

# Nahum

## **I. Introduction**

1. The book of Nahum is classified by man as a "minor prophet" = due to its length--short, but it is considered to be an important book because it announces the fate of the evil city, Nineveh.

2. The author (human instrument) of this book is Nahum. (II Peter 1:21) We know very little about him because verse 1 is the only time his name is mentioned in the Bible. This verse states that he is an "Elkoshite" which means he is from the city of Elkosh, a place believed to be close to Capernaum in Galilee.

3. The date of this prophecy seems to have been about 150 years after Jonah's message to Nineveh. This would put Nahum about 627 BC probably during Josiah's reign as King of Judah. Some believe his prophecy was about 713 BC during Hezekiah's reign, due to the vague mention of what they believe to be the invasion of Judah by Sennacherib, king of Assyria, and his General Rabshakeh. But this date does not seem to line up correctly.

4. The language of this book is spoken partly of Nineveh and partly to Nineveh. Nineveh's destruction is foretold in astonishing and graphic detail.

5. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria. They repented at the preaching of Jonah and God spared them. They had learned that God was slow to anger. (Jonah 4:2) But soon afterward, they had presumed upon that fact--took it for granted that He would always be that way; thus, they went to greater lengths of wickedness than ever before. They were used by God as a human instrument to capture Israel--the Northern Kingdom--in 721 BC. They continued to grow more and more powerful and arrogant. At the time of this prophecy, Nineveh was a queen city of the earth, mighty and brutal beyond imagination, head of a warrior state built on the loot of nations.

6. Nahum's predictions came to pass about 20 years later (607 BC) exactly as he had prophesied. The bloody vile city passed into oblivion. Its destruction was so complete that even its site was forgotten for 2450 years when someone uncovered its ruins in 1845.

7. A lesson to learn: Though God will forgive sin repented of, He will not condone sin persisted in. I'm reminded of a message of Dr. R. G. Lee--"Payday Someday."

8. We can outline this book as follows:

A. Chapter 1: Nineveh's doom declared. Nahum asserts the certainty of Nineveh's overthrow.

B. Chapter 2: Nineveh's doom described. Nahum depicts the siege and capture of the city.

C. Chapter 3: Nineveh's doom deserved. Nahum tells of the wickedness which provoked the retribution.

## **CHAPTER 1:**

### **II. Nineveh's doom declared.**

#### **V. 1**

1. This verse gives a double title to the book.

A. The first giving the object of the prophecy, which otherwise would not be evident--Nineveh.

B. The second its author, added to give confidence in its contents--Nahum.

2. "Burden" = a heavy, weighty thing; a message; the Hebrew word is a term generally used of a weighty, threatening prophecy; it almost always introduces a threat of judgment.

3. "Of Nineveh" = the object of this prophecy; the effect of Jonah's preaching had been only temporary; the reformation was partial and superficial; and now God's long-suffering was wearied out; and the time of punishment was to come.

4. "The book of the vision" = this defines the burden as the book in which was written the prophecy of Nahum.

5. "Vision" = so called because what the prophet foretold was presented to his mental sight, and stood plainly before him.

6. "Nahum" = the human instrument God used to pen down this book (II Peter 1:21; II Tim. 3:16); his name means comfort; there is comfort for the godly in this prophecy--to know that in the righteous government of God, the outrages of impenitent evil doers against their fellow-humans will be divinely repaid; his name is thought to have been preserved in the Galilean city of Capernaum, the name of which (Kaphar-Nahum) means the village-of-Nahum.

7. "Elkoshite" = one from the village of Elkosh, believed to be close to Capernaum.

#### **V. 2**

1. "God" = the Almighty; the strong one; who is the "LORD" = Jehovah; these are just two names of many of the same Deity.
2. "Jealous" = a passionate concern, even fiery zeal in behalf of holiness; whatever endangers God's interest arouses God's intense passion--sin will do that.
3. "LORD" = "his" = "he" = Jehovah; the self-existent One who stands alone and does not need help from an outside source; this three-fold mention of the "LORD" shows both the certainty and greatness of the vengeance.
4. "Revengeth" = "vengeance" = to punish by inflicting pain or evil on the wrong doer; a punishment which God inflicts or at least causes to be inflicted.
5. "Furious" = rage; a storm of anger; literally a master of fury--a storm of anger.
6. "His adversaries" = "enemies" = an enemy; a foe; those who hem and narrow Him in; we fall in that category when we sin willfully against our Holy God. (Rom. 5:10)
7. "He reserveth" = guarding; watching; observing for punishment; this does not mean He is just waiting for you to step out of line so He can zap you (this is our idea of what God is like); God withholds His hand for a time but He does not forget.
8. "*Wrath*" = in italics thus not in the originals but supplied by the translators because it is implied; God's holy and just indignation (anger mingled with disgust) against sin. (Rom. 1:18)
9. All of this description of God's attributes is intended to show that the destruction of Assyria is His doing, and that its accomplishment is certain.

