

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION TO NAHUM 3

In this chapter is contained the prophecy of the destruction of Nineveh, and with it the whole Assyrian empire; the causes of which, besides those before mentioned, were the murders, lies, and robberies it was full of, (^{<34RE>}Nahum 3:1) for which it should be swiftly and cruelly destroyed, (^{<34RE>}Nahum 3:2,3) as also its whoredoms and witchcrafts, or idolatry, by which nations and families were seduced, (^{<34RE>}Nahum 3:4) and hence she should be treated as a harlot, her nakedness exposed, and she cast out with contempt, and mocked at by all, (^{<34RE>}Nahum 3:5-7) and all those things she placed her confidence in are shown to be of no avail; as her situation and fortresses, as she might learn from the case of No Amon, (^{<34RE>}Nahum 3:8-12) nor the number of her inhabitants, which were weak as women; nor even her merchants, captains, nobles, and king himself, (^{<34RE>}Nahum 3:13-18) nor the people she was in alliance with, who would now mock at her, her case being irrecoverable and incurable, (^{<34RE>}Nahum 3:19).

Ver. 1. *Woe to the bloody city*, etc.] Nineveh, in which many murders were daily committed; innocent blood shed; the lives of men taken away, under the colour of justice, by false witnesses, and other unlawful methods; and which was continually making war with neighbouring nations, and shedding their blood, which it stuck not at, to enlarge its wealth and dominions; and therefore “woe” is denounced against it; and it is threatened with the righteous judgments of God, with all sorts of calamity and distress: or, “O bloody city”, as the Septuagint; for the word used is vocative, and expressive of calling, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi observe:

it [is] all full of lies [and] robbery; the palace and court; the houses of noblemen and common persons were full of flattery and deceit; men of high degree were a lie, and men of low degree vanity; no man could trust another, or believe what he said; there were no truth, honesty, and faithfulness, in conversation or commerce; their warehouses were full of goods, got by rapine and violence; and their streets full of robbers and robberies:

the prey departeth not; they go on in making a prey of their neighbours, in pillaging and plundering their substance; they repent not of such evil practices, nor desist from them; or because of the above sins they shall fall a prey to the enemy, who will not cease plundering them till he has utterly stripped them of all they have; and who is represented in the next verse (^{34RD}Nahum 3:2) as just at hand.

Ver. 2. *The noise of a whip*, etc.] Of a horseman or chariot driver whipping his horses to make speed to Nineveh, and enter into it, so near as to be heard by the inhabitants of it; and is thus represented in order to strike terror into them:

and the noise of the rattling of the wheels; that is, of the chariots upon the stones, whose drivers drove Jehu like, making the utmost haste they could to get in first, and seize the prey:

and of the prancing horses; or bounding steeds, upon a full gallop; either with horsemen on them riding full speed to partake of the booty; or in chariots, in which they caper and prance, and shake the ground as they go; hence it follows:

and of the jumping chariots; which, through the swiftness of the motion, seem to leap and dance as they run along.

Ver. 3. *The horseman lifteth up both the bright sword and the glittering spear*, etc.] Or, “the flame of the sword and the glittering spear”¹⁶⁹; he rides with a drawn sword, which, being brandished to and fro, looks like a flame of fire; or with a spear made of polished iron, or steel, which, when vibrated and moved to and fro, glitters like lightning; a large number of which entering the city must be terrible to the inhabitants of it:

and [there is] a multitude of slain, and a great number of carcasses; of dead men lying in the streets, pierced and slain with the bright sword and glittering spear of the Medes and Chaldeans:

and [there is] none end of [their] corpses; the number of them could not be told; they lay so thick in all parts of the city, that there was no telling them:

they stumble upon their corpses; the Ninevites in fleeing, and endeavouring to make their escape, and the Medes and Chaldeans pursuing them.

Ver. 4. *Because of the multitudes of the whoredoms of the wellfavoured harlot*, etc.] Meaning Nineveh; which, as it was an ancient city, was a well built one; full of stately and beautiful buildings, the seat of the kings of Assyria, and the metropolis of the nation, and abounded with wealth and riches; perhaps here may be an allusion to the name of the city, and to the signification of it; for Nineveh may have its name from the beauty of it, and be read, in Hebrew, *hwn yan* or *ywn*, and may signify a beautiful or pleasant habitation; so Hillerus^{f70} and Cocceius^{f71} give the etymology of it; which agrees with its delightful situation on the banks of the river Tigris, and the stately edifices in it, as the king's palace, and others; just as Zion is said to be "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth", (^{<340>}Psalm 48:2) and the epithet of "well favoured" well agrees with a harlot, whose beauty is engaging and ensnaring, as Lais, and others; particularly Semiramis, the wife of Ninus, from whom it is generally thought Nineveh had its name, was first a harlot, and one of exceeding beauty, who surpassed all others in it; on account of which she was beloved by the king of Assyria, and after a short time made his wife, and then he delivered the government of the kingdom to her^{f72}; yea, Sardanapalus the Last, and at this time the present king of the Assyrians, was very effeminate, used to dress himself in women's clothes, imitate a woman's voice, and paint his face, and even his whole body; and, by other tricks and enticements of harlots, made himself more lascivious, and behaved more lewdly, than any harlot^{f73}; in short, all the Assyrian women must be harlots, since they were obliged once in their lifetime to lie with a stranger in the temple of Venus, whom the Assyrians call Mylitta, as Herodotus^{f74} and Strabo^{f75} relate; to all which here may be an allusion: and particularly the inhabitants of this city had all the arts of address and insinuation to deceive others as harlots have; and both men and women very probably were given to whoredom and adultery in a literal sense as is generally the case where luxury and intemperance abound; and especially were grossly guilty of idolatry, which in Scripture is frequently expressed by whoredom and adultery; worshipping Bel, Nisroch and other deities and which was highly provoking to God; and therefore for these things, his judgements came upon them, before and after described:

the mistress of witchcrafts: thoroughly versed in such wicked and devilish practices, literally understood; (see ^{<340>}Isaiah 47:9,12) for the Assyrians, as well as the Babylonians and Chaldeans, were addicted to such diabolical arts, as appears from a passage in Theocritus^{f76}, which Grotius has also quoted; where one is represented saying that she kept in her box or chest

very pernicious poisons, which she had learned from an Assyrian guest. The allusion seems to be to philtres, and other tricks used by harlots to besot young men, and bewitch and captivate them: likewise this city and its inhabitants were well versed in all the arts of flattery, deceit, and carnal policy; and in all the charms of wealth, riches, luxury, and sensuality, the pomp of superstition and idolatry, to draw in kingdoms and nations into subjection to them:

that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts; enslaved whole kingdoms, and brought them under her power and dominion, to be her vassals; and was the instrument, not only of corporeal servitude, but of their selling themselves to work wickedness, by committing spiritual fornication or idolatry; into which multitudes were led by her influence and example, and particularly the kingdoms and families of Israel and Judah; (see ^{<1260>}2 Kings 16:10) (^{<3215>}Ezekiel 23:5,7,11,12). In these whoredoms and witchcrafts, as well as in her bloodthirstiness, lies, and oppression, Nineveh was a type of the whore of Rome; (see ^{<6170>}Revelation 17:1,2,5,6 18:23).

Ver. 5. *Behold, I [am] against thee, saith the Lord of hosts*, etc.] Because her doings were against him; (see Gill on “Na 2:13”):

and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face; turn up the skirts of her garments over her head, and thereby discover what should be concealed, than which nothing is more disagreeable and abominable to modest persons; it is here threatened she should be used in character as a harlot, or as women oftentimes are by rude soldiers, when a city is taken by them:

and I will show the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame; all her charms shall be taken away, and she become odious as a harlot to her former lovers; all her impostures, arts, and tricks, and shameful actions, will be discovered; and her aims and views at universal monarchy will be seen and her weakness to effect it made to appear; and, upon the whole, will become the object of the scorn and derision of kingdoms and nations.

Ver. 6. *And I will cast abominable filth upon thee*, etc.] As dirt and dung, or any or everything that is abominable and filthy; and which is thrown at harlots publicly disgraced, and as used to be at persons when carted. The meaning is, that this city and its inhabitants should be stripped of everything that was great and glorious in them, and should be reduced to the utmost shame and ignominy:

and make thee vile: mean, abject, contemptible, the offscouring of all things; rejected and disesteemed of all; had in no manner of repute or account, but in the utmost abhorrence:

and I will set thee as a gazingstock; to be looked and laughed at: or, “for an example”^{f77}; to others, that they may shun the evils and abominations Nineveh had been guilty of, or expect the same disgrace and punishment. Kimchi interprets it “as dung”^{f78}; to be no more reckoned of than that, or to be made a dunghill of; and so many others interpret it; or, “for a looking glass”^{f79}; that others may look into, and take warning, and avoid the sins that have brought on such calamities.

Ver. 7. *And it shall come to pass, [that] all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee*, etc.] As something loathsome and abominable, not fit to be come near unto, or touched; and as astonished and amazed at an object so forlorn and miserable, and lest they should partake of the same punishment:

and say, Nineveh is laid waste; utterly destroyed; its walls broke down, its houses demolished, its substance plundered, and its inhabitants killed, or carried captive; who could have thought it, when it was once so stately, rich, and powerful? but so it is indeed!

who will bemoan her? there are none left in her to do it; and as for others, her neighbours, whom she has oppressed and cruelly used, these will laugh and rejoice, instead of lamenting her case:

whence shall I seek comforters for thee? none from among her inhabitants, being destroyed, or carried into a foreign land; and none from among the nations round about, who will rather deride and insult than pity and comfort; so wretched and miserable would her case be!

Ver. 8. *Art thou better than populous No*, etc.] Or No Amon, a city in Egypt so called, not because the kings of Egypt were nursed and brought up there, as Jarchi and Abarbinel; (see ^{<180>}Proverbs 8:30) but from Ham the son of Noah, whose land Egypt was; or from Jupiter Ammon, worshipped there. No Amon signifies the mansion or palace of Ham, or Hamon; the Egyptians, as Herodotus says^{f80}, call Jupiter by the name of Ammon. The Targum interprets it of Alexandria the great, a city so called long after this, when it was rebuilt by Alexander the great; so Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, understand it: others take Diospolis or Thebes to be meant, famous in Homer^{f81} for its hundred gates; though some think this was not the number of the gates of the city, but of the temples in it; and others are

