

4/24/16

Nahum 2

Chapter two is the description of the doom or judgment of Nineveh, describing the actual battle of God's judgment over the Assyrians.

1. This not a mere prophesy, but rather actual battle as it is taking place.

2. Peter tell us that the prophets revealed the mind and will of God by the Spirit of God, not their own abilities.

* "And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private **interpretation**, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit." 2Pet. 1:19-21

* Nahum's division.

- I. The proclamation of the destruction of Nineveh. Nah. 1
- II. The description of the destruction of Nineveh. Nah. 2
- III. The vindication of the destruction of Nineveh. Nah. 3

2:1-7 The present destruction of Nineveh though it was still in the future.

2:1-2 The call to Nineveh to prepare for war.

- 1) God reveals the nameless conquering foe, "He who scatters has come up before your face." vs. 1a
* The invading armies were of Cyaxares of Medo and Nabopolasear of Babylon, with the Scythians.
- 2) Nahum in mockery calls the Assyrians to make all preparation against their enemy, but to no avail through five basic things. vs. 1b-e
 - a) To position the fighting men, "Man the fort!" vs. 11b
 - b) To commission their reconasins, "Watch the road!" vs. 1c
 - c) To reenforce the rear, perhaps supplies etc, "Strengthen *your* flanks!" vs. 1d
 - d) To bulk up on their defences, "Fortify *your* power mightily." vs. 1e
* God is saying get ready to fight the fight of your life!

2:2 The sovereign purposes of God.

- 1) God would restore the nation of Israel. vs. 2a
 - a) The covenant God "Yahweh" would restore the excellence of Jacob Like the excellence of Israel.
 - b) This would be after the Babylonian captivity in 536 B.C. through the decree of Cyrus. 2Chron. 36:22-23
- 2) Even though God had used Assyria to chasten His own people, "the emptiers have emptied them out And ruined their vine branches" identifies Assyria. vs. 2b

* Assyria was the rod of His anger. Is. 10:5

2:3-4 The armies invade the city of Nineveh.

- 1) The description of the shields of his mighty men said to be made red. vs. 3a
 - a) Some believe they were of polished copper and reflected the sun.
 - b) The multitudes of infantry men, a sea of red.
- 2) The valiant men *are* in scarlet. vs. 3b

* Scarlet “tala”, a colorful unified army ready for battle.
- 3) The chariots *come* with flaming torches in the day of his preparation. vs. 3c
- 4) And the spears are brandished. vs. 3d

* Brandished “ra’ al” made to quiver or shake to intimidate the enemy.
- 5) The chariots rage in the streets, They jostle one another in the broad roads.”. vs. 4a-b
 - a) Some have tried to identify the automobile age prophetically, but it is so far fetched, there is nothing in the text remotely related to the car.
 - b) The reference to jostling one another simply refers to the chariots scrimishing around in battle.
 - c) Nahum mentions the broad roads of Nineveh, “Ashurbanipal’s grandfather, Sennacherib, was the one who improved the streets of Nineveh. In the “Bellino cylinder” he boasts, “I [Sennacherib] widened its [Nineveh’s] squares, made

bright the avenues and streets and caused them to shine like the day.” (1:61)”

- 6) They seem like torches, they run like lightning. vs. 4c-d

* This refers to their speed, like lightning.

2:5-7 The realization of their defeat.

2:5 The desperation of the Assyrians at the wall of defense.

- 1) He remembers his nobles. vs. 5a

* This could refer to the commanding general making the urgent to mobilize his officers.
- 2) They stumble in their walk. vs. 5b

* In their hurry to respond they stumble on the way.
- 3) They make haste to her walls, And the defense is prepared. vs. 5c-d

* The enemy was where perhaps a mantelet was set up, a portable roof pushed up against the city wall to protect sappers working on the at the battering rams, from objects to be hurled down from the wall.

2:6 The prophetic destruction of the city.

- 1) The gates of the river are opened. vs. 6a
 - a) The River Khoser had sluices and gates for Nineveh’s moats and irrigation, they were used to flood the city.
 - b) The flooding of the Tigris River also washed away about two miles of the wall

along the river bank that rose to undermine the wall.

- 2) And the palace is dissolved. vs. 6b
 - a) The “palace” could include the temple of their gods.
 - b) God uses nature at His will and for His purposes. Nah. 1:4-6

2:7 Their prophetic defeat of the city.

- 1) God had declared it so, “It is decreed: She shall be led away captive, She shall be brought up.” vs. 7a-b
 - a) The Assyrians would never see their city or homes.
 - b) The Assyrians would be led to captivity, as they had led so many.
- 2) And her maidservants shall lead *her* as with the voice of doves, Beating their breasts. vs. 7c-d
 - a) The women mourn and lament in the judgment that had befallen them.
 - b) Afflicting themselves for their humiliating condition.

2:8-13 The past glory of Ninevah in contrast to her future desolation.

2:8 The people of Nineveh benefitted from her rivers that now became their calateral damage.

- 1) Though Nineveh of old *was* like a pool of water. vs. 8a

- a) The Tigris and the Khoser were her life, having access for their crops and drink in the past.
 - b) The same rivers were their protection in the past.
- 2) Now they flee away, “Halt! Halt!” *they cry*”. vs. 8b-d
 - a) The cry for warriors not to not flee was sounded out, to hold their ground.
 - b) In panic of their obvious defeat they did not obey, but they continued to flee.

2:9 The wealth of the city of Nineveh is given over to the enemy.