## V. 3

1. "The LORD" = Jehovah.
2. "Slow to anger" = Nahum takes up the words of Jonah in Jonah 4:2 as he spoke of God's attributes toward Nineveh, but only to show the opposite side of them; Jonah declares how God is slow to anger, giving men time of repentance, and if they repent, He repents also of what He said He would do; Nahum is showing that the longsuffering of God is not from slackness nor weakness, but due to the fact that He is not willing that any should perish but all come to repentance. (II Peter 3:9)
3. "Great in power" = strong in power; again the long-suffering of God is a token, not of weakness, but of power; like a fisherman He can give a person plenty of line to run with but when they are past help, He can end it at once; He can punish when He wills.
4. "Will not at all acquit *the wicked*" = "acquitt" means to discharge from obligation; He will not treat the guilty as innocent but He showers him with goodness giving him a

space of repentance (Rom. 2:4); if the sinner will not repent (turn from sin to God), there will come a time He will whet His sword for punishment. (Psa. 7:12-13)

5. "The LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm" = the vengeance of God comes at last swiftly, vehemently, fearfully, and irresistibly (I Thess. 5:3); "whirlwind" and "storm" are from two different Hebrew words which means hurricane--a storm of violent proportion; this basically means that all creation stands ready for the command of the Creator against His enemies.

6. "The clouds *are* the dust of his feet" = as large and grand as the clouds look to us, they are to God but as the dust raised by the feet in walking; the feet of God are that power whereby He trampleth upon the ungodly.

7. This verse is hard to explain so that man can understand it. This is a two sided coin and both are right. God is slow to anger, yet Psa. 7:11 says God is angry with the wicked every day. This must be understood in a manner in accordance with the Divine nature. It means His nature, His laws, His government, His feelings are all arrayed against the wicked; therefore, He cannot regard the conduct of the wicked with favor, yet He loved the sinner (Rom. 5:8, Eph. 2:4-5a) enough to die for them on Calvary. He holds back His wrath--forbears (Rom 2:4) giving man a space to repent. He is longsuffering not willing any should perish (II Peter 2:9) but there will come a time He will punish. (II Peter 2:10) This applies to nations and individuals as well.

8. Nahum's message to Nineveh may be in more detail than Jonah's was 150 years before. They both pronounced doom. The difference is that the people repented in Jonah's day but in Nahum's day they were not going to repent so the city was destroyed about 20 years later.

#### V. 4

1. Nahum begins to show how creation reacts to the Lord's commands. These great physical changes and convulsions in the world are tokens of God's wrath on sinful nations.

2. "He rebuketh the sea and maketh it dry" = as at the passage of the Red Sea. (Psa. 106:9-11)

3. "And drieth up all the rivers" = as He did Jordan for Israel to cross over in Joshua's day.

4. "Languisheth" = to wither; to fade, to lose its vegetating power.

5. "Bashan" = rich in pastures; a region east of the Jordan.

6. "Carmel" = rich in gardens and vineyards; on the west border of Israel.

7. "Lebanon" = rich in vines also and fragrant flowers and chiefly in the cedar and cypress; a region north of Israel.

8. These mountains together are emblems of richness, lasting beauty, fruitfulness--all would fade, dry up, and wither at the rebuke of God--at His word.

## V. 5

1. "The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt" = nature is pictured as endowed with the terror, which guilt feels at the presence of God; Rev. 20:11 says that the earth and the heaven fled away from His presence at the great white throne of judgment.

2. "And the earth is burned at his presence" = the Hebrew actually means to lift itself--lifting itself as if to meet its God or to flee.

3. "The world, and all that dwell therein" = the habitable world and all living creatures therein. (Joel 1:18-20)

4. And since all judgments are images of the last judgment (day of the Lord), and the awe at tokens of God's presence is a shadow of the terror that is coming (II Peter 3:10), Nahum adds:

## V. 6

a. "Who can stand before His indignation?" = "Who can abide in the fierceness of his anger?" = indignation denotes the wrath of God; "fierceness" denotes the burning of His anger; these questions appeal to our own consciences, that no one can stand in his own merit. (Joel 2:11)

2. "His fury is poured out like fire" = like the brimstone and fire that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24), or like molten lava that issues from a volcano. (Jer. 7:20)

3. "And the rocks are thrown down by him" = indicates the rocks are rent asunder (Jer. 23:29); if such is the power of God, how shall Nineveh resist it?

## V. 7

1. "The LORD" = "he" = "him" = Jehovah.

2. "Good" = full of sweetness; He is good and doing good; He is good in giving Himself and imparting His goodness to His own.

3. "A strong hold in the day of trouble" = the Lord is the strong hold (fortified place) wherein all that belong to Him can take refuge in time of trouble--there will come a time

when one is hemmed in on every side and there is no place to escape except to the Lord; Nahum may have had in his mind what had happened to the Assyrians (Nineveh) in Hezekiah's time when they besieged Jerusalem and 185,000 Assyrians were killed by one angel of the Lord, all at the same time. (Jer. 26:19; II Kings 19:35)

4. "He knoweth them that trust in him" = implies that the Lord loves and cares for those who trust Him; He delivers them as Rahab was delivered (saved) when Jericho perished, and Lot was delivered out of the midst of Sodom's destruction, and Hezekiah was delivered from the host of Sennacherib the Assyrian king.

