

ARAMAIC BIBLE COMPANION

NAHUM

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION 1

THE NATURE OF PROPHETIC BURDEN

The burden of Nineveh (in) the book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite. *It is very difficult to deny the association of Nahum with Babylon-Iraq. How else would he have carried a great love and message for this people? Well, if he lived close to where Jonah resided in Galilee he may well have been inspired by the earlier prophet. However he does not take up the merciful ministry of God as formerly to Nineveh but makes Jonah's message of Doom emphatic which would suggest quite apart from Jonah a personal "burden" given of God. The idea of prophetic burden acm is that which one "lifts" or "accepts" and "carries" in or throughout life. It is my Judgment that Nahum had an association with the Nineveh area as a resident sometime in the period 663-612 between the fall of Thebes (Nahum 3 8-10) and the fall of Nineveh itself.*

WHEN JUDGMENT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DEFLECT 2-3

God is burning with zeal [*anq*] and the LORD rebukes or avenges [*mqn*] and the LORD is a husband of rage. The LORD must be one to take vengeance in respect of his adversaries and he is aiming [*rfn*] at his enemies. The LORD is slow to anger and great in power and as to acquitting He will not acquit and his way is in the midst of the sea or the whirlwind of destruction and in the midst of the rushing tempest. *The image of the centre of a whirlwind and the tempest is one of determinate ruin and intimates "non-reversal" of judgment. The consonants pws are also radicals of "Red Sea". Once Pharaoh was enclosed in the Sea judgment was inevitable. The clouds also are the dust of His feet.*

TWO MIGHTY EARTHQUAKES 4-5

*As if to take the alternative meaning of "tempest" and playing on the idea Nahum speaks of the Sea (Red Sea) He is the one active to rebuke the sea and He makes it dry as the desert and He causes all the rivers to dry up. **Bashan has been drooping** or going to waste and **also Carmel and the blossom or flourish of Lebanon has been drooping.** The mountains shake from His allotment and the hills have been flowing down or softening in landslide. [*qmm*] the earth heaves up before His face and the world and all its inhabitants. *If Nineveh fell in 612 the earthquake which illustrated that fall and judgment would have been not a simultaneous event but a last warning. The world of those days read such events as omens of God's displeasure with the powers that be for they had not conceded the continued operation of God in the natural events of on-going history. Amos also over 150 years previous linked God's judgment in the time of Jereboam to a great earthquake of that time (circa 751B.C.. On both occasions the quakes appear to have been widespread. The first hailed the fall of Israel in 721B.C.-the second the fall of Nineveh in 607B.C.**

THE STRIKING EQUIVALENCE 6-11

The fire of incendiaries and the tumbling of city walls is uncannily equivalent to the fire of earthquake showering up to heaven and the rocks rolling down mountains and broken in earthquake.

Who can stand before his indignation? [*m[z]*] Who will rise in the house of the heat of his anger? His flaming heat pours itself out as fire and the rocks break themselves as He apportions. The LORD is good -a fortress in a day of adversity and one who knows those who confides or shelters in him. And in an inundation or flood overwhelming he will make an entire end of the famous place [*Nineveh*] and darkness pursues his enemies. **What you plan about the LORD** He will completely end. Adversity will not rise for two blows. For meantime thorns entangle and as drunkards have drunk to excess they shall be consumed as stubble-fried up fully. From you comes one who devises evil against the LORD-a **counsellor** who is no use. *No second military adventure against Judah will arise-Nineveh was to be defeated and in fact the 701 defeat at the hand of the Angel of the LORD was the end game of plans*

against Judah. This verse stands in the way of the scholarship that holds the Assyrian came back to Jerusalem after the death of Sennacherib nor do Assyrian annals boast any such advance.

THE LORD DIGS THE GRAVE OF THE SEXUALLY IMMORAL 12-14

Thus says the LORD "When they are **secure** and likewise **numerous** still they will be cut down and pass over and I have continually afflicted you I will not afflict you any more. But now I will break his yoke from your back and I will draw you out of your bonds. The LORD has commanded over you "Your name **shall not be sown** any longer. From the house of your Gods I will cut off the carved image and the shrine. I will make your grave for you are **accursed**." [l l q] *The "last word" of the chapter explains everything. Nineveh's religion had come down to sexual sin and despising of the human sperm and so the name of Nineveh would cease. A generation or so earlier family life was still worth upholding and "children in need" found the divine compassion but now the use of the sexual process to simply promote evil pleasure brings divine wrath. Paul makes exactly this point in Romans 1.26 "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature and likewise the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. The reference to the cutting off of the images of the gods of Nineveh is by parallel with Thebes whose god Amun was dethroned in the sack of Thebes (the city of Amun)*

