt the present spring *Ain es Sultân*, the only spring near to Jericho, the waters of which spread over the plain of Jericho, thirty-five minutes' distance from the present village and castle, taking its rise in a group of elevations not far from the foot of the mount *Quarantana* (Kuruntul); a large and beautiful spring, the water of which is neither cold nor warm, and has an agreeable and sweet (according to Steph. Schultz, “somewhat salt”) taste. It was formerly enclosed by a kind of reservoir or semicircular wall of hewn stones, from which the water was conducted in different directions to the plain (vid., Rob. *Pal.* ii. p. 283ff.). With regard to the miracle, a spring which supplied the whole of the

city and district with water could not be so greatly improved by pouring in a dish of salt, that the water lost its injurious qualities for ever, even if salt does possess the power of depriving bad water of its unpleasant taste and injurious effects. The use of these natural means does not remove the miracle. Salt, according to its power of preserving from corruption and decomposition, is a symbol of incorruptibility and of the power of life which destroys death (see Bähr, *Symbolik*, ii. pp. 325, 326). As such it formed the earthly substratum for the spiritual power of the divine word, through which the spring was made for ever sound. A new dish was taken for the purpose, not *ob munditiam* (Seb. Schm.), but as a symbol of the renewing power of the word of God. — But if this miracle was adapted to show to the people the beneficent character of the prophet's ministry, the following occurrence was intended to prove to the despisers of God that the Lord does not allow His servants to be ridiculed with impunity.

**2Ki. 2:23-25.** *The judgment of God upon the loose fellows at Bethel.* Elisha proceeded from Jericho to Bethel, the chief seat of the idolatrous calf-worship, where there was also a school of the prophets (v. 3). On the way thither there came small boys out of the city to meet him, who ridiculed him by calling out, "Come up, bald-head, come," etc. **גלגל**, bald-head (with a bald place at the back of the head), was used as a term of scorn (cf. Isa. 3:17, 24); but hardly from a suspicion of leprosy (Winer, Thenius). It was rather as a natural defect, for Elisha, who lived for fifty years after this (2Ki. 13:14), could not have been bald from age at that time.

**2Ki. 2:24.** The prophet then turned round and cursed the scoffers in the name of the Lord, and there came two bears out of the wood, and tore forty-two boys of them in pieces. The supposed "immorality of cursing," which Thenius still adduces as a disproof of the historical truth of this miracle, even if it were established, would not affect Elisha only, but would fall back upon the Lord God, who executed the curse of His servant in such a manner upon these worthless boys. And there is no need, in order to justify the judicial miracle, to assume that there was a preconcerted plan which had been devised by the chief rulers of the city out of enmity to the prophet of the Lord, so that the children had merely been put forward (O. v. Gerlach). All that is necessary is to admit that the worthless spirit which prevailed in Bethel was openly manifested in the ridicule of the children, and that these boys knew Elisha, and in his person insulted the prophet of the Lord. If this was the case, then Elisha cursed the boys for the purpose of avenging the honour of the Lord, which had been injured in his person; and the Lord caused this curse to be fulfilled, to punish in the children the sins of the parents, and to inspire the whole city with a salutary dread of His holy majesty.<sup>16</sup>

**2Ki. 2:25.** Elisha went from Bethel to Carmel (see at 1Ki. 18:19), probably to strengthen himself in solitude for the continuation of his master's work. He returned thence to Samaria, where, according to 2Ki. 6:32, he possessed a house.

### CH. 3. JORAM OF ISRAEL, AND THE EXPEDITION AGAINST MOAB WHICH HE UNDERTOOK IN COMPANY WITH JEHOSHAPHAT.

**2Ki. 3: 1-3.** Reign of Joram of Israel. — For the chronological statement in v. 1, see at 2Ki. 1:17. *Joram* or *Jehoram* was not so ungodly as his father Ahab and his Mother Jezebel. He had the statue or pillar of Baal, which his father had erected in Samaria, removed; and it was only to the sin of Jeroboam, i.e., the calf-worship, that he adhered. Joram therefore wished to abolish the worship of Baal and elevate the worship of Jehovah, under the image of the calf (ox), into the region of his kingdom once more. For the singular suffix **מִמְנָה** see Ewald, § 317, *a*. He did not succeed, however, in exterminating the worship of Baal. It not only continued in Samaria, but appears to have been carried on again in the most shameless manner (cf. 2Ki. 10:18ff.); at which we cannot be surprised, since his mother Jezebel, that fanatical worshipper of Baal, was living throughout the whole of his reign (2Ki. 9:30).

**2Ki. 3: 4-27.** War of Joram, in Alliance with Jehoshaphat, against the Moabites. — Vv. 4, 5. The occasion of this war was the rebellion of the Moabites, i.e., the refusal to pay tribute to Israel since the death of Ahab. Mesha the (vassal-) king of Moab was a possessor of flocks, and paid to the king of Israel 100,000 lambs and 100,000 rams; not merely at the commencement of each new reign (Cler.), but as a yearly tribute (**הַשִּׁיב**, to bring again = to bring repeatedly, as in Num. 18: 9, etc.). This yearly tribute could not be exorbitant for the land of the Moabites, which abounded in good pasture, and was specially adapted for the rearing of flocks. The payment of tribute in natural objects and in the produce of the land was very customary in ancient times, and is still usual among the tribes of Asia.<sup>17</sup>

**נוֹקֵד** signifies both a shepherd (Amo. 1: 1) and also a possessor of flocks. In Arabic it is properly the possessor of a superior kind of sheep and goats (vid., Boch. *Hieroz.* i. p. 483f. ed. Ros.). **צֹמֵר** may either be taken as a second object to **הַשִּׁיב**, or be connected with **אֵילִים** as an accusative of looser government (Ewald, § 287, *h.*). In the first case the tribute would consist of the wool (the fleeces) of 100,000 lambs and 100,000 rams; in the second, of 100,000 lambs and the wool of 100,000 rams. In support of the latter we may quote Isa. 16: 1, where lambs are mentioned as tribute.

**2Ki. 3: 5ff.** The statement concerning the rebellion of the Moabites, which has already been mentioned in 2Ki. 1: 1, is repeated here, because it furnished the occasion for the expedition about to be described. Ahaziah had been unable to do anything during his short reign to renew the subjugation of Moab; Joram was therefore anxious to overtake what had been neglected immediately after his ascent of the throne. He went to Samaria **בְּיוֹם הַהוּא**, at that time, namely, when he renewed his demand for the tribute and it was refused (Thenius), and mustered all Israel, i.e., raised an army out of the whole kingdom, and asked Jehoshaphat to join in the war, which he willingly promised to do (as in 1Ki. 22: 4), notwithstanding the fact that he had been blamed by prophets for his alliance with Ahab and Ahaziah (2Ch. 19: 2 and 20:37). He probably wished to chastise the Moabites still further on this occasion for their invasion of Judah (2Ch. 20), and to do his part by bringing them once more under the yoke of Israel, to put it out of their power to make fresh incursions into Judah.

**2Ki. 3: 8.** In reply to Joram's question, "By which way shall we advance (against Moab)?" Jehoshaphat decided in favour of "the way through the desert of Edom." There were two ways by which it was possible to enter the land of the Moabites; namely, either by going above the Dead Sea, and crossing the Jordan and the boundary river Arnon, and so entering it from the north, or by going round the southern point of the Dead Sea, and advancing through the northern portion of the mountains of Edom, and thus entering it from the south. The latter way was the longer of the two, and the one attended with the greatest difficulties and dangers, because the army would have to cross mountains which were very difficult to ascend. Nevertheless Jehoshaphat decided in its favour, partly because, if they took the northern route, they would have the Syrians at Ramoth in Gilead to fear, partly also because the Moabites, from their very confidence in the inaccessibility of their southern boundary, would hardly expect any attack from that side, and might therefore, if assailed at that point, be taken off their guard and easily defeated, and probably also from a regard to the king of Edom, whom they could induce to join them with his troops if they took that route, not so much perhaps for the purpose of strengthening their own army as to make sure of his forces, namely, that he would not make a fresh attempt at rebellion by a second invasion of the kingdom of Judah while Jehoshaphat was taking the field against the Moabites.

**2Ki. 3: 9.** But however cleverly this plan may have been contrived, when the united army had been marching round for seven days and was passing through the deep rocky valley of the *Ahsy*,<sup>18</sup> which divided the territories of Edom and Moab, it was in the greatest danger of perishing from want of water for men and cattle, as the river which flows through this valley, and in which they probably hoped to find a sufficient supply of water, since according to Robinson

(*Pal.* ii. pp. 476 and 488) it is a stream which never fails, was at that time perfectly dry.

In this distress the hearts of the two kings were manifested. — Vv. 10-12. Joram cried out in his despair: “Woe, that Jehovah has called these three kings, to give them into the hand of Moab!” (כִּי, *that*, serves to give emphasis to the assurance; see Ewald, § 330, *b.*) Jehoshaphat, on the other hand, had confidence in the Lord, and inquired whether there was no prophet there, through whom they could seek counsel of the Lord (as in 1Ki. 22: 7); whereupon one of the servants of the Israelitish king answered that Elisha was there, who had poured water upon the hands of Elijah, i.e., had been with him daily as his servant, and therefore could probably obtain and give a revelation from god. Elisha may perhaps have come to the neighbourhood of the army at the instigation of the Spirit of God, because the distress of the kings was to be one means in the hand of the Lord, not only of distinguishing the prophet in the eyes of Joram, but also of pointing Joram to the Lord as the only true God. The three kings, humbled by the calamity, went in person to Elisha, instead of sending for him.

**2Ki. 3:13, 14.** In order still further to humble the king of Israel, who was already bowed down by the trouble, and to produce some salutary fruit of repentance in his heart, Elisha addressed him in these words: “What have I to do with thee? Go to the (Baal-) prophets of thy father and thy mother! Let them help thee.” When Joram replied to this in a supplicatory tone: עַל, no, pray (as in Rut. 1:13), i.e., speak not in this refusing way, for the Lord has brought these three kings — not me alone, but Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom also — into this trouble; Elisha said to him with a solemn oath (cf. 1Ki. 17: 1): “If I did not regard Jehoshaphat, I should not look at thee and have respect to thee,” i.e., I should not deign to look at thee, much less to help thee.

**2Ki. 3:15-17.** He then sent for a minstrel, to collect his mind from the impressions of the outer world by the soft tones of the instrument, and by subduing the self-life and life in the external world to become absorbed in the intuition of divine things. On this influence of music upon the state of the mind, see the remark on 1Sa. 16:16, and Passavant’s *Untersuchungen über den Lebens-magnetismus*, p. 207 (ed. 2). — As the minstrel was playing, the hand of the Lord came upon him (וַיָּהִי according to the later usage for וַיְהִי, as in 1Sa. 17:48, etc.; compare Ewald, § 345, *b.*, and וַיְהִי as in 1Ki. 18:46), so that he said in the name of the Lord: “Make this valley full of trenches (עָשֵׂה, *inf. abs.* for the imperative; for גְּבִים גְּבִים see Ges. § 108, 4); for thus saith the Lord, ye will see neither wind nor rain, and this valley will be filled with water, that ye may be able to drink, and your flocks and your cattle.” גְּבִים are

trenches for collecting water (vid., Jer. 14: 3), which would suddenly flow down through the brook-valley. This large quantity of water came on the (following) morning “by the way of Edom” (v. 20), a heavy fall of rain or violent storm having taken place, as is evident from the context, in the eastern mountains of Edom, at a great distance from the Israelitish camp, the water of which filled the brook-valley, i.e., the Wady *el Kurahy* and *el Ahsy* (see at v. 9) at once, without the Israelites observing anything either of the wind, which always precedes rain in the East (Harmar, *Beobb.* i. pp. 51, 52), or of the rain itself. מִקְנֵיכֶם are the flocks intended for slaughtering, בְּהֵמַתְּכֶם the beasts of burden.

**2Ki. 3:18, 19.** Elisha continued: “and this is too little for Jehovah (the comparative force of נָקַל is implied in the context, especially in the alternating combination of the two clauses, which is indicated by וְ... וְ, see Ewald, § 360, c.): He will also give Moab into your hand, and ye will smite all the fortified and choice cities, fell all the good trees (fruit-trees), stop up all the springs of water, and spoil all the good fields with stones.” מִבְּצֹר and מִבְּחֹר are intended to produce a play upon words, through the resemblance in their sound and meaning (Ewald, § 160, c.). In the announcement of the devastation of the land there is an allusion to Deu. 20:19, 20, according to which the Israelites were ordered to spare the fruit-trees when Canaan was taken. These instructions were not to apply to Moab, because the Moabites themselves as the arch-foes of Israel would not act in any other way with the land of Israel if they should gain the victory. הִפְּאָה, to add pain, is a poetical expression for spoiling a field or rendering it infertile through the heaping up of stones.

**2Ki. 3:20.** The water came in the morning at the time of the morning sacrifice (see 1Ki. 18:36), to indicate that the Lord was once more restoring His favour to the people on account of the sacrifice presented to Him in His temple.

The help of God, which preserved the Israelitish army from destruction, also prepared destruction for the Moabites. Vv. 21-23. On hearing the report of the march of the allied kings, Moab had raised all the men that were capable of bearing arms, and stationed them on the frontier. In the morning, when the sun had risen above the water, the Moabites saw the water opposite to them like blood, and said: “That is blood: the (allied) kings have destroyed themselves and smitten one another; and now to the spoil, Moab!” Coming with this expectation to the Israelitish camp, they were received by the allies, who were ready for battle, and put to flight. The divine help consisted, therefore, not in a miracle which surpassed the laws of nature, but simply in the fact that the Lord God, as He had predicted through His prophet, caused the forces of nature ordained by Him to work in the predetermined manner. As the sudden supply of



an abundance of water was caused in a natural way by a heavy fall of rain, so the illusion, which was so fatal to the Moabites, is also to be explained in the natural manner indicated in the text. From the reddish earth of the freshly dug trenches the water collected in them had acquired a reddish colour, which was considerably intensified by the rays of the rising sun, so that when seen from a distance it resembled blood. The Moabites, however, were the less likely to entertain the thought of an optical delusion, from the fact that with their accurate acquaintance with the country they knew very well that there was no water in the wady at that time, and they had neither seen nor heard anything of the rain which had fallen at a great distance off in the Edomitish mountains. The thought was therefore a natural one, that the water was blood, and that the cause of the blood could only have been that their enemies had massacred one another, more especially as the jealousy between Israel and Judah was not unknown to them, and they could have no doubt that Edom had only come with them as a forced ally after the unsuccessful attempt at rebellion which it had made a short time before; and, lastly, they cannot quite have forgotten their own last expedition against Judah in alliance with the Edomites and Ammonites, which had completely failed, because the men composing their own army had destroyed one another. But if they came into collision with the allied army of the Israelites under such a delusion as this, the battle could only end in defeat and in a general flight so far as they were concerned.

*2Ki. 3:24, 25.* The Israelites followed the fugitives into their own land and laid it waste, as Elisha had prophesied (v. 25 compared with v. 19). The *Cheth-b* **וַיְבוֹרְבֵהוּ** is to be read **וַיָּבוֹרְבֵהוּ** (for **וַיָּבוֹא** as in 1Ki. 12:12): and (Israel) came into the land and smote Moab. The *Keri* **וַיָּבוֹ** is a bad emendation. **הַפּוֹת** is either the infinitive construct used instead of the infin. absolute (Ewald, § 351, *c.*), or an unusual form of the inf. absol. (Ewald, § 240, *b.*). **עַד-הַשָּׂאִיר**, till one (= so that one only) left its stones in *Kir-chareseth*. On the infinitive form **הַשָּׂאִיר** see at Jos. 8:22. The suffix in **אֲבַנֶיהָ** probably points forward to the following noun (Ewald, § 309, *c.*). The city called **קִיר חֲרֶשֶׁת** here and Isa. 16: 7, and **קִיר חֲרֶשׁ** in Isa. 16:11 and Jer. 48:31, 36, i.e., probably city of potsherds, is called elsewhere **קִיר מוֹאָב**, the citadel of Moab (Isa. 15: 1), as the principal fortress of the land (in the Chaldee Vers. **בְּרַכְא דְמוֹאָב**), and still exists under the name of *Kerak*, with a strong castle build by the Crusaders, upon a lofty and steep chalk rock, surrounded by a deep and narrow valley, which runs westward under the name of Wady Kerak and falls into the Dead Sea (vid., Burckhardt, *Syr.* pp. 643ff., C. v. Raumer, *Pal.* pp. 271, 272). This fortress the allied kings besieged. “The slingers surrounded and smote it,” i.e., bombarded it.

**2Ki. 3:26.** When the king of Moab saw that the battle was too strong for him, he attempted to fight a way through the besiegers with 700 men with drawn swords (לְהַבְקִיעַ, lit., to split them) to the king of Edom, i.e., on the side which was held by this king, from whom he probably hoped that he should meet with the weakest resistance.

**2Ki. 3:27.** But when this attempt failed, in his desperation he took his first-born son, who was to succeed him as king, and offered him as a sacrifice upon the wall, i.e., in the sight of the besiegers, not to the God of Israel (Joseph. Ephr. Syr., etc.), but to his own god Camos (see at 1Ki. 11: 7), to procure help from him by appeasing his wrath; just as the heathen constantly sought to appease the wrath of their gods by human sacrifices on the occasion of great calamities (vid., Euseb. *praepar. ev.* iv. 16, and E. v. Lasaulx, *die Sühnopfer der Griechen und Römer*, pp. 8ff.). — “And there was (came) great wrath upon Israel, and they departed from him (the king of Moab) and returned into their land.” As הָיָה קֶצֶף עַל is used of the divine wrath or judgment, which a man brings upon himself by sinning, in every other case in which the phrase occurs, we cannot understand it here as signifying the “human indignation,” or ill-will, which broke out among the besieged (Budd., Schulz, and others). The meaning is: this act of abomination, to which the king of the Moabites had been impelled by the extremity of his distress, brought a severe judgment from God upon Israel. The besiegers, that is to say, felt the wrath of God, which they had brought upon themselves by occasioning human sacrifice, which is strictly forbidden in the law (Lev. 18:21; 20: 3), either inwardly in their conscience or in some outwardly visible signs, so that they gave up the further prosecution of the siege and the conquest of the city, without having attained the object of the expedition, namely, to renew the subjugation of Moab under the power of Israel.

#### CH. 4. ELISHA WORKS SEVERAL MIRACLES.

**2Ki. 4.** From 2Ki. 4 through 2Ki. 8: 6 there follows a series of miracles on the part of Elisha, which both proved this prophet to be the continuer of the work which Elijah had begun, of converting Israel from the service of Baal to the service of the living God, and also manifested the beneficent fruits of the zeal of Elijah for the honour of the Lord of Sabaoth in the midst of the idolatrous generation of his time, partly in the view which we obtain from several of these accounts of the continuance and prosperity of the schools of the prophets, and partly in the attitude of Elisha towards the godly in the land as well as towards Joram the king, the son of the idolatrous Ahab, and in the extension of his fame beyond the limits of Israel. (See the remarks on the labours of both prophets at pp. 161ff., and those on the schools of the prophets at 1Sa. 19:24.) — All the

miracles described in this section belong to the reign of Joram king of Israel. They are not all related, however, in chronological order, but the chronology is frequently disregarded for the purpose of grouping together events which are homogeneous in their nature. This is evident, not only from the fact that (a) several of these accounts are attached quite loosely to one another without any particle to indicate sequence (vid., 2Ki. 4: 1, 38, 42; 5: 1; 6: 8, and 8: 1), and (b) we have first of all those miracles which were performed for the good of the scholars of the prophets and of particular private persons (2Ki. 4-6: 7), and then such works of the prophet as bore more upon the political circumstances of the nation, and of the king as the leader of the nation (2Ki. 6: 8-7:20), but also from the circumstance that in the case of some of these facts you cannot fail to perceive that their position is regulated by their substantial relation to what precedes or what follows, without any regard to the time at which they occurred. Thus, for example, the occurrence described in 2Ki. 8: 1-6, which should undoubtedly stand before 2Ki. 5 so far as the chronology is concerned, is placed at the end of the miracles which Elisha wrought for king Joram, simply because it exhibits in the clearest manner the salutary fruit of what he had done. And so, again, the account of Naaman the leper is placed in 2Ki. 5, although its proper position would be after 2Ki. 6: 7, because it closes the series of miracles performed for and upon private persons, and the miracle was wrought upon a foreigner, so that the fame of the prophet had already penetrated into a foreign country; whereas in order of time it should either stand between vv. 23 and 24 of the sixth chapter (because the incursions of the flying parties of Syrians, to which 2Ki. 6: 8-23 refers, had already taken place), or not till after the close of 2Ki. 7. On the other hand, the partial separation of the miracles performed for the schools of the prophets (2Ki. 4: 1-7, 38-41, 42-44, and 2Ki. 6: 1-7) can only be explained on chronological grounds; and this is favoured by the circumstance that the events inserted between are attached by a *Vav consec.*, which does indicate the order of sequence (2Ki. 5: 8ff. and 6: 1ff.). Regarded as a whole, however, the section 2Ki. 4: 1-8: 6, which was no doubt taken from a prophetic monograph and inserted into the annals of the kings, is in its true chronological place, since the account in 2Ki. 3 belongs to the earlier period of the history, and the events narrated from 2Ki. 8: 7 onwards to the later period.

**2Ki. 4: 1-7.** THE WIDOW'S CRUSE OF OIL. — A poor widow of the scholars of the prophets complained to Elisha of her distress, namely, that a creditor was about to take her two sons as servants (slaves). The Mosaic law gave a creditor the right to claim the person and children of a debtor who was unable to pay, and they were obliged to serve him as slaves till the year of jubilee, when they were once more set free (Lev. 25:39, 40). When the prophet learned, on inquiry that she had nothing in her house but a small flask of oil (כַּדָּיִם, from כָּדָה, means an anointing flask, a small vessel for the oil necessary for anointing the

body), he told her to beg of all her neighbours empty vessels, not a few (אַל-תַּמְעִיטִי, make not few, sc. to beg), and then to shut herself in with her sons, and to pour from her flask of oil into all these vessels till they were full, and then to sell this oil and pay her debt with the money, and use the rest for the maintenance of herself and her children. She was to close the house-door, that she might not be disturbed in her occupation by other people, and also generally to avoid all needless observation while the miracle was being performed. תַּסִּיעִי הַמֶּלֶא, let that which is filled be put on one side, namely by the sons, who handed her the vessels, according to vv. 5 and 6, so that she was able to pour without intermission. The form מִיצֶקֶת is a participle *Piel*, and is quite appropriate as an emphatic form; the *Keri* מוּצֶקֶת (*Hiphil*) is an unnecessary alteration, especially as the *Hiphil* of יָצַק is הִצִּיק. הַשָּׁמֶן. הַצֵּיִק, then the oil stood, i.e., it ceased to flow. The *asyndeton* וְאֵת בְּנֵיהֶּן is very harsh, and the *Vav copul.* has probably dropped out. With the alteration proposed by L. de Dieu, viz., of וְאֵת into וְאֵת, “live with thy sons,” the verb תִּחַיִּי would necessarily stand first (Thenius).

**2Ki. 4: 8-37.** THE SHUNAMMITE AND HER SON. — V. 8. When Elisha was going one day (lit., *the day*, i.e., at that time, then) to *Shunem* (*Solam*, at the south-western foot of the Lesser Hermon; see at 1Ki. 1: 3), a wealthy woman (גְּדוּלְהָהּ as in 1Sa. 25: 2, etc.) constrained him to eat at her house; whereupon, as often as he passed by that place in his subsequent journeys from Carmel to Jezreel and back, he was accustomed to call upon her (סוֹר as in Gen. 19: 2).

**2Ki. 4: 9, 10.** The woman then asked her husband to build a small upper chamber for this holy man of God, and to furnish it with the necessary articles of furniture (viz., bed, table, seat, and lamp), that he might always turn in at their house. עֲלִית־קִיר is either a walled upper chamber, i.e., one built with brick and not with wooden walls (Cler., Then.), or an upper chamber built upon the wall of the house (Ges.).

**2Ki. 4: 11-13.** After some time, when Elisha had spent the night in the chamber provided for him, he wanted to make some acknowledgment to his hostess for the love which she had shown him, and told his servant Gehazi to call her, and say to her: “Thou hast taken all this care for us, what shall I do to thee? Hast thou (anything) to say to the king or the chief captain?” i.e., hast thou any wish that I could convey to them, and intercede for thee? There is something striking here in the fact that Elisha did not address the woman himself, as she was standing before him, but told her servant to announce to her his willingness to make some return for what she had done. This was, probably, simply from a regard to the great awe which she had of the “holy man of God”

(v. 9), and to inspire her with courage to give expression to the wishes of her heart.<sup>19</sup> She answered: “I dwell among my people,” i.e., not, I merely belong to the people (Thenius), but, I live quietly and peaceably among my countrymen, so that I have no need for any intercession with the king and great men of the kingdom. *Ἀπραγμοσύνη χαίρω, καὶ εἰρηνικῶς διάγω καὶ πρὸς τινα ἄμφοισβήτησιν οὐκ ἀνέχομαι* (Theodoret).

*2Ki. 4:14-16.* When Elisha conversed with Gehazi still further on the matter, the latter said: “But she has no son, and her husband is old.” Elisha then had her called again, and told her when she had entered the door: “At this time a year hence (*בְּעֵת חַיָּה*, lit., at the time when it revives again; see at Gen. 18:10) thou wilt embrace a son.” The same favour was to be granted to the Shunammite as that which Sarah had received in her old age, that she might learn that the God of Abraham still ruled in and for Israel. She replied: “No, my lord, thou man of God,” *אֵל-הַחַיִּים*, I do not excite in thy servant any deceptive hopes.

*2Ki. 4:17.* But however incredible this promise might appear to her, as it had formerly done to Sarah (Gen. 18:12, 13), it was fulfilled at the appointed time (cf. Gen. 21: 2).

*2Ki. 4:18-20.* But even the faith of the pious woman was soon to be put to the test, and to be confirmed by a still more glorious revelation of the omnipotence of the Lord, who works through the medium of His prophets. When the child presented to her by God had grown up into a lad, he complained one day to the reapers of the field of a violent headache, saying to his father, “My head, my head!” He was then taken home to his mother, and died at noon upon her knees, no doubt from inflammation of the brain produced by a sunstroke.

*2Ki. 4:21-23.* The mother took the dead child at once up to the chamber built for Elisha, laid it upon the bed of the man of God, and shut the door behind her; she then asked her husband, without telling him of the death of the boy, to send a young man with a she-ass, that she might ride as quickly as possible to the man of God; and when her husband asked her, “Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day, since it is neither new moon nor Sabbath?”<sup>20</sup> she replied, *shalom*; i.e., either “it is all well,” or “never mind.” For this word, which is used in reply to a question after one’s health (see v. 26), is apparently also used, as Clericus has correctly observed, when the object is to avoid giving a definite answer to any one, and yet at the same time to satisfy him.

*2Ki. 4:24, 25.* She then rode without stopping, upon the animal driven by the young man, to Elisha at mount Carmel. *אֵל-תַּעְצֵר-לִי לָרֶכֶב*, literally, do not hinder me from riding.

**2Ki. 4:25-27.** When the prophet saw her מַנְיָדָה (from the opposite), that is to say, saw her coming in the distance, and recognised her as the Shunammite, he sent Gehazi to meet her, to ask her about her own health and that of her husband and child. She answered, *shalom*, i.e., well, that she might not be detained by any further discussion, and came to the prophet and embraced his feet, to pray for the help of the “holy man of God.” Gehazi wanted to thrust her away, “because it seemed to him an immodest importunity to wish to urge the prophet in such a way as this, and as it were to compel him” (Seb. Schm.); but the prophet said, “Let her alone, for her soul is troubled, and Jehovah has hidden it from me and has not told me.”<sup>f11</sup>

**2Ki. 4:28.** The pious woman then uttered this complaint to the prophet: “Did I ask a son of the Lord? Did I not say, Do not deceive me?” What had happened to her she did not say, — a fact which may easily be explained on psychological grounds from her deep sorrow, — but Elisha could not fail to discover it from what she said.

**2Ki. 4:29.** He therefore directed his servant Gehazi: “Gird thy loins and take thy staff in thy hand and go: if thou meet any one, thou wilt not salute him; and if any one salute thee, thou wilt not answer him; and lay my staff upon the face of the boy.” The object of this command neither to salute nor to return salutations by the way, was not merely to ensure the greatest haste (Thenius and many others), inasmuch as the people of the East lose a great deal of time in prolonged salutations (Niebuhr, *Beschr. v. Arab.* p. 48),<sup>f12</sup>

but the prophet wished thereby to preclude at the very outset the possibility of attributing the failure of Gehazi’s attempt to awaken the child to any external or accidental circumstance of this kind. For since it is inconceivable that the prophet should have adopted a wrong method, that is to say, should have sent Gehazi with the hope that he would restore the dead boy to life, his only intention in sending the servant must have been to give to the Shunammite and her family, and possibly also to Gehazi himself, a practical proof that the power to work miracles was not connected in any magical way with his person or his staff, but that miracles as works of divine omnipotence could only be wrought through faith and prayer; not indeed with the secondary intention of showing that he alone could work miracles, and so of increasing his own importance (Köster), but to purify the faith of the godly from erroneous ideas, and elevate them from superstitious reliance upon his own human person to true reliance upon the Lord God.

**2Ki. 4:30.** The mother of the boy does not appear, indeed, to have anticipated any result from the measures adopted by Elisha; for she swears most solemnly that she will not leave him. But the question arises, whether this urging of the

prophet to come himself and help arose from doubt as to the result of Gehazi's mission, or whether it was not rather an involuntary utterance of her excessive grief, and of the warmest wish of her maternal heart to see her beloved child recalled to life. We may probably infer the latter from the fulfilment of her request by Elisha.

**2Ki. 4:31.** Gehazi did as he was commanded, but the dead child did not come to life again; the prophet's staff worked no miracle. "There was no sound and no attention," i.e., the dead one gave no sign of life. This is the meaning of **אין קול ואין קשב** both here and 1Ki. 18:29, where it is used of dead idols. The attempt of Gehazi to awaken the child was unsuccessful, not *propter fidem ipsi a muliere non adhibitam* (Seb. Schm.), nor because of the vainglory of Gehazi himself, but simply to promote in the godly of Israel true faith in the Lord.

**2Ki. 4:32-35.** Elisha then entered the house, where the boy was lying dead upon his bed, and shut the door behind them both (i.e., himself and the dead child), and prayed to the Lord. He then lay down upon the boy, so that his mouth, his eyes, and his hands lay upon the mouth, eyes, and hands of the child, bowing down over him (**נָקַד**; see at 1Ki. 18:42); and the flesh (the body) of the child became warm. He then turned round, i.e., turned away from the boy, went once up and down in the room, and bowed himself over him again; whereupon the boy sneezed seven times, and then opened his eyes. This raising of the dead boy to life does indeed resemble the raising of the dead by Elijah (1Ki. 17:20ff.); but it differs so obviously in the manner in which it was effected, that we may see at once from this that Elisha did not possess the double measure of the spirit of Elijah. It is true that Elijah stretched himself three times upon the dead child, but at his prayer the dead returned immediately to life, whereas in the case of Elisha the restoration to life was a gradual thing.<sup>13</sup> And they both differ essentially from the raising of the dead by Christ, who recalled the dead to life by one word of His omnipotence (Mark 5:39-42; Luk. 7:13-15; John 11:43, 44), a sign that He was the only-begotten Son of God, to whom the Father gave to have life in Himself, even as the Father has life in Himself (John 5:25ff.), in whose name the Apostle Peter also was able through prayer to recall the dead Tabitha to life, whereas Elisha and Elijah had only to prophesy by word and deed of the future revelation of the glory of God.

**2Ki. 4:36, 37.** After the restoration of the boy to life, Elisha had his mother called and gave her back her son, for which she fell at his feet with thanksgiving.

**2Ki. 4:38-41.** Elisha Makes Uneatable Food Wholesome. — V. 38. When Elisha had returned to Gilgal, the seat of a school of the prophets (see at

2Ki. 2: 1), i.e., had come thither once more on his yearly circuit, during the famine which prevailed in the land (see at 2Ki. 8: 1), and the prophets' scholars sat before him (the teacher and master), he directed his servant (i.e., probably not Gehazi, but the pupil who waited upon him) to put the large pot to the fire and boil a dish for the pupils of the prophets. שִׁפַּת answers to the German *beisetzen*, which is used for placing a vessel *upon* the fire (cf. Eze. 24: 3).

**2Ki. 4:39.** One (of these pupils) then went to the field to gather vegetables (אֹרֵת, *olera*: for the different explanations of this word see Celsii *Hierobot.* i. 459ff., and Ges. *Thes.* p. 56), and found גִּפְנֵי שְׂדֵה, i.e., not wild vines, but wild creepers (Luther), field-creepers resembling vines; and having gathered his lap full of wild cucumbers, took them home and cut them into the vegetable pot. because they did not know them. פִּקְעֹת is rendered in the ancient versions *colocynths* (LXX πολυτή ἀγρία, i.e., according to Suid., *Colocynthis*), whereas Gesenius (*Thes.* p. 1122), Winer, and others, follow Celsius (*l.c.* i. 393ff.), have decided in favour of wild cucumbers, a fruit resembling an acorn, or, according to Oken, a green fleshy fruit of almost a finger's length and an inch thick, which crack with a loud noise, when quite ripe, and very gentle pressure, spirting out both juice and seeds, and have a very bitter taste. The reason for this decision is, that the peculiarity mentioned answers to the etymon פִּקַּע, to split, in Syr. and Chald. to crack. Nevertheless the rendering given by the old translators is apparently the more correct of the two; for the colocynths also belong to the genus of the cucumbers, creep upon the ground, and are a round yellow fruit of the size of a large orange, and moreover are extremely bitter, producing colic, and affecting the nerves. The form of this fruit is far more suitable for oval architectural ornaments (פִּקְעֵים, 1Ki. 6:18; 7:24) than that of the wild cucumber.

**2Ki. 4:40.** The extremely bitter flavour of the fruit so alarmed the pupils of the prophets when they began to eat of the dish, that they cried out, "Death in the pot," and therefore thought the fruit was poison. If eaten in any large quantity, colocynths might really produce death: vid., Dioscorid. iv. 175 (178).

**2Ki. 4:41.** Elisha then had some meal brought and poured it into the pot, after which the people were able to eat of the dish, and there was no longer anything injurious in the pot. וַיִּקַּח, then take, ו denoting sequence in thought (vid., Ewald, § 348, a.). The meal might somewhat modify the bitterness and injurious qualities of the vegetable, but could not take them entirely away; the author of the *Exegetical Handbook* therefore endeavours to get rid of the miracle, by observing that Elisha may have added something else. The meal, the most wholesome food of man, was only the earthly substratum for the working



of the Spirit, which proceeded from Elisha, and made the noxious food perfectly wholesome.

**2Ki. 4:42-44.** Feeding of a Hundred Pupils of the Prophets with Twenty Barley Loaves. — A man of *Baal-Shalisha* (a place in the land of *Shalisha*, the country to the west of Gilgal, Jiljilia; see at 1Sa. 9: 4) brought the prophet as first-fruits twenty barley loaves and **בָּרֶמֶל** = **גָּרֵשׁ בָּרֶמֶל**, i.e., roasted ears of corn (see the Comm. on Lev. 2:14), in his sack (**צִקְלוֹן**, *ἀπ. λεγ.*, sack or pocket). Elisha ordered this present to be given to the people, i.e., to the pupils of the prophets who dwelt in one common home, for them to eat; and when his servant made this objection: “How shall I set this (this little) before a hundred men?” he repeated his command, “Give it to the people, that they may eat; for thus hath the Lord spoken: They will eat and leave” (**אָכְלוּ וְהוֹתַר**, *infin. absol.*; see Ewald, § 328, *a.*); which actually was the case. That twenty barley loaves and a portion of roasted grains of corn were not a sufficient quantity to satisfy a hundred men, is evident from the fact that one man was able to carry the whole of this gift in a sack, and still more so from the remark of the servant, which shows that there was no proportion between the whole of this quantity and the food required by a hundred persons. In this respect the food, which was so blessed by the word of the Lord that a hundred men were satisfied by so small a quantity and left some over, forms a type of the miraculous feeding of the people by Christ (Mat. 14:16ff., 15:36, 37; John 6:11, 12); though there was this distinction between them, that the prophet Elisha did not produce the miraculous increase of the food, but merely predicted it. The object, therefore, in communicating this account is not to relate another miracle of Elisha, but to show how the Lord cared for His servants, and assigned to them that which had been appropriated in the law to the Levitical priests, who were to receive, according to Deu. 18: 4, 5, and Num. 18:13, the first-fruits of corn, new wine, and oil. This account therefore furnishes fresh evidence that the godly men in Israel did not regard the worship introduced by Jeroboam (his state-church) as legitimate worship, but sought and found in the schools of the prophets a substitute for the lawful worship of God (*vid.*, Hengstenberg, *Beitrr.* ii. S. 136f.).

## **CH. 5. CURING OF THE LEPROSY OF NAAMAN THE SYRIAN, AND PUNISHMENT OF GEHAZI.**

**2Ki. 5: 1-19.** CURING OF NAAMAN FROM LEPROSY. — V. 1. *Naaman*, the commander-in-chief of the Syrian king, who was a very great man before his lord, i.e., who held a high place in the service of his king and was greatly distinguished (**נִשְׂא פָּנִים**, cf. Isa. 3: 3; 9:14), because God had given the Syrians

salvation (victory) through him, was as a warrior afflicted with leprosy. The **ו** has not dropped out before **מִצְרַע**, nor has the copula been omitted for the purpose of sharpening the antithesis (Thenius), for the appeal to Ewald, § 354, *a.*, proves nothing, since the passages quoted there are of a totally different kind; but **גִּבּוֹר הָיָה** is a second predicate: the man was as a brave warrior leprous. There is an allusion here to the difference between the Syrians and the Israelites in their views of leprosy. Whereas in Israel lepers were excluded from human society (see at Lev. 13 and 14), in Syria a man afflicted with leprosy could hold a very high state-office in the closest association with the king.

**2Ki. 5: 2, 3.** And in Naaman's house before his wife, i.e., in her service, there was an Israelitish maiden, whom the Syrians had carried off in a marauding expedition (**יָצְאוּ גְדוּדִים**: they had gone out in (as) marauding bands). She said to her mistress: "O that my lord were before the prophet at Samaria! (where Elisha had a house, 2Ki. 6:32), he would free him from his leprosy." **מִצְרַעַת אֶסְרָה**, to receive (again) from leprosy, in the sense of "to heal," may be explained from Num. 12:14, 15, where **אֶסְרָה** is applied to the reception of Miriam into the camp again, from which she had been excluded on account of her leprosy.

**2Ki. 5: 4, 5.** When Naaman related this to his lord (the king), he told him to go to Samaria furnished with a letter to the king of Israel; and he took with him rich presents as compensation for the cure he was to receive, viz., ten talents of silver, about 25,000 thalers (£3750 — Tr.); 600 shekels (= two talents) of gold, about 50,000 thalers (£7500); and ten changes of clothes, a present still highly valued in the East (see the Comm. on Gen. 45:22). This very large present was quite in keeping with Naaman's position, and was not too great for the object in view, namely, his deliverance from a malady which would be certainly, even if slowly, fatal.

**2Ki. 5: 6, 7.** When the king of Israel (Joram) received the letter of the Syrian king on Naaman's arrival, and read therein that he was to cure Naaman of his leprosy (**וַיִּעֲרָה**), and now, — showing in the letter the transition to the main point, which is the only thing communicated here; cf. Ewald, § 353, *b.*), he rent his clothes in alarm, and exclaimed, "Am I God, to be able to kill and make alive?" i.e., am I omnipotent like God? (cf. Deu. 32:39; 1Sa. 2: 6); "for he sends to me to cure a man of his leprosy." The words of the letter **וַיִּאֲסֹפְתוּ**, "so cure him," were certainly not so insolent in their meaning as Joram supposed, but simply meant: have him cured, as thou hast a wonder-working prophet; the Syrian king imagining, according to his heathen notions of priests and *goëtes*, that Joram could do what he liked with his prophets and their miraculous

powers. There was no ground, therefore, for the suspicion which Joram expressed: “for only observe and see, that he seeks occasion against me.”

הִתְאַנֶּה to seek occasion, sc. for a quarrel (cf. Jud. 14: 4).

**2Ki. 5: 8.** When Elisha heard of this, he reproved the king for his unbelieving alarm, and told him to send the man to him, “that he may learn that there is a prophet in Israel.”

**2Ki. 5: 9, 10.** When Naaman stopped with his horses and chariot before the house of Elisha, the prophet sent a messenger out to him to say, “Go and wash thyself seven times in the Jordan, and thy flesh will return to thee, i.e., become sound, and thou wilt be clean.” יָשָׁב, return, inasmuch as the flesh had been changed through the leprosy into festering matter and putrefaction. The reason why Elisha did not go out to Naaman himself, is not to be sought for in the legal prohibition of intercourse with lepers, as Ephraem Syrus and many others suppose, nor in his fear of the leper, as Thenius thinks, nor even in the wish to magnify the miracle in the eyes of Naaman, as C. a Lapide imagines, but simply in Naaman’s state of mind. This is evident from his exclamation concerning the way in which he was treated. Enraged at his treatment, he said to his servant (vv. 11, 12): “I thought, he will come out to me and stand and call upon the name of Jehovah his God, and go with his hand over the place (i.e., move his hand to and fro over the diseased places), and take away the leprosy.”

הַמְצֹרֶעַ, the leprous = the disease of leprosy, the scabs and ulcers of leprosy.

“Are not *Abana* and *Pharpar*, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? (for the combination of טוב with נְהָרוֹת, see Ewald, § 174f.) Should I not bathe in them, and become clean?” With these words he turned back, going away in a rage. Naaman had been greatly strengthened in the pride, which is innate in every natural man, by the exalted position which he held in the state, and in which every one bowed before him, and served him in the most reverential manner, with the exception of his lord the king; and he was therefore to receive a salutary lesson of humiliation, and at the same time was also to learn that he owed his cure not to any magic touch from the prophet, but solely to the power of God working through him. — Of the two rivers of Damascus, *Abana* or *Amana* (the reading of the *Keri* with the interchange of the labials ב and פ, see Son. 4: 8) is no doubt the present *Barada* or *Barady* (Arab. *brdâ*, i.e., the cold river), the *Chrysorrhoas* (Strabo, xvi. p. 755; Plin. *h. n.* 18 or 16), which rises in the table-land to the south of Zebedany, and flows through this city itself, and then dividing into two arms, enters two small lakes about 4 3/4 hours to the east of the city. The *Pharpar* is probably the only other independent river of any importance in the district of Damascus, namely, the *Avaj*, which arises from the union of several brooks around *Sa’sa’*, and flows

through the plain to the south of Damascus into the lake *Heijâny* (see Rob. *Bibl. Researches*, p. 444). The water of the Barada is beautiful, clear and transparent (Rob.), whereas the water of the Jordan is turbid, “of a clayey colour” (Rob. *Pal.* ii. p. 256); and therefore Naaman might very naturally think that his own native rivers were better than the Jordan.

**2Ki. 5:13.** His servants then addressed him in a friendly manner, and said, “My father, if the prophet had said to thee a great thing (i.e., a thing difficult to carry out), shouldst thou not have done it? how much more then, since he has said to thee, Wash, and thou wilt be clean?” אָבִי, my father, is a confidential expression arising from childlike piety, as in 2Ki. 6:21 and 1Sa. 24:12; and the etymological jugglery which traces אָבִי from לָבִי = לָוִי = לוֹ (Ewald, *Gr.* § 358, Anm.), or from אָבִי (Thenius), is quite superfluous (see Delitzsch *on Job*, vol. ii. p. 265, transl.). — דְּבַר ... גְּדוֹל is a conditional clause without אָבִי (see Ewald, § 357, *b.*), and the object is placed first for the sake of emphasis (according to Ewald, § 309, *a.*). אַף כִּי, how much more (see Ewald, § 354, *c.*), sc. shouldst thou do what is required, since he has ordered thee so small and easy a thing.

**2Ki. 5:14.** Naaman then went down (from Samaria to the Jordan) and dipped in Jordan seven times, and his flesh became sound (שָׁבַר as in v. 10) like the flesh of a little boy. *Seven times*, to show that the healing was a work of God, for seven is the stamp of the works of God.

**2Ki. 5:15, 16.** After the cure had been effected, he returned with all his train to the man of God with this acknowledgment: “Behold, I have found that there is no God in all the earth except in Israel,” and with the request that he would accept a blessing (a present, בְּרִכָּה, as in Gen. 33:11, 1Sa. 25:27, etc.) from him, which the prophet, however, stedfastly refused, notwithstanding all his urging, that he might avoid all appearance of selfishness, by which the false prophets were actuated.

**2Ki. 5:17, 18.** Then Naaman said: אִלֵּן, “and not” = and if not, καὶ εἰ μὴ (LXX; not “and O,” according to Ewald, § 358, *b.*, Anm.), “let there be given to thy servant (= to me) two mules’ burden of earth (on the construction see Ewald, § 287, *h.*), for thy servant will no more make (offer) burnt-offerings and slain-offerings to any other gods than Jehovah. May Jehovah forgive thy servant in this thing, when my lord (the king of Syria) goeth into the house of Rimmon, to fall down (worship) there, and he supports himself upon my hand, that I fall down (with him) in the house of Rimmon; if I (thus) fall down in the house of Rimmon, may,” etc. It is very evident from Naaman’s explanation, “for thy

servant,” etc., that he wanted to take a load of earth with him out of the land of Israel, that he might be able to offer sacrifice upon it to the God of Israel, because he was still a slave to the polytheistic superstition, that no god could be worshipped in a proper and acceptable manner except in his own land, or upon an altar built of the earth of his own land. And because Naaman’s knowledge of God was still adulterated with superstition, he was not yet prepared to make an unreserved confession before men of his faith in Jehovah as the only true God, but hoped that Jehovah would forgive him if he still continued to join outwardly in the worship of idols, so far as his official duty required. *Rimmon* (i.e., the pomegranate) is here, and probably also in the local name *Hadad-rimmon* (Zec. 12:11), the name of the supreme deity of the Damascene Syrians, and probably only a contracted form of *Hadad-rimmon*, since *Hadad* was the supreme deity or sun-god of the Syrians (see at 2Sa. 8: 3), signifying the sun-god with the modification expressed by *Rimmon*, which has been differently interpreted according to the supposed derivation of the word. Some derive the name from רִמְּוֹן = רִמְּוֹן, as the supreme god of heaven, like the Ἐλιούδω of *Sanchun*. (Cler., Seld., Ges. *thes.* p. 1292); others from רִמְּוֹן, a pomegranate, as a *faecundantis*, since the pomegranate with its abundance of seeds is used in the symbolism of both Oriental and Greek mythology along with the Phallus as a symbol of the generative power (vid., Bähr, *Symbolik*, ii. pp. 122, 123), and is also found upon Assyrian monuments (vid., Layard, *Nineveh and its Remains*, p. 343); others again, with less probability, from רִמְּוֹן, *jaculari*, as the sun-god who vivifies and fertilizes the earth with his rays, like the ἑκρηβόλος Ἀπόλλων; and others from רִמְּוֹן = Arab. *rmm*, *computruit*, as the dying winter sun (according to Movers and Hitzig; see Leyrer in Herzog’s *Cyclopaedia*). — The words “and he supports himself upon my hand” are not to be understood literally, but are a general expressly denoting the service which Naaman had to render as the aide-de-camp to his king (cf. 2Ki. 7: 2, 17). For the Chaldaic form רִמְּוֹן, see Ewald, § 156, *a*. — In the repetition of the words “if I fall down in the temple of Rimmon,” etc., he expresses the urgency of his wish.

**2Ki. 5:19.** Elisha answered, “Go in peace,” wishing the departing Syrian the peace of God upon the road, without thereby either approving or disapproving the religious conviction which he had expressed. For as Naaman had not asked permission to go with his king into the temple of Rimmon, but had simply said, might Jehovah forgive him or be indulgent with him in this matter, Elisha could do nothing more, without a special command from God, than commend the heathen, who had been brought to belief in the God of Israel as the true God by the miraculous cure of his leprosy, to the further guidance of the Lord and of His grace.<sup>†14</sup>

**2Ki. 5:20-27.** PUNISHMENT OF GEHAZI. — Vv. 20-22. When Naaman had gone a stretch of the way (בְּבֵרַת אֲרָץ, v. 19; see at Gen. 35:16), there arose in Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, the desire for a portion of the presents of the Syrian which his master had refused (הִי יִי כִי אִם, as truly as Jehovah liveth, assuredly I run after him; אִם כִּי אִם as in 1Sa. 25:34). He therefore hastened after him; and as Naaman no sooner saw Gehazi running after him than he sprang quickly down from his chariot in reverential gratitude to the prophet (יָפַל as in Gen. 24:64), he asked in the name of Elisha for a talent of silver and two changes of raiment, professedly for two poor pupils of the prophets, who had come to the prophet from Mount Ephraim.

**2Ki. 5:23.** But Naaman forced him to accept two talents (הוֹאֵל קָח, be pleased to take; and בְּכַרְיִם, with the dual ending, *ne pereat indicium numeri* — Winer) in two purses, and two changes of raiment, and out of politeness had these presents carried by two of his servants before Gehazi.

**2Ki. 5:24.** When Gehazi came to the hill (הַעֲפֹל, the well-known hill before the city) he took the presents from the bearers, and dismissing the men, laid them up in the house. בְּיָקָדָה, to bring into safe custody.

**2Ki. 5:25, 26.** But when he entered his master's presence again, he asked him, "Whence (comest thou), Gehazi?" and on his returning the lying answer that he had not been anywhere, charged him with all that he had done. הֲלֹךְ לֹא לְבִי, "had not my heart gone, when the man turned from his chariot to meet thee?" This is the simplest and the only correct interpretation of these difficult words, which have been explained in very different ways. Theodoret (οὐχ ἡ καρδία μου ἦ μετὰ σοῦ) and the Vulgate (*nonne cor meum in praesenti erat, quando, etc.*) have already given the same explanation, and so far as the sense is concerned it agrees with that adopted by Thenius: was I not (in spirit) away (from here) and present (there)? הֲלֹךְ stands in a distinct relation to the הֲלֹךְ of Gehazi. — הֲעֵת וְגו': "is it time to take silver, and clothes, and olive-trees, and vineyards, and sheep and oxen, and servants and maidens?" i.e., is this the time, when so many hypocrites pretend to be prophets from selfishness and avarice, and bring the prophetic office into contempt with unbelievers, for a servant of the true God to take money and goods from a non-Israelite for that which God has done through him, that he may acquire property and luxury for himself?

**2Ki. 5:27.** "And let the leprosy of Naaman cleave to thee and to thy seed for ever." This punishment took effect immediately. Gehazi went out from Elisha covered with leprosy as if with snow (cf. ex. 4: 6, Num. 12:10). It was not too

harsh a punishment that the leprosy taken from Naaman on account of his faith in the living God, should pass to Gehazi on account of his departure from the true God. For it was not his avarice only that was to be punished, but the abuse of the prophet's name for the purpose of carrying out his selfish purpose, and his misrepresentation of the prophet.<sup>f15</sup>

## CH. 6: 1-23. THE FLOATING IRON. THE SYRIANS SMITTEN WITH BLINDNESS.

*2Ki. 6: 1-7.* Elisha Causes an Iron Axe to Float. — The following account gives us an insight into the straitened life of the pupils of the prophets. Vv. 1-4. As the common dwelling-place had become too small for them, they resolved, with Elisha's consent, to build a new house, and went, accompanied by the prophet, to the woody bank of the Jordan to fell the wood that was required for the building. The place where the common abode had become too small is not given, but most of the commentators suppose it to have been Gilgal, chiefly from the erroneous assumption that the Gilgal mentioned in 2Ki. 2: 1 was in the Jordan valley to the east of Jericho. Thenius only cites in support of this the reference in **יָשְׁבִים לְפָנָיִךָ** (dwell with thee) to 2Ki. 4:38; but this decides nothing, as the pupils of the prophets sat before Elisha, or gathered together around their master in a common home, not merely in Gilgal, but also in Bethel and Jericho. We might rather think of Jericho, since Bethel and Gilgal (Jiljilia) were so far distant from the Jordan, that there is very little probability that a removal of the meeting-place to the Jordan, such as is indicated by **שָׁם מְקוֹם** **נִעְשָׂה לָנוּ**, would ever have been thought of from either of these localities.

*2Ki. 6: 5.* In the felling of the beams, the iron, i.e., the axe, of one of the pupils of the prophets fell into the water, at which he exclaimed with lamentation: "Alas, my lord (i.e., Elisha), and it was begged!" The sorrowful exclamation implied a petition for help. **וְאֵת־הַבְּרֹזֶל**: "and as for the iron, it fell into the water;" so that even here **אֵת** does not stand before the nominative, but serves to place the noun in subjection to the clause (cf. Ewald, § 277, a.). **נִשְׁאַל** does not mean borrowed, but begged. The meaning to borrow is attributed to **שָׁאַל** from a misinterpretation of particular passages (see the Comm. on Exo. 3:22). The prophets' pupil had begged the axe, because from his poverty he was unable to buy one, and hence the loss was so painful to him.

*2Ki. 6: 6, 7.* When he showed Elisha, in answer to his inquiry, the place where it had fallen, the latter cut off a stick and threw it thither (into the water) and made the iron flow, i.e., float (**נִצַּף** from **נָצַף**, to flow, as in Deu. 11: 4); whereupon the prophets' pupil picked the axe out of the water with his hand.

The object of the miracle was similar to that of the stater in the fish's mouth (Mat. 17:27), or of the miraculous feeding, namely, to show how the Lord could relieve earthly want through the medium of His prophet. The natural interpretation of the miracle, which is repeated by Thenius, namely, that "Elisha struck the eye of the axe with the long stick which he thrust into the river, so that the iron was lifted by the wood," needs no refutation, since the raising of an iron axe by a long stick, so as to make it float in the water, is impossible according to the laws of gravitation.

**2Ki. 6: 8-23.** Elisha's Action in the War with the Syrians. — Vv. 8-10. In a war which the Syrians carried on against the Israelitish king Joram (not Jehoahaz, as Ewald, *Gesch.* iii. p. 557, erroneously supposes), by sending flying parties into the land of Israel (cf. v. 23), Elisha repeatedly informed king Joram of the place where the Syrians had determined to encamp, and thereby frustrated the plans of the enemy. **אֶל-מְקוֹם ... תַּחְנְתִּי**: "at the place of so and so shall my camp be." **פְּלַנִי אֶלְמִנִי** as in 1Sa. 21: 3 (see at Rut. 4: 1). **תַּחְנוּת**, the encamping or the place of encampment (cf. Ewald, § 161, *a.*), is quite appropriate, so that there is no need either for the alteration into **תַּחְבְּאוּ**, "ye shall hide yourselves" (Then.), or into **תַּנְחִרוּ**, with the meaning which is arbitrarily postulated, "ye shall place an ambush" (Ewald, *Gesch.* iii. p. 558), or for the much simpler alteration into **תַּחְנוּ לִי**, "pitch the camp for me" (Böttcher). The singular suffix in **תַּחְנְתִּי** refers to the king as leader of the war: "my camp" = the camp of my army. "Beware of passing over (**עֵבֶר**) this place," i.e., of leaving it unoccupied, "for there have the Syrians determined to make their invasion." **נַחְתִּים**, from **נָחַת**, going down, with *dagesh euphon.*, whereas Ewald (§ 187, *b.*) is of opinion that **נַחְתִּים**, instead of being an intrans. part. *Kal*, might rather be a part. *Niph.* of **חָתַת**, which would not yield, however, any suitable meaning. Thenius renders **מַעְבֵּר**, "to pass by this place," which would be grammatically admissible, but is connected with his conjecture concerning **תַּחְנְתִּי**, and irreconcilable with v. 10. When the king of Israel, according to v. 10, sent to the place indicated on account of Elisha's information, he can only have sent troops to occupy it; so that when the Syrians arrived they found Israelitish troops there, and were unable to attack the place. There is nothing in the text about the Syrians bursting forth from their ambush. **הַזְהִיר** means to enlighten, instruct, but not to warn. **נִשְׁמַר-שָׁם**, "he took care there," i.e., he occupied the place with troops, to defend it against the Syrians, so that they were unable to do anything, "not once and not twice," i.e., several times.

**2Ki. 6:11.** The king of the Syrians was enraged at this, and said to his servants, "Do ye not show me who of our men (leans) to the king of Israel?"



i.e., takes his part. **מִשְׁלָנוּ** = **מֵאִשְׁרָנוּ**, probably according to an Aramaean dialect: see Ewald, § 181, *b.*, though he pronounces the reading incorrect, and would read **מִבְּלָנוּ**, but without any ground and quite unsuitably, as the king would thereby reckon himself among the traitors.

**2Ki. 6:12ff.** Then one of the servants answered, “No, my lord king,” i.e., it is not we who disclose thy plans to the king of Israel, “but Elisha the prophet tells him what thou sayest in thy bed-chamber;” whereupon the king of Syria inquired where the prophet lived, and sent a powerful army to Dothan, with horses and chariots, to take him prisoner there. *Dothan* (see Gen. 37:17), which according to the *Onom.* was twelve Roman miles to the north of Samaria, has been preserved under its old name in a *Tell* covered with ruins to the south-west of Jenin, on the caravan-road from Gilead to Egypt (see Rob. *Bibl. Res.* p. 158, and V. de Velde, *Journey*, i. pp. 273, 274).

**2Ki. 6:15-17.** When Elisha’s servant went out the next morning and saw the army, which had surrounded the town in the night, he said to the prophet, “Alas, my lord, how shall we do?” But Elisha quieted him, saying, “Fear not, for those with us are more than those with them.” He then prayed that the Lord might open his servant’s eyes, whereupon he saw the mountain upon which Dothan stood full of fiery horses and chariots round about Elisha. Opening the eyes was translation into the ecstatic state of clairvoyance, in which an insight into the invisible spirit-world was granted him. The fiery horses and chariots were symbols of the protecting powers of Heaven, which surrounded the prophet. The fiery form indicated the super-terrestrial origin of this host. Fire, as the most ethereal of all earthly elements, was the most appropriate substratum for making the spirit-world visible. The sight was based upon Jacob’s vision (Gen. 32: 2), in which he saw a double army of angels encamped around him, at the time when he was threatened with danger from Esau.

**2Ki. 6:18-20.** When the enemy came down to Elisha, he prayed to the Lord that He would smite them with blindness; and when this took place according to his word, he said to them, This is not the way and this is not the city; follow me, and I will lead you to the man whom ye are seeking; and led them to Samaria, which was about four hours’ distance from Dothan, where their eyes were opened at Elisha’s prayer, so that they saw where they had been led. **אֵלָיו וַיֵּרְדוּ** cannot be understood as referring to Elisha and his servant, who went down to the Syrian army, as J. H. Mich., Budd., F. v. Meyer, and Thenius, who wants to alter **אֵלָיו** into **אֵלֵיהֶם**, suppose, but must refer to the Syrians, who went down to the prophet, as is evident from what followed. For the assumption that the Syrians had stationed themselves below and round the mountain on which Dothan stood, and therefore would have had to come up to

Elisha, need not occasion an unnatural interpretation of the words. It is true that Dothan stands upon an isolated hill in the midst of the plain; but on the eastern side it is enclosed by a ranger of hills, which project into the plain (see V. de Velde, *R. i. p. 273*). The Syrians who had been sent against Elisha had posted themselves on this range of hills, and thence they came *down* towards the town of Dothan, which stood on the hill, whilst Elisha went out of the town to meet them. It is true that Elisha's going out is not expressly mentioned, but in v. 19 it is clearly presupposed. סַנְרִים is mental blindness here, as in the similar case mentioned in Gen. 19:11, that is to say, a state of blindness in which, though a man has eyes that can see, he does not see correctly. Elisha's untruthful statement, "this is not the way," etc., is to be judged in the same manner as every other *ruse de guerre*, by which the enemy is deceived.

