

# Nahum

a commentary

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# A Word of Explanation

## **Bible Used:**

King James Version — henceforth highlighted in bold red (Electronic version).

## **Comparative Bibles:**

American Standard Version (1901) — henceforth designated as ASV (Electronic version).

Young's Literal Translation — henceforth designated as YLT (Electronic version).

English Standard Version — henceforth designated as ESV (book).

Text which **appears in blue** indicates a quotation.

Text which **appears in green** indicates a question.

**Bold black underlined letters**, are the phonetic spelling of the Hebrew word. Example: (**nakh-oom'**).

# Nahum

## a commentary

### Introduction:

The book of Nahum was given by the Spirit through the agency of the prophet of GOD — Nahum. The name **“Nahum”** (**nakh-oom**) means *“comfortable”* (Strong); *“comfort”* (BDB); *“comforter”* (Waldron, p. 14); *“consolation, comfort, or comforted by Yahwey”* (Roper, p. 237); *“consolation or consoler”* (Hailey, 248).

The text reveals that he was from Elkosh. There is much speculation as to where this place was. Some scholars think it was somewhere in Galilee or possibly in Judah. A tradition among the Jews said it is Capernaum, which they said means *“Village of Nahum”* (Waldron, p. 14). The fact of the matter is that no one knows with any certainty where Elkosh is to be found.

The time frame of the book is not known exactly, but in general terms, it was somewhere between 663 B.C. and 612 B.C.

*“The earliest date identifiable in the book is the fall of No-amon, the Egyptian Thebes (3:8). The expedition alluded to was carried out by Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria, about the year 663 B.C....Nineveh was destroyed by the combined forces of the Medes and Chaldeans, 612 B.C.”* (Hailey, p. 249).

Some believe that Nahum was written during the last few years of Ashurbanipal. Since he died in 631 B.C., this would make the writing of this book somewhere around 632 B.C. Others believe it was written around

620 B.C. It is safe to say that no one this side of Heaven can state empathically when it was written.

When considering dates, one should consider that the northern ten tribes (Israel) fell to the Assyrians in 721 B.C. Shalmaneser V began the siege in 722 B.C. but died before the fall of Samaria. The final victory belonged to Sargon II. Just here, one cannot help but think about the book of Jonah, because it, too, had a prophet of GOD prophesying against Nineveh. Jonah is believed to have been written somewhere between 780 B.C. and 760 B.C. One recalls that Nineveh was spared the destruction prophesied because they repented. The two prophecies against Nineveh were separated by over one hundred years.

The main difference between the two books (Jonah and Nahum) is that the first-prophesied destruction of Nineveh was put off because the people repented, whereas Nahum's book shows that they had returned to their evil ways at some point, and now there was no escaping their destruction by an outraged GOD. One of the great lessons which should be learned in Jonah and Nahum is that all nations are accountable to GOD, whether it is a nation of His people or those who oppose GOD's will. **All nations are subject to GOD.**

The message of the book of Nahum is not directed at Nineveh in order to cause her to repent. Nor does this author believe it was intended to stir up Nineveh's enemies to conquer her. It was designed to encourage the people of Judah that they were about to get some relief from the constant Assyrian threat.

# **Outline of Nahum**

(Outline by Bob Waldron)

## **I. Judgment against Nineveh decreed by God (Chapter 1).**

- A. Superscription (1:1).
- B. Character and power of God, the judge of Nineveh (1:2-8).
- C. Fall of Nineveh announced (1:9-15).

## **II. Siege and destruction of Nineveh (Chapter 2).**

- A. Assault on the city described (2:1-7).
- B. The treasures of Nineveh sacked; her destruction complete (2:8-13).

## **III. Nineveh the recipient of God's judgment (Chapter 3).**

- A. The sins of the bloody city are fully judged, and her shame exposed to the nations (3:1-7).
- B. She will be destroyed as was No-Amon (3:8-10).
- C. All her resources and strength will fail her (3:11-17).
- D. The kingdom of the king of Assyria is scattered, and no one at all grieves (3:18-19).

# **Nahum — Chapter One**

(Judgment against Nineveh decreed by God)

Superscription (1:1).

**Nahum. 1:1 “The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.”**

“The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.” (ASV)

“Burden of Nineveh. The Book of the Vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.” (YLT)

“An oracle concerning Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum of Elkosh.” (ESV)

**“The burden of Nineveh.”** The word **“burden”** is from the word **mas-saw**. Strong defined this word as *“utterance;”* BDB defined it as *“utterance, oracle, burden;”* Baker/Carpenter translated it as *“a burden or load; by extension, a burden in the form of a prophetic utterance or oracle”* (p. 674). In the present context, it deals with an utterance which will reveal the fate of Nineveh (Assyria) because of its sins. The burden which will fall upon Nineveh will be so great that, like a mule burdened too heavily, it will fall under it. Since Assyria had threatened Judah’s existence with its armies for generations, this will give Judah hope. Assyria will be destroyed so thoroughly that its capital city (Nineveh) would not be found by archaeologists until A.D. 1840 and would not be positively identified as Nineveh until the mid 1900’s.

As the book of Jonah stated, Nineveh was a **“great city”** (1:2), with **“more than sixscore thousand persons”** and **“much cattle”** (4:11). It might be remembered from the study of Jonah that

National Geographic did a special on Nineveh which, with the help of Lidar, showed that Nineveh could have indeed been as large or larger than 600,000 people. The Bible is right, and the skeptics who deny the Bible's accuracy are wrong — **always have been, always will be**, when they contradict GOD's word.

**“The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.”** The word **“vision”** comes from **khaw-zone**<sup>7</sup>. Strong defined this word as *“a sight (mentally), i.e., a dream, revelation or oracle;”* BDB defined it as a *“vision, oracle, prophecy (divine communication);”* Baker/Carpenter defined it as *“a revelation by means of a vision, an oracle, a divine communication...It signifies the direct, and specific communication between God and people through the prophetic office”* (p. 325).

The author of the book is the Spirit of GOD through the mind and proclamation of Nahum, a prophet of GOD. The name **“Nahum,”** is usually defined as either *“comfort”* or *“comforter.”* As the study progresses, it will easily be seen why this book would be comforting to those nations which had been abused by Assyria's great and powerful armies. Further, it would be a comfort to Judah. Nothing is known of Nahum's family nor his former occupation before being called to his prophetic office. One thing one can know is that he was called **“the Elkoshite,”** i.e., *“a native and/or descendant of Elkosh”* (BDB). The location of Elkosh is not known.

[Character and power of God, the judge of Nineveh \(1:2-8\).](#)

Nahum. 1:2 **“GOD is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the**

**LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserveth wrath for His enemies.”**

“Jehovah is a jealous GOD and avengeth; Jehovah avengeth and is full of wrath; Jehovah taketh vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserveth wrath for His enemies.” (ASV)

“A GOD zealous and avenging is Jehovah, An avenger is Jehovah, and possessing fury. An avenger is Jehovah on His adversaries, And He is watching for His enemies.” (YLT)

“The LORD is a jealous and avenging GOD; the LORD is avenging and wrathful; the Lord takes vengeance on His adversaries and keeps wrath for His enemies.” (ESV)

The first thing to be noted about GOD’s character is that **“God is jealous.”** The word **“Jealous”** is from the word **kan-no’**. Strong defined this word as *“jealous or angry;”* Baker/Carpenter defined it as *“jealous”* and said, *“it refers to Israel’s God, a jealous God for His people; in judgment toward them or vengeance on their enemies”* (p. 1001). With regard to GOD’s people (Judah), they belonged to Him; they were His possession. The relationship of GOD to His people parallels that of a husband and his wife.

**“For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The GOD of the whole earth shall He be called”** (Isaiah 54:5).

Just as a human husband would protect and take care of his wife, so does GOD for His people. A human husband will not tolerate a rival for his wife’s affections, nor will GOD tolerate a rival in the life of His people. **What happens when GOD’s people seek a god, i.e., put anything or anyone above Him?**

**“the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth”**

The word **“revengeth”** is repeated for emphasis and comes from the word **naw-kam’**. Strong defined this

word as *“avenge or punish;”* BDB defined it as *“to avenge, take vengeance, revenge, avenge oneself, be avenged, be punished.”* GOD will take vengeance against all who consistently defy Him, who disobey Him, whether it is His own people or others. In the present passage, it is primarily aimed at the Assyrians, because of their extremely cruel actions and their moral degeneracy. *What did this cause GOD to be?*

Their sins, their brutality, lack of morals and idolatry caused GOD to be **“furious,”** which comes from the word **khay-maw’**. BDB defined it as *“heat, rage, hot displeasure, indignation, anger, wrath, poison;”* Baker/Carpenter defined it as *“wrath, heat... figuratively, it can signify anger, hot displeasure, indignation, poison, or rage”* (p. 348). GOD’s anger is something to be avoided at all costs. GOD’s anger has been shown at times throughout the Scriptures, and those who experienced it suffered greatly. Consider the flood, as GOD’s anger caused Him to destroy every living creature on the earth except for those in the ark. David understood the strength and abilities of GOD and cried out, **“O LORD, rebuke me not in Thine anger, neither chasten me in Thy hot displeasure”** (Psalm 6:1). Those who raise the anger of GOD against themselves can expect Him to **“swallow them up in His wrath, and the fire shall devour them”** (Psalm 21:9). *What happens when GOD becomes furious?*

Two things will happen. First, **“the LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries.”** GOD will be avenged of His enemies. Second, **“He reserveth wrath for His enemies.”** Strong defined **“reserveth”** (**naw-tar’**) as *“to guard...bear (grudge)...reserve;”* BDB defined it as *“to keep, keep guard, reserve, maintain.”*

Baker/Carpenter defined it as *“a verb meaning to keep, to take care of, to be angry, to maintain a grudge. It means to hold something against another person, to disdain him or her”* (p. 729). When one looks at the rest of this phrase, he notes that the KJV shows that the word *“wrath”* is not found in the original. But, the word *“wrath”* is implied in the word **“enemies”** (**o-yabe**). Strong defined this word as *“hating; an adversary: (enemy) foe.”* BDB defined the word as *“enemy; personal, national.”* When one makes himself an enemy of GOD, GOD then reserves and maintains a grudge against him, her, or a nation (Consider the wrath of GOD against Sodom, Assyria and later Babylon.). Also note what King David said about GOD’s anger regarding His enemies in Psalm 21:7-10.

**“For the king trusteth in the LORD, and through the mercy of the most High he shall not be moved. Thine hand shall find out all Thine enemies: Thy right hand shall find out those that hate Thee. Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of Thine anger: the LORD shall swallow them up in His wrath, and the fire shall devour them. Their fruit shalt Thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men.”**

**Nahum 1:3 “The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet.”**

“Jehovah is slow to anger, and great in power, and will by no means clear the guilty: Jehovah hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet.” (ASV)

“Jehovah is slow to anger, and great in power, And Jehovah doth not entirely acquit, In a hurricane and in a tempest is His

way, And a cloud is the dust of His feet.” (YLT)

“The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and the LORD will by no means clear the guilty. His way is in whirlwind and storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet.” (ESV)

Continuing with the attributes of JEHOVAH, Nahum said He was **“slow to anger.”** The word **“slow”** comes from the word **aw-rake**. BDB defined this as *“patient, slow to anger;”* Baker/Carpenter said it is *“an adjective meaning long, drawn out, or slow. This word primarily describes feelings to a person: either being slow of temper or patient”* (p. 97). Baker/Carpenter also made an observation which is interesting and verifiable in Scripture. They said, *“When used to describe God, the Hebrew word means slow to anger and is immediately contrasted with God’s great love, faithfulness, and power, demonstrating His true nature and His long-suffering”* (IBID). Note some examples of this statement below.

**“And refused to obey** (Israelites – RK), **neither were mindful of Thy wonders that Thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but Thou art a GOD ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not”** (Nehemiah 9:17, emphasis added).

**“The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy”** (Psalm 145:8, emphasis added).

**“And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your GOD: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil”** (Joel 2:13, emphasis added).

Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh, because he **“knew that Thou art a gracious GOD, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest Thee of the evil”** (Jonah 4:2). Jonah wanted Nineveh to be destroyed, not spared. He, like many even today, had not learned to **“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust”** (Matthew 5:44-45, emphasis added).