CHAPTER 2

THE PROMISE OF MESSIAH (1.15)

BEHOLD UPON THE MOUNTAINS THE FEET OF THE ONE WHO DECLARES AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF PEACE. **O Judah** keep your feasts you must continue to execute of perform [yml c] your vows for Belial will not continue still to pass into your house. He will be cut off complete. *In the heart of a message of judgment is the most beautiful message of "comfort" and "Shalom". Messengers on the mountains usually proclaim "war" but this messianic LORD will proclaim peace.*

THE PROMISE OF JEWISH RESTORATION AS ISRAEL 1-2

The one with the battle hammer had come up or is coming up against you. Watch the fortress. Observe the path of approach continually, strengthen the loins, **repair your capability greatly** for the LORD will return the splendour or excellence of Jacob as the splendour of Israel for those who empty the bottle have emptied them out and destroyed their pruned (vine) branches.

THE RED ARMY OF NINEVEH -SYMBOL OF ITS SIN 3-4

The shields of the warriors are red. **The men of war are clothed in scarlet. The chariot (is equipped) with burning torches.** In the day of his preparation or (last)stand the lances are shaken. The chariots will have sung along the streets. They will have run to and fro in the broad streets. Their semblance like lighted torches. They will race continually like lightnings.

DEFENCE FAILS-NINEVEH IS OVERWHELMED MAIDS ARE LIKE D=SAD JONAHS 5-7

He will remember his excellent nobles or mighty ones. They will stumble in their walk. They speed to her walls and the defence is prepared. **The gates of the rivers open** and the palace is undone [gmm]. For it has been appointed [bxm] She has been taken captive-she shall be brought up and her maids will keep driving her away [ghm] **AS THE VOICE OF DOVES OR JONAHS CONSTANTLY BEATING ON THEIR BREASTS.** *The reference to "Doves" is more likely to be a comparison with Jonah's ancient cry of calamity. The maids are recording the message of Jonah in the ears of their mistresses and noble lords.*

ONCE A POOL OF HUMANITY-COURAGE GONE-FEAR GRIPS THEM 8-10

For Nineveh was as a pool of water-her waters roar and flee away. Stand, stand but none will face it. Booty of silver, booty of gold for there is no end of established store [hmk] or glory of every desirable vessel. Empty[qwb] and emptied and waste and the heart melts and the knees are unsteady[qwp]for pain is on all sides and all faces gather a pallid colour. [rwrp wxbq "gather in or away all colour"]

WHERE IS THE SPIRIT OF THE LION OF THE EAST? 11-12

Where is the lair of the lions and the eating place that is the preserve of the young lions where the lion walked the lioness and the lions whelp walked and none caused them to fear? The lion would rend according to his cubs (eating) and for his lionesses and filled his mountain dens with trophy and his refuges with torn food.

THE MESSAGE OF NINEVEH-ONE OF SORCERY-END-THE LORD'S MESSAGE CONTINUES 13

Behold me against you, whispers the LORD of hosts and I will cause your chariots to burn in smoke and the sword shall consume your young lions and I will cause your prey to be cut off from the earth and the voice of your ambassadors will be heard no more.

CHAPTER 3

SOUNDS OF THE CITY 1-2

1 Woe to the city of bloodshed, **filled complete deceitful disavowal** [vj k] and **violent rapine**; its prey does not escape.

2 **The sound of a whip**

3 **And the sound of rushing rattling wheels**

4 **And the prancing horse**

5 **And jolting chariots.**

Nineveh was filled with murder and denial of responsibility. It was notable for the violent seizure of property-clearly accompanied by murder. This was the cry God heard. The four other sounds of chariots and horses and whips are sounds of calamity-sounds of judgment.

