

Nahum

1 ¹This book is the vision* of Nahum from Elkosh. This is the sad message about the city of Nineveh.^a

The Lord Is Angry at Nineveh

- 2** The LORD is a jealous God.
The LORD punishes the guilty,
and he is very angry.
The LORD punishes his enemies,
and he stays angry with them.
- 3** The LORD is patient,
but he is also very powerful!
The LORD will punish the guilty;
he will not let them go free.
He will use whirlwinds and storms to
show his power.
People walk on the dusty ground,
but he walks on the clouds.
- 4** He will speak harshly to the sea,
and it will become dry.
He will dry up all the rivers.
The rich lands of Bashan and Carmel
become dry and dead.
The flowers in Lebanon fade away.
- 5** The Lord will come,
and the mountains will shake
and the hills will melt away.
He will come,
and the earth will shake with fear.
The earth and everyone on it
will shake with fear.
- 6** No one can stand against his great anger.
No one can endure his terrible anger.
His anger will burn like fire.
The rocks will shatter when he comes.
- 7** The LORD is good.
He is a safe place to go to in times of
trouble.
He takes care of those who trust him.
- 8** But he will completely destroy his
enemies.
He will wash them away like a flood
and chase them into the darkness.
- 9** Why are you making plans against the
LORD?
He will bring complete destruction,
so you will not cause trouble again.
- 10** You will be destroyed completely
like thornbushes burning under a pot.
You will be destroyed
like dry weeds that burn quickly.

- 11** Someone from Nineveh is making evil
plans against the LORD.
That advisor is a worthless
troublemaker.
- 12** This is what the LORD said:
“The people of Assyria are at full strength.
They have many soldiers,
but they will all be cut down.
They will all be finished.
My people, I made you suffer,
but I will make you suffer no more.”
- 13** Now I will set you free from the power of
Assyria.
I will take the yoke* off your neck
and tear away the chains holding you.”
- 14** King of Assyria, the LORD gave this
command about you:
“You will not have any descendants to
wear your name.
I will destroy your carved idols*
and metal statues that are in the temple
of your gods.
I am preparing your grave,
because your end is coming soon!^b”
- 15** Judah, look!
There, coming over the mountains, is a
messenger bringing good news!
He says there is peace.
Judah, celebrate your special festivals
and do what you promised.
Those worthless troublemakers will not
come through and attack you again.
They have all been destroyed.

Nineveh Will Be Destroyed

- 2** ¹An enemy is coming to attack you,
so guard the strong places of your city.
Watch the road.
Get ready for war.
Prepare for battle!
- 2** Yes, the LORD changed Jacob's* pride.
He made it like Israel's pride.
The enemy destroyed them
and ruined their grapevines.
- 3** The shields of his soldiers are red.
Their uniforms are bright red.
Their chariots* are shining like flames of
fire

^a**1:1** *Nineveh* The capital city of the country of Assyria. Assyria destroyed Israel in 722–721 B.C.

^b**1:14** *because your end is coming soon* Or “you are not important” or “you are so hated.”

- and are lined up for battle.
 Their horses are ready to go.
- 4 The chariots race wildly through the streets
 and rush back and forth through the square.
 They look like burning torches,
 like lightning flashing from place to place!
- 5 The enemy calls for his best soldiers.
 They stumble as they rush ahead.
 They run to the wall
 and set up their shield over the battering ram.
- 6 But the gates by the rivers are open,
 and the enemy comes flooding in and destroys the king's palace.
- 7 The enemy takes away the queen,
 and her slave girls moan sadly like doves.
 They beat their breasts to show their sadness.
- 8 Nineveh is like a pool whose water is draining away.
 People yell, "Stop! Stop running away!"
 But it does not do any good.
- 9 Take the silver!
 Take the gold!
 There are many things to take.
 There are many treasures.
- 10 Now Nineveh is empty.
 Everything is stolen.
 The city is ruined.
 People have lost their courage,
 their hearts are melting with fear,
 their knees are knocking together,
 their bodies are shaking,
 and their faces are pale from fear.
- 11 Where is the lion's cave (*Nineveh*) now?
 The male and female lions lived there.
 Their babies were not afraid.
- 12 The lion (*king of Nineveh*) killed people to feed his cubs and lionesses.
 He filled his cave with men's bodies.
 He filled his cave with women he had killed.
- 13 The LORD All-Powerful says,
 "I am against you, Nineveh.
 I will burn your chariots
 and kill your 'young lions' in battle.
 You will not hunt anyone on earth again.
 People will never again hear bad news from your messengers."

Bad News for Nineveh

3 It will be very bad for that city of murderers.
 Nineveh is a city full of lies.
 It is filled with things taken from other countries.