The next description concerning GOD is that He is **“great in power.”** In magnitude and extent, GOD has great **“power” (ko'-akh)**. BDB defined this word as *“strength, power, might;”* Baker/Carpenter said it means *“power, strength”* (p. 502). GOD’s power or strength can only be limited by that which is against His character. Otherwise, His power and strength is unlimited.

GOD **“will not at all acquit the wicked.”** The word **“acquit”** is from **naw-kaw’**. Strong defined this word as *“to be (or make) clean;”* BDB said it means *“to be empty, be clear, be pure, be free, be innocent, be desolate, be cut off.”* Baker/Carpenter defined it as a *“verb meaning to be free, to be clean, to be pure”* (p. 751). They went on to state that originally it referred to being *“emptied; therefore, its most basic sentiment is to be poured out and can have a negative or positive connotation”* (IBID). The context implies that GOD will not make clean those who do not empty their lives of sin, those who make themselves His enemies. Although GOD is slow to anger, it does not mean that

He will always exercise patience regarding man's rebellion to His laws. Just as in the days of Noah, just as in the days of Sodom and the cities of the plain, a point will come when GOD says enough is enough. This is true of both individuals or nations. When GOD says enough is enough, destruction will follow. His vengeance will be exercised on His enemies.

The power of GOD is illustrated by the LORD's having **"His way in the whirlwind and in the storm."** The figure of a **"whirlwind"** [soo-faw' – (*"hurricane,"* Strong)] is used to show that the power of GOD cannot be resisted by man. Man can use all of the abilities with which GOD has endowed him, yet his efforts to withstand GOD are futile, just as man cannot stop a tornado or hurricane. **GOD will always win!**

Hailey commented on **"the clouds are the dust of his feet,"** saying, *"In the storm of His presence the clouds are as the fine dust of His feet, boiling up as He strides on His way"* (p. 254). This brings to mind an event this writer experienced when the monsoons of Vietnam started. It had not rained for many months. The land was dry, and dust clouds could be stirred up by the slightest of movements. When the rain came, it came as a wall of rain steadily progressing toward him. The dust was rolling before the onslaught and then quickly turned to mud. GOD's power cannot be matched by mankind, who cannot stand before His rage.

**Nahum 1:4 "He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth."**

"He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the

rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel; and the flower of Lebanon languisheth.” (ASV)

“He is pushing against a sea, and drieth it up, Yea, all the floods He hath made dry, Languishing are Bashan and Carmel, Yea, the flower of Lebanon is languishing.” (YLT)

“He rebukes the sea and makes it dry; He dries up all the rivers; Bashan and Carmel wither; the bloom of Lebanon withers.” (ESV)

As one reads about GOD’s drying up the sea and causing the rivers to dry up, he cannot help but remember the statement made by Elijah the Tishbite in 1 Kings 17:1.

**“And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD GOD of Israel liveth, before Whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.”**

The context shows that Ahab and Jezebel’s sins were against the righteous, against GOD Himself. **How did they stir up His wrath?** Through the promotion of idolatry and the killing of GOD’s prophets. To punish Israel’s adherence to Jezebel’s gods, GOD caused a famine to dry up the land.

**“But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land”** (Luke 4:25, emphasis added).

The prophet Elijah spoke for GOD, and whatever GOD told him to say would come to pass. GOD had rebuked nature, and nature followed His commands to the letter, so much so that places which were normally lush with vegetation languished under the hand of GOD. The message is the same throughout this section — **GOD is all powerful!**

**Nahum 1:5 “The mountains quake at Him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at His presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein.”**

“The mountains quake at Him, and the hills melt; and the earth is upheaved at His presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein.” (ASV)

“Mountains have shaken because of Him, And the hills have been melted; And lifted up is the earth at His presence, And the world and all dwelling in it.” (YLT)

“The mountains quake before Him; the hills melt; the earth heaves before Him, the world and all that dwell in it.” (ESV)

**“The mountains quake at Him”** The word **“quake”** comes from **raw-ash** and is defined by Strong as *“to undulate.”* BDB says it is *“to quake, shake;”* Baker/Carpenter said it is *“a verb meaning to quake, to tremble, to shake, to leap, to be abundant. The word occurs thirty times in the Old Testament and most often refers to the physical, forceful (often violent), quick, back-and-forth movement of a physical body by an outside force”* (p. 1069). The picture is similar to an earthquake because, when it strikes, it causes the earth to undulate, i.e., move back and forth and ripple. Mountains were considered as symbols of strength and endurance by the ancients. Even today, companies like Prudential will use them on their literature to assure people of their abiding strength. The symbolism is that even a mighty power like Assyria, which had survived for hundreds upon hundreds of years, was nothing in comparison to the might and power of GOD.

**“And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the**

**whole mount quaked greatly**" (Exodus 19:18).

The word **"melt"** (**moog**) is defined by BDB as *"to melt, cause to melt...faint."* Baker/Carpenter defined this word as *"a verb meaning to dissolve, to melt away; to faint, to become weak, to become disheartened"* (p. 579).

**"The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth"** (Psalm 97:5).

The message of the hills' melting cannot help but remind the Bible student of 2 Peter 3:10-12.

**"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of GOD, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"**

Again, it cannot be overemphasized that GOD is in control of His creation. His power can raise mountains up or cause them to become as flat as the plains of Arkansas. Since He made them, and can control them, He can also control the nations. Through GOD's providence He had raised up Assyria to punish His people for their idolatry. Then through His providence, He raised up Babylon to punish Assyria because of its extreme cruelty and idolatry. Later, Babylon was used to punish Judah. **GOD is in control.**

**"the earth is burned at His presence"** The ASV translated this as *"the earth is upheaved at His presence,"* which seems to be the better translation. The word **"burned"** comes from **naw-saw'**, which

BDB defined as “to lift, bear up, carry, take.” Baker/Carpenter defined it simply as “a masculine noun meaning tottering” (p. 898). At the presence of GOD, the earth is portrayed as lifting itself up, which gives the imagery of tottering or an earthquake. Note should also be given that, when the earth is “upheaved,” those who live on the earth are affected as well. The destruction of Nineveh is thus pictured as something which would cause an upheaval in society, commerce, and the daily affairs of the earth’s population.

**Nahum 1:6 “Who can stand before His indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by Him.”**

“Who can stand before His indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of His anger? His wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken asunder by Him.” (ASV)

“Before His indignation who doth stand? And who riseth up in the heat of His anger? His fury hath been poured out like fire, And the rocks have been broken by Him.” (YLT)

“Who can stand before His indignation? Who can endure the heat of His anger? His wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken into pieces by Him.” (ESV)

**“Who can stand before His indignation?”** Who can endure or remain upright before GOD’s indignation? The word **“indignation”** comes from **zah’-am** and is defined by Strong as *“Froth at the (mouth), i.e., (figuratively) fury.”* BDB defined it as *“anger, indignation.”* Baker/Carpenter said it is *“a masculine noun meaning intense anger, indignation, denunciation, curse”* (p. 298). Baker/Carpenter noted

that this word is only used to describe GOD's overpowering anger. None can stand before GOD's anger over disobedience to His laws — not Assyria, not Babylon, not America, or any other modern nation. There are three words which are used in this verse to describe the anger of GOD **“indignation,” “fierceness,”** and **“fury.”** GOD's judicial anger is like fiery lava, which destroys everything in its path (Waldron, p. 41).

**Nahum 1:7 “The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him.”**

“Jehovah is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that take refuge in Him.” (ASV)

“Good is Jehovah for a strong place in a day of distress. And He knoweth those trusting in Him.” (YLT)

“The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; He knows those who take refuge in Him.” (ESV)

Verse seven is a passage of hope and security in GOD in the midst of a strong condemnation of those who oppose GOD, who have made themselves His enemies and deserve destruction.

**“Behold therefore the goodness and severity of GOD: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off”** (Romans 11:22, emphasis added).

**“The LORD is good”** The goodness of GOD has already been noticed and will be seen in later discussions. **What does Jehovah's goodness do, and upon whom does He shower it?**

**“a strong hold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him.”** GOD becomes a

place of safety for those who trust Him. The phrase **“a strong hold”** comes from ma’oz ma’uz ma’oz ma’uz. Strong defined this as *“a fortified place; figuratively a defence: fort, strength, strong.”* BDB defined it as a *“place or means of safety, protection, refuge, stronghold.”* Baker/Carpenter defined it as *“a masculine noun meaning a refuge, a fortress, a shelter”* (p. 639). Ancient towns would often have a walled city with great doors to admit people in times of war in order to protect them. When threatened by an enemy, the people living on the outskirts of the city would flee inside, and the doors would be shut. This fortress afforded them, at least temporary, protection. One should consider that the walls might be breached by the enemy and the people would still lose their lives or be made slaves. When GOD offers protection to those who trust in Him, they are assured that His fortress will not fall before the forces of evil.

The word **“trust”** is interesting. It comes from khaw-saw’, which Strong defined as *“to flee for protection...have (hope), make (refuge), (put trust).”* BDB defined it as *“to seek refuge, flee for protection; to put trust in (God), confide or hope in (God).”* Baker/Carpenter defined it as *“a verb meaning to seek, to take refuge”* (p. 361). One will not flee to someone or something for protection, if he has no confidence in his (its) ability to protect him. GOD has the ability to protect those who flee to Him. The security He offers is absolute for those who trust Him. No one, no army, no nation, can defeat Almighty GOD.

*“Jehovah is an impregnable stronghold to all who will flee to Him...His power is as great to protect as it is to destroy”*  
(Hailey, p. 255).

**Nahum 1:8 “But with an overrunning flood He will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue His enemies.”**

“But with an over-running flood He will make a full end of her place, and will pursue His enemies into darkness.” (ASV)

“And with a flood passing over, An end He maketh of its place, And His enemies doth darkness pursue.” (YLT)

“But with an overflowing flood He will make a complete end of the adversaries, and will pursue His enemies into darkness.” (ESV)

**“with an overrunning flood”** The word **“overrunning”** comes from **aw-bar**. Strong said this means *“to cross over...specifically, to cover.”* BDB defined it as *“to pass over or by or through, alienate, bring, carry, do away, take, take away, transgress.”* Baker/Carpenter said it is *“a verb meaning to pass through or over, to cover, to go beyond, to do along, to be crossed over, to go through, to go away”* (p. 799). It is mentioned in many commentaries that the walls of Nineveh were impregnable by human standards. They often speak of a flooding of the Tigris River that damaged the walls in such a way as to create an opening through which the Babylonians were able to enter the city and destroy it. Another idea involves the definition *“to cover”* mentioned above. GOD will cause Nineveh to be so completely destroyed that it will not be found until the nineteenth century by archaeologists.

*“It was said that when Alexander the Great marched over the ruins of Nineveh in his conquest of the Persian Empire that he did not even know it”* (Camp, quoted by Nelson, p. 7).

[Fall of Nineveh announced \(1:9-15\).](#)

What will be seen in this section will be good news for Judah and bad news for Nineveh.

**Nahum 1:9** “What do ye imagine against the LORD? He will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time.”

“What do ye devise against Jehovah? He will make a full end; affliction shall not rise up the second time.” (ASV)

“What do we devise against Jehovah? An end He is making, arise not twice doth distress.” (YLT)

“What do you plot against the LORD? He will make a complete end; trouble will not rise up a second time.” (ESV)

**“What do ye imagine against the LORD?”** The word **“imagine”** comes from **khaw-shab**. Strong defined this word as *“properly to plait or to weave or to fabricate.”* BDB stated that it is *“to think, plan, esteem, calculate, invent, make a judgment, imagine, count.”* The phrase **“against the LORD”** comes from **yeh-ho-vaw**. Strong said this means *“the self Existent or eternal,”* while Thayer defined it as *“the existing One.”* Baker/Carpenter said it is *“a noun meaning God. The word refers to the proper name of the God of Israel, particularly the name by which He revealed Himself to Moses (Ex. 6:2-3)”* (p. 426). **Who is doing the plotting against the Lord? Is it the Assyrians, the Jews, or possibly both?** This writer believes that Nahum’s prophecy is against the Assyrians. Further, this may have to do with their plotting against GOD’s people, i.e., Judah. It is remembered that what is done to a servant of GOD is done against Him. In Acts 9:4, the Lord asked Saul of Tarsus, **“Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?”** There is no reason to

believe that Saul had ever been associated with the Lord, i.e., ever met Him. Yet, the Lord said Saul was persecuting Him when he was going to Damascus to persecute Christians. **What would GOD do to the Assyrians' plotting and scheming?**

**“He will make an utter end”** The term **“utter end”** comes from **kaw-law**. Strong defined this word as *“a completion,”* and BDB defined it as a *“completion, termination, full end, complete destruction, consumption, annihilation,”* to which Baker/Carpenter agreed. The sum is that the Assyrians (or any people) would do all of the plotting they wanted, but GOD would completely destroy their plans.