THE MORAL MALAISE THAT ATTRACTED JUDGMENT 3-4

Horsemen are mounting and the sword is flashing and spear [hij] glittering and there are numerous slain and wounded, numerous including the honoured carcass and there is no end to the corpses. They are falling over the corpses. (Judgement) (This is sprung) from the **numerous harlots** of "the" wealthy pleasure giving "luscious"[nj] harlot [hbwf] **mistress of witchcraft and sorcery who sells nations by her harlotries and families by her witchcraft.**[pvk-prayers to demons or incantations]

THE SHOWCASE CITY OF NINEVEH 5-7

Behold me right in your direction or over against you [la] whispers the LORD of hosts I will keep revealing your clothing or robes over your face. *The action is almost like that of the wind but the Piel is used so the LORD is saying I will continually make your clothes a source not so much of shame but of pain and horror as ravaging soldiers use the harlots. As ever in scripture judgment is in the coinage of the lifestyle of the one judged.* I will cause the nations to see your nakedness and the kingdoms of your shameful deeds and contempt. I will throw abominable things upon you and constantly punish you and cause you to be made a showcase item. *The punishment of Nineveh or Mosul is not yet finished after 2600 years. This city very recently suffered an exodus of its long-standing Christian population and during the years subsequent to the fall of Saddam it suffered a "crack-down". The story of Iraq is not yet over and its warring factions will sadly ensure that it does not easily find peace.*

It shall be so that all who see you will move from you [dan literally "fly away like birds] and say "Nineveh is ruined, who will pity her?" *This is a very striking statement in the light of the divine compassion of 100 or more years before.* AND FROM WHERE SHALL I SEEK COMFORTERS [literally Nahums] FOR YOU?

NINEVEH'S FALL COMPARE TO THE FALL OF THEBES

Are you better than **No Ammon** [*Thebes: Literally "populous No"*] which lived by the rivers of water that surrounded her? Her strength was the sea and her wall like the sea. Cush and Egypt were her strength and her body of soldiers [*mz*] was endless. Phut and Lubim were your auxiliaries. *Thebes was over 300 miles from present day Cairo where present day Luxor is located. The rivers of water were the Nile waters. Its fall was brought about in 663BC by the Assyrian Ashurbanipal. Thebes had the triple protection of the sea and Nile delta, the fortifications at coastal level and the further benefit of being located far inland and beyond the easy reach of land forces.* She (Thebes) also walked away naked into captivity. Her children were dashed against stone at the end of every street and over her nobles they gave the lot of the hand and all her great men were shackled in chains. You will also be drunk. You will hide yourself and you will also seek protective refuge with the enemy.

A NATION IN DECAY-NINEVEH WILL PASS INTO OTHER HANDS LIKE A PURCHASE FROM A STALL

All your **fortified places** are fig trees with early fruit. If they are shaken to and fro they fall into the mouth of the eater. **Behold your people in the heart of your culture are women.** *By this idiom the prophet cites the inherent unreadiness of the nation for war.* The gates of your land are wide open to the enemy. Fire will eat up the (wooden or bronze?) **bars of your gates.** Draw water for you for the siege. Strengthen your fortifications. Go into clay [*fyf*] and tread [*smr*] mortar [*rmj*] like the potter. **Cause the building kiln to be made strong.** *The state of disrepair of the nations kilns shows that even buildings were weakening and presumably for that reason the doors and walls were the more easily broken and stormed.* There the fire will consume you. The sword will cause you to be cut off. It will eat you as a nation like the locust [*qly*] Cause yourselves to be numerous like the locust, numerous as the locust or ambusher. *There is an obvious play on the great numbers of the locust and of the invaders.* **You have increased your merchants or traffic as the stars of heaven.** The locust rushes in and attacks and flies away. *The style of the merchant and the style of the assault are married in Nahum's vivid picture of the siege. The military assault and withdrawal after booty has been captured and the city committed to the flames is quick and effective-like swift business or the devastating action of the locust.*

NINEVEH'S FICKLE MAVERICK LEADERS

Your princes [*Jyrzmm*] are as a locust swarm and your governors or satraps [*Jyrspf*] as the cutting locust that rest on fortifications or walls **on a cold day** [*Hebrew hrq from rrq "to be cold or quiet"*]. **At sunrise they are on the wing and no-one is wise to their whereabouts.**

THE IRREVERSIBLE CATASTROPHE OF NINEVEH

O King of Assyria

(1) Your Shepherds are asleep

(2) Your robed judges or nobles respire [*A euphemism for "refreshing" but one that probably means "taking their last breath"*]

(3) Your people are upon the hills (as sheep) and none is gathering them together.

(4) There is no restraining or mitigation [*hkh-like hhq meaning "blunting"*] of your brokenness-your calamity is your lot. All who hear the report about you will strike their hands. *This is not so much applause but much in the vein of what our sports people do during a match encouraging one another in the certainty that things are going well. This is a gesture of assurance that Nineveh is finally off the world stage. For against whom did not your evil works continually pass over as a tide?[rb["passing over" like the destroying angel]*

THE END

Bob Coffey L'shuvkha Marya
To the glory of the Lord
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