EDIFIED EDITION

Nahum

A modern rendering of the Holy Scriptures

3	47	Old	34
chapters	verses	Testament	book of 66

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Edified Edition (EDE): a modern rendering of the Holy Scriptures from the original Hebrew and Greek, in everyday British English. www.edifiededition.com

Numbered notes follow each chapter.

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Chapter 1

Nahum 1 is the oracle concerning Nineveh, the vision of Nahum of Elkosh. The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; He is slow to anger and great in power, and will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. His way is in the whirlwind and the storm; He rebukes the sea and dries it up, and the mountains quake before Him. Who can stand before His fury? Yet the LORD is good, a refuge in the day of trouble, and He knows those who take shelter in Him. With an overwhelming flood He will make an end of Nineveh. To Judah He promises that He will break the yoke from her neck, while Nineveh's name will not be carried on and her grave is prepared. Look, on the mountains are the feet of one who brings good news and proclaims peace: Judah may keep her festivals, for the wicked will never invade her again.

[1]An oracle concerning Nineveh: the book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.[1]

[2]The LORD is a jealous God who takes vengeance; the LORD takes vengeance and is full of wrath. The LORD takes vengeance on His adversaries and keeps His anger for His enemies.

[3]The LORD is slow to anger but great in power, and the LORD will certainly not acquit the guilty. His path is in the whirlwind and the storm, and clouds are the dust beneath His feet.[2]

[4]He rebukes the sea and dries it up; He makes all the rivers run dry. Bashan and Carmel wither, and the blossom of Lebanon fades.

[5]Before Him the mountains shake and the hills dissolve; the land rises up at His coming, the whole world with everyone who dwells there.

[6]Who can hold his ground when He is indignant? Who can rise against His burning anger? His fury pours out like fire; the very rocks break apart at His approach.

[7]The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of distress; He knows those who take refuge in Him.

[8]Yet He will sweep away her site with a flood in full spate, and darkness will chase down His foes.[3]

[9]Whatever you plot against the LORD, He will bring to a complete end; trouble will not rise up a second time.

[10]For like tangled thorns, and like drunkards soaked in their drink, they will be consumed like

dry stubble.

11 From you, Nineveh, has come one who plots evil
against the LORD, a counsellor of wickedness.

12 This is what the LORD says: Though they are at
full strength and many, even so they will be cut
down and pass away. Though I have afflicted you,
Judah, I will afflict you no more.

13 Now I will break his yoke from off you and snap
your chains.

14 The LORD has given a command concerning
you, Nineveh: No more descendants will bear your
name. I will cut off the carved image and the cast
idol from the house of your gods. I will make your
grave, for you are worthless.

15 Look, on the mountains, the feet of one who
brings good news, who proclaims peace! Keep
your festivals, Judah; fulfil your vows. For the
wicked will never again invade you; they will be
utterly cut off.[4]

1 Nahum prophesied between the fall of Thebes in 663 BC (3:8) and the fall of Nineveh in 612 BC. The site of Elkosh is unknown. ‘Oracle’ is literally ‘burden’.

2 Compare Exodus 34:6–7. Verses 2–8 form a partial acrostic, each line beginning with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

3 ‘Her place’ is Nineveh. Ancient historians say that part of the city’s wall was swept away by the flooding river during the siege.

4 In Hebrew this verse is 2:1, and 2:1–13 are numbered 2:2–14. Compare Isaiah 52:7.

Chapter 2

> *Nahum 2 describes the attack on Nineveh. The one who scatters advances against the city; it is told to guard the ramparts and brace itself, for the LORD is restoring the splendour of Jacob. The attackers’ shields are red and their warriors clothed in scarlet; chariots flash like torches and race through the streets like lightning. The river gates are thrown open and the palace melts away; the queen is carried off while her maids moan like doves. Nineveh is like a pool whose water drains away, and though her people are told to stand, no one turns back. Silver and gold are plundered without end; hearts melt and knees give way. Where now is the lions’ den, where the lion tore prey for his cubs and filled his lairs? The LORD of Armies declares that He is against her: He will burn her chariots and cut off her prey from the earth.*

1 The one who scatters has come up against you,
Nineveh. Guard the fortress, watch the road,
brace yourselves, gather all your strength!

2 For the LORD is restoring the majesty of Jacob,
like the majesty of Israel, though plunderers have
stripped them bare and ruined their vine
branches.

3 The shields of his warriors are reddened; his
fighting men are clothed in scarlet. The metal of
the chariots flashes like fire on the day he musters
them, and the cypress spears are brandished.[1]

4 The chariots dash madly through the streets and
rush to and fro in the squares. They look like
flaming torches; they dart about like lightning.

5 He summons his nobles, but they stumble on
their way. They hurry to the city wall, and the
protective shield is set in place.

