

INTRODUCTION TO NAHUM

This book is called, in the Vulgate Latin version, “the Prophecy of Nahum”; and in the Syriac and Arabic versions, “the Prophecy of the Prophet Nahum”; and in (~~3400~~ Nahum 1:1); it is called “the Book of the Vision of Nahum”; which is very singular; and from whence we learn of what place this prophet was; but of this more will be said on that verse. His name signifies “consolation”: and though the subject of his prophecy chiefly relates to the destruction of the Assyrian empire, and of Nineveh, the chief city of it; yet this was a comfort to the people of the Jews, that an enemy so powerful, and who was so troublesome to them, and whom they dreaded, should one day be destroyed. In what age Nahum lived is not said; and writers very much disagree about it. Some make him to be the most ancient of all the prophets; who suppose him to prophesy of the destruction of Nineveh, before the reigns of Joash king of Judah, and Jehu king of Israel, as Huetius^{f1} observes; and others bring him down as low, placing him after Ezekiel, in the times of Zedekiah, Clemens of Alexandria^{f2}; neither of which is likely. The Jewish chronologers^{f3} generally make him to live in the times of Manasseh, and so Abarbinel; but Josephus^{f4}, with more probability, puts him in the times of Jotham; though perhaps what the greater number of interpreters give into may be most correct; as that he lived in the times of Hezekiah, and was contemporary with Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, and Micah; and that this prophecy was delivered out after the ten tribes were carried captive by the king of Assyria, which was in the sixth year of Hezekiah, and before Sennacherib’s invasion of Judea, and siege of Jerusalem, which was in the fourteenth year of his reign; and which is thought to be referred to in the “first” chapter of this prophecy. Mr. Whiston^{f5} places him in the year of the world A. M. 3278, or 726 B.C.; and says that he foretold the destruction of Nineveh an hundred fifteen years before it came to pass, so says Josephus^{f6}. How long this prophet lived, and where he died, and was buried, is uncertain. Pseudo-Epiphanius^{f7} says he died and was buried in Begabar. Isidore^{f8} says it was in Bethafarim; both which are to be corrected by Dorotheus, who calls the place Bethabara, as Huetius^{f9} observes; the same where John was baptizing, (~~4028~~ John 1:28); but Benjamin of Tudela^{f10} says his grave was to be seen in a place called Einsiphla, in the land of Chaldea; and speaks of a synagogue of this prophet in the province of Assyria^{f11}; but on these things

we cannot depend. Of the authority of this prophecy there need be no doubt, as appears from the inscription of the book, the sublimity and majesty of the style, and its agreement with other prophets; (see Na 1:15); compared with (~~2517~~ Isaiah 52:7); and the accomplishment of the prophecies contained in it, which respect the ruin of the Assyrian empire, and particularly Nineveh, the metropolis of it; the cause of which were their sins and transgressions, the inhabitants thereof were guilty of, and are pointed at in it.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO NAHUM 1

This chapter begins with the title of the book, showing the subject matter of it; and describing the penman of it by his name and country, (^{300E}Nahum 1:1); which is followed with a preface to the whole book; setting forth the majesty of a jealous and revenging God; the power of his wrath and fury; of which instances are given in exciting tempests; drying up the sea and the rivers; making the most fruitful mountains barren, which tremble before him; yea, even the whole world, and the inhabitants thereof, his indignation being intolerable; and yet he is slow to anger, good to them that trust in him, whom he knows, and whose protection he is in a time of trouble, (^{300E}Nahum 1:2-7). Next the destruction of the Assyrian empire, and of the city of Nineveh, is prophesied of; and is represented as an utter and an entire destruction, and which would come upon them suddenly and unawares, while they were in their cups, (^{300E}Nahum 1:8-10). A particular person among them is spoken of, described as a designing wicked man, an enemy to the Lord and his people, thought to be Sennacherib king of Assyria, (^{301E}Nahum 1:11); from whose evil designs, yoke and bondage, the Jews should be delivered; and he and his posterity be cut off, because of his vileness, (^{301E}Nahum 1:12-14); and the chapter is concluded with tidings of joy to Judah, who are exhorted to keep their feasts and perform their vows on this occasion, (^{301E}Nahum 1:15).