**2Ki. 6:21-23.** Elisha forbade king Joram to slay the enemy that he had brought to him, because he had not taken them prisoners in war, and recommended him to treat them hospitably and then let them return to their lord. The object of the miracle would have been frustrated if the Syrians had been slain. For the intention was to show the Syrians that they had to do with a prophet of the true God, against whom no human power could be of any avail, that they might learn to fear the almighty God. Even when regarded from a political point of view, the prophet's advice was more likely to ensure peace than the king's proposal, as the result of v. 23 clearly shows. The Syrians did not venture any more to invade the land of Israel with flying parties, from fear of the obvious protection of Israel by its God; though this did not preclude a regular war, like that related in the following account. For אָבָר see the Comm. on 2Ki. 5:13. הַאֲשֶׁר שְׁבִית וְגוֹי: "art thou accustomed to slay that which thou hast taken captive with sword and bow?" i.e., since thou dost not even slay those whom thou hast made prisoners in open battle, how wouldst thou venture to put these to death? יִבְרָה לָהֶם בֶּרֶךָ, he prepared them a meal. בֶּרֶךָ is a *denom.* from בָּרַךְ, a meal, so called from the union of several persons, like *coena* from *koinḗ* (vid., Dietr. on Ges. *Lex. s. v. בָּרַךְ*).

### **Ch. 6:24-7:20. Elisha's Action during a Famine in Samaria.**

**2Ki. 6:24-33.** After this there arose so fearful a famine in Samaria on the occasion of a siege by Benhadad, that one mother complained to the king of another, because she would not keep her agreement to give up her son to be eaten, as she herself had already done.

**2Ki. 6:25.** The famine became great — till an ass's head was worth eighty shekels of silver, and a quarter of a cab of dove's dung was worth five shekels. הָיָה בֵּי, to become for = to be worth. The ass was an unclean animal, so that it

was not lawful to eat its flesh. Moreover the head of an ass is the most inedible part of the animal. Eighty shekels were about seventy thalers (£10, 10s. — Tr.), or if the Mosaic bekas were called shekels in ordinary life, thirty-five thalers (£5, 5s.; see Bertheau, *Zur Gesch. der Isr.* p. 49). According to Thenius, a quarter of a cab is a sixth of a small Dresden measure (*Mässchen*), not quite ten Parisian cubic inches. Five shekels: more than four thalers (twelve shillings), or more than two thalers (six shillings). The *Cheth-b* חֵת־בַּיִת is to be read יִנְיִם חֵת־בַּיִת, *excrementa columbarum*, for which the *Keri* substitutes the euphemistic יִנְיִם דִּיבֵי יִנְיִם, *fluxus, profluvium columbarum*. The expression may be taken literally, since dung has been known to be collected for eating in times of terrible famine (vid., *Joseph. Bell. Jud.* v. 13, 7); but it may also be figuratively employed to signify a very miserable kind of food, as the Arabs call the *herba Alkali* Arab. *šnân*, i.e., sparrow's dung, and the Germans call *Asa foetida* Teufelsdreck. But there is no ground for thinking of wasted chick-pease, as Bochart (*Hieroz.* ii. p. 582, ed. Ros.) supposes (see, on the other hand, *Celsii Hierobot.* ii. p. 30ff.).<sup>16</sup>

**2Ki. 6:26.** As the king was passing by upon the wall to conduct the defence, a woman cried to him for help; whereupon he replied: אֲלֵי־וְשַׁעַד יְיָ, “should Jehovah not help thee, whence shall I help thee? from the threshing-floor or from the wine-press?” It is difficult to explain the אֲלֵי, which Ewald (§ 355, *b.*) supposes to stand for אֵלִים אֲלֵי. Thenius gives a simpler explanation, namely, that it is a subjective negation and the sentence hypothetical, so that the condition would be only expressed by the close connection of the two clauses (according to Ewald, § 357). “From the threshing-floor or from the wine-press?” i.e., I can neither help thee with corn nor with wine, cannot procure thee either food or drink. He then asked her what her trouble was; upon which she related to him the horrible account of the slaying of her own child to appease her hunger, etc.

**2Ki. 6:30.** The king, shuddering at this horrible account, in which the curses of the law in Lev. 26:29 and Deu. 28:53, 57 had been literally fulfilled, rent his clothes; and the people then saw that he wore upon his body the hairy garment of penitence and mourning, מַבְיֵת, within, i.e., beneath the upper garment, as a sign of humiliation before God, though it was indeed more an *opus operatum* than a true bending of the heart before God and His judgment. This is proved by his conduct in v. 31. When, for example, the complaint of the woman brought the heart-breaking distress of the city before him, he exclaimed, “God do so to me...if the head of Elisha remain upon him to-day.” Elisha had probably advised that on no condition should the city be given up, and promised that God would deliver it, if they humbled themselves before Him in sincere humility and prayed for His assistance. The king thought that he had done his

part by putting on the hairy garment; and as the anticipated help had nevertheless failed to come, he flew into a rage, for which the prophet was to pay the penalty. It is true that this rage only proceeded from a momentary ebullition of passion, and quickly gave place to a better movement of his conscience. The king hastened after the messenger whom he had sent to behead Elisha, for the purpose of preventing the execution of the murderous command which he had given in the hurry of his boiling wrath (v. 32); but it proves, nevertheless, that the king was still wanting in that true repentance, which would have sprung from the recognition of the distress as a judgment inflicted by the Lord. The desperate deed, to which his violent wrath had impelled him, would have been accomplished, if the Lord had not protected His prophet and revealed to him the king's design, that he might adopt defensive measures.

**2Ki. 6:32.** The elders of the city were assembled together in Elisha's house, probably to seek for counsel and consolation; and the king sent a man before him (namely, to behead the prophet); but before the messenger arrived, the prophet told the elders of the king's intention: "See ye that this son of a murderer (Joram, by descent and disposition a genuine son of Ahab, the murderer of Naboth and the prophets) is sending to cut off my head?" and commanded them to shut the door against the messenger and to force him back at the door, because he already heard the sound of his master's feet behind him. These measures of Elisha, therefore, were not dictated by any desire to resist the lawful authorities, but were acts of prudence by which he delayed the execution of an unrighteous and murderous command which had been issued in haste, and thereby rendered a service to the king himself. — In v. 33 we have to supply from the context that the king followed close upon the messenger, who came down to Elisha while he was talking with the elders; and he (the king) would of course be admitted at once. For the subject to **וַיֹּאמֶר** is not the messenger, but the king, as is evident from 2Ki. 7: 2 and 17. The king said: "Behold the calamity from the Lord, why shall I wait still further for the Lord?" — the words of a despairing man, in whose soul, however, there was a spark of faith still glimmering. The very utterance of his feelings to the prophet shows that he had still a weak glimmer of hope in the Lord, and wished to be strengthened and sustained by the prophet; and this strengthening he received.

**2Ki. 7: 1, 2.** Elisha announced to him the word of the Lord: "At the (this) time to-morrow a seah of wheaten flour (**סֶלֶת**, see at 1Ki. 5: 2) will be worth a shekel, and two seahs of barley a shekel in the gate, i.e., in the market, at Samaria." A seah, or a third of an ephah = a Dresden peck (*Metze*), for a shekel was still a high price; but in comparison with the prices given in 2Ki. 6:25 as those obtained for the most worthless kinds of food, it was incredibly cheap. The king's aide-de-camp (**אֲשֶׁר לַמֶּלֶךְ נֹשֵׂעַן**; see at 2Sa. 23: 8; **שְׁלִישׁ**), an error

in writing for אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ נָשָׂא, cf. v. 17, and for the explanation 2Ki. 5:18) therefore replied with mockery at this prophecy: “Behold (i.e., granted that) the Lord made windows in heaven, will this indeed be?” i.e., such cheapness take place. (For the construction, see Ewald, § 357, b.) The ridicule lay more especially in the “windows in heaven,” in which there is an allusion to Gen. 7:11, sc. to rain down a flood of flour and corn. Elisha answered seriously: “Behold, thou wilt see it with thine eyes, but not eat thereof” (see vv. 17ff.). The fulfilment of these words of Elisha was brought about by the event narrated in vv. 3ff.

**2Ki. 7: 3-7.** “Four men were before the gate as lepers,” or at the gateway, separated from human society, according to the law in Lev. 13:46, Num. 5: 3, probably in a building erected for the purpose (cf. 2Ki. 15: 5), just as at the present day the lepers at Jerusalem have their huts by the side of the Zion gate (vid., Strauss, *Sinai u. Golgatha*, p. 205, and Tobler, *Denkblätter aus Jerus.* p. 411ff.). These men being on the point of starvation, resolved to invade the camp of the Syrians, and carried out this resolution בַּנֶּשֶׁף, in the evening twilight, not the morning twilight (Seb. Schm., Cler., etc.), on account of v. 12, where the king is said to have received the news of the flight of the Syrians during the night. Coming to “the end of the Syrian camp,” i.e., to the outskirts of it on the city side, they found no one there. For (vv. 6, 7) “the Lord had caused the army of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots and horses, a noise of a great army,” so that, believing the king of Israel to have hired the kings of the Hittites and Egyptians to fall upon them, they fled from the camp in the twilight אֶל-נַפְשָׁם, with regard to their life, i.e., to save their life only, leaving behind them their tents, horses, and asses, and the camp as it was. — The miracle, by which God delivered Samaria from the famine or from surrendering to the foe, consisted in an oral delusion, namely, in the fact that the besiegers thought they heard the march of hostile armies from the north and south, and were seized with such panic terror that they fled in the greatest haste, leaving behind them their baggage, and their beasts of draught and burden. It is impossible to decide whether the noise which they heard had any objective reality, say a miraculous buzzing in the air, or whether it was merely a deception of the senses produced in their ears by God; and this is a matter of no importance, since in either case it was produced miraculously by God. The kings of the Hittites are kings of northern Canaan, upon Lebanon and towards Phoenicia; הַחִיִּים in the broader sense for Canaanites, as in 1Ki. 10:29. The plural, “kings of the Egyptians,” is probably only occasioned by the parallel expression “kings of the Hittites,” and is not to be pressed.

**2Ki. 7: 8-11.** When these lepers (*these*, pointing back to vv. 3ff.) came into the camp which the Syrians had left, they first of all satisfied their own hunger

with the provisions which they found in the tents, and then took different valuables and concealed them. But their consciences were soon aroused, so that they said: We are not doing right; this day is a day of joyful tidings: if we are silent and wait till the morning light, guilt will overtake us; “for it is the duty of citizens to make known things relating to public safety” (Grotius). They then resolved to announce the joyful event in the king’s palace, and reported it to the watchman at the city gate. שְׂעַר הָעִיר stands as a generic term in a collective sense for the persons who watched at the gate; hence the following plural לָהֶם, and in v. 11 הַשְּׂעִירִים. “And the gate-keepers cried out (what they had heard) and reported it in the king’s palace.”

**2Ki. 7:12ff.** The king imagined that the unexpected departure of the Syrians was only a *ruse*, namely, that they had left the camp and hidden themselves in the field, to entice the besieged out of the fortress, and then fall upon them and press into the city. בַּהֲשִׁדָּה according to later usage for בְּשִׁדָּה (vid., Ewald, § 244, *a*). In order to make sure of the correctness or incorrectness of this conjecture, one of the king’s servants (counsellors) gave this advice: “Let them take (the *Vav* before יָקֻחוּ as in 2Ki. 4:41) five of the horses left in the city, that we may send and see how the matter stands.” The words, “Behold they (the five horses) are as the whole multitude of Israel that are left in it (the city); behold they are as the whole multitude of Israel that are gone,” have this meaning: The five horsemen (for horses stand for horsemen, as it is self-evident that it was men on horseback and not the horses themselves that were to be sent out as spies) can but share the fate of the rest of the people of Samaria, whether they return unhurt to meet death by starvation with the people that still remain, or fall into the hands of the enemy and are put to death, in which case they will only suffer the lot of those who have already perished. *Five* horses is an approximative small number, and is therefore not at variance with the following statement, that two pair of horses were sent out with chariots and men. The *Cheth-b* הַחֲמֹנִים is not to be altered, since there are other instances in which the first noun is written with the article, though in the construct state (vid., Ewald, § 290, *e.*); and the *Keri* is only conformed to the following כָּבֵל-הַחֲמֹנִים. Vv. 14b and 15. They then sent out two chariots with horses, who pursued the flying enemy to the Jordan, and found the whole of the road full of traces of the hurried flight, consisting of clothes and vessels that had been thrown away. The *Cheth-b* בַּהֲחֻפְזָם is the only correct reading, since it is only in the *Niphal* that חָפַז has the meaning to fly in great haste (cf. 1Sa. 23:26, Psa. 48: 6; 104: 7).

**2Ki. 7:16, 17.** When the returning messengers reported this, the people went out and plundered the camp of the Syrians, and this was followed by the consequent cheapness of provisions predicted by Elisha. As the people streamed

out, the unbelieving aide-de-camp, whom the king had ordered to take the oversight at the gate (הַפְּקִיד, to deliver the oversight) for the purpose of preserving order in the crowding of the starving multitude, was trodden down by the people, so that he died, whereby this prediction of Elisha was fulfilled. The exact fulfilment of this prediction appeared so memorable to the historian, that he repeats this prophecy in vv. 18-20 along with the event which occasioned it, and refers again to its fulfilment.

**CH. 8. ELISHA HELPS THE SHUNAMMITE TO HER PROPERTY THROUGH THE HONOUR IN WHICH HE WAS HELD; AND PREDICTS TO HAZAEL HIS POSSESSION OF THE THRONE. REIGNS OF JORAM AND AHAZIAH, KINGS OF JUDAH.**

*2Ki. 8: 1-6.* Elisha's Influence Helps the Shunammite to the Possession of her House and Field. — Vv. 1 and 2. By the advice of Elisha, the woman whose son the prophet had restored to life (2Ki. 4:33) had gone with her family into the land of the Philistines during a seven years' famine, and had remained there seven years. The two verses are rendered by most commentators in the pluperfect, and that with perfect correctness, for they are circumstantial clauses, and וְהִקְדָּם is merely a continuation of וְהִפְרֵךְ, the two together preparing the way for, and introducing the following event. The object is not to relate a prophecy of Elisha of the seven years' famine, but what afterwards occurred, namely, how king Joram was induced by the account of Elisha's miraculous works to have the property of the Shunammite restored to her upon her application. The seven years' famine occurred in the middle of Joram's reign, and the event related here took place before the curing of Naaman the Syrian (2Ki. 5), as is evident from the fact that Gehazi talked with the king (v. 4), and therefore had not yet been punished with leprosy. But it cannot have originally stood between 2Ki. 4:37 and 4:38, as Thenius supposes, because the incidents related in 2Ki. 4:38-44 belong to the time of this famine (cf. 2Ki. 4:38), and therefore precede the occurrence mentioned here. By the words, "the Lord called the famine, and it came seven years" (sc., lasting that time), the famine is described as a divine judgment for the idolatry of the nation.

*2Ki. 8: 3.* When the woman returned to her home at the end of the seven years, she went to the king to cry, i.e., to invoke his help, with regard to her house and her field, of which, as is evident from the context, another had taken possession during her absence.

*2Ki. 8: 4.* And just at that time the king was asking Gehazi to relate to him the great things that Elisha had done; and among these he was giving an account of the restoration of the Shunammite's son to life.

**2Ki. 8: 5, 6.** While he was relating this, the woman herself came into invoke the help of the king to recover her property, and was pointed out to the king by Gehazi as the very woman of whom he was speaking, which caused the king to be so interested in her favour, that after hearing her complaint he sent a chamberlain with her (*saris* as in 1Ki. 22: 9), with instructions to procure for her not only the whole of her property, but the produce of the land during her absence. — For עֲזָבָה without *mappiq*, see Ewald, § 247, *d*.

**2Ki. 8: 7-15.** ELISHA PREDICTS TO HAZAEL AT DAMASCUS THE POSSESSION OF THE THRONE. — Vv. 7ff. Elisha then came to Damascus at the instigation of the Spirit of God, to carry out the commission which Elijah had received at Horeb with regard to Hazael (1Ki. 19:15). Benhadad king of Syria was sick at that time, and when Elisha's arrival was announced to him, sent Hazael with a considerable present to the man of God, to inquire of Jehovah through him concerning his illness. The form of the name חֲזַהֲאֵל (here and v. 15) is etymologically correct; but afterwards it is always written without ה. דַּמִּי וְכָל־טוֹב (“and that all kinds of good of Damascus”) follows with a more precise description of the *minchah* — “a burden of forty camels.” The present consisted of produce or wares of the rich commercial city of Damascus, and was no doubt very considerable; at the same time, it was not so large that forty camels were required to carry it. The affair must be judged according to the Oriental custom, of making a grand display with the sending of presents, and employing as many men or beasts of burden as possible to carry them, every one carrying only a single article (cf. Harmar, *Beobb.* ii. p. 29, iii. p. 43, and Rosenmüller, *A. u. N. Morgenl.* iii. p. 17).

**2Ki. 8:10.** According to the *Cheth<sup>2</sup>-b* לֹא חַיֶּה, Elisha's answer was, “Thou wilt not live, and (for) Jehovah has shown me that he will die;” according to the *Keri* לוֹ חַיֶּה, “tell him: Thou wilt live, but Jehovah,” etc. Most of the commentators follow the ancient versions, and the Masoretes, who reckon our לֹא among the fifteen passages of the O.T. in which it stands for the pronoun לוֹ (vid., Hilleri *Arcan. Keri*, p. 62f.), and some of the codices, and decide in favour of the *Keri*. (1) because the conjecture that לוֹ was altered into לֹא in order that Elisha might not be made to utter an untruth, is a very natural one; and (2) on account of the extreme rarity with which a negative stands before the inf. abs. with the finite verb following. But there is not much force in either argument. The rarity of the position of לֹא before the inf. abs. followed by a finite verb, in connection with the omission of the pronoun לוֹ after אָמַר, might be the very reason why לֹא was taken as a pronoun; and the confirmation of this opinion might be found in the fact that Hazael brought back this answer to the



king: “Thou wilt live” (v. 14). The reading in the text לֹא (*non*) is favoured by the circumstance that it is the more difficult of the two, partly because of the unusual position of the negative, and partly because of the contradiction to v. 14. But the לֵא is found in the same position in other passages (Gen. 3: 4, Psa. 49: 8, and Amo. 9: 8), where the emphasis lies upon the negation; and the contradiction to v. 14 may be explained very simply, from the fact that Hazael did not tell his king the truth, because he wanted to put him to death and usurp the throne. We therefore prefer the reading in the text, since it is not in harmony with the character of the prophets to utter an untruth; and the explanation, “thou wilt not die of thine illness, but come to a violent death,” puts into the words a meaning which they do not possess. For even if Benhadad did not die of his illness, he did not recover from it.

**2Ki. 8:11.** Elisha then fixed Hazael for a long time with his eye, and wept. וַיַּעֲמֵד לְעַיְנֵהוּ literally, he made his face stand fast, and directed it (upon Hazael) to shaming. עַד-בֹּשׁ as in Jud. 3:25; not in a shameless manner (Thenius), but till Hazael was embarrassed by it.

**2Ki. 8:12.** When Hazael asked him the cause of his weeping, Elisha replied: “I know the evil which thou wilt do to the sons of Israel: their fortresses wilt thou set on fire (שָׂלַח בְּאֵשׁ, see at Jud. 1: 8), their youths wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children to pieces, and cut asunder their women with child” (בִּקַּעַת, split, cut open the womb). This cruel conduct towards Israel which is here predicted of Hazael, was only a special elaboration of the brief statement made by the Lord to Elijah concerning Hazael (1Ki. 19:17). The fulfilment of this prediction is indicated generally in 2Ki. 10:32, 33, and 13: 3ff.; and we may infer with certainty from Hos. 10:14 and 14: 1, that Hazael really practised the cruelties mentioned.

**2Ki. 8:13ff.** But when Hazael replied in feigned humility, What is thy servant, the dog (i.e., so base a fellow: for כָּלֵב see at 1Sa. 24:15), that he should do such great things? Elisha said to him, “Jehovah has shown thee to me as king over Aram;” whereupon Hazael returned to his lord, brought him the pretended answer of Elisha that he would live (recover), and the next day suffocated him with a cloth dipped in water. מִכְּבֵר, from כָּבַר, to plait or twist, literally, anything twisted; not, however, a net for gnats or flies (Joseph., J. D. Mich., etc.), but a twisted thick cloth, which when dipped in water became so thick, that when it was spread over the face of the sick man it was sufficient to suffocate him.

**2Ki. 8:16-24.** Reign of Joram of Judah (cf. 2Ch. 21: 2-20). — Joram became king in the fifth year of Joram of Israel, while Jehoshaphat his father was (still) king, the latter handing over the government to him two years before his death (see at 2Ki. 1:17), and reigned eight years, namely, two years to the death of Jehoshaphat and six years afterwards.<sup>17</sup> The *Cheth-b* שְׁמֹנֶה שָׁנָה is not to be altered, since the rule that the numbers two to ten take the noun in the plural is not without exception (cf. Ewald, § 287, *i.*).

**2Ki. 8:18, 19.** Joram had married a daughter of Ahab, namely Athaliah (v. 26), and walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, transplanting the worship of Baal into his kingdom. Immediately after the death of Jehoshaphat he murdered his brothers, apparently with no other object than to obtain possession of the treasures which his father had left them (2Ch. 21: 2-4). This wickedness of Joram would have been followed by the destruction of Judah, had not the Lord preserved a shoot to the royal house for David's sake. For לָתֵת לוֹ נֵיר see 1Ki. 11:36. The following word לְבָנָיו serves as an explanation of לוֹ נֵיר, "a light with regard to his sons," i.e., by the fact that he kept sons (descendants) upon the throne.

**2Ki. 8:20-22.** Nevertheless the divine chastisement was not omitted. The ungodliness of Joram was punished partly by the revolt of the Edomites and of the city of Libnah from his rule, and partly by a horrible sickness of which he died (2Ch. 21:12-15). Edom, which had hitherto had only a vicegerent with the title of king (see 2Ki. 3: 9 and 1Ki. 22:48), threw off the authority of Judah, and appointed its own king, under whom it acquired independence, as the attempt of Joram to bring it back again under his control completely failed. The account of this attempt in v. 21 and 2Ch. 21: 9 is very obscure. "Joram went over to *Zair*, and all his chariots of war with him; and it came to pass that he rose up by night and smote the Edomites round about, and indeed the captains of the war-chariots, and the people fled (i.e., the Judaeans of war, not the Edomites) to their tents." It is evident from this, that Joram had advanced to *Zair* in Idumaea; but there he appears to have been surrounded and shut in, so that in the night he fought his way through, and had reason to be glad that he had escaped utter destruction, since his army fled to their homes. צְעִירָה is an unknown place in Idumaea, which Movers, Hitzig, and Ewald take to be Zoar, but without considering that Zoar was in the land of Moab, not in Edom. The Chronicles have instead עִם שָׂרָיו, "with his captains," from a mere conjecture; whilst Thenius regards צְעִירָה as altered by mistake from שְׁעִירָה ("to Seir"), which is very improbable in the case of so well-known a name as שְׁעִיר. הַסִּבִּיב is a later mode of writing for הַסּוֹבֵב, probably occasioned by the frequently occurring word סִבִּיב. "To this day," i.e., to the time when the original sources

of our books were composed. For the Edomites were subjugated again by Amaziah and Uzziah (2Ki. 14: 7 and 22), though under Ahaz they made incursions into Judah again (2Ch. 28:17). — At that time *Libnah* also revolted. This was a royal city of the early Canaanites, and at a later period it was still a considerable fortress (2Ki. 19: 8). It is probably to be sought for in the ruins of *Arak el Menshiyeh*, two hours to the west of Beit-Jibrin (see the Comm. on Jos. 10:29). This city probably revolted from Judah on the occurrence of an invasion of the land by the Philistines, when the sons of Joram were carried off, with the exception of the youngest, Jehoahaz (Ahaziah: 2Ch. 21:16, 17).

**2Ki. 8:23, 24.** According to 2Ch. 21:18ff., Joram died of a terrible disease, in which his bowels fell out, and was buried in the city of David, though not in the family sepulchre of the kings.<sup>18</sup>

**2Ki. 8:25-29.** REIGN OF AHAZIAH OF JUDAH (cf. 2Ch. 22: 1-6). — Ahaziah, the youngest son of Joram, ascended the throne in the twenty-second year of his age. The statement in 2Ch. 22: 2, that he was forty-two years old when he became king, rests upon a copyist's error, namely, a confusion of 𐤂 twenty with 𐤃 forty. Now, since his father became king at the age of thirty-two, and reigned eight years, Ahaziah must have been born in the nineteenth year of his age. Consequently it may appear strange that Ahaziah had brothers still older than himself (2Ch. 21:17); but as early marriages are common in the East, and the royal princes had generally concubines along with their wife of the first rank, as is expressly stated of Joram in 2Ch. 21:17, he might have had some sons in his nineteenth year. His mother was called Athaliah, and was a daughter of the idolatrous Jezebel. In v. 26 and 2Ch. 22: 2 she is called the daughter, i.e., grand-daughter, of Omri; for, according to v. 18, she was a daughter of Ahab. Omri, the grand-father, is mentioned in v. 26 as the founder of the dynasty which brought so much trouble upon Israel and Judah through its idolatry.

**2Ki. 8:27.** Ahaziah, like his father, reigned in the spirit of Ahab, because he allowed his mother to act as his adviser (2Ch. 22: 3, 4).

**2Ki. 8:28, 29.** Ahaziah went with Joram of Israel, his mother's brother, to the war with the Syrians at Ramoth. The contest for this city, which had already cost Ahab his life (1Ki. 22), was to furnish the occasion, according to the overruling providence of God, for the extermination of the whole of Omri's family. Being wounded in the battle with the Syrians, Joram king of Israel returned to Jezreel to be healed of his wounds. His nephew Ahaziah visited him there, and there he met with his death at the same time as Joram at the hands of Jehu, who had conspired against Joram (see 2Ki. 9:14ff. and 2Ch. 22: 7-9). Whether the war with Hazael at Ramoth was for the recapture of this city, which had been taken by the Syrians, or simply for holding it against the

Syrians, it is impossible to determine. All that we can gather from 2Ki. 9:14 is, that at that time Ramoth was in the possession of the Israelites, whether it had come into their possession again after the disgraceful rout of the Syrians before Samaria (2Ki. 7), or whether, perhaps, it was not recovered till this war. For אַרְמִים without the article see Ewald, § 277, c.

2Ki. 8:29. בְּרָמָה = בְּרָמַת גִּלְעָד, v. 28; see at 1Ki. 22: 4.

## CH. 9. JEHU ANOINTED KING. HIS CONSPIRACY AGAINST JORAM. JORAM, AHAZIAH, AND JEZEBEL SLAIN.

2Ki. 9: 1-10. ANOINTING OF JEHU BY COMMAND OF ELISHA. — While the Israelitish army was at Ramoth, Elisha executed the last of the commissions which Elijah had received at Horeb (1Ki. 19:16), by sending a pupil of the prophets into the camp to anoint *Jehu* the commander-in-chief of the army as king, and to announce to him, in the name of Jehovah, that he would be king over Israel; and to charge him to exterminate the house of Ahab.

2Ki. 9: 1-3. Vv. 1-3 contain the instructions which Elisha gave to the pupil of the prophets. פֶּדַי הַשָּׁמַן as in 1Sa. 10: 1. רְאֵה שֵׁם יְהוָה, look round there for Jehu. הִקְמַתוּ וְגו', let him (bid him) rise up from the midst of his brethren, i.e., of his comrades in arms. הָדָר בְּחֶדֶר: the true meaning is, “into the innermost chamber” (see at 1Ki. 20:30). V. 3 contains only the leading points of the commission to Jehu, the full particulars are communicated in the account of the fulfilment in vv. 6ff. “And flee, and thou shalt not wait.” Elisha gave him this command, not to protect him from danger on the part of the secret adherents of Ahab (Theodoret, Cler.), but to prevent all further discussions, or “that he might not mix himself up with other affairs” (Seb. Schmidt).

2Ki. 9: 4. “And the young man, the servant of the prophet, went.” The second נָעַר has the article in the construct state, contrary to the rule (vid., Ges. § 110, 2, b.).

2Ki. 9: 5ff. After the communication of the fact that he had a word to Jehu, the latter rose up and went with him into the house, i.e., into the interior of the house, in the court of which the captains were sitting together. There the pupil of the prophets poured oil upon Jehu’s head, and announced to him that Jehovah had anointed him king for Israel, and that he was to smite, i.e., exterminate, the house of Ahab, to avenge upon it the blood of the prophets (vid., 1Ki. 18: 4; 19:10).

**2Ki. 9: 8-10.** Vv. 8-10 are simply a repetition of the threat in 1Ki. 21:21-23. For **בַּחֶלֶק יִי**, see at 1Ki. 21:23.

**2Ki. 9:11-15.** Jehu's Conspiracy against Joram. — V. 11. When Jehu came out again to his comrades in arms, after the departure of the pupil of the prophets, they inquired **הַשְּׁלוֹם**, i.e., "is it all well? why did this madman come to thee?" not because they were afraid that he might have done him some injury (Ewald), or that he might have brought some evil tidings (Thenius), but simply because they conjectured that he had brought some important news. They called the prophet **מַשְׁנָע**, a madman, in derision, with reference to the ecstatic utterances of the prophets when in a state of holy inspiration. Jehu answered evasively, "Ye know the man and his muttering," i.e., ye know that he is mad and says nothing rational. **שִׁיחַ** includes both meditating and speaking.

**2Ki. 9:12.** They were not contented with this answer, however, but said **שִׁקֵר**, i.e., thou dost not speak truth. Jehu thereupon informed them that he had anointed him king over Israel in the name of Jehovah.

**2Ki. 9:13.** After hearing this, they took quickly every man his garment, laid it under hi upon the steps, blew the trumpet, and proclaimed him king. The clothes, which consisted simply of a large piece of cloth for wrapping round the body (see at 1Ki. 11:29), they spread out in the place of carpets upon the steps, which served as a throne, to do homage to Jehu. For these signs of homage compare Mat. 21: 7 and Wetstein, *N. Test. ad h. l.* The difficult words **הַמַּעֲלוֹת אֶל-גְּרָם**, as to the meaning of which the early translators have done nothing but guess, can hardly be rendered in any other way than that proposed by Kimchi (*lib. rad.*), *super ipsosmet gradus*, upon the steps themselves = upon the bare steps; **גְּרָם** being taken according to Chaldee usage like the Hebrew **עֲצָם** in the sense of *substantia rei*, whereas the rendering given by Lud. de Dieu, after the Arabic *jarm, sectio* — *super aliquem e gradibus*, is without analogy in Hebrew usage (vid., L. de Dieu *ad h. l.*, and Ges. *Thes.* p. 303).<sup>f19</sup> The meaning is, that without looking for a suitable place on which to erect a throne, they laid their clothes upon the bare steps, or the staircase of the house in which they were assembled, and set him thereon to proclaim him king.

**2Ki. 9:14, 15.** Thus Jehu conspired against Joram, who (as is related again in the circumstantial clause which follows from **וַיֹּרֶם הָיָה** to **מֶלֶךְ אֲרָם**; cf. 2Ki. 8:28, 29) had been keeping guard at Ramoth in Gilead, i.e., had defended this city against the attacks of Hazael, and had returned to Jezreel to be healed of the wounds which he had received; and said, "If it is your wish (**נַפְשְׁכֶם**), let no fugitive go from the city, to announce it in Jezreel (viz., what had taken

place, the conspiracy or the proclamation of Jehu as king).” It is evident from this, that the Israelites were in possession of the city of Ramoth, and were defending it against the attacks of the Syrians, so that שָׁמַר in v. 14 cannot be understood as relating to the siege of Ramoth. The *Cheth<sup>b</sup>* לָגִיד for לְהַגִּיד is not to be altered according to the *Keri*, as there are many examples to be found of syncope in cases of this kind (vid., Olshausen, *Lehrb. d. Hebr. Spr.* p. 140).

**2Ki. 9:16-29.** SLAYING OF THE TWO KINGS, JORAM OF ISRAEL AND AHAZIAH OF JUDAH. — V. 16. Jehu drove without delay to Jezreel, where Joram was lying sick, and Ahaziah had come upon a visit to him.

**2Ki. 9:17-21.** As the horsemen, who were sent to meet him on the announcement of the watchman upon the tower at Jezreel that a troop was approaching, joined the followers of Jehu, and eventually the watchman, looking down from the tower, thought that he could discover the driving of Jehu in the approaching troop, Joram and Ahaziah mounted their chariots to drive and meet him, and came upon him by the portion of the ground of Naboth the Jezreelite. The second שָׁפַעַת in v. 17 is a rarer form of the absolute state (see Ges. § 80, 2, Anm. 2, and Ewald, § 173, *d.*). — מַה-לָּךְ וְלָשְׁלוֹם: “what hast thou to do with peace?” i.e., to trouble thyself about it. סָב אֶל-אַחֲרַי: “turn behind me,” sc. to follow me. הַמְנַהֵג כַּמ': “the driving is like the driving of Jehu; for he drives like a madman.” בְּשִׁנְעוֹן, *in insania*, i.e., in actual fact *in praecipitatione* (Vatabl.). “The portion of Naboth” is the vineyard of Naboth mentioned in 1Ki. 21, which formed only one portion of the gardens of the king’s palace.

**2Ki. 9:22.** To Joram’s inquiry, “Is it peace, Jehu?” the latter replied, “What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her many witchcrafts continue?” The notion of continuance is implied in עַד (see Ewald, § 217, *e.*); זְנוּנִים is spiritual whoredom, i.e., idolatry. בְּשָׁפִים, *incantationes magicae*, then witchcrafts generally, which were usually associated with idolatry (cf. Deu. 18:10ff.).

**2Ki. 9:23.** Joram detecting the conspiracy from this reply, turned round (יָדָיו) as in 1Ki. 22:34) and fled, calling out to Ahaziah מֶרְמָה, “deceit,” i.e., we are deceived, in actual fact betrayed.

**2Ki. 9:24.** But Jehu seized the bow (מָלֵא יָדוֹ בַקֶּשֶׁת), lit., filled his hand with the bow), and shot Joram “between his arms,” i.e., in his back between the shoulders in an oblique direction, so that the arrow came out at his heart, and Joram sank down in his chariot.

**2Ki. 9:25.** Jehu then commanded his aide-de-camp (שְׁלִישׁ, see at 2Sa. 23: 8) Bidkar to cast the slain man into the field of Naboth the Jezreelite, and said, “For remember how we, I and thou, both rode (or drove) behind his father Ahab, and Jehovah pronounced this threat upon him.” אֲנִי וְאַתָּה are accusatives, written with a looser connection for אֲתִי וְאוֹתְךָ, as the apposition רִכְבָּיִם shows: literally, think of me and thee, the riders. The olden translators were misled by אֲנִי, and therefore transposed זָכַר into the first person, and Thenius naturally follows them. רִכְבָּיִם צְמָדִים, riding in pairs. This is the rendering adopted by most of the commentators, although it might be taken, as it is by Kimchi and Bochart, as signifying the two persons who are carried in the same chariot. מִשָּׂא, a burden, then a prophetic utterance of a threatening nature (see the Comm. on Nah. 1: 1). For the connection of the clauses וַיְהִי־וְגו', see Ewald, § 338, a. In v. 26 Jehu quotes the word of God concerning Ahab in 1Ki. 21:19 so far as the substance is concerned, to show that he is merely the agent employed in executing it. “Truly (אִם־לֹא, a particle used in an oath) the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons have I seen yesterday, saith the Lord, and upon this field will I requite him.” The slaying of the sons of Naboth is not expressly mentioned in 1Ki. 21:13, “because it was so usual a thing, that the historian might leave it out as a matter of course” (J. D. Mich., Ewald). It necessarily followed, however, from the fact that Naboth’s field was confiscated (see at 1Ki. 21:14).

**2Ki. 9:27, 28.** When Ahaziah saw this, he fled by the way to the garden-house, but was smitten, i.e., mortally wounded, by Jehu at the height of Gur near Jibleam, so that as he was flying still farther to Megiddo he died, and was carried as a corpse by his servants to Jerusalem, and buried there. After הִכְהוּ, “and him also, smite him,” we must supply וַיִּכְהוּ, “and they smote him,” which has probably only dropped out through a copyist’s error. The way by which Ahaziah fled, and the place where he was mortally wounded, cannot be exactly determined, as the situation of the localities named has not yet been ascertained. The “garden-house” (בֵּית הַגֶּן) cannot have formed a portion of the royal gardens, but must have stood at some distance from the city of Jezreel, as Ahaziah went away by the road thither, and was not wounded till he reached the height of *Gur* near Jibleam. מַעְלֵה גֹר, the ascent or eminence of *Gur*, is defined by *Jibleam*. Now, as Ahaziah fled from Jezreel to Megiddo past Jibleam, Thenius thinks that Jibleam must have been situated between Jezreel and Megiddo. But between Jezreel and Megiddo there is only the plain of Jezreel or Esdrelom, in which we cannot suppose that there was any such eminence as that of *Gur*. Moreover *Jibleam* or *Bileam* (1Ch. 6:55, see at Jos. 17:11) was probably to the south of *Jenin*, where the old name בִּלְעָם has

been preserved in the well of Arab. *bl'mh*, *Belameh*, near *Beled Sheik Manssûr*, which is half an hour's journey off. And it is quite possible to bring this situation of Jibleam into harmony with the account before us. For instance, it is *a priori* probable that Ahaziah would take the road to Samaria when he fled from Jezreel, not only because his father's brothers were there (2Ki. 10:13), but also because it was the most direct road to Jerusalem; and he might easily be pursued by Jehu and his company to the height of Gur near Jibleam before they overtook him, since the distance from Jezreel (*Zer-n*) to Jenin is only two hours and a half (Rob. *Pal.* iii. p. 828), and the height of Gur might very well be an eminence which he would pass on the road to Jibleam. But the wounded king may afterwards have altered the direction of his flight for the purpose of escaping to Megiddo, probably because he thought that he should be in greater safety there than he would be in Samaria.<sup>20</sup> — In v. 29 we are told once more in which year of Joram's reign Ahaziah became king. The discrepancy between "the *eleventh* year" here and "the *twelfth* year" in 2Ki. 8:25 may be most simply explained, on the supposition that there was a difference in the way of reckoning the commencement of the years of Joram's reign.

**2Ki. 9:30-37. DEATH OF JEZEBEL.** — V. 30. When Jehu came to Jezreel and Jezebel heard of it, "she put her eyes into lead polish (i.e., painted them with it), and beautified her head and placed herself at the window." פִּינִי is a very favourite eye-paint with Oriental women even to the present day. It is prepared from antimony ore (Arab. *khl*, *Cohol* or *Stibium* of the Arabs), which when pounded yields a black powder with a metallic brilliancy, which was laid upon the eyebrows and eyelashes either in a dry state as a black powder, or moistened generally with oil and made into an ointment, which is applied with a fine smooth eye-pencil of the thickness of an ordinary goose-quill, made either of wood, metal, or ivory. The way to use it was to hold the central portion of the pencil horizontally between the eyelids, and then draw it out between them, twisting it round all the while, so that the edges of the eyelids were blackened all round; and the object was to heighten the splendour of the dark southern eye, and give it, so to speak, a more deeply glowing fire, and to impart a youthful appearance to the whole of the eyelashes even in extreme old age. Rosellini found jars with eye-paint of this kind in the early Egyptian graves (vid., Hille, *über den Gebrauch u. die Zusammensetzung der oriental. Augenschminke: Deutsch. morg. Ztsch.* v. p. 236ff.). — Jezebel did this that she might present an imposing appearance to Jehu and die as a queen; not to allure him by her charms (Ewald, after Ephr. Syr.). For (v. 31) when Jehu entered the palace gate, she cried out to him, "Is it peace, thou Zimri, murderer of his lord?" She addressed Jehu as Zimri the murderer of the king, to point to the fate which Jehu would bring upon himself by the murder of the king, as Zimri had already done (vid., 1Ki. 16:10-18).



**2Ki. 9:32, 33.** But Jehu did not deign to answer the worthless woman; he simply looked up to the window and inquired: “Who is (holds) with me? who?” Then two, three chamberlains looked out (of the side windows), and by Jehu’s command threw the proud queen out of the window, so that some of her blood spirted upon the wall and the horses (of Jehu), and Jehu trampled her down, driving over her with his horses and chariot.

**2Ki. 9:34.** Jehu thereupon entered the palace, ate and drank, and then said to his men: “Look for this cursed woman and bury her, for she is a king’s daughter.” **הָאִשָּׁר וְנָרָה**, the woman smitten by the curse of God.

**2Ki. 9:35, 36.** But when they went to bury her, they found nothing but her skull, the two feet, and the two hollow hands. The rest had been eaten by the dogs and dragged away. When this was reported to Jehu, he said: “This is the word of the Lord, which He spake by His servant Elijah,” etc. (1Ki. 21:23), i.e., this has been done in fulfilment of the word of the Lord. V. 37 is also to be regarded as a continuation of the prophecy of Elijah quoted by Jehu (and not as a closing remark of the historian, as Luther supposes), although what Jehu says here does not occur verbatim in 1Ki. 21:23, but Jehu has simply expanded rather freely the meaning of that prophecy. **וְנָרָה** (*Cheth<sup>b</sup>*) is the older form of the 3rd pers. fem. *Kal*, which is only retained here and there (vid., Ewald, § 194, *a.*). **וְאִשָּׁר** is a conjunction (see Ewald, § 337, *a.*): “that men may not be able to say, This is Jezebel,” i.e., that they may no more be able to recognise Jezebel.

## **CH. 10: 1-27. EXTERMINATION OF THE OTHER SONS OF AHAB, OR THE BRETHREN OF AHAZIAH OF JUDAH, AND OF THE PROPHETS OF BAAL.**

**2Ki. 10: 1-11.** EXTERMINATION OF THE SEVENTY SONS OF AHAB IN SAMARIA. — Vv. 1-3. As Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria (**בְּנֵי** in the wider sense, viz., sons, including grandsons [see at v. 13], as is evident from the fact that **אֲמֻנִים**, foster-fathers, are mentioned, whereas Ahab had been dead fourteen years, and therefore his youngest sons could not have had foster-fathers any longer), Jehu sent a letter to the elders of the city and to the foster-fathers of the princes, to the effect that they were to place one of the sons of their lord upon the throne. There is something very strange in the words **אֶל-שָׂרֵי יִזְרְעֵאל הַזְּקֵנִים**, “to the princes of Jezreel, the old men,” partly on account of the name *Jezreel*, and partly on account of the combination of **הַזְּקֵנִים** with **שָׂרֵי**. If we compare v. 5, it is evident that **הַזְּקֵנִים** cannot be the adjective to **שָׂרֵי יִזְרְעֵאל**, but denotes the elders of the city, so that the preposition

לְאָ has dropped out before שְׂרֵי יִזְרְעֵאל. הַזְּקֵנִים, the princes or principal men of Jezreel, might certainly be the chief court-officials of the royal house of Ahab, since Ahab frequently resided in Jezreel. But against this supposition there is not only the circumstance that we cannot discover any reason why the court-officials living in *Samaria* should be called princes of Jezreel, but also v. 5, where, instead of the princes of Jezreel, the governor of the city and the governor of the castle are mentioned. Consequently there is an error of the text in יִזְרְעֵאל, which ought to read הָעִיר לְאָ, though it is older than the ancient versions, since the Chaldee has the reading יִזְרְעֵאל, and no doubt the Alexandrian translator read the same, as the Septuagint has sometimes τῆς πόλεως, like the Vulgate, and sometimes Σαμαρείας, both unquestionably from mere conjecture. The “princes of the city” are, according to v. 5, the prefect of the palace and the captain of the city; the זְקֵנִים, “elders,” the magistrates of Samaria; and אֲמֻנִים אֲחָאָב, the foster-fathers and tutors appointed by Ahab for his sons and grandsons. הָאֲמֻנִים is governed freely by אֲחָאָב. In v. 2 the words from וְאֲחָאָב to הַנְּשִׁק form an explanatory circumstantial clause: “since the sons of your lord are with you, and with you the war-chariots and horses, and a fortified city and arms,” i.e., since you have everything in your hands, — the royal princes and also the power to make one of them king. It is perfectly evident from the words, “the sons of your lord,” i.e., of king Joram, that the seventy sons of Ahab included grandsons also. This challenge of Jehu was only a *ruse*, by which he hoped to discover the feelings of the leading men of the capital of the kingdom, because he could not venture, without being well assured of them, to proceed to Samaria to exterminate the remaining members of the royal family of Ahab who were living there. נִלְחַם עַל, to fight concerning, i.e., for a person, as in Jud. 9:17.

**2Ki. 10: 4, 5.** This *ruse* had the desired result. The recipients of the letter were in great fear, and said, Two kings could not stand before him, how shall we? and sent messengers to announce their submission, and to say that they were willing to carry out his commands, and had no desire to appoint a king.

**2Ki. 10: 6, 7.** Jehu then wrote them a second letter, to say that if they would hearken to his voice, they were to send to him on the morrow at this time, to Jezreel, the heads of the sons of their lord; which they willingly did, slaying the seventy men, and sending him their heads in baskets. רִאשֵׁי אֲנָשֵׁי בְנֵי אָדָּ, “the heads of the men of sons of your lord,” i.e., of the male descendants of Ahab, in which אֲנָשֵׁי may be explained from the fact that בְּנֵי-אֲדֹנֵיכֶם has the meaning “royal princes” (see the similar case in Jud. 19:22). In order to bring out still more clearly the magnitude of Jehu’s demand, the number of the victims required is repeated in the circumstantial clause, “and there were seventy men

of the king's sons with (אֲרָם) the great men of the city, who had brought them up."

**2Ki. 10: 8, 9.** When the heads were brought, Jehu had them piled up in two heaps before the city-gate, and spoke the next morning to the assembled people in front of them: "Ye are righteous. Behold I have conspired against my lord, and have slain him, but who has slain all these?" Jehu did not tell the people that the king's sons had been slain by his command, but spake as if this had been done without his interfering by a higher decree, that he might thereby justify his conspiracy in the eyes of the people, and make them believe what he says still further in v. 10: "See then that of the word of the Lord nothing falls to the ground (i.e., remains unfulfilled) which Jehovah has spoken concerning the house of Ahab; and Jehovah has done what He spake through His servant Elijah."

**2Ki. 10:11.** The effect of these words was, that the people looked quietly on when he proceeded to slay all the rest of the house of Ahab, i.e., all the more distant relatives in Jezreel, and "all his great men," i.e., the superior officers of the fallen dynasty, and "all his acquaintances," i.e., friends and adherents, and "all his priests," probably court priest, such as the heathen kings had; not secular counsellors or nearest servants (Thenius), a meaning which פְּהַנִּים never has, not even in 2Sa. 8:18 and 1Ki. 4: 5.

**2Ki. 10:12-17.** Extermination of the Brothers of Ahaziah of Judah and of the Other Members of Ahab's Dynasty. — Vv. 12ff. Jehu then set out to Samaria; and on the way, at the binding-house of the shepherds, he met with the brethren of Ahaziah, who were about to visit their royal relations, and when he learned who they were, had them all seized, viz., forty-two men, and put to death at the cistern of the binding-house. וַיָּבֹא וַיֵּלֶךְ, "he came and went," appears pleonastic; the words are not to be transposed, however, as Böttcher and Thenius propose after the Syriac, but וַיֵּלֶךְ is added, because Jehu did not go at once to Samaria, but did what follows on the way. By transposing the words, the slaying of the relations of Ahaziah would be transferred to Samaria, in contradiction to vv. 15ff. — The words from הוּא בֵּית וּגְו' onwards, and from הוּא to מִלְּךְ יְהוּדָה וַיְהוּא, are two circumstantial clauses, in which the subject הוּא is added in the second clause for the sake of greater clearness: "when he was at the binding-house of the shepherds on the road, and Jehu (there) met with the brethren of Ahaziah, he said...." בֵּית-עֶקֶד הַרְעִים (Βαρθακάθ, LXX) is explained by Rashi, after the Chaldee בֵּית בְּנֵי־שֵׁת רְעֵא, as signifying *locus conventus pastorum*, the meeting-place of the shepherds; and Gesenius adopts the same view. But the rest of the earlier translators for the most part adopt the

rendering, *locus ligationis pastorum*, from עָקַד, to bind, and think of a house *ubi pastores ligabant oves quando eas tondebant*. In any case it was a house, or perhaps more correctly a place, where the shepherds were in the habit of meeting, and that on the road from Jezreel to Samaria; according to Eusebius on the *Onom.* s.v. Βαιθακάθ, a place fifteen Roman miles from *Legio (Lejun, Megiddo)*, in the great plain of Jezreel: a statement which may be correct with the exception of the small number of miles, but which does not apply to the present village of *Beit Kad* to the east of Jenin (Rob. *Pal.* iii. p. 157), with which, according to Thenius, it exactly coincides. אֲחִי אֲחִיָּהוּ, for which we have בְּנֵי אֲחִי אֲחִיָּהוּ, Ahaziah's brothers' sons, in 2Ch. 22: 8, were not the actual brothers of Ahaziah, since they had been carried off by the Arabians and put to death before he ascended the throne (2Ch. 21:17), but partly step- brothers, i.e., sons of Joram by his concubines, and partly Ahaziah's nephews and cousins. לְשָׁלוֹם, *ad salutandum*, i.e., to inquire how they were, or to visit the sons of the king (Joram) and of the queen-mother, i.e., Jezebel, therefore Joram's brothers. In v. 1 they are both included among the "sons" of Ahab.

**2Ki. 10:15ff.** As Jehu proceeded on his way, he met with *Jehonadab* the son of *Rechab*, and having saluted him, inquired, "Is thy heart true as my heart towards thy heart?" and on his replying וַיֵּשׁ, "it is (honourable or true)," he bade him come up into the chariot, saying וַיֵּשׁ, "if it is (so), give me thy hand;" whereupon he said still further, "Come with me and see my zeal for Jehovah," and then drove with him to Samaria, and there exterminated all that remained of Ahab's family. *Jehonadab* the son of *Rechab* was the tribe-father of the Rechabites (Jer. 35: 6). The rule which the latter laid down for his sons and descendants for all time, was to lead a simple nomad life, namely, to dwell in tents, follow no agricultural pursuits, and abstain from wine; which rule they observed so sacredly, that the prophet Jeremiah held them up as models before his own contemporaries, who broke the law of God in the most shameful manner, and was able to announce to the Rechabites that they would be exempted from the Chaldaean judgment for their faithful observance of their father's precept (Jer. 35). *Rechab*, from whom the descendants of *Jehonadab* derived their tribe-name, was the son of *Hammath*, and belonged to the tribe of the Kenites (1Ch. 2:55), to which *Hobab* the father-in-law of *Moses* also belonged (Num. 10:29); so that the Rechabites were probably descendants of *Hobab*, since the Kenites the sons of *Hobab* had gone with the Israelites from the Arabian desert to Canaan, and had there carried on their nomad life (Jud. 1:16; 4:11; 1Sa. 15: 6; see *Witsii Miscell. ss.* ii. p. 223ff.). This *Jehonadab* was therefore a man distinguished for the strictness of his life, and *Jehu* appears to have received him in this friendly manner on account of the great distinction in which he was held, not only in his own tribe, but also in Israel generally, that

he might exalt himself in the eyes of the people through his friendship.<sup>21</sup> — In **הַיֵּשׁ אֶת־לִבְבְּךָ**, “is with regard to thy heart honourable or upright?” **אֵת** is used to subordinate the noun to the clause, in the sense of *quoad* (see Ewald, § 277, a.). **בְּלֵה־הַנְּשָׁאָרִים לְאַחָאָב**, “all that remained to Ahab,” i.e., all the remaining members of Ahab’s house.

**2Ki. 10:18-27.** Extermination of the Prophets and Priests of Baal and of the Baal-Worship. — Vv. 28ff. Under the pretence of wishing to serve Baal even more than Ahab had done, Jehu appointed a great sacrificial festival for this idol, and had all the worshippers of Baal throughout all the land summoned to attend it; he then placed eighty of his guards around the temple of Baal in which they were assembled, and after the sacrifice was offered, had the priests and worshippers of Baal cut down by them with the sword. Objectively considered, the slaying of the worshippers of Baal was in accordance with the law, and, according to the theocratical principle, was perfectly right; but the subjective motives which impelled Jehu, apart from the artifice, were thoroughly selfish, as Seb. Schmidt has correctly observed. For since the priests and prophets of Baal throughout the Israelitish kingdom were bound up with the dynasty of Ahab, with all their interests and with their whole existence, they might be very dangerous to Jehu, if on any political grounds he should happen not to promote their objects, whereas by their extermination he might hope to draw to his side the whole of the very numerous supporters of the Jehovah-worship, which had formerly been legally established in Israel, and thereby establish his throne more firmly. The very fact that Jehu allowed the calf-worship to continue, is a proof that he simply used religion as the means of securing his own ends (v. 29). **קִדְּשׁוּ עֵצְרָה** (v. 20), “sanctify a festal assembly,” i.e., proclaim in the land a festal assembly for Baal (compare Isa. 1:13; and for **עֵצְרָה** = **עֵצְרַת**, see at Lev. 23:36). **וַיִּקְרְאוּ**, and they proclaimed, sc. the festal meeting.

**2Ki. 10:21.** The temple of Baal was filled **פֶּה לְפֶה**, “from one edge (end) to the other.” **פֶּה** in this sense is not to be derived from **פֶּאֶה**, a corner (Cler., Ges.), but signifies mouth, or the upper rim of a vessel. *Metaphora sumta a vasibus humore aliquo plenis*: Vatabl.

**2Ki. 10:22.** **אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַמְּלִתָּחָה** is the keeper of the wardrobe (Arab. *praefectus vestium*), for the **ἀπ. λεγ. מְלִתָּחָה** signifies *vestiarium* (Ges. *Thes.* p. 764). The reference is not to the wardrobe of the king’s palace, out of which Jehu had every one who took part in the feast supplied with a festal dress or new caftan (Deres., Then., etc.), but the wardrobe of the temple of Baal, since the priests of Baal had their own sacred dresses like the priests of almost all religions (as Silius has expressly shown in his *Ital.* iii. 24-27, of the priests of

the Gadetic Hercules). These dresses were only worn at the time of worship, and were kept in a wardrobe in the temple.

**2Ki. 10:23, 24.** Jehu then came with Jehonadab to the temple, and commanded the worshippers of Baal to be carefully examined, that there might not be one of the worshippers of Jehovah with (among) them. When the priests of Baal were preparing to offer sacrifice, Jehu had eighty men of his guards stationed before the temple, and laid this injunction upon them: “Whoever lets one of the men escape whom I bring into your hands (we must read **יִמְלֹט** instead of **יִמְלֹט**), his life shall answer for his (the escaped man’s) life. **נִפְשׁוּ** **נִפְשׁוּ תַחַת**, as in 1Ki. 20:39.

**2Ki. 10:25.** **בְּבִלְתּוֹ**: when he (the sacrificing priest, not Jehu) had finished the burnt-offering (the singular suffix **ו** may also be taken as indefinite, when one had finished, vid., Ewald, § 294, *b.*), Jehu commanded the runners and aides-de-camp: Come and smite them (the worshippers of Baal), without one coming out (escaping); whereupon they smote them with the edge of the sword, i.e., slew them unsparingly. **וַיִּשְׁלִיכוּ**: and the runners and aides-de-camp threw (those who had been slain) away, and went into the citadel of the temple of Baal. **עִיר בֵּית־הַבַּעַל** cannot be the city of the temple of Baal, i.e., that part of the city in which the temple of Baal stood, for the runners were already in the court of the temple of Baal; but it is no doubt the temple-citadel, the true temple-house (**עִיר** from **עוּר**, *locus circumseptus*) — *templum Baalis magnifice exstructum instar arcis alicujus* (Seb. Schm.).

**2Ki. 10:26.** They then fetched the columns (**מִצְבֹּת**) out of the temple and burned them (the suffix in **יִשְׂרְפוּהָ** refers to the plural **מִצְבֹּת** taken as an abstract noun, as in 2Ki. 3: 3; cf. Ewald, § 317, *a.*). They then broke in pieces the **מִצְבַּת הַבַּעַל**, column of Baal, i.e., the real image of Baal, probably a conical stone dedicated to Baal, whereas the **מִצְבֹּת**, which were burned, were wooden columns as **πάρεδροι** or **στυμβωμοι** of Baal (see Movers, *Phöniz.* i. p. 674).

**2Ki. 10:27.** Lastly, they destroyed the temple itself and made it **לְמַחְרָאוֹת**, privies, for which the Masoretes have substituted the euphemistic **מוֹצְאוֹת**, sinks, as a mark of the greatest insult, many examples of which are to be met with among Oriental tribes (vid., Ezr. 6:11, Dan. 2: 5, and Haevernick *in loc.*). — Thus Jehu exterminated Baal from Israel. This remark in v. 28 forms the introduction to the history of Jehu’s reign, with which the last epoch in the history of the ten tribes begins.

## **From the Commencement of the Reigns of Jehu in Israel, and Athaliah in Judah, to the Destruction of the Kingdom of Israel.**

*2Ki. 10:28-17:41.* In the 161 years which this epoch embraces, from B.C. 883 to 722, the fate of the kingdom of Israel was accomplished. The first hundred years, which comprised the reigns of Jehu and his descendants, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, and Jeroboam II, were the last day of grace for the rebellious ten tribes, at the expiration of which the judgment began to burst upon them. As the anointing of Jehu by Elisha was performed by the command of God, so also was the religious reform, which Jehu vigorously commenced with the extermination of the Baal-worship, a fruit of the labours of the prophets Elijah and Elisha within the sinful kingdom; but this reform stood still half-way, since Jehu merely restored the idolatrous Jehovah-worship introduced by Jeroboam, and neither he himself nor his successors desisted from that sin. In order, therefore, if possible, to complete the work begun by His prophets of converting Israel to its God, the Lord now began to visit the rebellious tribes with severe chastisements, giving them up into the power of the Syrians, who under Hazael not only conquered the whole of the land to the east of the Jordan, but almost annihilated the military force of the Israelites (2Ki. 10:32, 33; 13: 3, 7). This chastisement did not remain without fruit. Jehoahaz prayed to the Lord, and the Lord had compassion upon the oppressed for the sake of His covenant with the patriarchs, and sent them deliverers in Joash, who recovered the conquered land from the Syrians after the death of Hazael, and in Jeroboam, who even restored the ancient boundaries of the kingdom (2Ki. 13: 4, 5, and 23ff., 14:25, 26). But with this renewal of external strength, luxuriance and debauchery, partiality in judgment and oppression of the poor began to prevail, as we may see from the prophecies of Hosea and Amos (Amo. 5:10ff., 6: 1-6; Hos. 6: 7ff.); and in addition to the Jehovah-worship, which was performed in an idolatrous manner (Hos. 8:13; 9: 4, 5), the worship of Baal was carried on most vigorously (Hos. 2:13, 15; 10: 1, 2), so that the people made pilgrimages to Bethel, Gilgal, and even to Beersheba in the south of the kingdom of Judah (Hos. 4:15; Amo. 4: 4; 5: 5; 8:14), and on account of the worship thus zealously performed, relied in carnal security upon the protection of God, and scoffed at the judgments of the Lord which were threatened by the prophets (Amo. 5:14, 18). This internal corruption increased with the death of Jeroboam, till all civil order was dissolved. Anarchy, conflicts for the possession of the throne, and repeated regicides, broke up the kingdom and made it ripe for the judgment of destruction, which was gradually accomplished by the Assyrians, whom one party in the reign of Menahem had called to their help, under Pul, Tiglath-pileser, and Shalmanasar. — The kingdom of Judah, on the other hand, was purified from the destructive consequence of the alliance with the dynasty of Ahab through the overthrow by

the high priest Jehoiada of the godless Athaliah, who had murdered the royal children after the death of Ahaziah and seized upon the government, and, with the renewal of the covenant and the extermination of the worship of Baal under the young king whom Jehoiada had trained, was brought back to the theocratic path; and notwithstanding the fact that in the closing years of Joash and Amaziah idolatry found admission again, was preserved in that path, in which it increased in strength and stability, so that not only were the wounds quickly healed which the war with Israel, occasioned by Amaziah's pride, had inflicted upon it through the conquest and plunder of Jerusalem (2Ki. 14: 8ff.), but during the sixty-eight years comprised in the reigns of Uzziah and Jotham, the people rose to a state of great prosperity and wealth through the pursuit of agriculture and trade, and a thoughtful development of the resources of the land, and the kingdom acquired great external power through the humiliation of the Philistines and the subjugation of the Edomites once more (2Ch. 26). At the same time, neither of these kings was able entirely to suppress the illegal worship of the high places, although the temple-worship was regularly sustained according to the law; and with the increase of wealth and power, not only did luxuriance and pride set in, but also idolatry and an inclination to heathen ways (Isa. 2: 5-8 and 16ff., 5:18ff.); so that even in the reigns of Uzziah and Jotham Isaiah predicted the day of the Lord's judgment, which was to fall upon everything lofty and proud (Isa. 2-4). This prophecy began to be fulfilled, so far as its first beginnings were concerned, even in the time of Ahaz. Under this weak and idolatrous ruler idolatry gained the upper hand, and the worship of Jehovah was suppressed; and this open apostasy from the Lord was followed by immediate punishment. The allied kings of Israel and Syria forced their way victoriously into Judah, and even stood before the gates of Jerusalem, with the intention of destroying the kingdom of Judah, when Ahaz, despising the help of the Lord, which was offered him by the prophet Isaiah, purchased the assistance of Tiglath-pileser the king of Assyria with silver and gold, and was thereby delivered from his foes. But this made him dependent upon the Assyrians, who would have conquered the kingdom of Judah and destroyed it, as they had already destroyed the kingdom of Israel, had not the Lord hearkened to the prayer of the pious king and miraculously routed the powerful army of Sennacherib before the walls of Jerusalem.