6 The river gates are opened, and the palace
dissolves.[2]

7 It is decreed: she is stripped and carried away,
and her slave girls moan like doves and beat their
breasts.[3]

8 Nineveh is like a pool whose waters are draining
away. “Stop! Stop!” they cry, but no one turns
back.

9 Seize the silver! Seize the gold! There is no end
to the treasure, a wealth of every precious thing.

10 She is emptied, drained and stripped! Hearts
melt, knees give way, bodies tremble, and every
face grows pale.[4]

11 Where now is the lions’ den, the feeding place of
the young lions, where the lion and lioness walked
with their cubs, and no one disturbed them?

12 The lion tore enough for his cubs and strangled
prey for his lionesses; he filled his lairs with prey
and his dens with torn flesh.[5]

13 See, I stand against you, says the LORD of
Armies. I will send your chariots up in smoke, and
your young lions will fall to the sword. I will leave
you no prey anywhere in the land, and no one will
hear your envoys’ voices again.

1 ‘Cypress spears’ is literally ‘the cypresses’; the Greek has ‘the horsemen’.

2 Nineveh lay on the Tigris, with the Khosr river running through it; its gates and dams controlled the water.

3 The Hebrew word for ‘it is decreed’ (huzzab) is uncertain; some take it as a name of the queen or of Nineveh’s goddess.

4 The Hebrew has three words of similar sound: buqah, mebuqah, mebullaqah.

5 The lion was an emblem of Assyria’s kings, who decorated their palaces with scenes of lion hunts.

Chapter 3

Nahum 3 pronounces woe on the city of bloodshed, full of lies and plunder, never without victims. The crack of whips, the rumble of wheels, galloping horses and flashing swords leave corpses past counting. All this is because of the prostitute’s countless harlotries, the mistress of sorceries who sold nations. The LORD of Armies will expose her shame to the nations, and all who see her will ask, “Who will grieve for her?” Is she better than Thebes, which sat by the Nile with water all round, yet went into exile with her children dashed to pieces? Nineveh’s fortresses are like fig trees with ripe figs that fall into the eater’s mouth, and her troops are like women. Her merchants and officials will vanish like locusts that fly away when the sun rises. Her shepherds sleep, the king of Assyria’s people are scattered on the mountains, and her wound is fatal; all who hear the news of her clap their hands, for who has not felt her endless cruelty?

1 Woe to the city of bloodshed, full of lies,
crammed with plunder, never letting go of its prey!

2 The crack of the whip, the rattle of wheels,
galloping horses and jolting chariots!

3 Horsemen charging, swords flashing, spears glittering!
Many slain, heaps of corpses, bodies without end;
they stumble over the dead!

4 All because of the countless harlotries of the prostitute,
so alluring, the mistress of sorceries,
who enslaved nations by her harlotries
and peoples by her witchcraft.

5 I am against you, declares the LORD of Armies.
I will lift your skirts over your face
and show the nations your nakedness
and the kingdoms your shame.

6 I will throw filth on you and treat you with contempt;
I will make you a spectacle.

7 All who see you will shrink from you and say,
“Nineveh is in ruins! Who will grieve for her?”
Where can I find anyone to comfort you?

8 Are you better than Thebes, which sat by the Nile
with water all around her,
the sea her rampart and the waters her wall?[1]

9 Her strength was Cush, and Egypt too, without limit;
Put and the Libyans came to her aid.[2]

10 Yet she too went into exile and captivity.
Her infants were dashed to pieces at the head of every street;
they cast lots for her nobles, and all her great men were bound in chains.

11 You too will become drunk; you will hide yourself;
you too will look for a refuge from the enemy.

12 All your fortresses are fig trees with the first ripe figs:
shake them, and they fall into the mouth of the eater.

13 Look at your troops: they are women in your midst!
The gates of your land are wide open to your enemies;
fire has consumed their bars.

14 Draw water for the siege, strengthen your forts!
Go into the clay and tread the mortar;
take hold of the brick mould!

15 There the fire will devour you;
the sword will cut you down and eat you up like the young locust.
Multiply like young locusts, multiply like swarming locusts!

16 You have increased your traders until they outnumber the stars of the sky,
but like young locusts they strip the land and fly away.

17 Your guards are like locusts, your officials like swarms of insects
that settle on the walls on a cold day;
when the sun comes up they fly off,
and no one knows where they have gone.[3]

18 King of Assyria, your shepherds have fallen asleep,
your mighty men lie still.
Your people are scattered across the hills,
and there is no one to round them up.

19 There is no healing for your injury;
your wound is fatal.
All who hear the news about you clap their hands over you,
for who has not suffered from your endless cruelty?

1 Thebes (No-amon, ‘city of Amon’) was the great city of Upper Egypt, sacked by the Assyrians themselves in 663 BC. ‘The sea’ is the Nile.

2 Cush is the upper Nile region (Sudan); Put is probably part of Libya.

3 The words for ‘guards’ and ‘officials’ are rare and may be loanwords from Assyrian.