of opinion that these were so many palaces of princes^{f82}. The city was built by Osiris; or, according to others, by Busiris, and seems more likely to be the place here meant; since here was a temple dedicated to Jupiter, called by the Egyptians Ammon, as Diodorus Siculus^{f83} relates, and was a very large and populous city. Indeed, according to the above historian, it was in compass but a seventeen and a half miles^{f84}; which is to be understood of the city when first built, and before it was enlarged; for it must have been a great deal larger in later times, if we may judge of it by its ruins. Strabo^{f85}, who was an eyewitness of them quickly after its last destruction by Cornelius Gallus, says, the footsteps of its largeness were seen fourscore furlongs in length, or ten miles; and even this was but small, in comparison of what it was before it was destroyed by Cambyses, when it is said to reach four hundred and twenty furlongs, or fifty two miles and a half^{f86}. It was the metropolis of all Egypt; and formerly the whole country was called after its name, as Herodotus^{f87} observes. The accounts given of its inhabitants are incredible, and particularly of the soldiers it sent out; according to the epitaph of Rhampses, seven hundred thousand soldiers dwelt in it; which number Diodorus Siculus^{f88} gives to all the people in Egypt; but, though it may seem too large for Thebes, must be too little for all Egypt; especially if what Agrippa in Josephus^{f89} says is right, that Egypt, from Ethiopia and the borders of India to Alexandria, had no less than 7,500,000 inhabitants: however, if Pomponius Mela^{f90} may be credited, when it was necessary, the hundred palaces in Thebes could each of them send out ten thousand armed men, or, as some say, twenty thousand; and if what Diodorus Siculus^{f91} affirms is true, that twenty thousand chariots used to go out from thence to war, this shows it to have been a very populous city indeed, and might well be called “populous” No; but now it is utterly destroyed, first by the Assyrians and Babylonians, then by the Persians, and last of all by the Romans; the first destruction must be here referred to, if this city is designed. Strabo^{f92} says in his time it was only inhabited in villages; and Juvenal^{f93} speaks of it as wholly lying in ruins; and Pausanias^{f94}, making mention of it with other cities which abounded with riches, says they were reduced to the fortune of a middling private man, yea, were brought to nothing. It is now, or what is built on the spot, or near it, called Luxxor, or Lukorcen^{f95} Some^{f96} think the city Memphis is meant, so Vitranga on (²³⁰¹⁵Isaiah 19:5). (See Gill on “²³⁰¹⁴Ezekiel 30:14”), (see Gill on “²³⁰¹⁵Ezekiel 30:15”), this was for many ages the metropolis of all Egypt. Strabo^{f97} calls it a large and “populous” city, and full of men, and second to Alexandria in his time. The compass of it, when first built, was

eighteen and three quarter miles^{f98}; but now there is no more remaining of it than if there had never been such a city; nay, it is not easy to say where it once stood: now Nineveh is asked, or its inhabitants, if it could be thought that their city was in a better and safer condition than this city; it might indeed, according to the account of it by historians, and as in the prophecy of Jonah, be larger, and its inhabitants more numerous; but not better fortified, which seems to be the thing chiefly respected, as follows:

that was situate among the rivers; the canals of the river Nile:

[that had] the waters round about it: a moat on every side, either naturally or artificially:

whose rampart [was] the sea, [and] her wall [was] from the sea? which agrees with Alexandria, according to the description of it by Strabo^{f99}, Solinus^{f100}, and Josephus^{f101}, which had two seas on each side of it; the Egyptian sea on the north, and the lake Mareotis on the south, as well as had the canals of the Nile running into it from various parts; and is represented as very difficult of access, through the sea, rivers, and marshy places about it; and, besides, might have a wall towards the sea, as by this account it should seem, as well as the sea itself was a wall and rampart to it: and this description may also agree with Diospolis or Thebes, which, though more inland, yet, as Bochart^{f102} observes, it had, as all Egypt had, the two seas, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, and the canals of the Nile, which might be said to be as a rampart to it. So Isocrates^{f103} says of all Egypt, that it is fortified with an immortal wall, the Nile, which not only affords a defence, but sufficient food, and is insuperable and inexpugnable; nor is it unusual, as to call rivers and lakes seas, so particularly the Nile, and its canals; (see ^{<3115>}Isaiah 11:15 18:1 ^{<3110>}Ezekiel 32:2), and in the Alcoran the Nile is often called a sea^{f104}. There is another Diospolis in Egypt, near Mendes, which, as Strabo^{f105} says, had lakes about it; but this, being a more obscure place, is not likely to be intended here; though Father Calmet^{f106} is of opinion that it is here meant; it being situated in the Delta, on one of the arms of the Nile, between Busiris to the south, and Mendes to the north. The description seems to agree better with Memphis, whose builder Uchoreus, as Diodorus Siculus^{f107} says, chose a very convenient place for it, where the Nile divided itself into many parts, and made the Delta, so called from its figure; and which he made wonderfully strong, after this manner: whereas the Nile flowed round the city, being built within the ancient bed of it, and at its increase would overflow it; he cast

up a very great mound or rampart to the south, which was a defence against the swell of the river, and was of the use of a fortress against enemies by land; and on the other parts all about he dug a large and deep lake, which received a very great deal of the river, and filled every place about the city but where the mound (or rampart) was built, and so made it amazingly strong; whence the kings after him left Thebes, and had their palace and court here; and so Herodotus, who makes Menes to be the builder of it, says^{f108}, that without the city he caused lakes to be dug from the river to the north, and to the west, for to the east the Nile itself bounded it; and Josephus^{f109}, who also makes Minaeus, or Menes, the first Pharaoh, to be the builder of it, speaks of that and the sea together, as if not far off each other: now, if a city so populous, and so well fortified by art and nature, as each of these were, was taken, and its inhabitants carried captive, Nineveh could not depend on her numbers or situation for safety, which were not more or better than this.

Ver. 9. *Ethiopia and Egypt [were] her strength*, etc.] That is, the strength, support, protection, and defence of No, whether Alexandria, or Thebes, or Memphis: Egypt was, for these cities were in it, and subject to it; or, if this was a free city, as some think, yet in alliance with Egypt, and under its protection; and in like connection it was with Ethiopia, that is, Arabia, a country that lay near to it; and yet, though it was strengthened by such powerful neighbours and allies, it was not secure from the devastation of the enemy:

and it [was] infinite; or there was “no end”^{f110}; of its strength, or of the number of its allies, or the forces they were able to bring in its defence. The Ethiopians were very numerous, as may be learnt from (^{<444>}2 Chronicles 14:9) and so were the Egyptians, to whom some interpreters strictly connect this sentence. In the times of Amasis, as Mela^{f111} relates, there were twenty thousand cities inhabited in it; and Josephus^{f112} says there were in it seven hundred and fifty myriads of men; as Sethon, king of Egypt, and Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, were about this time the allies of the Jews, in whom they trusted, no doubt they were confederate together, and so both the strength of this city; (see ^{<2316>}Isaiah 36:6 37:9):

Put and Lubim, were thy helpers; Put, or the Putim, were the people of the Moors, that dwelt in Mauritania; and Lubim were the Lybians that bordered on Egypt, and whose country is sometimes reckoned a part of it. The Jews^{f113} say Lybia is Egypt; (see ^{<4420>}Acts 2:10) these several people

were the confederates of No; and helped them, not only by their commerce with them, but in time of war assisted them against their enemies; and yet, though so strengthened by alliances, were not safe and secure; and therefore Nineveh could not depend upon such helps and helpers.