5. Even though Nineveh was going to be destroyed, this verse is a message of hope to any individual who will put his trust in the Lord. The same holds true for America. She may cease to be a nation but there is hope for God's remnant--those who will put their trust in the Lord.

6. The Lord knows those who are His, but for the rest it will be a sad day of judgment when the Lord tells a group "I never knew you." (Mat. 7:23)

## V. 8

1. "But" = shows the outcome of those who do not put their trust in Him.

2. "With an overrunning flood" = a metaphor to express the utter devastation which should overwhelm Nineveh: represents an invading army that overruns a land and spreads desolation in its path; a Greek historian of the 5th century BC recounts that while a drunken feast was going on in Nineveh, a sudden rising of the waters of the Tigris River swept away the city gates, thus permitting the Babylonian army to enter and burn the city about 607 BC.

3. "He" = "his" = the Lord.

4. "An utter end" = refers to complete destruction.

5. "The place thereof" = Nineveh, not named, but present in the prophet's mind and understood from verse 1.

6. "Darkness shall pursue his enemies" = the Hebrew seems to say, "He shall pursue his enemies into darkness," = so that they disappear from the earth; they were driven into darkness which they chose and loved. (John 3:19)

## V. 9

1. "What do ye imagine against the LORD?" = this is addressed to the Assyrians (Nineveh the capital) demanding of them what is it that they dare to plot against Jehovah--what devise ye against the LORD?

2. "He will make an utter end" = repetition from verse 8 to denote the absolute certainty of the doom.

3. "Affliction shall not rise up the second time" = this is stated for Judah's benefit; the Assyrians shall never again have the power of oppressing Judah as they did Israel; there shall be no repetition of Sennacherib's invasion; remember all of his army, 185,000, died at the hand of one angel in Hezekiah's time.

#### V. 10

1. "While *they be* folden together as thorns" = though they be intertwined as thorns; refers to the Assyrians who thought their front could not be penetrated, so much so, that they defied attack.

2. "While they are drunken as drunkards" = regarding themselves as invincible, and drenched with wine, and given up to luxury and excess; this compares to the fate of Belshazzar years later. (Dan. 5:1-6)

3. "They shall be devoured as stubble fully dry" = like worthless refuse, fit only for burning.

4. History says that the King of Nineveh had driven back his enemy three times and as a result he was so lifted up with pride that he gave himself up to festivity, and allowed all his army to indulge in drunkenness and feasting and their enemy overtook them. (See notes on verse 8.)

#### V. 11

1. "There is *one* come out of thee, that imagineth evil against the LORD" = this reveals the reason of the destruction and of the punishment; refers to Nineveh; expresses the arrogant impiety (irreverence of the Supreme Being) of the Assyrians and their attitude towards Jehovah.

2. "A wicked counsellor" = a counselor of Belial; a thing of worthlessness; he was in total agreement with the plans prepared by the Assyrians for destroying the people of God; a type of the world arrayed against piety (reverence of the Supreme Being).

#### V. 12

1. "Thus saith the LORD" = an expression used to introduce a solemn declaration.

2. "Though *they be* quiet" = "quiet" is used of physical entireness, completeness, or mental integrity; refers to the Assyrians as being complete like the thorn-hedge in v. 10.

3. "And likewise many" = many in number.

4. "Yet thus they shall be cut down" = the verb is used of the mowing of a field or the shearing of sheep and implies complete destruction; like the dry grass before the scythe is cut off and perishes, Nineveh shall be destroyed; as they have cut down other nations, they shall be cut down themselves.

5. "When he shall pass through" = still refers to Nineveh and means "when he shall pass away;" spoken of as one (he) to show their insignificance and complete annihilation.

6. "Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more" = the Lord addresses Judah, referring to the oppression of Judaea by the Assyrians in the time of Hezekiah; He will afflict no more according to the promise in verse 9; this is a conditional promise--I will afflict no more unless by new guilt thou compel Me (John 5:14); this is further confirmed in what follows.

#### V. 13

1. "Now" = God, lest His own should despair, does not put them off altogether to a distant day, but said "now."

2. "His yoke" = refers to the yoke of Assyria.

3. "Will burst thy bonds in sunder" = by the final overthrow of the Assyrian power; this is not referring to Sennacherib's invasion which was in Hezekiah's reign; The time this is spoken was sometime during the reign of Josiah.

4. "Thee" = "thy" = Judah.

#### V. 14

1. "And the LORD hath given a commandment concerning thee" = the prophet addresses the Assyrians and announces the Lord's purpose.

2. "*That* no more of thy name be sown" = indicates that the Assyrian people and name shall become extinct; denotes the tragic end of a God-defying life.

3. "Out of the house of thy gods will I cut off the graven image and the molten image" = the Assyrians used to destroy the images of the gods worshiped by conquered nations; this phrase indicates that "as thou hast done to others, it shall be done unto thee."

4. "Graven image" = idols carved out of wood or stone.

5. "Molten image" = idols cast in metal.