#### **CH. 10:28-36. REIGN OF JEHU OF ISRAEL.**

*2Ki. 10:28, 29.* Jehu exterminated the worship of Baal from Israel; but the sins of Jeroboam, the golden calves at Bethel and Dan, that is to say, the idolatrous worship of Jehovah, he allowed to remain. "The golden calves, etc.:" this is a supplementary and explanatory apposition to "the sins of Jeroboam."



*2Ki. 10:30, 31.* Jehu is promised the possession of the throne to the fourth generation of his sons for having exterminated the godless royal house of Ahab (vid., *2Ki. 15:12*). The divine sentence, “because thou hast acted well to do right in mine eyes. (because thou) hast done as it was in my heart to the house of Ahab,” refers to the deed as such, and not to the subjective motives by which Jehu had been actuated. For it is obvious that it had not sprung from pure zeal for the honour of the Lord, from the limitation added in v. 31: “but Jehu did not take heed to walk in the law of Jehovah with all his heart, and did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam.”

*2Ki. 10:32, 33.* Therefore (this link of connection follows from the actual fact, though it is not distinctly mentioned in the text) Hazael had now to inflict chastisement upon faithless Israel. In Jehu’s days Jehovah began “to cut off in Israel,” i.e., to rend away certain portions from the kingdom. “Hazael smote them (the Israelites) on the whole of the border of Israel,” i.e., of the kingdom, “from Jordan to the sun-rising (i.e., on the eastern side of the Jordan), the whole of the land of Gilead (אֶת כָּל־אֲרָץ) is dependent upon יִבְהָ which must be supplied from יִבְהָ), namely, the territory of the tribes of Gad, Reuben, and Half-Manasseh, from Aroer on the brook Arnon (now *Araayr*, a ruin on the northern border of the Mojob (Arnon) valley; see at *Num. 32:34*), the southern border of the Israelitish land to the east of the Jordan (*Deu. 2:36; 3:12*), both Gilead and Bashan,” the two countries into which Gilead in the broader sense was divided (see at *Deu. 3: 8-17*). — These conquests took place during the twenty-eight years’ reign of Jehu, since Hazael began to reign before Jehu, viz., while Joram was king, and had already fought successfully against the Israelites at Ramoth in Joram’s reign (*2Ki. 8:28, 29*), but not in the later part of Jehu’s reign, as Thenius supposes.

*2Ki. 10:34-36.* Conclusion of the history of Jehu’s reign. The length of his reign is not given till the end in this instance (v. 36), contrary to the usual custom in our books, because his ascent of the throne is not expressly mentioned in what precedes; but the general character of his reign is given in immediate connection with the account of his anointing and of the extermination of Ahab’s dynasty.

## CH. 11. TYRANNY AND OVERTHROW OF ATHALIAH, AND CORONATION OF JOASH.

*2Ki. 11: 1-3.* The Government of Athaliah (cf. *2Ch. 22:10-12*). After the death of Ahaziah of Judah, his mother Athaliah, a daughter of Ahab and Jezebel (see at *2Ki. 8:18* and *26*), seized upon the government, by putting to death all the king’s descendants with the exception of Joash, a son of Ahaziah of only a

year old, who had been secretly carried off from the midst of the royal children, who were put to death, by Jehosheba, his father's sister, the wife of the high priest Jehoiada, and was first of all hidden with his nurse in the bed-chamber, and afterwards kept concealed from Athaliah for six years in the high priest's house. The ו before **רָאָתָהּ** is no doubt original, the subject, Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah, being placed at the head absolutely, and a circumstantial clause introduced with **וַרָאָתָהּ**: "Athaliah, when she saw that, etc., rose up." **כָּל-זֶרַע הַמְּמֻלְכָה**, all the royal seed, i.e., all the sons and relations of Ahaziah, who could put in any claim to succeed to the throne. At the same time there were hardly any other direct descendants of the royal family in existence beside the sons of Ahaziah, since the elder brothers of Ahaziah had been carried away by the Arabs and put to death, and the rest of the closer blood-relations of the male sex had been slain by Jehu (see at 2Ki. 10:13). — *Jehosheba* (**יְהוֹשֻׁבֵעַ**), in the Chronicles (**יְהוֹשֻׁבֵעַת**), the wife of the high priest Jehoiada (2Ch. 22:11), was a daughter of king Joram and a sister of Ahaziah, but she was most likely not a daughter of Athaliah, as this worshipper of Baal would hardly have allowed her own daughter to marry the high priest, but had been born to Joram by a wife of the second rank. **מִמּוֹתָיִם** (*Chethib*), generally a substantive, *mortes* (Jer. 16: 4; Eze. 28: 8), here an adjective: slain or set apart for death. The *Keri* **מִמּוֹתָיִם** is the participle *Hophal*, as in 2Ch. 22:11. **בַּחֲדָר הַמ'** is to be taken in connection with **תִּגְנַב**: she stole him (took him away secretly) from the rest of the king's sons, who were about to be put to death, into the chamber of the beds, i.e., not the children's bed-room, but a room in the palace where the beds (mattresses and counterpanes) were kept, for which in the East there is a special room that is not used as a dwelling-room (see Chardin in Harm. *Beobb.* iii. p. 357). This was the place in which at first it was easiest to conceal the child and its nurse. **וַיִּסְתְּרוּ**, "they (Jehosheba and the nurse) concealed him," is not to be altered into **וַתִּסְתֵּירָהּ** after the Chronicles, as Thenius maintains. The masculine is used in the place of the feminine, as is frequently the case. Afterwards he was concealed with her (with Jehosheba) in the house of Jehovah, i.e., in the home of the high-priest in one of the buildings of the court of the temple.

**2Ki. 11: 4-20.** Dethronement of Athaliah and Coronation of Joash (compare the account in 2Ch. 23, which is more elaborate in several points).<sup>22</sup>

**2Ki. 11: 4.** In the seventh year of Athaliah's reign, Jehoiada sent for the captains of the king's body-guard to come to him into the temple, and concluded a covenant with them, making them swear and showing them the king's son, namely, to dethrone the tyrant Athaliah and set the king's son upon

the throne. **שָׂרֵי הַמַּאֲיוֹת**, *centuriones*, military commanders of the executioners and runners, i.e., of the royal body-guard. The *Cheth-b* **מַאֲיוֹת** may be explained from the fact that **מַאֲה** is abridged from **מַאֲיָה** (vid., Ewald, § 267, *d.*). On **כָּרִי וְרָצִים** = **הַכְּרָתִי וְהַרְצִיתִי** (1Ki. 1:38) see the Comm. on 2Sa. 8:18; and on **לְ** as a periphrasis of the genitive, see Ewald, § 292, *a.* In 2Ch. 23: 1-3 the chronicler not only gives the names of these captains, but relates still more minutely that they went about in the land and summoned the Levites and heads of families in Israel to Jerusalem, probably under the pretext of a festal celebration; whereupon Jehoiada concluded a covenant with the persons assembled, to ensure their assistance in the execution of his plan.

**2Ki. 11: 5-8.** Jehoiada then communicated to those initiated into the plan the necessary instructions for carrying it out, assigning them the places which they were to occupy. “The third part of you that come on the Sabbath (i.e., mount guard) shall keep the guard of the king’s house (**וְשֹׁמְרֵי** is a corruption of **וְשֹׁמְרֵי**), and the third part shall be at the gate Sur, and the third part at the gate behind the runners, and (ye) shall keep guard over the house for defence; and the two parts of you, (namely) all who depart on the Sabbath, shall keep the guard of the house of Jehovah for the king; and ye shall surround the king round about, every one with his weapons in his hand; and whoever presses into the ranks shall be slain, and shall be with the king when he goes out and in,” i.e., in all his steps. The words **בְּאֵי הַשַּׁבָּת** and **יְצֵאֵי הַשַּׁבָּת**, “those coming and those going out on the Sabbath,” denote the divisions of the watch, those who performed duty on the Sabbath and those who were relieved on the Sabbath; not the military guard at the palace however, but the temple-guard, which consisted of Levites. For David had divided the priests and Levites into classes, every one of which had to perform service for a week and was relieved on the Sabbath: compare 1Ch. 23-26 with Josephus (*Ant.* vii. 14, 7), who expressly says that every one of the twenty-four classes of priests had to attend to the worship of God “for eight days, from Sabbath to Sabbath,” also with Luk. 1: 5. On the other hand, we do not know that there was any similar division and obligation to serve in connection with the royal body-guard or with the army. The current opinion, that by those who come on the Sabbath and those who go out on the Sabbath we are to understand the king’s halberdiers or the guard of the palace, is therefore proved to be unfounded and untenable. And if there could be any doubt on the matter, it would be removed by vv. 7 and 10. According to v. 7, two parts of those who went away (were relieved) on the Sabbath were to undertake the guarding of the house of Jehovah about the king, i.e., to keep guard over that room in the temple where the king then was. Could Jehoiada have used the royal body-guard, that was being relieved from guarding the palace, for such a purpose as this? Who can imagine that this is a

credible thing? According to v. 10, Jehoiada gave to the captains over a hundred the weapons of king David, which were in the house of Jehovah. Did the palace-guard then return without weapons? In 2Ch. 23: 4, “those coming on the Sabbath” are correctly described as the priests and Levites coming on the Sabbath, i.e., the priests and Levites who entered upon their week’s duty at the temple on the Sabbath. According to this explanation of the words, which is the only one that can be grammatically sustained, the facts were as follows: “When Jehoiada had initiated the captains of the royal halberdiers, and with their help the heads of families of the people generally, into his plan of raising the youthful Joash to the throne and dethroning Athaliah, he determined to carry out the affair chiefly with the help of the priests and Levites who entered upon their duty in the temple on the Sabbath, and of those who left or were relieved at the same time, and entrusted the command over these men to the captains of the royal halberdiers, that they might occupy the approaches to the temple with the priests and Levites under their command, so as to prevent the approach of any military from the king’s palace and protect the youthful king. These captains had come to the temple without weapons, to avoid attracting attention. Jehoiada therefore gave them the weapons of king David that were kept in the temple.

With regard to the distribution of the different posts, the fact that two-thirds are spoken of first of all in vv. 5, 6, and then two parts in v. 7, occasions no difficulty. For the two-thirds mentioned in vv. 5, 6 were those who came on the Sabbath, whereas the “two divisions” (שְׁתֵּי הַיְדוּת) referred to in v. 7 were all who went away on the Sabbath. Consequently the priests and Levites, who came on the Sabbath and entered upon the week’s service, were divided into three sections; and those who should have been relieved, but were detained, into two. Probably the number of those who came this time to perform service at the temple was much larger than usual, as the priests were initiated into Jehoiada’s secret; so that it was possible to make three divisions of those who arrived, whereas those who were about to depart could only be formed into two. The three divisions of those who were entering upon duty are also distinctly mentioned in the Chronicles; whereas, instead of the two divisions of those who were relieved, “all the people” are spoken of. The description of the different posts which were assigned to these several companies causes some difficulty. In general, so much is clearly indicated in vv. 7 and 8, that the two divisions of those who were relieved on the Sabbath were to keep guard over the young king in the house of Jehovah, and therefore to remain in the inner spaces of the temple-court for his protection; whereas the three divisions of those who were entering upon duty were charged with the occupation of the external approaches to the temple. One-third was to “keep watch over the king’s house,” i.e., to observe whatever had to be observed in relation to the

king's palace; not to occupy the king's palace, or to keep guard in the citadel at the palace gate (Thenius), but to keep watch towards the royal palace, i.e., to post themselves so that no one could force a way into the temple, with which the indefinite **בבית המלך** in the Chronicles harmonizes, if we only translate it "against (at) the king's house." The idea that the palace was guarded is precluded not only by v. 13, according to which Athaliah came out of the palace to the people to the house of Jehovah, which she would not have been able to do if the palace had been guarded, but also by the circumstance that, according to v. 19, the chief men were in the temple with the whole of the (assembled) people, and did not go out of the house of Jehovah into the king's house till after the anointing of Joash and the death of Athaliah. The other third was to station itself at the gate *Sur* (**סור**), or, according to the Chronicles, *Yesod* (**יסוד**), foundation-gate. There is no doubt as to the identity of the gate *Sur* and the gate *Yesod*; only we cannot decide whether one of these names has simply sprung from a copyist's error, or whether the gate had two different names. The name **שער יסוד**, foundation-gate, suggests a gate in the outer court of the temple, at the hollow of either the Tyropoeon or the Kedron; for the context precludes our thinking of a palace gate. The third division was to be posted "at the gate behind the runners;" or, as it is stated in v. 19, "at the gate of the runners." It is very evident from v. 19 that this gate led from the temple-court to the royal palace upon Zion, and was therefore on the western side of the court of the temple. This also follows from v. 4 of the Chronicles, according to which this division was to act as "doorkeepers of the thresholds" (**הספים לשערי**), i.e., to keep guard at the gate of the thresholds. For we may safely infer, from a comparison with 1Ch. 9:19, that **הספים** were the thresholds of the ascent to the temple. The last clause, "and shall keep guard over the house for defence," refers to all three divisions, and serves to define with greater precision the object for which they were stationed there. **מסח** is not a proper name (LXX, Luther, and others), but an appellative in the sense of defence or resistance, from **נסח**, *depellere*. The meaning is, that they were to guard the house, to keep off the people, and not to let any of the party of Athaliah force a way into the temple. — In v. 7, **כל יצאי הש'** is an explanatory apposition to **ושתי הידות בכם**, "and the two parts in (of) you," namely, all who go out on the Sabbath, i.e., are relieved from duty. Their task, to observe the watch of the house of Jehovah with regard to the king, is more precisely defined in v. 8 as signifying, that they were to surround the king with weapons in their hands, and slay every one who attempted to force a way into their ranks. **בצאתו ובבואו**, i.e., in all his undertakings, or in all his steps; **צאת וּבוא** being applied to the actions and pursuits of a man, as in Deu. 28: 6; 31: 2, etc. (see the Comm. on

Num. 27:17). Thenius has explained this incorrectly: “in his going out of the temple and entering into the palace.”

**2Ki. 11: 9-11.** The execution of these plans. The high priest gave the captains “the spears and shields (שָׁלְמַיִם: see at 2Sa. 8: 7) which (belonged) to king David, that were in the house of Jehovah,” i.e., the weapons which David had presented to the sanctuary as dedicatory offerings. Instead of הַחֲנִיתִים we ought probably to read הַחֲנִיטִים (cf. Mic. 4: 3, Isa. 2: 4), after the חֲנִיטִים of the Chronicles, since the collective force of חֲנִיתִים is very improbable in prose, and a ה might easily drop out through a copyist’s error. Jehoiada gave the captains weapons from the temple, because, as has been already observed, they had come unarmed, and not, as Thenius imagines, to provide them with old and sacred weapons instead of their ordinary ones. In v. 11 the position of all the divisions is given in a comprehensive manner, for the purpose of appending the further course of the affair, namely, the coronation of the king. “Thus the halberdiers stood, every one with his weapons in his hand, from the right wing of the house to the left wing, towards the altar (of burnt-offering) and the (temple-) house, round about the king,” i.e., to cover the king on all sides. For it is evident that we are not to understand עַל-הַמֶּלֶךְ סָבִיב as signifying the encircling of the king, from the statement in v. 12, according to which Jehoiada did not bring out the king’s son till after the men had taken up their positions. The use of הַרְצִיִם, to signify the captains with the armed priests and Levites put under their command for this purpose, is an uncommon one, but it may be explained from the fact that רָצִים had retained the general meaning of royal halberdiers; and the priests and Levites under the command of the captains of the royal body-guard by this very act discharged the duty of the royal body-guard itself. The chronicler has used the indefinite expression כָּל-הָעָם, the whole of the people assembled in the temple-court.

**2Ki. 11:12.** After the approaches to the temple had all been occupied in this manner, Jehoiada brought out the king’s son from his home in the temple; or, he brought him forth, set the crown upon him, and handed him the testimony, i.e., the book of the law, as the rule of his life and action as king, according to the precept in Deu. 17:18, 19. וְאֶת-הָעֵדוּת is connected with יָתַן עָלָיו אֶת-הַנֶּזֶר, because יָתַן עָלָיו has the general meaning “delivered to him, handed him,” and does not specially affirm the putting on of the crown. וַיַּמְלִיכוּ, they made him king. The subject is the persons present, through, as a matter of course, the anointing was performed by Jehoiada and the priests, as the Chronicles expressly affirm. Clapping the hands was a sign of joyful acclamation, like the cry, “Long live the king” (cf. 1Ki. 1:39).

**2Ki. 11:13-16.** *Death of Athaliah.* — Vv. 13, 14. As soon as Athaliah heard the loud rejoicing of the people, she came to the people into the temple, and when she saw the youthful king in his standing-place surrounded by the princes, the trumpeters, and the whole of the people, rejoicing and blowing the trumpets, she rent her clothes with horror, and cried out, Conspiracy, conspiracy! **הָרָצִין הָעָם** does not mean the people running together, but the original reading in the text was probably **הָרָצִין וְהָעָם**, the people and the halberdiers, and the *Vav* dropped out through an oversight of the copyist. By **הָרָצִין** we are to understand the captains of the halberdiers with the armed Levites, as in v. 11; and **הָעָם** is the people who had assembled besides (cf. v. 19). In the Chronicles **הָרָצִים וְהַמְּהַלְלִים הַמְּלֶךְ** is in apposition to **הָעָם**: the noise of the people, the halberdiers, and those who praised the king. The **עַמּוּד**, upon which the king stood, was not a pillar, but an elevated standing-place (*suggestus*) for the king at the eastern gate of the inner court (**בַּמְּבֹאוֹ**, 2Ch. 23:13 compared with Eze. 46: 2), when he visited the temple on festive occasions (cf. 2Ki. 23: 3), and it was most probably identical with the brazen scaffold (**בַּיָּרֹד**) mentioned in 2Ch. 6:13, which would serve to explain **בַּמִּשְׁפָּט**, “according to the right” (Angl. V. “as the manner was”). **הַשָּׂרִים** are not merely the captains mentioned in vv. 4, 9, and 10, but these together with the rest of the assembled heads of the nation (**רֹאשֵׁי הָאֲבוֹת**, 2Ch. 13: 2). **הַחֲצֹצְרוֹת**, the trumpets, the trumpeters. The reference is to the Levitical musicians mentioned in 1Ch. 13: 8; 15:24, etc.; for they are distinguished from **כָּל-הָעָם וְגוֹי**, “all the people of the land rejoicing and blowing the trumpets,” i.e., not all the military men of the land who were present in Jerusalem (Thenius), but the mass of the people present in the temple (Bertheau).

**2Ki. 11:15.** Jehoiada then commanded the captains **פְּקָדֵי הַחַיִל**, those placed over the army, i.e., the armed men of the Levites, to lead out Athaliah between the ranks, and to slay every one who followed her, i.e., who took her part (**הִמָּת**, inf. abs. instead of imperative); for, as is added supplementarily in explanation of this command, the priest had (previously) said: “Let her not be slain in the house of Jehovah.” The temple was not to be defiled with the blood of the usurper and murderess.

**2Ki. 11:16.** Thus they made way for her on both sides, or, according to the correct explanation given by the Chaldee, **יָשִׁימוּ לָהּ יָדַים**, they formed lines (*Spalier*, fences) and escorted her back, and she came by the way of the horses’ entrance into the palace, and was there put to death. **מִבְּוֹא הַסּוּסִים** is explained in the Chronicles by **מִבְּוֹא שַׁעַר הַסּוּסִים**, entrance of the horse-gate. The entrance for the horses, i.e., the way which led to the royal mews, is not to

be identified with the horse-gate mentioned in Neh. 3:28; for this was a gate in the city wall, whereas the road from the temple to the royal mews, which were no doubt near the palace, was inside the wall.

**2Ki. 11:17-20.** *Renewal of the covenant, extermination of the worship of Baal, and entrance of the king into the palace.* — V. 17. After Jehoash was crowned and Athaliah put to death, Jehoiada concluded the covenant (1) between Jehovah on the one hand and the king and people on the other, and (2) between the king and the people. The former was simply a renewal of the covenant which the Lord had made with Israel through Moses (Exo. 24), whereby the king and the people bound themselves לְהִיּוֹת לְעַם לַיהוָה, i.e., to live as the people of the Lord, or to keep His law (cf. Deu. 4:20; 27: 9, 10), and was based upon the “testimony” handed to the king. This covenant naturally led to the covenant between the king and the people, whereby the king bound himself to rule his people according to the law of the Lord, and the people vowed that they would be obedient and subject to the king as the ruler appointed by the Lord (cf. 2Sa. 5: 3). The renewal of the covenant with the Lord was necessary, because under the former kings the people had fallen away from the Lord and served Baal. The immediate consequence of the renewal of the covenant, therefore, was the extermination of the worship of Baal, which is mentioned at once in v. 18, although its proper place in order of time is after v. 18. All the people (כָּל-עַם הָאָרֶץ), as in v. 14) went to the temple of Baal, threw down his altars, broke his images (the columns of Baal and Astarte) rightly, i.e., completely (הַיָּטֵב as in Deu. 9:21), and slew the priest Mattan, probably the chief priest of Baal, before his altars. That the temple of Baal stood within the limits of the sanctuary, i.e., of the temple of Jehovah (Thenius), cannot be shown to be probable either from 2Ch. 24: 7 or from the last clause of this verse. (For 2Ch. 24: 7 see the fuller remarks on 2Ki. 12: 5.) The words “and the priest set overseers over the house of Jehovah” do not affirm that Jehoiada created the office of overseer over the temple for the purpose of guarding against a fresh desecration of the temple by idolatry (Thenius), but simply that he appointed overseers over the temple, namely, priests and Levites entrusted with the duty of watching over the performance of worship according to the precepts of the law, as is more minutely described in vv. 18 and 19.

**2Ki. 11:19.** And he took the captains, and they brought the king down out of the house of Jehovah, etc. The word יָקַח is not to be pressed, but simply affirms that Jehoiada entrusted the persons named with the duty of conducting the king into his palace. Beside the captains over a hundred (see at v. 4) there are mentioned הַכָּרִי וְהַרְצִים, i.e., the royal halberdiers (the body-guard), who had passed over to the new king immediately after the fall of Athaliah and now



followed their captains, and בְּלִעַם הָאָרֶץ, all the rest of the people assembled. Instead of the halberdiers there are mentioned in the Chronicles הַאֲדִירִים הַמּוֹשְׁלִים בָּעַם, the nobles and lords in the nation, — a completion implied in the facts themselves, since Jehoiada had drawn the heads of the nation into his plan, and on the other hand the express allusion to the body-guard might be omitted as of inferior importance. We cannot infer from יָרִידוֹ that the bridge between Moriah and Zion was not yet in existence, as Thenius supposes, but simply that the bridge was lower than the temple-courts. Instead of שַׁעַר הַרְצִיִּים, the gate of the runners (i.e., of the halberdiers), we find in the Chronicles שַׁעַר הָעֲלִיּוֹן, the upper gate, which appears to have been a gate of the temple, according to 2Ki. 15:35 and 2Ch. 27: 3. The statement that they came by the way of the runners' gate into the house of the king is not at variance with this, for it may be understood as meaning that it was by the halberdiers' gate of the temple that the entry into the palace was carried out. — In v. 20 this account is concluded with the general remark that all the people rejoiced, sc. at the coronation of Joash, and the city was quiet, when they slew Athaliah with the sword. This is the way, so far as the sense is concerned, in which the last two clauses are to be connected.

## CH. 12. REIGN OF KING JOASH OF JUDAH, AND REPAIRING OF THE TEMPLE.

*2Ki. 12.* All that is recorded of the forty years' reign of Joash, in addition to the general characteristics of the reign (vv. 1-4), is the repairing of the temple which was effected by him (vv. 5-17), and the purchased retreat of the Syrians from their invasion of Judah (vv. 18 and 19), and finally his violent death in consequence of a conspiracy formed against him, of which we have only a brief notice in vv. 20-22. The parallel account in 2Ch. 24 supplies several additions to this: viz., concerning the wives of Joash, the distribution of the Levites at the repairing of the temple, the death of Jehoiada, and the seduction of Joash to idolatry by the chief men of Judah, and the stoning of the prophet Zechariah, who condemned this rebellion, — all of which can easily be fitted into our account.

*2Ki. 12: 1-4 (1-5). Reign of Joash.* — V. 1 (1, 2). His age on ascending the throne, viz., seven years (cf. 2Ki. 11: 4). — Commencement and length of his reign. His mother's name was *Zibiah* of Beersheba.

*2Ki. 12: 2 (3).* Joash did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord וַגִּי' אֲשֶׁר בְּלִימּוֹ אֲשֶׁר, "all his days that," etc., i.e., during the whole period of his life that Jehoiada instructed him (for אֲשֶׁר after substantives indicating time, place,

and mode, see Ewald, § 331, c., 3; and for the use of the suffix attached to the noun defined by **אֲשֶׁר וְגו'**, compare 2Ki. 13:14); not “all his life long, because Jehoiada had instructed him,” although the *Athnach* under **יָמָיו** favours this view. For Jehoiada had not instructed him before he began to reign, but he instructed him after he had been raised to the throne at the age of seven years, that is to say, so long as Jehoiada himself lived. The **כָּל-יְמֵי יְהוֹדָדָע** of the Chronicles is therefore a correct explanation. But after Jehoiada's death, Joash yielded to the petitions of the princes of Judah that he would assent to their worshipping idols, and at length went so far as to stone the son of his benefactor, the prophet Zechariah, on account of his candid reproof of this apostasy (2Ch. 24:17-22).

**2Ki. 12: 3 (4)**. But the worship on the high places was not entirely suppressed, notwithstanding the fact that Jehoiada instructed him (on this standing formula see the Comm. on 1Ki. 15:14).

**2Ki. 12: 4-16 (5-17)**. *Repairing of the temple* (cf. 2Ch. 24: 5-14). — Vv. 4, 5. That the temple, which had fallen into ruins, might be restored, Joash ordered the priests to collect all the money of the consecrated gifts, that was generally brought into the house of the Lord, and to effect therewith all the repairs that were needed in the temple. The general expression **בְּסֵף הַקִּדְשִׁים**, money of the holy gifts, i.e., money derived from holy gifts, is more specifically defined by **בְּסֵף עֹבֵר וְגו'**, according to which it consisted of three kinds of payments to the temple: viz.,

**(1) בְּסֵף עֹבֵר**, i.e., money of persons mustered (or numbered in the census); **עֹבֵר** is an abbreviated expression for **הָעֹבֵר הַפְּקָדִים**, “he who passes over to those who are numbered” (Exo. 30:13), as it has been correctly interpreted by the Chald., Rashi, Abarb., and others; whereas the explanation “money that passes” (Luther), or current coin, which Thenius still defends, yields not suitable sense, since it is impossible to see why only current coin should be accepted, and not silver in bars of vessels, inasmuch as Moses had accepted gold, silver, copper, and other objects of value *in natura*, for the building of the tabernacle (Exo. 24: 2, 3; 35: 5; 36: 5, 6). The brevity of the expression may be explained from the fact, that **בְּסֵף עֹבֵר** had become a technical term on the ground of the passage in the law already cited. The objection raised by Thenius, that the explanation adopted would be without any parallel, would, if it could be sustained, also apply to his own explanation “current money,” in which **עֹבֵר** is also taken as an abbreviation of **עֹבֵר לַסֶּחֶר** in Gen. 23:16. There is still less ground for the other objection, that if **בְּסֵף עֹבֵר** denoted one kind of temple-revenue, **כָּל** or **אִישׁ** would necessarily have been used.

(2) **עֶרְבוֹ אִישׁ** ... **אִישׁ**, “every kind of souls’ valuation money;” **אִישׁ** is more precisely defined by **עֶרְבוֹ**, and the position in which it stands before **בְּסֶרֶךְ** resembles the **בְּתָרוֹ** in Gen. 15:10 — literally, soul money of each one’s valuation. Thenius is wrong in his interpretation, “every kind of money of the souls according to their valuation,” to which he appends the erroneous remark, that **אִישׁ** is also used in Zec. 10: 1 and Joe. 2: 7 in connection with inanimate objects as equivalent to **אִישׁ ... עֶרְבוֹ כָּל**, every kind of valuation, because both in the redemption of the male first-born (Num. 18:15, 16) and also in the case of persons under a vow a payment had to be made according to the valuation of the priest.

(3) “All the money that cometh into any one’s mind to bring into the house of the Lord,” i.e., all the money which was offered as a free-will offering to the sanctuary. This money the priests were to take to themselves, every one from his acquaintance, and therewith repair all the dilapidations that were to be found in the temple. In the Chronicles the different kinds of money to be collected for this purpose are not specified; but the whole is embraced under the general expression “the taxes of Moses the servant of God, and of the congregation of Israel, to the tent of the testimony,” which included not only the contribution of half a shekel for the building of the temple, which is prescribed in Exo. 30:12ff., but also the other two taxes mentioned in this account.<sup>123</sup>

Again, according to v. 7 of the Chronicles, Joash gave the following reason for his command: “For Athaliah, the wicked woman, and her sons have demolished the house of God, and all the dedicated gifts of the house of Jehovah have they used for the Baals.” We are not told in what the violent treatment of demolition (**פְּרִיץ**) of the temple by Athaliah had her sons consisted. The circumstance that considerable repairs even of the stonework of the temple were required in the time of Joash, about 130 or 140 years after it was built, is quite conceivable without any intentional demolition. And in no case can we infer from these words, as Thenius has done, that Athaliah or her sons had erected a temple of Baal within the limits of the sanctuary. The application of all the dedicatory offerings of the house of Jehovah to the Baals, involves nothing more than that the gifts which were absolutely necessary for the preservation of the temple and temple-service were withdrawn from the sanctuary of Jehovah and applied to the worship of Baal, and therefore that the decay of the sanctuary would necessarily follow upon the neglect of the worship.

**2Ki. 12: 6ff.** But when the twenty-third year of the reign of Joash arrived, and the dilapidations had not been repaired, the king laid the matter before the high priest Jehoiada and the priests, and directed them not to take the money any more from their acquaintance, but to give it for the dilapidations of the temple;

“and the priests consented to take no money, and not to repair the dilapidations of the house,” i.e., not to take charge of the repairs. We may see from this consent how the command of the king is to be understood. Hitherto the priests had collected the money to pay for the repairing of the temple; but inasmuch as they had not executed the repairs, the king took away from them both the collection of the money and the obligation to repair the temple. The reason for the failure of the first measure is not mentioned in our text, and can only be inferred from the new arrangement made by the king (v. 9): “Jehoiada took a chest, — of course by the command of the king, as is expressly mentioned in 2Ch. 24: 8, — bored a hole in the door (the lid) thereof, and placed it by the side of the altar (of burnt-offering) on the right by the entrance of every one into the house of Jehovah, that the priests keeping the threshold might put thither (i.e., into the chest) all the money that was brought into the house of Jehovah.”

*2Ki. 12:10.* “And when they saw that there was much money in the chest, the king’s writer and the high priest came, and bound up and reckoned the money that was found in the house of Jehovah.” צָוַר, to bind up the money in bags (cf. 2Ki. 5:23). The binding is mentioned before the reckoning, because the pieces of money were not counted singly, but packed at once into bags, which were then weighed for the purpose of estimating the amount received.

*2Ki. 12:11, 12.* “They gave the money weighed into the hands of those who did the work, who were placed over the house of Jehovah,” i.e., the appointed overlookers of the work; “and they paid it (as it was required) to the carpenters and builders, who worked at the house, and to the masons and hewers of stone, and for the purchase of wood and hewn stones, to repair the dilapidations of the house, and for all that might be spent (נָצַח, i.e., be given out) for the house for repairing it.” It is quite clear from this, that the assertion of J. D. Michaelis, De Wette, and others, that the priests had embezzled the money collected, is perfectly imaginary. For if the king had cherished any such suspicion against the priests, he would not have asked for their consent to an alteration of the first arrangement or to the new measure; and still less would he have commanded that the priests who kept the door should put the money into the chest, for this would have been no safeguard against embezzlement. For if the door-keepers wished to embezzle, all that they would need to do would be to put only a part of the money into the chest. The simple reason and occasion for giving up the first arrangement and introducing the new arrangement with the chest, was that the first measure had proved to be insufficient for the accomplishment of the purpose expected by the king. For inasmuch as the king had not assigned any definite amount for the repairing of the temple, but had left it to the priests to pay for the cost of the repairs out of the money that was to be collected, one

portion of which at least came to themselves, according to the law, for their own maintenance and to provide for the expenses of worship, it might easily happen, without the least embezzlement on the part of the priests, that the money collected was paid out again for the immediate necessities of worship and their own maintenance, and that nothing remained to pay for the building expenses. For this reason the king himself now undertook the execution of the requisite repairs. The reason why the chest was provided for the money to be collected was, first of all, that the money to be collected for the building might be separated from the rest of the money that came in and was intended for the priests; and secondly, that the contributions to be gathered for the building might be increased, since it might be expected that the people would give more if the collections were made for the express purpose of restoring the temple, than if only the legal and free-will offerings were simply given to the priests, without any one knowing how much would be applied to the building. — And because the king had taken the building into his own hand, as often as the chest was full he sent his secretary to reckon the money along with the high priest, and hand it over to the superintendents of the building.

If we compare with this the account in the Chronicles, it helps to confirm the view which we have obtained from an unprejudiced examination of the text as to the affair in question. According to v. 5 of the Chronicles, Joash had commanded the priests and Levites to accelerate the repairs; “but the Levites did not hurry.” This may be understood as signifying that they were dilatory both in the collection of the money and in the devotion of a portion of their revenues to the repairing of the temple. But that the king took the matter in hand himself, not so much because of the dilatoriness or negligence of the priests as because his first measure, regarded as an expedient, did not answer the purpose, is evident from the fact that, according to the Chronicles, he did not content himself with placing the chest at the entrance, but had a proclamation made at the same time in Judah and Jerusalem, to offer the tax of Moses for the repair of the temple (v. 9) — evidently with no other intention than to procure more liberal contributions. For, according to v. 10, all the chief men and all the people rejoiced thereat, and cast their gifts into the chest, i.e., they offered their gifts with joy for the purpose that had been proclaimed. — The other points of difference between the Chronicles and our text are unimportant. For instance, that they placed the chest “at the gate of the house of Jehovah on the outside.” The חֲזָצָה merely defines the expression in our text, בְּיָמִין בְּכוּא־אֵיֵשׁ בֵּית יי, “to the right at the entrance into the temple,” more minutely, by showing that the ark was not placed on the inner side of the entrance into the court of the priests, but against the outer wall of it. This is not at variance with אֶצֶל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ in v. 10; for even apart from the account in the Chronicles, and according to our own text, this cannot be understood as

signifying that the ark had been placed in the middle of the court, as Thenius explains in opposition to **בְּבוֹא־אִשׁ וְגוֹי**, but can only mean at the entrance which was on the right side of the altar, i.e., at the southern entrance into the inner court. Again, the further variation, that according to the Chronicles (v. 11), when the chest was full, an officer of the high priest came with the scribe (not the high priest himself), furnishes simply a more exact definition of our account, in which the high priest is named; just as, according to v. 10, the high priest took the chest and bored a hole in the lid, which no intelligent commentator would understand as signifying that the high priest did it with his own hand. But there is a real difference between vv. 14 and 15 of our text and v. 14 of the Chronicles, though the solution of this suggests itself at once on a closer inspection of the words. According to our account, there were no golden or silver vessels, basons, knives, bowls, etc., made with the money that was brought in, but it was given for the repairing of the house. In the Chronicles, on the contrary, it is stated that “when they had finished the repairs, they brought the remnant of the money to the king and Jehoiada, and he (the king) used it for vessels for the house of the Lord, for vessels of the service,” etc. But if we take proper notice of **בְּכִלּוֹתָם** here, there is no ground for saying that there is any contradiction, since the words of our text affirm nothing more than that none of the money that came in was applied to the making of vessels of worship so long as the repairing of the building went on. What took place afterwards is not stated in our account, which is limited to the main fact; this we learn from the Chronicles.

*2Ki. 12:15.* No return was required of the inspectors as to the money handed over to them, because they were convinced of their honesty.

*2Ki. 12:16.* The money obtained from trespass-offerings and sin-offerings was not brought into the house of Jehovah, i.e., was not applied to the repairing of the temple, but was left for the priests. In the case of the trespass-offering compensation had to be made for the earthly debt according to the valuation of the priest, with the addition of a fifth in money; and this was assigned to the priests not only in the case of a **מַעַל** committed against Jehovah, but also when a neighbour had been injured in his property, if he had died in the meantime (see at Lev. 5:16 and Num. 5: 9). On the other hand, in the case of the sin-offerings the priests received no money according to the law. Most of the commentators therefore assume, that those who lived at a distance had sent money to the priests, that they might offer sin-offerings with it, and what money as over they had retained for themselves. But there is not the slightest trace of any such custom, which is quite at variance with the idea of the sin-offering. It may probably have become a customary thing in the course of time, for those who

presented these offerings to compensate the officiating priest for his trouble by a free-will gift.

*2Ki. 12:17, 18.* The brief account of *Hazael's campaign against Jerusalem* is completed by 2Ch. 24:23, 24. Hazael had gone down along the coast after defeating Israel (see 2Ki. 13: 3), for the purpose of making war upon Judah also, and had taken Gath, which Rehoboam had fortified (2Ch. 11: 8). He then set his face, i.e., determined, to advance to Jerusalem; and Joash took the temple treasures, etc. According to the Chronicles, he sent an army against Judah and Jerusalem, which destroyed all the princes of the nation and sent much booty to the king to Damascus, as the small army of the Syrians had smitten the very large army of Judah. To protect Jerusalem, after this defeat, from being taken by the Syrians, Joash sent all the treasures of the temple and palace to Hazael, and so purchased the withdrawal of the Syrians. In this way the two brief accounts of the war may be both reconciled and explained; whereas the opinion, still repeated by Thenius, that the two passages treat of different wars, has no tenable ground to rest upon. The Philistian city of *Gath* (see the Comm. on Jos. 13: 3) appears to have belonged at that time to the kingdom of Judah, so that the Gathites were not among the Philistines who made an incursion into Judah in the reign of Joram along with the Arabian tribes of the south (2Ch. 21:16). And it is impossible to determine when Gath was wrested from the Syrians again; probably in the time of Joash the son of Jehoahaz of Israel, as he recovered from the Syrians all the cities which they had taken from the Israelites under Jehoahaz (2Ki. 13:25), and even smote Amaziah the king of Judaea at Bethshemesh and took him prisoner (2Ki. 14:13; 2Ch. 25:21ff.). "All the consecrated things, which Jehoshaphat, Joram, and Ahaziah had consecrated, and his own consecrated things," i.e., what he (Joash) himself had consecrated. The existence of such temple treasures is not at variance either with the previous account of the repairing of the temple, for Joash would not use the consecrated offerings for the restoration of the temple, as the current revenue of the temple was sufficient for the purpose, or with 2Ch. 24: 7, where it is stated that Athaliah and her sons had applied all the **קְדָשֵׁי בֵּית יְהוָה** to the Baals (see at 2Ki. 12: 5, p. 261); for even if we are to understand by the sons of Athaliah not bastard sons (Ewald, *Gesch.* iii. p. 582), but the brethren of Joram whom the Philistines and Arabians had carried off, Ahaziah and Joram, although they both of them served Baal, may, from political considerations, have now and then made consecrated gifts to the temple, if only in a passing fit of religious fear.

*2Ki. 12:19-21. Conspiracy against Joash.* — Not long after the departure of the Syrians, who had left Joash, according to 2Ch. 24:25, with many wounds, his servants formed a conspiracy against him and slew him upon his bed in the

house Millo, which goeth down to Silla. This description of the locality is perfectly obscure for us. The conjecture that **בֵּית מִלָּא** was the house in the castle of *Millo* which is so frequently mentioned (see at 1Ki. 9:15 and 2Sa. 5: 9), is precluded by the fact that this castle is always called **הַמִּלָּא** (with the article). **סָלָא** is regarded by many as an abbreviation of **מִסְלָא**, “which goes down by the road;” and Thenius supposes that the reference is to the road which ran diagonally through the city from the Joppa gate to the Haram-area, corresponding to the present David’s road. Others regard **סָלָא** as the proper name of a place in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. It is impossible to get any certain meaning out of it, unless we alter the text according to arbitrary assumptions, as Thenius has done. The conspirators were *Jozachar* the son of *Shimeath*, and *Jehozabad* the son of *Shomer*, according to v. 21; but according to the Chronicles (v. 26), they were *Zabad* the son of *Shimeath* the Ammonitess, and *Jehozabad* the son of *Shimrith* the Moabitess. The identity of the first names is perfectly obvious. **זָכָר** is a copyist’s error for **זָכָר**, and this is the contracted form of **יְזַכָּר**. The difference in the second: son of *Shomer* according to our text, and son of the *Shimrith* according to the Chronicles, has probably also arisen from a slip of the pen, since **מֶר** might easily be occasioned by the dropping out of the **ת** from the defectively written **מֶרֶת**, although it is also possible that *Shomer* may be the name of the grandfather. Joash was buried with his father in the city of David; but according to v. 25 of the Chronicles he was not buried in the graves of the kings. The two statements are not irreconcilable; and there may be good historical ground for the account in the Chronicles, as Bertheau acknowledges with perfect justice, in spite of the suspicion which has been cast upon it by Thenius.

### CH. 13. REIGNS OF JEHOAHAZ AND JOASH, KINGS OF ISRAEL. DEATH OF ELISHA.

**2Ki. 13: 1-9.** REIGN OF JEHOAHAZ. — Jehu was followed by Jehoahaz his son, “in the twenty-third year of Joash of Judah.” This synchronistic statement is not only at variance with v. 10, but cannot be very well reconciled with 2Ki. 12: 1. If Jehoahaz began to reign in the twenty-third year of Joash king of Judah, and reigned seventeen years, his son cannot have followed him after his death in the thirty-seventh year of Joash of Judah, as is stated in v. 10, for there are only fourteen years and possibly a few months between the twenty-third and thirty-seventh years of Joash; and even if he ascended the throne at the commencement of the twenty-third year of the reign of Joash and died at the end of the thirty-seventh, they could only be reckoned as fifteen and not as seventeen years. Moreover, according to 2Ki. 12: 1, Joash of Judah began to reign in the seventh year of Jehu, and therefore Athaliah, who ascended the



throne at the same time as Jehu, reigned fully six years. If, therefore, the first year of Joash of Judah coincides with the seventh year of Jehu, the twenty-eighth year of Jehu must correspond to the twenty-second year of Joash of Judah; and in this year of Joash not only did Jehu die, but his son Jehoahaz ascended the throne. Consequently we must substitute the twenty-second year of Joash, or perhaps, still more correctly, the twenty-first year (Josephus), for the twenty-third.<sup>124</sup>

If Jehu died in the earliest months of the twenty-eighth year of his reign, so that he only reigned twenty-seven years and one or two months, his death and his son's ascent of the throne might fall even in the closing months of the twenty-first year of the reign of Joash of Judah. And from the twenty-first to the thirty-seventh year of Joash, Jehoahaz may have reigned sixteen years and a few months, and his reign be described as lasting seventeen years.

**2Ki. 13: 2, 3.** As Jehoahaz trod in the footsteps of his forefathers and continued the sin of Jeroboam (the worship of the calves), the Lord punished Israel during his reign even more than in that of his predecessor. The longer and the more obstinately the sin was continued, the more severe did the punishment become. He gave them (the Israelites) into the power of the Syrian king Hazael and his son Benhadad **בְּכָל-הַיָּמִים**, “the whole time,” sc. of the reign of Jehoahaz (vid., v. 22); not of the reigns of Hazael and Benhadad, as Thenius supposes in direct opposition to vv. 24 and 25. According to v. 7, the Syrians so far destroyed the Israelitish army, that only fifty horsemen, ten war-chariots, and ten thousand foot soldiers were left.

**2Ki. 13: 4ff.** In this oppression Jehoahaz prayed to the Lord (**הָלָה פָּנֵי יי'**) as in 1Ki. 13: 6); and the Lord heard this prayer, because He saw their oppression at the hands of the Syrians, and gave Israel a saviour, so that they came out from the power of the Syrians and dwelt in their booths again, as before, i.e., were able to live peaceably again in their houses, without being driven off and led away by the foe. The saviour, **מוֹשִׁיעַ**, was neither an angel, nor the prophet Elisha, nor *quidam e ducibus Joasi*, as some of the earlier commentators supposed, nor a victory obtained by Jehoahaz over the Syrians, nor merely Jeroboam (Thenius); but the Lord gave them the saviour in the two successors of Jehoahaz, in the kings Jehoash and Jeroboam, the former of whom wrested from the Syrians all the cities that had been conquered by them under his father (v. 25), while the latter restored the ancient boundaries of Israel (2Ki. 14:25). According to vv. 22-25, the oppression by the Syrians lasted as long as Jehoahaz lived; but after his death the Lord had compassion upon Israel, and after the death of Hazael, when his son Benhadad had become king, Jehoash recovered from Benhadad all the Israelitish cities that had been taken by the

Syrians. It is obvious from this, that the oppression which Benhadad the son of Hazael inflicted upon Israel, according to v. 3, falls within the period of his father's reign, so that it was not as king, but as commander-in-chief under his father, that he oppressed Israel, and therefore he is not even called king in v. 3.

*2Ki. 13: 6.* "Only they departed not," etc., is inserted as a parenthesis and must be expressed thus: "although they departed not from the sin of Jeroboam."

*2Ki. 13: 7.* "For (כִּי) he had not left," etc., furnishes the ground for v. 5: God gave them a saviour,...although they did not desist from the sin of Jeroboam,...for Israel had been brought to the last extremity; He (Jehovah) had left to Jehoahaz people (עַמָּו, people of war), only fifty horsemen, etc. For הַחֲמַטִּי instead of הַחֲמַטִּי (v. 6), see at 1Ki. 21:21. The suffix בָּהּ in v. 6 refers to הַטָּאֵת, just as that in מִמֶּנָּה in v. 2 (see at 2Ki. 3: 3). "And even the Asherah was (still) standing at Samaria," probably from the time of Ahab downwards (1Ki. 16:33), since Jehu is not said to have destroyed it (2Ki. 10:26ff.). וַגַּי וַיִּשְׂמֹם "and had made them like dust for trampling upon," — an expression denoting utter destruction.

*2Ki. 13: 8, 9.* Close of the reign of Jehoahaz. Jehoahaz had probably shown his might in the war with the Syrians, although he had been overcome.

*2Ki. 13:10-13.* Reign of Jehoash or Joash of Israel. — On the commencement of his reign see at v. 1. He also walked in the sins of Jeroboam (compare v. 11 with vv. 2 and 6). The war with Amaziah referred to in v. 12 is related in the history of this king in 2Ki. 14: 8-14; and the close of the reign of Joash is also recorded there (vv. 15 and 16) with the standing formula. And even here it ought not to be introduced till the end of the chapter, instead of in vv. 12 and 13, inasmuch as the verses which follow relate several things belonging to the reign of Joash. But as they are connected with the termination of Elisha's life, it was quite admissible to wind up the reign of Joash with v. 13.

*2Ki. 13:14-21.* ILLNESS AND DEATH OF THE PROPHET ELISHA. — V. 14. When Elisha was taken ill with the sickness of which he was to die, king Joash visited him and wept over his face, i.e., bending over the sick man as he lay, and exclaimed, "My father, my father! the chariot of Israel and horsemen thereof!" just as Elisha had mourned over the departure of Elijah (2Ki. 2:12). This lamentation of the king at the approaching death of the prophet shows that Joash knew how to value his labours. And on account of this faith which was manifested in his recognition of the prophet's worth, the Lord gave the king another gracious assurance through the dying Elisha, which was confirmed by means of a symbolical action.

**2Ki. 13:15ff.** “Take — said Elisha to Joash — bow and arrows,...and let thy hand pass over the bow” (הִרְכִּיב), i.e., stretch the bow. He then placed his hands upon the king’s hands, as a sign that the power which was to be given to the bow-shot came from the Lord through the mediation of the prophet. He then directed him to open the window towards the east and shoot, adding as he shot off the arrow: “An arrow of salvation from the Lord, and an arrow of salvation against the Syrians; and thou wilt smite the Syrians at Aphek (see at 1Ki. 20:26) to destruction.” The arrow that was shot off was to be a symbol of the help of the Lord against the Syrians to their destruction. This promise the king was then to appropriate to himself through an act of his own. Elisha therefore directed him (v. 18) to “take the arrows;” and when he had taken them, said: הֵךְ אֶרֶצָה, “strike to the earth,” i.e., shoot the arrows to the ground, not “smite the earth with the bundle of arrows” (Thenius), which neither agrees with the shooting of the first arrow, nor admits of a grammatical vindication; for הִכָּה, when used of an arrow, signifies to shoot and to strike with the arrow shot off, i.e., to wound or to kill (cf. 2Ki. 9:24, 1Ki. 22:34). The shooting of the arrows to the earth was intended to symbolize the overthrow of the Syrians. “And the king shot three times, and then stood (still),” i.e., left off shooting.

**2Ki. 13:19.** Elisha was angry at this, and said: “Thou shouldst shoot five or six times, thou wouldst then have smitten the Syrians to destruction; but now thou wilt smite them three times.” לַהֲפֹת: it was to shoot, i.e., thou shouldst shoot; compare Ewald, § 237, *c.*; and for אִזְ הַכִּיתָ, then hadst thou smitten, vid., Ewald, § 358, *a.* As the king was told that the arrow shot off signified a victory over the Syrians, he ought to have shot off all the arrows, to secure a complete victory over them. When, therefore, he left off after shooting only three times, this was a sign that he was wanting in the proper zeal for obtaining the divine promise, i.e., in true faith in the omnipotence of God to fulfil His promise.<sup>125</sup>

Elisha was angry at this weakness of the king’s faith, and told him that by leaving off so soon he had deprived himself of a perfect victory over the Syrians.

**2Ki. 13:20, 21.** Elisha then died at a great age. As he had been called by Elijah to be a prophet in the reign of Ahab and did not die till that of Joash, and forty-one years elapsed between the year that Ahab died and the commencement of the reign of Joash, he must have held his prophetic office for at least fifty years, and have attained the age of eighty. “And they buried him must as marauding bands of Moabites entered the land. And it came to pass, that at the burial of a man they saw the marauding bands coming, and placed

the dead man in the greatest haste in the grave of Elisha,” for the purpose of escaping from the enemy. But when the (dead) man touched the bones of Elisha, he came to life again, and rose up upon his feet. וַיָּגִדוּדַי מוֹאָב וּגְוִי is a circumstantial clause. The difficult expression בָּא שָׁנָה, “a year had come,” can only have the meaning given by the LXX and Chald.: “when a year had come,” and evidently indicates that the burial of Elisha occurred at the time when the yearly returning bands of Moabitish marauders invaded the land. Ewald (*Krit. Gramm.* p. 528) would therefore read בָּוֹא, a coming of the year, in which case the words would be grammatically subordinate to the main clause. Luther renders it “the same year,” *in ipso anno*, after the Vulgate and Syriac, as if the reading had been הֵם. בָּהֶם שָׁנָה, they, the people who had just buried a man. וַיִּשְׁלִיכוּ, not threw, but placed hastily. וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיִּגַע: and the man went and touched. וַיֵּלֶךְ serves as a pictorial delineation of the thought, that as soon as the dead man touched the bones of Elisha he came to life. וַיֵּלֶךְ is not only applied to the motion of inanimate objects, but also to the gradual progress of any transaction. The conjecture of Thenius and Hitzig, וַיֵּלְכוּ, “and they went away,” is quite unsuitable. The earlier Israelites did not bury their dead in coffins, but wrapped them in linen cloths and laid them in tombs hewn out of the rock. The tomb was then covered with a stone, which could easily be removed. The dead man, who was placed thus hurriedly in the tomb which had been opened, might therefore easily come into contact with the bones of Elisha. The design of this miracle of the restoration of the dead man to life was not to show how even in the grave Elisha surpassed his master Elijah in miraculous power (Ephr. Syr. and others), but to impress the seal of divine attestation upon the prophecy of the dying prophet concerning the victory of Joash over the Syrians (Wisd. 48:13, 14), since the Lord thereby bore witness that He was not the God of the dead, but of the living, and that His spirit was raised above death and corruptibility. — The opinion that the dead man was restored to life again in a natural manner, through the violent shaking occasioned by the fall, or through the coolness of the tomb, needs no refutation.

**2Ki. 13:22-25.** The prophecy which Elisha uttered before his death is here followed immediately by the account of its fulfilment, and to this end the oppression of the Israelites by Hazael is mentioned once more, together with that turn of affairs which took place through the compassion of God after the death of Hazael and in the reign of his son Benhadad. לָחַץ is a pluperfect: “Hazael *had* oppressed” (for the fact itself compare vv. 4 and 7). For the sake of the covenant made with the patriarchs the Lord turned again to the Israelites, and would not destroy them, and did not cast them away from His face עָתָה עַד (“till now”), as was the case afterwards, but delivered them from the

threatening destruction through the death of Hazael. For in the reign of his son and successor Benhadad, Joash the son of Jehoahaz took from him again (וַיִּשָׁב) is to be connected with (וַיִּקַּח) the cities which he (Hazael) had taken from Jehoahaz in the war. These cities which Hazael had wrested from Jehoahaz were on this side of the Jordan, for Hazael had conquered all Gilead in the time of Jehu (2Ki. 10:32, 33). Joash recovered the former from Benhadad, whilst his son Jeroboam reconquered Gilead also (see at 2Ki. 14:25).

#### CH. 14. REIGNS OF AMAZIAH OF JUDAH, AND JEROBOAM II OF ISRAEL.

*2Ki. 14: 1-22.* REIGN OF AMAZIAH OF JUDAH (cf. 2Ch. 25). — Vv. 1-7. *Length and spirit of his reign, and his victory over the Edomites.* — V. 1. Amaziah began to reign in the second year of Joash of Israel. Now as Joash of Israel ascended the throne, according to 2Ki. 13:10, in the thirty-seventh year of Joash of Judah, the latter cannot have reigned thirty-nine full years, which might be reckoned as forty (2Ki. 12: 1), according to the principle mentioned at p. 130f. of reckoning the current years as complete years, if the commencement of his reign took place a month or two before Nisan, and his death occurred a month or two after, without its being necessary to assume a regency.

*2Ki. 14: 2, 3.* Amaziah reigned twenty-nine years in the same theocratical spirit as his father Joash, only not like his ancestor David, i.e., according to the correct explanation in 2Ch. 25: 2, not with לָבַב שָׁלֵם (see at 1Ki. 11: 4), since Amaziah, like his father Joash (see at 2Ki. 12: 3), fell into idolatry in the closing years of his reign (cf. 2Ch. 25:14ff.). — Only the high places were not taken away, etc.

*2Ki. 14: 5, 6.* After establishing his own government, he punished the murderers of his father with death; but, according to the law in Deu. 24:16, he did not slay their children also, as was commonly the custom in the East in ancient times, and may very frequently have been done in Israel as well. The *Cheth-b* חֶת־בַּיִת is correct, and the *Keri* כֶּרִי is an unnecessary alteration made after Deuteronomy.

*2Ki. 14: 7.* The brief account of the defeat of the Edomites in the Salt Valley and of the taking of the city of *Sela* is completed by 2Ch. 25: 6-16. According to the latter, Amaziah sought to strengthen his own considerable army by the addition of 100,000 Israelitish mercenaries; but at the exhortation of a prophet he sent the hired Israelites away again, at which they were so enraged, that on their way home they plundered several of the cities of Judah and put many men to death. The Edomites had revolted from Judah in the reign of Joram

(2Ki. 8:20ff.); Amaziah now sought to re-establish his rule over them, in which he was so far successful, that he completely defeated them, slaying 10,000 in the battle and then taking their capital, so that his successor Uzziah was also able to incorporate the Edomitish port of Elath in his own kingdom once more (v. 22). On the Salt Valley (גַּי הַמֶּלַח for גַּי־הַמֶּלַח in the Chronicles), a marshy salt plain in the south of the Dead Sea, see at 2Sa. 8:13. According to v. 12 of the Chronicles, in addition to the 10,000 who were slain in battle, 10,000 Edomites were taken prisoners and cast headlong alive from the top of a rock. הַסֵּלֶע (*the rock*) with the article, because the epithet is founded upon the peculiar nature of the city, was probably the capital of the Edomites, called by the Greeks ἡ Πέτρα, and bore this name from its situation and the mode in which it was built, since it was erected in a valley surrounded by rocks, and that in such a manner that the houses were partly hewn in the natural rock. Of this commercial city, which was still flourishing in the first centuries of the Christian era, splendid ruins have been preserved in a valley on the eastern side of the ghor which runs down to the Elanitic Gulf, about two days' journey from the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, on the east of Mount *Hor*, to which the Crusaders gave the name of *vallis Moysi*, and which the Arabs still call *Wady Musa* (see Robinson, *Pal.* ii. pp. 512ff., and for the history of this city, pp. 574ff., and Ritter's *Erdkunde*, xiv. pp. 1103ff.).

**2Ki. 14: 8-14. War with Joash of Israel.** — V. 8. Amaziah then sent a challenge to the Israelitish king Joash to go to war with him. The outward reason for this was no doubt the hostile acts that had been performed by the Israelitish troops, which had been hired for the war with Edom and then sent back again (2Ch. 25:13). But the inward ground was the pride which had crept upon Amaziah in consequence of his victory over the Edomites, and had so far carried him away, that he not only forgot the Lord his God, to whom he was indebted for this victory, and brought to Jerusalem the gods of the Edomites which he had taken in the war and worshipped them, and silenced with threats the prophet who condemned this idolatry (2Ch. 25:14ff.), but in his proud reliance upon his own power challenged the Israelitish king to war.