Ver. 10. *Yet [was] she carried away, she went into captivity*, etc.] Not by Nebuchadnezzar; though this city was afterwards taken, and its inhabitants carried captive, by that monarch, as was foretold, (^{<2465>}Jeremiah 46:25) but the prophet here does not predict an event to be accomplished, and instance in that, and argue from it, which could have no effect on Nineveh and its inhabitants, or be an example or terror to them; but refers to what had been done, a recent fact, and which they were well acquainted with. Aben Ezra says, this city No was a city of the land of Egypt, which the king of the Chaldeans took as he went to Nineveh; but when, and by whom it was taken, is nowhere said. According to Bishop Usher^{f114} and Dean Prideaux^{f115}, the destruction of the city of Thebes was by Sennacherib, in his expedition against Egypt, which he harassed for three years together, from one end to the other; at which time Sevechus, the son of Sabacon, or So, the Ethiopian, was king of Egypt; and Egypt and Ethiopia were as one country, and helped each other; but could not secure this city from falling into the hands of Sennacherib, about three years before he besieged Jerusalem; and so, according to Mr. Whiston^{f116}, it was destroyed three years before the army of Sennacherib was destroyed at Jerusalem:

her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets: against the walls of the houses, or upon the stones and pavements of the streets; which cruelties were often used by conquerors upon innocent babes at the sacking of cities, (^{<3D09>}Psalm 137:9 ^{<23E6>}Isaiah 13:16):

and they cast lots for her honourable men; the soldiers did, who should have them, and sell them for slaves; which was done without any regard to their birth and breeding, (^{<29RB>}Joel 3:3):

and all her great men were bound in chains; as nobles may be meant by “honourable men”, by “great men” may be designed the gentry, merchants, and others; these were taken, and bound in iron chains, handcuffed, and pinioned, and so led captive into a foreign land; and Nineveh might expect the same treatment.

Ver. 11. *Thou also shalt be drunken*, etc.] This is said to Nineveh, whose turn would be next to drink of the cup of the wrath of God, and be

inebriated with it, so that they should not know where they were, or what they did; and be as unable to guide and help themselves as a drunken man. So the Targum,

“thou also shalt be like to a drunken man;”

this was literally true of Nineveh when taken; (see Na 1:10):

thou shalt be hid; or, “thou shall be”, as if thou wast not; as Nineveh is at this day, “hid” from the sight of men, not to be seen any more. So the Targum,

“thou shall be swallowed up or destroyed.”

The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, render it “despised”; or the meaning is, she should “hide herself”^{f117}; or be lurking about through shame, as drunken, or through fear of her enemies:

thou also shall seek strength because of the enemy; seek to others to help them against the enemy, not being able with their own strength to face them: or, seek strength “of the enemy”^{f118}; beg their lives of him, and their bread; pray for quarter, and desire to be taken under his protection; to so low and mean a state and condition should Nineveh and its inhabitants be reduced, who had given laws to all about them, and had been a terror to them.

Ver. 12. *All thy strong holds [shall be like] fig trees with the first ripe figs*, etc.] Upon them, or like them: “and the first ripe figs”; which are easily shook and gathered; and so easily should the fortresses and towers of Nineveh, in which they trusted for safety, be taken by the enemy, not only one, but all of them:

if they be shaken, they shall even fall into the mouth of the eater; as such ripe fruit is very desirable, and the mouth of a man is open and ready for them; so if he gives the tree but the least shake, they will fall into his mouth, or about him in great plenty: in like manner, as the fortresses of Nineveh, being of importance, were desirable by the Chaldeans and Medes, and for which they were gaping; so upon the least assault they would fall into their hands; (see ^{¶113} Revelation 6:13).

Ver. 13. *Behold, thy people in the midst of thee [are] women*, etc.] Or like women, weak and feeble, fearful and timorous; frightened at the first approach of the enemy; run away, and run up and down in the utmost

consternation and distress, having neither skill nor courage to oppose them; some regard may be had to the effeminacy of their king; (see Na 2:7). The sense is, they should be at once dispirited, and lose all strength of mind and body, and have neither heads nor hearts to form schemes, and execute them in their own defence; and thus should they be, even in the midst of the city, upon their own ground, where, any where, it might be thought they would exert themselves, and play the man, since their all lay at stake: this was another thing they trusted in, the multitude of their people, even of their soldiers; but these would be of no avail, since they would lose all their military skill and bravery:

the gates of thy land shall be set wide open to thine enemies: instead of guarding the passes and avenues, they would abandon them to the enemy; and, instead of securing the gates and passages, they would run away from them; and the enemy would find as easy access as if they were thrown open on purpose for them; perhaps this may respect the gates of the rivers being opened by the inundation, which threw down the wall, and made a way into the city; (see Na 2:6):

the fire shall devour thy bars; with which their gates had been shut, but now opened, and in the enemies' hands; who would set fire to them, that the way to go in and out might be open and free.