6. "I will make thy grave" = indicates the Lord will consign the Assyrians and their idols to oblivion--cessation of remembrance; He will doom them to destruction; this does not mean that He will make their temple their grave. (Eze. 32:22-23)

7. "For thou art vile" = of no account; "vile" means light; the prophet tells it like it is in the eyes of God--light, empty, as Daniel said to Belshazzar, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting." (Dan. 5:27)

## V. 15

1. "Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace" = the scene is one in which messengers herald a long-awaited deliverance; they come from the East across the mountains of Palestine announcing the fall of Nineveh and the consequent peace and security of Judah.

2. "O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts" = Judah is exhorted to resume the observation of the feasts God required, which were interrupted during the enemies' occupation of the country or could not be properly attended by the distant inhabitants.

3. "Perform thy vows" = in the hour of trial many of the godly made vows to the Lord; now perform them--do what you said you would do in the time of peril.

4. "The wicked" = Belial, the adversary; the opposing army.

5. "Shall no more pass through thee" = they would harass God's people no more for they will be utterly destroyed = "utterly cut off."

## CHAPTER 2:

### **III. Nineveh's doom described.**

## V. 1

1. Nahum addresses Nineveh and forewarns her of the siege she was about to undergo.

2. "He" = refers to the mixed army that was going to besiege Nineveh.

3. "Dasheth in pieces" = refers to this army, as an instrument of God, that would break Nineveh in pieces like a potter's vessel or would scatter her in all lands.

4. "Is come up before thy face" = refers to placing his (mixed army) forces in the sight of Nineveh so that they would see his power and the danger they were to face.

5. "Keep the munition" = provisions of a garrison or fortress; the prophet urges the Ninevites to guard their fortress well.
6. "Watch the way" = peer in the distance and pay careful attention to the way by which the enemy approaches.
7. "Make thy loins strong" = gather up thy strength, the loins being regarded as the seat of strength. (I Peter 1:13)
8. "Fortify *thy* power mightily" = make yourselves as strong as possible.

## V. 2

1. "The LORD" = Jehovah; the self existent One.
2. "Hath turned away" = to turn back; word has the idea of returning to the starting point.
3. "The excellency of Jacob, as the excellency of Israel" = the Lord restores the glory and honor of Jacob, the nation in its political aspect, and the high privileges of spiritual Israel--the chosen people of God.
4. "For" = introduces the reason this ruin shall fall on Nineveh--the Lord is mindful of His chosen people, who Assyria has oppressed; Assyria is visited because Judah has had its full measure of punishment (at that particular time).
5. "The emptiers have emptied them out" = the plunderers (enemy) have plundered the Jews.
6. "And marred their vine branches" = the heathen have cut off the members of Israel, the Lord's vineyard; we learn that the Assyrians were a constant danger and annoyance to Israel and harassed continually both the southern and northern provinces; refers to its fruit bearing branches, that, as far as in them lay, it should not bear fruit unto God; but to cut a vine (prune) is, by God's grace, to make it shoot and bear fruit more abundantly.

## V. 3

1. The prophet describes, as though he were an eye-witness, the army advancing against Nineveh.
2. "The shield = singular to signify that the order and singleness of purpose is as one.
3. "His mighty men" = shows their powerfulness and that they were many.

4. "Is made red" = could be due to the shields being covered with polished copper, thus giving them a reddish look; this could indicate that they were already tintured (slightly impregnated) with the blood they had shed or intended to shed.

5. "The valiant men are in scarlet" = a bright red color; word indicates the wealth of the army or the bloody work they were going to make of Nineveh.

6. "The chariots *shall* be with flaming torches" = this could refer to carrying torches with them in the open chariots; also, it could refer to when they are making their approach, the chariots shall fly as swiftly as lightning and their wheels of steel would strike fire upon the stones as they drove them furiously.

7. "In the day of his preparation" = in the day the army is assembled to go against Nineveh.

8. "And the fir trees shall be terribly shaken" = the fir tree is larger and more stately than the shrubs, thus applied to Nineveh which was larger and more stately than her neighbors but when the army comes, she shall be terribly shaken.

#### V. 4

1. "The chariots shall rage in the streets" = the chariots shall dash madly about the open ways in the suburbs--streets outside the walls; this army would be so numerous that to the Ninevites, looking from their walls, their chariots seem to dash against one another.

3. "In the broad ways" = in the plains of the country; remember the city is not yet taken--the walls are still standing.

4. "They shall seem" = refers to their appearance as "like torches" = leaving streaks of fire as the iron wheels struck the rocks, as they pass rapidly along.

5. "They shall run" = with great force and violence; "like the lightnings" = swift but vanishing.

#### V. 5

1. The prophet turns to the Ninevites and their preparations for defense.

2. "He shall recount his worthies" = means he shall remember his nobles; the King of Nineveh calls to mind the mighty captains who have often led his armies to victory and sends them to defend the wall.

3. "They shall stumble in their walk" = the nobles, in their fear and haste, or half drunken state, totter and stumble as "they shall make haste (to hurry) to the wall thereof."

4. "And the defence shall be prepared" = the Hebrew word for "defence" means "the covered way" = means something was prepared to shelter them from the darts of the enemy.