Ver. 1. *The burden of Nineveh*, etc.] Of the city of Nineveh, and the greatness of it, (see Gill on “Jon 1:2”); (see Gill on “Jon 3:3”); Jonah was sent to this city to threaten it with ruin for its sins; at that time the king and all his people humbled themselves and repented, and the threatened destruction was averted; but they relapsing to their former iniquities, this prophet foretells what would be their certain fate; very rightly therefore the Targum, and some other Jewish writings^{f12}, observe, that Jonah prophesied against this city of old; and that Nahum prophesied after him a considerable time, perhaps at a hundred years distance. This prophecy is called a burden; it was taken up by the prophet at the command of the Lord, and was carried or sent by him to Nineveh; and was a hard, heavy, grievous, and

burdensome prophecy to that city, predicting its utter ruin and desolation; and which, as Josephus^{f13} says, came to pass hundred fifteen years after this prophecy; and which event is placed by the learned Usher^{f14} in the year of the world 3378 A.M., and which was 626 B.C.; and by others^{f15} in the year of the world 3403 A.M., of the flood 1747, in 601 B.C.; but by Dean Prideaux^{f16} and Mr. Whiston^{f17}, in 612 B.C.;

the book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite; no other prophecy is called, a book but this, as Abarbinel observes; and gives this reason for it, because the other prophets immediately declared their prophecies, as Jonah; but Nahum never went to the Ninevites, but wrote his prophecy in a book, and sent it to them. It is called “the book of the vision”; what it contains being made known to him by the Lord in a vision, as was common; hence the prophets are called seers; and the prophet is described by the place of his birth, an Elkoshite; though some think he is so called from his father, whose name was Helkesi, and said to be a prophet too, as Jerom relates; and with this agrees the Targum, which calls him Nahum of the house or family of Koshi; but Jarchi says that Elkosh was the name of his city; Aben Ezra and Kimchi are in doubt which to refer it to, whether to his city, or to his ancestors; but there seems no reason to doubt but that he is so called from his native place; since Jerom^{f18} says, that there was a village in Galilee called Helkesi in his days, and which he had seen; though scarce any traces of the old buildings could be discerned, it was so fallen to ruin, yet known, to the Jews; and was shown him by one that went about with him; and which is, by Hesychius^{f19} the presbyter, placed in the tribe of Simeon. This is another instance, besides that of Jonah, disproving the assertion of the Jews, that no prophet rose out of Galilee, (~~John~~ John 7:52).

Ver. 2. *God [is] jealous, and the Lord revengeth*, etc.] He is jealous of his own honour and glory, and for his own worship and ordinances; and will not give his glory to another, nor his praise to graven images; and therefore will punish all idolaters, and particularly the idolatrous Assyrians: he is jealous for his people, and cannot bear to see them injured; and will avenge the affronts that are offered, and the indignities done unto them:

the Lord revengeth, and [is] furious; or, is “master of wrath”^{f20}; full of it, or has it at his command; can restrain it, and let it out as he pleases, which man cannot do; a furious and passionate man, who has no rule over his spirit. The Lord’s revenging is repeated for the confirmation of it; yea, it is a third time observed, as follows; which some of the Jewish writers think

has respect to the three times the king of Assyria carried the people of Israel captive, and for which the Lord would be revenged on him, and punish him:

the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries; on all his adversaries; particularly the Assyrians are here meant, who were both the enemies of him and of his people. The Targum explains it,

“that hate his people:”

vengeance belongs to the Lord, and he will repay it sooner or later; if not immediately, he will hereafter; for it follows:

and he reserveth [wrath] for his enemies: and them for that; if not in this world, yet in the world to come; he lays it up among his treasures, and brings it forth at his pleasure. The word “wrath” is not in the text; it is not said what he reserves for the enemies of himself and church; it is inconceivable and inexpressible.