**2Ki. 14: 9, 10.** Jehoash (Joash) answered his insolent challenge, "Come, we will see one another face to face," i.e., measure swords with one another in war, with a similar fable to that with which Jotham had once instructed his fellow-citizens (Jud. 9: 8ff.). "The thorn-bush on Lebanon asked the cedar on Lebanon for its daughter as a wife for his son, and beasts of the field went by and trampled down the thorn-bush." This fable is, of course, not to be interpreted literally, as though Amaziah were the thorn-bush, and Jehoash the cedar, and the wild beasts the warriors; but the thorn-bush putting itself upon an equality with the cedar is a figurative representation of a proud man overrating his

strength, and the desire expressed to the cedar of a wish surpassing the bounds of one's condition; so that Thenius is not warranted in inferring from this that Amaziah had in his mind the subjugation of Israel to Judah again. The trampling down of the thorn-bush by a wild beast is only meant to set forth the sudden overthrow and destruction which may come unexpectedly upon the proud man in the midst of his daring plans. V. 10 contains the application of the parable. The victory over Edom has made thee high-minded. **נִשְׂאֵךְ לִבְךְ**: thy heart has lifted thee up, equivalent to, thou hast become high-minded. **הִפְכִּיבְךְ**, "be honoured," i.e., be content with the fame thou hast acquired at Edom, "and stay at home." Wherefore shouldst thou meddle with misfortune? **הִתְנַרְרָה**, to engage in conflict or war. Misfortune is thought of as an enemy, with whom he wanted to fight.

**2Ki. 14:11, 12.** But Amaziah paid not attention to this warning. A battle was fought at *Beth-shemesh* (Ain-Shems, on the border of Judah and Dan, see at Jos. 15:10); Judah was smitten by Israel, so that every one fled to his home.

**2Ki. 14:13.** Jehoash took king Amaziah prisoner, and then came to Jerusalem, and had four hundred cubits of the wall broken down at the gate of Ephraim to the corner gate, and then returned to Samaria with the treasures of the palace and temple, and with hostages. the *Cheth<sup>h</sup>-b* **וַיִּבְאוּ** is to be pointed **וַיִּבְאוּ**, the vowel **ו** being placed after **ס**, as in several other cases (see Ewald, § 18, *b.*).

There is no ground for altering **וַיִּבְאוּ** after the Chronicles (Thenius), although the reading in the Chronicles elucidates the thought. For if Jehoash took Amaziah prisoner at Beth-shemesh and then came to Jerusalem, he no doubt brought his prisoner with him, for Amaziah remained king and reigned for fifteen years after the death of Jehoash (v. 17). The *Ephraim gate*, which is generally supposed to be the same as the gate of Benjamin (Jer. 37:13; 38: 7; Zec. 14:10; compare Neh. 8:16; 12:39), stood in the middle of the north wall of Jerusalem, through which the road to Benjamin and Ephraim ran; and the *corner gate* was at the north-western corner of the same wall, as we may see from Jer. 31:38 and Zec. 14:10. If, then, Jehoash had four hundred cubits of the wall thrown down at the gate Ephraim to the corner gate, the distance between the two gates was not more than four hundred cubits, which applies to the northern wall of Zion, but not to the second wall, which defended the lower city towards the north, and must have been longer, and which, according to 2Ch. 32: 5, was probably built for the first time by Hezekiah (vid., Krafft, *Topographie v. Jerus.* pp. 117ff.). Jehoash destroyed this portion of the Zion wall, that the city might be left defenceless, as Jerusalem could be most easily taken on the level northern side.<sup>126</sup> — The treasures of the temple and palace, which Jehoash took away, cannot, according to 2Ki. 12:19, have been very

considerable. **בְּנֵי הַתְּעָרֻכּוֹת**, sons of the citizenships, i.e., hostages (*obsides*, Vulg.). He took hostages in return for the release of Amaziah, as pledges that he would keep the peace.

**2Ki. 14:15-17.** The repetition of the notice concerning the end of the reign of Joash, together with the formula from 2Ki. 13:12 and 13, may probably be explained from the fact, that in the annals of the kings of Israel it stood after the account of the war between Jehoash and Amaziah. This may be inferred from the circumstance that the name of Joash is spelt invariably **יְהוֹשָׁף** here, whereas in the closing notices in 2Ki. 13:12 and 13 we have the later form **יְוֹשָׁף**, the one which was no doubt adopted by the author of our books. But he might be induced to give these notices once more as he found them in his original sources, from the statement in v. 17, that Amaziah outlived Jehoash fifteen years, seeing therein a manifestation of the grace of God, who would not destroy Amaziah notwithstanding his pride, but delivered him, through the death of his victor, from further injuries at his hands. As Amaziah ascended the throne in the second year of the sixteen years' reign of Jehoash, and before his war with Israel made war upon the Edomites and overcame them, the war with Israel can only fall in the closing years of Jehoash, and this king cannot very long have survived his triumph over the king of Judah.

**2Ki. 14:18-22.** *Conspiracy against Amaziah.* — V. 19. Amaziah, like his father Joash, did not die a natural death. They made a conspiracy against him at Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish, whither murderers were sent after him, who slew him there. The earlier commentators sought for the cause of this conspiracy in the unfortunate result of the war with Jehoash; but this conjecture is at variance with the circumstance that the conspiracy did not break out till fifteen years or more after that event. It is true that in 2Ch. 25:27 we read “from the time that Amaziah departed from the Lord, they formed a conspiracy against him;” but even this statement cannot be understood in any other way than that Amaziah's apostasy gave occasion for discontent, which eventually led to a conspiracy. For his apostasy began with the introduction of Edomitish deities into Jerusalem after the defeat of the Edomites, and therefore before the war with Jehoash, in the first part of his reign, whereas the conspiracy cannot possibly have lasted fifteen years or more before it came to a head. *Lachish*, in the lowlands of Judah, has probably been preserved in the ruins of *Um Lakis* (see at Jos. 10: 3).

**2Ki. 14:20.** “They lifted him upon the horses,” i.e., upon the hearse to which the king's horses had been harnessed, and brought him to Jerusalem, where he was buried with his fathers, i.e., in the royal tomb.



**2Ki. 14:21.** All the people of Judah, i.e., the whole nation, not the whole of the men of war (Thenius), thereupon made his son *Azariah* (Uzziah) king, who was only sixteen years old. עֲזַרְיָה or עֲזַרְיָהוּ is the name given to this king here and 2Ki. 15: 1, 6, 8, 17, 23, and 27, and 1Ch. 3:12; whereas in 2Ki. 15:13, 30, 32, 34, 2Ch. 26: 1, 3, 11, etc., and also Isa. 1: 1; 6: 1, Hos. 1: 1, Amo. 1: 1, and Zec. 14: 5, he is called עֲזִיָּה or עֲזִיָּהוּ (Uzziah). This variation in the name is too constant to be attributable to a copyist's error. Even the conjecture that *Azariah* adopted the name *Uzziah* as king, or that it was given to him by the soldiers after a successful campaign (Thenius), does not explain the use of the two names in our historical books. We must rather assume that the two names, which are related in meaning, were used promiscuously. עֲזַרְיָה signifies "in Jehovah is help;" עֲזִיָּה, "whose strength is Jehovah." This is favoured by the circumstance adduced by Bertheau, that among the descendants of Kohath we also find an Uzziah who bears the name *Azariah* (1Ch. 6: 9 and 21), and similarly among the descendants of Heman an *Uzziel* with the name *Azarel* (1Ch. 25: 4 and 18).

**2Ki. 14:22.** Immediately after his ascent of the throne, Uzziah built, i.e., fortified, *Elath*, the Idumaeen port (see at 1Ki. 9:26), and restored it to Judah again. It is evident from this that Uzziah completed the renewed subjugation of Edom which his father had begun. The position in which this notice stands, immediately after his ascent of the throne and before the account of the duration and character of his reign, may be explained in all probability from the importance of the work itself, which not only distinguished the commencement of his reign, but also gave evident of its power.

**2Ki. 14:23-29.** Reign of Jeroboam II of Israel. — V. 23. The statement that Jeroboam the son of Joash (Jehoash) ascended the throne in the fifteenth year of Amaziah, agrees with v. 17, according to which Amaziah outlived Jehoash fifteen years, since Amaziah reigned twenty-nine years. On the other hand, the forty-one years' duration of his reign does not agree with the statement in 2Ki. 15: 8, that his son Zachariah did not become king till the thirty-eighth year of Azariah (Uzziah); and therefore Thenius proposes to alter the number 41 into 51, Ewald into 53. For further remarks, see 2Ki. 15: 8. Jeroboam also adhered firmly to the image-worship of his ancestors, but he raised his kingdom again to great power.

**2Ki. 14:25.** He brought back (הָשִׁיב), i.e., restored, the boundary of Israel from towards Hamath in the north, to the point to which the kingdom extended in the time of Solomon (1Ki. 8:65), to the sea of the Arabah (the present Ghor), i.e., to the Dead Sea (compare Deu. 3:17, and 4:49, from which this designation of the southern border of the kingdom of the ten tribes arose), "according to the

word of the Lord, which He had spoken through the prophet Jonah,” who had probably used this designation of the southern boundary, which was borrowed from the Pentateuch, in the announcement which he made. The extent of the kingdom of Israel in the reign of Jeroboam is defined in the same manner in Amo. 6:14, but instead of **יַם הָעַרְבָּה** the **נַחַל הָעַרְבָּה** is mentioned, i.e., in all probability the Wady *el Ashy*, which formed the boundary between Moab and Edom; from which we may see that Jeroboam had also subjugated the Moabites to his kingdom, which is not only rendered probable by 2Ki. 3: 6ff., but is also implied in the words that he restored the former boundary of the kingdom of Israel, — On the prophet Jonah, the son of Amittai, see the Comm. on Jon. 1: 1. *Gath-Hepher*, in the tribe of Zebulun, is the present village of *Mesched*, to the north of Nazareth (see at Jos. 19:13).

**2Ki. 14:26, 27.** The higher ground for this strengthening of Israel in the time of Jeroboam was to be found in the compassion of God. The Lord saw the great oppression and helpless condition of Israel, and had not yet pronounced the decree of rejection. He therefore sent help through Jeroboam. **מָרָה מְאֹד** without the article, and governed by **עֵינֵי יְשׁוּ** (see Ewald, § 293, *a.*), signifies very bitter, **מָרָה** having taken the meaning of **מָרַר**. This is the explanation adopted in all the ancient versions, and also by Dietrich in *Ges. Lex.* **עֲצוּר וְנִי** **וְאֶפְסִים**, verbatim from Deu. 32:36, to show that the kingdom of Israel had been brought to the utmost extremity of distress predicted there by Moses, and it was necessary that the Lord should interpose with His help, if His people were not utterly to perish. **לֹא דִבֶּר**: He had not yet spoken, i.e., had not yet uttered the decree of rejection through the mouth of a prophet. To blot out the name under the heavens is an abbreviated expression for: among the nations who dwelt under the heavens.

**2Ki. 14:28, 29.** Of the rest of the history of Jeroboam we have nothing more than an intimation that he brought back Damascus and Hamath of Judah to Israel, i.e., subjugated it again to the kingdom of Israel. **לְיְהוּדָה** is a periphrastic form for the genitive, as proper names do not admit of any form of the construct state, and in this case the simple genitive would not have answered so well to the fact. For the meaning is: “whatever in the two kingdoms of Damascus and Hamath had formerly belonged to Judah in the times of David and Solomon.” By Damascus and Hamath we are not to understand the cities, but the kingdoms; for not only did the city of Hamath never belong to the kingdom of Israel, but it was situated outside the boundaries laid down by Moses for Israel (see at Num. 34: 8). It cannot, therefore, have been re-conquered (**הַשִּׁיב**) by Jeroboam. It was different with the city of Damascus, which David had conquered and even Solomon had not

permanently lost (see at 1Ki. 11:24). Consequently in the case of Damascus the capital is included in the kingdom.

*2Ki. 14:29.* As Jeroboam reigned forty-one years, his death occurred in the twenty-seventh year of Uzziah. If, then, his son did not begin to reign till the thirty-eight year of Uzziah, as is stated in 2Ki. 15: 8, he cannot have come to the throne immediately after his father's death (see at 2Ki. 15: 8).

### **CH. 15. REIGNS OF AZARIAH OF JUDAH, ZACHARIAH, SHALLUM, MENAHEM, PEKAHIAH, AND PEKAH OF ISRAEL, AND JOTHAM OF JUDAH.**

*2Ki. 15: 1-7.* Reign of Azariah (Uzziah) or Judah (cf. 2Ch. 26). — The statement that “in the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam Azariah began to reign” is at variance with 2Ki. 14: 2, 16, 17, and 23. If, for example, Azariah ascended the throne in the fifteenth year of Joash of Israel, and with his twenty-nine years' reign outlived Joash fifteen years (2Ki. 14: 2, 17); if, moreover, Jeroboam followed his father Joash in the fifteenth year of Amaziah (2Ki. 14:23), and Amaziah died in the fifteenth year of Jeroboam; Azariah (Uzziah) must have become king in the fifteenth year of Jeroboam, since, according to 2Ki. 14:21, the people made him king after the murder of his father, which precludes the supposition of an interregnum. Consequently the *datum* “in the twenty-seventh year” can only have crept into the text through the confounding of the numerals טו (15) with כז (27), and we must therefore read “in the fifteenth year.”

*2Ki. 15: 2ff.* Beside the general characteristics of Uzziah's fifty-two years' reign, which are given in the standing formula, not a single special act is mentioned, although, according to 2Ch. 26, he raised his kingdom to great earthly power and prosperity; probably for no other reason than because his enterprises had exerted no permanent influence upon the development of the kingdom of Judah, but all the useful fruits of his reign were destroyed again by the ungodly Ahaz. Uzziah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, as his father Amaziah had done. For as the latter was unfaithful to the Lord in the closing years of his reign, so did Uzziah seek God only so long as Zechariah, who was experienced in divine visions, remained alive, and God gave success to his enterprises, so that during this time he carried on successful wars against the Philistines and Arabians, fortified the walls of Jerusalem with strong towers, built watch-towers in the desert, and constructed cisterns for the protection and supply of his numerous flocks, promoted agriculture and vine-growing, and organized a numerous and well-furnished army (2Ch. 26: 5-15). But the great power to which he thereby attained produced such haughtiness, that he wanted

to make himself high priest in his kingdom after the manner of the heathen kings, and usurping the sacred functions, which belonged according to the law to the Levitical priests alone, to offer incense in the temple, for which he was punished with leprosy upon the spot (v. 5 compared with 2Ch. 26:16ff.). The king's leprosy is described in our account also as a punishment from God. "וַיִּנָּע

וַיִּנָּע: Jehovah smote him, and he became leprous. This presupposes an act of guilt, and confirms the fuller account of this guilt given in the Chronicles, which Thenius, following the example of De Wette and Winer, could only call in question on the erroneous assumption "that the powerful king wanted to restore the regal high-priesthood exercised by David and Solomon" Oehler (Herzog's *Cycl.*) has already shown that such an opinion is perfectly "groundless," since it is nowhere stated that David and Solomon performed with their own hands the functions assigned in the law to the priests in connection with the offering of sacrifice, as the co-operation of the priests is not precluded in connection with the sacrifices presented by these kings (2Sa. 6:17, and 1Ki. 3: 4, etc.). — Uzziah being afflicted with leprosy, was obliged to live in a separate house, and appoint his son Jotham as president of the royal house to judge the people, i.e., to conduct the administration of the kingdom. — The time when this event occurred is not stated either in our account or in the Chronicles. But this punishment from God cannot have fallen upon him before the last ten years of his fifty-two years' reign, because his son, who was only twenty-five years old when his father died (v. 33, and 2Ch. 27: 1), undertook the administration of the affairs of the kingdom at once, and therefore must have been at least fifteen years old. **בֵּית הַחֲפְשִׁית** is taken by Winer, Gesenius, and others, after the example of Iken, to signify *nosocomium*, an infirmary or lazar-house, in accordance with the verb Arab. *xfš*, *fecit, II debilis, imbecillis fuit*. But this meaning cannot be traced in Hebrew, where **חֲפְשִׁי** is used in no other sense than free, set at liberty, *manumissus*. Consequently the rendering adopted by Aquila is correct, **οἶκος ἐλευθερίας**; and the explanation given by Kimchi of this epithet is, that the persons who lived there were those who were sent away from human society, or perhaps more correctly, those who were released from the world and its privileges and duties, or cut off from intercourse with God and man.

**2Ki. 15: 7.** When Uzziah died, he was buried with his fathers in the city of David, but because he died of leprosy, not in the royal family tomb, but, as the Chronicles (v. 23) add to complete the account, "in the burial-field of the kings;" so that he was probably buried in the earth according to our mode. His son Jotham did not become king till after Uzziah's death, as he had not been regent, but only the administrator of the affairs of the kingdom during his father's leprosy.

*2Ki. 15: 8-12.* REIGN OF ZACHARIAH OF ISRAEL. — V. 8. “In the thirty-eighth year of Uzziah, Zachariah the son of Jeroboam became king over Israel six months.” As Jeroboam died in the twenty-seventh year of Uzziah, according to our remarks on *2Ki. 14:29*, there is an interregnum of eleven years between his death and the ascent of the throne by his son, as almost all the chronologists since the time of Usher have assumed. It is true that this interregnum may be set aside by assuming that Jeroboam reigned fifty-one or fifty-three years instead of forty-one, without the synchronism being altered in consequence. but as it is not very probable that the numeral letters **נב** or **נ** should be confounded with **סב**, and as the conflict for the possession of the throne, which we meet with after the very brief reign of Zachariah, when taken in connection with various allusions in the prophecies of Hosea, rather favours the idea that the anarchy broke out immediately after the death of Jeroboam, we regard the assumption of an interregnum as resting on a better foundation than the removal of the chronological discrepancy by an alteration of the text.

*2Ki. 15: 9ff.* Zechariah also persevered in the sin of his fathers in connection with the calf-worship therefore the word of the Lord pronounced upon Jehu (*2Ki. 10:30*) was fulfilled in him. — *Shallum* the son of Jabesh formed a conspiracy and put him to death **קָבַל-עַם**, before people, i.e., openly before the eyes of all.<sup>p27</sup> As Israel would not suffer itself to be brought to repentance and to return to the Lord, its God and King, by the manifestations of divine grace in the times of Joash and Jeroboam, any more than by the severe judgments that preceded them, and the earnest admonitions of the prophets Hosea and Amos; the judgment of rejection could not fail eventually to burst forth upon the nation, which so basely despised the grace, long-suffering, and covenant-faithfulness of God. We therefore see the kingdom hasten with rapid steps towards its destruction after the death of Jeroboam. In the sixty-two years between the death of Jeroboam and the conquest of Samaria by Shalmaneser anarchy prevailed twice, in all for the space of twenty years, and six kings followed one another, only one of whom, viz., Menahem, died a natural death, so as to be succeeded by his son upon the throne. The other five were dethroned and murdered by rebels, so that, as Witsius has truly said, with the murder of Zachariah not only was the declaration of Hosea (*Hos. 1: 4*) fulfilled, “I visit the blood-guiltiness of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu,” but also the parallel utterance, “and I destroy the kingdom of the house of Israel,” since the monarchy in Israel really ceased with Zachariah. “For the successors of Zachariah were not so much kings as robbers and tyrants, unworthy of the august name of kings, who lost with ignominy the tyranny which they had wickedly acquired, and as wickedly exercised.” — Witsius, *Δεκαφυλ.* p. 320.

**2Ki. 15:13-16.** Reign of Shallum. — Shallum reigned only a full month (יָרַח יָמִים), as in Deu. 21:13; see at Gen. 29:14). *Menahem* the son of Gadi then made war upon him from Tirzah; and by him he was smitten and slain. Menahem must have been a general or the commander-in-chief, as Josephus affirms. As soon as he became king he smote *Tiphsach*, — i.e., Thapsacus on the Euphrates, which has long since entirely disappeared, probably to be sought for in the neighbourhood of the present *Rakka*, by the ford of *el Hamman*, the north-eastern border city of the Israelitish kingdom in the time of Solomon (1Ki. 5: 4), which came into the possession of the kingdom of Israel again when the ancient boundaries were restored by Jeroboam II (2Ki. 14:25 and 28), but which had probably revolted again during the anarchy which arose after the death of Jeroboam, — “and all that were therein, and the territory thereof, from Tirzah; because they opened not (to him), therefore he smote it, and had them that were with child ripped up.” מִתְרָצָה does not mean that Menahem laid the land or district waste from Tirzah to Tiphsach, but is to be taken in connection with יָבָה in this sense: he smote Tiphsach proceeding from Tirzah, etc. The position of this notice, namely, immediately after the account of the usurpation of the throne by Menahem and before the history of his reign, is analogous to that concerning Elath in the case of Uzziah (2Ki. 14:22), and, like the latter, is to be accounted for from the fact that the expedition of Menahem against Tiphsach formed the commencement of his reign, and, as we may infer from v. 19, became very eventful not only for his own reign, but also for the kingdom of Israel generally. The reason why he proceeded from Tirzah against Tiphsach, was no doubt that it was in Tirzah, the present Tallusa, which was only three hours to the east of Samaria (see at 1Ki. 14:17), that the army of which Menahem was commander was posted, so that he had probably gone to Samaria with only a small body of men to overthrow Shallum, the murderer of Zachariah and usurper of the throne, and to make himself king. It is possible that the army commanded by Menahem had already been collected in Tirzah to march against the city of Tiphsach, which had revolted from Israel when Shallum seized upon the throne by the murder of Zachariah; so that after Menahem had removed the usurper, he carried out at once the campaign already resolved upon, and having taken Tiphsach, punished it most cruelly for its revolt. On the cruel custom of ripping up the women with child, i.e., of cutting open their wombs, see 2Ki. 8:12, Amo. 1:13, and Hos. 14: 1. *Tiphsach*, *Thapsacus*, appears to have been a strong fortress; and from its situation on the western bank of the Euphrates, at the termination of the great trade-road from Egypt, Phœnicia, and Syria to Mesopotamia and the kingdoms of Inner Asia (Movers, *Phöniz.* ii. 2, pp. 164, 165; and Ritter, *Erdkunde*, x. pp. 1114-15), the possession of it was of great importance to the kingdom of Israel.<sup>128</sup>

**2Ki. 15:17-22.** REIGN OF MENAHEM. — Menahem's reign lasted ten full years (see at v. 23), and resembled that of his predecessors in its attitude towards God. In v. 18, the expression **בְּלִימֵי** (all his days) is a very strange one, inasmuch as no such definition of time occurs in connection with the usual formula, either in this chapter (cf. vv. 24 and 28) or elsewhere (cf. 2Ki. 3: 3; 10:31; 13: 2, 11, etc.). The LXX have instead of this, **ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις αὐτοῦ** (in his days). If we compare v. 29, **בְּיָמֵי פִקַּח בֶּא** (in the days of Pekah came, etc.), **בְּיָמֵי בֶא** might possibly be regarded as the original reading, from which a copyist's error **בְּלִימֵי בֶא** arose, after which **בְּלִימֵי** was connected with the preceding clause.

**2Ki. 15:19.** In the time of Menahem, *Pul* king of Assyria invaded the land, and Menahem gave him 1000 talents of silver — more than two and a half millions of thalers (£375,000) — “that his hands might be with him, to confirm the kingdom in his hand.” These words are understood by the majority of commentators from the time of Ephraem Syrus, when taken in connection with Hos. 5:13, as signifying that Menahem invited Pul, that he might establish his government with his assistance. But the words of Hosea, “Ephraim goes to the Assyrian,” sc. to seek for help (Hos. 5:13, cf. 7:11 and 8: 9), are far too general to be taken as referring specially to Menahem; and the assumption that Menahem invited Pul into the land is opposed by the words in the verse before us, “Pul came over the land.” Even the further statement that Menahem gave to Pul 1000 talents of silver when he came into the land, that he might help him to establish his government, presupposes at the most that a party opposed to Menahem had invited the Assyrians, to overthrow the usurper. At any rate, we may imagine, in perfect harmony with the words of our account, that Pul marched against Israel of his own accord, possibly induced to do so by Menahem's expedition against Thapsacus, and that his coming was simply turned to account as a good opportunity for disputing Menahem's possession of the throne he had usurped, so that Menahem, by paying the tribute mentioned, persuaded the Assyrian to withdraw, that he might deprive the opposing party of the Assyrian support, and thereby establish his own rule.

**2Ki. 15:20.** To collect the requisite amount, Menahem imposed upon all persons of property a tax of fifty shekels each. **עָלָה יָצָא** with **עָלָה**, he caused to arise, i.e., made a collection. **יָצָא** in a causative sense, from **יָצָא**, to arise, to be paid (2Ki. 12:13). **גְּבוּרֵי חַיִל**: not warriors, but men of property, as in Rut. 2: 1, 1Sa. 9: 1. **לְאִישׁ אֶחָד**, for the individual. *Pul* was the first king of Assyria who invaded the kingdom of Israel and prepared the way for the conquest of this kingdom by his successors, and for the extension of the Assyrian power as far as Egypt. According to the thorough investigation made by Marc. v. Niebuhr

(*Gesch. Assurs u. Babels*, pp. 128ff.), *Pul*, whose name has not yet been discovered upon the Assyrian monuments, was the last king of Nineveh of the family of the *Derketades*, who still ruled over Babylon according to Berosus, and the last king but one of this dynasty.<sup>129</sup>

**2Ki. 15:23-26.** REIGN OF PEKAHIAH. — Pekahiah the son of Menahem began to reign “in the fiftieth year of Uzziah.” As Menahem had begun to reign in the thirty-ninth year of Uzziah and reigned ten years, he must have died in the forty-ninth year of Uzziah; and therefore, if his son did not become king till the fiftieth year, some months must have elapsed between the death of Menahem and Pekahiah’s ascent of the throne, probably cause, in the existing disorganization of the kingdom, the possession of the throne by the latter was opposed. Pekahiah reigned in the spirit of his predecessors, but only for two years, as his aide-de-camp (שְׁלִישׁ, see at 2Sa. 23: 8) *Pekah* conspired against him and slew him in the citadel (אֶרְמוֹן, see at 1Ki. 16: 8) of the king’s palace, with *Argob* and *Aryeh*. Argob and Aryeh were not fellow-conspirators of Pekah, who helped to slay the king, but *principes Pekachijae*, as Seb. Schmidt expresses it, probably aides-de-camp of Pekahiah, who were slain by the conspirators when defending their king. We must take the words in this sense on account of what follows: וְעִמּוֹ חֲמִשִּׁים וְגוֹ, “and with him (Pekah) were fifty men of the Gileadites” (i.e., they helped him). The Gileadites probably belonged to the king’s body-guard, and were under the command of the aides-de-camp of Pekah.

**2Ki. 15:27-31.** REIGN OF PEKAH. — Pekah the son of Remaliah reigned twenty years.<sup>130</sup> During his reign the Assyrian king *Tiglath-pileser* came, and after conquering the fortified cities round Lake Merom took possession of Gilead and Galilee, namely the whole land of Naphtali, and led the inhabitants captive to Assyria. Tiglath-pileser (תִּגְלַת פִּלְסֶר or תִּגְלַת פִּלְאֶסֶר, 2Ki. 16: 7; פִּלְנְאֶסֶר or תִּגְלַת פִּלְנְסֶר, 1Ch. 5:26, and 2Ch. 28:20; Θεγλαθφραλασάρ or Θαλγαθφελλασάρ, LXX; written *Tiglat-palatsira* or *Tiglat-palatsar* on the Assyrian monuments, and interpreted by Gesenius and others “ruler of the Tigris,” although the reading of the name upon the monuments is still uncertain, and the explanation given a very uncertain one, since Tiglat or Tilgat is hardly identical with *Diglath* = Tigris, but is probably a name of the goddess *Derketo*, *Atergatis*), was, according to M. v. Niebuhr (pp. 156, 157), the last king of the *Derketade* dynasty, who, when the Medes and Babylonians threw off the Assyrian supremacy after the death of Pul, attempted to restore and extend the ancient dominion.<sup>131</sup>

His expedition against Israel falls, according to v. 29 and 2Ki. 16: 9, in the closing years of Pekah, when Ahaz had come to the throne in Judah. The



enumeration of his conquests in the kingdom of Israel commences with the most important cities, probably the leading fortifications. Then follow the districts of which he took possession, and the inhabitants of which he led into captivity. The cities mentioned are *Ijon*, probably the present *Ayun* on the north-eastern edge of the Merj Ayun; *Abel-Beth-Maacah*, the present *Abil el Kamh*, on the north-west of Lake Huleh (see at 1Ki. 15:20); *Janoach*, which must not be confounded with the *Janocha* mentioned in Jos. 16: 6, 7, on the border of Ephraim and Manasseh, but is to be sought for in Galilee or the tribe-territory of Naphtali, and has not yet been discovered; *Kedesh*, on the mountains to the west of Lake Huleh, which has been preserved as an insignificant village under the ancient name (see at Jos. 12:22); *Hazor*, in the same region, but not yet traced with certainty (see at Jos. 11: 1). *Gilead* is the whole of the land to the east of the Jordan, the territory of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half-Manasseh (1Ch. 5:26), which had only been wrested from the Syrians again a short time before by Jeroboam II, and restored to Israel (2Ki. 14:25, compared with 2Ki. 20:33). הַגְּלִילָה (the feminine form of הַגְּלִיל, see Ewald, § 173, *h.*) is more precisely defined by the apposition “all the land of Naphtali” (see at 1Ki. 9:11). — In the place of אֲשׁוּרָה, “to the land of Assyria,” the different regions to which the captives were transported are given in 1Ch. 5:26. For further remarks on this point see at 2Ki. 17: 6.

**2Ki. 15:30.** Pekah met with his death in a conspiracy organized by *Hosea* the son of Elah, who made himself king “in the twentieth year of Jotham.” There is something very strange in this chronological datum, as Jotham only reigned sixteen years (v. 33), and Ahaz began to reign in the seventeenth year of Pekah (2Ki. 16: 1); so that Pekah’s death would fall in the fourth year of Ahaz. The reason for this striking statement can only be found, as Usher has shown (*Chronol. sacr.* p. 80), in the fact that nothing has yet been said about Jotham’s successor Ahaz, because the reign of Jotham himself is not mentioned till vv. 32ff.<sup>B2</sup>

**2Ki. 15:32-38.** Reign of Jotham of Judah (cf. 2Ch. 27). — V. 32. “In the second year of Pekah Jotham began to reign.” This agrees with the statement in v. 27, that Pekah became king in the last year of Uzziah, supposing that it occurred at the commencement of the year. Jotham’s sixteen years therefore came to a close in the seventeenth year of Pekah’s reign (2Ki. 16: 1). His reign was like that of his father Uzziah (compare vv. 34, 35 with vv. 3, 4), except, as is added in Chron. v. 2, that he did not force himself into the temple of the Lord, as Uzziah had done (2Ch. 16:16). All that is mentioned of his enterprises in the account before us is that he built the upper gate of the house of Jehovah, that is to say, that he restored it, or perhaps added to its beauty. The upper gate, according to Eze. 9: 2 compared with 2Ki. 8: 3, 5, 14 and 16, is the gate

at the north side of the inner or upper court, where all the sacrifices were slaughtered, according to Eze. 40:38-43. We also find from 2Ch. 27: 3ff. that he built against the wall of *Ophel*, and several cities in the mountains of Judah, and castles and towers in the forests, and subdued the Ammonites, so that they paid him tribute for three years. Jotham carried on with great vigour, therefore, the work which his father had begun, to increase the material prosperity of his subjects.

*2Ki. 15:37.* In those days the Lord began to send against Judah *Rezin*, etc. It is evident from the position of this verse at the close of the account of Jotham, that the incursions of the allied Syrians and Israelites into Judah under the command of *Rezin* and *Pekah* commenced in the closing years of Jotham, so that these foes appeared before Jerusalem at the very beginning of the reign of Ahaz. — It is true that the Syrians had been subjugated by Jeroboam II (2Ki. 14:28); but in the anarchical condition of the Israelitish kingdom after his death, they had no doubt recovered their independence. They must also have been overcome by the Assyrians under *Pul*, for he could never have marched against Israel without having first of all conquered Syria. But as the power of the Assyrians was greatly weakened for a time by the falling away of the Medes and Babylonians, the Syrians had taken advantage of this weakness to refuse the payment of tribute to Assyria, and had formed an alliance with *Pekah* of Israel to conquer Judah, and thereby to strengthen their power so as to be able to offer a successful resistance to any attack from the side of the Euphrates. — But as 2Ki. 16: 6ff. and 2Ki. 17 show, it was otherwise decreed in the counsels of the Lord.

## CH. 16. REIGN OF KING AHAZ OF JUDAH.

*2Ki. 16.* With the reign of Ahaz a most eventful change took place in the development of the kingdom of Judah. Under the vigorous reigns of Uzziah and Jotham, by whom the earthly prosperity of the kingdom had been studiously advanced, there had been, as we may see from the prophecies of Isaiah, chs. 2-6, which date from this time, a prevalence of luxury and self-security, of unrighteousness and forgetfulness of God, among the upper classes, in consequence of the increase of their wealth. Under Ahaz these sins grew into open apostasy from the Lord; for this weak and unprincipled ruler trod in the steps of the kings of Israel, and introduced image-worship and idolatrous practices of every kind, and at length went so far in his ungodliness as to shut up the doors of the porch of the temple and suspend the temple-worship prescribed by the law altogether. The punishment followed this apostasy without delay. The allied Syrians and Israelites completely defeated the Judaeans, slew more than a hundred thousand men and led away a much larger

number of prisoners, and then advanced to Jerusalem to put an end to the kingdom of Judah by the conquest of the capital. In this distress, instead of seeking help from the Lord, who promised him deliverance through the prophet Isaiah, Ahaz sought help from Tiglat-pileser the king of Assyria, who came and delivered him from the oppression of Rezin and Pekah by the conquest of Damascus, Galilee, and the Israelitish land to the east of the Jordan, but who then oppressed him himself, so that Ahaz was obliged to purchase the friendship of this conqueror by sending him all the treasures of the temple and palace. — In the chapter before us we have first of all the general characteristics of the idolatry of Ahaz (vv. 2-4), then a summary account of his oppression by Rezin and Pekah, and his seeking help from the king of Assyria (vv. 5-9), and lastly a description of the erection of a heathen altar in the court of the temple on the site of the brazen altar of burnt-offering, and of other acts of demolition performed upon the older sacred objects in the temple-court (vv. 10-18). The parallel account in 2Ch. 28 supplies many additions to the facts recorded here.

*2Ki. 16: 1-4.* On the time mentioned, “in the seventeenth year of Pekah Ahaz became king” see at 2Ki. 15:32. The datum “twenty years old” is a striking one, even if we compare with it 2Ki. 18: 2. As Ahaz reigned only sixteen years, and at his death his son Hezekiah became king at the age of twenty-five years (2Ki. 18: 2), Ahaz must have begotten him in the eleventh year of his age. It is true that in southern lands this is neither impossible nor unknown,<sup>83</sup> but in the case of the kings of Judah it would be without analogy. The reading found in the LXX, Syr., and Arab. at 2Ch. 28: 1, and also in certain codd., viz., five and twenty instead of twenty, may therefore be a preferable one. According to this, Hezekiah, like Ahaz, was born in his father’s sixteenth year.

*2Ki. 16: 3.* “Ahaz walked in the way of the kings of Israel,” to which there is added by way of explanation in 2Ch. 28: 2, “and also made molten images to the Baals.” This refers, primarily, simply to the worship of Jehovah under the image of a calf, which they had invented; for this was the way in which all the kings of Israel walked. At the same time, in 2Ki. 8:18 the same formula is so used of Joram king of Judah as to include the worship of Baal by the dynasty of Ahab. Consequently in the verse before us also the way of the kings of Israel includes the worship of Baal, which is especially mentioned in the Chronicles. — “He even made his son pass through the fire,” i.e., offered him in sacrifice to Moloch in the valley of Benhinnom (see at 2Ki. 23:10), after the abominations of the nations, whom Jehovah had cast out before Israel. Instead of בְּנֵי we have the plural בְּנָיו in 2Ch. 28: 3, and in v. 16 מְלֻכֵי אַשּׁוּר, kings of Asshur, instead of מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר, although only one, viz., Tiglath-pileser, is spoken of. This repeated use of the plural shows very plainly that it is to be understood rhetorically, as expressing the thought in the most general manner, since the

number was of less importance than the fact.<sup>f34</sup> So far as the fact is concerned, we have here the first instance of an actual Moloch-sacrifice among the Israelites, i.e., of one performed by slaying and burning. For although the phrase **הָעֵבִיר בְּאֵשׁ** or **לַמִּלְחָה** does not in itself denote the slaying and burning of the children as Moloch-sacrifices, but primarily affirms nothing more than the simple passing through fire, a kind of februation or baptism of fire (see at Lev. 18:21); such passages as Eze. 16:21 and Jer. 7:31, where sacrificing in the valley of Benhinnom is called slaying and burning the children, show most distinctly that in the verse before us **הָעֵבִיר בְּאֵשׁ** is to be taken as signifying actual sacrificing, i.e., the burning of the children slain in sacrifice to Moloch, and, as the emphatic **וְגַם** indicates, that this kind of idolatrous worship, which had never been heard of before in Judah and Israel, was introduced by Ahaz.<sup>f35</sup>

In the Chronicles, therefore **הָעֵבִיר** is correctly explained by **וַיִּבְעַר**, “he burned;” though we cannot infer from this that **הָעֵבִיר** is always a mere conjecture for **הִבְעִיר**, as Geiger does (*Urschrift u. Uebers, der Bibel*, p. 305). The offering of his son for Moloch took place, in all probability, during the severe oppression of Ahaz by the Syrians, and was intended to appease the wrath of the gods, as was done by the king of the Moabites in similar circumstances (2Ki. 3:27). — In v. 4 the idolatry is described in the standing formulae as sacrificing upon high places and hills, etc., as in 1Ki. 14:23. The temple-worship prescribed by the law could easily be continued along with this idolatry, since polytheism did not exclude the worship of Jehovah. It was not till the closing years of his reign that Ahaz went so far as to close the temple-hall, and thereby suspend the temple-worship (2Ch. 28:24); in any case it was not till after the alterations described in vv. 11 ff. as having been made in the temple.

**2Ki. 16: 5-9.** Of the war which the allied Syrians and Israelites waged upon Ahaz, only the principal fact is mentioned in v. 5, namely, that the enemy marched to Jerusalem to war, but were not able to make war upon the city, i.e., to conquer it; and in v. 6 we have a brief notice of the capture of the port of Elath by the Syrians. We find v. 5 again, with very trifling alterations, in Isa. 7: 1 at the head of the prophecy, in which the prophet promises the king the help of God and predicts that the plans of his enemies will fail. According to this, the allied kings intended to take Judah, to dethrone Ahaz, and to install a vassal king, viz., the son of Tabeel. We learn still more concerning this war, which had already begun, according to 2Ki. 15:37, in the closing years of Jotham, from 2Ch. 28: 5-15; namely, that the two kings inflicted great defeats upon Ahaz, and carried off many prisoners and a large amount of booty, but that the Israelites set their prisoners at liberty again, by the direction of the prophet *Oded*, and after feeding and clothing them, sent them back to their

brethren. It is now generally admitted that these statements are not at variance with our account (as Ges., Winer, and others maintain), but can be easily reconciled with it, and simply serve to complete it.<sup>136</sup>

The only questions in dispute are, whether the two accounts refer to two different campaigns, or merely to two different events in the same campaign, and whether the battles to which the Chronicles allude are to be placed before or after the siege of Jerusalem mentioned in our text. The first question cannot be absolutely decided, since there are no decisive arguments to be found in favour of either the one supposition or the other; and even “the *one* strong argument” which Caspari finds in Isa. 7: 6 against the idea of two campaigns is not conclusive. For if the design which the prophet there attributes to the allied kings, “we will make a breach in Judah,” i.e., storm his fortresses and his passes and conquer them, does obviously presuppose, that at the time when the enemy spake or thought in this manner, Judah was still standing uninjured and unconquered, and therefore the battles mentioned in 2Ch. 28: 5, 6 cannot yet have been fought; it by no means follows from the connection between Isa. 7: 6 and v. 1 (of the same chapter) that v. 6 refers to plans which the enemy had only just formed at the time when Isaiah spoke (Is. 7: 4ff.). On the contrary, Isaiah is simply describing the plans which the enemy devised and pursued, and which they had no doubt formed from the very commencement of the war, and now that they were marching against Jerusalem, hoped to attain by the conquest of the capital. All that we can assume as certain is, that the war lasted longer than a year, since the invasion of Judah by these foes had already commenced before the death of Jotham, and that the greater battles (2Ch. 28: 5, 6) were not fought till the time of Ahaz, and it was not till his reign that the enemy advanced to the siege of Jerusalem. — With regard to the second question, it cannot be at all doubtful that the battles mentioned preceded the advance of the enemy to the front of Jerusalem, and therefore our account merely mentions the last and principal event of the war, and that the enemy was compelled to retreat from Jerusalem by the fact that the king of Assyria, Tiglath-pileser, whom Ahaz had called to his help, marched against Syria and compelled Rezin to hurry back to the defence of his kingdom. — It is more difficult to arrange in the account of the capture of Elath by the Syrians (v. 6) among the events of this war. The expression **בַּעַת הַדָּוָה** merely assigns it in a perfectly general manner to the period of the war. The supposition of Thenius, that it did not take place till after the siege of Jerusalem had been relinquished, and that Rezin, after the failure of his attempt to take Jerusalem, that he might not have come altogether in vain, marched away from Jerusalem round the southern point of the Dead Sea and conquered Elath, is impossible, because he would never have left his own kingdom in such a defenceless state to the advancing Assyrians. We must therefore place the taking of Elath by Rezin before his march against Jerusalem,

though we still leave it undecided how Rezin conducted the war against Ahaz: whether by advancing along the country to the east of the Jordan, defeating the Judaeans there (2Ch. 28: 5), and then pressing forward to Elath and conquering that city, while Pekah made a simultaneous incursion into Judah from the north and smote Ahaz, so that it was not till after the conquest of Elath that Rezin entered the land from the south, and there joined Pekah for a common attack upon Jerusalem, as Caspari supposes; or whether by advancing into Judah along with Pekah at the very outset, and after he had defeated the army of Ahaz in a great battle, sending a detachment of his own army to Idumaea, to wrest that land from Judah and conquer Elath, while he marched with the rest of his forces in combination with Pekah against Jerusalem.

“Rezin brought Elath to Aram and drove the Jews out of Elath, and Aramaeans came to Elath and dwelt therein to this day.” הָשִׁיב does not mean “to lead back” here, but literally to turn, to bring to a person; for Elath had never belonged to Aram before this, but was an Edomitish city, so that even if we were to read אָדוּם for אֶרֶם, הָשִׁיב could not mean to bring back. But there is no ground whatever for altering לְאֶרֶם into לְאָדוּם (Cler., Mich., Ew., Then., and others), whereas the form אֶרֶם is at variance with such an alteration through the assumption of an exchange of ר and ד, because אָדוּם is never written *defective* אָדֹם except in Eze. 25:14. There are also no sufficient reasons for altering וְאֶדוּמִים into וְאָדוּמִים (*Keri*); אֶדוּמִים is merely a Syriac form for אֶרֶמִים with the dull Syriac *u*-sound, several examples of which form occur in this very chapter, — e.g., הַקְּוּמִים for הַקְּמִים v. 7, דְּמִשְׁק for דְּמִשְׁק v. 10, and אֵילוֹת for אֵילָת v. 6, — whereas אָדוּם, with additions, is only written *plene* twice in the ancient books, and that in the Chronicles, where the *scriptio plena* is generally preferred (2Ch. 25:14 and 28:17), but is always written *defective* (אֶדְמִים). Moreover the statement that “אֶדוּמִים (*Edomites*, not *the* Edomites) came thither,” etc., would be very inappropriate, since Edomites certainly lived in this Idumaeian city in perfect security, even while it was under Judaeian government. And there would be no sense in the expression “the Edomites dwelt there *to this day*,” since the Edomites remained in their own land to the time of the captivity. All this is applicable to *Aramaeans* alone. As soon as Rezin had conquered this important seaport town, it was a very natural thing to establish an Aramaean colony there, which obtained possession of the trade of the town, and remained there till the time when the annals of the kings were composed (for it is to this that the expression עַד־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה refers), even after the kingdom of Rezin had long been destroyed by the Assyrians, since Elath and the Aramaeans settled there were not affected by that blow.<sup>B7</sup>

As soon as the Edomites had been released by Rezin from the control of Judah, to which they had been brought back by Amaziah and Uzziah (2Ki. 14: 7, 22), they began plundering Judah again (2Ch. 28:17); and even the Philistines took possession of several cities in the lowland, to avenge themselves for the humiliation they had sustained at the hand of Uzziah (2Ch. 28:18).

**2Ki. 16: 7.** In this distress Ahaz turned to Tiglath-pileser, without regarding either the word of Isaiah in Isa. 7: 4ff., which promised salvation, or the prophet's warning against an alliance with Assyria, and by sending the gold and silver which were found in the treasures of the temple and palace, purchased his assistance against Rezin and Pekah. Whether this occurred immediately after the invasion of the land by the allied kings, or not till after they had defeated the Judaeen army and advanced against Jerusalem, it is impossible to discover either from this verse or from 2Ch. 28:16; but probably it was after the first great victory gained by the foe, with which Isa. 7 and 8 agree. — On קומים for קמי see Ewald, § 151, b.

**2Ki. 16: 9.** Tiglath-pileser then marched against Damascus, took the city, slew Rezin, and led the inhabitants away to *Kir*, as Amos had prophesied (Amo. 1: 3-5). קיר, *Kir*, from which, according to Amo. 9: 7, the Aramaeans had emigrated to Syria, is no doubt a district by the river *Kur* (Κῦρος Κύρρος), which taking its rise in Armenia, unites with the Araxes and flows into the Caspian Sea, although from the length of the river Kur it is impossible to define precisely the locality in which they were placed; and the statement of Josephus (*Ant.* ix. 13, 3), that the Damascenes were transported εἰς τὴν ἄνω Μηδίαν, is somewhat indefinite, and moreover has hardly been derived from early historical sources (see M. v. Niebuhr, *Gesch. Assurs*, p. 158). Nothing is said here concerning Tiglath-pileser's invasion of the kingdom of Israel, because this has already been mentioned at 2Ki. 15:29 in the history of Pekah.

**2Ki. 16:10-18.** Ahaz paid Tiglath-pileser a visit in Damascus, “to present to him his thanks and congratulations, and possibly also to prevent a visit from Tiglath-pileser to himself, which would not have been very welcome” (Thenius). The form דרמשק is neither to be altered into דמשק nor regarded as a copyist's error for דרמשק, as we have several words in this chapter that are formed with dull Syriac *u*-sound. The visit of Ahaz to Damascus is simply mentioned on account of what follows, namely, that Ahaz saw an altar there, which pleased him so much that he sent a picture and model of it “according to all the workmanship thereof,” i.e., its style of architecture, to Urijah the priest (see Isa. 8: 2), and had an altar made like it for the temple, upon which, on his return to Jerusalem, he ordered all the burnt-offerings, meat-offerings, and

drink-offerings to be presented. The allusion here is to the offerings which he commanded to be presented for his prosperous return to Jerusalem.

*2Ki. 16:14ff.* Soon after this Ahaz went still further, and had “the copper altar before Jehovah,” i.e., the altar of burnt-offering in the midst of the court before the entrance into the Holy Place, removed “from the front of the (temple-) house, from (the spot) between the altar (the new one built by Urijah) and the house of Jehovah (i.e., the temple-house), and placed at the north side of the altar.” **הַקָּרִיב** does not mean *removit*, caused to be taken away, but *admovit*, and is properly to be connected with **עַל-יָרֵךְ הַמֶּלֶךְ**, notwithstanding the fact that **וַיִּתֵּן אֹתוֹ** is inserted between for the sake of greater clearness, as Maurer has already pointed out.<sup>68</sup> On the use of the article with **הַמִּזְבֵּחַ** in the construct state, see Ewald, § 290, *d*.

*2Ki. 16:15.* He also commanded that the daily morning and evening sacrifice, and the special offerings of the king and the people, should be presented upon the new altar, and thereby put a stop to the use of the Solomonian altar, “about which he would consider.” The *Cheth-b* **וַיִּצְוֶהוּ** is not to be altered; the *pron. suff.* stands before the noun, as is frequently the case in the more diffuse popular speech. The new altar is called “the great altar,” probably because it was somewhat larger than that of Solomon. **הַקָּמָר**: used for the burning of the sacrifices. **מִנְחַת הָעֶרֶב** is not merely the meat-offering offered in the evening, but the whole of the evening sacrifice, consisting of a burnt-offering and a meat-offering, as in 1Ki. 18:29, 36. **וַיְהִי-לִי לְבַקָּר**, the brazen altar “will be to me for deliberation,” i.e., I will reflect upon it, and then make further arrangements. On **בִּיקָר** in this sense see Pro. 20:25. In the opinion of Ahaz, the altar which had been built after the model of that of Damascus was not to be an idolatrous altar, but an altar of Jehovah. The reason for this arbitrary removal of the altar of Solomon, which had been sanctified by the Lord Himself at the dedication of the temple by fire from heaven, was, in all probability, chiefly that the Damascene altar pleased Ahaz better; and the innovation was a sin against Jehovah, inasmuch as God Himself had prescribed the form for His sanctuary (cf. Exo. 25:40; 26:30; 1Ch. 28:19), so that any altar planned by man and built according to a heathen model was practically the same as an idolatrous altar. — The account of this altar is omitted from the Chronicles; but in v. 23 we have this statement instead: “Ahaz offered sacrifice to the gods of Damascus, who smote him, saying, The gods of the kings of Aram helped them; I will sacrifice to them that they may help me: and they were the ruin of him and of all Israel.” Thenius and Bertheau find in this account an alteration of our account of the copying of the Damascene altar introduced by the chronicler as favouring his design, namely, to give as glaring a description as possible of the ungodliness of



Ahaz. But they are mistaken. For even if the notice in the Chronicles had really sprung from this alone, the chronicler would have been able from the standpoint of the Mosaic law to designate the offering of sacrifice upon the altar built after the model of an idolatrous Syrian altar as sacrificing to these gods. But it is a question whether the chronicler had in his mind merely the sacrifices offered upon that altar in the temple-court, and not rather sacrifices which Ahaz offered upon some *bamah* to the gods of Syria, when he was defeated and oppressed by the Syrians, for the purpose of procuring their assistance. As Ahaz offered his son in sacrifice to Moloch according to v. 3, he might just as well have offered sacrifice to the gods of the Syrians.

**2Ki. 16:17, 18.** Ahaz also laid his hand upon the other costly vessels of the court of the temple. He broke off the panels of the Solomonian stands, which were ornamented with artistic carving, and removed the basins from the stands, and took the brazen sea from the brazen oxen upon which they stood, and placed it upon a stone pavement. The ך before אֶת־הַכִּיָּר can only have crept into the text through a copyist's error, and the singular must be taken distributively: he removed from them (the stands) every single basin. אֲבָנִים מְרֻצָּפֹת (without the article) is not the stone pavement of the court of the temple, but a pedestal made of stones (βάσις λιθίνη, LXX) for the brazen sea. The reason why, or the object with which Ahaz mutilated these sacred vessels, is not given. The opinion expressed by Ewald, Thenius, and others, that Ahaz made a present to Tiglath-pileser with the artistically wrought panels of the stands, the basins, and the oxen of the brazen sea, is not only improbable in itself, since you would naturally suppose that if Ahaz had wished to make a "valuable and very welcome present" to the Assyrian king, he would have chosen some perfect stands with their basins for this purpose, and not merely the panels and basins; but it has not the smallest support in the biblical text, — on the contrary, it has the context against it. For, in the first place, if the objects named had been sent to Tiglath-pileser, this would certainly have been mentioned, as well as the sending of the temple and palace treasures. And, again, the mutilation of these vessels is placed between the erection of the new altar which was constructed after the Damascene model, and other measures which Ahaz adopted as a protection against the king of Assyria (v. 18). Now if Ahaz, on his return from visiting Tiglath-pileser at Damascus, had thought it necessary to send another valuable present to that king in order to secure his permanent friendship, he would hardly have adopted the measures described in the next verse.

**2Ki. 16:18.** "The covered Sabbath-stand, which they had built in the house (temple), and the outer entrance of the king he turned (i.e., removed) into the house of Jehovah before the king of Assyria." מִיֶּסֶד הַשַּׁבָּת (Keri מוֹסֵד, from

סִבְּךָ, to cover) is no doubt a covered place, stand or hall in the court of the temple, to be used by the king whenever he visited the temple with his retinue on the Sabbath or on feast-days; and “the outer entrance of the king” is probably the special ascent into the temple for the king mentioned in 1Ki. 10: 5. In what the removal of it consisted it is impossible to determine, from the want of information as to its original character. According to Ewald (*Gesch.* iii. p. 621) and Thenius, הִסַב בֵּית יְהוָה means, “he altered (these places), i.e., he robbed them of their ornaments, in the house of Jehovah.” This is quite arbitrary. For even if בֵּית יְהוָה could mean “in the house of Jehovah” in this connection, הִסַב does not mean to disfigure, and still less “to deprive of ornaments.” In 2Ki. 23:34 and 24:17 it signifies to alter the name, not to disfigure it. Again, מִפְּנֵי מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר, “for fear of the king of Assyria,” cannot mean, in this connection, “to make presents to the king of Assyria.” And with this explanation, which is grammatically impossible, the inference drawn from it, namely, that Ahaz sent the ornaments of the king’s stand and king’s ascent to the king of Assyria along with the vessels mentioned in v. 17, also falls to the ground. If the alterations which Ahaz made in the stands and the brazen sea had any close connection with his relation to Tiglath-pileser, which cannot be proved, Ahaz must have been impelled by fear to make them, not that he might send them as presents to him, but that he might hide them from him if he came to Jerusalem, to which 2Ch. 28:20, 21 seems to refer. It is also perfectly conceivable, as Züllich (*Die Cherubimwagen*, p. 56) conjectures, that Ahaz merely broke off the panels from the stands and removed the oxen from the brazen sea, that he might use these artistic works to decorate some other place, possibly his palace. — Whether these artistic works were restored or not at the time of Hezekiah’s reformation or in that of Josiah, we have no accounts to show. All that can be gathered from 2Ki. 25:13, 14, Jer. 52:17, and 27:19, is, that the stands and the brazen sea were still in existence in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, and that on the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans they were broken in pieces and carried away to Babylonia as brass. The brazen oxen are also specially mentioned in Jer. 52:20, which is not the case in the parallel passage 2Ki. 25:13; though this does not warrant the conclusion that they were no longer in existence at that time.

**2Ki. 16:19, 20.** Conclusion of the reign of Ahaz. According to 2Ch. 28:27, he was buried in the city of David, but not in the sepulchres of the kings.

**CH. 17. REIGN OF HOSHEA AND DESTRUCTION OF THE  
KINGDOM OF ISRAEL. THE PEOPLE CARRIED AWAY TO  
ASSYRIA AND MEDIA. TRANSPORTATION OF THE HEATHEN  
COLONISTS TO SAMARIA.**

*2Ki. 17: 1-6.* REIGN OF HOSHEA KING OF ISRAEL. — V. 1. In the twelfth year of Ahaz began Hoshea to reign. As Hoshea conspired against Pekah, according to 2Ki. 15:30, in the fourth year of Ahaz, and after murdering him made himself king, whereas according to the verse before us it was not till the twelfth year of Ahaz that he really became king, his possession of the throne must have been contested for eight years. The earlier commentators and almost all the chronologists have therefore justly assumed that there was an eight years' anarchy between the death of Pekah and the commencement of Hoshea's reign. This assumption merits the preference above all the attempts made to remove the discrepancy by alterations of the text, since there is nothing at all surprising in the existence of anarchy at a time when the kingdom was in a state of the greatest inward disturbance and decay. Hoshea reigned nine years, and "did that which was evil in the eyes of Jehovah, though not like the kings of Israel before him" (v. 2). We are not told in what Hoshea was better than his predecessors, nor can it be determined with any certainty, although the assumption that he allowed his subjects to visit the temple at Jerusalem is a very probable one, inasmuch as, according to 2Ch. 30:10ff., Hezekiah invited to the feast of the Passover, held at Jerusalem, the Israelites from Ephraim and Manasseh as far as to Zebulun, and some individuals from these tribes accepted his invitation. But although Hoshea was better than his predecessors, the judgment of destruction burst upon the sinful kingdom and people in his reign, because he had not truly turned to the Lord; a fact which has been frequently repeated in the history of the world, namely, that the last rulers of a decaying kingdom have not been so bad as their forefathers. "God is accustomed to defer the punishment of the elders in the greatness of His long-suffering, to see whether their descendants will come to repentance; but if this be not the case, although they may not be so bad, the anger of God proceeds at length to visit iniquity (cf. Exo. 20: 5)." Seb. Schmidt.

*2Ki. 17: 3.* "Against him came up *Salmanasar* king of Assyria, and Hoshea became subject to him and rendered him tribute" (מִנְחָה, as in 1Ki. 5: 1).

שַׁלְמַנְאֶסֶר, Σαλαμανασσάρ (LXX), *Salmanasar*, according to the more recent researches respecting Assyria, is not only the same person as the *Shalman* mentioned in Hos. 10:14, but the same as the *Sargon* of Isa. 20: 1, whose name is spelt *Sargina* upon the monuments, and who is described in the inscriptions on his palace at Khorsabad as ruler over many subjugated lands, among which *Samirina* (Samaria?) also occurs (vid., Brandis *üb. d. Gewinn*, pp. 48ff. and 53;

M. v. Niebuhr, *Gesch. Ass.* pp. 129, 130; and M. Duncker, *Gesch. des Alterth.* i. pp. 687ff.). The occasion of this expedition of Salmanasar appears to have been simply the endeavour to continue the conquests of his predecessor Tiglath-pileser. There is no ground whatever for Maurer's assumption, that he had been asked to come to the help of a rival of Hoshea; and the opinion that he came because Hoshea had refused the tribute which had been paid to Assyria from the time of Menahem downwards, is at variance with the fact that in 2Ki. 15:29 Tiglath-pileser is simply said to have taken a portion of the territory of Israel; but there is no allusion to any payment of tribute or feudal obligation on the part of Pekah. Salmanasar was the first to make king Hoshea subject and tributary. This took place at the commencement of Hoshea's reign, as is evident from the fact that Hoshea paid the tribute for several years, and in the sixth year of his reign refused any further payment.

*2Ki. 17: 4.* The king of Assyria found a conspiracy in Hoshea; for he had sent messengers to *So* the king of Egypt, and did not pay the tribute to the king of Assyria, as year by year. The Egyptian king **סוֹ**, *So*, possibly to be pronounced **סֶוֶה**, *Seveh*, is no doubt one of the two *Shebeks* of the twenty-fifth dynasty, belonging to the Ethiopian tribe; but whether he was the second king of this dynasty, *Sábâtákâ* (Brugsch, *hist. d'Egypte*, i. p. 244), the *Sevechus* of Manetho, who is said to have ascended the throne, according to Wilkinson, in the year 728, as Vitringa (*Isa.* ii. p. 318), Gesenius, Ewald, and others suppose, or the first king of this Ethiopian dynasty, *Sabako* the father of Sevechus, which is the opinion of Usher and Marsham, whom M. v. Niebuhr (*Gesch.* pp. 458ff. and 463) and M. Duncker (i. p. 693) have followed in recent times, cannot possibly be decided in the present state of Egyptological research.<sup>f39</sup> — As soon as Salmanasar received intelligence of the conduct of Hoshea, which is called **קִשְׁרָה**, conspiracy, as being rebellion against his acknowledged superior, he had him arrested and put into prison in chains, and then overran the whole land, advanced against Samaria and besieged that city for three years, and captured it in the ninth year of Hoshea. These words are not to be understood as signifying that Hoshea had been taken prisoner before the siege of Samaria and thrown into prison, because in that case it is impossible to see how Salmanasar could have obtained possession of his person.<sup>f40</sup>

We must rather assume, as many commentators have done, from R. Levi ben Gersom down to Maurer and Thenius, that it was not till the conquest of his capital Samaria that Hoshea fell into the hands of the Assyrians and was cast into a prison; so that the explanation to be given to the introduction of this circumstance before the siege and conquest of Samaria must be, that the historian first of all related the eventual result of Hoshea's rebellion against Salmanasar so far as Hoshea himself was concerned, and then proceeded to

describe in greater detail the course of the affair in relation to his kingdom and capital. This does not necessitate our giving to the word **וַיַּעֲצֵרְהוּ** the meaning “he assigned him a limit” (Thenius); but we may adhere to the meaning which has been philologically established, namely, arrest or incarcerate (Jer. 33: 1; 36: 5, etc.). **וַיַּעֲלֵהוּ** may be given thus: “he overran, that is to say, the entire land.” The three years of the siege of Samaria were not full years, for, according to 2Ki. 18: 9, 10, it began in the seventh year of Hoshea, and the city was taken in the ninth year, although it is also given there as three years.