## V. 6

1. All defense is vain. The prophet describes the last scene.

2. "The gates of the rivers shall be opened" = history says that the King of Nineveh had driven back his enemy three times and as a result he was so lifted up with pride that he gave himself up to festivity and allowed all his army to indulge in drunkenness and feasting; while this feast was going on, there was a sudden rising of the waters of the Tigris River which washed away the gates spoken of in this verse, thus permitting the Babylonian army, along with their allies, to enter and burn the city about 607 BC.

3. "The palace shall be dissolved" = ended; melted; there is evidence that fire played a great part in the destruction of the palace and temples of the idol gods; the kingdom was also destroyed.

4. When the God of heaven goes forth to contend with people, neither their palaces nor their kings, neither the temples nor their gods, can protect and shelter them, but all must fall with them.

5. This prophecy came to pass in about 20 years (607 BC) exactly like God's man had said it would.

## V. 7

1. "Huzzab" = a symbolic name for Nineveh; the word may mean established or set firm; the use of this word seems to indicate that what is said will surely come to pass.

2. "Shall be led away captive" = the captives were usually stripped and treated shamefully--greater disgrace than that of common prisoners.

3. "She" = people of this city under the figure of a captive woman--Huzzab.

4. "She shall be brought up" = refers to judgment.

5. "Her maids shall lead *her* as with the voice of doves" = the maids refer to the people of the metropolis as they would mourn over the fall of their beloved city; with doves referred to, it indicates that the people not only show the outward tokens of sorrow but mourn inwardly in their hearts as doves. (Isa. 38:14)

6. "Tabering upon their breasts" = beating their own breast in grief and vexation as if they were drumming upon them as the word "tabering" signifies.

## V. 8

1. The prophet compares the past with present conditions of Nineveh.
2. "But Nineveh *is* of old like a pool of water" = Nineveh was a populous city for many years, even before Jonah's day; she was replenished with people as a pool with water; the multitude of her inhabitants gathered from all parts of the world and streamed into her.
3. "Yet they shall flee away" = in spite of their numbers, the multitudes represented by "the water" fly before the enemy.
4. "Stand, stand, *shall they cry*" = this is the voice of their captains or leaders who cry "stand, stand" but they cried out in vain.
5. "But none shall look back" = not one of the fugitives turn around and gives a thought to anything but his own safety; there is not one spark of courage remaining among the people.

## V. 9

1. The prophet calls on the invaders to come and gather the spoil of the city, which God gives into their hands.
2. "Take yethe spoil" = one word in Hebrew; to plunder--to take goods of an enemy by open force.
3. "Silver" and "gold" = money or artifacts made of silver or gold.
4. "For *there is* none end of the store and glory out of all the pleasant furniture" = Nineveh had stored up silver, gold, and all manner of vessels of desire (pleasant furniture) since her beginning; therefore, all these items were in abundance; "glory" = brightness; luster; splendor.
5. There was no end to what they had, yet all their wealth, though there was more than enough for the enemy and for them, could not save them.

## V. 10

1. "She" = Nineveh.
2. "Empty, and void, and waste" = the completeness of her judgment is declared by three Hebrew words which are nearly the same, with the same meaning with each word fuller than the former, as picturing a growing desolation.

3. "The heart melteth" = a common expression for fear and despondency. (Josh. 7:5)
4. "The knees smite together" = tremble and shake for fear. (Dan. 5:6)
5. "Much pain *is* in all loins" = refers to strong pains as of a woman in travail.
6. "The faces of them all gather blackness" = withdraw their color; wax pale; the Hebrew implies that their faces assume a black and blue color, like that of coming death.

## V. 11

1. The prophet asks, as if astonished at the complete collapse of the great city--"Where is the site of Nineveh?"
2. "Where *is* the dwelling of the lions?" = the lion is a natural symbol of Assyria, both from that animal's cruel, predatory, ravenous habits, and from its use as the chief national emblem.
3. "And the feeding place of the young lions" = means the subject lands where they took their prey.
4. "Where the lion, even the old lion walked" = refers to the chieftains of the Assyrian kingdom being in control.
5. "And the lion's whelp, and none made *them* afraid?" = refers to Nineveh leaders being like lions, and their offspring--young ones, walked the streets of Nineveh without fear; they lived in perfect security, without fear or care, irresistible in might.
6. Nahum could see their destruction and was filled with amazement and wonder and said in essence, "Where are they?" The predictions of Nahum were so literally fulfilled that for centuries armies marched over the site of Nineveh without realizing there had been a city there.

## V. 12

1. The figure of the lion is continued and may best be explained by continuing the interrogation--"Where is now the lion that use to tear in pieces, etc?"
2. "The lion did tear in pieces enough for his whelps" = the Assyrian monarch provided for his children and dependants by plundering other nations.
3. "And strangled for his lionesses" = may mean his wives and concubines, to whom they assigned towns and provinces to their favorites, as was their custom.

4. "And filled his holes with prey and his dens with ravin" = this is what lions do; "prey" is what the lions had killed and stored in a hole in the ground; "ravin" means to obtain food by violence.

