

worship of their god. Such worship may have been involved also, and so might be in the background of the prophet's thought. Instead of building up the plants that God desires and following His program, the Ephraimites are planting plants that seem to their own sinful judgment to be pleasant, and are setting up strange slips. Israel, which has been told repeatedly that it was God's will that it should be separate from the heathen nations around it, here for almost the first time in its history unites with Syria in an alliance against its own brethren in the Southern Kingdom. God cannot but punish such an unnatural action. Thus these verses give the reason for the destruction.

The last half of verse 11 describes the destruction again. The people have planted their lovely plants and set up their strange slips, put a fence around, and tried to make their seed flourish, but the harvest is entirely different from what they expect. The word which is translated "flee away" in the American Standard Version can just as well be rendered "heap" as in the King James Version, and is so translated in a number of other places in the Old Testament. In this particular instance, I consider the rendering of the King James Version to be preferable. The harvest of the wonderful plants of the godless leaders of the Northern Kingdom will prove to be simply a heap of ruins in a day of grief and desperate sorrow.

The fourth section of chapter 17 runs from verse 12 to 14. There is a sharp jump between section 3 and section 4. The logical relationship between the two is not stated. It might seem at first sight that verses 12 and 13 describe the oncoming hosts of the foreign nations that will overthrow Damascus and Ephraim. In this case there is no meaning to the end of verse 13 and to verse 14, where destruction of these hosts is described. God did not put an end to the attack of many nations against Israel, but caused the Northern Kingdom to go into exile at this time.

A second interpretation would be that this is a picture of the attack of Syria and Israel against Judah, and of the way that God will deliver Judah from it. There are two objections to this. It is hardly appropriate to describe Syria and Israel as "the multitude of many people which make a noise like the noise of the seas." It is true that they were much stronger