**“affliction shall not rise up the second time”** *“Straits, distress, trouble”* (BDB) will not arise again from the Assyrians, when Nahum's prophecy was fulfilled. This is good news for Judah, because for generations, the Assyrians had been a thorn in the side of Judah. Now their destruction is forecast by GOD. When their destruction is complete, they will never arise again to trouble anyone.

*“He will make a full end of the Assyrians; affliction will not again rise against you, Judah, as it did in the days of Ahaz and Hezekiah”* (Hailey, p. 256).

**Nahum 1:10** **“For while they be folden together as thorns, and while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry.”**

“For entangled like thorns, and drunken as with their drink, they are consumed utterly as dry stubble.” (ASV)

“For while princes are perplexed, And with their drink are drunken, They have been consumed as stubble fully dried.” (YLT)

"For they are like entangled thorns, like drunkards as they drink; they are consumed like stubble fully dried." (ESV)

**"For while they be folden together as thorns"**

The phrase **"folden together"** comes from **saw-bak'**. Strong defined this phrase as *"to entwine: fold (together), wrap."* Thayer defined it as *"to interweave."* Baker/Carpenter defined it as *"a verb meaning to wrap around, to intertwine, to become entangled. It describes the way the roots of a plant or tree cling to and entangle themselves to a rock pile; or the way thorns become entangled"* (p. 766).

*"Nineveh may have been hurtful like 'thorns' and 'drunkin' on the presumption of its own power, but it would be burned up like dry 'stubble' or 'chaff'"* (Roper, p. 249).

One might consider that all three of these words (thorns, drunkards and stubble) are irritations not only to man, but especially to GOD. Nineveh thought that it was like a thorn hedge which was so dense that its enemies could not penetrate its defenses. But Nineveh will be as powerless to avoid destruction as the thorns, drunkards and stubble when GOD lights the fire. The phrase **"fully dried"** indicates that which easily succumbs to fire and which generally burns so fast as to leave full destruction. Interestingly, archaeologists found much of the ruins of Nineveh as having been destroyed by fire.

*"Those who are drunk are unable to think and to act so as to deliver themselves from danger"* (Waldron, p. 44).

**Nahum 1:11 "There is one come out of thee, that imagineth evil against the LORD, a wicked counsellor."**

"There is one gone forth out of thee, that deviseth evil against Jehovah, that counselleth wickedness." (ASV)

“From thee hath come forth a deviser of evil Against Jehovah – a worthless counsellor.” (YLT)

“From you came one who plotted evil against the LORD, a worthless counselor.” (ESV)

**“There is one come out of thee, that imagineth evil against the LORD”** One has come out of Nineveh who imagines evil against Jehovah. The word **“imagineth”** comes from **khaw-shab’**. This is similar to the words **“folden together” saw-bak’** in verse ten. BDB defined **khaw-shab’** as *“to think, plan, esteem, calculate, invent, make a judgment, imagine, count”* (p. 385). The idea is that someone was plotting and scheming against Jehovah’s plans. This schemer was like the thorns, drunkards and stubble in his ability to defeat GOD, i.e., unable to stand when GOD sent forth His fire’s of vengeance. The identity of this schemer is not known. There are several theories as to who this plotter might be, as discussed by Roper (p. 249). (1) Personification of the Assyrian kings as one man. (2) Sennacherib (704-681 B.C.), who schemed to destroy Jerusalem in 702-701 B.C. (3) Ashurbanipal (699-631 B.C.), who took King Manasseh into captivity and later restored him to his throne. This author would add a fourth possibility. (4) A threat was being plotted against Jerusalem close to the time when Assyria was to be destroyed. No matter who the schemer was, all his plans would come to nought.

This schemer is called **“a wicked counselor.”** The word **“wicked”** is from **bel-e-yah’-al**. Strong defined this word as *“without (profit), worthlessness; by extension wickedness.”* BDB defined it as *“worthlessness, worthless, good for nothing, unprofitable, base fellow; wicked.”* Whoever this

counselor was, he conspired and gave advice to overcome GOD's people, to destroy them. But instead, it was he who would be destroyed.

**Nahum 1:12** **“Thus saith the LORD; Though they be quiet, and likewise many, yet thus shall they be cut down, when he shall pass through. Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more.”**

“Thus saith Jehovah: Though they be in full strength, and likewise many, even so shall they be cut down, and he shall pass away. Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more.” (ASV)

“Thus said Jehovah: Though complete, and thus many, Yet thus they have been cut off, And he hath passed away. And I afflicted thee, I afflict thee no more.” (YLT)

“Thus says the LORD, though they are at full strength and many, they will be cut down and pass away. Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no more.” (ESV)

**“Thus saith the LORD; Though they be quiet”**

The original for **“quiet”** (**shaw-lame'**) has several meanings, but it would appear that three of them apply here — *“complete, safe, unharmed”* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1153). The ASV translated the above phrase as *“Thus saith Jehovah: Though they be in full strength,”* and the YLT translated it as *“Thus said Jehovah: Though complete.”* This is talking about their armies' being at full strength. Further, the Ninevites are **“likewise many,”** i.e., their armies are large in number. During Jonah's time, GOD said they numbered over one hundred twenty thousand. Their walls were considered to be impenetrable. But, they forgot something.

GOD said **“yet thus shall they be cut down.”**

The words **“cut down”** come from **gaw-zaz’**. Strong defined this word as *“to cut off, specifically to shear a (flock) or shave the hair; figuratively to destroy an enemy.”* BDB defined it as *“to shear, mow...to be cut off, be destroyed.”* Nineveh was being pictured as sheep that will be sheared, thus exposing their flaws and weaknesses. Like the wool which is cut off, Nineveh will be separated from the world, i.e., it will be destroyed, and no one will live there anymore. It will become a city which many will not believe existed until the nineteenth century.

**“when he shall pass through”** Does **“he”** represent an individual or a nation? The phrase **“when he shall pass through”** comes from one word — **aw-bar’**. Strong said it means *“to cross over; used very widely of any transaction.”* BDB translated it as *“to pass over or by or through.”* There appear to be two choices here: (1) the ruler of Assyria’s passing over from the living to the dead, or (2) Assyria’s enemies’ passing over the Tigris River to destroy them. It could be either, but this writer prefers the Babylonians and Medes as GOD’s instrument to punish Assyria for the many violations of His laws and for their extreme cruelty.

Nahum now turned to Judah and told them **“Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more.”** Up until the time of this prophecy, GOD had used the Assyrians to punish both Israel and Judah, mainly for their idolatry. But He now told them that He was bringing their affliction and oppression by Assyria to an end.

*“Even at full strength, and with their multitudes, the Assyrians will be cut down, and the one imagining evil and counseling wickedness will vanish”* (Waldron, p. 45).

**Nahum 1:13 “For now will I break his yoke from off thee, and will burst thy bonds in sunder.”**

“And now will I break his yoke from off thee, and will burst thy bonds in sunder.” (ASV)

“And now I break his rod from off thee, And thy bands I do draw away.” (YLT)

“And now I will break his yoke from off you and will burst your bonds apart.” (ESV)

At first glance, one might wonder what the difference between **“break”** and **“burst”** is. The word **“break”** comes from **shaw-bar**. Strong defined this word as *“to burst (literally or figuratively): break [(down) (off) in (pieces) (up)].”* BDB defined it as *“to break, break in pieces.”* Baker/Carpenter defined it as *“a verb meaning to break, to burst, to break in pieces, to break down, to break up, to smash, to shatter”* (p. 1097). The word **“burst”** in this verse comes from **naw-thak**. Strong and BDB defined this word as *“to tear off.”* Baker/Carpenter defined it as *“a verb meaning to break, to break away, to pull away; to draw away”* (p. 763). Interestingly, the phrase **“in sunder”** also comes from **naw-thak**, thus appearing as a double emphasis on the fact that GOD is going to free them from the reign of terror to which they had been subjected, by tearing off the yoke of Assyrian bondage.

One of the things which is very important to remember here is that GOD **is not** telling the people of Judah that they will never be under a yoke again. That will depend on them. A few decades later, they failed their test, and GOD put them under the yoke of Babylon. Still later, they would be under the yoke of

the Roman Empire.

**Nahum 1:14** “And the LORD hath given a commandment concerning thee, *that no more of thy name be sown: out of the house of thy gods will I cut off the graven image and the molten image: I will make thy grave; for thou art vile.*”

“And Jehovah hath given commandment concerning thee, that no more of thy name be sown: out of the house of thy gods will I cut off the graven image and the molten image; I will make thy grave; for thou art vile.” (ASV)

“And commanded concerning thee hath Jehovah, No more of thy name doth spread abroad, From the house of thy gods I cut off graven and molten image, I appoint thy grave, for thou hast been vile.” (YLT)

“The LORD has given commandment about you: No more shall your name be perpetuated; from the house of your gods I will cut off the carved image and the metal image. I will make your grave, for you are vile.” (ESV)

Jehovah commands that Nineveh’s influence (“**sown**”) would never be scattered among the nations again. YLT reads here, “*No more of thy name doth spread abroad,*” and the ESV reads, “*No more shall your name be perpetuated.*” The pronouns in this verse are masculine, which indicates that a human being is spoken about. It is probably, considering the context, a king — **but which one?** There are several views regarding who this king was, as expressed by Roper.

*“One possibility is that this verse relates to Ashurbanipal, ‘the last great king of Assyria’ c. 669-631 B.C.)...Another possibility is that the verse refers to Sinshar-ishkun, the last Assyrian king to reign in Nineveh (627-612 B.C.)”* (p. 251).

This author, while not disagreeing with the individual

king as a possibility, would suggest that these masculine pronouns possibly represent the kings of Assyria as a whole.

**“out of the house of thy gods will I cut off the graven image and the molten image”** Waldron quoted an interesting observation by EBC.

*“The sentence was duly fulfilled. The temple of Nabu, a major deity of Nineveh, was razed to the ground and buried with ash from the blaze. The statue of Ishtar was discovered, prostrate and headless, amid the ruins of her temple, which had stood at Nineveh for almost fifteen centuries”* (p. 46).

**“I will make thy grave; for thou art vile”**

Because the kings of Assyria had worshipped all of these gods and had committed so many atrocities against His people, GOD would **“make thy grave.”** Why? Because these kings were **“vile”** (**kaw-lal**). They had made themselves **“despicable”** (BDB) and thus had caused themselves to be **“cursed”** (BDB) through their false worship. BDB translated **kaw-lal** as *“a verb meaning to be slight, to be trivial, to be swift”* (p. 997). Their gods were insignificant and despicable and GOD said these kings were no different. Their contempt had been shown to GOD and His laws. Now the nations would be shown just how worthless they were because their gods, their armies, their fortifications, and their leaders were powerless against the One true GOD, just as all men and their gods are shown to be vile.

**Nahum. 1:15 “Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off.”**

“Behold, upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth

good tidings, that publisheth peace! Keep thy feasts, O Judah, perform thy vows; for the wicked one shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off.” (ASV)

“Lo, on the mountains the feet of one proclaiming tidings, sounding peace! Celebrate, O Judah, thy festivals, complete thy vows, For add no more to pass over into thee doth the worthless, He hath been completely cut off!” (YLT)

“Behold upon the mountains, the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace! Keep your feasts, O Judah; fulfill your vows, for never again shall the worthless pass through you; he is utterly cut off.” (ESV)

**“Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings”**

**“And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things”** (Romans 10:15)!

**Who is the one who would bring good news to Judah?**

This is not speaking of Jehovah, because the message of hope had already been delivered by Nahum, and yet, for a brief time, Assyria (Nineveh) still stood. This passage deals with the one who would deliver the message of Nineveh’s destruction when it happened. Possibly it would be one who had been enslaved by Assyria, or possibly a refugee fleeing when Babylon and the Medes conquered Nineveh.