Ver. 3. *The Lord [is] slow to anger*, etc.] He is not in haste to execute it; he takes time for it, and gives men space for repentance. Nineveh had had a proof of this when it repented at the preaching of Jonah, upon which the Lord deferred the execution of his wrath; but lest they should presume upon this, and conclude the Lord would always bear with them, though they had returned to their former impieties; they are let to know, that this his forbearance was not owing to want of power or will in him to punish: since he is

great in power, and will not at all acquit [the wicked]; he is able to execute the wrath he threatens, and will by no means clear the guilty, or let them go free and unpunished; though he moves slowly, as he may seem in the execution of his judgments, yet they shall surely be brought on his enemies, and be fully accomplished:

the Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds [are] the dust of his feet; he spoke to Job out of the whirlwind; he descended on Mount Sinai in a storm and tempest; and the clouds are his chariots; in which he rides swiftly; and which, for their appearance and number, are like the dust raised by a multitude of horsemen riding full speed, The wrath of God may be compared to a whirlwind, and a storm, which is sometimes hastily and suddenly executed upon men: respect seems to be had to the armies of the Medes and Chaldeans against the Assyrians;

who, as the Babylonians against the Jews, came up as clouds, and their chariots as the whirlwind, (²⁴¹¹³Jeremiah 4:13); and the figures beautifully describe the numbers of them, the force with which they came; and in an elegant manner represent the vast quantity of dust raised by an army in full march; at the head of which was the Lord himself, ordering, directing, and succeeding, before whom none can stand.

Ver. 4. *He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry*, etc.] As he did the Red sea, when the children of Israel passed through it as on dry land; which shows his power and sovereignty over it; that it is at his command, as a servant at his master's; and since the wind and sea obey him, what is it he cannot do? (see ²⁸¹¹⁰Isaiah 50:2 51:10);

and drieth up all the rivers; that is, he can do it if he will; he divided the waters of Jordan, through the midst of which the Israelites passed on dry ground; and will dry up the river Euphrates, to make way for the kings of the east; and as for Tigris, on the banks of which the city of Nineveh stood, of which the inhabitants boasted, and in which they trusted for their security, he could dry up, and make way for the enemy to enter in; or make that their enemy, and overflow them with it, as he did; (see Na 1:8 Na 2:8). By the "sea" and "rivers" may be meant the whole Assyrian empire, and many nations and people, as Jarchi and Abarbinel interpret it, of whom it consisted; (see ²⁶¹³⁶Jeremiah 51:36 ⁶⁶⁷¹⁵Revelation 17:15);

Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth; when the Lord restrains the heavens from giving rain, then Bashan, famous for its fat pastures and fruitful meadows, and Carmel for its rich grain fields, and Lebanon for its tall shadowy cedars, these, and the glory of all, wither and fade away, being parched and dried up for want of moisture. These were places in the land of Israel, but may be put for like flourishing and fruitful hills and countries in the land of Assyria, which should become desolate; (see ¹⁹⁴⁷³³Psalms 107:33,34).

Ver. 5. *The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt*, etc.] As Sinai of old did, when the Lord descended on it, (¹²¹⁹¹⁸Exodus 19:18 ¹⁰¹⁸¹⁶Judges 5:5). Mountains figuratively signify kings and princes; and hills large countries, as Jarchi and Abarbinel observe, and the inhabitants of them; particularly the kingdoms and nations belonging to the Assyrian empire, which would tremble and quake, and their hearts melt with fear, when they should hear of the destruction of Nineveh their chief city; and of the devastation made

by the enemy there and in other parts, under the direction of the Lord of hosts; his power and providence succeeding him:

and the earth is burnt at his presence; either when he withholds rain from it, and so it becomes parched and burnt up with the heat of the sun; or when he rains fire and brimstone on it, as he did on Sodom and Gomorrah; or consumes any part of it with thunder and lightning, as he sometimes does; nay, if he but touch the mountains, they smoke; (see ^{}Psalm 104:32);

yea, the world, and all that dwell therein; as in the last day, at the general conflagration, when the world, and all the wicked inhabitants of it, will be burnt up; (see ^{<C>}2 Peter 3:10).

