
NAHUM 2: 1 He who dashes in pieces has come up against you. Keep the fortress! Watch the way! Strengthen your waist! Fortify your power mightily!

Nineveh is now called upon to prepare for the approach of her enemies, the instruments of Jehovah's vengeance, Nah 2:1; and the military array and muster, the very arms and dress, of the Medes and Babylonians in the reigns of Cyaxares and Nabopolassar; their rapid approach to the city; the process of the siege, and the inundation of the river; the capture of the place; the captivity, lamentation, and flight of the inhabitants; the sacking of this immense, wealthy, and exceedingly populous city; and the consequent desolation and terror, are all described in the pathetic, vivid, and sublime imagery of Hebrew poetry, Nah 2:2-10. This description is succeeded by a very beautiful and expressive allegory, Nah 2:11-12; which is immediately explained, and applied to the city of Nineveh, Nah 2:13. It is thought by some commentators that the metropolitan city of the Assyrian empire is also intended by the tender and beautiful simile, in the seventh verse, of a great princess led captive, with her maids of honor attending her, bewailing her and their own condition, by beating their breasts, and by other expressions of sorrow.

Verse 1

He that dasheth in pieces - Or scattereth. The Chaldeans and Medes.

Keep the munition - Guard the fenced places. From this to the end of the fifth verse, the preparations made at Nineveh to repel their enemies are described. The description is exceedingly picturesque.

Watch the way - By which the enemy is most likely to approach.

Make thy loins strong - Take courage.

Fortify thy power - Muster thy troops; call in all thy allies.

NAHUM 2: 2 For the LORD restores the excellency of Jacob, as the excellency of Israel; for the destroyers have destroyed them, and ruined their vine branches.

Verse 2

For the Lord hath turned away - Bishop Newcome reads, for the Lord restoreth, by a slight alteration in the text. I do not see that we gain much by this. The Lord has been opposed to Jacob, and the enemy has prevailed against him.

Emptied them out - Brought them from their own land into captivity. This was the emptying!

NAHUM 2: 3 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 pine spears are brandished.

Verse 3

The shield of his mighty men is made red - These things may refer to the war-like preparations made by the Ninevites: they had red shields, and scarlet or purple clothing; their chariots were finely decorated, and proceeded with amazing rapidity.

The fir trees shall be terribly shaken - This may refer to the darts, arrows, and javelins, flung with destructive power.

NAHUM 2: 4 The chariots rage in the streets. They rush back and forth in the broad ways. Their appearance is like torches. They run like the lightnings.

Verse 4

The chariots shall rage - Those of the besiegers and the besieged, meeting in the streets, producing universal confusion and carnage.

NAHUM 2: 5 He summons his picked troops. They stumble on their way. They dash to its wall, and the protective shield is put in place.

Verse 5

He shall recount his worthies - Muster up his most renowned warriors and heroes.

Shall make haste to the wall - Where they see the enemies making their most powerful attacks, in order to get possession of the city.

NAHUM 2: 6 The gates of the rivers are opened, and the palace is dissolved.

Verse 6

The gates of the rivers shall be opened - I have already referred to this, see the note on Nah 1:8; but it will be necessary to be more particular. The account given by Diodorus Siculus, lib. ii., is very surprising. He begins thus: Ην δ' αὐτῷ λόγιον παραδεδομένον ἐκ προγόνων, κ.τ.λ. - "There was a prophecy received from their forefathers, that Nineveh should not be taken till the river first became an enemy to the city. It happened in the third year of the siege, that the Euphrates [query, Tigris] being swollen with continued rains, overflowed part of the city, and threw down twenty stadia of the wall. The king then imagining that the oracle was accomplished, and that the river was now manifestly become an enemy to the city, casting aside all hope of safety, and lest he should fall into the hands of the enemy, built a large funeral pyre in the palace, (ἐν τοῖς βασιλείοις), and having collected all his gold and silver and royal vestments, together with his concubines and eunuchs, placed himself with them in a little apartment built in the pyre; burnt them, himself, and the palace together. When the death of the king (Sardanapalus) was announced by certain deserters, the enemy entered in by the breach which the waters had made, and took the city." Thus the prophecy

of Nahum was literally fulfilled: "the gates of the river were opened, and the palace dissolved," i.e., burnt.