**2Ki. 17: 6.** The ninth year of Hoshea corresponds to the sixth year of Hezekiah and the year 722 or 721 B.C., in which the kingdom of the ten tribes was destroyed.

**2Ki. 17: 6b.** The Israelites carried into exile. — After the taking of Samaria, Salmanasar led Israel into captivity to Assyria, and assigned to those who were led away dwelling-places in *Chalach* and on the *Chabor*, or the river *Gozan*, and in cities of Media. According to these clear words of the text, the places to which the ten tribes were banished are not to be sought for in Mesopotamia, but in provinces of Assyria and Media. **חֲלָח** is neither the city of **כַּלְח** built by Nimrod (Gen. 10:11), nor the *Cholwan* of *Abulfeda* and the Syriac writers, a city five days' journey to the north of Bagdad, from which the district bordering on the Zagrus probably received the name of **αλωνίτις** or **Καλωνίτις**, but the province **Καλαχηνή** of Strabo (xi. 8, 4; 14, 12, and xvi. 1, 1), called **Καλακινή** by Ptolemaeus (vi. 1), on the eastern side of the Tigris near Adiabene, to the north of Nineveh on the border of Armenia. **חַבּוֹר** is not the **כַּבָּר** in Upper Mesopotamia (Eze. 1: 3; 3:15, etc.), which flows into the Euphrates near *Kirkesion* (*Carchemish*), and is called *Chebar* (*kbr*) or *Chabor* (*kbwr*) by the Syriac writers, *Chabûr* (*xâbûr*) by *Abulfeda* and *Edrisi*; **αβώρας** by Ptolemaeus, **Αβόρρας** (*Aboras*) by Strabo and others, as *Michaelis*, *Gesenius*, *Winer*, and even *Ritter* assume; for the epithet “river of *Gozan*” is not decisive in favour of this, since *Gozan* is not necessarily to be identified with the district of *Gauzanitis*, now *Kaushan*, situated between the rivers of *Chaboras* and *Saokoras*, and mentioned in *Ptol.* v. 18, 4, inasmuch as Strabo (xvi. 1, 1, p. 736) also mentions a province called **ἀζηνή** above Nineveh towards Armenia, between *Calachene* and *Adiabene*. Here in northern Assyria we also find both a mountain called **αβώρας**, according to *Ptol.* vi. 1, on the boundary of Assyria and Media, and the river *Chabor*, called by *Yakut* in the *Moshtarik* **ḫ-l-ḫsn<sup>h</sup>** (*Khabor Chasaniae*), to distinguish it from the Mesopotamian *Chaboras* or *Chebar*. According to *Marasz.* i. pp. 333f., and *Yakut*, *Mosht.* p. 150, this *Khabor* springs from the mountains of the land of *Zauzan*, *zawzan*, i.e., of the land between the mountains of Armenia, *Adserbeidjan*, *Diarbekr*, and *Mosul* (*Marasz.* i. p. 522), and is frequently mentioned in *Assemani* as a tributary of

the Tigris. It still bears the ancient name *Khabûr*, taking its rise in the neighbourhood of the upper *Zab* near *Amad-jeh*, and emptying itself into the Tigris a few hours below *Jezirah* (cf. Wichelhaus, pp. 471, 472; Asah. Grant, *Die Nestorianer*, v. *Preiswerk*, pp. 110ff.; and Ritter, *Erdk.* ix. pp. 716 and 1030). This is the river that we are to understand by **חָבּוּר**.

It is a question in dispute, whether the following words **נְהַר גּוּזָן** are in apposition to **בְּחָבּוּר**: “by the Chabor the river of Gozan,” or are to be taken by themselves as indicating a peculiar district “by the river *Gozan*.” Now, however the absence of the prep. **בְּ**, and even of the copula **ו**, on the one hand, and the words of Yakut, “*Khabur*, a river of *Chasania*,” on the other, may seem to favour the former view, we must decide in favour of the latter, for the simple reason that in 1Ch. 5:26 **נְהַר גּוּזָן** is separated from **חָבּוּר** by **וְהָרָא**. The absence of the preposition **בְּ** or of the copula **ו** before **נְהַר גּוּזָן** in the passage before us may be accounted for from the assumption that the first two names, in *Chalah* and on the *Khabur*, are more closely connected, and also the two which follow, “on the river *Gozan* and in the cities of *Media*.” The river *Gozan* or of *Gozan* is therefore distinct from **חָבּוּר** (*Khabur*), and to be sought for in the district in which **Γαυζανία**, the city of *Media* mentioned by Ptol. (vi. 2), was situated. In all probability it is the river which is called *Kisil* (the red) *Ozan* at the present day, the *Mardos* of the Greeks, which takes its rise to the south-east of the Lake *Urumiah* and flows into the Caspian Sea, and which is supposed to have formed the northern boundary of *Media*.<sup>41</sup> The last locality mentioned agrees with this, viz., “and in the cities of *Media*,” in which Thenius proposes to read **הָרִי**, mountains, after the LXX, instead of **עִרֵי**, cities, though without the least necessity.

**2Ki. 17: 7-23.** *The causes which occasioned this catastrophe.* — To the account of the destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes, and of the transportation of its inhabitants into exile in Assyria, the prophetic historian appends a review of the causes which led to this termination of the greater portion of the covenant-nation, and finds them in the obstinate apostasy of Israel from the Lord its God, and in its incorrigible adherence to idolatry. V. 7. **וַיְהִי כִּי**, “and it came to pass when” (not because, or that): compare Gen. 6: 1; 26: 8; 27: 1; 44:24, Exo. 1:21, Jud. 1:28; 6: 7, etc. The apodosis does not follow till v. 18, as vv. 7-17 simply contain a further explanation of Israel’s sin. To show the magnitude of the sin, the writer recalls to mind the great benefit conferred in the redemption from Egypt, whereby the Lord had laid His people under strong obligation to adhere faithfully to Him. The words refer to the first commandment (Exo. 20: 2, 3; Deu. 5: 6, 7). It is from this that the “fearing of other gods” is taken, whereas **מִתַּחַת יַד פְּרַעֲהַ** recall Exo. 18:10.

**2Ki. 17: 8.** The apostasy of Israel manifested itself in two directions: 1. in their walking in the statutes of the nations who were cut off from before them, instead of in the statutes of Jehovah, as God had commanded (cf. Lev. 18: 4, 5, and 26, 20:22, 23, etc.; and for the formula **הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הִוְרִישׁ וּגְוִי**, which occurs repeatedly in our books — e.g., 2Ki. 16: 3; 21: 2, and 1Ki. 14:24 and 21:26 — compare Deu. 11:23 and 18:12); and 2. in their walking in the statutes which the kings of Israel had made, i.e., the worship of the calves. **אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ**: it is evident from the parallel passage, v. 19b, that the subject here stands before the relative.

**2Ki. 17: 9.** **וַיִּחַפְּאוּ דְבָרִים**: “they covered words which were not right concerning Jehovah their God,” i.e., they sought to conceal the true nature of Jehovah their God,” i.e., they sought to conceal the true nature of Jehovah by arbitrary perversions of the word of God. This is the explanation correctly given by Hengstenberg (*Dissert.* vol. i. p. 210, transl.); whereas the interpretation proposed by Thenius, “they trifled with things which were not right against Jehovah,” is as much at variance with the usage of the language as that of Gesenius (*thes.* p. 5050, *per fide egerunt res...in Jehovam*, since **עַל חַפָּא** with **עַל** simply means to cover over a thing (cf. Isa. 4: 5). This covering of words over Jehovah showed itself in the fact that they built **בְּמֹזֹת** (altars on high places), and by worshipping God in ways of their own invention concealed the nature of the revealed God, and made Jehovah like the idols. “In all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fortified city.” **מִגְדַּל נוֹצְרִים** is a tower built for the protection of the flocks in the steppes (2Ch. 26:10), and is mentioned here as the smallest and most solitary place of human abode in antithesis to the large and fortified city. Such *bamoth* were the houses of high places and altars built for the golden calves at Bethel and Dan, beside which no others are mentioned by name in the history of the kingdom of the ten tribes, which restricts itself to the principal facts, although there certainly must have been others.

**2Ki. 17:10.** They set up for themselves monuments and *asherim* on every high hill, etc., — a practice condemned in 1Ki. 14:16, 23, as early as the time of Jeroboam. In this description of their idolatry, the historian, however, had in his mind not only the ten tribes, but also Judah, as is evident from v. 13, “Jehovah testified against Israel *and Judah* through His prophets,” and also from v. 19.

**2Ki. 17:11.** “And burned incense there upon all the high places, like the nations which Jehovah drove out before them.” **הַגְּלוּהָ**, lit., to lead into exile, is applied here to the expulsion and destruction of the Canaanites, with special reference to the banishment of the Israelites.

**2Ki. 17:12.** They served the clods, i.e., worshipped clods or masses of stone as gods (גללים, see at 1Ki. 15:12), notwithstanding the command of God in Exo. 20: 3ff., 23:13, Lev. 26: 1, etc.

**2Ki. 17:13ff.** And the Lord was not satisfied with the prohibitions of the law, but bore witness against the idolatry and image-worship of Israel and Judah through all His prophets, who exhorted them to turn from their evil way and obey His commandments. But it was all in vain; they were stiff-necked like their fathers. Judah is mentioned as well as Israel, although the historian is simply describing the causes of Israel's rejection to indicate beforehand that Judah was already preparing the same fate for itself, as is still more plainly expressed in vv. 19, 20; not, as Thenius supposes, because he is speaking here of that which took place before the division of the kingdom. The *Cheth<sup>b</sup>* כָּל־נְבִיאָוּ כָּל־חֹזֶה is not to be read כָּל נְבִיא וְכָל חֹזֶה (Houbig., Then., Ew. § 156, e.), but after the LXX כָּל־נְבִיאָוּ כָּל־חֹזֶה, “through all His prophets, every seer,” so that כָּל־חֹזֶה is in apposition to כָּל־נְבִיאָוּ, and serves to bring out the meaning with greater force, so as to express the idea, “prophets of every kind, that the Lord had sent.” This reading is more rhetorical than the other, and is recommended by the fact that in what follows the copula ו is omitted before חֲקֹנִי also on rhetorical grounds. וְאֲשֶׁר שָׁלַחְתִּי וְגו': “and according to what I demanded of you through my servants the prophets.” To the law of Moses there was added the divine warning through the prophets. יִקְשׁוּ אֶת־עַרְפָּם has sprung from Deu. 10:16. The stiff-necked fathers are the Israelites in the time of Moses.

**2Ki. 17:15.** “They followed vanity and became vain:” *verbatim* as in Jer. 2: 5. A description of the worthlessness of their whole life and aim with regard to the most important thing, namely, their relation to God. Whatever man sets before him as the object of his life apart from God is הָבֵל (cf. Deu. 32:21) and idolatry, and leads to worthlessness, to spiritual and moral corruption (Rom. 1:21). “And (walked) after the nations who surrounded them,” i.e., the heathen living near them. The concluding words of the verse have the ring of Lev. 18: 3.

**2Ki. 17:16, 17.** The climax of their apostasy: “They made themselves molten images, two (golden) calves” (1Ki. 12:28), which are called מַסְכָּה after Exo. 32: 4, 8, and Deu. 9:12, 16, “and Asherah,” i.e., idols of Astarte (for the fact, see 1Ki. 16:33), “and worshipped all the host of heaven (sun, moon, and stars), and served Baal” — in the time of Ahab and his family (1Ki. 16:32). The worshipping of all the host of heaven is not specially mentioned in the history of the kingdom of the ten tribes, but occurs first of all in Judah in the time of



Manasseh (2Ki. 21: 3). The fact that the host of heaven is mentioned between Asherah and Baal shows that the historian refers to the Baal and Astarte worship, and has borrowed the expression from Deu. 4:19 and 17: 3, to show the character of this worship, since both Baal and Astarte were deities of a sidereal nature. The first half of v. 17 rests upon Deu. 18:10, where the worship of Moloch is forbidden along with soothsaying and augury. There is no allusion to this worship in the history of the kingdom of the ten tribes, although it certainly existed in the time of Ahab. The second half of v. 17 also refers to the conduct of Ahab (see at 1Ki. 21:20).

*2Ki. 17:18ff.* This conduct excited the anger of God, so that He removed them from His face, and only left the tribe (i.e., the kingdom) of Judah (see above, p. 179), although Judah also did not keep the commandments of the Lord and walked in the statutes of Israel, and therefore had deserved rejection. V. 19 contains a parenthesis occasioned by **רַק שֶׁבַט וגו'** (v. 18*b*). The statutes of Israel in which Judah walked are not merely the worship of Baal under the Ahab dynasty, so as to refer only to Joram, Ahaziah, and Ahaz (according to 2Ki. 8:18, 27, and 16: 3), but also the worship on the high places and worship of idols, which were practised under many of the kings of Judah.

*2Ki. 17:20.* **וַיִּמָּאס** is a continuation of **וַיִּתְאַפֵּי יְהוָה** in v. 18, but so that what follows also refers to the parenthesis in v. 19. “Then the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel,” not merely the ten tribes, but all the nation, and humbled them till He thrust them from His face. **מָאָס** differs from **הַשְּׁלִיךְ מִפְּנֵי**. The latter denotes driving into exile; the former, simply that kind of rejection which consisted in chastisement and deliverance into the hand of plunderers, that is to say, penal judgments by which the Lord sought to lead Israel and Judah to turn to Him and to His commandments, and to preserve them from being driven among the heathen. **נָתַן בְּיַד שָׂשִׁים** as in Jud. 2:14.

*2Ki. 17:21.* **בִּי קָרַע וגו'**: “for He (Jehovah) rent Israel from the house of David.” This view is apparently more correct than that Israel rent the kingdom from the house of David, not only because it presupposes too harsh an ellipsis to supply **אֶת־הַמְּלָכָה**, but also because we never meet with the thought that Israel rent the kingdom from the house of David, and in 1Ki. 11:31 it is simply stated that Jehovah rent the kingdom from Solomon; and to this our verse refers, whilst the following words **וַיִּמְלִיכוּ וגו'** recall 1Ki. 12:20. The **בִּי** is explanatory: the Lord delivered up His people to the plunderers, for He rent Israel from the house of David as a punishment for the idolatry of Solomon, and the Israelites made Jeroboam king, who turned Israel away from Jehovah, etc. The *Cheth-b* **וַיִּדָּא** is to be read **וַיִּדָּא**, the *Hiphil* of **וַיִּדָּא = נָדָה**, “he caused to

depart away from the Lord.” The *Keri* כִּרְיָהּ, *Hiphil* of כִּרְיָהּ, he drove away, turned from the Lord (cf. Deu. 13:11), is not unusual, but it is an unnecessary gloss.

**2Ki. 17:22, 23.** The sons of Israel (the ten tribes) walked in all the sins of Jeroboam, till the Lord removed them from His face, thrust them out of the land of the Lord, as He had threatened them through all His prophets, namely, from the time of Jeroboam onwards (compare 1Ki. 14:15, 16, and also Hos. 1: 6; 9:16, Amo. 3:11, 12; 5:27, Isa. 28 etc.). The banishment to Assyria (see v. 6) lasted “unto this day,” i.e., till the time when our books were written.<sup>f42</sup>

**2Ki. 17:24-41.** The Samaritans and Their Worship. — After the transportation of the Israelites, the king of Assyria brought colonists from different provinces of his kingdom into the cities of Samaria. The king of Assyria is not Salmanasar, for it is evident from v. 25 that a considerable period intervened between the carrying away of the Israelites and the sending of colonists into the depopulated land. It is true that Salmanasar only is mentioned in what precedes, but the section vv. 24-41 is not so closely connected with the first portion of the chapter, that the same king of Assyria must necessarily be spoken of in both. According to Ezz. 4: 2, it was Esarhaddon who removed the heathen settlers to Samaria. It is true that the attempt has been made to reconcile this with the assumption that the king of Assyria mentioned in our verse is Salmanasar, by the conjecture that one portion of these colonists was settled there by Salmanasar, another by Esarhaddon; and it has also been assumed that in this expedition Esarhaddon carried away the last remnant of the ten tribes, namely, all who had fled into the mountains and inaccessible corners of the land, and to some extent also in Judaea, during Salmanasar’s invasion, and had then collected together in the land again after the Assyrians had withdrawn. But there is not the smallest intimation anywhere of a second transplantation of heathen colonists to Samaria, any more than of a second removal of the remnant of the Israelites who were left behind in the land after the time of Salmanasar. The prediction in Isa. 7: 8, that in sixty-five years more Ephraim was to be destroyed, so that it would be no longer a people, even if it referred to the transplantation of the heathen colonists to Samaria by Esarhaddon, as Usher, Hengstenberg, and others suppose, would by no means necessitate the carrying away of the last remnant of the Israelites by this king, but simply the occupation of the land by heathen settlers, with whom the last remains of the Ephraimites intermingled, so that Ephraim ceased to be a people. As long as the land of Israel was merely laid waste and deprived of the greater portion of its Israelitish population, there always remained the possibility that the exiles might one day return to their native land and once more form one people with those who were left behind, and so long might Israel be still

regarded as a nation; just as the Judaeans, when in exile in Babylon, did not cease to be a people, because they looked forward with certain hope to a return to their fatherland after a banishment of seventy years. But after heathen colonists had been transplanted into the land, with whom the remainder of the Israelites who were left in the land became fused, so that there arose a mixed Samaritan people of a predominantly heathen character, it was impossible to speak any longer of a people of Ephraim in the land of Israel. This transplantation of colonists out of Babel, Cutha, etc., into the cities of Samaria might therefore be regarded as the point of time at which the nation of Ephraim was entirely dissolved, without any removal of the last remnant of the Israelites having taken place. We must indeed assume this if the ten tribes were deported to the very last man, and the Samaritans were in their origin a purely heathen people without any admixture of Israelitish blood, as Hengstenberg assumes and has endeavoured to prove. But the very opposite of this is unmistakably apparent from 2Ch. 34: 6, 9, according to which there were not a few Israelites left in the depopulated land in the time of Josiah. (Compare Kalkar, *Die Samaritaner ein Mischvolk*, in Pelt's *theol. Mitarbeiten*, iii. 3, pp. 24ff.). — We therefore regard Esarhaddon as the Assyrian king who brought the colonists to Samaria. The object to **יְבֹא** may be supplied from the context, more especially from **יְשִׁב**, which follows. He brought inhabitants from *Babel*, i.e., from the country, not the city of Babylon, from *Cuthah*, etc. The situation of *Cuthah* or *Cuth* (v. 30) cannot be determined with certainty. M. v. Niebuhr (*Gesch.* p. 166) follows Josephus, who speaks of the Cuthaeans in *Ant.* ix. 14, 3, and x. 9, 7, as a people dwelling in Persia and Media, and identifies them with the *Kossaeans*, *Kissians*, *Khushiya*, *Chuzi*, who lived to the north-east of Susa, in the north-eastern portion of the present Khusistan; whereas Gesenius (*thes.* p. 674), Rosenmüller (*bibl. Althk.* 1, 2, p. 29), and J. D. Michaelis (*Supplem. ad Lex. hebr.* p. 1255) have decided in favour of the *Cutha* (Arabic *kûtâ* or *kûta*) in the Babylonian *Irak*, in the neighbourhood of the *Nahr Malca*, in support of which the fact may also be adduced, that, according to a communication from Spiegel (in the *Auslande*, 1864, No. 46, p. 1089), *Cutha*, a town not mentioned elsewhere, was situated by the wall in the north-east of Babylon, probably on the spot where the hill *Ohaimir* with its ruins stands. The greater number of colonists appear to have come from *Cutha*, because the Samaritans are called **כוֹתִיִּים** by the Rabbins.

**אַוּוָּא**, *Avva*, is almost always, and probably with correctness, regarded as being the same place as the **עֵוָּה** (*Ivva*) mentioned in 2Ki. 18:34 and 19:13, as the conjecture naturally suggests itself to every one that the *Avvaeans* removed to Samaria by Esarhaddon were inhabitants of the kingdom of *Avva* destroyed by the Assyrian king, and the form **עֵוָּה** is probably simply connected with the

appellative explanation given to the word by the Masoretes. As *Ivvâh* is placed by the side of *Henah* in 2Ki. 18:34 and 19:13, *Avva* can hardly by any other than the country of *Hebeh*, situated on the Euphrates between *Anah* and the *Chabur* (M. v. Niebuhr, p. 167). *Hamath* is *Epiphania* on the Orontes: see at 1Ki. 8:65 and Num. 13:21. *Sepharvaim* is no doubt the *Sippara* (Σιπφάρα) of Ptolem. (v. 18, 7), the southernmost city of Mesopotamia on the Euphrates, above the Nahr Malca, the Ἡλιούπολις ἐν Σιππάρουσι or Σιππαρηγῶν πόλις, which Berosus and Abydenus mention (in Euseb. *Praepar. evang.* ix. 12 and 41, and *Chronic. Armen.* i. pp. 33, 36, 49, 55) as belonging to the time of the flood. — שְׁמֶרֶן: this is the first time in which the name is evidently applied to the kingdom of Samaria.

**2Ki. 17:25-28.** In the earliest period of their settlement in the cities of Samaria the new settlers were visited by lions, which may have multiplied greatly during the time that the land was lying waste. The settlers regarded this as a punishment from Jehovah, i.e., from the deity of the land, whom they did not worship, and therefore asked the king of Assyria for a priest to teach them the right, i.e., the proper, worship of God of the land; whereupon the king sent them one of the priests who had been carried away, and he took up his abode in Bethel, and instructed the people in the worship of Jehovah. The author of our books also looked upon the lions as sent by Jehovah as a punishment, according to Lev. 26:22, because the new settlers did not fear Him. הַאֲרִיֹּת: the lions which had taken up their abode there. וַיֵּלְכוּ וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁם: that they (the priest with his companions) went away and dwelt there. There is no need therefore to alter the plural into the singular.

The priest sent by the Assyrian king was of course an Israelitish priest of the calves, for he was one of those who had been carried away and settled in Bethel, the chief seat of Jeroboam's image-worship, and he also taught the colonists to fear or worship Jehovah after the manner of the land. This explains the state of divine worship in the land as described in vv. 29ff. "Every separate nation (גֹּיִם גֹּיִם: see Ewald, § 313, *a.*) made itself its own gods, and set them up in the houses of the high places (בֵּית הַבָּמוֹת: see at 1Ki. 12:31, and for the singular בֵּית, Ewald, § 270, *c.*) which the Samaritans (הַשְּׁמֶרֶנִים, not the colonists sent thither by Esarhaddon, but the former inhabitants of the kingdom of Israel, who are so called from the capital Samaria) had made (built); every nation in the cities where they dwelt."

**2Ki. 17:30.** The people of Babel made themselves סִכּוֹת בָּנוֹת, *daughters' booths*. Selden (*de Diis Syr.* ii. 7), Münter (*Relig. der Babyl.* pp. 74, 75), and others understand by these the temples consecrated to Mylitta or Astarte, the καμάραι, or covered little carriages, or tents for prostitution (Herod. i. 199);

but Beyer (*Addit. ad Seld.* p. 297) has very properly objected to this, that according to the context the reference is to idols or objects of idolatrous worship, which were set up in the **בֵּית בַּמֹּזֵת**. It is more natural to suppose that small tent-temples are meant, which were set up as idols in the houses of the high places along with the images which they contained, since according to 2Ki. 23: 7 women wove **בְּתִיִּם**, little temples, for the Asherah, and Ezekiel speaks of patch-work *Bamoth*, i.e., of small temples made of cloth. It is possible, however, that there is more truth than is generally supposed in the view held by the Rabbins, that **סִבּוֹת בְּנוֹת** signifies an image of the “hen,” or rather the constellation of “the clucking-hen” (*Gluckhenne*), the Pleiades, — *simulacrum gallinae coelestis in signo Tauri nidulantis*, as a *symbolum Veneris coelestis*, as the other idols are all connected with animal symbolism. In any case the explanation given by Movers, *involucra seu secreta mulierum*, female lingams, which were handed by the hierodulae to their paramours instead of the Mylitta-money (*Phöniz.* i. p. 596), is to be rejected, because it is at variance with the usage of speech and the context, and because the existence of female lingams has first of all to be proved. For the different views, see *Ges. thes.* p. 952, and Leyrer in Herzog’s *Cycl.* — The Cuthaeans made themselves as a god, **נֶרְגַּל**, *Nergal*, i.e., according to Winer, Gesenius, Stuhr, and others, the planet *Mars*, which the Zabians call *n̄rīg*, *Nerig*, as the god of war (*Codex Nasar*, i. 212, 224), the Arabs *mrr̄-x*, *Mirrig*; whereas older commentators identified *Nergal* with the sun-god *Bel*, deriving the name from **נִיר**, light, and **גַּל**, a fountain = fountain of light (Selden, ii. 8, and Beyer, *Add.* pp. 301ff.). But these views are both of them very uncertain. According to the Rabbins (Rashi, R. Salomo, Kimchi), *Nergal* was represented as a cock. This statement, which is ridiculed by Gesenius, Winer, and Thenius, is proved to be correct by the Assyrian monuments, which contain a number of animal deities, and among them the cock standing upon an altar, and also upon a gem a priest praying in front of a cock (see Layard’s *Nineveh*). The pugnacious cock is found generally in the ancient ethnical religions in frequent connection with the gods of war (cf. J. G. Müller in Herzog’s *Cycl.*). **אַשִּׁמָּא**, *Ashima*, the god of the people of Hamath, was worshipped, according to rabbinical statements, under the figure of a bald he-goat (see Selden, ii. 9). The suggested combination of the name with the Phoenician deity *Esmun*, the Persian *Asuman*, and the Zendic *acmano*, i.e., heaven, is very uncertain.

**2Ki. 17:31.** Of the idols of the *Avvaeans*, according to rabbinical accounts in Selden, *l.c.*, *Nibchaz* had the form of a dog (**נִבְחָז**, *latrator*, from **נִבַּח**), and *Tartak* that of an ass. Gesenius regards *Tartak* as a demon of the lower regions, because in Pehlwi *tar* — *thakh* signifies deep darkness or hero of darkness, and

Nibchaz as an evil demon, the נבאז of the Zabians, whom Norberg in his *Onomast. cod. Nasar.* p. 100, describes as *horrendus rex infernalis: posito ipsius throno ad telluris*, i.e., *lucis et caliginis confinium, sed imo acherontis fundo pedibus substrato*, according to *Codex Adami*, ii. 50, lin. 12. — With regard to the gods of the Sepharvites, *Adrammelech* and *Anammelech*, it is evident from the offering of children in sacrifice to them that they were related to Moloch. The name אדרמלך which occurs as a personal name in 2Ki. 19:37 and Isa. 37:38, has been explained either from the Semitic אדר as meaning “glorious king,” or from the Persian *dr, zr*, in which case it means “fire-king,” and is supposed to refer to the sun (see Ges. *on Isaiah*, ii. p. 347). ענמלך is supposed to be Hyde (*de relig. vett. Persarum*, p. 131) to be the group of stars called *Cepheus*, which goes by the name of “the shepherd and flock” and “the herd-stars” in the Oriental astrognosis, and in this case ענמ might answer to the Arabic *genm* = ضان. Movers, on the other hand (*Phöniz.* i. pp. 410, 411), regards them as two names of the same deity, a double-shaped Moloch, and reads the *Cheth<sup>b</sup>* אלה ספרים as the singular אל הספרים, the god of Sepharvaim. This double god, according to his explanation, was a sun-being, because Sepharvaim, of which he was *πολιούχος*, is designated by Berosus as a city of the sun. This may be correct; but there is something very precarious in the further assumption, that “*Adar-Melech* is to be regarded as the sun’s fire, and indeed, since *Adar* is Mars, that he is so far to be thought of as a destructive being,” and that *Anammelech* is a contraction of עין מלך, *oculus Molechi*, signifying the ever-watchful eye of Saturn; according to which *Adrammelech* is to be regarded as the solar Mars, *Anammelech* as the solar Saturn. The explanations given by Hitzig (*on Isa.* p. 437) and Benfey (*die Monatsnamen*, pp. 187, 188) are extremely doubtful.

**2Ki. 17:32.** In addition to these idols, *Jehovah* also was worshipped in temples of the high places, according to the instructions of the Israelitish priest sent by the king of Assyria. וַיִּהְיוּ יִרְאִים: “and they were (also) worshipping *Jehovah*, and made themselves priests of the mass of the people” (מקצותם) as in 1Ki. 12:31). וַיִּהְיוּ עֹשִׂים לָהֶם: “and they (the priests) were preparing them (sacrifices) in the houses of the high places.”

**2Ki. 17:33.** Verse 33 sums up by way of conclusion the description of the various kinds of worship.

**2Ki. 17:34-41.** This mixed *cultus*, composed of the worship of idols and the worship of *Jehovah*, they retained till the time when the books of the Kings were written. “Unto this day they do after the former customs.” הַרְאֲשָׁנִים

הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים can only be the religious usages and ordinances which were introduced at the settlement of the new inhabitants, and which are described in vv. 28-33. The prophetic historian observes still further, that “they fear not Jehovah, and do not according to their statutes and their rights, nor according to the law and commandment which the Lord had laid down for the sons of Jacob, to whom He gave the name of Israel” (see 1Ki. 18:31), i.e., according to the Mosaic law. מִשְׁפָּטִים and חֻקֵּיהֶם “their statutes and their right,” stands in antithesis to הַתּוֹרָה וְהַמִּצְוָה which *Jehovah* gave to the children of Israel. If, then, the clause, “they do not according to their statutes and their right,” is not to contain a glaring contradiction to the previous assertion, “unto this day they do after their first (former) rights,” we must understand by חֻקֵּיהֶם וּמִשְׁפָּטֵיהֶם the statutes and the right of the ten tribes, i.e., the worship of Jehovah under the symbols of the calves, and must explain the inexactness of the expression “their statutes and their right” from the fact that the historian was thinking of the Israelites who had been left behind in the land, or of the remnant of the Israelitish population that had become mixed up with the heathen settlers (2Ki. 23:19, 20; 2Ch. 34: 6, 9, 33). The meaning of the verse is therefore evidently the following: The inhabitants of Samaria retain to this day the *cultus* composed of the worship of idols and of Jehovah under the form of an image, and do not worship Jehovah either after the manner of the ten tribes or according to the precepts of the Mosaic law. Their worship is an amalgamation of the Jehovah image-worship and of heathen idolatry (cf. v. 41). — To indicate the character of this worship still more clearly, and hold it up as a complete breach of the covenant and as utter apostasy from Jehovah, the historian describes still more fully, in vv. 35-39, how earnestly and emphatically the people of Israel had been prohibited from worshipping other gods, and urged to worship Jehovah alone, who had redeemed Israel out of Egypt and exalted it into His own nation. For v. 35 compare Exo. 20: 5; for v. 36, the exposition of v. 7, also Exo. 32:11; 6: 6; 20:23; Deu. 4:34; 5:15, etc. In v. 37 the committal of the *thorah* to writing is presupposed. For v. 39, see Deu. 13: 5; 23:15, etc.

*2Ki. 17:40.* They did not hearken, however (the subject is, of course, the ten tribes), but they (the descendants of the Israelites who remained in the land) do after their former manner. מִשְׁפָּטֵיהֶם הָרִאשׁוֹן is their manner of worshipping God, which was a mixture of idolatry and of the image-worship of Jehovah, as in v. 34. — In v. 41 this is repeated once more, and the whole of these reflections are brought to a close with the additional statement, that their children and grandchildren do the same to this day. — In the period following the Babylonian captivity the Samaritans relinquished actual idolatry, and by the adoption of the Mosaic book of the law were converted to monotheism. For the later history of the Samaritans, of whom a small handful have been preserved to

the present day in the ancient Sichern, the present Nablus, see Theod. Guil. Joh. Juynboll, *commentarii in historiam gentis Samaritanae*, Lugd. Bat. 1846, 4, and H. Petermann, *Samaria and the Samaritans*, in Herzog's *Cycl.*

### **III. History of the Kingdom of Judah from the Destruction of the Kingdom of the Ten Tribes to the Babylonian Captivity.**

**2Ki. 18-25.** At the time when the kingdom of the ten tribes was destroyed, Judah found itself in a state of dependence upon the imperial power of Assyria, into which it had been brought by the ungodly policy of Ahaz. But three years before the expedition of Salmanasar against Samaria, the pious Hezekiah had ascended the throne of his ancestor David in Jerusalem, and had set on foot with strength and zeal the healing of Judah's wounds, by exterminating idolatry and by restoring the legal worship of Jehovah. As Hezekiah was devoted to the Lord his God with undivided heart and trusted firmly in Him, the Lord also acknowledged him and his undertakings. When Sennacherib had overrun Judah with a powerful army after the revolt of Hezekiah, and had summoned the capital to surrender, the Lord heard the prayer of His faithful servant Hezekiah and saved Judah and Jerusalem from the threatening destruction by the miraculous destruction of the forces of the proud Sennacherib (2Ki. 18 and 19), whereby the power of Assyria was so weakened that Judah had no longer much more to fear from it, although it did chastise Manasseh (2Ch. 33:11 ff.). Nevertheless this deliverance, through and in the time of Hezekiah, was merely a postponement of the judgment with which Judah had been threatened by the prophets (Isaiah and Micah), of the destruction of the kingdom and the banishment of its inhabitants. Apostasy from the living God and moral corruption had struck such deep and firm roots in the nation, that the idolatry, outwardly suppressed by Hezekiah, broke out again openly immediately after his death; and that in a still stronger degree, since his son and successor Manasseh not only restored all the abominations of idolatry which his father had rooted out, but even built altars to idols in the courts of the temple of Jehovah, and filled Jerusalem with innocent blood from one end to the other (2Ki. 21), and thereby filled up the measure of sins, so that the Lord had to announce through His prophets to the godless king and people His decree to destroy Jerusalem and cast out the remaining portion of the people of His inheritance among the heathen, and to show the severity of His judgments in the fact that Manasseh was led away captive by the officers of the Assyrian king. And even though Manasseh himself renounced all gross idolatry and restored the legal worship in the temple after his release and return to Jerusalem, as the result of this chastisement, this alteration in the king's mind exerted no lasting influence



upon the people generally, and was completely neutralized by his successor Amon, who did not walk in the way of Jehovah, but merely worshipped his father's idols. In this state of things even the God-fearing Josiah, with all the stringency with which he exterminated idolatry, more especially after the discovery of the book of the law, was unable to effect any true change of heart or sincere conversion of the people to their God, and could only wipe out the outward signs and traces of idolatry, and establish the external supremacy of the worship of Jehovah. The people, with their carnal security, imagined that they had done quite enough for God by restoring the outward and legal form of worship, and that they were now quite sure of the divine protection; and did not hearken to the voice of the prophets, who predicted the speedy coming of the judgments of God. Josiah had warded off the bursting forth of these judgments for thirty years, through his humiliation before God and the reforms which he introduced; but towards the end of his reign the Lord began to put away Judah from before His face for the sake of Manasseh's sins, and to reject the city which He had chosen that His name might dwell there (2Ki. 22-23:27). Necho king of Egypt advanced to extend his sway to the Euphrates and overthrow the Assyrian empire. Josiah marched to meet him, for the purpose of preventing the extension of his power into Syria. A battle was fought at Megiddo, the Judaeen army was defeated, Josiah fell in the battle, and with him the last hope of the sinking state (2Ki. 23:29, 30; 2Ch. 35:23, 24). In Jerusalem Jehoahaz was made king by the people; but after a reign of three months he was taken prisoner by Necho at Riblah in the land of Hamath, and led away to Egypt, where he died. Eliakim, the elder son of Josiah, was appointed by Necho as Egyptian vassal-king in Jerusalem, under the name of Jehoiakim. He was devoted to idolatry, and through his love of show (Jer. 22:13ff.) still further ruined the kingdom, which was already exhausted by the tribute to be paid to Egypt. In the fourth year of his reign Pharaoh-Necho succumbed at Carchemish to the Chaldaean power, which was rising under Nebuchadnezzar upon the ruins of the Assyrian kingdom. At the same time Jeremiah proclaimed to the incorrigible nation that the Lord of Sabaoth would deliver Judah with all the surrounding nations into the hand of His servant Nebuchadnezzar, that the land of Judah would be laid waste and the people serve the king of Babylon seventy years (Jer. 25). Nebuchadnezzar appeared in Judah immediately afterwards to follow up his victory over Necho, took Jerusalem, made Jehoiakim his subject, and carried away Daniel, with many of the leading young men, to Babylon (2Ki. 24: 1). But after some years Jehoiakim revolted; whereupon Nebuchadnezzar sent fresh troops against Jerusalem to besiege the city, and after defeating Jehoiachin, who had in the meantime followed his father upon the throne, led away into captivity to Babylon, along with the kernel of the nation, nobles, warriors, craftsmen, and smiths, and set upon the throne Mattaniah, the only remaining son of Josiah, under the name of Zedekiah (2Ki. 24: 2-17). But when he also formed an

alliance with Pharaoh-Hophra in the ninth year of his reign, and revolted from the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar advanced immediately with all his forces, besieged Jerusalem, and having taken the city and destroyed it, put an end to the kingdom of Judah by slaying Zedekiah and his sons, and carrying away all the people that were left, with the exception of a very small remnant of cultivators of the soil (2Ki. 24:18-25:26), a hundred and thirty-four years after the destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes.

## Ch. 18. Reign of King Hezekiah. Sennacherib Invades Judah and Threatens Jerusalem.

*2Ki. 18: 1-8. Length and character of Hezekiah's reign.* <sup>f43</sup>

— Vv. 1, 2. In the third year of Hoshea of Israel, Hezekiah became king over Judah, when he was twenty-five years old. According to vv. 9 and 10, the fourth and sixth years of Hezekiah corresponded to the seventh and ninth of Hoshea; consequently his first year apparently ran parallel to the fourth of Hoshea, so that Josephus (*Ant.* ix. 13, 1) represents him as having ascended the throne in the fourth year of Hoshea's reign. But there is no necessity for this alteration. If we assume that the commencement of his reign took place towards the close of the third year of Hoshea, the fourth and sixth years of his reign coincided for the most part with the sixth and ninth years of Hoshea's reign. The name **חֲזַקְיָהוּ** or **חֲזַקְיָהוּ** (vv. 9, 13, etc.) is given in its complete form **יְחֲזַקְיָהוּ**, "whom Jehovah strengthens," in 2Ch. 29ff. and Isa. 1: 1; and **יְחֲזַקְיָהוּ** in Hos. 1: 1 and Mic. 1: 1. On his age when he ascended the throne, see the Comm. on 2Ki. 16: 2. The name of his mother, **אֲבִי**, is a strongly contracted form of **אֲבִיָּה** (2Ch. 29: 1).

*2Ki. 18: 3ff.* As ruler Hezekiah walked in the footsteps of his ancestor David. He removed the high places and the other objects of idolatrous worship, trusted in Jehovah, and adhered firmly to Him without wavering; therefore the Lord made all his undertakings prosper. **הַמְצָבוֹת**, **הַבְּמוֹת**, and **הָאֲשֵׁרָה** (see at 1Ki. 14:23) embrace all the objects of idolatrous worship, which had been introduced into Jerusalem and Judah in the reigns of the former kings, and more especially in that of Ahaz. The singular **הָאֲשֵׁרָה** is used in a collective sense = **הָאֲשֵׁרִים** (2Ch. 31: 1). The only other idol that is specially mentioned is the brazen serpent which Moses made in the wilderness (Num. 21: 8, 9), and which the people with their leaning to idolatry had turned in the course of time into an object of idolatrous worship. The words, "to this day were the children of Israel burning incense to it," do not mean that this took place without interruption from the time of Moses down to that of Hezekiah, but simply, that it occurred at intervals, and that the idolatry carried on with this idol lasted till the time of

Hezekiah, namely, till this king broke in pieces the brazen serpent, because of the idolatry that was associated with it. For further remarks on the meaning of this symbol, see the Comm. on Num. 21: 8, 9. The people called (נִקְרָא, one called) this serpent נְחֹשֶׁתַן, i.e., a brazen thing. This epithet does not involve anything contemptuous, as the earlier commentators supposed, nor the idea of “Brass-god” (Ewald).

**2Ki. 18: 5.** The verdict, “after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah,” refers to Hezekiah’s confidence in God (בַּטָּח), in which he had no equal, whereas in the case of Josiah his conscientious adherence to the Mosaic law is extolled in the same words (2Ki. 23:25); so that there is no ground for saying that there is a contradiction between our verse and 2Ki. 23:25 (Thenius).

**2Ki. 18: 6.** “יָדָבֵק בֵּי” he adhered faithfully to Jehovah (דָּבַק as in 1Ki. 11: 2), and departed not from Him, i.e., he never gave himself up to idolatry.

**2Ki. 18: 7.** The Lord therefore gave him success in all his undertakings (הִשְׁכִּיל, see at 1Ki. 2: 3), and even in his rebellion against the king of Assyria, whom he no longer served, i.e., to whom he paid no more tribute. It was through Ahaz that Judah had been brought into dependence upon Assyria; and Hezekiah released himself from this, by refusing to pay any more tribute, probably after the departure of Salmanasar from Palestine, and possibly not till after the death of that king. Sennacherib therefore made war upon Hezekiah to subjugate Judah to himself again (see vv. 13ff.).

**2Ki. 18: 8.** Hezekiah smote the Philistines to Gaza, and their territory from the tower of the watchmen to the fortified city, i.e., all the towns from the least to the greatest (see at 2Ki. 17: 9). He thus chastised these enemies for their invasion of Judah in the time of Ahaz, wrested from them the cities which they had taken at that time (2Ch. 28:18), and laid waste all their country to *Gaza*, i.e., *Ghuzzeh*, the most southerly of the chief cities of Philistia (see at Jos. 13: 3). This probably took place after the defeat of Sennacherib (cf. 2Ch. 32:22, 23).

**2Ki. 18: 9-12.** In vv. 9-12 the destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes by Salmanasar, which has already been related according to the annals of the kingdom of Israel in 2Ki. 17: 3-6, is related once more according to the annals of the kingdom of Judah, in which this catastrophe is also introduced as an event that was memorable in relation to all the covenant-nation.

**2Ki. 18:13-37.** *Sennacherib invades Judah and threatens Jerusalem.* <sup>f44</sup> — Sennacherib, סַנְחֶרִיב (*Sanchēribh*), Σενναχηρίμ (LXX), Σεναχήριβος

(Joseph.), *Σαναχάριβος* (Herodot.), whose name has not yet been deciphered with certainty upon the Assyrian monuments or clearly explained (see J. Brandis *uber den histor. Gewinn aus der Entzifferung der assyr. Inschriften*, pp. 103ff., and M. v. Niebuhr, *Gesch. Assurs*, p. 37), was the successor of Salmanasar (Sargina according to the monuments). He is called βασιλεὺς Αραβίων τε καὶ Ἀσσυρίων by Herodotus (ii. 141), and reigned, according to Berosus, eighteen years. He took all the fortified cities in Judah (מְצֻדָּוֹתַי, with the masculine suffix instead of the feminine: cf. Ewald, § 184, c.). The מְצֻדָּוֹתַי, *all*, is not to be pressed; for, beside the strongly fortified capital Jerusalem, he had not yet taken the fortified cities of Lachish and Libnah (v. 17 and 2Ki. 19: 8) at the time, when, according to vv. 14ff., he sent a division of his army against Jerusalem, and summoned Hezekiah to surrender that city. According to Herodotus (*l.c.*), the real object of his campaign was Egypt, which is also apparent from 2Ki. 19:24, and is confirmed by Isa. 10:24; for which reason *Tirhaka* marched against him (2Ki. 19: 8; cf. M. v. Niebuhr, *Gesch. Assurs*, pp. 171, 172).

*2Ki. 18:14ff.* On the report of Sennacherib's approach, Hezekiah made provision at once for the safety of Jerusalem. He had the city fortified more strongly, and the fountain of the upper Gihon and the brook near the city stopped up (see at v. 17), to cut off the supply of water from the besiegers, as is stated in 2Ch. 32: 2-8, and confirmed by Isa. 22: 8-11. In the meantime Sennacherib had pressed forward to *Lachish*, i.e., *Um Lakis*, in the plain of Judah, on the south-west of Jerusalem, seven hours to the west of *Eleutheropolis* on the road to Egypt (see at Jos. 10: 3); so that Hezekiah, having doubts as to the possibility of a successful resistance, sent ambassadors to negotiate with him, and promised to pay him as much tribute as he might demand if he would withdraw. The confession "I have sinned" is not to be pressed, inasmuch as it was forced from Hezekiah by the pressure of distress. Since Asshur had made Judah tributary by faithless conduct on the part of Tiglath-pileser towards Ahaz, there was nothing really wrong in the shaking off of this yoke by the refusal to pay any further tribute. But Hezekiah certainly did wrong, when, after taking the first step, he was alarmed at the disastrous consequences, and sought to purchase once more the peace which he himself had broken, by a fresh submission and renewal of the payment of tribute. This false step on the part of the pious king, which arose from a temporary weakness of faith, was nevertheless turned into a blessing through the pride of Sennacherib and the covenant-faithfulness of the Lord towards him and his kingdom. Sennacherib demanded the enormous sum of three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold (more than two and a half million thalers, or £375,000); and Hezekiah not only gave him all the gold and silver found in the treasures of the temple and palace, but had the gold plates with which he had covered the doors and doorposts of the temple (2Ch. 29: 3) removed, to send

them to the king of Assyria. **הַאֲמֹנֹת**, lit., the supports, i.e., the posts, of the doors.

These negotiations with Sennacherib on the part of Hezekiah are passed over both in the book of Isaiah and also in the Chronicles, because they had no further influence upon the future progress of the war.

**2Ki. 18:17ff.** For though Sennacherib did indeed take the money, he did not depart, as he had no doubt promised, but, emboldened still further by this submissiveness, sent a detachment of his army against Jerusalem, and summoned Hezekiah to surrender the capital. “He sent Tartan, Rabsaris, and Rabshakeh.” Rabshakeh only is mentioned in Isaiah, as the chief speaker in the negotiations which follow, although in Isa. 37: 6 and 24 allusion is evidently made to the other two. Tartan had no doubt the chief command, since he is not only mentioned first here, but conducted the siege of Ashdod, according to Isa. 20: 1. The three names are probably only official names, or titles of the offices held by the persons mentioned. For **רַב־סָרִיס** means *princeps eunuchorum*, and **רַב־שָׁקֶה** chief cup-bearer. **תַּרְטָן** is explained by Hitzig on Isa. 20: 1 as derived from the Persian *târ-tan*, “high person or vertex of the body,” and in Jer. 39: 3 as “body-guard;” but this is hardly correct, as the other two titles are Semitic. These generals took up their station with their army “at the conduit of the upper pool, which ran by the road of the fuller’s field,” i.e., the conduit which flowed from the upper pool — according to 2Ch. 32:30, the basin of the upper *Gihon* (*Birket el Mamilla*) — into the lower pool (*Birket es Sultân*: see at 1Ki. 1:33). According to Isa. 7: 3, this conduit was in existence as early as the time of Ahaz. The “end” of it is probably the locality in which the conduit began at the upper pool or Gihon, or where it first issued from it. This conduit which led from the upper Gihon into the lower, and which is called in 2Ch. 32:30 “the outflow of the upper Gihon,” Hezekiah stopped up, and conducted the water downwards, i.e., the underground, towards the west into the city of David; that is to say, he conducted the water of the upper Gihon, which had previously flowed along the western side of the city outside the wall into the lower Gihon and so away down the valley of Ben-hinnom, into the city itself by means of a subterranean channel,<sup>45</sup>

that he might retain this water for the use of the city in the event of a siege of Jerusalem, and keep it from the besiegers.

This water was probably collected in the cistern (**הַבְּרִכָּה**) which Hezekiah made, i.e., order to be constructed (2Ki. 20:20), or the reservoir “between the two walls for the waters of the old pool,” mentioned in Isa. 22:11, i.e., most probably the reservoir still existing at some distance to the east of the Joppa gate on the western side of the road which leads to the Church of the Holy

Sepulchre, the so-called “pool of Hezekiah,” which the natives call *Birket el Hamman*, “Bathing-pool,” because it supplies a bath in the neighbourhood, or *B. el Batrak*, “Patriarch’s pool” (see Robinson, *Pal.* i. p. 487, and *Fresh Researches into the Topography of Jerusalem*, pp. 111ff.), since this is still fed by a conduit from the *Mamilla* pool (see E. G. Schultz, *Jerusalem*, p. 31, and Tobler, *Denkblätter*, pp. 44ff.).<sup>f46</sup>

**2Ki. 18:18.** Hezekiah considered it beneath his dignity to negotiate personally with the generals of Sennacherib. He sent three of his leading ministers out to the front of the city: *Eliakim* the son of Hilkiah, the captain of the castle, who had only received the appointment to this office a short time before in *Shebna*’s place (Isa. 22:20, 21); *Shebna*, who was still secretary of state (סֹפֵר: see at 2Sa. 8:17); and *Joach* the son of Asaph, the chancellor (מְזַכֵּר: see at 2Sa. 8:16).

*Rabshakeh* made a speech to these three (vv. 19-25), in which he tried to show that Hezekiah’s confidence that he would be able to resist the might of the king of Assyria was perfectly vain, since neither Egypt (v. 21), nor his God (v. 22), nor his forces (v. 23), would be able to defend him.

**2Ki. 18:19.** “*The great king:*” the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian kings all assumed this title (cf. Eze. 26: 7; Dan. 2:37), because kings of conquered lands were subject to them as vassals (see at Isa. 10: 8). “What is this confidence that thou cherishest?” i.e., how vain or worthless is this confidence!

**2Ki. 18:20.** “Thou sayest...it is only a lip-word...: counsel and might for battle;” i.e., if thou speakest of counsel and might for battle, that is only שִׁפְתַיִם דָּבַר, a word that merely comes from the lips, not from the heart, the seat of the understanding, i.e., a foolish and inconsiderate saying (cf. Pro. 14:23; Job. 11: 2). — אִמְרַתִּי is to be preferred to the אִמְרַתִּי of Isaiah as the more original of the two. עָפָה, now, sc. we will see on whom thou didst rely, when thou didst rebel against me.

**2Ki. 18:21.** On Egypt? “that broken reed, which runs into the hand of any one who would lean upon it (thinking it whole), and pierces it through.” This figure, which is repeated in Eze. 29: 6, 7, is so far suitably chosen, that the Nile, representing Egypt, is rich in reeds. What *Rabshakeh* says of Egypt here, *Isaiah* had already earnestly impressed upon his people (Isa. 30: 3-5), to warn them against trusting in the support of Egypt, from which one party in the nation expected help against Assyria.

**2Ki. 18:22.** Hezekiah (and Judah) had a stronger ground of confidence in *Jehovah* his God. Even this *Rabshakeh* tried to shake, availing himself very

skilfully, from his heathen point of view, of the reform which Hezekiah had made in the worship, and representing the abolition of the altars on the high places as an infringement upon the reverence that ought to be shown to God. “And if ye say, We trust in Jehovah our God, (I say:) is it not He whose high places and altars Hezekiah has taken away and has said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar (in the temple) in Jerusalem?” Instead of **כִּי תֹאמְרוּ**, according to which Rabshakeh turned to the deputies, we have in Isa. 7: 7 **כִּי תֹאמַר**, according to which the words are addressed to Hezekiah, as in v. 20. **תֹאמְרוּ** is preferred by Thenius, Knobel, and others, because in what follows Hezekiah is addressed in the third person. but the very circumstance that **תֹאמְרוּ** is apparently more suitable favours the originality of **תֹאמַר**, according to which the king is still addressed in the person of his ambassadors, and Rabshakeh only speaks directly to the ambassadors when this argument is answered. The attack upon the confidence which the Judaeans placed in their God commences with **הֲלוֹא הוּא**. The opinion of Thenius, that the second clause of the verse is a continuation of the words supposed to be spoken by the Judaeans who trusted in God, and that the apodosis does not follow till v. 23, is quite a mistake. The ambassadors of Hezekiah could not regard the high places and idolatrous altars that had been abolished as altars of Jehovah; and the apodosis could not commence with **וְעַתָּה**.

**2Ki. 18:23, 24.** Still less could Hezekiah rely upon his military resources. **נָא** **הִתְעַרַב**: enter, I pray thee, (into contest) with my lord, and I will give thee 2000 horses, if thou canst set the horsemen upon them. The meaning, of course, is not that Hezekiah could not raise 2000 soldiers in all, but that he could not produce so many men who were able to fight as horsemen. “How then wilt thou turn back a single one of the smallest lieutenants of my lord?” **אֶתְדַפְּנִי כֹל** **הַשִּׁיב**, to repulse a person’s face, means generally to turn away a person with his petition (1Ki. 2:16, 17), here to repulse an assailant. **פַּחַת אֶחָד** is one pasha; although **אֶחָד**, which is grammatically subordinate to **פַּחַת**, is in the construct state, that the genitives which follow may be connected (for this subordination of **אֶחָד** see Ewald, § 286, a.). **פַּחַח** (see at 1Ki. 10:15), lit., under-vicegerent, i.e., administrator of a province under a satrap, in military states also a subordinate officer. **וַתִּבְטַח**: and so (with thy military force so small) thou trustest in Egypt **לְרֶכֶב וְגוֹי**, so far as war-chariots and horsemen are concerned.

**2Ki. 18:25.** After Rabshakeh had thus, as he imagined, taken away every ground of confidence from Hezekiah, he added still further, that the Assyrian king himself had also not come without Jehovah, but had been summoned by

Him to effect the destruction of Judah. It is possible that some report may have reached his ears of the predictions of the prophets, who had represented the Assyrian invasion as a judgment from the Lord, and these he used for his own purposes. Instead of **עַל הַמְּקוֹם הַזֶּה**, against this place, i.e., Jerusalem, we have **עַל הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת** in Isaiah, — a reading which owes its origin simply to the endeavour to bring the two clauses into exact conformity to one another.

**2Ki. 18:26-37.** It was very conceivable that Rabshakeh's boasting might make an impression upon the people; the ambassadors of Hezekiah therefore interrupted him with the request that he would speak to them in Aramaean, as they understood that language, and not in Jewish, on account of the people who were standing upon the wall. **אַרְמִית** was the language spoken in Syria, Babylonia, and probably also in the province of Assyria, and may possibly have been Rabshakeh's mother-tongue, even if the court language of the Assyrian kings was an Aryan dialect. With the close affinity between the Aramaean and the Hebrew, the latter could not be unknown to Rabshakeh, so that he made use of it, just as the Aramaean language was intelligible to the ministers of Hezekiah, whereas the people in Jerusalem understood only **יְהוּדִית**, Jewish, i.e., the Hebrew language spoken in the kingdom of Judah. It is evident from the last clause of the verse that the negotiations were carried on in the neighbourhood of the city wall of Jerusalem.

**2Ki. 18:27.** But Rabshakeh rejected this proposal with the scornful remark, that his commission was not to speak to Hezekiah and his ambassadors only, but rather to the people upon the wall. The variation of the preposition **עַל** and **אַל** in **עַל אֲדֹנָיְךָ**, to thy lord (Hezekiah), and **אַלֶּיךָ**, to thee (Eliakim as chief speaker), is avoided in the text of Isaiah. **עַל** is frequently used for **אַל**, in the later usage of the language, in the sense of *to* or *at*. In the words "who sit upon the wall to eat their dung and drink their urine," Rabshakeh points to the horrors which a siege of Jerusalem would entail upon the inhabitants. For **חֲרִיָּהֶם = חֲרָאֵיהֶם**, *excrementa sua*, and **שִׁינֵיהֶם**, *urinas suas*, the Masoretes have substituted the euphemisms **צֹאָתָם**, going forth, and **מִיַּי רַגְלֵיהֶם**, water of their feet.

**2Ki. 18:28ff.** **וַיַּעֲמֹד**: not, he stood up, raised himself (Ges.), or came forward (Then.), but he stationed himself, assumed an attitude calculated for effect, and spoke to the people with a loud voice in the Jewish language, telling them to listen to the king of Assyria and not to be led astray by Hezekiah, i.e., to be persuaded to defend the city any longer, since neither Hezekiah nor Jehovah could defend them from the might of Sennacherib. **אַל-יִשְׂאָ**: let not Hezekiah deceive you, sc. by pretending to be able to defend or save Jerusalem.



In **מִיָּדוֹ**, “out of his (the Assyrian’s) hand,” the speaker ceases to speak in the name of his king. On the construction of the passive **תִּפְתָּן** with **אֶת־הָעִיר**, see Ewald, § 277, *d.*, although in the instance before us he proposes to expunge the **תָּ** after Isa. 36:15.

**2Ki. 18:31ff.** “Make peace with me and come out to me (sc., out of your walls, i.e., surrender to me), and ye shall eat every one his vine,...till I come and bring you into a land like your own land...” **בְּרַכָּה** is used here to signify peace as the concentration of weal and blessing. The imperative **וְאָכַלְוּ** expresses the consequence of what goes before (vid., Ewald, § 347, *b.*). To eat his vine and fig-tree and to drink the water of his well is a figure denoting the quiet and undisturbed enjoyment of the fruits of his own possession (cf. 1Ki. 5: 5). Even in the event of their yielding, the Assyrian would transport the Jewish people into another land, according to the standing custom of Asiatic conquerors in ancient times (for proofs see Hengstenberg, *De rebus Tyriis*, pp. 51, 52). To make the people contented with this thought, the boaster promised that the king of Assyria would carry them into a land which was quite as fruitful and glorious as the land of Canaan. The description of it as a land with corn and new wine, etc., recalls the picture of the land of Canaan in Deu. 8: 8 and 33:28. **וַיֵּת יְצֹהָר** is the olive-tree which yields good oil, in distinction from the wild olive-tree. **וְחָי וְגַי**: and ye shall live and not die, i.e., no harm shall befall you from me (Thenius). This passage is abridged in Isa. 36:17.