Ver. 6. *Who can stand before his indignation?* etc.] No creature whatever; no man nor body of men; not Nineveh, and the inhabitants of it; nor the whole Assyrian empire:

and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? not the great men of the earth; not kings or generals of armies; not kingdoms and nations, ever so numerous and powerful; but all must be consumed by him, who is a consuming fire; (see ^{<D>}Jeremiah 10:10 ^{<E>}Revelation 6:15-17);

his fury is poured out like fire; or like metal that is melted by fire, and poured out by the force of it; or like fire of lightning poured out of the heavens, which is quick, powerful, and penetrating, and there is no resisting it:

and the rocks are thrown down by him; by the Lord, by his wrath and fury; kingdoms that seemed as strong and immovable as rocks and mountains are thrown down; as such have been by the force of fire bursting from the midst of them, as Etna, Vesuvius, and others.

Ver. 7. *The Lord [is] good*, etc.] To Israel, as the Targum adds; to Hezekiah and his people, that betook themselves to him, and put their trust in him; whom he defended and preserved from the king of Assyria, to whom he was dreadful and terrible, destroying his army in one night by an angel; and so delivered the king of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from that terror that had seized them, and that danger they were exposed unto; and so the Lord is good in himself, in the perfections of his nature, in the works of his hands, in all his persons to his people, that fear him, trust in him, and seek him, and wait for him, and on him:

a strong hold in the day of trouble; or, he is “good for a strong hold”^{f21}, etc. it was a day of trouble, rebuke, and blasphemy, with Hezekiah and his people, when they were besieged by the army of Sennacherib king of Assyria, and had received from Rabshakeh by his orders a railing and reproaching letter; and then the Lord was a strong hold to them, to whom they betook themselves, and he protected and defended them. The whole time of this life is a time of trouble to the saints, though it is but a day, a short time; in which they meet with much from their own corrupt hearts, and the sin that dwells in them; from Satan and his temptations; from carnal professors, their principles and practices; and from a profane and persecuting world; and from the Lord himself, who sometimes lays his afflicting hand upon them, and hides his face from them; and yet he is their rock and their refuge, their strong tower and place of defence; where they find safety and plenty in all their times of distress and want:

and he knoweth them that trust in him; in his word, as the Targum; and they are such that know him, and are sensible of the vanity of all other objects of trust; who betake themselves to him for shelter and protection; lean and stay themselves upon him, and commit all unto him, and expect all from him: these he knows, loves, and has the strongest affection for; he approves of them, and commends their faith and confidence; he takes notice of them, visits them, and makes himself known unto them, even in their adversity; he owns and acknowledges them as his own, claims his right in them now, and will confess them hereafter; and he takes care of them that they perish not, whoever else do; (see ^{<3006>}Psalm 1:6 ^{<3018>}2 Timothy 2:18,19); he knows the necessities of those that trust in him, as Jarchi; he knows them for their good, takes care of them, provides for, them, and watches over them, as Kimchi. The ancients formerly had their *γνωσθηρας* and *μυνητας*, “notores”^{f22}, such as knew them, and were their patrons and defenders; as when a Roman citizen was condemned to be whipped or crucified in a province where he was not known, and claimed the Roman privileges, such persons were his witnesses and advocates; and thus the Lord is represented as one that knows his people, and is their patron and advocate. The goodness of God expressed in this text is set off with a foil by the terribleness of his wrath and vengeance against his enemies.

Ver. 8. *But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof*, etc.] Of Nineveh, against whom this prophecy was, and upon whom it lay as a burden, (^{<3001>}Nahum 1:1); and now though the Lord

was good to them that trust in him, and a strong hold to them in a time of trouble; yet he was determined to destroy their enemies the Assyrians, and Nineveh their chief city; and that by the means of a powerful army, which, like a flood or inundation of water breaking in, overruns and carries all before it; and very fitly may the Medes and Babylonians, who joined together in an expedition against Nineveh, be compared to such a flood for their number and force; since, as the historian tells^{f23} us, they were no less than four hundred thousand men: though this may be literally understood; for as the same writer^{f24} observes,