- 1) God commanded and gave permission to take the spoils of war, “Take spoil of silver! Take spoil of gold!” vs. 9a-b
 - * Nineveh was said to be the “Fort Knox” of the mid-seventh century B.C. Mesopotamia.
- 2) The amount of wealth was immense, “*There is* no end of treasure, Or wealth of every desirable prize.” vs. 9c-e
 - * The Assyrians in their sacking of cities made list of the booty.
 - a) The Babylonian Chronicles described the spoils taken from Nineveh by the Babylonians and the Medes in these terms: “Great quantities of spoil from the city, beyond counting, they carried off” (Luckenbill 1989, 2:420, ¶ 1178).
 - b) One of the excavators of Nineveh has commented that very little gold and

silver has been found in the ruins of the city. The Medes and Babylonians, “cleaned house” after they conquered the city, just as Nahum predicted.

- c) Diodorus, a Greek historian from Sicily, writing in the first century BC, described the final hours of the king of Nineveh, Sardanapallus, in these words: “In order that he might not fall into the hands of the enemy, he built an enormous pyre in his palace, heaped upon it all his gold and silver as well as every article of the royal wardrobe, and then...he consigned [his concubines and eunuchs] and himself and his palace to the flame.” (Book 2. 27:2; Old father 1998:1:441). *This article was first published in the Fall 2003 issue of **Bible and Spade**.*

2:10 The feeble and suffering of the people.

- 1) She is empty, desolate, and waste! vs. 10a
 - a) The three words refer to empty city, void and devastated.
 - b) The implication is due to the incredible amount of casualties in the battle.
- 2) The heart melts, and the knees shake. vs. 10b-c
 - a) These were fierce warriors and fearless people whose heart melted in fear.
 - b) Their fear caused their knees to shake together, like Beshazzar. Dan. 5:6
- 3) Much pain *is* in every side. vs. 10d

* Terror and anguish!

- 4) And all their faces are drained of color. vs. 10e
 - a) The realization of their defeat made them realize their doom.
 - b) All the blood in their faces drained away in the fearful reality.

2:11-12 The city of Ninevah once was a lion, but now the prey.

- 1) The prophet in irony and mockery asked a rhetorical question, “Where is the dwelling of the lions, and the feeding place of the young lions, where the lion walked, the lioness and lion’s cub, and no one made them afraid?” vs. 11

* The only answer is it no longer exists, God has destroyed it!
- a) According to Ashurbanipal’s annals, at the beginning of his reign, two deities, Adad and Ea, blessed the land of Assyria with plenty of rain. This rain caused the forests to thrive and the reeds in the marshes to flourish. This blessing resulted in a population explosion among the lions. They exerted their influence in the hills and on the plain by attacking herds of cattle, flocks of sheep and people. Many were killed (Luckenbill 1989, 2:363, ¶ 935). Ashurbanipal II, following in the footsteps of his predecessors, took charge of the lion hunts in order to control the lion

population (Luckenbill 1989, 2:392, ¶ 1025).

- b) Ashurbanipal also engaged in lion hunting as a sport. Apparently lions were captured alive and put in cages in the king's garden in Nineveh and used for staged lion hunts (Weissert 1997:339–58). One relief that was found in Ashurbanipal's palace at Nineveh, apparently from a second floor, had three panels depicting a lion hunt. On the top panel, a lion is released from a cage and Ashurbanipal is shooting him with arrows. The central panel is interesting because it shows the bravery of the king. On the right side of the panel, soldiers are distracting a lion. On the left side, Ashurbanipal sneaks up and grabs the lion by the tail as he rears to his hind legs. The inscription above says, "I, Ashurbanipal, king of the universe, king of Assyria, in my lordly sport, I seized a lion of the plain by his tail and at the command of Urta, Nergal, the gods, my allies, I smashed his skull with the club of my hand (Luckenbill 1989, 2:391, ¶ 1023)". This article was first published in the Fall 2003 issue of [*Bible and Spade*](#).

- 2) Nahum describes the wealth and abundance of Nineveh, "The lion tore in pieces enough for his cubs, Killed for his lionesses, Filled his caves with prey, And his dens with flesh." vs. [12](#)

- a) He sees Nineveh as a lions' den that has been destroyed and the lions are gone. vs. [10](#)
- b) The "prey" is the booty that the Assyrians have taken from all the cities they conquered in recent times.

2:13 God is her true enemy! Ezk. 37-39

- 1) God the Captian of the armies of heaven was fighting and defeating Nineveh, "Behold, I *am* against you," says the LORD of hosts." vs. [13a-c](#)
- 2) God was the one defeating and destroying her worriers, "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 be heard no more." vs. [13d-g](#)
- a) The book of Nahum sets forth an ironic reversal of the Assyrian usage of the lion motif. Gordon Johnston has observed.
- b) The extended lion metaphor in Nahum 2:11–13 includes the two major varieties of the Neo-Assyrian lion motif: the depiction of the Assyrian king and his warriors as mighty lions, and the royal lion hunt theme. While the Assyrians kept these two motifs separate, Nahum dovetailed the two, but in doing so he also reversed their original significance. While the Assyrian warriors loved to depict themselves as mighty lions hunting their prey, Nahum pictured them

as lions that would be hunted down. The Assyrian kings also boasted that they were mighty hunters in royal lion hunts; Nahum pictured them as the lions being hunted in the lion hunt. By these reversals Nahum created an unexpected twist on Assyrian usage. According to Nahum the Assyrians were like lions, to be sure; however, not in the way that they depicted themselves; rather than being like lions on the prowl for prey, the hunters would become the hunted! (2001:304). *This article was first published in the Fall 2003 issue of [Bible and Spade](#).*