**2Ki. 18:33ff.** Even Jehovah could not deliver them any more than Hezekiah. As a proof of this, Rabshakeh enumerated a number of cities and lands which the king of Assyria had conquered, without their gods’ being able to offer any resistance to his power. “Where are the gods of Hamath, etc., that they might have delivered Samaria out of my hand?” Instead of **כִּי הֲצִילוּ** we have **וְכִי הֲצִי** and that they might have, which loosens the connection somewhat more between this clause and the preceding one, and makes it more independent. “Where are they?” is equivalent to they are gone, have perished (cf. 2Ki. 19:18); and “that they might have delivered” is equivalent to they have not delivered. The subject to **כִּי הֲצִילוּ** is **אֱלֹהֵי הַגּוֹיִם**, which includes the God of Samaria. Sennacherib regards himself as being as it were one with his predecessors, as the representative of the might of Assyria, so that he attributes to himself the conquests of cities and lands which his ancestors had made. The cities and lands enumerated in v. 34 have been mentioned already in 2Ki. 17:24 as conquered territories, from which colonists had been transplanted to Samaria, with the exception of *Arpad* and *Hena*. **אֲרַפָּד**, which is also mentioned in 2Ki. 19:13, Isa. 10: 9; 36:19; 37:13, and Jer. 49:23, in connection with *Hamath*, was certainly situated in the neighbourhood of that city, and still

exists, so far as the name is concerned, in the large village of }rfād, Arfād (mentioned by Maraszid, i. 47), in northern Syria in the district of Azâz, which was seven hours to the north of Haleb, according to Abulf. *Tab. Syr. ed. Köhler*, p. 23, and Niebuhr, *Reise*, ii. p. 414 (see Roediger, *Addenda ad Ges. thes.* p. 112). הַנֶּעַ, Hena, which is also combined with 'Ivvah in 2Ki. 19:13 and Isa. 37:13, is probably the city of {ânt Ana, on the Euphrates, mentioned by Abulf., and עֲנָה is most likely the same as עֲנָה in 2Ki. 17:24. The names עֲנָה הַנֶּעַ are omitted from the text of Isaiah in consequence of the abridgment of Rabshakeh's address.

*2Ki. 18:35.* V. 35 contains the conclusion drawn from the facts already adduced: "which of all the gods of the lands are they who have delivered their land out of my hand, that Jehovah should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?" i.e., as not one of the gods of the lands named have been able to rescue his land from Assyria, Jehovah also will not be able to defend Jerusalem.

*2Ki. 18:36, 37.* The people were quite silent at this address ("the people," עַמִּי, to whom Rabshakeh had wished to address himself); for Hezekiah had forbidden them to make any answer, not only to prevent Rabshakeh from saying anything further, but that the ambassadors of Sennacherib might be left in complete uncertainty as to the impression made by their words. The deputies of Hezekiah returned to the king with their clothes rent as a sign of grief at the words of the Assyrian, by which not only Hezekiah, but still more Jehovah, had been blasphemed, and reported what they had heard.

## **Ch. 19. Jerusalem Delivered. Destruction of the Assyrian Army and Death of Sennacherib. (Compare Isa. 37.)**

*2Ki. 19: 1-4.* When Hezekiah had heard from his counsellors the report of Rabshakeh's words, he rent his clothes with horror at his daring mockery of the living God (v. 4), put on mourning clothes as a sign of the trouble of his soul and went into the temple, and at the same time sent Eliakim and Shebna with the oldest of the priests in mourning costume to the prophet Isaiah, to entreat him to intercede with the Lord in these desperate circumstances.<sup>47</sup>

The order of the words: Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, is unusual (cf. 2Ki. 14:25; 20: 1; 1Ki. 16: 7, etc.), and is therefore altered in Isaiah into Isaiah the son of Amoz, the prophet.

*2Ki. 19: 3.* "A day of distress, and of chastisement, and of rejection is this day." תְּבוּבָה: the divine chastisement. נִסְאָה: contemptuous treatment, or rejection of the people on the part of God (compare נִסְאָה, Deu. 32:19,

Jer. 14:21, Lam. 2: 6). “For children have come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth.” A figure denoting extreme danger, the most desperate circumstances. If the woman in travail has not strength to bring forth the child which has come to the mouth of the womb, both the life of the child and that of the mother are exposed to the greatest danger; and this was the condition of the people here (see the similar figure in Hos. 13:13). For לָדָה instead of לָדֶת, see Ges. § 69, 2 Anm.

**2Ki. 19: 4.** Perhaps Jehovah thy God will hear the blasphemies of the living God on the part of Rabshakeh. יִשְׁמַע: hear, equivalent to observes, take notice of, and in this case punish. אֱלֹהִים חַי: the living God, in contrast to the gods of the heathen, who are only lifeless idols (cf. 1Sa. 17:26, 36). וְהוֹכִיחַ is not to be taken in connection with לְהַחֲרִי, as if it stood for לְהוֹכִיחַ, “and to scold with words” (Luth., Ges., etc.), but is a *perf. rel.* or a progressive perfect (Ewald, § 234, a.), and the continuation of יִשְׁמַע: “and will chastise (punish, sc. him) for the words which He has heard.” וְנִשְׂאתָ תְּפִלָּה “therefore lift up prayer (to heaven) for the (still) existing remnant, sc. of the people of God;” nearly all Judah having come into the power of Sennacherib since the carrying away of the ten tribes.

**2Ki. 19: 5-7.** Isaiah replied with this comforting promise: Hezekiah was not to be afraid of the blasphemous words of the Assyrian king; the Lord would frighten him with a report, so that he would return to his own land, and there would He cause him to fall by the sword. נַעֲרֵי מֶלֶךְ אֲשׁוּר, the servants or young men of the Assyrian king, is a derogatory epithet applied to the officials of Assyria. “Behold, I put a spirit into him, so that he shall hear a report and return into his own land.” שְׂמוּעָה does not refer to the report of the destruction of his army (v. 35), as Thenius supposes, for Sennacherib did not hear of this through the medium of an army, but was with the army himself at the time when it was smitten by the angel of the Lord; it refers to the report mentioned in v. 9. For even if he made one last attempt to secure the surrender of Jerusalem immediately upon hearing this report, yet after the failure of this attempt to shake the firmness of Hezekiah his courage must have failed him, and the thought of return must have suggested itself, so that this was only accelerated by the blow which fell upon the army. For, as O. v. Gerlach has correctly observed, “the destruction of the army would hardly have produced any decisive effect without the approach of Tirhakah, since the great power of the Assyrian king, especially in relation to the small kingdom of Judah, was not broken thereby. But at the prayer of the king the Lord added this miracle to the other, which His providence had already brought to pass. — For the fulfilment of the prophecy of Sennacherib’s death, see v. 37.

**2Ki. 19: 8-13.** In the meantime Rabshakeh had returned to his king at *Libnah* (see at 2Ki. 8:22), to which he had gone from Lachish, probably after having taken that fortress.

**2Ki. 19: 9.** There Sennacherib heard that Tirhakah was advancing to make war against him. *Tirhakah*, Θαρακά (LXX), king of Cush, is the ἀρακός of Manetho, the successor of Sevechus (Shebek II), the third king of the twenty-fifth (Ethiopian) dynasty, described by Strabo (xv. 687), who calls him εάρκων, as a great conqueror. His name is spelt *Tâhâlqa* or *Tâharqo* upon the monuments, and on the Pylon of the great temple at Medinet-Abu he is represented in the form of a king, cutting down enemies of conquered lands (Egypt, Syria, and *Tepopâ*, an unknown land) before the god Ammon (see Bursch, *hist. d’Egypte*, i. pp. 244, 245).<sup>f48</sup>

— On hearing the report of the advance of Tirhakah, Sennacherib sent ambassadors again to Hezekiah with a letter (v. 14), in which he summoned him once more to give up his confidence in his God, and his assurance that Jerusalem would not be delivered into the hands of the king of Assyria, since the gods of no other nation had been able to save their lands and cities from the kings of Assyria who had preceded him. The letter contained nothing more, therefore, than a repetition of the arguments already adduced by Rabshakeh (2Ki. 18:19ff.), though a larger number of the lands conquered by the Assyrians are given, for the purpose of strengthening the impression intended to be made upon Hezekiah of the irresistible character of the Assyrian arms. — To offer a successful resistance to Tirhakah and overcome him, Sennacherib wanted above all things a firm footing in Judah; and for this the possession of Jerusalem was of the greatest importance, since it would both cover his back and secure his retreat. Fortifications like Lachish and Libnah could be quickly taken by a violent assault. But it was very different with Jerusalem. Salmanasar had stood before Samaria for three years before he was able to conquer it; and Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem for two years before the city was starved out and it was possible to take it (2Ki. 25: 1ff.). But as Tirhakah was approaching, Sennacherib had no time now for so tedious a siege. He therefore endeavoured to induce Hezekiah to surrender the city quietly by a boastful description of his own power. Instead of וַיִּשְׁלַח (v. 9), we have in Isaiah וַיִּשְׁמַע וַיִּשְׁלַח, “when he heard this he sent,” which is probably the more original, and indicates that when Sennacherib received the intelligence he sent at once (Drechsler).

**2Ki. 19:10.** אַל יִשְׂאֵךְ: “let not thy God deceive thee,” i.e., do not allow yourself to be deceived by your confidence in your God. לֹא אֲמַר, to say, i.e., to think or believe, that Jerusalem will not be given, etc. To shatter this

confidence, Sennacherib reminds him of the deeds of the Assyrian kings.

לְהַחֲרִימָם, to ban them, i.e., by smiting them with the ban. The verb הַחֲרִימָם is chosen with emphasis, to express the unsparing destruction. וְאַתָּה הֲנִצֵּל: and thou shouldst be saved? — a question implying a strong negative.

*2Ki. 19:12.* “Have the gods of the nations delivered them?” אֲתָם is not a pronoun used in anticipation of the object, which follows in גִּתְיָן וּגְרִי (Thenius), but refers to כָּל הָאֲרָצוֹת in v. 11, a specification of which is given in the following enumeration. *Gozan* may be the province of *Gauzanitis* in Mesopotamia, but it may just as well be the country of *Gauzania* on the other side of the Tigris (see at *2Ki. 17: 6*). The combination with *Haran* does not force us to the first assumption, since the list is not a geographical but a historical one. — *Haran (Charan)*, i.e., the *Carrae* of the Greeks and Romans, where Abraham’s father Terah died, a place in northern Mesopotamia (see at *Gen. 11:31*), is probably not merely the city here, but the country in which the city stood. — *Rezeph* (רֶצֶף), the Arabic *ruṣâfât*, a very widespread name, since *Jakut* gives nine cities of this name in his *Geographical Lexicon*, is probably the most celebrated of the cities of that name, the *Rusapha* of Syria, called Ῥυσάφα in *Ptol. v. 15*, in Palmyrene, on the road from Racca to Emesa, a day’s journey from the Euphrates (cf. *Ges. Thes. p. 1308*). — “The sons of *Eden*, which (were in *Telassar*,” were evidently a tribe whose chief settlement was in *Telassar*. By עֵדֵן we might understand the בֵּית־עֵדֵן of *Amo. 1: 5*, a city in a pleasant region of Syria, called Παράδεισος by *Ptol. (v. 15)*, since there is still a village called *Ehden* in that locality (cf. *Burckhardt, Syr. p. 66*, and *v. Schubert, Reise, iii. p. 366*), if we could only discover *Telassar* in the neighbourhood, and if the village of *Ehden* could be identified with Παράδεισος and the *Eden* of the Bible, as is done even by *Gesenius* on *Burckhardt*, p. 492, and *Thes. p. 195*; but this *Ehden* is spelt *’hdn* in Arabic, and is not to be associated with עֵדֵן (see *Rob. Bibl. Res. pp. 586, 587*). Moreover the *Thelseae* near Damascus (in the *Itin. Ant. p. 196*, ed. *Wess.*) is too unlike *Telassar* to come into consideration. There is more to be said in favour of the identification of our עֵדֵן with the Assyrian *Eden*, which is mentioned in *Eze. 27:23* along with *Haran* and *Calneh* as an important place for trade, although its position cannot be more certainly defined; and neither the comparison with the tract of land called (Syr.) *māād<sup>n</sup>*, *Maadon*, which *Assemani (Biblioth. or. ii. p. 224)* places in Mesopotamia, towards the Tigris, in the present province of *Diarbekr* (*Ges., Win.*), nor the conjecture of *Knobel* that the tribe-name *Eden* may very probably have been preserved in the large but very dilapidated village of *Adana* or *Adna*, some distance to the north of *Bagdad* (*Ker Porter, Journey, ii. p. 355*, and *Ritter, Erdk. ix. p. 493*), can be established as even a probability. תֵּל־אֲשָׁר, *Telassar*, is

also quite unknown. The name applies very well to *Thelser* on the eastern side of the Tigris (*Tab. Peut.* xi. e), where even the later Targums on Gen. 10:12 have placed it, interpreting Nimrod's *Resen* by תְּלָסָר, תְּלָאָסָר, though Knobel opposes this on the ground that a place in Assyria proper is unsuitable in such a passage as this, where the Assyrian feats of war outside Assyria itself are enumerated. Movers (*Phöniz.* ii. 3, p. 251) conjectures that the place referred to is *Thelassar* in *Terodon*, a leading emporium for Arabian wares on the Persian Gulf, and supposes that *Terodon* has sprung from *Teledon* with the Persian pronunciation of the תֵּל, which is very frequent in the names of Mesopotamian cities. This conjecture is at any rate a more natural one than that of Knobel on Isa. 37:12, that the place mentioned in Assemani (*Bib. or.* iii. 2, p. 870), (Arabic) *tl b-šršr*, *Tel* on the *Szarszar*, to the west of the present Bagdad, is intended. — With regard to the places named in v. 13, see at 2Ki. 18:34.

**2Ki. 19:14-19.** *Hezekiah's prayer.* — V. 14. Hezekiah took the letter, read it, went into the temple and spread it out before Jehovah, to lay open its contents before God. The contents of the letter are given in vv. 10-13 in the form of the message which the ambassadors delivered to Hezekiah from their king, because the ambassadors communicated to Hezekiah by word of mouth the essential contents of the writing which they conveyed, and simply handed him the letter as a confirmation of their words. סִפְרִים, like *litterae*, means a letter; hence the singular suffix attached to וַיִּפְרְשֵׁהוּ, whereas in the case of וַיִּקְרָאֵם, which stands nearer, the suffix follows the number of the noun to which it refers. The spreading out of the letter before God was an embodiment of the wish, which sprang from a child-like and believing trust, that the Lord would notice and punish that defiance of the living God which it contained. What Hezekiah meant by this action he expressed in the following prayer.

**2Ki. 19:15.** In opposition to the delusion of the Assyrians, he describes Jehovah, the God of Israel, as the only God of all the kingdoms of the earth, since He was the Creator of heaven and earth. יְיָ שֵׁב הַכְּרֻבִים (see at 1Sa. 4: 4 and Exo. 25:22) indicates the covenant-relation into which Jehovah, the almighty Creator and Ruler of the whole world, had entered towards Israel. As the covenant God who was enthroned above the cherubim the Lord was bound to help His people, if they turned to Him with faith in the time of their distress and entreated His assistance; and as the only God of all the world He had the power to help. In Isaiah, צְבָאוֹת, which is very rare in historical prose, but very common in prophetic addresses, is added to the name יְהוָה, and thus Jehovah at the very outset is addressed as the God of the universe. On the meaning of צְבָאוֹת, see at 1Sa. 1: 3. On אֱתָהּ הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים, see 2Sa. 7:28 and 1Ki. 18:39.

**2Ki. 19:16.** The accumulation of the words, “bow down Thine ear, Jehovah, and hear; open, Jehovah, Thine eyes and see, and hear the words,” etc., indicates the earnestness and importunity of the prayer. The plural עֵינַיִךְ by the side of the singular אָזְנֶךָ is the correct reading, since the expression “to incline the ear” is constantly met with (Psa. 17: 6; 31: 3; 45:11, etc.); and even in the plural, “incline ye your ear” (Psa. 78: 1; Isa. 55: 3), and on the other hand “to open the eyes” (Job. 27:19; Pro. 20:13; Zec. 12: 4; Dan. 9:18), because a man always opens both eyes to see anything, whereas he turns one ear to a person speaking. The עֵינַיִךְ of Isaiah is also plural, though written defectively, as the Masora has already observed. The suffix in שְׁלַחֲוֹ, which is wanting in Isaiah, belongs to אֲשֶׁר, and refers with this to דְּבַרִּי in the sense of speech: the speech which Sennacherib had made in his letter.

**2Ki. 19:17, 18.** After the challenge, to observe the blasphemies of Sennacherib, Hezekiah mentions the fact that the Assyrians have really devastated all lands, and therefore that it is not without ground that they boast of their mighty power; but he finds the explanation of this in the impotence and nothingness of the gods of the heathen. אֲמָנָם, truly, indeed — the kings of Asshur have devastated the nations and their land. Instead of this we find in Isaiah: “they have devastated all lands and their (own) land” — which is evidently the more difficult and also the more original reading, and has been altered in our account, because the thought that the Assyrians had devastated their own land by making war upon other lands, that is to say, had depopulated it and thereby laid it waste, was not easy to understand. “And have cast their gods into the fire, for they are not gods, but works of human hands, wood and stone, and have thus destroyed them.” Hezekiah does not mention this as a sign of the recklessness of the Assyrians (Knobel), but, because Sennacherib had boasted that the gods of no nation had been able to resist him (vv. 12, 13), to put this fact in the right light, and attach thereto the prayer that Jehovah, by granting deliverance, would make known to all the kingdoms of the earth that He alone was God. Instead of וְנִתְּנוּ we have in Isaiah וְנִתְּוֹן, the inf. absol.; in this connection the more difficult and more genuine reading. This also applies to the omission of אֱלֹהִים (v. 19b) in Isa. 37:20, since the use of *Jehovah* as a predicate, “that Thou alone art Jehovah,” is very rare, and has therefore been misunderstood even by Gesenius. By the introduction of *Elohim*, the thought “that Thou Jehovah art God alone” is simplified.

**2Ki. 19:20-34.** *The divine promise.* — Vv. 20, 21. When Hezekiah had prayed, the prophet Isaiah received a divine revelation with regard to the hearing of this prayer, which he sent, i.e., caused to be handed over, to the king. שְׁמַעְתִּי (v. 21) is omitted in Isaiah, so that אֲשֶׁר הִתְפַּלֵּלָתָ וְגו' is to be taken in

the sense of “with regard to that which thou hast prayed to me,” whilst שָׁמַעְתִּי (I have heard) elucidates the thought and simplifies the construction. The word of the Lord announced to the king, (1) the shameful retreat of Sennacherib as a just retribution for his mockery of the living God (vv. 21-28; Isa. 37:22-29); (2) the confirmation of this assurance through the indication of a sign by which Hezekiah was to recognise the deliverance of Jerusalem (vv. 29-31; Isa. 37:30-32), and through the distinct promise, that the Assyrian would neither come into the city nor besiege it, because the Lord was sheltering it (vv. 32-34; Isa. 37:33-35). In the first part the words are addressed with poetic vivacity directly to Sennacherib, and scourge his haughty boastings by pointing to the ridicule and scorn which would follow him on his departure from the land.

*2Ki. 19:21.* “The virgin daughter Zion despises thee, the daughter Jerusalem shakes the head behind thee.” By daughter Zion, daughter Jerusalem, we are not to understand the inhabitants of Zion, or of Jerusalem, as though בַּת stood for בָּנִים or בְּנֵי (Ges., Hitzig, and others); but the city itself with its inhabitants is pictorially personified as a daughter and virgin, and the construct state בַּת־צִיּוֹן is to be taken, like נִהַר בְּרַת, as in apposition: “daughter Zion,” not daughter of Zion (vid., Ges. § 116, 5; Ewald, § 287, e.). Even in the case of בַּת־הַגּוֹלָת the construct state expresses simply the relation of apposition. Zion is called a “virgin” as being an inviolable city to the Assyrians, i.e., one which they cannot conquer. Shaking the head is a gesture denoting derision and pleasure at another’s misfortune (cf. Ps. 22: 8; 109:25, etc.). “Behind thee,” i.e., after thee as thou goest away, is placed first as a pictorial feature for the sake of emphasis.

*2Ki. 19:22, 23.* This derision falls upon the Assyrian, for having blasphemed the Lord God by his foolish boasting about his irresistible power. “Whom hast thou despised and blasphemed, and against whom hast thou lifted up the voice? and thou liftest up thine eyes against the Holy One of Israel.” Lifting up the voice refers to the tone of threatening assumption, in which Rabshakeh and Sennacherib had spoken. Lifting up the eyes on high, i.e., to the heavens, signifies simply looking up to the sky (cf. Isa. 40:26), not “directing proud looks against God” (Ges.). Still less is מָרוֹם to be taken adverbially in the sense of haughtily, as Thenius and Knobel suppose. The bad sense of proud arrogance lies in the words which follow, “against the Holy One of Israel,” or in the case of Isaiah, where אֵל stands for עֵל, in the context, viz., the parallelism of the members. God is called the Holy One of Israel as He who manifests His holiness in and upon Israel. This title of the Deity is one of the peculiarities of Isaiah’s range of thought, although it originated with Asaph (Psa. 78:41; see at Isa. 1: 4). This insult to the holy God consisted in the fact that Sennacherib had



said through his servants (vv. 23, 24): “With my chariots upon chariots I have ascended the height of the mountains, the uttermost part of Lebanon, so that I felled the tallness of its cedars, the choice of its cypresses, and came to the shelter of its border, to the forest of its orchard. I have dug and drunk strange water, so that I dried up all the rivers of Egypt with the sole of my feet.” The words put into the mouth of the Assyrian are expressive of the feeling which underlay all his blasphemies (Drechsler). The two verses are kept quite uniform, the second hemistich in both cases expressing the result of the first, that is to say, what the Assyrian intended still further to perform after having accomplished what is stated in the first hemistich. When he has ascended the heights of Lebanon, he devastates the glorious trees of the mountain. Consequently in v. 24 the drying up of the Nile of Egypt is to be taken as the result of the digging of wells in the parched desert; in other words, it is to be interpreted as descriptive of the devastation of Egypt, whose whole fertility depended upon its being watered by the Nile and its canals. We cannot therefore take these verses exactly as Drechsler does; that is to say, we cannot assume that the Assyrian is speaking in the first hemistichs of both verses of what he (not necessarily Sennacherib himself, but one of his predecessors) has actually performed. For even if the ascent of the uttermost heights of Lebanon had been performed by one of the kings of Assyria, there is no historical evidence whatever that Sennacherib or one of his predecessors had already forced his way into Egypt. The words are therefore to be understood in a figurative sense, as an individualizing picture of the conquests which the Assyrians had already accomplished, and those which they were still intending to effect; and this assumption does not necessarily exhibit Sennacherib “as a mere braggart, who boastfully heaps up in ridiculous hyperbole an enumeration of the things which he means to perform” (Drechsler). For if the Assyrian had not ascended with the whole multitude of his war-chariots to the loftiest summits of Lebanon, to feel its cedars and its cypresses, Lebanon had set no bounds to his plans of conquest, so that Sennacherib might very well represent his forcing his way into Canaan as an ascent of the lofty peaks of this mountain range. Lebanon is mentioned, partly as a range of mountains that was quite inaccessible to war-chariots, and partly as the northern defence of the land of Canaan, through the conquest of which one made himself lord of the land. And so far as Lebanon is used synecdochically for the land of which it formed the defence, the hewing down of its cedars and cypresses, those glorious witnesses of the creation of God, denotes the devastation of the whole land, with all its glorious works of nature and of human hands. The chief strength of the early Asiatic conquerors consisted in the multitude of their war-chariots: they are therefore brought into consideration simply as signs of vast military resources; the fact that they could only be used on level ground being therefore disregarded. The *Cheth<sup>h</sup>-b* רֶכֶב רֶכֶב־בַּי, “my chariots upon chariots,” is used

poetically for an innumerable multitude of chariots, as **גֹּרֵב גֹּרֵב** for an innumerable host of locusts (Nah. 3:17), and is more original than the *Keri* **רַב רַבְּבֵי**, the multitude of my chariots, which simply follows Isaiah. The “height of the mountains” is more precisely defined by the emphatic **לְבָנוֹן יִרְבְּתֵי**, the uttermost sides, i.e., the loftiest heights, of Lebanon, just as **בֹּר יִרְבְּתֵי** in Isa. 14:15 and Eze. 32:23 are the uttermost depths of Sheol. **אֲרָזֵי קוֹמַת**, his tallest cedars. **מִבְּחֹר בְּרִשְׁוֹ**, his most select or finest cypresses. **מְלוֹן קֶזֶה**, for which Isaiah has the more usual **מָרוֹם קֶצֶו**, “the height of his end,” is the loftiest point of Lebanon on which a man can rest, not a lodging built on the highest point of Lebanon (Cler., Vitruv., Ros.). **יַעַר בְּרִמְלוֹ**, the forest of his orchard, i.e., the forest resembling an orchard. The reference is to the celebrated cedar-forest between the loftiest peaks of Lebanon at the village of *Bjerreh* (see at 1Ki. 5:20).

**2Ki. 19:24.** V. 24 refers to the intended conquest of Egypt. Just as Lebanon could not stop the expeditions of the Assyrians, or keep them back from the conquest of the land of Canaan, so the desert of *et Tih*, which separated Egypt from Asia, notwithstanding its want of water (cf. Herod. iii. 5; Rob. *Pal.* i. p. 262), was no hindrance to him, which could prevent his forcing his way through it and laying Egypt waste. The digging of water is, of course, not merely “a reopening of the wells that had been choked with rubbish, and the cisterns that had been covered up before the approaching enemy” (Thenius), but the digging of wells in the waterless desert. **מַיִם זָרִים**, strange water, is not merely water belonging to others, but water not belonging to this soil (Drechsler), i.e., water supplied by a region which had none at other times. By the perfects the thing is represented as already done, as exposed to no doubt whatever; we must bear in mind, however, that the desert of *et Tih* is not expressly named, but the expression is couched in such general terms, that we may also assume that it includes what the Assyrian had really effected in his expeditions through similar regions. The drying up of the rivers with the soles of the feet is a hyperbolic expression denoting the omnipotence with which the Assyrian rules over the earth. Just as he digs water in the desert where no water is to be had, so does he annihilate it where mighty rivers exist.<sup>49</sup> **יְאוּרֵי** are the arms and canals of the *Yeor*, i.e., of the Nile. **מִצְוֹר**, a rhetorical epithet for Egypt, used not only here, but also in Isa. 19: 6 and Mic. 7:12.

**2Ki. 19:25ff.** To this foolish boasting the prophet opposes the divine purpose which had been formed long ago, and according to which the Assyrian, without knowing it or being willing to acknowledge it, had acted simply as the

instrument of the Lord, who had given him the power to destroy, but who would soon restrain his ranting against Him, the true God.

**2Ki. 19:25.** “Hast thou not heard? Long ago have I done this, from the days of olden time have I formed it! Now have I brought it to pass, that fortified cities should be to be destroyed into waste heaps.” V. 26. “And their inhabitants, short of hand, were dismayed and put to shame; they were herb of the field and green of the turf, grass of the roofs and blighted corn before the stalk.” V.27. “And thy sitting and thy going out and thy coming I know, and thy raging against me.” V. 28. “Because of thy raging against me and thy safety, which rise up into my ears, I put my ring into thy nose, and my bridle into thy lips, and bring thee back by the way by which thou hast come.” The words are still addressed to the Assyrian, of whom the Lord inquires whether he does not know that the destructive deeds performed by him had been determined very long before. “Hast thou not heard?” namely, what follows, what the Lord had long ago made known through His prophets in Judah (cf. Isa. 7: 7-9; 16:17-20; 8: 1-4 and 7, etc.). **לְמִרְחוֹק**, from distant time have I done it, etc., refers to the divine ordering and governing of the events of the universe, which God has purposed and established from the very beginning of time. The pronoun **אַתָּה**, and the suffixes attached to **יִצְרַתִּיָּךְ** and **הִבִּיאֲתִיָּךְ**, do not refer with vague generality to the substance of vv. 23 and 24, i.e., to the boastings of the Assyrians quoted there (Drechsler), but to **וַתְּהִי לְהַשְׁתֹּת**, i.e., to the conquests and devastations which the Assyrian had really effected. The **וַ** before **יִצְרַתִּיָּךְ** introduces the apodosis, as is frequently the case after a preceding definition of time (cf. Ges. § 155, a). **וַתְּהִי לְהַשְׁתֹּת**, “that it may be to destroy” (**לְהַשְׁתֹּת**, a contraction of **לְהַשְׁאוֹת**, *Keri* and Isaiah, from **שָׂאָה**; see Ewald, § 73, c., and 245, b.), i.e., that it shall be destroyed, — according to a turn which is very common in Isaiah, like **הָיָה לְבַעַר**, it is to burn = it shall be burned (cf. Isa. 5: 5; 6:13; 44:15, and Ewald, § 237, c.). The rendering given by Ges., Knob., Then., and others, “that thou mayest be for destruction,” is at variance with this usage.

**2Ki. 19:26.** V. 26 is closely connected, so far as the sense is concerned, with the last clause of v. 25, but in form it is only loosely attached: “and their inhabitants were,” instead of “that their inhabitants might be.” **קִצְרֵי יָד**, of short hand, i.e., without power to offer a successful resistance (cf. Num. 11:23, and Isa. 50: 2; 59: 1). — They were herbage of the field, etc., just as perishable as the herbage, grass, etc., which quickly fade away (cf. Ps. 37: 2; 90: 5, 6; Isa. 40: 6). The grass of the roofs fades still more quickly, because it cannot strike deep roots (cf. Ps. 129: 6). Blighted corn before the stalk, i.e., corn which is blighted and withered up, before it shoots up into a stalk. In Isaiah we

have **שְׂדָמָה** instead of **שְׂדָפָה**, with a change of the labials, probably for the purpose of preserving an assonance with **קָמָה**, which must not therefore be altered into **שְׂדָמָה**. The thought in the two verses is this: The Assyrian does not owe his victories and conquests to his irresistible might, but purely to the fact that God had long ago resolved to deliver the nations into his hands, so that it was possible to overcome them without their being able to offer any resistance. This the Assyrian had not perceived, but in his daring pride had exalted himself above the living God. This conduct of his the Lord was well acquainted with, and He would humble him for it. Sitting and going out and coming denote all the actions of a man, like sitting down and rising up in Psa. 139: 2. Instead of rising up, we generally find going out and coming in (cf. Deu. 28: 6 and Psa. 121: 8). **הִתְרַגְּזָה**, thy raging, *commotio furibunda, quae ex ira nascitur superbiae mixta* (Vitr.). We must repeat **יַעַן** before **שְׂאֲנִיךָ**; and **עָלָה בְּאָזְנִי** is to be taken in a relative sense: on account of thy self-security, which has come to my ears. **שְׂאֲנָן** is the security of the ungodly which springs from the feeling of great superiority in power. The figurative words, “I put my ring into thy nose,” are taken from the custom of restraining wild animals, such as lions (Eze. 19: 4) and other wild beasts (Eze. 29: 4 and Isa. 30:28), in this manner. For “the bridle in the lips” of ungovernable horses, see Psa. 32: 9. To lead a person back by the way by which he had come, i.e., to lead him back disappointed, without having reached the goal that he set before him.

**2Ki. 19:29.** To confirm what he had said, the prophet gave to Hezekiah a sign (vv. 29ff.): “Eat this year what groweth in the fallow, and in the second year what groweth wild, and in the third year sow and reap and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof.” That the words are not addressed to the king of Assyria as in v. 28, but to Hezekiah, is evident from their contents. This sudden change in the person addressed may be explained from the fact that from v. 29 the words contain a perfectly fresh train of thought. For **זֶה־לְךָ־הָאוֹת** see Exo. 3:12, 1Sa. 2:34 and 14:10; also Jer. 44:29. In all these passages **אוֹת**, **σημεῖον**, is not a (supernatural) wonder, a **מוֹפֵת** as in 1Ki. 13: 3, but consists simply in the prediction of natural events, which serve as credentials to a prediction, whereas in Isa. 7:14 and 38: 7 a miracle is given as an **אוֹת**. The inf. abs. **אָכַל** is not used for the pret. (Ges., Then., and others), but for the imperf. or fut.: “one will eat.” **הַשָּׁנָה**, the (present) year. **סִפִּיחַ** signifies the corn which springs up and grows from the grains that have been shaken out the previous year (Lev. 25: 5, 11). **סִחִישׁ** (in Isa. **שְׁחִישׁ**) is explained by Abulw. as signifying the corn which springs up again from the roots of what has been sown. The etymology of the word is uncertain, so that it is impossible to decide which of the two forms is the original one. For the fact itself compare the evidence adduced in the Comm.

on Lev. 25: 7, that in Palestine and other lands two or three harvests can be reaped from one sowing. — The signs mentioned do not enable us to determine with certainty how long the Assyrians were in the land. All that can be clearly gathered from the words, “in this and the following year will they live upon that which has sprung up without any sowing,” is that for two years, i.e., in two successive autumns, the fields could not be cultivated because the enemy had occupied the land and laid it waste. But whether the occupation lasted two years, or only a year and a little over, depends upon the time of the year at which the Assyrians entered the land. If the invasion of Judah took place in autumn, shortly before the time for sowing, and the miraculous destruction of the Assyrian forces occurred a year after about the same time, the sowing of two successive years would be prevented, and the population of Judah would be compelled to live for two years upon what had sprung up without sowing. Consequently both the prophecy of Isaiah and the fulfilment recorded in vv. 35, 36 would fall in the autumn, when the Assyrians had ruled for a whole year in the land; so that the prophet was able to say: in this year and in the second (i.e., the next) will they eat after-growth and wild growth; inasmuch as when he said this, the first year had not quite expired. Even if the overthrow of the Assyrians took place immediately afterwards (cf. v. 35), with the extent to which they had carried out the desolation of the land, many of the inhabitants having been slain or taken prisoners, and many others having been put to flight, it would be utterly impossible in the same year to cultivate the fields and sow them, and the people would be obliged to live in the second or following year upon what had grown wild, until the harvest of the second year, when the land could be properly cultivated, or rather till the third year, when it could be reaped again.<sup>150</sup>

*2Ki. 19:30, 31.* The sign is followed in vv. 30, 31 by the distinct promise of the deliverance of Judah and Jerusalem, for which Isaiah uses the sign itself as a type. “And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah will again strike roots downwards and bear fruit upwards; for from Jerusalem will go forth a remnant, and that which is escaped from Mount Zion; the zeal of Jehovah will do this.” יָסַף שָׂרָשׁ, to add roots, i.e., to strike fresh roots. The meaning is, that Judah will not succumb to this judgment. The remnant of the nation that has escaped from destruction by the Assyrians will once more grow and flourish vigorously; for from Jerusalem will a rescued remnant go forth. פְּלִיטָה denotes those who have escaped destruction by the judgment (cf. Isa. 4: 2; 10:20, etc.). The deliverance was attached to Jerusalem or to Mount Zion, not so much because the power of the Assyrians was to be destroyed before the gates of Jerusalem, as because of the greater importance which Jerusalem and Mount Zion, as the centre of the kingdom of God, the seat of the God-King, possessed in relation to the covenant-nation, so that, according to Isa. 2: 3, it was thence that the Messianic salvation was also to proceed. This deliverance is traced to

the zeal of the Lord on behalf of His people and against His foes (see at Exo. 20: 5), like the coming of the Messiah in Isa. 9: 6 to establish an everlasting kingdom of peace and righteousness. The deliverance of Judah out of the power of Asshur was a prelude and type of the deliverance of the people of God by the Messiah out of the power of all that was ungodly. The **צְבָאוֹת** of Isaiah is omitted after **יְהוָה**, just as in v. 15; though here it is supplied by the Masora as *Keri*. — In vv. 32-34 Isaiah concludes by announcing that Sennacherib will not come to Jerusalem, nor even shoot at the city and besiege it, but will return disappointed, because the Lord will defend and save the city for the sake of His promise. The result of the whole prophecy is introduced with **לָכֵן**: therefore, because this is how the matter stands, viz., as explained in what precedes. **אֶל-מֶלֶךְ**, with regard to the king, as in v. 20. **לֹא יִקְדְּמֶנָּה מָגֵן**, “he will not attack it with a shield,” i.e., will not advance with shields to make an attack upon it. **קָדַם** with a double accusative, as in Psa. 21: 4. It only occurs here in a hostile sense: to come against, as in Psa. 18:19, i.e., to advance against a city, to storm it. The four clauses of the verse stand in a graduated relation to one another: not to take, not even to shoot at and attack, yea, not even to besiege the city, will he come. In v. 33a we have v. 28b taken up again, and v. 32a is repeated in v. 33b for the purpose of strengthening the promise. Instead of **יָבוֹא בָהּ** we have in Isaiah **בָּא בָהּ**: “by which he has come.” The perfect is actually more exact, and the imperfect may be explained from the fact that Sennacherib was at that very time advancing against Jerusalem. In v. 34 we have **גְּנוּתֵי אֵל** instead of the **גְּנוּתֵי עַל** of Isaiah: **עַל** is more correct than **אֵל**. “For my sake,” as Hezekiah had prayed in v. 19; and “for my servant David’s sake,” because Jehovah, as the unchangeably true One, must fulfil the promise which He gave to David (see at 1Ki. 11:13).

**2Ki. 19:35-37. The fulfilment of the divine promise.** — V. 35. “It came to pass in that night, that the angel of the Lord went out and smote in the army of the Assyrian 185,000 men; and when they (those that were left, including the king) rose up in the morning, behold there were they all (i.e., all who had perished) dead corpses,” i.e., they had died in their sleep. **מֵתִים** is added to strengthen **פְּגָרִים**: lifeless corpses. **בְּלַיְלָה הַהוּא** is in all probability the night following the day on which Isaiah had foretold to Hezekiah the deliverance of Jerusalem. Where the Assyrian army was posted at the time when this terrible stroke fell upon it is not stated, since the account is restricted to the principal fact. One portion of it was probably still before Jerusalem; the remainder were either in front of Libnah (v. 8), or marching against Jerusalem. From the fact that Sennacherib’s second embassy (vv. 9ff.) was not accompanied by a body of troops, it by no means follows that the large army which had come with the first

embassy (2Ki. 18:17) had withdrawn again, or had even removed to Libnah on the return of Rabshakeh to his king (2Ki. 19: 8). The very opposite may be inferred with much greater justice from 2Ki. 19:32. And the smiting of 185,000 men by an angel of the Lord by no means presupposes that the whole of Sennacherib's army was concentrated at one spot. The blow could certainly fall upon the Assyrians wherever they were standing or were encamped. The "angel of the Lord" is the same angel that smote as **הַמְשִׁיחַ** the first-born of Egypt (Exo. 12:23, compared with vv. 12 and 13), and inflicted the pestilence upon Israel after the numbering of the people by David (2Sa. 24:15, 16). The last passage renders the conjecture a very probable one, that the slaying of the Assyrians was also effected by a terrible pestilence. But the number of the persons slain — 185,000 in a single night — so immensely surpasses the effects even of the most terrible plagues, that this fact cannot be interpreted naturally; and the deniers of miracle have therefore felt obliged to do violence to the text, and to pronounce either the statement that it was "the same night" or the number of the slain a mythical exaggeration.<sup>151</sup>

**2Ki. 19:36.** This divine judgment compelled Sennacherib to retreat without delay, and to return to Nineveh, as Isaiah, 28 and 32, had predicted. The heaping up of the verbs: "he decamped, departed, and returned," expresses the hurry of the march home. **וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּנִינְוֶה**, "he sat, i.e., remained, in Nineveh," implies not merely that Sennacherib lived for some time after his return, but also that he did not undertake any fresh expedition against Judah. On *Nineveh* see at Gen. 10:11.

**2Ki. 19:37.** V. 37 contains an account of Sennacherib's death. When he was worshipping in the temple of his god Nisroch, his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer slew him, and fled into the land of Ararat, and his son Esarhaddon became king in his stead. With regard to **נִסְרוֹךְ**, *Nisroch*, all that seems to be firmly established is that he was an eagle-deity, and represented by the eagle- or vulture-headed human figure with wings, which is frequently depicted upon the Assyrian monuments, "not only in colossal proportions upon the walls and watching the portals of the rooms, but also constantly in the groups upon the embroidered robes. When it is introduced in this way, we see it constantly fighting with other mythical animals, such as human-headed oxen or lions; and in these conflicts it always appears to be victorious," from which we may infer that it was a type of the supreme deity (see Layard's *Nineveh and its Remains*). The eagle was worshipped as a god by the Arabs (Pococke, *Specim.* pp. 94, 199), was regarded as sacred to *Melkarth* by the Phoenicians (*Nonnus*, Dionys. xl. 495, 528), and, according to a statement of Philo. *Bybl.* (in Euseb. *Praepar. evang.* i. 10), that Zoroaster taught that the supreme deity was represented with an eagle's head, it was also a symbol of Ormuzd among the Persians;

consequently Movers (*Phöniz.* i. pp. 68, 506, 507) regards *Nisroch* as the supreme deity of the Assyrians. It is not improbable that it was also connected with the constellation of the eagle (see Ideler, *Ursprung der Sternnamen*, p. 416). On the other hand, the current interpretation of the name from נִשְׂרָ (נִשְׂרָ, Chald.; *nsr*, Arab.), eagle, vulture, with the Persian adjective termination *ok* or *ach*, is very doubtful, not merely on account of the ס in נִשְׂרָ, but chiefly because this name does not occur in Assyrian, but simply *Asar*, *Assar*, and *Asarak* as the name of a deity which is met with in many Assyrian proper names. The last is also adopted by the LXX, who (*ed. Aldin. Compl.*) have rendered נִשְׂרָ by *Ἀσαράχ* in Isaiah, and *Ἐσοράχ* (*cod. Vatic.*) in 2 Kings, by the side of which the various readings *Μεσεράχ* in our text (*cod. Vat.*) and *Νασαράχ* in Isaiah are evidently secondary readings emended from the Hebrew, since Josephus (*Ant.* x. 1, 5) has the form *Ἀρασκῆς*, which is merely somewhat “Graecized.” The meaning of these names is still in obscurity, even if there should be some foundation for the assumption that *Assar* belongs to the same root as the name of the people and land, *Asshur*. The connection between the form *Nisroch* and *Asarak* is also still obscure. Compare the collection which J. G. Müller has made of the different conjectures concerning this deity in the *Art. Nisroch* in Herzog’s *Cycl.* — *Adrammelech*, according to 2Ki. 17:31, was the name of a deity of Sepharvaim, which was here borne by the king’s son.

שָׂרֵצֶר, *Sharezer*, is said to mean “prince of fire,” and was probably also borrowed from a deity. בְּנֵי (Isa.) is wanting in our text, but is supplied by the Masora in the *Keri*. The “land of *Ararat*” was a portion of the high land of Armenia; according to Moses v. Chorene, the central portion of it with the mountains of the same name (see at Gen. 8: 4). The slaying of Sennacherib is also confirmed by Alex. Polyhistor, or rather Berossus (in Euseb. *Chron. Armen.* i. p. 43), who simply names, however, a son *Arđumusanus* as having committed the murder, and merely mentions a second *Asordanius* as viceroy of Babylon.<sup>f52</sup>

The identity of the latter with *Esarhaddon* is beyond all doubt. The name אֶסְרַחְדֹּן, *Esar-cha-don*, consisting of two parts with the guttural inserted, the usual termination in Assyrian and Babylonian, *Assar-ach*, is spelt *Ἀσορδάν* in the LXX, *Σαχερδονός* in Tobit — probably formed from *Ἀσερῆχδονοσορ* by a transposition of the letters, — by Josephus *Ἀσσαραχόδδας*, by Berossus (in the *armen. Euseb.*) *Asordanes*, by Abyden. *ibid.* *Axerdis*, in the *Canon Ptol.* *Ἀσαράδινος*, and lastly in Ezr. 4:10 mutilated into אֶסְנַפֶּר, *Osnappar* (Chald.), and in the LXX *Ἀσσεναφάρ*; upon the Assyrian monuments, according to Oppert, *Assur-akh-iddin* (cf. M. v. Niebuhr, *Gesch. Ass.* p. 38). The length of his reign is uncertain. The statements of Berossus, that he was first of all viceroy of Babylon, and then for eight years king of Assyria, and that of the *Canon Ptol.*, that he reigned for thirteen years in Babylon, are decidedly incorrect.



Brandis (*Rerum Assy. tempora emend.* p. 41) conjectures that he reigned twenty-eight years, but in his work *Ueber den histor. Gewinn*, pp. 73, 74, he suggests seventeen years. M. v. Niebuhr (*ut sup.* p. 77), on the other hand, reckons his reign at twenty-four years.

## **Ch. 20. Hezekiah's Illness and Recovery. Merodach Baladan's Embassy. Death of Hezekiah.**

*2Ki. 20: 1-11.* Hezekiah's Illness and Recovery. — Compare the parallel account in Isa. 38 with Hezekiah's psalm of thanksgiving for his recovery (vv. 9-20 of Isaiah).

*2Ki. 20: 1.* "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death." By the expression "in those days" the illness of Hezekiah is merely assigned in a general manner to the same time as the events previously described. That it did not occur after the departure of the Assyrians, but at the commencement of the invasion of Sennacherib, i.e., in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign, is evident from v. 6, namely, both from the fact that in answer to his prayer fifteen years more of life were promised him, and that he nevertheless reigned only twenty-nine years (*2Ki. 18: 2*), and also from the fact that God promised to deliver him out of the hand of the Assyrians and to defend Jerusalem. The widespread notion that his sickness was an attack of plague, and was connected with the pestilence which had broken out in the Assyrian camp, is thereby deprived of its chief support, apart from the fact that the epithet (שִׁחִי) (v. 7), which is applied to the sickness, does not indicate pestilence. Isaiah then called upon him to set his house in order. צַו לְבֵיתְךָ: set thy house in order, lit., command or order with regard to thy house, not declare thy (last) will to thy family (Ges., Knob.), for צַו is construed with the *accus. pers.* in the sense of commanding anything, whereas here לְ is synonymous with אֵל (2Sa. 17:23). "For thou wilt die and not live;" i.e., thy sickness is to death, namely, without the miraculous help of God. Sickness to death in the very prime of life (Hezekiah was then in the fortieth year of his age) appeared to the godly men of the Old Testament a sign of divine displeasure. Hezekiah was therefore greatly agitated by this announcement, and sought for consolation and help in prayer. He turned his face to the wall, sc. of the room, not of the temple (Chald.), i.e., away from those who were standing round, to be able to pray more collectedly.

*2Ki. 20: 3.* In his prayer he appealed to his walking before the Lord in truth and with a thoroughly devoted heart, and to his acting in a manner that was well-pleasing to God, in perfect accordance with the legal standpoint of the Old Testament, which demanded of the godly righteousness of life according to the law. This did not imply by any means a self-righteous trust in his own virtue; for

walking before God with a thoroughly devoted heart was impossible without faith. “And Hezekiah wept violently,” not merely at the fact that he was to die without having an heir to the throne, since Manasseh was not born till three years afterwards (Joseph., Ephr. Syr., etc.), but also because he was to die in the very midst of his life, since God had promised long life to the righteous.

**2Ki. 20: 4ff.** This prayer of the godly king was answered immediately. Isaiah had not gone out of the midst of the city, when the word of the Lord came to him to return to the king, and tell him that the Lord would cure him in three days and add fifteen years to his life, and that He would also deliver him from the power of the Assyrians and defend Jerusalem. **הָעִיר הַתִּיכְנָה**, the middle city, i.e., the central portion of the city, namely, the Zion city, in which the royal citadel stood. The **הַצֵּדָה הַתִּיכְנָה**, the central court, not of the temple, but of the royal citadel, which is adopted in all the ancient versions, is nothing more than an interpretation of the **עִיר** as denoting the royal castle, after the analogy of 2Ki. 10:25. The distinct assurance added to the promise “I will heal thee,” viz., “on the third day thou wilt go into the house of the Lord,” was intended as a pledge to the king of the promised cure. The announcement that God would add fifteen years to his life is not put into the prophet’s mouth *ex eventu* (Knobel and others); for the opinion that distinct statements as to time are at variance with the nature of prophecy is merely based upon an *a priori* denial of the supernatural character of prophecy. The words, “and I will deliver thee out of the hand of the Assyrians,” imply most distinctly that the Assyrian had only occupied the land and threatened Jerusalem, and had not yet withdrawn. The explanation given by Vitringa and others, that the words contain simply a promise of deliverance out of the hand of the oppressor for the next fifteen years, puts a meaning into them which they do not contain, as is clearly shown by Isa. 37:20, where this thought is expressed in a totally different manner. **וְגַרְוִי עַל-הָעִיר**: as in 2Ki. 19:34, where the prophet repeated this divine promise in consequence of the attempt of Sennacherib to get Jerusalem into his power.

**2Ki. 20: 7.** Isaiah ordered a lump of figs to be laid upon the boil, and Hezekiah recovered (**וַיִּחַי**: he revived again). It is of course assumed as self-evident, that Isaiah returned to the king in consequence of a divine revelation, and communicated to him the word of the Lord which he had received.<sup>153</sup>

**דְּבַלְתַּת תְּאֵנִים** is a mass consisting of compressed figs, which the ancients were in the habit of applying, according to many testimonies (see Celsii *Hierob.* ii. p. 373), in the case of plague-boils and abscesses of other kinds, because the fig **διὰφορεῖ ἀσκληρίας** (Dioscor.) and *ulcera aperit* (Plin.), and which is still used

for softening ulcers. **שִׁחִין**, an abscess, is never used in connection with plague or plague-boils, but only to denote the abscesses caused by leprosy (Job. 2: 7, 8), and other abscesses of an inflammatory kind (Exo. 9: 9ff.). In the case of Hezekiah it is probably a carbuncle that is intended.

After the allusion to the cure and recovery of Hezekiah, we have an account in vv. 8ff. of the sign by which Isaiah confirmed the promise given to the king of the prolongation of his life. In the order of time the contents of v. 7 follow v. 11, since the prophet in all probability first of all disclosed the divine promise to the king, and then gave him the sign, and after that appointed the remedy and had it applied. At the same time, it is also quite possible that he first of all directed the lump of figs to be laid upon the boil, and then made known to him the divine promise, and guaranteed it by the sign. In this case **וַיַּחֲזֵק** merely anticipates the order of events. The sign which Isaiah gave to the king, at his request, consisted in the miraculous movement of the shadow backward upon the sundial of Ahaz.

**2Ki. 20: 9.** **הָלַךְ הַצֵּל**: “the shadow is gone ten degrees, if it should go back ten degrees?” The rendering, *visne umbram solarii decem gradibus progredi an...regredi*, which Maurer still gives after the Vulgate, *vis an ut ascendat...an ut revertatur*, cannot be grammatically reconciled with the perfect **הָלַךְ**, and is merely a conjecture founded upon the answer of Hezekiah.<sup>154</sup>

According to this answer, “it is easy for the shadow to decline (i.e., to go farther down) ten degrees; no (sc., that shall not be a sign to me), but if the shadow turn ten degrees backwards,” Isaiah seems to have given the king a choice as to the sign, namely, whether the shadow should go ten degrees forward or backward. But this does not necessarily follow from the words quoted. Hezekiah may have understood the prophet’s words **הָלַךְ הַצֵּל וְגוֹר** hypothetically: “has the shadow gone (advanced) ten degrees, whether it should,” etc.; and may have replied, the advance of the shadow would not be a sure sign to him, but only its going back.

**2Ki. 20:11.** Isaiah then prayed to the Lord, and the Lord “turned back the shadow (caused it to go back) upon the sun-dial, where it had gone down, on the sundial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward.” **מֵעֲלוֹת אָחָז** cannot be understood, as it has been by the LXX, Joseph., Syr., as referring to a flight of steps at the palace of Ahaz, which was so arranged that the shadow of an object standing near indicated the hours, but is no doubt a gnomon, a sun-dial which Ahaz may have received from Babylonia, where sun-dials were discovered (Herod. ii. 109). Nothing further can be inferred from the words with regard to its construction, since the ancients had different kinds of sun-dials (cf. Martini

*Abhandlung von den Sonnenuhren der Alten*, Lpz. 1777). The word **מַעְלוֹת** steps in the literal sense, is transferred to the *scala*, which the shadow had to traverse both up and down upon the disk of the sun-dial, and is used both to denote the separate degrees of this *scala*, and also for the sum-total of these *scala*, i.e., for the sun-dial itself, without there being any necessity to assume that it was an obelisk-like pillar erected upon an elevated place with steps running round it (Knobel), or a long portable scale of twice ten steps with a gnomon (Gumpach, *Alttestl. Studien*, pp. 181ff.). All that follows from the descent of the shadow is that the dial of the gnomon was placed in a vertical direction; and the fact that the shadow went ten degrees down or backward, simply presupposes that the gnomon had at least twenty degrees, and therefore that the degrees indicated smaller portions of time than hours. If, then, it is stated in v. 8b of Isaiah that the sun went back ten degrees, whereas the going back of the shadow had been previously mentioned in agreement with our text, it is self-evident that the sun stands for the shining of the sun which was visible upon the dial-plate, and which made the shadow recede. We are not, of course, to suppose that the sun in the sky and the shadow on the sun-dial went back at the same time, as Knobel assumes. So far as the miracle is concerned, the words of the text do not require that we should assume that the sun receded, or the rotation of the earth was reversed, as Eph. Syr. and others supposed, but simply affirm that there was a miraculous movement backward of the shadow upon the dial, which might be accounted for from a miraculous refraction of the rays of the sun, effected by God at the prophet's prayer, of which slight analoga are met with in the ordinary course of nature.<sup>155</sup>

This miraculous sign was selected as a significant one in itself, to confirm the promise of a fresh extension of life which had been given to Hezekiah by the grace of God in opposition to the natural course of things. The retrograde movement of the shadow upon the sun-dial indicated that Hezekiah's life, which had already arrived at its close by natural means, was to be put back by a miracle of divine omnipotence, so that it might continue for another series of years.

**2Ki. 20:12-19.** *The Babylonian embassy, and Hezekiah's imprudence* (cf. Isa. 39). — V. 12. "At that time Berodach Baladan, king of Babel, sent a letter and a present to Hezekiah, because he had heard that Hezekiah was sick." By **בֵּעֵת הַהִיא** the arrival of these ambassadors is merely assigned in the most general manner to the period following Hezekiah's recovery. But from the object of their mission, it is evident that they did not arrive in Jerusalem till after the overthrow and departure of Sennacherib, and therefore at least half a year after Hezekiah's recovery. The ostensible reason given is, that Berodach Baladan had heard of Hezekiah's illness, and therefore sent to congratulate him

on his recovery; but in 2Ch. 32:31 the further reason is mentioned, that he wished to inquire concerning the miracle upon the sun-dial. But, as Josephus has shown, the true object, no doubt, was to make sure of Hezekiah's friendship in anticipation of his intended revolt from the Assyrian rule. *Berodach Baladan*, for *Merodach Baladan* (Isa.), with the labial changed, is the same person as the *Marodach Baladan* who reigned in Babylon for six months, according to Alex. Polyhistor, or rather Berosus (Euseb. *Chron. armen.* i. pp. 42, 43), and was slain by *Elibus*, and also the same as the *Mardokempad* who reigned, according to the *Can. Ptol.*, from 26 to 38 *aer. Nab.*, i.e., from 721 to 709 B.C. The first part of the name, **מְרֹדַךְ**, occurs in Jer. 50: 2 in connection with *Bel* as the name of a Babylonian idol; and the whole name is found on a cylinder (in the British Museum) which contains the first expeditions of Sennacherib against Babylon and Media, and upon the inscriptions at Khorsabad spelt either *Merodak-pal-dsana* (according to Brandis, *Ueber der Gewinn*, pp. 44 and 53) or *Marduk bal iddin* (according to Oppert).<sup>156</sup>

Instead of **בִּי שָׁמַע** we have **וַיִּשְׁמַע** in Isaiah, which is not so clear, though it is probably more original; whereas the clause in Isaiah, **בִּי חָלָה וַיִּחַזַּק**, “that he had been sick and had become strengthened, i.e., well again,” is simply an elucidation of the **בִּי חָלָה חֲזָקָהּ** of our text, in which the recovery is implied in the pluperfect “had been sick.”

**2Ki. 20:13.** In v. 13 **וַיִּשְׁמַע** is apparently a copyist's error for **וַיִּשְׁמַח** of Isaiah, which many of the codd. and ancient versions have even in our text. At the same time, the construction of **שָׁמַע** with **עַל** is also found in 2Ki. 22:13. — **עֲלֵיהֶם**, concerning them, i.e., the ambassadors who had brought the letter and the present. In his delight at the honour paid to him by this embassy, Hezekiah showed the ambassadors all his treasure-house, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the costly oil, and all his arsenal, etc. The literal meaning of **נֶכֶת בַּיִת** is probably spice-house (Aquila, Symm., Vulg.), **נֶכֶת** being a contraction of **נִכְאָת** in Ge. 37:25, whereas the derivation suggested from the Arabic *kayyata, farsit, implevit locum*, is much more wide of the mark. The house received its name from the spices for the storing of which it was really intended, although it was also used for the storing of silver and gold. **שֶׁמֶן הַטּוֹב** is not fine olive oil, but, according to the Rabbins and Movers (*Phöniz.* iii. p. 227), the valuable balsam oil which was obtained in the royal gardens; for olive oil, which was obtained in all Judaea, was not stored in the treasure-chambers along with gold, silver, and perfumes, but in special storehouses (1Ch. 27:28). **מִמְּשָׁלָתוֹ** **בְּכָל**, in all his dominion, i.e., in all the district which he was able to govern or

control. — The existence of such treasures, of which, according to v. 17, the ancestors of Hezekiah had collected a very large store, at so short a period after the departure of the Assyrians, is not at variance with 2Ki. 18:15, 16, according to which Hezekiah had sent to Sennacherib all the silver in his treasuries, and even the gold plate upon the temple doors. For, in the first place, it is not stated that there was much silver and gold in the treasure-house, but the silver and gold are simply mentioned along with the spices; and, secondly, Hezekiah may have kept back from Sennacherib many a valuable piece of silver or gold, and have taken off the gold plate from the temple doors, to show the ambassadors of Sennacherib, who came to receive the money demanded as compensation, that he was not in a condition to give anything more. Moreover a great deal may have flowed into the treasuries since the payment of that tribute, partly from the presents which Hezekiah received from many quarters after the overthrow of Sennacherib (2Ch. 32:23), and partly from the booty that had been collected in the camp of the Assyrians after their hurried departure. And again, the treasures which the ancestors of Hezekiah had collected (v. 17) may not have consisted of gold and silver exactly, but of different jewels and objects of art, which could not be applied to the payment of the tribute demanded by Sennacherib. And, lastly, “we must not overlook the fact, that it answered the purpose of the reporter to crowd together as much as possible, in order to show how anxious Hezekiah was to bring out and exhibit everything whatever that could contribute to the folly” (Drechsler). Hezekiah evidently wanted to show all his glory, because the arrival of the Babylonian ambassadors had flattered his vanity.

*2Ki. 20:14ff.* Isaiah therefore announced to him the word of the Lord, that all his treasures would one day be carried to Babel, and some even of his sons would serve as chamberlains in the palace of the king of Babel. The sin of vanity was to be punished by the carrying away of that of which his heart was proud. Isaiah did not go to Hezekiah by his own impulse, but by the direction of God. His inquiries: “What have these men said, and whence do they come to thee?” were simply intended to lead the king to give expression to the thoughts of his heart. In the answer, “From a distant land have they come, from Babel,” his vanity at the great honour that had been paid him comes clearly to light.

*2Ki. 20:18.* The words, “of thy sons, which shall proceed from thee, which thou shalt beget,” do not necessarily refer to the actual *sons*, but only to *lineal* descendants. The *Cheth-b* חֶתֶב, “will one take,” is to be preferred to the חֶתֶב of Isaiah and the *Keri*, as being the more difficult reading. סְרִיסִים, chamberlains, courtiers, not necessarily eunuchs, as in 1Sa. 8:15, etc. — For the fulfilment of this threat see Dan. 1: 2ff.

**2Ki. 20:19.** The first part of Hezekiah's reply, "Good is the word of Jehovah, which thou hast spoken," is an expression of submission to the will of the Lord, like Eli's answer in 1Sa. 3:18 (cf. 1Ki. 2:38, 42),<sup>157</sup>

the second part, which the repetition of **וַיִּאֱמַר** shows to have been spoken after a pause, and which was not addressed directly to Isaiah, "Is it not so (i.e., is it not purely goodness), if there are to be peace and truth in my days (during my life)?" is a candid acknowledgment of the grace and truth of the Lord.<sup>158</sup>

**הָלוֹא** is used, as is frequently the case, in the sense of a lively affirmation. Instead of **הָלוֹא אָמֵן** we have in Isaiah **כִּי**, "for there will be peace and truth," by which this clause is attached more clearly to the first declaration as a reason for it: the word of the Lord is good, for the Lord proves His goodness and truth in the fact, that He will not inflict the merited punishment in my lifetime. "Peace and truth" are connected as in Jer. 33: 6. **אֱמֶת** does not mean continuance (Ges.), security (Knobel), but *fides*, faithfulness, — not human faithfulness, however, which preserves peace, and observes a tacit treaty (Hitzig), but the faithfulness of God, which preserves the promised grace to the humble.