Ver. 14. *Draw thee waters for the siege*, etc.] Before the siege is begun, fetch water from the river, wells, or fountains without the city, and fill cisterns, and such like receptacles of water, with them; that there may be sufficiency of it to hold out, which is often wanting in long sieges; the want of which gives great distress to the besieged: this is put for all necessary provisions, which should be made when a city is in danger of being blocked up: this, and what follows, are said ironically; signifying, let them do what they would or could for their support and security, it would be all in vain:

fortify thy strong holds; repair the old fortifications, and add new ones to them; fill them with soldiers, arms, and ammunition:

go into clay, and tread the mortar; make strong the brick kiln; repair the brick kilns, keep them in good order; employ men in digging clay, and treading it, and making it into bricks, and burning them in the kiln, that there be no want of bricks to repair the fortifications, or such breaches as might be made by the enemy. Bricks were much used instead of stone in

those countries; but when they had done their utmost, they would not be able to secure themselves, and keep out the enemy.

Ver. 15. *There shall the fire devour thee*, etc.] In the strong holds, made ever so firm and secure; either the fire of divine wrath; or the fire of the enemy they should put into them; or the enemy himself, as Kimchi; and so the Targum,

“thither shall come upon thee people who are as strong as fire:”

the sword shall cut thee off; it shall eat thee up as the cankerworm: that is, the sword of the Medes and Chaldeans shall utterly destroy thee, as the cankerworm is destroyed by rain or fire; or rather, as that creature destroys all herbs, plants, and trees it falls upon, and makes clear riddance of them, so should it be with Nineveh:

make thyself many as the cankerworm; make thyself many as the locust; which go in swarms, innumerable, and make the air “heavy” in which they fly, and the earth on which they fall, as the word^{f119} signifies. The locust has one of its names, “*arbah*”, in Hebrew, from the large numbers of them; so a multitude of men, and large armies, are often signified in Scripture to be like grasshoppers or locusts, for their numbers; (see ^{<JUB>}Judges 6:5 7:12 ^{<JUB>}Jeremiah 46:23). So Sithalces king of Thrace is represented^{f120} as swearing, while he was sacrificing, that he would assist the Athenians, having an army that would come like locusts, that is, in such numbers; for so the Greek scholiast on the place says the word used signifies a sort of locusts: the sense is, gather together as many soldiers, and as large an army, as can be obtained to meet the enemy, or cause him to break up the siege: and so we find^{f121} the king of Assyria did; for, perceiving his kingdom in great danger, he sent into all his provinces to raise soldiers, and prepare everything for the siege; but all to no purpose, which is here ironically suggested. The word in the Misnic language, as Kimchi observes, has the signification of sweeping; and some render it, “sweep as the locust”^{f122}; which sweeps away and consumes the fruits of the earth; so sweep with the besom of destruction, as Jarchi, either their enemies, sarcastically spoken, or be thou swept by them.

Ver. 16. *Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of heaven*, etc.] A hyperbolical expression, setting forth the great number of merchants that were in Nineveh, and in the land of Assyria; who either were the natives of the place, or came thither for the sake of merchandise,

which serve to enrich a nation, and therefore are encouraged to settle; and from whom, in a time of war, much benefit might be expected; being able to furnish with money, which is the sinews of war, as well as to give intelligence of the designs of foreign princes, they trading abroad:

the cankerworm spoileth, and flieth away; or “puts off”^{f123} its clothes, disrobes and changes its form; or breaks out with force, as the Septuagint, out of its former worm state, and appears a beautiful butterfly, and then flies away. The word is rendered a caterpillar, (^{A53}Psalm 105:34 ^{514}Jeremiah 51:14, 27) and what we translate “spoileth” is used of stripping, or putting off of clothes, (^{92}1 Samuel 19:24 ^{218}Song of Solomon 5:3) and the sense may be, that though their merchants were multiplied above the stars of heaven, in which there may be an allusion to the increase of caterpillars, (^{345}Nahum 3:15) yet, as the caterpillar drops its clothes, and flies away, so their merchants, through fear of the enemy, would depart in haste, or be suddenly stripped of their riches, which make themselves wings, and fly away, (^{235}Proverbs 23:5). These merchants, at their beginning, might be low and mean, but, increasing, adorning, and enriching themselves in a time of peace, fled away in a time of war: or, “spreads itself”^{f124}, and “flies away”; so these creatures spread themselves on the earth, and devour all they can, and then spread their wings, and are gone; suggesting that in like manner the merchants of Nineveh would serve them; get all they could by merchandise among them, and then betake themselves elsewhere and especially in a time of war, which is prejudicial to merchandise; and hence nothing was to be expected from them, or any dependence had upon them.

Ver. 17. *Thy crowned men [are] as the locusts*, etc.] Tributary kings, and hired officers, as some think, who might be distinguished by what they wore on their heads; or their own princes and nobles, who wore coronets or diadems; unless their religious persons are meant, their Nazarites and devotees, their priests; these were like locusts for their number, fear, and flight in time of danger, and for their spoil of the poor; and some locusts have been seen with little crowns on their heads, as those in (^{690}Revelation 9:7) “which had on their heads as it were crowns like gold”. In the year 1542 came locusts out of Turkish Satmatia into Austria, Silesia, Lusatia, and Misnia, which had on their heads little crowns^{f125}. In the year 1572 a vehement wind brought large troops of locusts out of Turkey into Poland, which did great mischief, and were of a golden colour^{f126}; and Aelianus^{f127} speaks of locusts in Arabia, marked with golden coloured figures; and

mention is made in the Targum on (²⁶¹⁷Jeremiah 51:27), of the shining locust, shining like gold:

and thy captains as the great grasshoppers; or “locusts of locusts”^{f128}; those of the largest size. The Vulgate Latin renders the word for captains “thy little ones”, junior princes, or officers of less dignity and authority; these were, as the Targum paraphrases it, as the worms of locusts; but rather as the locusts themselves, many and harmful:

which camp in the hedges in the cold day; in the cold part of the day, the night; when they get into the hedges of fields, gardens, and vineyards, in great numbers, like an army, and therefore said to encamp like one:

[but] when the sun ariseth they flee away, and their place is not known where they [are]; whither they are fled, as the Targum; so these captains, or half pay officers, swarmed in great numbers about the city, and in the provinces, while it was a time of peace, and they were indulged in sloth, and enjoyed much ease and prosperity; but when war broke out, and the heat of it began to be felt, these disappeared, and went into their own countries, from whence they came, with the auxiliaries and hired troops; nor could they be found where they were, or be called upon to do their duty: this is true of locusts in a literal sense, who flee away when the sun rises; hence the Arabs, as Bochart says^{f129} elegantly express this by the word “ascaara”; signifying, that when the sun comes to the locust it goes away, According to Macrobius^{f130}, both Apollo and Hercules are names for the sun; and both these are surnamed from their power in driving away locusts: Hercules was called Cornopion by the Oetians, because he delivered them from the locusts^{f131}: and Apollo was called Parnopius by the Grecians, because, when the country was hurt by locusts, he drove them out of it, at Pausanias^{f132} relates; who observes, that they were drove out they knew, but in what manner they say not; for his own part, he says, he knew them thrice destroyed at Mount Sipylus, but not in the same way; one time a violent wind drove them out; another time a prodigious heat killed them; and a third time they perished by sudden cold; and so, according to the text here, the cold sends them to the hedges, and the heat of the sun obliges them to abandon their station.

Ver. 18. *Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria*, etc.] Who this king of Assyria was is not easy to say; some think Esarhaddon, who is the last of the kings of Assyria the Scriptures speak of; according to Diodorus Siculus^{f133}, Sardanapalus was the last of these kings, and in him the

Assyrian monarchy ended; though, according to Alexander Polyhistor^{f134}, Saracus, perhaps the Chyniladanus of Ptolemy, was king when Nineveh was destroyed: it is very likely that Sardanapalus and Saracus design the same person, though set at a great distance by historians; since the same things are said of the one as of the other; particularly that, when they saw their danger, they burnt themselves and theirs in the royal palace at Nineveh; nor is it probable that the same city with the empire should be destroyed and subverted twice by the same people, the Medes and Babylonians, uniting together; and it is remarkable that the double destruction of this city and empire is related by different historians; and those that speak of the one say nothing of the other: but this king, be he who he will, his case was very bad, his “shepherds slumbered”; his ministers of state, his counsellors, subordinate magistrates in provinces and cities, and particularly in Nineveh; his generals and officers in his army were careless and negligent of their duty, and gave themselves up to sloth and ease; and which also was his own character, as historians agree in; or they were dead, slumbering in their graves, and so could be of no service to him:

thy nobles shall dwell [in the dust]; be brought very low, into a very mean and abject condition; their honour shall be laid in the dust, and they be trampled upon by everyone: or, “they shall sleep”^{f135}; that is, die, and be buried, as the Vulgate Latin renders it: or, “shall dwell in silence”, as others^{f136}; have their habitation in the silent grave, being cut off by the enemy; so that this prince would have none of his mighty men to trust in, but see himself stripped of all his vain confidences:

thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth [them]; like sheep without a shepherd, which being frightened by beasts of prey, run here and there, and there is none to get them together, and bring them back again; so the subjects of this king, being terrified at the approach of the Medes and Babylonians, forsook their cities, and fled to the mountains; where they were scattered about, having no leader and commander to gather them together, and put them in regular order to face and oppose the enemy. So the Targum interprets it

“the people of thine armies.”

Ver. 19. [*There is no healing of thy bruise*, etc.] Made by the fatal blow given to the empire by the taking of Nineveh; the ruin of it was irreparable and irrecoverable; the city of Nineveh was no more, and the Assyrian

empire sunk, and never rose again: or, “there is no contraction of thy bruise”^{f137}; as when a wound is healed, or near it, the skin round about is wrinkled and contracted. The Targum is,

“there is none that grieves at thy breach;”

so the Syriac version; so far from it, that they rejoiced at it, as in a following clause:

thy wound is grievous; to be borne; the pain of it intolerable; an old obstinate one, inveterate and incurable: or, is “weak”, or “sickly”^{f138}; which had brought a sickness and weakness on the state, out of which it would never be recovered:

all that hear the bruit of thee; the fame, the report of the destruction of Nineveh, and of the ruin of the Assyrian empire, and the king of it:

shall clap the hands over thee; for joy; so far were they from lending a helping hand in the time of distress, that they clapped both hands together, to express the gladness of their hearts at hearing such news:

for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually? to which of thy neighbours hast thou not been troublesome and injurious? which of them hast thou not oppressed, and used with violence and cruelty? what province or city but have felt the weight of thine hand, have been harassed with wars, and distressed with tributes and exactions? and therefore it is no wonder they rejoice at thy fall. The destruction of this city, and so of the whole empire, is placed by Dr. Prideaux in the twenty ninth year of Josiah’s reign, and in the year 612 B.C.; and by what Josephus says^{f139} it appears to have been but a little while before Josiah was slain by Pharaohnecho, who came out with an army to Euphrates, to make war upon the Medes and Babylonians; who, he says, had overturned the Assyrian empire; being jealous, as it seems, of their growing power. Learned men justly regret the loss of the Assyriaca of Abydenus, and of the history of the Assyrians by Herodotus, who promised^{f140} it; but whether he finished it or no is not certain; however, it is not extant; and in one place, speaking of the Medes attacking Nineveh, and taking it, he says^{f141}, but how they took it I shall show in another history; all which, had they come to light, and been continued, might have been of singular use in explaining this prophecy.