5. Figuratively this applied to Nineveh. This is exactly what they did and yet it would not keep them from being totally destroyed.

## V. 13

1. "Behold" = to observe with care; used to call special attention to what the Prophet is about to say.

2. "I" = "LORD of hosts" = the warring name of God; Jehovah; the Lord of the forces of heaven and earth; indicates the omnipotence of the Lord; thus, it would be God Himself who would direct the destruction of Nineveh and it would surely be accomplished.

3. "I *am* against thee" = God is longsuffering and forbears (holds back His judgment), but He must act when the cup of iniquity gets full. (Mat. 23:32-33)

4. "I will burn her chariots in the smoke" = chariots stand for the whole apparatus of war and military power--all will be destroyed.

5. "The sword shall devour thy young lions" = refers to the fighting men of the city who would be destroyed by the army coming against Nineveh.

6. "I will cut off thy prey from the earth" = refers to the disabling of them for the future to prey upon their neighbors; they shall no more be able to pillage other countries.

7. "And the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard" = refers to the heralds who carried the king's commands to the leaders of his army for neither will the king be there nor his armies out invading--all will be totally destroyed.

## CHAPTER 3:

### **IV. Nineveh's doom deserved.**

## V. 1

1. "Woe" = denunciation; speaks of judgment on the city.

2. "The bloody city" = literally the city of bloods; refers to the city built and founded in blood by its manifold blood-shedding; murder, oppression, wresting of judgment, war out of covetousness, grinding or neglect of the poor, make it a city of bloods; in their history we read how prisoners were impaled alive, flayed, beheaded, dragged to death

with ropes passed through rings in their lips, blinded by the king's own hand, hung up by hands or feet to die in slow torture; others had their brains beaten out or their tongues torn out by the roots, while the bleeding heads of the slain are tied around the necks of the living, who are reserved for further torture; no wonder judgment was pronounced upon that bloody city.

3. "It is full of lies" = the Assyrians used treachery in furthering their conquests, and made promises which they never kept, to induce nations to submit to their yoke.

4. "Robbery" = a taking away by force; means rending in pieces; it is a figure applied to the way in which a wild beast kills its prey by tearing it to pieces; no man cares, in the city, what mischief he does nor to whom he does it.

5. "The prey departeth not" = means they never know when they have gotten enough by spoil and oppression; they will neither leave the sin, nor the sin them; they neither repent, nor are weary of sinning; the prey continues as a witness against it, as a lion's lair is defiled by fragments of his prey.

6. Judgment was pronounced upon Nineveh because of three crimes mentioned-- bloodshed, deceit, and violence.

## V. 2

1. The prophet describes the advance of the invading army.

2. "The noise of a whip, etc." = he hears the cracking of the whips of the chariot drivers, the rattling of the wheels of the chariots, the galloping horses, and the chariots bounding over the plains.

## V. 3

1. The prophet describes the battle scene.

2. Chariots, horses, and horsemen with their gleaming swords and spears charge forward.

3. "The bright sword and glittering spear" = reveals these weapons of war were polished such that they reflected the sun.

4. "*There is* a multitude of slain" = means a great number were killed = "a great number of carcasses" = described as "*there is* none end of *their* corpses" = so numerous are the dead bodies that "they stumble upon their corpses" = they could not help stumbling over them because there were so many; the invaders themselves were hindered by the heaps of dead bodies which they had to climb over.



## V. 4

1. "Because" = introduces the cause that brought on this punishment.
2. "The multitude of the whoredoms" = a term commonly applied to idolatry--worshiping false deities while willfully ignoring the light of conscience and creation. (Rom. 1:19-20)
3. "Of the wellfavoured harlot" = Nineveh is rightly so called for her splendor and magnificence were unsurpassed, dazzling all beholders and hiding the rottenness that lay below the surface.
4. "The mistress of witchcrafts" = refers to magic; Nineveh was skillful in employing every art to seduce nations to her side.
5. "That selleth nations through her whoredoms" = "whoredoms" means idolatry; Nineveh deprived the nations she overrun of freedom and made them tributaries (to pay tribute or annual sum of money to another) or in some cases, actually selling the inhabitants as slaves; she also made those nations worship her idols, thus the use of whoredoms.
6. "And families through her witchcrafts" = through her skillful art to seduce, she seduced not only nations, but smaller bodies (families), individuals so that none escaped; she drew mankind both as a mass and one by one after her, so that none escaped.

## V. 5

1. "I" = "the LORD of hosts" = Jehovah; the warring name of God; the Lord of the forces of heaven and earth.
2. "Behold" = to observe with care; used to call special attention to what the prophet is about to say as he speaks what Jehovah spoke to him.
3. "I *am* against thee" = the second time he has said this (Nah. 2:13); God is longsuffering and forbears (holds back His judgment) but He must act when the cup of iniquity gets full (Mat. 23:32-33); the Lord will not send an angel as He did in Hezekiah's day but He, Himself will punish Nineveh.
4. "Thee" = "thy" = Nineveh.
5. "I will discover thy skirts" = refers to the long flowing robes which were part of her pomp and dignity, but which were only the veil of her misdeeds; Nineveh had brought disgrace upon herself and now the Lord would manifest it.