**What will this messenger proclaim? “that publisheth peace!”** He will call for them to give heed to what he said. The word **“publisheth”** comes from **shaw-mah**. Strong defined this word as *“to hear intelligently (often with implication of attention), (obedience), etc.”* BDB defined it as *“to hear, listen to, obey.”* Baker/Carpenter said it is *“a verb meaning to hear, to obey, to listen to, to be heard of, to be*

*regarded, to cause to hear, to proclaim, to sound aloud*" (p. 1166). This one who comes will be like a herald calling for all to hear his message and, as the text indicates, obey that message. His message was not simply the good news that Nineveh was no more. It also contained commands.

Judah was called upon to **"keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows"** Baker/Carpenter revealed that **"solemn feasts" (khawg)** *"is used numerous times throughout the Old Testament referring to the feasts of the Hebrew religious calendar"* (p. 312). This then refers to keeping the feasts that GOD had appointed them in the wilderness (Feasts of Unleavened Bread, Passover, Weeks, Tabernacles, etc.). Judah was to keep its **"vows,"** i.e., its promises to GOD, which included the sacrifices it had promised Him. It seems obvious that one of the things the people had petitioned GOD about was deliverance from the oppression of the Assyrians. Because GOD had freed them from the Assyrian threat, they were to keep their feasts and vows.

The news was that **"the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off."** The **"wicked"** one, whether ruler or nation, would no longer pass through them. They had easily done so in the past, but no longer would such be the case. The word **"wicked"** comes from **bel-e-yah'-al**. Strong defined this word as *"without (profit), worthlessness,"* and BDB defined it as *"worthless, good for nothing, unprofitable, base fellow."* Baker/Carpenter stated that there is *"often a strong moral component in the context which suggests the state of being good for nothing and therefore expresses the concept of wickedness"* (p. 140). Nahum continued, saying, **"he**

**is utterly cut off**", i.e., he has been cut down, eliminated. When Nahum informed Judah of these events, the people probably would have asked when these things would take place, because Nineveh was still standing. But Nahum would have been speaking as if Nineveh had already been destroyed. **Why?** Because GOD had said it was going to happen, and Nahum was absolutely positive that it would happen. GOD said it. Therefore it was as if it had already happened.

The emphasis placed in this text is interesting. GOD told the people of Judah that they would no longer be oppressed by the Assyrians. Physically, their armies would no longer be invading them and extracting tribute. But the phrase **"O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows,"** also seems to imply, in some way, that their worship had been affected by the Assyrians. Therefore, the command was given to worship, to make the sacrifices they had promised.

## Nahum — Chapter Two

(Siege and destruction of Nineveh)

Assault on the city described (2:1-7)

**Nahum 2:1 “He that dasheth in pieces is come up before thy face: keep the munition, watch the way, make thy loins strong, fortify thy power mightily.”**

“He that dasheth in pieces is come up against thee: keep the fortress, watch the way, make thy loins strong, fortify thy power mightily.” (ASV)

“Come up hath a scatterer to thy face, Keep the bulwark, watch the way, Strengthen the loins, strengthen power mightily.” (YLT)

“The scatterer has come up against you. Man the ramparts; watch the road; dress for battle; collect all your strength.” (ESV)

Whether one considers the “*scatterer*” as the Babylonians and Medes or GOD Himself is of little difference. It is GOD who raised up the coalition of Babylon to defeat the Assyrians. Waldron stated that the Babylonian Chronicle, in the British Museum, said that the Scythians also joined with this coalition in Nineveh’s defeat (p. 48).

Instructions are given to Assyria to prepare for battle with all its might. Normally, it would have been those whom the armies of Assyria were marching against which needed this admonition. And like those defending themselves from Assyria, all of Nineveh’s preparation would not help in the least — it would be destroyed. Man often foolishly thinks he does not have to obey GOD and thus somehow will be able to thwart GOD’s plans. The defeat of Nineveh, with all of its strength, would bring honor and glory to GOD.

**Nahum 2:2 “For the LORD hath turned away the excellency of Jacob, as the excellency of Israel: for the emptiers have emptied them out, and marred their vine branches.”**

“For Jehovah restoreth the excellency of Jacob, as the excellency of Israel; for the emptiers have emptied them out, and destroyed their vine-branches.” (ASV)

“For turned back hath Jehovah to the excellency of Jacob, As to the excellency of Israel, For emptied them out have emptiers, And their branches they have marred.” (YLT)

“For the LORD is restoring the majesty of Jacob as the majesty of Israel. For plunderers have plundered them and ruined their branches.” (ESV)

Consider for a moment the two names given here, i.e., Jacob and Israel. “Jacob” was the name he had been given at birth, but one remembers that later GOD changed his name from Jacob to Israel. The name **“Jacob”** comes from **yah-ak-obe**, which Strong defined as meaning *“heel catcher, i.e., supplanter.”* The divinely given name of **“Israel”** is from **yis-raw-ale**, which Strong defined as *“he will rule as God.”* BDB defined this word as *“God prevails.”* Baker Carpenter said the name means *“he (who) struggles with God”* (p. 486). Jacob’s divinely given name, **“Israel,”** became the name of the nation which evolved to represent his twelve sons. It might be remembered that Jacob lied and deceived his father Isaac into believing that he was Esau. But GOD gave him a new beginning, a new name, that would describe his role in fulfilling GOD’s plan for the descendants of Abraham. When one considers Jacob’s original name and its meaning, with the events which followed, his name was not very honorable. But

the name **“Israel”** was to be very honorable, because it pointed to the One who would prevail — the self-existent One, the Creator and Ruler of all. They had removed themselves from the glory of their name, the glory of their GOD.

Those who had displaced Israel, depopulated their land, and destroyed their crops are called **“the emptiers.”** This phrase comes from **baw-kah**, which Strong defined as *“to pour (out), i.e., to (empty), figuratively to depopulate.”* BDB simply defined the word as *“to empty.”* Baker/Carpenter said it is *“a verb meaning to empty; lay waste; be laid waste”* (p. 158). The **“emptiers”** are not specifically identified, and so some have thought they were any nation which had subjugated Israel in the past. But the context strongly leads one to believe that this text is speaking about the Assyrians. The Assyrians had the standing practice of taking the people of a conquered nation and moving many of them to other conquered areas. They seemed to have believed that, by scattering these people who did not have the same customs and language, it would somehow prohibit them from acts of rebellion. This fits well with the definitions above. because they would empty the people of a land and refill it with people from other lands. The fact is, these people would have to quickly learn to communicate with each other to participate in commerce, et cetera.

**“Israel”** is the covenant name GOD gave His people, and He would never totally allow them to be destroyed, until the setting up of the kingdom promised through His Son. When that time came, Israel’s physical descendants were no longer the covenant people of GOD. The covenant GOD has with those willing to obey Him today is a spiritual

kingdom.

**“Not as though the word of GOD hath taken none effect. For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of GOD: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.”** (Romans 9:6-8).

Waldron said that what GOD possibly *“is saying here in Nahum is that God will restore Himself as the excellency of Israel”* (p. 50). As to when he thought this excellency would be restored, he made these thoughtful comments.

*“The restoration of the excellency of Israel cannot refer to the brief period of revival under Josiah because it was too short...Therefore the excellency would be later, in the day when God would raise up His Servant who would rule in righteousness and justice (Isa. 9:7), and whose kingdom would stand forever (Dan. 2:44)”* (p. 50).

**Nahum 2:3 “The shield of his mighty men is made red, the valiant men are in scarlet: the chariots shall be with flaming torches in the day of his preparation, and the fir trees shall be terribly shaken.”**

“The shield of his mighty men is made red, the valiant men are in scarlet: the chariots flash with steel in the day of his preparation, and the cypress spears are brandished.” (ASV)

“The shield of his mighty ones is become red, Men of might are in scarlet, With fiery torches is the chariot in a day of his preparation, And the firs have been caused to tremble.” (YLT)

“The shield of his mighty men is red; his soldiers are clothed in scarlet. The chariots come with flashing metal on the day he musters them; the cypress spears are brandished.” (ESV)

From verse three to verse thirteen, the army of the

**“dasher”** is described. It might also be noted that the present tense is used throughout these verses. It is used here to speak of what is in the future as if the described events had already taken place.

Who is the **“his”** in this verse? It is probably whoever the one is who is the **“dasher.”** Consider the description of the shields of the warriors — they were **“made red.”** This could be describing the color they were painted, but probably they were made red by the blood of their enemies. The soldiers of the *“one who scatters”* are described as wearing scarlet. This could refer to either the color of their “uniforms,” or, again, it could refer to being covered in blood. They are also described as being **“mighty...valiant men,”** i.e., being strong, powerful and brave.

The chariots are described as **“flaming torches”** in the KJV and to *“flash with steel”* in the ASV. Roper wrote that some believe this describes a type of blanket or carpet which covered the chariot. The idea seems to be that they would be able to divide their prey, to cut through them as steel would.

**“the fir trees shall be terribly shaken”** Roper informs one that the Septuagint and Syriac versions reference horses here (p. 259). If this refers to spears, it would seem to be the idea of the soldiers’ shaking them over their heads in a show of confidence and eagerness to engage the enemy. If it is speaking of horses, then it would seem to imply that they were “chomping at the bits” to get into action. Either way, this seems to refer to an eagerness for battle.

**Nahum 2:4 “The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall justle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run**

### **like the lightnings.”**

“The chariots rage in the streets; they rush to and fro in the broad ways: the appearance of them is like torches; they run like the lightnings.” (ASV)

“In out-places shine do the chariots, They go to and fro in broad places, Their appearances are like torches, As lightnings they run.” (YLT)

“The chariots race madly through the streets; they rush to and fro through the squares; they gleam like torches; they dart like lightning.” (ESV)

The passage here describes the way the chariots will do their damage. They will **“rage in the streets.”** The word **“rage”** is from **haw-lal'**, which BDB defined as *“to shine...to praise, boast, be boastful.”* It would seem to indicate that their presence was so large that they stood out. They could not be stopped, thus a boasting of that fact. The chariots would be rushing to and fro through the streets unhindered. They would be “flying” up and down like lightning. The phrase **“they shall jostle one against another”** comes from the word **shaw-kak'**. The meaning of this word shows an eagerness and greed, which could refer to seeking more victims for their swords or for the spoils of war. It would also seem that this could possibly be a description of the defenders as they are running around in panic, but more likely it is speaking of the invaders.

**Nahum 2:5 “He shall recount his worthies: they shall stumble in their walk; they shall make haste to the wall thereof, and the defence shall be prepared.”**

“He remembereth his nobles: they stumble in their march;

they make haste to the wall thereof, and the mantelet is prepared.” (ASV)

“He doth remember his honourable ones, They stumble in their goings, They hasten to its wall, and prepared is the covering.” (YLT)

“He remembers his officers; they stumble as they go, they hasten to the wall; the siege tower is set up.” (ESV)

**“He shall recount his worthies”** The word **“recount”** comes from **zaw-kar**. Strong defined this word as *“properly to mark (so as to be recognized).”* BDB said it means *“to remember, recall, call to mind...make a remembrance.”* Baker/Carpenter said *“the basic meaning indicates a process of mentioning or recalling either silently, verbally, or by means of a memorial sign or symbol”* (p. 289). The word **“worthies”** is from **ad-deer**, which BDB defined as *“great, majestic...of nobles, chieftains, servants.”* Baker/Carpenter said *“when describing humans, it refers to those who lead, either as rulers or royalty”* (p. 15). The leaders will be remembered and memorialized, which would tend to make one think that this refers to the **“dasher,”** i.e., the victorious leader. One does not long remember who finished second in a race, only who wins.

The second part of this verse has two possible thoughts, one involving the defender and the other the invaders. If it is speaking about the defenders, then it seems to indicate confusion. If it is speaking of the invaders, then it probably refers to their stumbling in their hurry to get to the wall. The word **“stumble”** comes from **kaw-shal**. Strong defined this word as *“to totter or waver (through weakness of the legs); by*

*implication to (falter), (stumble), faint or fall.*” BDB defined it as *“to stumble, stagger, totter.”* Baker/Carpenter said *“this word is used literally of individuals falling or figuratively of cities and nations falling”* (p. 529). Considering the way this word is used, it probably refers to the defenders, but it could also refer to the invaders’ stumbling over the bodies of the defeated.