FOOTNOTES

- ft1 -- Demonstr. Evangel. prop. 4. p. 298.
- ft2 -- Strom. 1. 1. p. 329.
- ft3 -- Seder Olam Rabbi, c. 10. p. 55. & Zuta, p. 105. Juchasin, fol. 12. 2. Tzemach David, fol. 15. 1. Shalsholet Hakabala, fol. 12. 1.
- ft4 -- Antiqu. 1. 9. c, 11. sect. 3.
- ft5 -- Chronological Tables, cent. 8.
- ft6 -- Antiqu. 1. 9. c. 11. sect. 3.
- ft7 -- Deuteronomy Proph. Vit. & Inter. c. 17.
- ft8 -- Deuteronomy Vit. & Mort. Sanct. c. 46.
- ft9 -- Ut supra. (Demonstr. Evangel. prop. 4. p. 298.)
- ft10 -- Itinerarium, p. 30.
- ft11 -- Ibid. p. 62.
- ft12 -- Tzemach David, fol. 15. 1.
- ft13 -- Antiqu. 1. 9. c. 11. sect. 3.
- ft14 -- Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3378.
- ft15 -- Universal History, vol. 4. p. 331.
- ft16 -- Connexion, etc. par. 1. B. 1. p. 47, 48.
- ft17 -- Chronological Table, cent. 9.
- ft18 -- Proem. in Nahum.
- ft19 -- Apud Reland. Palestina Illustrata, tom. 2. p. 748.
- ft20 -- **hmj** | [**b** “dominus irae”, Calvin, Vatablus, Grotius; “dominus excandescenciae”, Piscator, Tarnovius; “dominus irae aestuantis, [sive] fervoris”, Burkius.

- ft21 -- **zw[ml hwby bwj** “bonus Dominus ad robur”, Burkus; “bonus est Jehovah in arcem”, Cocceius.
- ft22 -- Dannhaver, apud Burkium in loc. Vid. Turnebi Adversar. 1. 29. c. 36.
- ft23 -- Diodor. Sicul. 1. 2. p. 111. Ed. Rhodum.
- ft24 -- Ibid. p. 113, 114.
- ft25 -- **επισκοπ.** sive, “contemplantes”, in fine.
- ft26 -- Itinerarium, p. 62.
- ft27 -- Apud Bochart Phaleg. 1. 4. c. 20. p. 255.
- ft28 -- Travels, par. 1. B. 1. c. 11. p. 52.
- ft29 -- Bibliothec. 1. 2. p. 110, 111.
- ft30 -- L. 1. sive Clio, c. 106.
- ft31 -- Tobit 14:15.
- ft32 -- See the Universal History, vol. 4. c. 8. sect. 5. & vol. 5. p. 22. Margin, & Nicolai Abrami Pharus Vet. Test. 1. 6. c. 19. p. 165.
- ft33 -- Diodor. Sicul. 1. 2. p. 112.
- ft34 -- **l [yl b Qwy** “consulens”, Belijahai, Montanus; “consiliarius Belijaal”, Burkus.
- ft35 -- **wzwgn** “tonsi”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft36 -- **επειτα δητα δουλος ων κομην εχεις** Aristophanes in Avibus, p. 584.
- ft37 -- Scholia Graec. in ib.
- ft38 -- Aristotel. Rhetor. 1. 1. c. 9.
- ft39 -- “Tonsa comas imo Barathri claudere recessu”, Claudian in Ruffin. 1. 1. prope finem. Vid. Barthium in ib.
- ft40 -- Lydius de Revelation Militari, 1. 6. c. 6. p. 237.

- ft41 -- **dw[al** “non ultra”, Pagninus, Montanus; “non amplius”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.
- ft42 -- **dw[Æn[a al** “non exaudiam te amplius”, Burkus.
- ft43 -- Antiqu. l. 10. c. 1. sect. 5.
- ft44 -- Deuteronomy Dis Syris, Syntagm. 2. c. 10. p. 329.
- ft45 -- Vid. Jarchi in Isaiam, c. 37, 38.
- ft46 -- In Calmet’s Dictionary, in the word “Samaritans”.
- ft47 -- De Dea Syria.
- ft48 -- In Jupiter Tragoedus.
- ft49 -- **twl q yk Ærbq μυχα**.
- ft50 -- **εστ εμε τις ορεων, ευσεβης εστω**. Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 141.
- ft51 -- Seder Olam Rabba, c. 24. p. 69.
- ft52 -- **ym** “malleus”, Drusius, Tarnovius.
- ft53 -- **bq[y ^wag ta hwhy bç yk** “ulciscitur enim Jehova adhibitam in Jacobaeos superbiam”, Castalio; “reponit Deus Assyrio illam superbiam quam ipse in Jacobo et Israele exercuit”, Grotius; “quia reddidit superbiam”, etc. Tirinus.
- ft54 -- **wtj ç** “corruperunt”, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Vatablus, Burkus.
- ft55 -- So **b** is sometimes used as **k**. See Nold. Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 162. No. 728. So Piscator, and the Tigurine version.
- ft56 -- **Ækwsh** “operimentum”, Pagninus, Montanus; “integumentum”, Calvin; “testudo”, Vatablus, Grotius, Cocceius, Burkus.
- ft57 -- Vid. Fuller. Miscel. Sacr. l. 3. c. 6.
- ft58 -- **l kyhh** “templum”, V. L. Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Cocceius.
- ft59 -- Diodor. Sicul. l. 2. p. 109, 110.