6. "Upon thy face" = where shame is felt; this was to be done so that she might know her own shame.

7. "I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame" = all men (nations) shall see what Nineveh was really like--like an adulteress brought before the congregation, this was to be done so that all nations would despise, avoid, and take example from Nineveh and praise God for His righteous judgments upon her. (Rev. 19:1-3)

## V. 6

1. "I" = Jehovah still speaking.

2. "I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile" = abominable means disgusting; God had seen abominable things in Nineveh's doings and with abominable things He would punish her; Nineveh shall be like a vile woman exposed to the insults and ill treatment of a confused disorderly crowd.

3. "And will set thee as a gazingstock" = that all may see and take warning. (Ezek. 28:18)

## V. 7

1. "And it shall come to pass" = it is certain to happen.

2. "All they that look upon thee shall flee from thee" = all would flee from Nineveh, when they saw her judgment, lest they should share her plagues, as Israel did, when the earth swallowed up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Num. 16:19-26); those who saw the desolation of the city would flee in terror, not desiring to partake of her miseries.

3. "And say, Nineveh is laid waste: who will bemoan her?" = "bemoan" means to express sorrow for Nineveh's loss; the answer to this question--not one will pity her for her well deserved judgment.

4. "Whence shall I seek comforters for thee?" = truly, nowhere in all the world.

## V. 8

1. "Better" = prosperous; having good qualities in a greater degree than another.

2. "Populous" = having a throng of people.

3. "No" = a city believed to be in Egypt. (Jer. 46:25; Ezek. 30:14-16)

4. "Situate among the rivers" = the Nile river forked into several branches before it flowed into the Mediterranean Sea; the city of No was believed to be located between two of these branches.

5. "*Had* the waters round about it" = means to be surrounded by the rivers and possibly the Mediterranean Sea = "whose rampart was the sea" = if it does not refer to the Mediterranean, then there was another sea inside Egypt like the sea of Galilee, by which the city was built.

6. "Rampart" = that which fortifies and defends from assault, that which secures safety = "her wall was from the sea."

7. No was fortified by nature. The Nile, as well as the sea, guarded her walls. The city thought that she could not be captured.

## V. 9

1. "Ethiopia" = a country SE of Egypt.

2. "Egypt" = country in which No was located.

3. "Were her strength" = either by the wealth brought to her in a way of trade or by their forces furnished for military services.

4. "*It was* infinite" = refers to the strength; means without limit; there was no end to it.

5. "Put and Lubim were thy helpers" = refers to two neighboring countries of Africa which may correspond to Libya, just W of Egypt, and Mauritania which is located today on the W coast of Africa which is the Atlantic Ocean.

6. "Helpers" = those who aid.

7. No seemed impossible to be captured and destroyed but her fall proved to be fatal.

## V. 10

1. "*Yet was* she carried away" = her (No) strength failed her in spite of having every geographical and political advantage; even she that was so strong, so secure; "went into captivity" = this refers to some destruction of that city which was well known and probably fresh in memory at the time Nahum prophesied, though not recorded in history.

2. "Her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets" = the prophet described the unusual treatment of the captured city in the most public places--where many streets converge; a usual occurrence when a city or country was captured. (II Kings 8:12; Isa. 13:16, speaking of Judah.)

3. "They" = refers to the armies that had joined together to defeat No.
4. "They cast lots for her honourable men" = refers to the ones who determined his portion (honorable men) by chance like throwing dice; this was to see who the people belonged to and he was made a slave = "all her great men were bound in chains" = put in prison or handcuffed, not only as slaves, but as condemned malefactors--one who is guilty of violating the laws.
5. The fall of No was recent enough in the time of Nahum to be an example of the judgment soon to be poured out on Nineveh.
6. America, we had better take heed!

#### V. 11

1. "Thou also shalt be drunken" = Nahum makes the application--the fate of No shall be thine, O Nineveh; thou shalt drink to the fill the cup of God's wrath; the metaphor indicates the effect of some overwhelming calamity that makes men reel with terror or stupefies them with amazement.
2. "Thou shalt be hid" = Nineveh which was taken and destroyed about 607 BC was so effectually "hidden" that its very site was discovered only in 1845.
3. "Thou also shalt seek strength because of the enemy" = refers to seeking a stronghold from the enemy; as the people of No fled for refuge from one place to another (see notes on verse 10), so shall the Assyrians attempt in vain to escape the enemy; history records that they endeavored a retreat from Nineveh during the siege but to no avail.

#### V. 12

1. "All thy strong holds, etc" = the Assyrians' fortresses are as ready for destruction and as easy to destroy as ripe figs are ready to fall from the tree at the least shake of the eater.
2. The reason the destruction was easy was because it was of the Lord's doing.

#### V. 13

1. "Behold" = to observe with care what Nahum is about to say as he speaks what Jehovah spoke to him.

2. "Thy people in the midst of thee *are* women" = the Assyrians were essentially a brave nation, but they should be now no more able to resist the enemy than if they were women.