“there was an oracle received by the Ninevites from their ancestors, that Nineveh could never be taken by any, unless the river (on which it stood) first became an enemy to it; and so it was, that, in the third year of the siege, the river, being swelled with continual rains, overflowed part of the city, and broke down the wall for the space of two and half miles; hence the king concluded the oracle was fulfilled, and gave up all hopes of safety; and through the breach of the wall the enemy entered, and took the city;”

and an “utter end” was made of it, and of the place of it, insomuch that historians and geographers disagree about it; some say it was situated upon the river Euphrates, others upon the river Tigris, which is the most correct; some say on the east of that river, others on the west; some will have it to be above the river Lycus, and others below it; so true is that of Lucian^{f25}, that Nineveh is now entirely lost, and no traces of it remain; nor can one easily say where it once was; and travellers in general, both ancient and modern, agree that it lies wholly in ruins, and is a heap of rubbish. Benjamin Tudelensis^{f26}, who travelled into these parts in the twelfth century, relates, that between Almozal or Mosul, and Nineveh, is only a bridge, and it (Nineveh) is a waste; but there are villages, and many towers. Haitho, an Armenian^{f27}, who wrote more than a hundred years after the former, says,

“this city (Nineveh) at present is wholly destroyed; but, by what yet appears in it, it may be firmly believed that it was one of the greatest cities in the world.”

Monsieur Thevenot^{f28}, who was upon the spot in the last century, observes,

“on the other side of the river (Tigris from that on which Mosul stands) at the end of the bridge begins the place, where, in ancient times, stood the famous city of Nineveh. --There is nothing of it,

(adds he) now to be seen, but some hillocks, which (they say) are its foundations, the houses being underneath; and these reach a good way below the city of Mosul:"

and darkness shall pursue his enemies; the enemies of God and his people, who would make such a devastation of Nineveh; even he would cause all manner of calamities, often signified in Scripture by darkness, to follow and overtake them; so that they should be brought into the most uncomfortable and distressed condition imaginable.

Ver. 9. *What do ye imagine against the Lord?* etc.] O ye Ninevites or Assyrians; do you think you can frustrate the designs of the Lord, resist his power, and hinder him from executing what he has threatened and has determined to do? or what mischief is it you devise against his people, which is the same as against himself? can you believe that you shall prosper and succeed, and your schemes be carried into execution, when he, the all wise and all powerful Being, opposes you?

he will make an utter end; of you, as before declared, and will save his people; which may be depended on will certainly be the case:

affliction shall not rise up the second time; either this should be the last effort the Assyrians would make upon the Jews, which they made under Sennacherib, and this the last time they would afflict them; or rather their own destruction should be so complete that there would be no need to repeat the stroke, or give another blow; the business would be done at once. This seems to contradict a notion of some historians and chronologers, who suppose that Nineveh was destroyed at two different times, and by different persons of the same nations; and so the whole Assyrian empire was twice ruined, which is not likely in itself, and seems contrary to this passage; for though some ascribe it to Arbaces the Mede, and Belesis the Babylonian as Diodorus Siculus^{f29}; and others to Cyaxares the Mede as Herodotus^{f30}, and to Nebuchadnezzar the first, or Nabopolassar the Babylonian in a later period; so Tobit^{f31} says it was taken by Nebuchadnezzar and Ahasuerus, the same with the Cyaxares of Herodotus; yet all seem to agree that it was taken by the conjunct forces of the Medes and Babylonians; and there are some things similar^{f32} in all these accounts, which show that there was but one destruction of Nineveh, and of the Assyrian empire.

Ver. 10. *For while [they be] folden together [as] thorns*, etc.] Like them, useless and unprofitable, harmful and pernicious, fit only for burning, and, being bundled together, are prepared for it; and which is not only expressive of the bad qualities of the Ninevites, and of the danger they were in, and what they deserved; but of the certainty of their ruin, no more being able to save themselves from it, than a bundle of thorns from the devouring fire:

and while they are drunken [as] drunkards; dead drunk, no more able to help themselves than a drunken man that is fallen; or who were as easily thrown down as a drunken man is with the least touch; though there is no need to have recourse to a figurative sense, since the Ninevites were actually drunk when they were attacked by their enemy, as the historian relates^{f33}; that the king of Assyria being elated with his fortune, and thinking himself secure, feasted his army, and gave them large quantities of wine; and while the whole army were indulging themselves, the enemy, having notice of their negligence and drunkenness by deserters, fell upon them unawares in the night, when disordered and unprepared, and made a great slaughter among them, and forced the rest into the city, and in a little time took it:

they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry; as easily, and as inevitably and irrecoverably.