NAHUM 2: 7 It is decreed: she is uncovered, she is carried away; and her handmaids moan as with the voice of doves, beating on their breasts.

Verse 7

And Huzzab shall be led away captive - Perhaps Huzzab means the queen of Nineveh, who had escaped the burning mentioned above by Diodorus. As there is no account of the queen being burnt, but only of the king, the concubines, and the eunuchs, we may, therefore, naturally conclude that the queen escaped; and is represented here as brought up and delivered to the conqueror; her maids at the same time bewailing her lot. Some think Huzzab signifies Nineveh itself.

NAHUM 2: 8 But Nineveh has been from of old like a pool of water, yet they flee away. "Stop! Stop!" they cry, but no one looks back.

Verse 8

But Nineveh is of old like a pool of water - מִימֵי mimey, from days. Bp. Newcome translates the line thus: "And the waters of Nineveh are a pool of waters." There may be reference here to the fact given in the preceding note, the overflowing of the river by which the city was primarily destroyed.

Stand, stand - Consternation shall be at its utmost height, the people shall flee in all directions; and though quarter is offered, and they are assured of safety if they remain, yet not one looketh back.

NAHUM 2: 9 Take the plunder of silver. Take the plunder of gold, for there is no end of the store, the glory of all goodly furniture.

Verse 9

Take ye the spoil - Though the king burnt his treasures, vestments, etc., he could not totally destroy the silver and the gold. Nor did he burn the riches of the city; these fell a prey to the conquerors; and there was no end of the store of glorious garments, and the most costly vessels and furniture.

NAHUM 2: 10 She is empty, void, and waste. The heart melts, the knees knock together, their bodies and faces have grown pale.

Verse 10

She is empty, and void, and waste - The original is strongly emphatic; the words are of the same sound; and increase in their length as they point out great, greater, and greatest desolation. **בוקה ומבוקה ומבלקה**

Bukah, umebukah, umebullakah.

She is void, empty, and desolate.

The faces of them all gather blackness - This marks the diseased state into which the people had been brought by reason of famine, etc.; for, as Mr. Ward justly remarks, "sickness makes a great change in the countenance of the Hindoos; so that a person who was rather fair when in health, becomes nearly black by sickness." This was a general case with the Asiatics.

NAHUM 2: 11 Where is the den of the lions, and the feeding place of the young lions, where the lion and the lioness walked, the lion's cubs, and no one made them afraid?

Verse 11

Where is the dwelling of the lions - Nineveh, the habitation of bold, strong, and ferocious men.

The feeding place of the young lions - Whither her victorious and rapacious generals frequently returned to consume the produce of their success. Here they walked at large, and none made them afraid. Wheresoever they turned their arms they were victors; and all nations were afraid of them.

NAHUM 2: 12 The lion tore in pieces enough for his cubs, and strangled for his lionesses, and filled his caves with the kill, and his dens with prey.

Verse 12

The lion did tear - This verse gives us a striking picture of the manner in which the Assyrian conquests and depredations were carried on. How many people were spoiled to enrich his whelps - his sons, princes, and nobles! How many women were stripped and slain, whose spoils went to decorate his lionesses - his queen, concubines, and mistresses. And they had even more than they could assume; their holes and dens - treasure-houses, palaces, and wardrobes - were filled with ravin, the riches which they got by the plunder of towns, families, and individuals. This is a very fine allegory, and admirably well supported.

NAHUM 2: 13 "Behold, I am against you," says the LORD of Armies, "and I will burn her chariots in the smoke, and the sword will devour your young lions; and I will cut off your prey from the earth, and the voice of your messengers will no longer be heard."

Verse 13

Behold, I am against thee - Assyria, and Nineveh its capital. I will deal with you as you have dealt with others.

The voice of thy messengers - Announcing thy splendid victories, and the vast spoils taken - shall no more be heard - thou and thy riches, and ill-got spoils, shall perish together.