The phrase **“they shall make haste to the wall thereof”** could again refer to either the defenders or the invaders. Note the different ways the last part of this verse has been translated — **“defense shall be prepared”** (KJV); *“the mantelet is prepared”* (ASV); *“prepared is the covering”* (YLT). The word which has been translated in these various ways is **saw-kak’**. Strong defined this word as *“to entwine as a screen; by implication to fence (in), cover (over), (figuratively) protect.”* BDB defined it as *“to block, overshadow... cover.”* Baker/Carpenter defined it as *“a verb meaning to cover. It means to hide something or to shield something”* (p. 777). Again, this phrase can refer to either defenders or invaders. It appears to have been a common practice for soldiers to have used their shields over their heads when arrows were loosed against them from above. The Romans especially used a formation called the “turtle,” where those in the front line held their shields in front of them, and the soldiers behind them held their shields over their heads. The words of this text could also describe a covering used to protect the invaders who were attacking a walled city.

*“From the inscriptions on the monuments the mantelets seem to have been small towers, carried on four or six wheels, in which men were protected as they were brought to the walls of a city. Some were battering rams with covers under which*

*men were protected*" (Hailey, p. 261).

**Nahum 2:6 "The gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved."**

"The gates of the rivers are opened, and the palace is dissolved." (ASV)

"Gates of the rivers have been opened, And the palace is dissolved." (YLT)

"The river gates are opened; the palace melts away;" (ESV)

The word **"opened"** comes from **paw-thakh'**. Strong defined this word as *"to open wide (literally or figuratively); specifically to (loosen) begin (plough) carve."* BDB defined it as *"to open...be let loose, be thrown open...to carve."* The historian Diodorus Siculus (1<sup>st</sup> Century B.C.) wrote about the fall of Nineveh.

*"Thus the siege lasted a long time, and they pressed their assaults for two whole years...But in the third year great storms of rain fell without cease, with the result that the Euphrates (sic, should be the Tigris) became swollen, inundated part of the city, and overturned the wall for twenty stades (about two miles, BW)"* (Waldron, p. 52).

It should be remembered that the walls of Nineveh were tall and very wide. Further, there were two walls. The inner wall was about 20 feet tall and reportedly was wide enough for three chariots to run side-by-side. This wall was made of stone. The outer wall was made of mud-brick and was about ten feet tall (Wikipedia). If the outer wall was breached, this would create a killing zone between it and the inner wall. This would have been devastating to any army of that time. But if a flood took out a part of the wall, the resulting opening would have allowed the invading

forces to sweep into the city.

Regarding the word “**palace**,” no one truly knows to what this refers. The original word (**hay-kawl**) refers to “a large public (building), such as a palace or temple” (Strong). Baker/Carpenter said the original came from **yakol**, which “comes from the idea of capacity” (p. 263). Thus, this word “**palace**” refers to a building which could hold a large number of people. Again, the idea being presented is that, though Nineveh considered itself invincible, it could not stand against the power of GOD. It would be destroyed.

**Nahum 2:7 “And Huzzab shall be led away captive, she shall be brought up, and her maids shall lead her as with the voice of doves, tabering upon their breasts.”**

“And it is decreed: she is uncovered, she is carried away; and her handmaids moan as with the voice of doves, beating upon their breasts.” (ASV)

“And it is established – she hath removed, She hath been brought up, And her handmaids are leading as the voice of doves, Tabering on their hearts.” (YLT)

“its mistress is stripped; she is carried off, her slave girls lamenting, moaning like doves and beating their breasts.” (ESV)

The two better translations here are the ASV (“*it is decreed*”) and the YLT (“*it is established*”). GOD had decreed that, no matter how strong the walls of Nineveh were, no matter how large her armies were, no matter how great her weapons were — she would be taken captive. There was literally nothing she could do to prevent her downfall. Just as Nineveh had led so many conquered people away as captives, so

would it be done to her people. The mourning would be great as they learned what it was like to be captured and enslaved.

*"The picture is one of deep anguish and sorrow as the proud city comes to an end"* (Hailey, p. 261).

The Treasures of Nineveh sacked; her destruction complete (Nahum 2:8-13)

**Nahum 2:8 "But Nineveh is of old like a pool of water: yet they shall flee away. Stand, stand, shall they cry; but none shall look back."**

"But Nineveh hath been from of old like a pool of water: yet they flee away. Stand, stand, they cry; but none looketh back." (ASV)

"And Nineveh is as a pool of waters, From of old it is – and they are fleeing! Stand ye, stand; and none is turning!" (YLT)

"Nineveh is like a pool whose waters run away. Halt! Halt! They cry, but none turns back. (ESV)

What comes from a pool of water in a hot climate? What is gained by a cool glass of water after mowing a lawn for several hours? Cooling, regenerating refreshment. That is what Nineveh had been like for centuries to those who found its gates. But that is in the past. Now they are like a pond whose embankment has been breeched, which allowing the water to drain from it. When the waters run, the pool begins to drain away, the breach gets wider and deeper, until all of the life-giving waters have fled. The people, the soldiers, are pictured as fleeing from the doomed city like water released by a broken dam. Nothing can stop them. Once the waters have fled its pool, the land becomes dry and useless. It is no longer a refreshing place, but instead becomes a

place to be avoided.

When a city like Nineveh (which had been an oasis, an invincible refuge) is destroyed, no one wants to remain in it. As the people fled, someone appears to have tried to rally them by proclaiming, “Stop! Stop!” But the fleeing people would not listen. They did not even look back in their mad dash to escape destruction.

**Nahum 2:9 “Take ye the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold: for *there is none end of the store and glory out of all the pleasant furniture.*”**

“Take ye the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold; for there is no end of the store, the glory of all goodly furniture.” (ASV)

“Seize ye silver, seize ye gold, And there is no end to the prepared things, To the abundance of all desirable vessels.” (YLT)

“Plunder the silver, plunder the gold! There is no end of the treasure or of the wealth of all precious things.” (ESV)

The Assyrians had stripped their neighbors of their wealth as they conquered them. Now all that treasure they had taken from others and stored up was taken from them. One can almost hear the victorious voices of the conquering soldiers, encouraging one another to take the spoil, the possessions of the conquered Ninevites, for themselves. They will take all that is desirable, and all which is not desirable is destroyed.

**Nahum 2:10 “She is empty, and void, and waste: and the heart melteth, and the knees smite together, and much pain *is* in all loins, and the faces of them all gather blackness.”**

“She is empty, and void, and waste; and the heart melteth, and the knees smite together, and anguish is in all loins, and the faces of them all are waxed pale.” (ASV)

“She is empty, yea, emptiness and waste, And the heart hath melted, And the knees have smitten together, And great pain is in all loins, And the faces of all of them have gathered paleness.” (YLT)

“Desolate! Desolation and ruin! Hearts melt and knees tremble; anguish is in all loins; all faces grow pale!” (ESV)

Nineveh has been reduced to emptiness. She has been laid **“waste.”** The word **“waste”** comes from **baw-lak**, which Strong defined as *“annihilate,”* and BDB defined as *“to waste, lay waste, devastate.”* Baker/Carpenter said it is *“a verb meaning to lay waste, destroy...brought about by the Lord’s judgment”* (p. 142). Nineveh is being treated to the same destruction and humiliation she had brought upon others. Further, the text says the **“heart melteth.”** The word **“heart”** comes from **labe**, and is defined by Strong as *“the (feeling), the will, and even the intellect; likewise for the center of anything.”* BDB defined it as the *“inner man, mind, will, heart, understanding.”* The inner man, the minds of the Ninevites is described as melting in fear as the next phrase appears to show.

**“the knees smite together”** The strength has gone out of their knees, which are essential for proper actions in daily life, sports, and war. It refers thus to one who knows he is defeated and is losing the will to continue resistance. The phrase **“smite together”** comes from the word **peek**. Strong defined this word as *“a tottering: smite together;”* and BDB said it means a *“tottering, staggering, stagger, stumble.”* The idea seems to be that all strength has been taken from

them to resist because of their terror. Much **“pain”** has come to them through the punishment inflicted by GOD through Babylon, the Medes, and their allies. Strong stated that the word **“pain”** (**khal-khaw-law**) refers to a *“writhing (in childbirth); by implication terror.”* BDB said it indicates *“pain, trembling, terror, writhing, anguish.”* The pain is described as being in their **“loins,”** i.e., the waist and hips.

The faces of the Ninevites are described as being gathered in **“blackness.”** This word comes from **paw-roor**, which Strong defined as *“properly (illuminated), i.e., a glow; as a flush (of anxiety).”* Baker/Carpenter said this word is *“a masculine noun whose meaning is assumed to be in dread or fear; however, the meaning of this word is uncertain”* (p. 887). One can only imagine the shock, terror, and horror of Nineveh’s inhabitants as the invaders broke through the walls and were cutting them down, destroying their once powerful and beautiful city. The consternation as they saw their wealth looted, their way of life destroyed and houses of their impotent gods destroyed. Consider here the translations of the YLT and ASV.

*“And the faces of all of them have gathered paleness”* (YLT).

*“the faces of them all are waxed pale”* (ASV).

Waldron observed that *“Courage flees, fear paralyzes, and faces grow pale”* (p. 55).

*“After the downfall of Nineveh, the Babylonian Chronicles reported that the Medes and the Babylonians ‘carried off much spoil from the city and temple-area and turned the city into a ruin-mound and heap of debris’* (Roper, p. 263).

**Nahum 2:11** **“Where is the dwelling of the lions, and the feedingplace of the young lions, where the**

**lion, even the old lion, walked, and the lion's whelp, and none made them afraid?"**

"Where is the dwelling of the lions, and the feeding place of the young lions, where the lion, even the old lion, walked, and the lion's whelp, and none made them afraid?" (ASV)

"Where is the habitation of lionesses? And a feeding-place it is for young lions Where walked hath a lion, an old lion, A lion's whelp, and there is none troubling." (YLT)

"Where is the lion's den, the feeding place of the young lions, where the lion and lioness went, where his cubs were, with none to disturb?" (ESV)

The imagery of a lion was often used in Assyrian art to represent the fierceness and power of the Assyrians.

*"Nergal, the war god, had a winged lion with a man's face as an emblem; and the goddess Ishtar was often depicted as mounted on a lion's back or as a lioness herself"* (Lewis, quoted by Roper, p. 264).

When the text speaks of the lion here (Nineveh), and asks where is its den, it does so mocking the great and mighty Nineveh. The answer to the question is that it cannot be found, because it does not exist anymore. GOD has destroyed it through His servants the Babylonians and Medes. Nineveh's destruction was so sure that the prophet could see it through the mind's eye of faith. There would be no more sanctuary for the Assyrian people or their armies. There would be no place of safety to raise up young warriors. They had ruled the world and thought themselves invincible. Now it would be as if they had never existed. The ruins of Nineveh would not positively be identified until the middle of the nineteenth century.

**Nahum 2:12 "The lion did tear in pieces enough for his whelps, and strangled for his lionesses, and**

**filled his holes with prey, and his dens with ravin.”**

“The lion did tear in pieces enough for his whelps, and strangled for his lionesses, and filled his caves with prey, and his dens with ravin.” (ASV)

“The lion is tearing parts for his whelps, And is strangling for his lionesses, And he doth fill with prey his holes, And his habitations with rapine.” (YLT)

“The lion tore enough for his cubs and strangled prey for lionesses; he filled his caves with prey and his dens with torn flesh.” (ESV)

Since the **“den”** is Nineveh, this suggests that its citizens are the lions. If this imagery is accurate, then the lion would represent the king and his nobles. Carrying this imagery forward, it is primarily the lionesses which hunt, and therefore would signify the armies of Assyria. By his direction, the king had provided all that the whelps, the common people, needed for protection and sustenance.

*“The word ‘ravin’ is from a word that meant to tear, hence with that which had been torn from others, booty”* (Hailey, p. 263).

They had caused great suffering for other nations and their people, and they did not care. Instead, they bragged about the suffering and cruelty they had inflicted upon others.

*“There is no problem documenting the cruelty of the Assyrians, whether from the annals of Tiglath-pileser I early in the history of Assyria or from the inscriptions of Asshurbanipal”* (Waldron, p. 55).

*“The fierceness and brutality of a lion accurately portrays the practices of the Assyrian army, who were known for impaling and flaying their enemies. One of the kings, Sennacherib, even boasted of raging like a lion”* (Roper, p. 263).