Ver. 11. *There is [one] come out of thee*, etc.] That is, out of Nineveh, as the Targum explains it; meaning Sennacherib, who had his royal seat and palace there; or Rabshakeh that was sent from hence by him with a railing and blaspheming letter to the king of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. This is said to be at the present time of writing this prophecy, though it was after it, because of the certainty of it, as is usual in prophetic language; unless it can be thought that this prophecy was delivered out exactly at the time when Sennacherib had entered Judea, and was before the walls of Jerusalem; but not yet discomfited, as after predicted:

that imagineth evil against the Lord; against the people of the Lord, as the Targum; formed a scheme to invade the land of Judea, take the fenced cities thereof, and seize upon Jerusalem the metropolis of the nation, and carry the king, princes, and all the people captive as Shalmaneser his father had carried away the ten tribes:

a wicked counsellor; or “a counsellor of Belial”^{f34}; who, by Rabshakeh, advised Israel not to regard their king, nor trust in their God but surrender themselves up to him, (^{<1289>}2 Kings 18:29-31).

Ver. 12. *Thus saith the Lord, though [they be] quiet, and likewise many,* etc.] The Assyrian army under Sennacherib before Jerusalem, though they were quiet and secure and thought themselves out of all danger; not at all fearing that the besieged would sally out against them they being so numerous, and therefore betook themselves to sleep and rest:

yet thus shall they be cut down; or “shorn”^{f35}; as the wool is shorn off the back of a sheep with sheers; or grass or corn is mowed with a scythe; or else as the hair of a man’s head and beard are shaved with a razor; which sometimes was done, not only in a way of ignominy and contempt, as David’s servants were served by Hanun, (^{<1004>}2 Samuel 10:4); but as a token of servitude; hence those words of the poet^{f36},

“after thou art a servant, dost thou let thy hair grow?”

upon which it is observed^{f37}, that it belongs to freemen to let the hair grow; and so the philosopher says^{f38}, to let the hair grow, or to nourish it, is commendable with a Lacedemonian, for it is a sign of liberty; for it is not for him who lets his hair grow to do any servile work; and it was usual with conquerors to shave the conquered, and such as were carried captives^{f39}, which some think is referred to in (^{<1530>}Deuteronomy 32:42); and render the latter clause of that verse,

“and there shall be captivity, by reason of the head of nakedness of the enemy;”

that is, there should be captives whose heads should be made bare, or shaved by the enemy the conqueror^{f40}; hence the king of Assyria, when a conqueror, is compared to a sharp razor, that should shave the head, and feet, and beard, even all sorts of people, (^{<2171>}Isaiah 7:20); but now he and his army should be shaved themselves; that is, conquered, slain, or taken captives, and become slaves, and treated with contempt; all which may be taken into the sense of this phrase, and serve to illustrate it:

when he shall pass through; when the angel should pass through the camp of the Assyrians, then were they cut down by him in great numbers, a hundred and fourscore and five thousand slain at once, (^{<1295>}2 Kings 19:35);

though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more: or “any longer”^{f41}; though the Lord had afflicted the people of the Jews by the Assyrian king, the rod of his anger, again and again, yet after this he would afflict them no more by him; for otherwise they were afflicted afterwards, yet not by the Assyrians, but by the Babylonians, Syrians, and Romans, Some understand this, as before, of the Ninevites and Assyrians, that should be utterly destroyed at once, and their affliction should not be a second time; (see Na 1:9); so Abarbinel: or, “I will not hear thee any more”^{f42}; as he did formerly, when they repented at the preaching of Jonah.

Ver. 13. *For now will I break his yoke from off thee,* etc.] The Assyrian yoke from off the Jews, who had been obliged to pay tribute, or send presents to the king of Assyria, from the times of Ahaz; and were in bondage, while shut up and besieged by his army, and the country all around laid under contribution; from all which they were delivered when his army was in that dreadful manner destroyed:

and will burst thy bonds in sunder; and set thee entirely free from the bondage of the enemy, and all fear of it; a type of that freedom from the yoke of sin, Satan, and the law, which the people of God have by Jesus Christ.