**2Ki. 20:20, 21.** Close of Hezekiah's reign. — On the basin (**בְּרִכָּה**) and the aqueduct constructed by him, see at 2Ki. 18:17.

## **Ch. 21. Reigns of Manasseh and Amon.**

**2Ki. 21: 1-18.** Reign of Manasseh (cf. 2Ch. 33: 1-20). — V. 1. Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, so that he was not born till after Hezekiah's dangerous illness (2Ki. 20: 1ff.).

**2Ki. 21: 2ff.** Having begun to reign at this early age, he did not choose his father's ways, but set up the idolatry of his father Ahab again, since the godless party in the nation, at whose head chiefs, priests, and (false) prophets stood, and who would not hearken to the law of the Lord, and in the time of Hezekiah had sought help against Assyria not from Jehovah, but from the Egyptians (Isa. 28: 7, 14ff., 30: 9ff.), had obtained control of the young inexperienced king, and had persuaded him to introduce idolatry again. On v. 2 cf. 2Ki. 8:18 and 16: 3.

**2Ki. 21: 3.** **וַיִּשָׁב וַיִּבֶן**, "he built again" the high places, which Hezekiah had destroyed (2Ki. 18: 4), erected altars for Baal and an Asherah, like Ahab of Israel (1Ki. 16:32, 33). **הָאֲשֵׁרָה** is the image of Asherah mentioned in v. 7, whereas in the Chronicles the thought is generalized by the plurals **לְבַעֲלִים** and **הָאֲשֵׁרוֹת**. To these two kinds of idolatry, the idolatrous *bamoth* and the (true) Baal- and Asherah-worship, Manasseh added as a third kind the worship of all

the host of heaven, which had not occurred among the Israelites before the Assyrian era, and was probably of Assyrian or Chaldaean origin. This worship differed from the Syrophenician star-worship, in which sun and moon were worshipped under the names of Baal and Astarte as the bearers of the male and female powers of nature, and was pure star-worship, based upon the idea of the unchangeableness of the stars in contradistinction to the perishableness of everything earthly, according to which the stars were worshipped not merely as the originators of all rise and decay in nature, but also as the leaders and regulators of sublunary things (see Movers, *Phöniz.* i. pp. 65 and 161). This star-worship was a later development of the primary star-worship of Ssabism, in which the stars were worshipped without any image, in the open air or upon the housetops, by simple contemplation, the oldest and comparatively the purest form of deification of nature, to which the earlier Arabians and the worshippers of the sun among the Ssabians (Zabians) were addicted (cf. Delitzsch on Job. 31:26, 27), and which is mentioned and forbidden in Deu. 4:19 and 17: 3. In this later form the sun had sacred chariots and horses as among the Persians (2Ki. 23:11), and incense was offered to the stars, with the face turned towards the east, upon altars which were built either upon housetops, as in the case of the Nabataeans (Strabo, xvi. 784), or within the limits of the temple in the two courts (cf. Eze. 8:16, also 2Ki. 21: 5; 23:12, and 2Ch. 33: 5, Jer. 19:13, Zep. 1: 5). This burning of incense took place not merely to the sun and moon, but also to the signs of the zodiac and to all the host of heaven, i.e., to all the stars (2Ki. 23: 5); by which we are no doubt to understand that the sun, moon, planets and other stars, were worshipped in conjunction with the zodiac, and with this were connected astrology, augury, and the casting of nativities, as in the case of the later so-called Chaldaeans.<sup>159</sup>

This star-worship is more minutely described in vv. 4 and 5. The two verses are closely connected. The **וּבְנָה מִזְבֵּחַת** of v. 4 is resumed in **וַיִּבֶן מִזְבֵּחַ** in v. 5, and the **בְּבֵית יְיָ** of v. 4 is more minutely defined in the **בְּשַׁתֵּי חֲצֵרוֹת בֵּית יְיָ** of v. 5. “In the two courts:” not merely in the outer court, but even in the court of the priests, which was set apart for the worship of Jehovah.

**2Ki. 21: 6.** He also offered his son in sacrifice to Moloch, like Ahaz (2Ki. 16: 3), in the valley of Benhinnom (Chron. cf. 2Ki. 23:10), and practised soothsaying and witchcraft of every kind. On **עֹוֹנֵן וְנִחֵשׁ** see Deu. 18:10 and Lev. 19:26, **עָשָׂה אוֹב**, he made, i.e., appointed, put into office, a “necromancer and wise people” (cf. Lev. 19:31 and Deu. 18:11).

**2Ki. 21: 7.** Yea, he even placed the image of Asherah in the temple, i.e., in the Holy Place. In the description of his idolatry, which advances *gradatim*, this is introduced as the very worst crime. According to the express declaration of the



Lord to David (2Sa. 7:13) and Solomon (1Ki. 9: 3 compared with 2Ki. 8:16), the temple was to serve as the dwelling-place of His name.

**2Ki. 21: 8.** The word of the Lord, “I will no more make the foot of Israel to move out of the land which I gave to their fathers,” refers to the promise in 2Sa. 7:10: “I will appoint my people a place, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and be stirred up no more,” which had been fulfilled by the building of the temple as the seat of the name of the Lord, in the manner indicated in pp. 85ff. The lasting fulfilment of this promise, however, was made to rest upon the condition of Israel’s faithful adherence to the commandments of God (cf. 1Ki. 9: 6ff.).

**2Ki. 21: 9.** This condition was not observed by the Israelites; Manasseh seduced them, so that they did more evil than the Canaanites, whom Jehovah had destroyed before them.

**2Ki. 21:10-15.** The Lord therefore announced through the prophets, to the rebellious and idolatrous nation, the destruction of Jerusalem and the deliverance of Judah into the hands of its enemies; but, as is added in 2Ch. 33:10, they paid no heed to them. The prophets who foretold this terrible judgment are not named. According to 2Ch. 33:18, their utterances were entered in the annals of the kings. Habakkuk was probably one of them, since he (Hab. 1: 5) predicted the Chaldaean judgment as a fact which excited astonishment and appeared incredible. The *Amorites* are mentioned in v. 11 *instar omnium* as the supporters of the Canaanitish ungodliness, as in 1Ki. 21:26, etc. — The phrase, “that whosoever heareth it, both his ears may tingle,” denotes such a judgment as has never been heard of before, and excites alarm and horror (cf. 1Sa. 3:11 and Jer. 19: 3). The *Keri* שְׁמָעָה is a correction, to bring the *pronom. suff.* into conformity with the noun רָעָה so far as the gender is concerned, whereas in the *Cheth-b* שְׁמָעֵי the masculine suffix is used in the place of the feminine, as is frequently the case.

**2Ki. 21:13.** “I stretch over Jerusalem the measure of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab.” The measure (קֶדֶן) and the plummet (מִשְׁקֶלֶת, lit., a level) were applied to what was being built (Zec. 1:16), and also to what was being made level with the ground, i.e., completely thrown down (Amo. 7: 7). From this sprang the figurative expressions, measure of desolation and plummet of devastation (Isa. 34:11). — The measure of Samaria therefore denotes the measure which was applied to the destruction of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab denotes the extermination of the royal house of Ahab. The meaning is: I shall destroy Jerusalem as I have destroyed Samaria, and exterminate its inhabitants like the house of Ahab. In the second hemistich

the same thing is expressed, if possible, still more strongly: “I wipe away Jerusalem as one wipes the dish, and (having) wiped (it), turns it upon its upper side (פָּנֶיהָ).” The wiping of a dish that has been used, and the turning over of the dish wiped, so as not to leave a single drop in it, are a figurative representation of the complete destruction of Jerusalem and the utter extermination of its inhabitants.

*2Ki. 21:14.* With the destruction of Jerusalem the Lord forsakes the people of His possession, and give it up to its enemies for a prey and spoil. נִקְלְתִי שְׂאֵרֵי: Judah is called the remnant of the people of God’s inheritance with a reference to the rejection and leading away of the ten tribes, which have already taken place. On בָּן וּמְשָׁסָה see Isa. 42:22, Jer. 30:16.

To this announcement of the judgment there is appended in 2Ch. 33:11ff. the statement, that Jehovah caused Manasseh the king to be taken prisoner by the generals of the king of Assyria and led away to Babylon in chains; and that when he humbled himself before God there, and made supplication to Him, He brought him back to Jerusalem and placed him upon his throne again; whereupon Manasseh fortified the walls of Jerusalem still further, placed garrisons in the fortified cities, removed the idol from the temple, abolished from the city the idolatrous altars erected in Jerusalem and upon the temple-mountain, restored the altar of Jehovah, and commanded the people to offer sacrifice upon it. — This incident is omitted in our book, because the conversion of Manasseh was not followed by any lasting results so far as the kingdom was concerned; the abolition of outward idolatry in Jerusalem did not lead to the conversion of the people, and after the death of Manasseh even the idolatrous abominations that had been abolished were restored by Amon.<sup>160</sup>

*2Ki. 21:16.* Manasseh also sinned grievously by shedding innocent blood till Jerusalem was quite filled with it. פָּה לְפָה, from one edge to the other, see at 2Ki. 10:21. This statement has been paraphrased by Josephus thus (*Ant.* x. 3, 1): Manasseh slew πάντας ὁμῶς τοὺς δικαίους τοὺς ἐν τοῖς Ἑβραίοις Ἰεροσολύμοις, and did not spare even the prophets, with the additional clause, which exaggerates the thing: καὶ τούτων δὲ τινὰς καθ’ ἡμέραν ἀπέσφαξε ὥστε αἵματι ῥεῖσθαι τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα.<sup>161</sup>

*2Ki. 21:17, 18.* Manasseh was buried “in the garden of his house, in the garden of Uzza.” “His house” cannot be the royal palace built by Solomon, because the garden is also called the garden of Uzza, evidently from the name of its former possessor. “His house” must therefore have been a summer palace belonging to Manasseh, the situation of which, however, it is impossible to determine more precisely. The arguments adduced by Thenius in support of the

view that it was situated upon Ophel, opposite to Zion, are perfectly untenable. Robinson (*Pal.* i. p. 394) conjectures that the garden of Uzza was upon Zion. The name עֲזָא (עֲזָה) occurs again in 2Sa. 6: 8, 1Ch. 8: 7, Ezr. 2:49, and Neh. 7:51.

**2Ki. 21:19-26.** Reign of Amon (cf. 2Ch. 33:21-25). — Amon reigned only two years, and that in the spirit of his father, that is to say, worshipping all his idols. The city of Jotbah, from which his mother sprang, was, according to Jerome (in the *Onom.* s. v. Jethaba), *urbs antiqua Judaeae*; but it is not further known.

**2Ki. 21:23, 24.** His servants conspired against him and slew him in his palace; whereupon the people of the land, i.e., the population of Judah (עַם הָאָרֶץ = עַם יְהוּדָה, 2Ch. 26: 1), put the conspirators to death and made *Josiah* the son of Amon king, when he was only eight years old.

**2Ki. 21:26.** Amon was buried “in his grave in the garden of Uzza,” i.e., in the grave which he had had made in the garden of Uzza by the side of his father’s grave. He had probably resided in this palace of his father. יִקְבֵר, one buried him.

## **Ch. 22: 1-23:30. Reign of King Josiah.**

**2Ki. 22: 1-23:30.** After a brief account of the length and spirit of the reign of the pious Josiah (vv. 1 and 2), we have a closely connected narrative, in v. 3-23:24, of what he did for the restoration of idolatry; and the whole of the reform effected by him is placed in the eighteenth year of his reign, because it was in this year that the book of the law was discovered, through which the reformation of worship was carried to completion. It is evident that it was the historian’s intention to combine together everything that Josiah did to this end, so as to form one grand picture, from the circumstance that he has not merely placed the chronological datum, “it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah,” at the beginning, but has repeated it at the close (2Ki. 23:23). If we run over the several facts which are brought before us in this section, — the repairing of the temple (2Ki. 22: 3-7); the discovery of the book of the law; the reading of the book to the king; the inquiry made of the prophetess Huldah, and her prophecy (vv. 8-20); the reading of the law to the assembled people in the temple, with the renewal of the covenant (2Ki. 23: 1-3); the eradication of idolatry not only from Jerusalem and Judah, but from Bethel also, and all the cities of Samaria (vv. 4-20); and, lastly, the passover (vv. 21-23), — there is hardly any need to remark, that all this cannot have taken place in the one eighteenth year of his reign, even if, with Usher (*Annales ad a.m.* 3381), we

were to place the solemn passover at the close of the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, which is hardly suitable, and by no means follows from the circumstance that the chronological datum, "in the eighteenth year," stands at the commencement of the complete account of the reform of worship introduced by that king. For we may clearly infer that the several details of this account are not arranged chronologically, but according to the subject-matter, and that the historian has embraced the efforts of Josiah to restore the legal worship of Jehovah, which spread over several years, under the one point of view of a discovery of the law, and therefore within the eighteenth year of his reign, from the fact that he introduces the account of the repairing of the temple (2Ki. 22: 3-7) in a period by itself, and makes it subordinate to the account of the discovery of the book of the law, and indeed only mentions it in a general manner, because it led to the finding of the book of the law. It is true that the other facts are attached to one another in the narrative by *Vav consec.*; but, on a closer inspection of the several details, there cannot be any doubt whatever that the intention is not to arrange them in their chronological order. The repairing of the temple must have commenced before the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, inasmuch as in that year, in which the incident occurred which led to the discovery of the book of the law (2Ki. 22: 3-7), not only were the builders occupied with the repairs of the temple, but money had been brought by all the people to the house of God to carry on this work, and had been collected by the Levites who kept the door. Moreover, from the very nature of the case, we cannot conceive of the restoration of the temple, that had fallen to decay, without the removal of the idolatrous abominations found in the temple. And the assumption is an equally inconceivable one, that all the people entered into covenant with the Lord (2Ki. 23: 3), before any commencement had been made towards the abolition of the prevailing idolatry, or that the pious king had the book of the law read in the temple and entered into covenant with the Lord, so long as the Ashera was standing in the temple, and the idolatrous altars erected by Manasseh in the courts, together with the horses and chariots dedicated to the sun. If the conclusion of a covenant in consequence of the public reading of the book of the law was to be an act in accordance with the law, the public memorials of idolatry must be destroyed at all events in the neighbourhood of the temple. And is it likely that the king, who had been so deeply moved by the curses of the law, would have undertaken so solemn a transaction in sight of the idolatrous altars and other abominations of idolatry in the house of Jehovah, and not rather have seen that this would be only a daring insult to Jehovah? These reasons are quite sufficient to prove that the extermination of idolatry had commenced before the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, and had simply been carried out with greater zeal throughout the whole kingdom after the discovery of the book of the law.

This view of our account is simply confirmed by a comparison with the parallel history in 2Ch. 34 and 35. According to 2Ch. 34: 3ff., Josiah began to seek the God of his father David in the eighth year of his reign, when he was still a youth, that is to say, not more than sixteen years old, and in the twelfth year of his reign began to purify Judah and Jerusalem from idolatry; and, according to vv. 8ff., in the eighteenth year of his reign, at the purification of the land and temple, and the renovation of the temple, the book of the law was found by the high priest, and handed over to the king and read before him (vv. 8-28), after which the renewal of the covenant took place, and all the abominations of idolatry that still remained in the land were swept away (vv. 29-33), and, lastly, a solemn passover was celebrated, of which we have an elaborate account in ch 35: 1-19. Consequently the account given in the Chronicles is, on the whole, arranged with greater chronological precision, although even there, after the commencement of the extermination of idolatry has been mentioned, we have a brief and comprehensive statement of all that Josiah did to accomplish that results; so that after the renewal of the covenant (2Ch. 34:33) we have nothing more than a passing allusion, by way of summary, to the complete abolition of the abominations of idolatry throughout the whole land.

*2Ki. 22: 1, 2. Length and spirit of Josiah's reign.* — Josiah (for the name, see at 1Ki. 13: 2), like Hezekiah, trode once more in the footsteps of his pious forefather David, adhering with the greatest constancy to the law of the Lord. He reigned thirty-one years. As a child he had probably received a pious training from his mother; and when he had ascended the throne, after the early death of his godless father, he was under the guidance of pious men who were faithfully devoted to the law of the Lord, and who turned his heart to the God of their fathers, as was the case with Joash in 2Ki. 12: 3, although there is no allusion to guardianship. His mother *Jedidah*, the daughter of Adaiah, was of *Bosath*, a city in the plain of Judah, of which nothing further is known (see at Jos. 15:39). The description of his character, “he turned not aside to the right hand and to the left,” sc. from that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, is based upon Deu. 5:29; 17:11, 20, and 28:14, and expresses an unwavering adherence to the law of the Lord.

*2Ki. 22: 3-8. Repairing of the temple, and discovery of the book of the law* (cf. 2Ch. 34: 8-18). — When Josiah sent Shaphan the secretary of state (סֹפֵר, see at 2Sa. 8:17) into the temple, in the eighteenth year of his reign, with instructions to Hilkiah the high priest to pay to the builders the money which had been collected from the people for repairing the temple by the Levites who kept the door, Hilkiah said to Shaphan, “I have found the book of the law.” Vv. 3-8 form a long period. The apodosis to וַיְהִי וַגַּר, “it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah — the king had sent Shaphan,” etc., does not

follow till v. 8: “that Hilkiah said,” etc. The principal fact which the historian wished to relate, was the discovery of the book of the law; and the repairing of the temple is simply mentioned because it was when Shaphan was sent to Hilkiah about the payment of the money to the builders that the high priest informed the king’s secretary of state of the discovery of the book of the law in the temple, and handed it over to him to take to the king. **שָׁלַח הַמֶּלֶךְ**, in v. 3, forms the commencement to the minor clauses inserted within the principal clause, and subordinate to it: “the king had sent Shaphan,” etc. According to 2Ch. 34: 8, the king had deputed not only Shaphan the state- secretary, but also Maaseiah the governor of the city and Joach the chancellor, because the repairing of the temple was not a private affair of the king and the high priest, but concerned the city generally, and indeed the whole kingdom. In vv. 4, 5 there follows the charge given by the king to Shaphan: “Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may make up the money,...and hand it over to the workmen appointed over the house of Jehovah,” etc. **יָתַם**, from **תָּמַם**, *Hiphil*, signifies to finish or set right, i.e., not pay out (Ges., Dietr.), but make it up for the purpose of paying out, namely, collect it from the door-keepers, count it, and bind it up in bags (see 2Ki. 12:11). **יָתַם** is therefore quite appropriate here, and there is no alteration of the text required. The door-keepers had probably put the money in a chest placed at the entrance, as was the case at the repairing of the temple in the time of Joash (2Ki. 12:10). In v. 5 the *Keri* **יִתְּנֶהוּ** is a bad alteration of the *Cheth-b* **יִתְּנֶהוּ**, “and give (it) into the hand,” which is perfectly correct. **עֲשֵׂי הַמְּלָאכָה** might denote both the masters and the workmen (builders), and is therefore defined more precisely first of all by **הַמְּפַקְדִים בְּבֵית יְיָ**, “who had the oversight at the house of Jehovah,” i.e., the masters or inspectors of the building, and secondly by **אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵית יְיָ**, who were (occupied) at the house of Jehovah, whilst in the Chronicles it is explained by **אֲשֶׁר עֲשִׂים בִּי**. The *Keri* **יִתְּנֶהוּ** is an alteration after v. 9, whereas the combination **מְפַקְדִים בְּבֵית יְיָ** is justified by the construction of **הַפְּקִיד** *c. acc. pers.* and **בֵּי** *rei* in Jer. 40: 5. The masters are the subject to **וַיִּתְּנוּ**; they were to pay the money as it was wanted, either to the workmen, or for the purchase of materials for repairing the dilapidations, as is more precisely defined in v. 6. Compare 2Ki. 12:12, 13; and for v. 7 compare 2Ki. 12:16. The names of the masters or inspectors are given in 2Ch. 34:12. — The execution of the king’s command is not specially mentioned, that the parenthesis may not be spun out any further.

**2Ki. 22: 8.** Hilkiah the high priest (cf. 1Ch. 5:39) said, “I have found the book of the law in the house of Jehovah.” **סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה**, *the book of the law* (not a law-book or a roll of laws), cannot mean anything else, either grammatically or historically, than the Mosaic book of the law (the Pentateuch), which is so

designated, as is generally admitted, in the Chronicles, and the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.<sup>f62</sup>

The finding of the book of the law in the temple presupposes that the copy deposited there had come to light. But it by no means follows from this, that before its discovery there were no copies in the hands of the priests and prophets. The book of the law that was found was simply the temple copy,<sup>f63</sup>

deposited, according to Deu. 31:26, by the side of the ark of the covenant, which had been lost under the idolatrous kings Manasseh and Amon, and came to light again now that the temple was being repaired. We cannot learn, either from the account before us, or from the words of the Chronicles (2Ch. 34:14), “when they were taking out the money brought into the house of Jehovah, Hilkiyah found the book of the law of the Lord,” in what part of the temple it had hitherto lain; and this is of no importance so far as the principal object of the history is concerned. Even the words of the Chronicles simply point out the occasion on which the book was discovered, and do not affirm that it had been lying in one of the treasure-chambers of the temple, as Josephus says. The expression וַיִּקְרָאֵהוּ does not imply that Shaphan read the whole book through immediately.

*2Ki. 22: 9-14. The reading of the book of the law to the king, and the inquiry made of the prophetess Huldah concerning it. — Vv. 9, 10. When Shaphan informed the king of the execution of his command, he also told him that Hilkiyah had given him a book, and read it to the king. הָשִׁיב דְבָר, to bring an answer, to give a report as to a commission that has been received. הִתִּיכוּ, they poured out the money, i.e., out of the chest in which it was collected, into bags. וַיִּקְרָאֵהוּ, “he read it to the king,” is simplified in the Chronicles (v. 18) by בּוּ וַיִּקְרָא, “he read therein.” That וַיִּקְרָאֵהוּ does not signify that the whole was read, is evident from a comparison of 2Ki. 23: 2, where the reading of the whole is expressed by כָּל־דְּבָרֵי טוֹ. Which passages or sections Shaphan read by himself (v. 8), and which he read to the king, it is impossible to determine exactly. To the king he most likely read, among other things, the threats and curses of the law against those who transgressed it (Deu. 28), and possibly also Lev. 26, because the reading made such an impression upon him, that in his anguish of soul he rent his clothes. Nor is it possible to decide anything with certainty, as to whether the king had hitherto been altogether unacquainted with the book of the law, and had merely a traditional knowledge of the law itself, or whether he had already had a copy of the law, but had not yet read it through, or had not read it with proper attention, which accounted for the passages that were read to him now making so deep and alarming an impression upon him. It is a well-known experience, that even books which have been read may, under*

peculiar circumstances, produce an impression such as has not been made before. But in all probability Josiah had not had in his possession any copy of the law, or even read it till now; although the thorough acquaintance with the law, which all the prophets display, places the existence of the Pentateuch in prophetic circles beyond the reach of doubt.

**2Ki. 22:11.** In his alarm at the words of the book of the law that had been read to him, Josiah rent his clothes, and sent a deputation to the prophetess Huldah, to make inquiry of Jehovah through her concerning the things which he had heard from the law. The deputation consisted of the high priest Hilkiah, Ahikam the supporter of Jeremiah (Jer. 26:24) and the father of Gedaliah the governor (2Ki. 25:22; Jer. 39:14, etc.), Achbor the son of Michaiah, Shaphan the state-secretary (v. 3), and Asahiah the servant (i.e., an officer) of the king.

**2Ki. 22:13.** From the commission, “Inquire ye of Jehovah for me and for the people and for all Judah (i.e., the whole kingdom) concerning the words of this book of the law that has been found, for great is the wrath of the Lord which has been kindled against us, because our fathers have not heard...,” we may infer that the curses of the law upon the despisers of the commandments of God in Lev. 26, Deu. 28, and other passages, had been read to the king. **אֶת־יְיָ** **דָּרַשׁ** means to inquire the will of the Lord, what He has determined concerning the king, his people, and the kingdom. **שָׁמַעַ עַל** signifies here to hearken to anything, to observe it, for which **אֵל** is used elsewhere. **בָּתַב עַל**, to prescribe for performance. **עָלֵינוּ**, “prescribed for us,” is quite appropriate, since the law was not only given to the fathers to obey, but also to the existing generation, — a fact which Thenius has overlooked with his conjecture **עָלָיו**. To render the king’s alarm and his fear of severe judgments from God intelligible, there is no need for the far-fetched and extremely precarious hypothesis, that just at that time the Scythians had invaded and devastated the land.

**2Ki. 22:14.** Nothing further is known of the prophetess *Huldah* than what is mentioned here. All that we can infer from the fact that the king sent to her is, that she was highly distinguished on account of her prophetic gifts, and that none of the prophets of renown, such as Jeremiah and Zephaniah, were at that time in Jerusalem. Her father *Shallum* was *keeper of the clothes*, i.e., superintendent over either the priests’ dresses that were kept in the temple (according to the Rabbins and Wits. *de proph.* in his *Miscell. ss.* i. p. 356, ed. 3), or the king’s wardrobe. The names of his ancestors **תִּקְנָה** and **חֲרָחִים** are written **תִּוְקָנָה** and **חֲסָרָה** in the Chronicles. Huldah lived at Jerusalem **בְּמִשְׁנֵה**, “in the second part” or district of the city, i.e., in the lower city, upon



the hill *Ἀκρα* (Rob. *Pal.* i. p. 391), which is called *הַמִּשְׁנָה* in Zep. 1:10, and *הַעִיר מִשְׁנָה* in Neh. 11: 9, and *ἄλλη πόλις* in Joseph. *Ant.* xv. 11, 5.

*2Ki. 22:15-20. The reply of Huldah the prophetess.* — Huldah confirmed the fear expressed by Josiah, that the wrath of the Lord was kindled against Jerusalem and its inhabitants on account of their idolatry, and proclaimed first of all (vv. 16, 17), that the Lord would bring upon Jerusalem and its inhabitants all the punishments with which the rebellious and idolaters are threatened in the book of the law; and secondly (vv. 18-20), to the king himself, that on account of his sincere repentance and humiliation in the sight of God, he would not live to see the predicted calamities, but would be gathered to his fathers in peace. The first part of her announcement applies “to the man who has sent you to me” (v. 15), the second “to the king of Judah, who has sent to inquire of the Lord” (v. 18). “The man” who had sent to her was indeed also the king; but Huldah intentionally made use of the general expression “the man,” etc., to indicate that the word announced to him applied not merely to the king, but to every one who would hearken to the word, whereas the second portion of her reply had reference to the king alone. *הַמְּקוֹם הַזֶּה*, in vv. 16, 19, and 20, is Jerusalem as the capital of the kingdom. In v. 16, *בְּלִדְבָרֵי הַסֵּפֶר* is an explanatory apposition to *רָעָה*. V. 17. “With all the work of their hands,” i.e., with the idols which they have made for themselves (cf. 1Ki. 16: 7). The last clause in v. 18, “the words which thou hast heard,” is not to be connected with the preceding one, “thus saith the Lord,” and *עַל* or *לְ* to be supplied; but it belongs to the following sentence, and is placed at the head absolutely: as for the words, which thou hast heard — because thy heart has become soft, i.e., in despair at the punishment with which the sinners are threatened (cf. Deu. 20: 3; Isa. 7: 4), and thou hast humbled thyself, when thou didst hear, etc.; therefore, behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, etc. *לְהִיֹּת לְשָׂמָה*, “that they (the city and inhabitants) may become a desolation and curse.” These words, which are often used by the prophets, but which are not found connected like this except in Jer. 44:22, rest upon Lev. 26 and Deu. 28, and show that these passages had been read to the king out of the book of the law.

*2Ki. 22:20.* To gather to his fathers means merely to let him die, and is generally applied to a peaceful death upon a sick-bed, like the synonymous phrase, to lie with one’s fathers; but it is also applied to a violent death by being slain in battle (1Ki. 22:40 and 34), so that there is no difficulty in reconciling this comforting assurance with the slaying of Josiah in battle (2Ki. 23:29). *בְּשָׁלוֹם*, in peace, i.e., without living to witness the devastation of Jerusalem, as is evident from the words, “thine eyes will not see,” etc.

**2Ki. 23: 1-30.** Instead of resting content with the fact that he was promised deliverance from the approaching judgment, Josiah did everything that was in his power to lead the whole nation to true conversion to the Lord, and thereby avert as far as possible the threatened curse of rejection, since the Lord in His word had promised forgiveness and mercy to the penitent. He therefore gathered together the elders of the nation, and went with them, with the priests and prophets and the assembled people, into the temple, and there had the book of the law read to those who were assembled, and concluded a covenant with the Lord, into which the people also entered. After this he had all the remnants of idolatry eradicated, not only in Jerusalem and Judah, but also in Bethel and the other cities of Samaria, and directed the people to strengthen themselves in their covenant fidelity towards the Lord by the celebration of a solemn passover.

**2Ki. 23: 1-3.** *Reading of the law in the temple, and renewal of the covenant* (cf. 2Ch. 34:29-32). Beside the priests, Josiah also gathered together the prophets, including perhaps Jeremiah and Zedekiah, that he might carry out the solemn conclusion of the covenant with their co-operation, and, as is evident from Jer. 1-11, that they might then undertake the task, by their impressive preaching in Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, of making the people conscious of the earnestness of the covenant duties which they had so recently undertaken (see Oehler in Herzog's *Cycl.*). Instead of the prophets, the Levites are mentioned in the Chronicles, probably only because the Levites are mentioned along with the priests in other cases of a similar kind. וַיִּקְרָא, he read, i.e., had it read; for the duty of reading the law in the temple devolved upon the priests as the keepers of the law (Deu. 31: 9ff.).

**2Ki. 23: 3.** The king stood על העמוד, as in 2Ki. 11:14. For וַיִּכְרַת וגו' see 2Ki. 11:17. לְלַכֵּת, i.e., he bound himself solemnly to walk after the Lord, that is to say, in his walk to follow the Lord and keep His commandments (see at 1Ki. 2: 3). — וַיַּעֲמֹד ... בְּבְרִית, all the people entered into the covenant (Luther and others); not *perstitit*, stood firm, continued in the covenant (Maurer, Ges.), which would be at variance with Jer. 11: 9, 10; 25: 3ff., and other utterances of the prophets.

**2Ki. 23: 4-20.** *The eradication of idolatry.* — According to 2Ch. 34: 3-7, this had already begun, and was simply continued and carried to completion after the renewal of the covenant.

**2Ki. 23: 4-14.** *In Jerusalem and Judah.* V. 4. The king commanded the high priest and the other priests, and the Levites who kept the door, to remove from the temple everything that had been made for Baal and Asherah, and to burn it

in the valley of Kidron. **כֹּהֲנֵי הַמִּשְׁנָה**, *sacerdotes secundi ordinis* (Vulg., Luth., etc.), are the common priests as distinguished from **הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל**, the high priest. The Rabbins are wrong in their explanation *vicarii summi sacerdotis*, according to which Thenius would alter the text and read **כֹּהֵן** for **כֹּהֲנֵי**. **חֹסְפֵי שְׁמֵרֵי**, the keepers of the threshold, are the Levites whose duty it was to watch the temple, as in 2Ki. 22: 4 (cf. 1Ch. 23: 5). **כָּל־הַבַּלִּים** (*alles Zeug*, Luth.), i.e., all the apparatus, consisting of altars, idols, and other things, that had been provided for the worship of Baal and Astarte. Josiah had these things burned, according to the law in Deu. 7:25, and that outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron valley. The **שְׂדֵמוֹת קִדְרוֹן** (fields of Kidron) are probably to be sought for to the north-east of Jerusalem, where the Kidron valley is broader than between the city and the Mount of Olives, and spreads out into a basin of considerable size, which is now cultivated and contains plantations of olive and other fruit-trees (Rob. *Pal.* i. p. 405). “And he had their dust carried to Bethel,” i.e., the ashes of the wooden objects which were burned, and the dust of those of stone and metal which were ground to powder, to defile the idolatrous place of worship at Bethel as the chief seat of idolatry and false worship.

**2Ki. 23: 5.** “He abolished the high priests.” **כֹּהֲנִים** are also mentioned in Hos. 10: 5 and Zec. 1: 4: they were not idolatrous priests or prophets of Baal, but priests whom the kings of Judah had appointed to offer incense upon the altars of the high places; for they are distinguished from the idolatrous priests, or those who burnt incense to Baal, the sun, etc. In Hos. 10: 5 the priests appointed in connection with the golden calf at Bethel are called **כֹּהֲנִים**; and in Zep. 1: 4 the **כֹּהֲנִים** are not exclusively idolatrous priests, but such as did service sometimes for Jehovah, who had been degraded into a Baal, and sometimes to actual idols. Now as **כֹּהֲנֵי** who burnt incense upon high places are also mentioned in v. 8, we must understand by the **כֹּהֲנִים** non-Levitical priests, and by the **כֹּהֲנֵי** in v. 8 Levitical priests who were devoted to the worship on the high places. The primary signification of **כֹּהֵן** is disputed. In Syriac the word signifies the priest, in Hebrew spurious priests, probably from **כָּמַר** in the sense of to bring together, or complete, as the performers of sacrifice, like **ἑρδων**, the sacrificer (Dietr.); whereas the connection suggested by Hitzig (on Zeph.) with (Arabic) *kfr*, to be unbelieving, in the opposite sense of the religious, is very far-fetched, and does not answer either to the Hebrew or the Syriac use of the word.<sup>164</sup>

The singular **וַיִּקְפָּר** is striking, inasmuch as if the *imperf. c. Vav rel.* were a continuation of **וַיִּקְפָּר**, we should expect the plural, “and who had burnt incense,” as it is given in the Chaldee. The LXX, Vulg., and Syr. have rendered **לְקַפָּר**,

from which **וַיִּקְטֹר** has probably arisen by a mistake in copying. In the following clause, “and those who had burnt incense to Baal, to the sun and to the moon,” etc., *Baal* is mentioned as the deity worshipped in the sun, the moon, and the stars (see at 2Ki. 21: 3). **מְזֻלוֹת**, synonymous with **מְזֻרוֹת** in Job. 38:32, does not mean the twenty-eight *naxatra*, or Indian stations of the moon,<sup>f65</sup> but the twelve signs or constellations of the zodiac, which were regarded by the Arabs as *menâzil*, i.e., station-houses, in which the sun took up its abode in succession when describing the circuit of the year (cf. *Ges. Thes.* p. 869, and Delitzsch on Job. 38:32).

**2Ki. 23: 6.** The image of Asherah (**הַאֲשֵׁרָה** = **פֶּסֶל הָאֵל**, 2Ki. 21: 3, 7), which Manasseh placed in the temple and then removed after his return from Babylon (2Ch. 33:15), but which Amon had replaced, Josiah ordered to be burned and ground to powder in the valley of Kidron, and the dust to be thrown upon the graves of the common people. **וַיִּדֹק**, from **דָּקַק**, to make fine, to crush, refers to the metal covering of the image (see at Exo. 32:10). Asa had already had an idol burned in the Kidron valley (1Ki. 15:13), and Hezekiah had ordered the idolatrous abominations to be taken out of the city and carried thither (2Ch. 29:16); so that the valley had already been defiled. There was a burial-place there for **בְּנֵי הָעָם**, i.e., the common people (cf. Jer. 26:23), who had no graves of their own, just as at the present day the burial-ground of the Jews there lies to the north of *Kefr Silwân*. Josiah ordered the ashes to be cast upon these graves, probably in order to defile them as the graves of idolaters.

**2Ki. 23: 7.** **בְּתֵי הַקְּדוּשִׁים**, the houses (places of abode) of the paramours (for **הַקְּדוּשִׁים** see at 1Ki. 14:24), were probably only tents or huts, which were erected in the court of the temple for the paramours to dwell in, and in which there were also women who wove tent-temples (**בְּתֵי־מִשְׁכָּן**) for Asherah (see at 2Ki. 17:30).<sup>f66</sup>

**2Ki. 23: 8.** All the (Levitical) priests he sent for from the cities of Judah to Jerusalem, and defiled the altars of the high places, upon which they had offered incense, from Geba to Beersheba, i.e., throughout the whole kingdom. *Geba*, the present *Jeba*, about three hours to the north of Jerusalem (see at Jos. 18:24), was the northern frontier of the kingdom of Judah, and *Beersheba* (*Bir-seba*: see the Comm. on Gen. 21:31) the southern frontier of Canaan. It is evident from v. 9 that **כֹּהֲנֵי־לֵוִי** are Levitical priests. He ordered them to come to Jerusalem, that they might not carry on illegal worship any longer in the cities of Judah. He then commanded that the unlawful high places should be defiled throughout the whole land, for the purpose of suppressing this worship altogether. He also destroyed “the altars of the high places at the gates, (both

that) which was at the entrance of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, (and also that) which was at the left of every one (entering) by the city gate.” The two clauses beginning with **אֲשֶׁר** contain a more precise description of **בְּמֹת הַשָּׁעֵרִים**. The gate of Joshua the governor of the city is not mentioned anywhere else, but it was probably near to his home, i.e., near the citadel of the city; but whether it was the future gate of *Gennath*, as Thenius supposes, or some other, it is impossible to determine. This also applies to the opinion that **שַׁעַר הָעִיר** is the valley gate or Joppa gate (Thenius) as being the gate of greatest traffic; for the traffic through the northern or Ephraim gate was certainly not less. **עַל-שְׂמֹאל אִישׁ**, at the left of every one, sc. going into the city.

**2Ki. 23: 9.** “Only the priests of the high places did not sacrifice,...but ate unleavened bread in the midst of their brethren.” The **אֲשֶׁר** is connected with v. 8: Josiah did not allow the priests, whom he had brought out of the cities of Judah to Jerusalem, to offer sacrifice upon the altar of Jehovah in the temple, i.e., to perform the sacrificial service of the law, though he did allow them “to eat that which was unleavened,” i.e., to eat of the sacred altar-gifts intended for the priests (Lev. 6: 9, 10 and 22); only they were not allowed to consume this at a holy place, but simply in the midst of their brethren, i.e., at home in the family. They were thus placed on a par with the priests who were rendered incapable of service on account of a bodily defect (Lev. 21:17-22).

**2Ki. 23:10.** He also defiled the place of sacrifice in the valley of Benhinnom, for the purpose of exterminating the worship of Moloch. Moloch’s place of sacrifice is called **הַתְּפֹת**, as an object of abhorrence, or one to be spat at (**הַתְּפֹת**: Job. 17: 6), from **תָּפַח**, to spit, or spit out (cf. Roediger in *Ges. thes.* p. 1497, where the other explanations are exploded).<sup>167</sup> On the valley *Bne* or *Ben-Hinnom*, at the south side of Mount Zion, see at Jos. 15: 8.

**2Ki. 23:11.** He cleared away the horses dedicated to the sun, and burned up the chariots of the sun. As the horses were only cleared away (**וַיִּשְׁבֹּת**), whereas the chariots were burned, we have not to think of images of horses (Selden, *de Diis Syr.* ii. 8), but of living horses, which were given to the sun, i.e., kept for the worship of the sun. Horses were regarded as sacred to the sun by many nations, viz., the Armenians, Persians, Massagetae, Ethiopians, and Greeks, and were sacrificed to it (for proofs see Bochart, *Hieroz.* i. lib. ii. c. 10); and there is no doubt that the Israelites received this worship first of all from Upper Asia, along with the actual sun-worship, possibly through the Assyrians. “The kings of Judah” are Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon. These horses were hardly kept to be offered to the sun in sacrifice (Bochart and others), but, as we must infer from

the “chariots of the sun,” were used for processions in connection with the worship of the sun, probably, according to the unanimous opinion of the Rabbins, to drive and meet the rising sun. The definition **מִבַּאֲבֵית יי**, “from the coming into the house of Jehovah,” i.e., near the entrance into the temple, is dependent upon **נָתַנוּ**, “they had given (placed) the horses of the sun near the temple entrance,” **אֶל-לְשֵׁבֶת**, “in the cell of Nethanmelech.” **אֶל** does not mean *at* the cell, i.e., in the stable by the cell (Thenius), because the ellipsis is too harsh, and the cells built in the court of the temple were intended not merely as dwelling-places for the priests and persons engaged in the service, but also as a *depôt* for the provisions and vessels belonging to the temple (Neh. 10:38ff.; 1Ch. 9:26). One of these *depôts* was arranged and used as a stable for the sacred horses. This cell, which derived its name from Nethanmelech, a chamberlain (**סָרִיס**), of whom nothing further is known, possibly the builder or founder of it, was **בְּפִרְוֵרִים**, in the *Pharvars*. **פִּרְוֵרִים**, the plural of **פִּרְוֵר**, is no doubt identical with **פִּרְוֵר** in 1Ch. 26:18. This was the name given to a building at the western or hinder side of the outer temple-court by the gate *Shalleket* at the ascending road, i.e., the road which led up from the city standing in the west into the court of the temple (1Ch. 26:16 and 18). The meaning of the word **פִּרְוֵר** is uncertain. Gesenius (*thes.* p. 1123) explains it by *porticus*, after the Persian *firwâr*, summer-house, an open kiosk. Böttcher (*Proben*, p. 347), on the other hand, supposes it to be “a separate spot resembling a suburb,” because in the Talmud **פִּרְוֵרִין** signifies *suburbia, loca urbi vicina*.

**2Ki. 23:12**. The altars built upon the roof of the *aliyah* of Ahaz were dedicated to the host of heaven (Zep. 1: 5; Jer. 19:13; 32:29), and certainly built by Ahaz; and inasmuch as Hezekiah had undoubtedly removed them when he reformed the worship, they had been restored by Manasseh and Amon, so that by “the kings of Judah” we are to understand these three kings as in v. 11. We are unable to determine where the **עֲלִיָּה**, the upper chamber, of Ahaz really was. But since the things spoken of both before and afterwards are the objects of idolatry found in the temple, this *aliyah* was probably also an upper room of one of the buildings in the court of the temple (Thenius), possibly at the gate, which Ahaz had built when he removed the outer entrance of the king into the temple (2Ki. 16:18), since, according to Jer. 35: 4, the buildings at the gate had upper stories. The altars built by Manasseh in the two courts of the temple (see 2Ki. 21: 5) Josiah destroyed, **וַיִּרְץ מֵשָׁם**, “and crushed them to powder from thence,” and cast their dust into the Kidron valley. **וַיִּרְץ**, not from **רוּץ**, to run, but from **רָצַץ**, to pound or crush to pieces. The alteration proposed by Thenius into **וַיִּרְץ**, he caused to run and threw = he had them removed with all speed, is

not only arbitrary, but unsuitable, because it is impossible to see why Josiah should merely have hurried the clearing away of the dust of these altars, whereas **רָצַץ**, to pound or grind to powder, was not superfluous after **נָתַן**, to destroy, but really necessary, if the dust was to be thrown into the Kidron. **וַיִּרְץ** is substantially equivalent to **וַיִּדְרֹק** in v. 6.

**2Ki. 23:13, 14.** The places of sacrifice built by Solomon upon the southern height of the Mount of Olives (see at 1Ki. 11: 7) Josiah defiled, reducing to ruins the monuments, cutting down the Asherah idols, and filling their places with human bones, which polluted a place, according to Num. 19:16. V. 14 gives a more precise definition of **טְמֵא** in v. 13 in the form of a simple addition (with *Vav cop.*). **הַר הַמְּשָׁחִית**, mountain of destruction (not *unctionis* = **הַמְּשָׁחָה**, Rashi and Cler.), is the southern peak of the Mount of Olives, called in the tradition of the Church *mons offensionis* or *scandali* (see at 1Ki. 11: 7). For **מִצְבוֹת** and **אֲשֵׁרִים** see at 1Ki. 14:23. **מְקוֹמָם** are the places where the *Mazzeboth* and *Asherim* stood by the altars that were dedicated to Baal and Astarte, so that by defiling them the altar-places were also defiled.

**2Ki. 23:15-20.** *Extermination of idolatry in Bethel and the cities of Samaria.* — In order to suppress idolatry as far as possible, Josiah did not rest satisfied with the extermination of it in his own kingdom Judah, but also destroyed the temples of the high places and altars and idols in the land of the former kingdom of the ten tribes, slew all the priests of the high places that were there, and burned their bones upon the high places destroyed, in order to defile the ground. The warrant for this is not to be found, as Hess supposes, in the fact that Josiah, as vassal of the king of Assyria, had a certain limited power over these districts, and may have looked upon them as being in a certain sense his own territory, a power which the Assyrians may have allowed him the more readily, because they were sure of his fidelity in relation to Egypt. For we cannot infer that Josiah was a vassal of the Assyrians from the imprisonment and release of Manasseh by the king of Assyria, nor is there any historical evidence whatever to prove it. The only reason that can have induced Josiah to do this, must have been that after the dissolution of the kingdom of the ten tribes he regarded himself as the king of the whole of the covenant-nation, and availed himself of the approaching or existing dissolution of the Assyrian empire to secure the friendship of the Israelites who were left behind in the kingdom of the ten tribes, to reconcile them to his government, and to win them over to his attempt to reform; and there is no necessity whatever to assume, as Thenius does, that he asked permission to do so of the newly arisen ruler Nabopolassar. For against this assumption may be adduced not only the improbability that Nabopolassar would give him any such permission, but still more the

circumstance that at a still earlier period, even before Nabopolassar became king of Babylon, Josiah had had taxes collected of the inhabitants of the kingdom of Israel for the repairing of the temple (2Ch. 34: 9), from which we may see that the Israelites who were left behind in the land were favourably disposed towards his reforms, and were inclined to attach themselves in religious matters to Judah (just as, indeed, even the Samaritans were willing after the captivity to take part in the building of the temple, Ezr. 4: 2ff.), which the Assyrians at that time were no longer in a condition to prevent.

**2Ki. 23:15.** “Also the altar at Bethel, the high place which Jeroboam had made — this altar also and the high place he destroyed.” It is grammatically impossible to take **הַבְּמֹתָה** as an accusative of place (Thenius); it is in apposition to **הַמִּזְבֵּחַ**, serving to define it more precisely: the altar at Bethel, namely the high place; for which we have afterwards the altar and the high place. By the appositional **הַבְּמֹתָה** the altar at Bethel is described as an illegal place of worship. “He burned the **בְּמֹתָה**,” i.e., the buildings of this sanctuary, ground to powder everything that was made of stone or metal, i.e., both the altar and the idol there. This is implied in what follows: “and burned Asherah,” i.e., a wooden idol of Astarte found there, according to which there would no doubt be also an idol of Baal, a **מִצְבֵּה** of stone. The golden calf, which had formerly been set up at Bethel, may, as Hos. 10: 5, 6 seems to imply, have been removed by the Assyrians, and, after the settlement of heathen colonists in the land, have been supplanted by idols of Baal and Astarte (cf. 2Ki. 17:29).

**2Ki. 23:16ff.** In order to desecrate this idolatrous site for all time, Josiah had human bones taken out of the graves that were to be found upon the mountain, and burned upon the altar, whereby the prophecy uttered in the reign of Jeroboam by the prophet who came out of Judah concerning this idolatrous place of worship was fulfilled; but he spared the tomb of that prophet himself (cf. 1Ki. 13:26-32). The mountain upon which Josiah saw the graves was a mountain at Bethel, which was visible from the *bamah* destroyed. **צִיּוֹן**, a sepulchral monument, probably a stone erected upon the grave. **וַיִּמְלֹטוּ**: “so they rescued (from burning) his bones (the bones of the prophet who had come from Judah), together with the bones of the prophet who had come from Samaria,” i.e., of the old prophet who sprang from the kingdom of the ten tribes and had come to Bethel (1Ki. 13:11). **בְּאֵל מִשְׁמֵרֹן** in antithesis to **בְּאֵל מִיְהוּדָה** denotes simply descent from the land of Samaria.<sup>f68</sup>

**2Ki. 23:19, 20.** All the houses of the high places that were in the (other) cities of Samaria Josiah also destroyed in the same way as that at Bethel, and offered up the priests of the high places upon the altars, i.e., slew them upon the



altars on which they had offered sacrifice, and burned men's bones upon them (the altars) to defile them. The severity of the procedure towards these priests of the high places, as contrasted with the manner in which the priests of the high places in Judah were treated (vv. 8 and 9), may be explained partly from the fact that the Israelitish priests of the high places were not Levitical priests, but chiefly from the fact that they were really idolatrous priests.

*2Ki. 23:21-23.* The passover is very briefly noticed in our account, and is described as such an one as had not taken place since the days of the judges. V. 21 simply mentions the appointment of this festival on the part of the king, and the execution of the king's command has to be supplied. V. 22 contains a remark concerning the character of the passover. In 2Ch. 35: 1-19 we have a very elaborate description of it. What distinguished this passover above every other was, (1) that "all the nation," not merely Judah and Benjamin, but also the remnant of the ten tribes, took part in it, or, as it is expressed in 2Ch. 35:18, "all Judah and Israel;" (2) that it was kept in strict accordance with the precepts of the Mosaic book of the law, whereas in the passover instituted by Hezekiah there were necessarily many points of deviation from the precepts of the law, more especially in the fact that the feast had to be transferred from the first month, which was the legal time, to the second month, because the priests had not yet purified themselves in sufficient numbers and the people had not yet gathered together at Jerusalem, and also that even then a number of the people had inevitably been allowed to eat the passover without the previous purification required by the law (2Ch. 30: 2, 3, 17-20). This is implied in the words, "for there was not holden such a passover since the days of the judges and all the kings of Israel and Judah." That this remark does not preclude the holding of earlier passovers, as Thenius follows De Wette in supposing, without taking any notice of the refutations of this opinion, was correctly maintained by the earlier commentators. Thus Clericus observes: "I should have supposed that what the sacred writer meant to say was, that during the times of the kings no passover had ever been kept *so strictly by every one, according to all the Mosaic laws*. Before this, even under the pious kings, they seem to have followed custom rather than the very words of the law; and since this was the case, many things were necessarily changed and neglected." Instead of "since the days of the judges who judged Israel," we find in 2Ch. 35:18, "since the days of Samuel the prophet," who is well known to have closed the period of the judges.

*2Ki. 23:24-30.* Conclusion of Josiah's reign. — V. 24. As Josiah had the passover kept in perfect accordance with the precepts of the law, so did he also exterminate the necromancers, the teraphim and all the abominations of idolatry, throughout all Judah and Jerusalem, to set up the words of the law in

the book of the law that had been found, i.e., to carry them out and bring them into force. For **הַאֲבוֹת** and **הַיְדֹעָנִים** see at 2Ki. 21: 6. **תְּרַפִּים**, *penates*, domestic gods, which were worshipped as the authors of earthly prosperity and as oracular deities (see at Gen. 31:19). **נְלָלִים** and **שִׁקְצִים**, connected together, as in Deu. 29:16, as a contemptuous description of idols in general. — In v. 25 the account of the efforts made by Josiah to restore the true worship of Jehovah closes with a general verdict concerning his true piety. See the remarks on this point at 2Ki. 18: 5. He turned to Jehovah with all his heart, etc.: there is an evident allusion here to Deu. 6: 5. Compare with this the sentence of the prophet Jeremiah concerning his reign (Jer. 22:15, 16).

**2Ki. 23:26.** Nevertheless the Lord turned not from the great fierceness of His wrath, wherewith He had burned against Judah on account of all the provocations “with which Manasseh had provoked Him.” With this sentence, in which **אֲשֶׁר שָׁב אֵלַי** forms an unmistakable word-play upon **אֵךְ לֹא שָׁב**, the historian introduces the account not merely of the end of Josiah’s reign, but also of the destruction of the kingdom of Judah. Manasseh is mentioned here and at 2Ki. 24: 3 and Jer. 15: 4 as the person who, by his idolatry and his unrighteousness, with which he provoked God to anger, had brought upon Judah and Jerusalem the unavoidable judgment of rejection. It is true that Josiah had exterminated outward and gross idolatry throughout the land by his sincere conversion to the Lord, and by his zeal for the restoration of the lawful worship of Jehovah, and had persuaded the people to enter into covenant with its God once more; but a thorough conversion of the people to the Lord he had not been able to effect. For, as Clericus has correctly observed, “although the king was most religious, and the people obeyed him through fear, yet for all that the mind of the people was not changed, as is evident enough from the reproaches of Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and other prophets, who prophesied about that time and a little after.” With regard to this point compare especially the first ten chapters of Jeremiah, which contain a *resumé* of his labours in the reign of Josiah, and bear witness to the deep inward apostasy of the people from the Lord, not only before and during Josiah’s reform of worship, but also afterwards. As the Holy One of Israel, therefore, God could not forgive any more, but was obliged to bring upon the people and kingdom, after the death of Josiah, the judgment already foretold to Manasseh himself (2Ki. 21:12ff.).

**2Ki. 23:27.** The Lord said: I will also put away Judah (in the same manner as Israel: cf. 2Ki. 17:20, 23) from my face, etc. **וַיֹּאמֶר** expresses the divine decree, which was announced to the people by the prophets, especially Jeremiah and Zephaniah.

**2Ki. 23:29, 30**: compare 2Ch. 35:20-24. The predicted catastrophe was brought to pass by the expedition of Necho the king of Egypt against Assyria. “In his days (i.e., towards the end of Josiah’s reign) Pharaoh *Necho* the king of Egypt went up against the king of Asshur to the river Euphrates.” *Necho* (נְכֹחַ or נְכוֹ, 2Ch. 35:20, Jer. 46: 2; called *Νεχάω* by Josephus, Manetho in Jul. Afric., and Euseb., after the LXX; and *Νεκώς* by Herod. ii. 158, 159, iv. 42, and Diod. Sic. i. 33; according to Brugsch, *hist. d’Eg.* i. p. 252, *Nekâou*) was, according to Man., the sixth king of the twenty-sixth (Saitic) dynasty, the second Pharaoh of that name, the son of Psammetichus I and grandson of Necho I; and, according to Herodotus, he was celebrated for a canal which he proposed to have cut in order to connect the Nile with the Red Sea, as well as for the circumnavigation of Africa (compare Brugsch, *l.c.*, according to whom he reigned from 611 to 595 B.C.). Whether “the king of Asshur” against whom Necho marched was the last ruler of the Assyrian empire, *Asardanpal* (*Sardanapal*), *Saracus* according to the monuments (see Brandis, *Ueber den Gewinn*, p. 55; M. v. Niebuhr, *Gesch. Assurs*, pp. 110ff. and 192), or the existing ruler of the Assyrian empire which had already fallen, Nabopolassar the king of Babylon, who put an end to the Assyrian monarchy in alliance with the Medes by the conquest and destruction of Nineveh, and founded the Chaldaean or Babylonian empire, it is impossible to determine, because the year in which Nineveh was taken cannot be exactly decided, and all that is certain is that Nineveh had fallen before the battle of Carchemish in the year 606 B.C. Compare M. v. Niebuhr, *Gesch. Assurs*, pp. 109ff. and 203, 204. — King Josiah went against the Egyptian, and “he (Necho) slew him at Megiddo when he saw him,” i.e., caught sight of him. This extremely brief notice of the death of Josiah is explained thus in the Chronicles: that Necho sent ambassadors to Josiah, when he was taking the field against him, with an appeal that he would not fight against him, because his only intention was to make war upon Asshur, but that Josiah did not allow himself to be diverted from his purpose, and fought a battle with Necho in the valley of Megiddo, in which he was mortally wounded by the archers. What induced Josiah to oppose with force of arms the advance of the Egyptian to the Euphrates, notwithstanding the assurance of Necho that he had no wish to fight against Judah, is neither to be sought for in the fact that Josiah was dependent upon Babylon, which is at variance with history, nor in the fact that the kingdom of Judah had taken possession of all the territory of the ancient inheritance of Israel, and Josiah was endeavouring to restore all the ancient glory of the house of David over the surrounding nations (Ewald, *Gesch.* iii. p. 707), but solely in Josiah’s conviction that Judah could not remain neutral in the war which had broken out between Egypt and Babylon, and in the hope that by attacking Necho, and frustrating his expedition

to the Euphrates, he might be able to avert great distress from his own land and kingdom.<sup>169</sup>

This battle is also mentioned by Herodotus (ii. 159); but he calls the place where it was fought *Μάγδολον*, i.e., neither *Migdol*, which was twelve Roman miles to the south of Pelusium (Forbiger, *Hdb. d. alten Geogr.* ii. p. 695), nor the perfectly apocryphal *Magdala* or *Migdal Zebaiah* mentioned by the Talmudists (Reland, *Pal.* p. 898, 899), as Movers supposes. We might rather think with Ewald (*Gesch.* iii. p. 708) of the present *Mejdel*, to the south-east of Acca, at a northern source of the Kishon, and regard this as the place where the Egyptian camp was pitched, whereas Israel stood to the east of it, at the place still called *Rummane*, at *Hadad-Rimmon* in the valley of Megiddo, as Ewald assumes (*Gesch.* iii. p. 708). But even this combination is overthrown by the fact that *Rummane*, which lies to the east of *el Mejdel* at the distance of a mile and three-quarters (geogr.), on the southern edge of the plain of Buttauf, cannot possibly be the *Hadad-Rimmon* mentioned in *Zec.* 12:11, where king Josiah died after he had been wounded in the battle. For since *Megiddo* is identical with the Roman *Legio*, the present *Lejun*, as Robinson has proved (see at *Jos.* 12:21), and as is generally admitted even by C. v. Raumer (*Pal.* p. 447, note, ed. 4), *Hadad-Rimmon* must be the same as the village of *Rümmuni* (*Rummane*), which is three-quarters of an hour to the south of Lejun, where the Scottish missionaries in the year 1839 found many ancient wells and other traces of Israelitish times (V. de Velde, *R.* i. p. 267; *Memoir*, pp. 333, 334). But this *Rummane* is four geographical miles distant from *el Mejdel*, and *Mediggo* three and a half, so that the battle fought at Megiddo cannot take its name from *el Mejdel*, which is more than three miles off. The *Magdolon* of Herodotus can only arise from some confusion between it and *Megiddo*, which was a very easy thing with the Greek pronunciation *Μαγεδδῶ*, without there being any necessity to assume that Herodotus was thinking of the Egyptian *Migdol*, which is called *Magdolo* in the *Itin. Ant.* p. 171 (cf. Brugsch, *Geogr. Inschriften altägypt. Denkmäler*, i. pp. 261, 262). If, then, Josiah went to Megiddo in the plain of Esdrelom to meet the king of Egypt, and fell in with him there, there can be no doubt that Necho came by sea to Palestine and landed at Acco, as des Vignoles (*Chronol.* ii. p. 427) assumed.<sup>170</sup>

For if the Egyptian army had marched by land through the plain of Philistia, Josiah would certainly have gone thither to meet it, and not have allowed it to advance into the plain of Megiddo without fighting a battle.

**2Ki. 23:30.** The brief statement, “his servants carried him dead from Megiddo and brought him to Jerusalem,” is given with more minuteness in the Chronicles: his servants took him, the severely wounded king, by his own command, from his chariot to his second chariot, and drove him to Jerusalem,

and he died and was buried, etc. Where he died the Chronicles do not affirm; the occurrence of **וַיָּמָת** after the words “they brought him to Jerusalem,” does not prove that he did not die till he reached Jerusalem. If we compare Zec. 12:11, where the prophet draws a parallel between the lamentation at the death of the Messiah and the lamentation of Hadad-Rimmon in the valley of Megiddo, as the deepest lamentation of the people in the olden time, with the account given in 2Ch. 35:25 of the lamentation of the whole nation at the death of Josiah, there can hardly be any doubt that Josiah died on the way to Jerusalem at Hadad-Rimmon, the present Rummane, to the south of Lejun (see above), and was taken to Jerusalem dead. — He was followed on the throne by his younger son Jehoahaz, whom the people (**עַם הָאָרֶץ**), as in 2Ki. 21:24) anointed king, passing over the elder, Eliakim, probably because they regarded him as the more able man.

