

Nachum (Nahum) – Part 2

Once again, we run into the difference between the Hebrew Bible and the English Bible on where to break the verses into chapters.

Y'hudah Will Be Safe

2^{1(1:15)} Look! On the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, proclaiming shalom. Keep your festivals, Y'hudah, fulfill your vows; for B'liya'al will never pass through you again; he has been completely destroyed.

This verse describes the messenger *who brings* the **good news** of **Assyria's** destruction and the resulting **peace** in **Y'hudah**. **Sha'ul** quotes similar words in Romans 10:15.

2⁽¹⁾ A destroyer has risen in front of your face; guard the ramparts, keep watch on the road, brace yourselves, marshal all your strength.

The first ten verses describe the **Babylonian** siege of **Nineveh**. The frenzied inhabitants of the city are mockingly told to prepare for battle with four commands in the following ten verses: **"Man the fort!"** **"Watch the road!"** **"Strengthen your flanks!"** and **"Fortify your power mightily."**

3⁽²⁾ For Adonai is restoring the pride of Ya'akov, along with the pride of Isra'el; because plunderers have plundered them and ravaged their vines.

Here, **Nachum** gives one reason for the fall of **Nineveh**: **God** had used the **Assyrians** as **His** scourge of discipline on unfaithful **Y'hudah**, but this scourge would no longer be needed because **the Lord is restoring the majesty of Ya'akov**.

Details of the Fall

4⁽³⁾ The shields of [Ninveh's] warriors are [dyed] red; the soldiers are wearing scarlet. The steel of the chariots flashes like fire as they prepare for battle. The cypress [spears] are poisoned. 5⁽⁴⁾ The chariots rush madly about in the streets, jostling each other in the open places; their appearance is like torches, they run here and there like lightning. 6⁽⁵⁾ [The king of Ninveh] assigns His officers; they stumble as they march; they hurry to its wall and set up shields to protect the battering ram. 7⁽⁶⁾ The gates of the rivers are opened, and the palace melts away.

The soldiers of **Babylon** are pictured in verses 3 and 4, clad in their favorite colors: the **Babylonians** in **red**, and their allies, the **Medes**, in their **scarlet** tunics. (The **Assyrians'** military color was **blue**.) The stumbling officers of verse 5 have been understood as being the **Assyrian** defenders, but the context points rather to the **Babylonian** invaders. The **rivers** pour into the city, undermining the foundations so that **the palace is dissolved**.

08⁽⁷⁾ Its mistress is stripped and carried away; her handmaids moan, they sound like doves, as they beat their breasts. 9⁽⁸⁾ Ninveh is like a pool whose water ebbs away. "Stop! Stop!" But none of it goes back. 10⁽⁹⁾ Plunder the silver! Plunder the gold! There is no end to the treasure, weighed down with precious things. 11⁽¹⁰⁾ She is void, vacant; she is made bare. Hearts are melting, knees are knocking; every stomach is churning, every face is drained of color.

The Queen (mistress) is **stripped and carried away**. The people flee from the city, disregarding the order to **"Stop!"** The **wealth** and **treasure** of **Nineveh** are plundered. The city is now desolate. Fear reigns on every face.

Atrocities Will Cease

12(11) What has become of the lion's den, the cave where the young lions fed, where lion and lioness walked with their cubs, and no one made them afraid? 13(12) The lion would tear up food for His cubs and strangle prey for His lionesses; he used to fill His caves with prey, His lairs with torn flesh.

The **lion** was a symbol of kingship in the ancient **Near East** (cf. Genesis.49:9); the **Assyrian** kings exhibited ferocity in their attacks on and "devouring" of other lands and called themselves lions. Reliefs on palace walls depicted lions being hunted by the **Assyrian rulers**. During the time of **Assyrian** might, no other nation dared to, or could, attack **Nineveh**.

14(13) "I am against you," says Adonai-Tzva'ot. "Her chariots I will send up in smoke, the sword will consume your lion cubs, I will destroy your prey from the earth, and your envoys' voices will be heard no more."¹

Nachum closes the fourth major portion of the book (vv. 1–13) by quoting **God's** proclamation of judgment against **Nineveh**. The city will fall because this is the will of the **Lord**. This is a striking contrast to the swift chariots of the conquering coalition (Nachum. 2:3–4). The devouring pride of **lions** (vv. 11–12) shall now be devoured by the enemy. The end of the **Assyrian** messengers brings about the messenger of peace coming to **Yehudah** (1:15).

Nachum 2 emphasizes vigilance and preparedness amid forthcoming judgment. Use this as a prompt to conduct a family emergency preparedness plan. Discuss and identify potential challenges your family could face, be it financial, health-related, or even natural disasters. Plan together to address these issues - whether it's creating a budget, emergency kits, or even family health check routines. This proactive approach not only readies your family for unforeseen circumstances but also strengthens your bond as you work together towards readiness, reflecting the foresight embodied in Nachum. This is especially helpful in dealing with the weather conditions where you are located.

In our next post, we will conclude our study of the **Prophecy of Nachum (Nahum)**.

¹ Nachum 2:1-14