- ft60 -- Gebhardus apud Burkium in loc.
- ft61 -- Athenaeus apud Rollin's Ancient History, etc. vol. 2. p. 31, 32. See the Universal History, vol. 4. p. 306.
- ft62 -- Diodor. Sicul. l. 2. p. 114, 115.
- ft63 -- Thalia, sive l. 3. c. 108.
- ft64 -- Noctes Atticae, l. 13. c. 7.
- ft65 -- Orat. 8. in Verrem, l. 3. p. 509.
- ft66 -- *Æyl a ynnh* "ad te venturus sum", Vatablus; "ego ad te venio", Drusius.
- ft67 -- *ἄϙ[b* "in fumum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft68 -- *hkkal m l wq* "vox dentium molarium", Calvin.
- ft69 -- *tynj qrbw brj bhl* "flammas gladii et fulgorem hastae", Piscator; "flammas gladii et fulgur hastae", Cocceius; "flamma gladii et fulgur lanceae", Burkus.
- ft70 -- Onomastic. Sacr. p. 304, 431, 898.
- ft71 -- Comment. in Jonam, c. 1. 2.
- ft72 -- Diodor. Sicul. l. 2. p. 93. 107. Ed. Rhodoman.
- ft73 -- Ibid. p. 109, 110.
- ft74 -- Clio, sive. l. 1. c. 199.
- ft75 -- Geograph. l. 16. p. 513.
- ft76 -- Pharmaceutria, sive Idyll. 2. prope finem.
- ft77 -- *yawrk εις παραδειγμα*, Sept.; "in exemplum", Drusius, Tarnovius; "sicut spectaculum", Burkus.
- ft78 -- "Tanquam stercus", Munster, Montanus, Vatablus, Calvin, Cocceius.
- ft79 -- "Ut speculum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Quistorpius.
- ft80 -- L. 2. sive Euterpe, c. 42.

- ft81 -- Iliad. 9. ver. 381.
- ft82 -- Vid. Mela de Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 9. Diodor. Sicul. l. 1. p. 43.
- ft83 -- Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 14, 42. Ed. Rhodoman.
- ft84 -- Ibid. p. 42.
- ft85 -- Geograph. l. 16. p. 561, Ed. Casaubon.
- ft86 -- See the Universal History, vol. 1. p. 396.
- ft87 -- Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 15.
- ft88 -- Ut supra, (Bibliothec. l. 1.) p. 27.
- ft89 -- De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 16. sect. 4.
- ft90 -- De Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 9.
- ft91 -- Ut supra, (Bibliothec. l. 1.) p. 43. Vid. Homer, ut supra. (Iliad. 9. ver. 381.)
- ft92 -- Ut supra. (Geograph. l. 16. p. 561, Ed. Casaubon.)
- ft93 -- "Vetus Theba centum jacet obruta portis", Satyr. 15. l. 6.
- ft94 -- Arcadica, sive l. 8. p. 509. Ed. Hanau.
- ft95 -- Norden's Travels in Egypt and Nubia, vol. 2. p. 61, 62.
- ft96 -- So Hillerus, Onomast. Sacr. p. 571, 572. & Burkius in loc.
- ft97 -- Geograph. l. 17. p. 555.
- ft98 -- Diodor. Sicul. Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 46.
- ft99 -- Geograph. l. 17. p. 545.
- ft100 -- Polyhistor. c. 45.
- ft101 -- De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 16. sect. 4.
- ft102 -- Phaleg. l. 1. c. 1. col. 6, 7.
- ft103 -- Busiris, p. 437.
- ft104 -- Vid. Schultens in Job xiv. 11.
- ft105 -- Geograph. l. 17. p. 551.

- ft106 -- Dictionary, in the word “Diospolis”.
- ft107 -- Ut supra. (Diodor. Sicul. Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 46.)
- ft108 -- Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 99.
- ft109 -- Antiqu. l. 8. c. 6. sect. 2. & l. 2. c. 10. sect. 1.
- ft110 -- **hxq** **ˆyaw** “non est finis”, Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Cocceius.
- ft111 -- Deuteronomy Orbis Situ. l. 1. c. 9.
- ft112 -- Deuteronomy Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 16. sect. 4.
- ft113 -- T. Hieros. Celaim, c. 8. fol. 31. 3.
- ft114 -- Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3292.
- ft115 -- Connexion, par. 1. B. 1. p. 22, 23.
- ft116 -- Chronological Tables, cent. 8.
- ft117 -- **hml** [n “latitans”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “abscondes te”, Vatablus; “eris abscondita”, Burkius.
- ft118 -- **bywam** **εξ εχψρων**, Sept.; “ab hoste”, Montanus, Calvin, Drusius, Grotius, Cocceius.
- ft119 -- **dbkth** “aggravate”, Montanus; “onerate”, Tigurine version; “gravem effice te”, Burkius.
- ft120 -- Aristophan. in Acharnens. Act. 1. Scen. 1.
- ft121 -- Diodor. Sicul. l. 2. p. 113.
- ft122 -- So R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 39. 1.
- ft123 -- **j** **çp** “exspoliavit”, Deuteronomy Dieu; “proprie est, exuere, vestem detrahere et exspoliare”, Deuteronomy Dieu.
- ft124 -- “Diffundit se”, Munster, so the Targum; “effunditur”, Cocceius.
- ft125 -- Vid. Frantzii Hist. Animal. Sacr. par. 5. c. 4. p. 799.
- ft126 -- Ibid. p. 798.

- ft127 -- Hist. Animal. l. 10. c. 13.
- ft128 -- **ybwg bwgk** “ut locustae locustarum”, Vatablus, Pagninus, Montanus; “sicut locusta locustarum”, Burkius.
- ft129 -- Hierozoic. par. 2. c. 2. col. 458.
- ft130 -- Saturnal l. 1. c. 17. p. 335. & c. 20. p. 362.
- ft131 -- Strabo. Geograph. l. 13. p. 422.
- ft132 -- Attica, sive l. 1. p. 44.
- ft133 -- Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 109, 115.
- ft134 -- Apud Syncell. p. 210.
- ft135 -- **wbkçy** “dormiunt”, Piscator; so Ben Melech interprets it, “the rest of death.”
- ft136 -- “Habitarunt in silentio”, Buxtorf, Drusius.
- ft137 -- **hhk ^ya** “nulla est contractio”, Junius & Tremellius, Burkius.
- ft138 -- **hl j n** “infirmata”, Pagninus, Montanus; “aegritudine plena”, Vatablus; “aegra”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Burkius.
- ft139 -- Antiqu. l. 10. c. 5. sect. 1.
- ft140 -- L. 1. sive Clio, c. 184.
- ft141 -- Ibid. c. 106.