**Nahum. 2:13 “Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will burn her chariots in the**

**smoke, and the sword shall devour thy young lions: and I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard.”**

“Behold, I am against thee, saith Jehovah of hosts, and I will burn her chariots in the smoke, and the sword shall devour thy young lions; and I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard.” (ASV)

“Lo, I am against thee, An affirmation of Jehovah of Hosts, And I have burned in smoke its chariot, And thy young lions consume doth a sword, And I have cut off from the land thy prey, And not heard any more is the voice of thy messengers!” (YLT)

“Behold, I am against you, declares the LORD of hosts, and I will burn your chariots in smoke, and the sword shall devour your young lions. I will cut off your prey from the earth, and the voice of your messengers shall no longer be heard.” (ESV)

**“Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts”** Webster’s 1828 Dictionary shows that **“Behold”** is an intense word, meaning *“to fix the eyes upon; to see with attention; to observe with care”* (Electronic edition). Another way of putting this would be, “What is about to be said is important, and you had better pay attention.” The message of importance is that Jehovah is against Nineveh. Imagine the five best professional basketball players playing against five fourth graders. Those fourth graders would not stand a chance. That is what it is like if GOD is against a person, people, city, or nation — only much worse.

The chariot was used as a weapon of great destruction by the Assyrians. Thus, to burn them shows the destruction of their military. They will not have the armies to destroy and capture those they

previously terrorized, for GOD has destroyed them. The sword's devouring the young lions would seem to focus on their ground forces, i.e., the unmounted common soldiers. The phrase **“cut off” (kaw-rath’)** is puzzling to this writer, because it means *“to cut (off down or asunder); by implication to destroy or consume.”* The question this writer has is *Why would those who were the prey of Assyria (Nineveh) be cut off, destroyed?* Perhaps Roper has the understanding here when he said GOD *“promised to release its prey (those who were held captive or the booty which it had captured) and to prevent the Assyrians from preying on others”* (p. 264). Further, Nineveh's **“messengers shall no more be heard.”**

*“No more would her emissaries be sent throughout the earth to command, compel submission, and extort tribute from her miserable subjugated nations”* (Hailey, p. 264).

## Nahum — Chapter Three

(Nineveh the recipient of God's judgment)

The sins of the bloody city are fully judged, and her shame exposed to the nations. (Nahum 3:1-7)

**Nahum 3:1 “Woe to the bloody city! it is all full of lies and robbery; the prey departeth not;”**

“Woe to the bloody city! it is all full of lies and rapine; the prey departeth not.” (ASV)

“Woe to the city of blood, She is all with lies – burglary – full, Prey doth not depart.”(YLT)

“Woe to the bloody city, all full of lies and plunder — no end to the prey! (ESV)

Chapter three shows the sins for which GOD's judgment has come upon Nineveh. Verse one begins with a simple yet strong statement. This was a city full of blood. Strong showed that the term **“bloody”** (**dawn**) refers not just to blood being shed, but to the death of those by whom it was shed. This would seem to imply that Nineveh was a city full of murder and murderers. Further, it is the case that Nineveh (Assyria) was the cause of blood being shed across the nations. She had been ruthless in the shedding of human blood as if the deaths she caused were no more than the squashing of a fly.

**“it is all full of lies and robbery”** Strong stated that **“lies”** (**kakh'ash**) figuratively refers to **“hypocrisy,”** and BDB defined it as **“lying, deception.”** This possibly goes back to the mention of their **“messengers”** (2:13), i.e., ambassadors. If so, it shows that they would not hesitate to be treaty-breakers, those who go back on their promises. Thus,

their word once given could not be trusted. If this writer is correct in earlier observations, the phrase **“the prey departeth not”** refers to the fact that once they had captured their prey, there was no escape. It might also refer to the wealth they had stolen, never departing their greedy hands.

**Nahum 3:2-3 “The noise of a whip, and the noise of the rattling of the wheels, and of the prancing horses, and of the jumping chariots. The horseman lifteth up both the bright sword and the glittering spear: and *there is a multitude of slain, and a great number of carcases; and there is none end of their corpses; they stumble upon their corpses:*”**

“The noise of the whip, and the noise of the rattling of wheels, and prancing horses, and bounding chariots, the horseman mounting, and the flashing sword, and the glittering spear, and a multitude of slain, and a great heap of corpses, and there is no end of the bodies; they stumble upon their bodies;” (ASV)

“The sound of a whip, And the sound of the rattling of a wheel, And of a prancing horse, and of a bounding chariot, Of a horseman mounting. And the flame of a sword, and the lightning of a spear, And the abundance of the wounded, And the weight of carcases, Yea, there is no end to the bodies, They stumble over their bodies.” (YLT)

“The crack of the whip, and rumble of the wheel, galloping horse and bounding chariot! Horsemen charging, flashing sword and glittering spear, hosts of slain, heaps of corpses, dead bodies without end — they stumble over the bodies!” (ESV)

This verse describes the noises of battle. This writer believes that Roper is probably correct, because

of the context, when he said these verses *“describe what the Assyrians had done to others, not what others would do to them”* (p. 269). To be sure, the same scenes and sounds would be true when Assyria’s enemies destroyed them. It should also be considered that these verses could be interpreted either way. When one observes the carnage of battle as portrayed here, the multitude of carcasses, the tripping over bodies, he is looking at a scene which does not take place in modern times as often as it did in those times. Hand-to-hand combat was the rule of the day, and such is extremely messy. After battles in that time, many thousands would often lie dead or wounded upon the battlefield. In America’s own Civil War, the battle at Shiloh was fought for two days. In those two days, 1,754 Union soldiers were killed, and Confederate deaths were 1,723: the total wounded from both sides was over 16,000 (National Portrait Gallery). In Roman times, the bloodiest battle fought was Cannae, where out of an army of 80,000 soldiers, only 13,000 Roman soldiers survived (Golovic, Roberto; Culture Frontier, electronic).

**Nahum 3:4 “Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the well-favored harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts.”**

“because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the well-favored harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts.” (ASV)

“Because of the abundance of the fornications of an harlot, The goodness of the grace of the lady of witchcrafts, Who is selling nations by her fornications, And families by her witchcrafts.” (YLT)

“And all for the countless whorings of the prostitute, graceful and of deadly charms, who betrays nations with her whorings, and peoples with her charms.” (ESV)

What enabled Nineveh’s armies to create such destruction of life among the nations? Nineveh is pictured as a **“wellfavoured harlot”** (prostitute). The word **“wellfavoured”** comes from **khane**. BDB defined this word as *“favor, grace, charm... elegance...acceptance.”* This word can be, and is used sometimes, to refer to the unmerited favor of GOD (Gen. 6:8). Baker/Carpenter said that, at other times, *“the word conveys a sense of acceptance or preference in a more general manner as well, such as the enticement of a woman (Prov. 31:30; Nah. 3:4)”* (p. 354). Nineveh is thus portrayed as a woman who uses her *“graceful and deadly charms”* (ESV) to destroy the nations and people around her. Armerding said, *“In the Bible, prostitution carries the connotations of treachery and unfaithfulness (Judg. 2:17), defilement (Lev. 20:3-5), and lust (Ezek. 23:5-21)”* (Quoted by Roper, p. 269). A prostitute seduces people into believing that she has something for them which is desirable, pleasant, and beneficial to them. That is how Nineveh acted. **But with what did she seduce the nations?** The word **“seduce”** means to *“attract (someone) to a belief or into a course of action that is inadvisable or foolhardy”* (Oxford Dictionary, electronic). Nineveh deceived others into believing that she was all powerful, that becoming like her and following her gods would bring the wealth she had to themselves. But her seductions were meant to allure others into her spider web, where she devoured their riches. The prostitute treats her suitor as merchandise

to be used and thrown away. That is exactly what Nineveh did. There is another aspect of **“whoredom”** which should be noted. At times, the word **“whoredom”** is used to designate idolatry and adultery toward GOD.

**“I have seen thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredom, and thine abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be”** (Jeremiah 13:27)?

**“They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and elms, because the shadow thereof is good: therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall commit adultery”** (Hosea 4:13).

The Bible teaches that GOD is the church’s husband.

**“I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from GOD out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband”** (Revelation 21:2).

Therefore, when anyone puts anything first, i.e., before his loyalty to GOD, he has committed both idolatry and adultery to GOD, who is figuratively his husband in Scripture. Nineveh **“had enticed, seduced, and led many to destruction”** (Hailey, p. 265). She had ruined many, and now she would be ruined.

**Nahum 3:5 “Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts; and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame.”**

“Behold, I am against thee, saith Jehovah of hosts, and I will uncover thy skirts upon thy face; and I will show the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame.” (ASV)

“Lo, I am against thee, An affirmation of Jehovah of Hosts, And have removed thy skirts before thy face, And have

shewed nations thy nakedness, And kingdoms thy shame,”  
(YLT)

“Behold, I am against you, declares the LORD of hosts, and will lift up your skirts over your face; and I will make nations look at you’re your nakedness and kingdoms at your shame.”  
(ESV)

**“Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts”** **“Behold,”** see or observe that I am against thee. The fact that GOD was against them could be seen. It was not simply a thought that He might be against them. The results of His anger and displeasure were obvious.

*“Nahum, in effect, wrote, ‘If God is against us, who can be for us? Who can keep God from taking vengeance on us?’”*  
(Roper, p. 270).

**“I will discover thy skirts upon thy face”** The word **“discover”** comes from **gaw-law’** and means *“to denude (especially in a disgraceful sense); by implication to exile (captives being usually stripped)”* (Strong). BDB defined it as *“to uncover, remove, to uncover, to remove, depart, to go into exile.”* Baker/Carpenter defined it as *“a verb meaning to reveal, to be revealed, to uncover, to remove, to go into exile, to reveal oneself, to expose, to disclose”* (p. 202). The text has called Nineveh a prostitute, and like all prostitutes, time takes a toll on their appearance, no matter how hard they try to hide it. When such is revealed in the harsh light of reality, they are often seen for their true ugliness and rejected by their one-time suitors.

**“I will shew the nations thy nakedness”** The word **“nakedness”** comes from **mah’-ar**. Strong said it is defined as *“a nude (place)...(figuratively) a vacant space.”* BDB defined it as a *“bare, naked place,”* and

Baker Carpenter said it is *“a masculine noun depicting a base place, nakedness...it is used figuratively of opening up the city of Nineveh to destruction”* (p. 546). The idea is that what little protection they had would be stripped away to allow the enemy to rape and pillage the city. The city and Assyria would be made a bare place upon the earth — no wealth, beauty, power, commerce, or inhabitants would desire this place.

What should be the result of mankind’s nakedness when revealed to anyone other than their mate?

**“And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed”** (Genesis 2:25).

This was before their sin, but note the difference after they sinned.

**“the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons”** (Genesis 3:7).

They were now ashamed to be seen naked. The kingdoms of the earth would be shown Nineveh’s **“nakedness”** and **“shame.”** The word **“shame”** is from **kaw-lone**, defined by Strong as *“disgrace.”* BDB defined it as *“shame, disgrace, dishonor, disgrace.”* It is evident from the context that Nineveh was not destroyed by her physical enemies — GOD destroyed her by using physical armies to do His will. GOD destroyed her disgusting attributes and revealed them to the world for what they were - useless, unprofitable.

**Nahum 3:6 “And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazingstock.”**

“And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazing-stock.” (ASV)

“And I have cast upon thee abominations, And dishonoured thee, and made thee as a sight.” (YLT)

“I will throw filth at you and treat you with contempt and make you a spectacle.” (ESV)

In this verse, GOD said He would do three things to Nineveh. First, GOD said He would **“cast abominable filth upon thee.”** The word **“cast”** is from **shaw-lak**, defined by Strong as *“to throw (out), down, or away.”* BDB said it means *“to throw, cast, throw away, cast off, shed, cast down.”* In the present text, it means that GOD cast something upon them which He has already described as being **“shame.”** Here the shameful thing is called **“abominable filth”** (**shik-koots’ shik-koots’**). Strong defined this as *“(disgusting), i.e., filthy; especially idolatrous.”* BDB said it means *“detestable thing or idol, abominable thing, abomination, idol, detested thing.”* Baker/Carpenter said, *“this Hebrew word identifies an object that is abhorrent or blasphemous”* (p. 1193). To throw disgusting and filthy things on an object is to obscure its beauty. It is to degrade and show contempt for that thing. Nineveh had been thought of as a beautiful city on the outside, but now her outside is going to be like her insides.