3. "The gates of thy land shall be set wide open unto thine enemies" = "gates" here speaks of the mountain passes which gave an access to the land and usually could be held against the enemy; refers to the various approaches and passes which lead into Assyria and especially Nineveh.

4. "The fire shall devour thy bars" = refers to the bars of the gates in the wall around Nineveh; these bars and gates were high and thick and it would take intense heat to burn them but they would be burnt; this was the Assyrians' custom to set fire to the gates of any city they attacked; during the excavations of Nineveh 2450 years after she was destroyed, a considerable quantity of charcoal and even pieces of wood either half-burnt or in a perfect state of preservation were found in many places, thus proving these prophecies true.

5. When the Lord says something will happen, it will certainly come to pass.

#### V. 14

1. Nahum ironically bids the Ninevites to prepare for the siege they were about to sustain.

2. "Draw thee waters for the siege" = refers to storing up the drinking water for the siege (to surround with armed forces for the purpose of destroying the place besieged).

3. "Fortify thy strong holds" = strengthen thy fortresses; repair any defects in thy defenses. (II Chron. 11:11)

4. "Go into clay, and tread the mortar" = the soil around Nineveh was OF such quality that when moistened with water and kneaded, either with feet or hand, with the addition usually of a little chopped straw, IT was easily formed into bricks which would become dry and hard in the course of a few days just in the sun's rays; these brick would be needed to fortify the wall.

5. "Make strong the brickkiln" = the prophet bids them to repair their kilns which had not been used in the days of prosperity, when they had no need to look to the security of their wall; after all Assyria's armies had been the ones warring against other nations and nobody was fighting Nineveh; but now the table is about to be turned and Nahum says you had better get prepared by repairing the kilns to burn brick; both sun dried brick and fired brick would be needed to fortify the walls.

6. Yet, though stored up within and fenced without, it shall not stand.

## V. 15

1. "There shall the fire devour thee" = in the very place where thou hast taken all these precautions, fire will devour you; fire played a great part in the destruction of Nineveh according to the remains discovered years later.
2. "The sword shall cut thee off" = while fire destroys the buildings, the sword shall devour the inhabitants of the city.
3. "It shall eat thee up like the cankerworm" = refers to the locust in its earlier stage--caterpillar; this phrase implies that the destruction of Nineveh should be sudden and complete, as that wrought on vegetation by the inroad of young locust.
4. "Make thyself many" = collect thine armies; gather hosts as innumerable as the "cankerworm" and "locusts."

## V. 16

1. "Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of heaven" = Nineveh was located in a favorable place for carrying on commerce with other countries because the trade routes or roads converged at Nineveh; "multiplied" does not mean numerous above the stars but glorious in the eyes of the world; yet in an instant all is gone.
2. "The cankerworm spoileth, and fleeth away" = refers to the enemy, who spread themselves over the rich produce of Nineveh, and then flees away laden with the spoil.

## V. 17

1. "Thy" = Nineveh.
2. "Crowned" = refers to the princes or the officials of upper rank.
3. "Captains" = refers to military leaders.
4. "Grasshoppers" = in the same family as locusts.
5. The crowned and captains are as the locusts and grasshoppers which means there are many of them in the city. But how much help would these great military leaders be in the day of calamity? They are likened to swarms of locusts (grasshoppers) with wings stiffened by the cold, which after being warmed by the sun's rays, regain strength and vitality and fly away without leaving a trace.
6. "And their place is not known where they *are*" = when Nineveh was overrun, she was driven north, with no trace where they had been or where they were; they had disappeared from human sight, from their greatness, their visible being, and their place on earth.

## V. 18

1. "Thy shepherds" = the princes and counselors, on whom the safety of the nation depends.
2. "Slumber" = sleep the sleep of death--slain in the war. (Psa. 76:6)
3. "O king of Assyria" = the power and evil of Nineveh personified, refers not to any particular king.
4. "Thy nobles shall dwell *in the dust*" = means they are lying in dust due to death.
5. "Thy people is scattered upon the mountains" = refers to the mountains which shut in Assyria on the north; their shepherds being dead, the flock, the herd of common people is scattered abroad and perishes, because "no man gathereth *them*."

## V. 19

1. "*There* is no healing of thy bruise" = the ruin is final; no one can restore the destroyed kingdom.
2. "Thy wound is grievous" = incurable; it was inflicted by God.
3. "All that hear the bruit of thee shall clap the hands over thee" = "bruit" means report; all who hear of thy destruction will rejoice over it. (Psa. 47:1)
4. "For upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?" = refers to the cruelty and oppression of Nineveh as having been universally felt; the wickedness of Nineveh had passed upon the whole world and each one in it; but now it had passed away, and the whole earth is at rest (for a while--short while) and breaks forth in rejoicing at Nineveh's fall.
5. The city of Nineveh came to a shameful and disgraceful end in 607 BC (some commentaries say 612 BC). The date matters not but the main thing is it happened just like God said.
6. America beware! We cannot continue in sin as a nation and get by for God said, "Be sure your sin will find you out." (Num. 32:23) Amos 6:1 warns us not to trust in our government nor our armies. We had better trust the Lord.

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