Ver. 14. *And the Lord hath given a commandment concerning thee,* etc.] This is directed to Sennacherib king of Assyria, as the Targum expresses it; and so Jarchi and Kimchi; and signifies the decree of God concerning him, what he had determined to do with him, and how things would be ordered in Providence towards him, agreeably to his design and resolution:

[that] no more of thy name be sown; which is not to be understood that he should have no son and heir to succeed him; for Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead, (^{<12957>}2 Kings 19:37); and after him, according to Ptolemy’s canon, Saosduchinus and Chyniladanus but the memory of his name should no be spread in the earth; or the fame of it, with any marks of honour and glory, but of shame and disgrace. So the Targum,

“neither shall be any memory of thy name any more:”

out of the house of thy gods will I cut of the graven image and the molten image; called “the house of Nisroch his god”, (^{<12957>}2 Kings 19:37); where he was slain; and some say that after that it ceased to be a place of worship, being polluted with his blood. Josephus^{f43} calls it his own temple, where he usually worshipped, for which he had a peculiar regard, and for

his god Nisroch; but who this deity was is not certain. Selden says^{f44}, he knew nothing, nor had read anything of him, but what is mentioned in the Scripture. Some of the Jewish writers^{f45} take it to be a plank of Noah's ark; and Mr. Basnage^{f46} is of opinion that it is Janus represented by Noah's ark, who had two faces, before and behind; a fit emblem of Noah, who saw two worlds, one before, and another after the flood. Some say Dagon the god of the Philistines is meant, which is not likely; (see Gill on "~~2373~~ Isaiah 37:38"); but, be he who he will, there were other idols besides him, both graven and molten, in this temple, as is here expressed; very probably here stood an image of Belus or Pul, the first Assyrian monarch, and who; was deified; and perhaps Adrammelech the god of the Sepharvites was another, since one of Sennacherib's sons bore this name; and it was usual with the Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Babylonians, to give the names of their gods to their princes, or insert them in theirs: here also might be the Assyrian Venus, Derceto, Semiramis, and others: fishes also were worshipped by the Assyrians, in honour of Derceto; and doves in remembrance of Semiramis, said to be nourished by one in her infancy, and turned into one at her death; hence those creatures became sacred in Assyria, and were not suffered to be touched and killed, as Philo observed at Askelon; (see Gill on "~~2811~~ Hosea 11:11"); and Lucian^{f47} at Hieropolis in Syria; where, he says, of all birds, they think the dove most holy; so that they count it very unlawful to touch them; and if by chance they do, they reckon themselves unclean that whole day; hence you may see them frequently in their houses conversing familiarly with them, generally feeding on the ground, without any fear; and he also says^{f48} the Assyrians sacrifice to a dove, and which he must have known, since he himself was an Assyrian, as he tells us; but, whatever these graven and molten images were, it is here predicted they should be utterly demolished. The sense is, that whereas Sennacherib's empire should be destroyed, and his capital taken, the temple where he worshipped would be defaced, and all his gods he gloried of, all his images, both graven and molten, would be cut to pieces, falling into the conqueror's hands, as was usual in such cases; these would not be able to defend him or his, or secure them from the vengeance of God, whom he had blasphemed:

I will make thy grave, for thou art vile: the Targum is,

“there will I put thy grave;”

that is, in the house of thy god, as Aben Ezra, Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, interpret it; where he was slain by two of his sons, as before observed; and this judgment came upon him by the will of God, because he was a loose vile creature; because he had vilified the true God, and reproached him, as unable to deliver Hezekiah and his people out of his hands. The Targum paraphrases it,

“because this is easy before me;”

what the Lord could easily do, make his idol temple his grave; or, however, take away his life, and lay his honour in the dust: or it may be rendered, “I will put [upon] thy grave that thou art vile”^{f49}; he, who thought to have a superb monument over his grave, and an epitaph inscribed on it to his immortal honour, as kings used to have; this shall be the sepulchral inscription,

“here lies a vile, wicked, and contemptible man;”

so Abarbanel. There was a statue of this king in an Egyptian temple, as Herodotus^{f50} relates, according, as many think, with this inscription on it,

“whosoever looks on me, let him be religious;”

though I rather think it was a statue of Sethon the priest of Vulcan, and last king of Egypt. Here ends the first chapter in some Hebrew copies, and in the Syriac and Arabic versions, and in Aben Ezra.