**“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness”** (Matthew 23:27).

Second, GOD would make Nineveh **“vile”** (**naw-bale**). Strong defined this word as *“to wilt; generally to fall (away), fail, faint; figuratively to be foolish.”* BDB said it means *“to be senseless, be foolish...to sink or drop down, languish, wither and fall.”* Baker/Carpenter

said *“it refers to something wearing out, drying up, dying, falling off”* (p. 701). It is GOD who will cause the vitality and memory of this city to fade. Like a flower, its beauty will dry up and fall from its place of prominence at the head of the stem.

Third, GOD would set Nineveh up to be a **“gazingstock”** (**ro-ee**). The idea seems to be to look upon something with revulsion and/or shock. Attention would be drawn to them which would cause people to be revolted at what they saw. The sight of Nineveh would be almost too horrible to contemplate, almost too astounding to believe.

**Nahum 3:7 “And it shall come to pass, that all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste: who will bemoan her? whence shall I seek comforters for thee?”**

“And it shall come to pass, that all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste: who will bemoan her? whence shall I seek comforters for thee?” (ASV)

“And it hath come to pass, Each of thy beholders fleeth from thee, And hath said: Spoiled is Nineveh, Who doth bemoan for her? Whence do I seek comforters for thee?” (YLT)

“All who look at you will shrink from you and say, Wasted is Nineveh; who will grieve for her? Where shall I find comforters for you?” (ESV)

The sight of Nineveh’s destruction will cause all who see it to flee because **“Nineveh is laid waste”** (**shaw-dad**). The primary meaning of this word (**“waste”**) is to be devastated, to be destroyed. Their reaction was probably similar to that experienced by many when the wall in Berlin, Germany came down.

People were so astonished, because months before the people of East Berlin gained freedom through that event — no one could have imagined it would happen. At the time Nahum was written, no one would have envisioned the fall of the mightiest empire on earth. But GOD knew and had His prophet proclaim the news.

Two questions are then put forth: **“who will bemoan her? whence shall I seek comforters for thee?”** These questions seem to imply that no one (outside of Assyrians) would mourn or lament the fall and destruction of Nineveh. Again, this would be similar to Herod the Great who, when he was dying, knew that no one would mourn his death because of all his cruelties. So he ordered that the chief men in the city be imprisoned and, upon his death, they were all to be killed. That way there would be mourning, if not for himself, for those he had ordered to be murdered. Thankfully, his soldiers disobeyed the order after he died. This is the same situation for Nineveh, where, like Herod, the nations, the people, would have said, “Good riddance.” Nineveh had despised, terrorized, and shamed the nations. It had given them no respect, and humiliating them at every opportunity. Now it was her turn to reap what she had sown.

[She will be destroyed as was No-Amon \(3:8-10\).](#)

**Nahum. 3:8 “Art thou better than populous No, that was situate among the rivers, that had the waters round about it, whose rampart was the sea, and her wall was from the sea?”**

“Art thou better than No-amon, that was situate among the rivers, that had the waters round about her; whose rampart

was the sea, and her wall was of the sea?" (ASV)

"Art thou better than No-Ammon, That is dwelling among brooks? Waters she hath round about her, Whose bulwark is the sea, waters her wall." (YLT)

"Are you better than Thebes that sat by the Nile, with water around her, her rampart a sea, and water her wall?" (ESV)

**"No"** is also known as "No-amon," as well as the name "Thebes." It was a city located about 450 miles south of modern day Cairo. Hailey stated that No-amon was the city of the god Amon and was a very important city to the Egyptians (p. 266). But in 663 B.C., Ashurbanipal, Assyrian ruler, destroyed the city. Like Nineveh, part of its defenses was a river, the Nile for Thebes, and the Tigris for Nineveh. Just as the river Nile did not save Thebes, neither would the Tigris save Nineveh. Waldron stated that in Homer's day, Thebes was a very powerful city (p. 59). Like Thebes and Nineveh, no city or nation is powerful enough to withstand GOD — all such will be destroyed, either while the world stands or at the end of time. Verse nine emphasizes Thebes' strength by mentioning her allies.

**Nahum 3:9 "Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite; Put and Lubim were thy helpers."**

"Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite; Put and Lubim were thy helpers." (ASV)

"Cush her might, and Egypt, and there is no end. Put and Lubim have been for thy help." (YLT)

"Cush was her strength; Egypt too, and that without limit; Put and the Libyans were her helpers." (ESV)

Most writers believe that these named places were the allies of Thebes and, coupled with her natural defenses, made it seem like she could not be defeated. This writer would like to pose a thought here with regard to the names found. There is little doubt in his mind that Ethiopia and Egypt were indeed Thebes' allies. But, considering the wording of the text, Put and Lubim may have been Ashurbanipal's allies in its destruction. Consider: **Who is the "her" referred to in 9a?** Since the previous verse was dealing with the destruction of Thebes, **"her"** would obviously apply to Thebes' allies. But consider the change made in 9b, where Put and Lubim are said to be **"thy helpers."** The parallel is being drawn between two cities which were thought in their times to be unconquerable but are being shown to be conquerable. It simply seems to this writer that the battle lines between two groups are what is being shown in this verse. Whether this writer's thoughts are correct, or whether they were all the allies of Thebes, the result is the same — Assyria destroyed Thebes. When man becomes so arrogant that he thinks he cannot be destroyed — his doom is already sealed.

**Nahum 3:10 "Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity: her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets: and they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains."**

"Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity; her young children also were dashed in pieces at the head of all the streets; and they cast lots for her honorable men, and all her great men were bound in chains." (ASV)

“Even she doth become an exile, She hath gone into captivity,  
Even her sucklings are dashed to pieces At the top of all  
out-places, And for her honoured ones they cast a lot, And all  
her great ones have been bound in fetters.” (YLT)

“Yet she became an exile; she went into captivity; her infants  
were dashed in pieces at the head of every street; for her  
honored men lots were cast, and her great men were bound  
in chains.” (ESV)

The great cruelty of Assyria over her conquered foes is seen briefly, but with much horror. This horror is not seen in the fact that the people of Thebes were exiled or made captives. It is seen in what was done to the children of Thebes — **“her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets.”** The phrase **“young children”** comes from **(o-lale’) o-lawl’**. Compare how this phrase is translated in other versions: *“young children”* (KJV, ASV), *“her sucklings”* (YLT), and *“her infants”* (ESV). In all of these, the reference is to very young children. Strong defined **(o-lale’) o-lawl’** as *“a suckling: (babe, (young), (child), (infant), little one.”* Baker/Carpenter defined it as *“a masculine noun meaning a child, an infant. It refers to offspring, sons and daughters, still quite young and holding the promise of descendants.”* They then added this thought: *“The destruction of children was especially devastating to a people (2 Kings 8:12; Lamentations 2:11, 20)”* (p. 813). **What did the Assyrians do to the “young children?”** They **“dashed in pieces”** the children. The phrase **“dashed in pieces”** comes from the word **raw-tash’**. Strong defined this phrase as *“to dash down,”* and Baker/Carpenter defined it as *“a verb meaning to dash in pieces; to strike down”* (p. 1051). The meaning is to

dash or strike something downward into pieces. **What were they striking or dashing down?** Infants, sucklings, young children. **For what purpose?** To break them in pieces, to kill them in a horrifying manner. **Where did they commit this atrocity?** In all of the streets of Thebes. Thebes fell to the Assyrian king, Ashurbanipal, in 663 B.C.

They also **“cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains.”** All of their nobles and great men were divided up by the casting of lots, and her great men suffered the indignity of being chained so as to be taken away in captivity. Ashurbanipal did not take all of the people into captivity, but Thebes was so devastated by the destruction, deaths, and numbers carried away that it never rose to its previous heights of power, prominence and grandeur. Unlike Thebes, Nineveh would never be occupied after its destruction.

[All her resources and strength will fail her](#) (3:11-17).

**Nahum 3:11 “Thou also shalt be drunken: thou shalt be hid, thou also shalt seek strength because of the enemy.”**

“Thou also shalt be drunken; thou shalt be hid; thou also shalt seek a stronghold because of the enemy.” (ASV)

“Even thou art drunken, thou art hidden, Even thou dost seek a strong place, because of an enemy.” (YLT)

“You also will be drunken; you will go into hiding, you will seek a refuge from the enemy.” (ESV)

**What does “Thou also shalt be drunken” mean?**

There are three basic views which are put forth. Keil and Delitzsch believed that it referred to the result of

drinking the cup of GOD's wrath, as in Obadiah 16. Robertson thought it referred to Nineveh's staggering around like a drunk when its destruction came. Waldron thought it referred to being drunk in the sense of being out of control and thus, being unable to do anything about its destruction. (Points summarized from Waldron, p. 60.)

**“thou shalt be hid”** There are also two ideas generally thought about with regard to being **“hid.”** One view is that Nineveh would be hidden in the sands of time. The second view is that the people would try to hide themselves from the enemy, but with no luck. This writer does not believe it is an either/or situation. He believes that both are in play here.

**“thou also shalt seek strength because of the enemy.”** The word **“strength”** (**maw-oze'**) (**maw-ooz**) **maw-ooz'** in the KJV is better translated as **“strong hold”** (ASV) or **“strong place”** (YLT). The people would seek a fortified place from which to repel the enemy or to hide from him. But the results will be the same, even if they were to find such a place — destruction. As the book of Jonah so aptly shows, one cannot hide from GOD. GOD's wrath had been rightly earned by Nineveh.

**Nahum 3:12** **“All thy strong holds shall be like fig trees with the firstripe figs: if they be shaken, they shall even fall into the mouth of the eater.”**

“All thy fortresses shall be like fig-trees with the first-ripe figs: if they be shaken, they fall into the mouth of the eater.” (ASV)

“All thy fortresses are fig-trees with first-fruits, If they are shaken, They have fallen into the mouth of the eater.” (YLT)

“All your fortresses are like fig trees with first-ripe figs — if

shaken they fall into the mouth of the eater.” (ESV)

The words “**strong holds**” come from {**mib-tswr**} **mib-tsaw-raw**’. Strong defined this word as “*a fortification castle or fortified city.*” BDB defined it as a “*fortification, fortress, fortified city, stronghold.*” All of Nineveh’s fortresses where the people would normally have sought refuge are portrayed as fig trees with their ripe fruit. To harvest the fruit, all one had to do was shake the tree and let it fall. This portrays how easily these fortified places would fall to the enemy. Those who fled for safety in these places would be consumed, i.e., either destroyed or taken captive.

*“After a winter with no fresh fruit, the first ripe fig is eagerly sought as a delicacy and falls readily into the mouth of the eater”* (Hailey, p. 267).

**Nahum 3:13** “**Behold, thy people in the midst of thee are women: the gates of thy land shall be set wide open unto thine enemies: the fire shall devour thy bars.**”

“Behold, thy people in the midst of thee are women; the gates of thy land are set wide open unto thine enemies: the fire hath devoured thy bars.” (ASV)

“Lo, thy people are women in thy midst, To thine enemies thoroughly opened Have been the gates of thy land, Consumed hath fire thy bars.” (YLT)

“Behold, your troops are women in your midst. The gates of your land are wide open to your enemies; fire has devoured your bars.” (ESV)

“**Behold, thy people in the midst of thee are women**” The word “**people**” probably refers to the defenders of Nineveh. The text refers to them as

being women, i.e., like women. It should be remembered that, in those times, most combat was close quarters, i.e., hand-to-hand, shield-to-shield. Each army would attempt to push its foe backwards. This would have taken a lot of strength, especially upper body strength. Thus, women were generally not warriors, since it is a well understood fact that, in most cases, they are much weaker in that area than men. Since women were not trained for combat, they could be easily defeated. This seems to be the gist of what is being said here. Because GOD has determined Nineveh's overthrow, its defeat will be like a male army's attacking a female army, the defeat would be easily accomplished.