- It is filled with plenty of people that it hunted and killed.
- 2 You can hear the sounds of whips and the noise of wheels.
 You can hear horses galloping and chariots* bouncing along!
- 3 Soldiers on horses are attacking,
 their swords are shining,
 their spears are gleaming!
 There are many dead people.
 Dead bodies are piled up—too many bodies to count.
 People are tripping over the dead bodies.
- 4 All this happened because of Nineveh.
 Nineveh is like a prostitute who could never get enough.
 She wanted more and more.
 She sold herself to many nations,
 and she used her magic to make them her slaves.
- 5 The LORD All-Powerful says,
 "I am against you, Nineveh.
 I will pull your dress^a up over your face.
 I will let the nations see your naked body.
 The kingdoms will see your shame.
- 6 I will throw dirty things on you and treat you in a hateful way.
 People will look at you and laugh.
- 7 Everyone who sees you will be shocked.
 They will say, 'Nineveh is destroyed.
 Who will cry for her?'
 I know I cannot find anyone to comfort you, Nineveh."

⁸Nineveh, are you better than Thebes^b on the Nile River? Thebes also had water all around her to protect herself from enemies. She used that water like a wall too. ⁹Ethiopia and Egypt made Thebes strong. Libya and the Sudan supported her, ¹⁰but Thebes was defeated. Her people were taken away as prisoners to a foreign country. Soldiers beat her small children to death at every street corner. They threw lots* to see who got to keep the important people as slaves. They put chains on all the important men of Thebes.

¹¹So, Nineveh, you will also fall like a drunk. You will try to hide. You will look for a safe place away from the enemy. ¹²But Nineveh, all your strong places will be like fig trees. When new figs become ripe, people come and shake the tree. The figs fall into their mouths. They eat them, and the figs are gone.

¹³Nineveh, your people are all like women—and the enemy soldiers are ready to take them. The gates of your land are open

^a3:5 *pull your dress* This is a wordplay in Hebrew. The Hebrew word also means "to destroy a country and take its people away as prisoners to other nations."

^b3:8 *Thebes* A great city in Egypt. It was destroyed in 663 B.C. by the Assyrian army.

wide for your enemies to come in. Fire has destroyed the wooden bars across the gates.

¹⁴Get water and store it inside your city, because the enemy soldiers will surround your city. Make your defenses strong! Get clay to make more bricks and mix the mortar. Get the molds for making bricks. ¹⁵You can do all these things, but the fire will still destroy you completely. And the sword will kill you. Your land will look like a swarm of grasshoppers came and ate everything.

Nineveh, you grew and grew. You became like a swarm of grasshoppers. You were like a swarm of locusts. ¹⁶You have many traders who go places and buy things. They are as many as the stars in the sky. They are like

locusts that come and eat until everything is gone and then leave. ¹⁷And your government officials are also like locusts that settle on a stone wall on a cold day. But when the sun comes up, the rocks become warm, and the locusts all fly away. And no one knows where.

¹⁸King of Assyria, your shepherds fell asleep. These powerful men are sleeping. And now your sheep have wandered away on the mountains. There is no one to bring them back. ¹⁹Nineveh, you have been hurt badly, and nothing can heal your wound. Everyone who hears the news of your destruction claps their hands. They are all happy, because they all felt the pain you caused again and again.

Habakkuk

Habakkuk Complains to God

1 This is the message that was given to Habakkuk the prophet.*

²LORD, I continue to ask for help. When will you listen to me? I cried to you about the violence, but you did nothing! ³People are stealing things and hurting others. They are arguing and fighting. Why do you make me look at these terrible things? ⁴The law is weak and not fair to people. Evil people win their fights against good people. So the law is no longer fair, and justice does not win anymore.

The Lord Answers Habakkuk

⁵Look at the other nations! Watch them, and you will be amazed. I will do something in your lifetime that will amaze you. You would not believe it even if you were told about it. ⁶I will make the Babylonians^a a strong nation. They are cruel and powerful fighters. They will march across the earth. They will take houses and cities that don't belong to them. ⁷The Babylonians will scare the other people. They will do what they want to do and go where they want to go. ⁸Their horses will be faster than leopards and more dangerous than wolves at sunset. Their horse soldiers will come from faraway places. They will attack their enemies quickly, like a hungry eagle swooping down from the sky. ⁹The one thing they all want to do is fight. Their armies will march fast like the wind in the desert. And the Babylonian soldiers will take many prisoners—as many as the grains of sand.

^a**1:6** *Babylonians* Literally, “Chaldeans,” a tribe of Arameans who gained control in Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar was from this tribe.

¹⁰“The Babylonian soldiers will laugh at the kings of other nations. Foreign rulers will be like jokes to them. The Babylonian soldiers will laugh at the cities with tall, strong walls. They will simply build dirt roads up to the top of the walls and easily defeat the cities. ¹¹Then they will leave like the wind and go on to fight against other places. The only thing the Babylonians worship is their own strength.”

Habakkuk's Second Complaint

¹² LORD, you are the one who lives forever! You are my holy God who never dies!^b

LORD, you created the Babylonians to do what must be done.

Our Rock,* you created them to punish people.

¹³ Your eyes are too good to look at evil. You cannot stand to see people doing wrong.

So why do you permit such evil?

How can you watch while the wicked destroy people who are so much better?

¹⁴ You made people like fish in the sea.

They are like little sea animals without a leader.

¹⁵ The enemy catches all of them with hooks and nets.

The enemy catches them in his net and drags them in, and the enemy is very happy with what he caught.

^b**1:12** LORD, you are ... never dies Or “LORD, you have been my holy God forever! Surely we will not die.”

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