### **Ch. 23:31-24:17. Reigns of the Kings Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Jehoiachin.**

**2Ki. 23:31-35.** Reign of Jehoahaz (cf. 2Ch. 36: 1-4). — *Jehoahaz*, called significantly by Jeremiah (Jer. 22:11) *Shallum*, i.e., “to whom it is required,” reigned only three months, and did evil in the eyes of the Lord as all his fathers had done. The people (or the popular party), who had preferred him to his elder brother, had apparently set great hopes upon him, as we may judge from Jer. 22:10-12, and seem to have expected that his strength and energy would serve to avert the danger which threatened the kingdom on the part of Necho. Ezekiel (Eze. 19: 3) compares him to a young lion which learned to catch the prey and devoured men, but, as soon as the nations heard of him, was taken in their pit and led by nose-rings to Egypt, and thus attributes to him the character of a tyrant disposed to acts of violence; and Josephus accordingly (*Ant.* x. 5, 2) describes him as **ἀσεβῆς καὶ μιαρὸς τὸν τρόπον**.

**2Ki. 23:33.** “Pharaoh Necho put him in fetters (**וַיִּאֶסְרֵהוּ**) at Riblah in the land of Hamath, when he had become king at Jerusalem.” In 2Ch. 36: 3 we have, instead of this, “the king of Egypt deposed him (**וַיִּסְרֵהוּ**) at Jerusalem.” The Masoretes have substituted as *Keri* **מִמְלָךְ**, “away from being king,” or “that he might be no longer king,” in the place of **בְּמִלְךְ**, and Thenius and Bertheau prefer the former, because the LXX have **τοῦ μὴ βασιλεύειν** not in our text only, but in the Chronicles also; but they ought not to have appealed to the Chronicles, inasmuch as the LXX have not rendered the Hebrew text there, but have simply repeated the words from the text of the book of Kings. The *Keri* is nothing more than an emendation explaining the sense, which the LXX have also followed. The two texts are not contradictory, but simply complete

each other: for, as Clericus has correctly observed, “Jehoahaz would of course be removed from Jerusalem before he was cast into chains; and there was nothing to prevent his being dethroned at Jerusalem before he was taken to Riblah.”

We are not told in what way Necho succeeded in getting Jehoahaz into his power, so as to put him in chains at Riblah. The assumption of J. D. Michaelis and others, that his elder brother Eliakim, being dissatisfied with the choice of Jehoahaz as king, had recourse to Necho at Riblah, in the hope of getting possession of his father’s kingdom through his instrumentality, is precluded by the fact that Jehoahaz would certainly not have been so foolish as to appear before the enemy of his country at a mere summons from Pharaoh, who was at Riblah, and allow him to depose him, when he was perfectly safe in Jerusalem, where the will of the people had raised him to the throne. If Necho wanted to interfere with the internal affairs of the kingdom of Judah, it would never have done for him to proceed beyond Palestine to Syria after the victory at Megiddo, without having first deposed Jehoahaz, who had been raised to the throne at Jerusalem without any regard to his will. The course of events was therefore probably the following: After the victory at Megiddo, Necho intended to continue his march to the Euphrates; but on hearing that Jehoahaz had ascended the throne, and possibly also in consequence of complaints which Eliakim had made to him on that account, he ordered a division of his army to march against Jerusalem, and while the main army was marching slowly to Riblah, he had Jerusalem taken, king Jehoahaz dethroned, the land laid under tribute, Eliakim appointed king as his vassal, and the deposed Jehoahaz brought to his headquarters at Riblah, then put into chains and transported to Egypt; so that the statement in 2Ch. 36: 3, “he deposed him at Jerusalem,” is to be taken quite literally, even if Necho did not come to Jerusalem *in propria personâ*, but simply effected this through the medium of one of his generals.<sup>171</sup>

*Riblah* has been preserved in the miserable village of *Rible*, from ten to twelve hours to the S.S.W. of Hums (Emesa) by the river el Ahsy (Orontes), in a large fruitful plain of the northern portion of the Bekaa, which was very well adapted to serve as the camping ground of Necho’s army as well as of that of Nebuchadnezzar (2Ki. 25: 6, 20, 21), not only because it furnished the most abundant supply of food and fodder, but also on account of its situation on the great caravan-road from Palestine by Damascus, Emesa, and Hamath to Thapsacus and Carchemish on the Euphrates (cf. Rob. *Bibl. Res.* pp. 542-546 and 641).

In the payment imposed upon the land by Necho, one talent of gold (c. 25,000 thalers: £3750) does not seem to bear any correct proportion to 100 talents of silver (c. 250,000 thalers, or £37,500), and consequently the LXX have 100

talents of gold, the Syr. and Arab. 10 talents; and Thenius supposes this to have been the original reading, and explains the reading in the text from the dropping out of a ך (= 10), though without reflecting that as a rule the number 10 would require the plural כַּכְּרִים.

**2Ki. 23:34.** From the words “Necho made Eliakim the son of Josiah king *in the place of his father Josiah*,” it follows that the king of Egypt did not acknowledge the reign of Jehoahaz, because he had been installed by the people without his consent. “And changed his name into Jehoiakim.” The alteration of the name was a sign of dependence. In ancient times princes were accustomed to give new names to the persons whom they took into their service, and masters to give new names to their slaves (cf. Gen. 41:45, Ezr. 5:14, Dan. 1: 7, and Hävernicks on the last passage). — But while these names were generally borrowed from heathen deities, Eliakim, and at a later period Mattaniah (2Ki. 24:17), received genuine Israelitish names, *Jehoiakim*, i.e., “Jehovah will set up,” and *Zidkiyahu*, i.e., “righteousness of Jehovah;” from which we may infer that Necho and Nebuchadnezzar did not treat the vassal kings installed by them exactly as their slaves, but allowed them to choose the new names for themselves, and simply confirmed them as a sign of their supremacy. *Eliakim* altered his name into *Jehoiakim*, i.e., *El* (God) into *Jehovah*, to set the allusion to the establishment of the kingdom, which is implied in the name, in a still more definite relation to Jehovah the covenant God, who had promised to establish the seed of David (2Sa. 7:14), possibly with an intentional opposition to the humiliation with which the royal house of David was threatened by Jeremiah and other prophets. — “But Jehoahaz he had taken (לָקַח, like יָקַח in 2Ki. 24:12), and he came to Egypt and died there” — when, we are not told. — In v. 35, even before the account of Jehoiakim’s reign, we have fuller particulars respecting the payment of the tribute which Necho imposed upon the land (v. 33), because it was the condition on which he was appointed king. — “The gold and silver Jehoiakim gave to Pharaoh; yet (אֲשֶׁר = but in order to raise it) he valued (הִעֲרִיף as in Lev. 27: 8) the land, to give the money according to Pharaoh’s command; of every one according to his valuation, he exacted the silver and gold of the population of the land, to give it to Pharaoh Necho.” נָגַשׁ, to exact tribute, is construed with a double accusative, and אִישׁ בְּעֶרְכּוֹ placed first for the sake of emphasis, as an explanatory apposition to אֶת־עַם הָאָרֶץ.

**2Ki. 23:36-24: 7.** REIGN OF JEHOIAKIM (cf. 2Ch. 36: 5-8). — Jehoiakim reigned eleven years in the spirit of his ungodly forefathers (compare v. 37 with v. 32). Jeremiah represents him (Jer. 22:13ff.) as a bad prince, who enriched himself by the unjust oppression of his people, “whose eyes and heart were directed upon nothing but upon gain, and upon innocent blood to shed it, and

upon oppression and violence to do them” (compare 2Ki. 24: 4 and Jer. 26:22, 23). Josephus therefore describes him as **τὴν φύσιν ἄδικος καὶ κακοῦργος καὶ μήτε πρὸς Θεὸν ὄσιος, μήτε πρὸς ἀνθρώπους** (*Ant.* x. 5, 2). The town of *Rumah*, from which his mother sprang, is not mentioned anywhere else, but it has been supposed to be identical with *Aruma* in the neighbourhood of Shechem (Jud. 9:41).

**2Ki. 24: 1.** “In his days Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babel, came up; and Jehoiakim became subject to him three years, then he revolted from him again.” **נְבֻכַדְנֶצְצַר**, *Nebuchadnezzar*, or **נְבוּכַדְרֶצְצַר**, *Nebuchadrezzar* (Jer. 21: 2, 7; 22:25, etc.), **Ναβουχοδονόσορ** (LXX), **Ναβουχοδονόσορος** (Beros. in Jos. c. *Ap.* i. 20, 21), **Ναβοκοδρόσορος** (Strabo, xv. 1, 6), upon the Persian arrow-headed inscriptions at Bisutun *Nabhukudracara* (according to Oppert, composed of the name of God, *Nabhu* (Nebo), the Arabic *kadr*, power, and *zar* or *sar*, prince), and in still other forms (for the different forms of the name see M. v. Niebuhr’s *Gesch.* pp. 41, 42). He was the son of Nabopolassar, the founder of the Chaldaean monarchy, and reigned, according to Berossus (Jos. *l.c.*), Alex. Polyh. (Eusebii *Chron. arm.* i. pp. 44, 45), and the *Canon* of Ptol., forty-three years, from 605 to 562 B.C. With regard to his first campaign against Jerusalem, it is stated in 2Ch. 36: 6, that “against him (Jehoiakim) came up Nebuchadnezzar, and bound him with brass chains, to carry him (**לְהוֹלִיכוֹ**) to Babylon;” and in Dan. 1: 1, 2, that “in the year three of the reign of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem and besieged it; and the Lord gave Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, into his hand, and a portion of the holy vessels, and he brought them (the vessels) into the land of Shinar, into the house of his god,” etc. Bertheau (*on Chr.*) admits that all three passages relate to Nebuchadnezzar’s first expedition against Jehoiakim and the first taking of Jerusalem by the king of Babylon, and rejects the alteration of **לְהוֹלִיכוֹ**, “to lead him to Babylon” (Chr.), into **ἀπήγαγεν αὐτόν** (LXX), for which Thenius decides in his prejudice in favour of the LXX. He has also correctly observed, that the chronicler intentionally selected the infinitive with **ל**, because he did not intend to speak of the actual transportation of Jehoiakim to Babylon. The words of our text, “Jehoiakim became servant (**עֶבֶד**) to him,” i.e., subject to him, simply affirm that he became tributary, not that he was led away. And in the book of Daniel also there is nothing about the leading away of Jehoiakim to Babylon. Whilst, therefore, the three accounts agree in the main with one another, and supply one another’s deficiencies, so that we learn that Jehoiakim was taken prisoner at the capture of Jerusalem and put in chains to be led away, but that, inasmuch as he submitted to Nebuchadnezzar and vowed fidelity, he was not taken away, but left upon the throne as vassal of the king of Babylon; the statement in the book of Daniel concerning the time when this event



occurred, which is neither contained in our account nor in the Chronicles, presents a difficulty when compared with Jer. 25 and 46: 2, and different attempts, some of them very constrained, have been made to remove it. According to Jer. 46: 2, Nebuchadnezzar smote Necho the king of Egypt at Carchemish, on the Euphrates, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. This year is not only called the first year of Nebuchadnezzar in Jer. 25: 1, but is represented by the prophet as the turning-point of the kingdom of Judah by the announcement that the Lord would bring His servant Nebuchadnezzar upon Judah and its inhabitants, and also upon all the nations dwelling round about, that he would devastate Judah, and that these nations would serve the king of Babylon seventy years (Jer. 25: 9-11). Consequently not only the defeat of Necho at Carchemish, but also the coming of Nebuchadnezzar to Judah, fell in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, and not in the third. To remove this discrepancy, some have proposed that the time mentioned, "in the fourth year of Jehoiakim" (Jer. 46: 2), should be understood as relating, not to the year of the battle at Carchemish, but to the time of the prophecy of Jeremiah against Egypt contained in Jer. 46, and that Jer. 25 should also be explained as follows, that in this chapter the prophet is not announcing the first capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, but is proclaiming a year after this the destruction of Jerusalem and the devastation of the whole land, or a total judgment upon Jerusalem and the rest of the nations mentioned there (M. v. Nieb. *Gesch.* pp. 86, 87, 371). But this explanation is founded upon the erroneous assumption, that Jer. 46: 3-12 does not contain a prediction of the catastrophe awaiting Egypt, but a picture of what has already taken place there; and it is only in a very forced manner that it can be brought into harmony with the contents of Jer. 25.<sup>172</sup>

We must rather take "the year three of the reign of Jehoiakim" (Dan. 1: 1) as the extreme *terminus a quo* of Nebuchadnezzar's coming, i.e., must understand the statement thus: that in the year referred to Nebuchadnezzar commenced the expedition against Judah, and smote Necho at Carchemish at the commencement of the fourth year of Jehoiakim (Jer. 46: 2), and then, following up this victory, took Jerusalem in the same year, and made Jehoiakim tributary, and at the same time carried off to Babylon a portion of the sacred vessels, and some young men of royal blood as hostages, one of whom was Daniel (2Ch. 36: 7; Dan. 1: 2ff.). The fast mentioned in Jer. 36: 9, which took place in the fifth year of Jehoiakim, cannot be adduced in disproof of this; for extraordinary fast-days were not only appointed for the purpose of averting great threatening dangers, but also after severe calamities which had fallen upon the land or people, to expiate His wrath by humiliation before God, and to invoke the divine compassion to remove the judgment that had fallen upon them. The objection, that the godless king would hardly have thought of renewing the remembrance of a divine judgment by a day of repentance and

prayer, but would rather have desired to avoid everything that could make the people despair, falls to the ground, with the erroneous assumption upon which it is founded, that by the fast-day Jehoiakim simply intended to renew the remembrance of the judgment which had burst upon Jerusalem, whereas he rather desired by outward humiliation before God to secure the help of God to enable him to throw off the Chaldaean yoke, and arouse in the people a religious enthusiasm for war against their oppressors. — Further information concerning this first expedition of Nebuchadnezzar is supplied by the account of Berossus, which Josephus (*Ant.* x. 11, and *c. Ap.* i. 19) has preserved from the third book of his Chaldaean history, namely, that when Nabopolassar received intelligence of the revolt of the satrap whom he had placed over Egypt, Coele-Syria, and Phoenicia, because he was no longer able on account of age to bear the hardships of war, he placed a portion of his army in the hands of his youthful son Nebuchadnezzar and sent him against the satrap. Nebuchadnezzar defeated him in battle, and established his power over that country again. In the meantime Nabopolassar fell sick and died in Babylon; and as soon as the tidings reached Nebuchadnezzar, he hastened through the desert to Babylon with a small number of attendants, and directed his army to follow slowly after regulating the affairs of Egypt and the rest of the country, and to bring with it the prisoners *from the Jews*, Syrians, Phoenicians, and Egyptian tribes, and with the heavily-armed troops. So much, at any rate, is evident from this account, after deducting the motive assigned for the war, which is given from a Chaldaean point of view, and may be taken as a historical fact, that even before his father's death Nebuchadnezzar had not only smitten the Egyptians, but had also conquered Judah and penetrated to the borders of Egypt. And there is no discrepancy between the statement of Berossus, that Nebuchadnezzar was not yet king, and the fact that in the biblical books he is called king proleptically, because he marched against Judah with kingly authority.

**2Ki. 24: 2-7.** To punish Jehoiakim's rebellion, Jehovah sent hosts of Chaldaeans, Aramaeans, Moabites, and Ammonites against him and against Judah to destroy it (לְהַשְׁבִּיחוֹ). Nebuchadnezzar was probably too much occupied with other matters relating to his kingdom, during the earliest years of his reign after his father's death, to be able to proceed at once against Jehoiakim and punish him for his revolt.<sup>173</sup> He may also have thought it a matter of too little importance for him to go himself, as there was not much reason to be afraid of Egypt since its first defeat (cf. M. v. Niebuhr, p. 375). He therefore merely sent such troops against him as were in the neighbourhood of Judah at the time. The tribes mentioned along with the Chaldaeans were probably all subject to Nebuchadnezzar, so that they attacked Judah at his command in combination with the Chaldaean tribes left upon the frontier. How much they effected is not distinctly stated; but it is evident that they were not able to take

Jerusalem, from the fact that after the death of Jehoiakim his son was able to ascend the throne (v. 6). — The sending of these troops is ascribed to Jehovah, who, as the supreme controller of the fate of the covenant-nation, punished Jehoiakim for his rebellion. For, after the Lord had given Judah into the hands of the Chaldaeans as a punishment for its apostasy from Him, all revolt from them was rebellion against the Lord. “According to the word of Jehovah, which He spake by His servants the prophets,” viz., Isaiah, Micah, Habakkuk, Jeremiah, and others.

**2Ki. 24: 3, 4.** אֶךְ עַל־פִּי יי: “only according to the mouth (command) of Jehovah did this take place against Judah,” i.e., for no other reason than because the Lord had determined to put away Judah from before His face because of Manasseh’s sins (cf. 2Ki. 21:12-16, and 23:27). “And Jehovah would not forgive,” even if the greatest intercessors, Moses and Samuel, had come before Him (Jer. 15: 1ff.), because the measure of the sins was full, so that God was obliged to punish according to His holy righteousness. We must repeat ב from the preceding words before דָּם הַנִּקֵּי.

**2Ki. 24: 6.** “Jehoiakim lay down to (fell asleep with) his fathers, and Jehoiachin his son became king in his stead.” That this statement is not in contradiction to the prophecies of Jer. 22:19: “Jehoiakim shall be buried like an ass, carried away and cast out far away from the gates of Jerusalem,” and 36:30: “no son of his shall sit upon the throne of David, and his body shall lie exposed to the heat by day and to the cold by night,” is now generally admitted, as it has already been by J. D. Michaelis and Winer. But the solution proposed by Michaelis, Winer, and M. v. Niebuhr (*Gesch.* p. 376) is not sufficient, namely, that at the conquest of Jerusalem, which took place three months after the death of Jehoiakim, his bones were taken out of the grave, either by the victors out of revenge for his rebellion, or by the fury of the people, and cast out before the city gate; for Jeremiah expressly predicts that he shall have no funeral and no burial whatever. We must therefore assume that he was slain in a battle fought with the troops sent against him, and was not buried at all; an assumption which is not at variance with the words, “he laid himself down to his fathers,” since this formula does not necessarily indicate a peaceful death by sickness, but is also applied to king Ahab, who was slain in battle (1Ki. 22:40, cf. 2Ki. 22:20).<sup>f74</sup> — And even though his son Jehoiachin ascended the throne after his father’s death and maintained his position for three months against the Chaldaeans, until at length he fell into their hands and was carried away alive to Babylon, the prophet might very truly describe this short reign as not sitting upon the throne of David (cf. Graf on Jer. 22:19). — To the death of Jehoiakim there is appended the notice in v. 7, that the king of Egypt did not go out of his own land any more, because the king of Babylon had taken away everything

that had belonged to the king of Egypt, from the brook of Egypt to the river Euphrates. The purpose of this notice is to indicate, on the one hand, what attitude Necho, whose march to the Euphrates was previously mentioned, had assumed on the conquest of Judah by the Chaldaeans, and on the other hand, that under these circumstances a successful resistance to the Chaldaeans on the part of Judah was not for a moment to be thought of.

**2Ki. 24: 8-17** (cf. 2Ch. 36: 9 and 10). Jehoiachin, **יְהוֹיָכִין** or **יְהוֹיָכִין** (Eze. 1: 2), i.e., he whom Jehovah fortifies, called **יְבִנְיָהוּ** in 1Ch. 3:16, 17, and Jer. 27:20; 28: 4, etc., and **כְּבִנְיָהוּ** in Jer. 22:24, 28; 37: 1, probably according to the popular twisting and contraction of the name Jehoiachin, was eighteen years old when he ascended the throne (the eight years of the Chronicles are a slip of the pen), and reigned three months, or, according to the more precise statement of the Chronicles, three months and ten days, in the spirit of his father. Ezekiel (Eze. 19: 5-7) describes him not only as a young lion, who learned to prey and devoured men, like Jehoahaz, but also affirms of him that he knew their (the deceased men's) widows, i.e., ravished them, and destroyed their cities, — that is to say, he did not confine his deeds of violence to individuals, but extended them to all that was left behind by those whom he had murdered, viz., to their families and possessions; and nothing is affirmed in Jer. 22:24 and 28 respecting his character at variance with this. His mother *Nehushta* was a daughter of Elnathan, a ruler of the people, or prince, from Jerusalem (Jer. 26:22; 36:12, 25).

**2Ki. 24:10.** “At that time,” i.e., when Jehoiachin had come to the throne, or, according to 2Ch. 36:10, “at the turn of the year,” i.e., in the spring (see at 1Ki. 20:22), the servants (generals) of Nebuchadnezzar marched against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. The *Keri* **עָלוּ** is substantially correct, but is an unnecessary alteration of the *Cheth-b* **עָלָה**, since the verb when it precedes the subject is not unfrequently used in the singular, though before a plural subject (cf. Ewald, § 316, *a.*). The **עֲבָדֵי נָבִי** are different from the **גְּדֹדִים** of v. 2. As the troops sent against Jehoiakim had not been able to conquer Judah, especially Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar sent his generals with an army against Jerusalem, to besiege the city and take it.

**2Ki. 24:11.** During the siege he came himself to punish Jehoiakim's revolt in the person of his successor.

**2Ki. 24:12.** Then Jehoiachin went out to the king of Babylon to yield himself up to him, because he perceived the impossibility of holding the city any longer against the besiegers, and probably hoped to secure the favour of Nebuchadnezzar, and perhaps to retain the throne as his vassal by a voluntary

submission. Nebuchadnezzar, however, did not show favour any more, as he had done to Jehoiakim at the first taking of Jerusalem, but treated Jehoiachin as a rebel, made him prisoner, and led him away to Babylon, along with his mother, his wives (v. 15), his princes and his chamberlains, as Jeremiah had prophesied (Jer. 22:24ff.), in the eighth year of his (Nebuchadnezzar's) reign. The reference to the king's mother in vv. 12 and 15 is not to be explained on the ground that she still acted as guardian over the king, who was not yet of age (J. D. Mich.), but from the influential position which she occupied in the kingdom as **הַמְּבִרָה** (Jer. 29: 2: see at 1Ki. 14:21). The eighth year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar is reckoned from the time when his father had transferred to him the chief command over the army to make war upon Necho, according to which his *first* year coincides with the *fourth* year of Jehoiakim (Jer. 25: 1). As Nebuchadnezzar acted as king, so far as the Jews were concerned, from that time forward, although he conducted the war by command of his father, this is always reckoned as the point of time at which his reign commenced, both in our books and also in Jeremiah (cf. 2Ki. 25: 8; Jer. 32: 1). According to this calculation, his reign lasted forty-four years, viz., the eight years of Jehoiakim and the thirty-six years of Jehoiachin's imprisonment, as is evident from 2Ki. 25:27.

**2Ki. 24:13.** Nebuchadnezzar thereupon, that is to say, when he had forced his way into the city, plundered the treasures of the temple and palace, and broke the gold off the vessels which Solomon had made in the temple of Jehovah.

**קָצַץ**, to cut off, break off, as in 2Ki. 16:17, i.e., to bear off the gold plates.

Nebuchadnezzar had already taken a portion of the golden vessels of the temple away with him at the first taking of Jerusalem in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, and had placed them in the temple of his god at Babylon (2Ch. 36: 7; Dan. 1: 2). They were no doubt the smaller vessels of solid gold, — basins, scoops, goblets, knives, tongs, etc., — which Cyrus delivered up again to the Jews on their return to their native land (Ezr. 1: 7ff.). This time he took the gold off the larger vessels, which were simply plated with that metal, such as the altar of burnt-offering, the table of shew-bread and ark of the covenant, and carried it away as booty, so that on the third conquest of Jerusalem, in the time of Zedekiah, beside a few gold and silver basins and scoops (2Ki. 25:15) there were only the large brazen vessels of the court remaining (2Ki. 25:13-17; Jer. 27:18ff.). The words, "as Jehovah had spoken," refer to 2Ki. 20:17 and Isa. 39: 6, and to the sayings of other prophets, such as Jer. 15:13; 17: 3, etc.

**2Ki. 24:14-16.** Beside these treasures, he carried away captive to Babylon the cream of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, not only the most affluent, but, as is evident from Jer. 24, the best portion in a moral respect. In v. 14 the number of those who were carried off is simply given in a general form, according to its

sum-total, as 10,000; and then in vv. 15 and 16 the details are more minutely specified. “All Jerusalem” is the whole of the population of Jerusalem, which is first of all divided into two leading classes, and then more precisely defined by the clause, “nothing was left except the common people,” and reduced to the cream of the citizens. The king, queen-mother, and king’s wives being passed over and mentioned for the first time in the special list in v. 15, there are noticed here **כָּל-הַשָּׂרִים** and **כָּל גְּבוּרֵי הַחַיִל**, who form the first of the leading classes. By the **שָׂרִים** are meant, according to v. 15, the **סָרִיסִים**, chamberlains, i.e., the officials of the king’s court in general, and by **אֲנָשֵׁי הָאָרֶץ** (“the mighty of the land”) all the heads of the tribes and families of the nation that were found in Jerusalem; and under the last the priests and prophets, who were also carried away according to Jer. 29: 1, with Ezekiel among them (Eze. 1: 1), are included as the spiritual heads of the people. The **גְּבוּרֵי הַחַיִל** are called **הַחַיִל אֲנָשֵׁי** in v. 16; their number was 7000. The persons intended are not warriors, but men of property, as in 2Ki. 15:20. The second class of those who were carried away consisted of **כָּל הַהָרָשׁ**, all the workers in stone, metal, and wood, that is to say, masons, smiths, and carpenters; and **הַמְסֻגָּר**, the locksmiths, including probably not actual locksmiths only, but makers of weapons also. There is no need for any serious refutation of the marvellous explanation given of **מְסֻגָּר** by Hitzig (on Jer. 24: 1), who derives it from **מַס** and **גָּר**, and supposes it to be an epithet applied to the remnant of the Canaanites, who had been made into tributary labourers, although it has been adopted by Thenius and Graf, who make them into artisans of the foreign sojagers. **דָּלַת עַם-הָאָרֶץ** = **דָּלַת הָאָרֶץ** (2Ki. 25:12), the poor people of the land, i.e., the lower portion of the population of Jerusalem, from whom Nebuchadnezzar did not fear any rebellion, because they possessed nothing (Jer. 39:10), i.e., neither property (money nor other possessions), nor strength and ability to organize a revolt. The antithesis to these formed by the **גְּבוּרִים עֹשֵׂי מְלָחָמָה**, the strong or powerful men, who were in a condition to originate and carry on a war; for this category includes all who were carried away, not merely the thousand workmen, but also the seven thousand **אֲנָשֵׁי הַחַיִל**, and the king’s officers and the chiefs of the nation, whose number amounted to two thousand, since the total number of the exiles was then thousand. There is no special allusion to warriors or military, because in the struggle for the rescue of the capital and the kingdom from destruction every man who could bear arms performed military service, so that the distinction between warriors and non-warriors was swept away, and the actual warriors are swallowed up in the ten thousand. *Babel* is the country of Babylonia, or rather the Babylonian empire.

**2Ki. 24:17.** Over the lower classes of the people who had been left behind Nebuchadnezzar placed the paternal uncle of the king, who had been led away, viz., Mattaniah, and made him king under the name of Zedekiah. He was the youngest son of Josiah (Jer. 1: 3; 37: 1); was only ten years old when his father died, and twenty-one years old when he ascended the throne; and as the uncle of Jehoiachin, who being only a youth of eighteen could not have a son capable of reigning, had the first claim to the throne. Instead of **דָּדוֹ**, his uncle, we have in 2Ch. 36:10 **אָחִיו**, his brother, i.e., his nearest relation. On the change in the name see at 2Ki. 23:34. The name **צִדְקִיָּהוּ**, i.e., he who has Jehovah's righteousness, was probably chosen by Mattaniah in the hope that through him or in his reign the Lord would create the righteousness promised to His people.

**Ch. 24:18-25:30.** Reign of Zedekiah, Destruction of Jerusalem and the Kingdom of Judah, and Fate of the People Left Behind, and of King Jehoiachin.<sup>175</sup>

**2Ki. 24:18-20.** *Length and spirit of Zedekiah's reign* (cf. Jer. 52: 1-3, and 2Ch. 36:11-13). — Zedekiah's mother Hamital, daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah, was also the mother of Jehoahaz (2Ki. 23:31); consequently he was his own brother and the half-brother of Jehoiakim, whose mother was named Zebidah (2Ki. 23:36). His reign lasted eleven years, and in its attitude towards the Lord exactly resembled that of his brother Jehoiakim, except that Zedekiah does not appear to have possessed so much energy for that which was evil. According to Jer. 38: 5 and 24ff., he was weak in character, and completely governed by the great men of his kingdom, having no power or courage whatever to offer resistance. but, like them, he did not hearken to the words of the Lord through Jeremiah (Jer. 37: 2), or, as it is expressed in 2Ch. 36:12, "he did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spake to him out of the mouth of the Lord."

**2Ki. 24:20.** "For because of the wrath of the Lord it happened concerning Judah and Jerusalem." The subject to **הִיָּתָה** is to be taken from what precedes, viz., Zedekiah's doing evil, or that such a God-resisting man as Zedekiah became king. "Not that it was of God that Zedekiah was wicked, but that Zedekiah, a man (if we believe Brentius, *in loc.*) simple, dependent upon counsellors, yet at the same time despising the word of God and impenitent (2Ch. 36:12, 13), became king, so as to be the cause of Jerusalem's destruction" (Seb. Schm.). On **עַד הַשְּׁלִיכוֹ וְגו'** cf. v. 3, and 2Ki. 17:18, 23. "And Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babel," who, according to 2Ch. 36:13, had made him swear by God, to whom he was bound by oath to render fealty. This breach of covenant and frivolous violation of his oath Ezekiel also condemns in sharp words (Eze. 17:13ff.), as a grievous sin against

the Lord. Zedekiah also appears from the very first to have had no intention of keeping the oath of fealty which he took to the king of Babel with very great uprightness. For only a short time after he was installed as king he despatched an embassy to Babel (Jer. 29: 3), which, judging from the contents of the letter to the exiles that Jeremiah gave to the ambassadors to take with them, can hardly have been sent with any other object than to obtain from the king of Babel the return of those who had been carried away. Then in the fourth year of his reign he himself made a journey to Babel (Jer. 41:59), evidently to investigate the circumstances upon the spot, and to ensure the king of Babel of his fidelity. And in the fifth month of the same year, probably after his return from Babel, ambassadors of the Moabites, Ammonites, Tyrians, and Sidonians came to Jerusalem to make an alliance with him for throwing off the Chaldaean yoke (Jer. 27: 3). Zedekiah also had recourse to Egypt, where the enterprising Pharaoh *Hophra (Apries)* had ascended the throne; and then, in spite of the warnings of Jeremiah, trusting to the help of Egypt, revolted from the king of Babel, probably at a time when Nebuchadnezzar (according to the combinations of M. v. Nieb., which are open to question however) was engaged in a war with Media.

*2Ki. 25: 1-7. Siege and conquest of Jerusalem; Zedekiah taken prisoner and led away to Babel* (cf. Jer. 52: 4-11 and 39: 1-7). — V. 1. In the ninth year of the reign of Zedekiah, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar marched with all his forces against Jerusalem and commenced the siege (cf. Jer. 39: 1), after he had taken all the rest of the fortified cities of the land, with the exception of Lachish and Azekah, which were besieged at the same time as Jerusalem (Jer. 34: 7). On the very same day the commencement of the siege of Jerusalem was revealed to the prophet Ezekiel in his exile (Eze. 24: 1). “And they built against it (the city) siege-towers round about.” פִּיִּתִּי, which only occurs here and in Jeremiah (Jer. 52: 4) and Ezekiel (Eze. 4: 2; 17:17; 21:27; 26: 8), does not mean either a line of circumvallation (J. D. Mich., Hitzig), or the outermost enclosure constructed of palisades (Thenius, whose assertion that פִּיִּתִּי is always mentioned as the first work of the besiegers is refuted by Eze. 17:17 and 21:27), but a *watch*, and that in a collective sense: watch-towers or siege-towers (cf. Ges. *thes.* p. 330, and Hävernick on Eze. 4: 2).

*2Ki. 25: 2.* “And the city was besieged till the eleventh year of king Zedekiah,” in which the northern wall of the city was broken through on the ninth day of the fourth month (v. 3). That Jerusalem could sustain a siege of this duration, namely eighteen months, shows what the strength of the fortifications must have been. Moreover the siege was interrupted for a short time, when the approach of the Egyptian king Hophra compelled the Chaldaeans to march to



meet him and drive him back, which they appear to have succeeded in doing without a battle (cf. Jer. 37: 5ff., Eze. 17: 7).

*2Ki. 25: 3, 4.* Trusting partly to the help of the Egyptians and partly to the strength of Jerusalem, Zedekiah paid no attention to the repeated entreaties of Jeremiah, that he would save himself with his capital and people from the destruction which was otherwise inevitable, by submitting, to the Chaldaeans (cf. Jer. 21:37 and 38), but allowed things to reach their worst, until the famine became so intense, that inhuman horrors were perpetrated (cf. Lam. 2:20, 21; 4: 9, 10), and eventually a breach was made in the city wall on the ninth day of the fourth month. The statement of the month is omitted in our text, where the words **בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָרְבִיעִי** (Jer. 52: 6, cf. 39: 2) have fallen out before **בְּתִשְׁעָה** (v. 3, commencement) through the oversight of a copyist. The overwhelming extent of the famine is mentioned, not “because the people were thereby rendered quite unfit to offer any further resistance” (Seb. Schm.), but as a proof of the truth of the prophetic announcements (Lev. 26:29; Deu. 28:53-57; Jer. 15: 2; 27:13; Eze. 4:16, 17). **עַם הָאָרֶץ** are the common people in Jerusalem, or the citizens of the capital. From the more minute account of the entrance of the enemy into the city in Jer. 39: 3-5 we learn that the Chaldaeans made a breach in the northern or outer wall of the lower city, i.e., the second wall, built by Hezekiah and Manasseh (2Ch. 32: 5; 33:14), and forced their way into the lower city (**הַמְּשֻׁנָה**, 22:14), so that their generals took their stand at the gate of the centre, which was in the wall that separated the lower city from the upper city upon Zion, and formed the passage from the one to the other. When Zedekiah saw them here, he fled by night with the soldiers out of the city, through the gate between the two walls at or above the king’s garden, on the road to the plain of the Jordan, while the Chaldaeans were round about the city. In v. 4 a faulty text has come down to us. In the clause **וְכָל-אֲנָשֵׁי הַמֶּלֶכָה** the verb **יִבְרָחוּ** is omitted, if not even more, namely **יִבְרָחוּ וַיֵּצְאוּ מִן הָעִיר**, “fled and went out of the city.” And if we compare Jer. 39: 4, it is evident that before **וְכָל-אֲנָשֵׁי הַמֶּלֶךְ** still more has dropped out, not merely **הַמֶּלֶךְ**, which must have stood in the text, since according to v. 5 the king was among the fugitives; but most probably the whole clause **רָאם צִדְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה** **וַיְהִי כַאֲשֶׁר**, since the words **וְכָל-אֲנָשֵׁי הַמֶּלֶךְ** have no real connection with what precedes, and cannot form a circumstantial clause so far as the sense is concerned. The “gate between the two walls, which (was) at or over (**עַל**) the king’s garden,” was a gate at the mouth of the Tyropoeon, that is to say, at the south-eastern corner of the city of Zion; for, according to Neh. 3:15, the king’s garden was at the pool of Siloah, i.e., at the mouth of the Tyropoeon (see Rob. *Pal.* ii. 142). By this defile, therefore, the approach to the city was barred by a

double wall, the inner one running from Zion to the Ophel, whilst the outer one, at some distance off, connected the Zion wall with the outer surrounding wall of the Ophel, and most probably enclosed the king's garden. The subject to וַיֵּלֶךְ is הַמֶּלֶךְ, which has dropped out before הַדְּעָרְבָה וְכָל-אֲנָשֵׁי הַמִּי is the lowland valley on both sides of the Jordan (see at Deu. 1: 1).

**2Ki. 25: 5.** As the Chaldeans were encamped around the city, the flight was immediately discovered. The Chaldaean army pursued him, and overtook him in the steppes of Jericho, whilst his own army was dispersed, all of which Ezekiel had foreseen in the Spirit (Eze. 12: 3ff.). עֲרֵבוֹת יְרֵחוֹ are that portion of the plain of the Jordan which formed the country round Jericho (see at Jos. 4:13).

**2Ki. 25: 6.** Zedekiah having been seized by the Chaldeans, was taken to the king of Babel in the Chaldaean headquarters at Riblah (see at 2Ki. 23:33), and was there put upon his trial. According to v. 1, Nebuchadnezzar had commenced the siege of Jerusalem in person; but afterwards, possibly not till after the Egyptians who came to relieve the besieged city had been repulsed, he transferred the continuance of the siege, which was a prolonged one, to his generals, and retired to Riblah, to conduct the operations of the whole campaign from thence. דָּבַר מִשְׁפָּט אֶת-כָּל, to conduct judicial proceedings with any one, i.e., to hear and judge him. For this Jeremiah constantly uses the plural מִשְׁפָּטִים, not only in 2Ki. 52: 9 and 39: 5, but also in 2Ki. 1:16 and 4:12.

**2Ki. 25: 7.** The punishment pronounced upon Zedekiah was the merited reward of the breach of his oath, and his hardening himself against the counsel of the Lord which was announced to him by Jeremiah during the siege, that he should save not only his own life, but also Jerusalem from destruction, by a voluntary submission to the Chaldeans, whereas by obstinate resistance he would bring an ignominious destruction upon himself, his family, the city, and the whole people (Jer. 38:17ff., 32: 5; 34: 3ff.). His sons, who, though not mentioned in v. 4, had fled with him and had been taken, and (according to Jer. 52:10 and 39: 6) all the nobles (princes) of Judah, sc. those who had fled with the king, were slain before his eyes. He himself was then blinded, and led away to Babel, chained with double chains of brass, and kept a prisoner there till his death (Jer. 52:11); so that, as Ezekiel (Eze. 12:13) had prophesied, he came to Babel, but did not see the land, and died there. Blinding by pricking out the eyes was a common punishment for princes among the Babylonians and Persians (cf. Herod. vii. 18, and Brisson, *de region Pers. princip.* p. 589). נְחֹשְׁתַיִם, double brazen chains, are brazen fetters for the hands and feet. Samson was treated in the same manner by the Philistines (Jud. 16:21).

*2Ki. 25: 8-21. Destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. The people carried away to Babel* (cf. Jer. 52:12-27, and 39: 8-10). — In this section we have first a general account of the destruction of the temple and city (vv. 8-10), and of the carrying away of the people (vv. 11 and 12), and then a more particular description of what was done with the metal vessels of the temple (vv. 13-17), and how the spiritual and secular leaders of the people who had been taken prisoners were treated (vv. 18-21).

*2Ki. 25: 8-10.* The destruction of Jerusalem, by the burning of the temple, of the king's palace, and of all the larger buildings, and by throwing down the walls, was effected by Nebuzaradan, the chief of the body-guard of Nebuchadnezzar, on the seventh day of the fifth month in the nineteenth year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. Instead of the *seventh* day we have the *tenth* in Jer. 52:12. This difference might be reconciled, as proposed by earlier commentators, on the assumption that the burning of the city lasted several days, commencing on the seventh and ending on the tenth. But since there are similar differences met with afterwards (vv. 17 and 19) in the statement of numbers, which can only be accounted for from the substitution of similar numeral letters, we must assume that there is a change of this kind here. Which of the two dates is the correct one it is impossible to determine. The circumstance that the later Jews kept the ninth as a fast-day cannot be regarded as decisive evidence in favour of the date given in Jeremiah, as Thenius supposes; for in Zec. 7: 3 and 8:19 the fasting of the fifth month is mentioned, but no day is given; and though in the Talmudic times the ninth day of the month began to be kept as a fast-day, this was not merely in remembrance of the Chaldaean destruction of Jerusalem, but of the Roman also, and of three other calamities which had befallen the nation (see the statement of the Gemara on this subject in Lightfoot, *Opp.* ii. p. 139, ed. Leusden, and in Köhler on Zec. 7: 3), from which we see that the Gemarists in the most unhistorical manner grouped together different calamitous events in one single day. The nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar corresponds to the eleventh of Zedekiah (see at 2Ki. 24:12). Nebuzaradan is not mentioned in Jer. 39: 3 among the Chaldaean generals who forced their way into the city, so that he must have been ordered to Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar after the taking of the city and the condemnation of Zedekiah, to carry out the destruction of the city, the carrying away of the people, and the appointment of a deputy-governor over those who were left behind in the land. This explains in a very simple manner how a month could intervene between their forcing their way into the city, at all events into the lower city, and the burning of it to the ground, without there being any necessity to assume, with Thenius, that the city of Zion held out for a month, which is by no means probable, for the simple reason that the fighting men had fled with Zedekiah and had been scattered in their flight. רַב־טַבָּחִים

= שַׂר הַמְּבַחִים in Gen. 37:36; 39: 1, was with the Babylonians, as with the Egyptians, the chief of the king's body-guard, whose duty it was to execute the sentences of death (see at Gen. 37:36). הַמְּבַחִים answers to the הַכְּרֵתִי of the Israelites (2Sa. 8:18, etc.). In Jer. 52:12 we have עָמַד לְפָנַי מֶלֶךְ instead of בִּירוּשָׁלַם, without the אֲשֶׁר, which is rarely omitted in prose, and בִּירוּשָׁלַם instead of יְרוּשָׁלַם: he came into Jerusalem, not he forced a way into the real Jerusalem (Thenius). The meaning is not altered by these two variations.

2Ki. 25: 9. By the words, "every great house," אֵת כָּל-בֵּיתֵי יְרֵ is more minutely defined: not all the houses to the very last, but simply all the large houses he burned to the very last, together with the temple and the royal palaces. The victors used one portion of the dwelling-houses for their stay in Jerusalem. He then had all the walls of the city destroyed. In Jeremiah כָּל is omitted before חוֹמֹת, as not being required for the sense; and also the אֵת before רַב מְבַחִים, which is indispensable to the sense, and has fallen out through a copyist's oversight.

2Ki. 25:11, 12. The rest of the people he led away, both those who had been left behind in the city and the deserters who had gone over to the Chaldeans, and the remnant of the multitude. יֵתֵר הָאֲמוֹן, for which we have יֵתֵר הָאֲמוֹן in Jer. 52:15, has been interpreted in various ways. As אֲמוֹן signifies an artist or artificer in Pro. 8:30, and יֵתֵר הָעָם has just preceded it, we might be disposed to give the preference to the reading הָאֲמוֹן, as Hitzig and Graf have done, and understand by it the remnant of the artisans, who were called הַחֲרָשׁ וְהַמְּסַגֵּר in 2Ki. 24:14, 16. But this view is precluded by Jer. 39: 9, where we find יֵתֵר הָעָם הַנִּשְׁאָרִים instead of יֵתֵר הָאֲמוֹן or יֵתֵר הָהָמוֹן. These words cannot be set aside by the arbitrary assumption that they crept into the text through a copyist's error; for the assertion that they contain a purposeless repetition is a piece of dogmatical criticism, inasmuch as there is a distinction drawn in Jer. 39: 9 between יֵתֵר הָעָם הַנִּשְׁאָרִים בְּעִיר and הָעָם הַנִּשְׁאָרִים יֵתֵר. Consequently הָאֲמוֹן is simply another form for הָהָמוֹן (ה and א being interchanged) in the sense of a mass of people, and we have simply the choice left between two interpretations. Either יֵתֵר הָעָם הַנִּשְׁאָרִים בְּעִיר means the fighting people left in the city, as distinguished from the deserters who had fled to the Chaldeans, and הָאֲמוֹן = יֵתֵר הָהָמוֹן in Jer. 52:15, or הָעָם הַנִּשְׁאָרִים יֵתֵר in Jer. 39: 9, the rest of the inhabitants of Jerusalem; or הָעָם הַנִּשְׁאָרִים בְּעִיר יֵתֵר is the people left in Jerusalem (warriors and non-warriors), and הָהָמוֹן יֵתֵר the rest of the population of the land outside Jerusalem. The latter is probably the preferable view, not only because full justice is thereby done to

בְּעִיר in the first clause, but also because it is evident from the exception mentioned in v. 12 that the deportation was not confined to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but extended to the population of the whole land. The “poor people,” whom he allowed to remain in the land as vine-dressers and husbandmen, were the common people, or people without property, not merely in Jerusalem, but throughout the whole land. דָּלַת עַם־הָאָרֶץ = דָּלַת הָאָרֶץ (2Ki. 24:14). Instead of מִדָּלַת we have in Jeremiah מִדָּלּוֹת: the plural used in an abstract sense, “the poverty,” i.e., the lower people, “the poor who had nothing” (Jer. 39:10). Instead of the *Cheth-b* לְגַבִּים from גָּב, *secuit, aravit*, the *Keri* has לְיַגְבִּים from יָגַב, in the same sense, after Jer. 52:16.

2Ki. 25:13-17. The brazen vessels of the temple were broken in pieces, and the brass, and smaller vessels of brass, silver, and gold, were carried away. Compare Jer. 52:17-23, where several other points are mentioned that have been passed over in the account before us. The pillars of brass (see 1Ki. 7:15ff.), the stands (see 1Ki. 7:27ff.), and the brazen sea (1Ki. 7:23ff.), were broken in pieces, because it would have been difficult to carry these colossal things away without breaking them up. On the smaller vessels used in the worship (v. 14) see 1Ki. 7:40. In Jer. 52:18 הַמְזֻרְקֹת are also mentioned. V. 15 is abridged still more in contrast with Jer. 52:19, and only הַמְחֻתָּוֹת and הַמְזֻרְקוֹת are mentioned, whereas in Jeremiah six different things are enumerated beside the candlesticks. אֲשֶׁר זָהָב ... כֶּסֶף, “what was of gold, gold, what was of silver, silver, the captain of the guard took away,” is a comprehensive description of the objects carried away. To this there is appended a remark in v. 16 concerning the quantity of the brass of the large vessels, which was so great that it could not be weighed; and in v. 17 a supplementary notice respecting the artistic work of the two pillars of brass. וְגַם הָעֲמוּדִים is placed at the head absolutely: as for the pillars, etc., the brass of all these vessels was not to be weighed. In Jer. 52:20, along with the brazen sea, the twelve brazen oxen under it are mentioned; and in the description of the pillars of brass (vv. 21ff.) there are several points alluded to which are omitted in our books, not only here, but also in 1Ki. 7:16ff. For the fact itself see the explanation given at pp. 70-74. The omission of the twelve oxen in so condensed an account as that contained in our text does not warrant the inference that these words in Jeremiah are a spurious addition made by a later copyist, since the assumption that Ahaz sent the brazen oxen to king Tiglath-pileser cannot be proved from 2Ki. 16:17 (see p. 289). Instead of שְׁלֹשׁ אַמָּה we must read חֲמִשָּׁ אַמָּה, *five cubits*, according to Jer. 52:22 and 1Ki. 7:16. The עַל־הַשְּׂבָכָה at the end of the verse is very striking, since it stands quite alone,

and when connected with **וּבְאֵלֶּהּ וּגְרֵי** does not appear to yield any appropriate sense, as the second pillar was like the first not merely with regard to the trellis-work, but in its form and size throughout. At the same time, it is possible that the historian intended to give especial prominence to the similarity of the two pillars with reference to this one point alone.

**2Ki. 25:18-21** (cf. Jer. 52:24-27). The principal officers of the temple and city, and sixty men of the population of the land, who were taken at the destruction of Jerusalem, Nebuzaradan sent to his king at Riblah, where they were put to death. *Seraiah*, the high priest, is the grandfather or great-grandfather of Ezra the scribe (Ezr. 7: 1; 1Ch. 5:40). *Zephaniah*, a priest of the second rank (**בִּיהֵן מְשֻׁנָּה**; in Jer. **בִּיהֵן הַמְּשֻׁנָּה**: see at 2Ki. 23: 4), is probably the same person as the son of Maaseiah, who took a prominent place among the priests, according to Jer. 21: 1; 29:25ff., and 37: 3. The “three keepers of the threshold” are probably the three superintendents of the Levites, whose duty it was to keep guard over the temple, and therefore were among the principal officers of the sanctuary.

**2Ki. 25:19**. From the city, i.e., from the civil authorities of the city, Nebuzaradan took a king’s chamberlain (**סָרִיס**), who was commander of the men of war. Instead of **אֲשֶׁר הוּא פֶקִיד** we find in Jer. 52:25 **אֲשֶׁר הָיָה פִּי**, who had been commander, with an allusion to the fact that his official function had terminated when the city was conquered. “And *five* (according to Jeremiah *seven*) men of those who saw the king’s face,” i.e., who belonged to the king’s immediate circle, *de intimis consiliariis regis*, and “the scribe of the commander-in-chief, who raised the people of the land for military service,” or who enrolled them. Although **הַסֹּפֵר** has the article, which is omitted in Jeremiah, the following words **שֶׁר הַצָּבָא** are governed by it, or connected with it in the construct state (Ewald, § 290 *d.*). **שֶׁר הַצָּבָא** is the commander-in-chief of the whole of the military forces, and **הַמְצַבֵּא וּגְרֵי** a more precise definition of **הַסֹּפֵר**, and not of **שֶׁר הַצָּבָא**, which needed no such definition. “And sixty men of the land-population who were found in the city.” They were probably some of the prominent men of the rural districts, or they may have taken a leading part in the defence of the city, and therefore were executed in Riblah, and not merely deported with the rest of the people. — The account of the destruction of the kingdom of Judah closes with **וַיִּגַּל יְהוּדָה** in v. 21, “thus was Judah carried away out of its own land;” and in vv. 22-26 there follows merely a brief notice of those who had been left behind in the land, in the place of which we find in Jer. 52:28-40 a detailed account of the number of those who were carried away.

*2Ki. 25:22-26. Installation of Gedaliah the governor. His assassination, and the flight of the people to Egypt.* — Much fuller accounts have been handed down to us in Jer. 40-44 of the events which are but briefly indicated here.

*2Ki. 25:22, 23.* Over the remnant of the people left in the land Nebuchadnezzar placed Gedaliah as governor of the land, who took up his abode in Mizpah. *Gedaliah*, the son of Ahikam, who had interested himself on behalf of the prophet Jeremiah and saved his life (Jer. 26:24), and the grandson of Shaphan, a man of whom nothing more is known (see at 2Ki. 22:12), had his home in Jerusalem, and, as we may infer from his attitude towards Jeremiah, had probably secured the confidence of the Chaldeans at the siege and conquest of Jerusalem by his upright conduct, and by what he did to induce the people to submit to the judgment inflicted by God; so that Nebuchadnezzar entrusted him with the oversight of those who were left behind in the land — men, women, children, poor people, and even a few princesses and court-officials, whom they had not thought it necessary or worth while to carry away (Jer. 40: 7; 41:10, 16), i.e., he made him governor of the conquered land. Mizpah is the present *Nebi Samwil*, two hours to the north-west of Jerusalem (see at Jos. 18:26). — On hearing of Gedaliah's appointment as governor, there came to him "all the captains of the several divisions of the army and their men," i.e., those portions of the army which had been scattered at the flight of the king (v. 5), and which had escaped from the Chaldeans, and, as it is expressed in Jer. 40: 7, had dispersed themselves "in the field," i.e., about the land. Instead of **וְאֲנָשִׁים** we have in Jer. 40: 7 the clearer expression **וְאֲנָשֵׁיהֶם**, "and their men," whilst **וְאֲנָשִׁים** in our text receives its more precise definition from the previous word **הַחַיִּלִּים**. Of the military commanders the following are mentioned by name: Ishmael, etc. (the **וְ** before **וְיִשְׁמַעֵאל**, is explic., "and indeed Ishmael"). Ishmael, son of Mattaniah and grandson of Elishama, probably of the king's secretary mentioned in Jer. 36:12 and 20, of royal blood. Nothing further is known about the other names. We simply learn from Jer. 40:13ff. that Johanan had warned Gedaliah against the treachery of Ishmael, and that when Gedaliah was slain by Ishmael, having disregarded the warning, he put himself at the head of the people and marched with them to Egypt, notwithstanding the dissuasions of Jeremiah (Jer. 41:15ff.). Instead of "Johanan the son of Kareah," we have in Jer. 40: 8 "Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah," but it is uncertain whether **וַיִּוָּנְתָן** has crept into the text of Jeremiah from the previous **יְהוֹנָתָן** merely through a mistake, and this mistake has brought with it the alteration of **בֶּן** into **בְּנֵי** (Ewald), or whether **וַיִּוָּנְתָן** has dropped out of our text through an oversight, and this omission has occasioned the alteration of **בְּנֵי** into **בֶּן** (Thenius, Graf, etc.). The former supposition is

favoured by the circumstance that in Jer. 40:13; 41:11, 16, Johanan the son of Kareah alone is mentioned. In Jer. 40: 8 **עִיִּיבִי עֹפַי** (*Cheth-b' עיפי*) stands before **הַנְּטָפְתִּי**, according to which it was not Seraiah who sprang from Netophah, but Ophai whose sons were military commanders. He was called *Netophathite* because he sprang from *Netopha* in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem (Neh. 7:26; Ezr. 2:22), the identity of which with *Beit Nettif* is by no means probable (see at 2Sa. 23:28). The name **יְיָנִיָּהוּ** is written **יְיָנִיָּהוּ** in Jeremiah; he was the son of the Maachathite, i.e., his father sprang from the Syrian district of Maacah in the neighbourhood of the Hermon (see at Deu. 3:14).

**2Ki. 25:24.** As these men were afraid of the vengeance of the Chaldaeans because they had fought against them, Gedaliah assured them on oath that they had nothing to fear from them if they would dwell peaceably in the land, be submissive to the king of Babel, and cultivate the land (cf. Jer. 40: 9 and 10). “Servants of the Chaldees” are Chaldaean officials who were subordinate to the governor Gedaliah.

**2Ki. 25:25.** In the seventh month, i.e., hardly two months after the destruction of Jerusalem, came Ishmael with ten men to Gedaliah at Mizpah, and murdered him together with the Jews and Chaldaeans, whom he had with him as soldiers to do his bidding and for his protection. This occurred, according to Jer. 41: 1ff., when Gedaliah had received them hospitably and had invited them to eat with him. Ishmael was instigated to commit this murder by the Ammonitish king Baalis, and Gedaliah had previously been made acquainted with the intended crime and put upon his guard by Johanan, but had put no faith in the information (Jer. 40:13-16).

**2Ki. 25:26.** After Ishmael had performed this deed, and had also treacherously murdered a number of men, who had come to the temple with a sacrifice from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria, he took the Jews who were at Mizpah prisoners, with some kings' daughters among them, intending to take them over to the Ammonites; but as soon as his deed became known, he was pursued by Johanan and the rest of the military chiefs and was overtaken at Gibeon, whereupon those who had been led away by him went over to Johanan, so that he was only able to make his escape with eight men and get away to the Ammonites (Jer. 41: 4-15). Johanan then went with the rest of the military commanders and the people whom he had brought back into the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, with the intention of fleeing to Egypt for fear of the Chaldaeans. There they did indeed have recourse to the prophet Jeremiah, to inquire of him the word of the Lord; but they did not allow themselves to be diverted from their intention by the word of the Lord which he announced to them, that if they



remained in the land they need not fear anything from the king of Babel, but if they went to Egypt they should all perish there with sword, hunger, and pestilence, or by the prediction that the Lord would also deliver Pharaoh Hophra into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 42). They went to Egypt notwithstanding, taking the prophet himself with them, and settled in different cities of Egypt, where they gave themselves up to idolatry, and did not suffer themselves to be drawn away from it even by the severe judgments which the prophet Jeremiah predicted as sure to fall upon them (Jer. 43 and 44). In the verse before us we have simply a brief allusion to the eventual result of the whole affair. "Because they were afraid of the Chaldeans," namely, that they might possibly take vengeance upon them for the murder of the governor.

**2Ki. 25:27-30.** *Jehoiachin delivered from prison, and exalted to royal honours* (cf. Jer. 42:31-34). — In the thirty-seventh year after his deportation Jehoiachin was taken out of prison by Evil-merodach when he came to the throne. **בְּשַׁנַּת מַלְכוֹ**, in the year of his becoming king, probably immediately after he had ascended the throne, for it was no doubt an act of grace at the commencement of his reign. **נָשָׂא אֶת־רֹאשׁוֹ**, to lift up a persons' head, i.e., to release him from prison and exalt him to civil honours and dignities (cf. Gen. 40:13). On the coincidence of the thirty-seventh year of Jehoiachin's imprisonment and the commencement of the reign of Evil-merodach see the remarks at 2Ki. 24:12. Instead of the 27th day of the month, the 25th is given in Jeremiah, again through the substitution of similar numeral letters (see at v. 8). *Evil-merodach*: **אֵוִיל מְרֹדַךְ**, *Eύιαλ Μαρώδαχ* or *Eύιαλμαρωδέκ* (LXX); *Ἰλλοαροόδαμος*, possibly a copyist's error for *Ἰλμαροόδακος*, in the *Can. Ptol.*, and in other forms also: see M. v. Nieb. *Gesch. Ass.* p. 42, and *Ges. thes.* p. 41; compounded from the name of the Babylonian god *Merodach* (see at 2Ki. 20:12) and the prefix *Evil*, which has not yet been explained with certainty. He reigned two years, according to Berosus in *Jos. c. Ap.* i. 20, and the *Can. Ptol.*; and according to the verdict of Berosus, **προστὰς τῶν πραγμάτων ἀνόμως καὶ ἀσελγῶς**; and was murdered by his brother-in-law Neriglissor. The statement in *Jos. Ant.* x. 11, 2, to the effect that he reigned eighteen years, and that of *Alex. Polyh.* in *Euseb. Chron. arm.* i. p. 45, that he reigned twelve years, are evidently false.

**2Ki. 25:28.** "He spake kindly to him (cf. Jer. 12: 6), and set his throne above the throne of the kings who were with him in Babel." This is not to be understood literally, as signifying that he assigned him a loftier throne than the other kings (Hitzig, Thenius), but figuratively: *loco honestiore eum habuit* (Ros.). The "kings with him" were dethroned kings, who were kept at the court like Jehoiachin to add to its splendour, just as Cyrus kept the conquered Croesus by his side (Herod. i. 88).

*2Ki. 25:29, 30.* “And he (Jehoiachin) changed his prison garments,” i.e., took them off and put other regal clothing on (cf. Gen. 41:42). “And ate continually before him all his life,” i.e., ate at the king’s table (cf. 2Sa. 9: 7). Moreover a daily ration of food was supplied to him by the king for the maintenance of his retainers, who formed his little court. The **כָּל־יְמֵי חַיָּיו** of v. 30, upon which Thenius throws suspicion without any reason, refers to Jehoiachin like that in v. 29; for the historian intended to show how Jehoiachin had fared from the day of his elevation to the end of his life. At the same time, we cannot infer from this with any certainty that Jehoiachin died before Evil-merodach; for the favour shown to him might be continued by Evil-merodach’s successor. We cannot make any safe conjecture as to the motives which induced Evil-merodach to pardon Jehoiachin and confer this distinction upon him. The higher ground of this joyful termination of his imprisonment lay in the gracious decree of God, that the seed of David, though severely chastised for its apostasy from the Lord, should not be utterly rejected (2Sa. 7:14, 15). At the same time, this event was also intended as a comforting sign to the whole of the captive people, that the Lord would one day put an end to their banishment, if they would acknowledge that it was a well-merited punishment for this sins that they had been driven away from before His face, and would turn again to the Lord their God with all their heart.