**“the gates of thy land shall be set wide open unto thine enemies”** The walled cities of that time would often have large wooden gates. In times of crisis, these gates would be closed, and a very heavy wooden bar would be lowered to lock them. The picture presented is that the gates of Nineveh were wide open, thus leaving easy access for the invading enemy to pour into the city in order to plunder it. **How is it that these gates were wide open? “the fire shall devour thy bars”** The gates of Nineveh would be destroyed by fire, thus allowing easy access to the city. When considering this, one could say the gates of a city defended the city. It may then be assumed that buffer fortresses which would normally be used to defend a major city had been easily destroyed, thus opening the way for the invasion of Nineveh and her fall.

**Nahum 3:14 “Draw thee waters for the siege, fortify thy strong holds: go into clay, and tread the**

**morter, make strong the brickkiln.”**

“Draw thee water for the siege; strengthen thy fortresses; go into the clay, and tread the mortar; make strong the brickkiln.” (ASV)

“Waters of a siege draw for thyself, Strengthen thy fortresses, Enter into mire, and tread on clay, Make strong a brick-kiln.” (YLT)

“Draw water for the siege; strengthen your forts; tread the mortar; take hold of the brick mold!” (ESV)

One reminds himself here that the book of Nahum was written while Assyria (Nineveh) was still relatively strong. There was no indication at the time of its writing that Nineveh was about to fall. If this writer’s understanding is correct, then GOD is telling the people well before the armies of Babylon appeared on the horizon, that Babylon is coming, so they should do everything they can to prepare their defenses.

They were told to gather plenty of water, because there would be a siege. Water would need to be stored to put out fires the enemy might start. **How were they to fortify their city and strongholds?** Much of Nineveh was made out of clay bricks. These bricks were made by a process that included treading out the clay and other ingredients in order to blend them all together. The kilns would have been used to dry them and thus make them much stronger. This author watched an archaeological program recently where this kind of bricks were being unearthed at Nineveh, which looked like they had been made yesterday. Still strong and useable after being buried for over two thousand years. But, as the next verse shows, all of their efforts to protect themselves would be worthless.

**Nahum 3:15 “There shall the fire devour thee; the sword shall cut thee off, it shall eat thee up like the cankerworm: make thyself many as the cankerworm, make thyself many as the locusts.”**

“There shall the fire devour thee; the sword shall cut thee off; it shall devour thee like the canker-worm: make thyself many as the canker-worm; make thyself many as the locust.” (ASV)

“There consume thee doth a fire, Cut thee off doth a sword, It doth consume thee as a cankerworm! Make thyself heavy as the cankerworm, Make thyself heavy as the locust.” (YLT)

“There will the fire devour you; the sword will cut you off. It will devour you like the locust. Multiply yourselves like the locusts; multiply like the grasshopper!” (ESV)

*“It is said by ancient historians that as the siege drew toward the end, the king and his family withdrew into the palace and set it to fire, dying in the holocaust”* (Hailey, p. 268).

*“In verses 15-17 there are three terms for locusts or grasshoppers. The first yeleq, a species of winged locusts. The second is Arbeh, from rabah, to multiply. Thus ‘a multitude.’ The third term is gob, or gobay, which likewise means ‘grasshopper.’ ... ‘it is very difficult to determine whether these terms refer to different kinds of locusts or to different phases of development of the same insect’”* (Waldron, p. 63).

As indicated in the context, GOD challenged Nineveh to do everything it could to defend itself. But it would do the people no good, for — no matter how thick they made their walls, no matter how many troops they gathered — none of their preparations would save them. Their doom was sealed, because GOD had decreed it.

**Nahum 3:16 “Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of heaven: the cankerworm spoileth, and flieth away.”**

“Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of heaven: the canker-worm ravageth, and fleeth away.” (ASV)

“Multiply thy merchants above the stars of the heavens, The cankerworm hath stripped off, and doth flee away.” (YLT)

“You increased your merchants more than the stars of the heavens. The locust spreads its wings and flies away.” (ESV)

The idea of merchants seems to involve trade. Part of the riches of Nineveh would have come from its trade with other people. But when one includes the locusts in the picture, he sees all of these riches which had been gained as being stripped away. Like the literal locusts which left the land behind them barren, so would it be with Nineveh. Another idea here is that a merchant only goes where he believes he can make money. Under siege, Nineveh could purchase nothing, so there was no need to go there. Instead, they would have done business with the besiegers. As Roper stated, *“Their only loyalty was to their own pocketbooks”* (p. 275).

**Nahum 3:17 “Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges in the cold day, but when the sun ariseth they flee away, and their place is not known where they are.”**

“Thy princes are as the locusts, and thy marshals as the swarms of grasshoppers, which encamp in the hedges in the cold day, but when the sun ariseth they flee away, and their place is not known where they are.” (ASV)

“Thy crowned ones are as a locust, And thy princes as great grasshoppers, That encamp in hedges in a day of cold, The sun hath risen, and it doth flee away, And not known is its place where they are.” (YLT)

“Your princes are like grasshoppers, your scribes like clouds of locusts settling on the fences in a day of cold — when the sun rises, they fly away; no one knows where they are.” (ESV)

The meanings of the words **“crowned”** and **“captains”** are not certain. The word **“Crowned”** is translated as *“princes”* in the ASV and ESV. The word **“captains”** is translated *“marshals”* in the ASV, *“princes”* in the YLT, and *“scribes”* in the ESV. It appears to this author that these words refer to high-ranking officials or advisors, although they could be referring to military positions. Zodhiates thought that **“crowned”** referred to *“a dedicated courtier or guardsman serving the king”* (p. 629). He also thought that **“captains”** refers to *“a military commander”* (p. 407). The point being made is that, like the merchants, and like locusts who settle in for the night, when the morning sunlight warms their wings, they fly away, never to be seen again. If this is referring to either group, officials or army, it is a picture of desertion where all is viewed as being lost. There is no loyalty. There is also the possibility that this can be viewed as the slaughter of all who had at one time supported Nineveh.

[The kingdom of the king of Assyria is scattered, and no one at all grieves](#) (3:18-19)

**Nahum. 3:18 “Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria: thy nobles shall dwell in the dust: thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth them.”**

“Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria; thy nobles are at rest; thy people are scattered upon the mountains, and there is none to gather them.” (ASV)

“Slumbered have thy friends, king of Asshur, Rest do thine honourable ones, Scattered have been thy people on the mountains, And there is none gathering.” (YLT)

“Your shepherds are asleep, O king of Assyria; your nobles slumber. Your people are scattered on the mountains with none to gather them.”(ESV)

The word **“shepherds”** comes from **raw-aw’**, which Strong defined as *“to tend a (flock), i.e., pasture it.”* BDB defined it as *“to pasture, tend, graze, feed.”* Baker/Carpenter said it is *“a verb meaning to feed, to tend, to be a shepherd. It means in general to care for, to protect, to graze, to feed flocks and herds”* (p. 1065). Nineveh’s shepherds, i.e., those who were supposed to guide, care for and protect it had failed. Instead of leading the people correctly as the king in the book of Jonah did to repentance and righteousness, they led them into immorality, idolatry and viciousness. Instead of being watchful for their well being, they slumbered and slept. They were like the guard on the tower who could have seen and warned the people of imminent danger but was asleep at his post. They had not built their house around the Lord’s commandments and statutes; therefore, they were overrun by the enemy.

**“Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain”** (Psalm 127:1).

**“O king of Assyria: thy nobles shall dwell in the dust”** The word **“dwell”** is from **shaw-kan’**, which Strong defined as *“the idea of lodging...to reside or permanently stay.”* BDB defined it as *“to settle down, abide, dwell, tabernacle, reside.”* Considering the context, the added words *“in the dust,”* convey the idea of permanently residing, i.e., buried. They have

all been killed.

**“thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth them”** The people who had been gathered by the king into a great and powerful people are now scattered on the mountains. Go back to the concept of **“shepherds”** earlier in the verse. Physical sheep have to have constant care. They have to be guided to food and water. They have to be kept together, and they cannot protect themselves. If they do not have a shepherd to care for them, a shepherd who is willing to give his life to protect them, they will soon wander to the four corners. Being scattered, they become easy prey for the wolves, pumas, et cetera. They soon lose their lives. This is the picture drawn of the people of Nineveh whose leaders had abandoned their well being, who — instead of leading them to fresh life-giving water — led them to dead and poisoned pools. Instead of leading them to the lush grasses of righteousness, they led them to fields of human corruption. The result is the death of a people, the death of a nation.

There is another thought here based upon the imagery of locusts and grasshoppers in verse seventeen. This is the imagery of the nobles and officers' fleeing when the armies of Babylon and its allies attacked, thus, leaving the city of Nineveh helpless in the face of its foes. Yet, this writer believes that though some may have fled, the basic imagery is of the death of all of these leaders.

There is something important to consider here from the pen of Waldron.

*“The history of nations shows that when a mighty empire falls, it is because of weakness within, a decay of strength, courage, and moral fiber. Because of the self-centeredness and the effeminacy of the culture, Assyria did not have the*

*strength to survive*" (p. 68).

Waldron was right, and the history books show the truth of his words. **The warning:** "America, your days are numbered, as is seen by the increasing decline of morality and the attacks growing against the separation of the roles of the sexes. The moral fiber is being stripped away and being replaced by compromising leaders who, like the nobles and leaders of Nineveh, care little about what is right and best for its people."

**Nahum 3:19** "There is **no healing of thy bruise; thy wound is grievous: all that hear the bruit of thee shall clap the hands over thee: for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?"**

"There is no assuaging of thy hurt: thy wound is grievous: all that hear the report of thee clap their hands over thee; for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?" (ASV)

"There is no weakening of thy destruction, Grievous is thy smiting, All hearing thy fame have clapped the hand at thee, For over whom did not thy wickedness pass continually?" (YLT)

"There is no easing your hurt; your wound is grievous. All who hear the news about you clap their hands over you. For upon whom has not come your unceasing evil?" (ESV)

**"no healing of thy bruise"** The word **"healing"** comes from **kay-haw'**, which Strong defined as *"a weakening; figuratively (alleviation), i.e., cure."* BDB defined this word as *"a quenching, dulling, lessening, healing, alleviation."* Baker/Carpenter defined it as *"a feminine noun indicating healing, relief. It has the sense of let up or partial cessation"* (p. 496). The

word **“bruise”** comes from **(sheh’-ber) shay’-ber**, which Strong defined as *“a fracture, figuratively ruin; specifically a solution.”* BDB defined it as *“breaking, fracture, crushing, breach, crash, ruin, shattering.”* Baker/Carpenter defined it as *“a masculine noun meaning destruction, ruin, affliction, fracture, solution of a dream, breach”* (p. 1097). The idea is that there is not going to be any relief, not even temporarily, for the fractured nation. The bone has been broken beyond repair. It has been crushed, and it needs to be amputated. GOD is saying that Nineveh must be amputated from the nations of the world.

**“all that hear the bruit of thee shall clap the hands over thee”** The word **“bruit”** is an old English word which Webster’s 1828 dictionary defined as *“report; rumor; fame...to report, to noise abroad”* (Electronic edition). When the report of Nineveh’s fall and destruction is spread far and wide, the people of all the nations **“shall clap the hands over thee.”** The picture is of a despised enemy which was so evil, so abusive, that everyone rejoiced when it was destroyed. The word **“clap”** comes from **taw-kah’**. Strong defined this word as *“to clatter, i.e., slap (the hands together), clang (an instrument)...blow (a trumpet).”* The point is that there is going to be a massive celebration. No one is going to mourn over Nineveh’s fall. **Why?**

**“for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?”** The word **“wickedness”** comes from **(rah) raw-aw’**, which Strong defined as *“bad or evil...affliction.”* BDB defined it as *“bad, evil...evil, distress, misery, injury, calamity...evil (ethical).”* Baker/Carpenter gave a rather lengthy definition which shows the extent of their evil.

*“An adjective meaning bad, evil. The basic meaning of this word displays ten or more various shades of the meaning of evil according to its contextual usage. It means bad in a moral sense and is used to describe, along with good, the entire spectrum of good and evil; hence, it depicts evil in an absolute, negative sense”* (p. 1062; The entire discussion of this word by Baker/Carpenter is recommended.)

The evil, injury and misery that Nineveh exerted upon all its neighbors was so great that all would rejoice over her fall. None would mourn Nineveh’s destruction.

*“Nahum is one of only two books in the Old Testament to end with a question — the other is the book of Jonah — and both books are about Nineveh”* (Roper, p. 276).

*“...what a way to have lived that when the end comes there would be universal rejoicing”* (Hailey, p. 270).

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