Ver. 15. *Behold upon the mountains*, etc.] Of the land of Israel, as the Targum; or those about Jerusalem:

the feet of him that bringeth good tidings; see how they come one after another with the news of the havoc and slaughter made in the army of Sennacherib by an angel in one night; of his flight, and of the death of him by the hands of his two sons; and, after that, of the destruction of Nineveh, and of the whole Assyrian empire; all which were good tidings to the Jews, to whom the Assyrians were implacable enemies, and whose power the Jews dreaded; and therefore it must be good news to them to hear of their defeat and ruin, and the messengers that brought it must be welcome to them:

that publisheth peace; to the Jewish nation, who might from hence hope for peaceable and prosperous times: like expressions with these are used in (²⁵¹⁷Isaiah 52:7) on account of the return of the Jews from the Babylonish

captivity; and are applied by the apostle to Gospel times and Gospel preachers, (^{<6015>}Romans 10:15) as these may also, and express the good tidings of victory obtained by Christ over sin, Satan, the world, hell and death; and of salvation wrought out, and peace made by him; it being usual for the prophets abruptly and at once to rise from temporal to spiritual and eternal things, particularly to what concern the Messiah, and the Gospel dispensation; (see Gill on “^{<2517>}Isaiah 52:7”):

O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts; of the passover, pentecost, and tabernacles; which had been interrupted or omitted through the invasion of the land, and the siege of Jerusalem, by the enemy; but now, he being gone and slain, they had full liberty, and were at leisure to attend these solemnities:

perform thy vows; which they had made when in distress, when the enemy was in their land, and before their city; promising what they would do, if it pleased God to deliver them out of his hands, and now they were delivered; and therefore it was incumbent on them to make good their promises, and especially to offer up their thanksgivings to God for such a mercy; (see ^{<6014>}Psalm 50:14 66:13,14 ^{<2104>}Ecclesiastes 5:4,5):

for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off; or Belial, the counsellor of Belial, as in (^{<3011>}Nahum 1:11) the king of Assyria; who, though he had passed through their land, had invaded it, and made devastation in it, should do so no more; being dead, cut off in a judicial way, through the just judgment of God, suffering his sons to take away his life while in the midst of his idolatrous worship; and this may reach, not only to him, and his seed after him, being wholly cut off, but to the whole Assyrian empire, who should none of them ever give any further trouble to Judah.

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO NAHUM 2

This chapter gives an account of the destruction of the city of Nineveh; describes the instruments of it as very terrible and powerful, and not to be resisted, (^{<311>}Nahum 2:1-4). The manner of taking it, the flight of its inhabitants, and the spoil of its riches and treasures, (^{<311>}Nahum 2:5-10) and the king and the princes thereof, compared to a lion, and a lion's whelp, are insulted as being without a den or dwelling place, because of their cruelty and ravening, for which the Lord was against them, and threatened them with utter ruin, which he brought upon them, (^{<311>}Nahum 2:11-13).

Ver. 1. *He that dasheth in pieces is come up before thy face,* etc.] O Nineveh, or land of Assyria; for this is not to be understood of Sennacherib's coming up against Jerusalem, as Kimchi; but of Nebuchadnezzar against Nineveh, as Aben Ezra; not Nebuchadnezzar the great, who, the Jewish chronologers say^{f51}, took Nineveh in the first year of his reign; but his father, Nebuchadnezzar the first, called Nabopolassar, who, with Cyaxares or Ahasuerus the Mede, joined their forces against Nineveh, and took it, see the Apocrypha:

“But before he died he heard of the destruction of Nineve, which was taken by Nabuchodonosor and Assuerus: and before his death he rejoiced over Nineve.” (Tobit 14:15)

and these together, the Chaldeans and Medes, are the “dasher in pieces”; or, “the hammer”^{f52}, as the word may be rendered; and so Babylon, over which one of these kings reigned, is called the hammer of the whole earth, (^{<311>}Jeremiah 50:23) these came up openly, boldly, to the face of the king of Assyria, attacked him in his metropolis, not fearing his strength and numbers:

keep the munition; this and what follow are spoken ironically to the Assyrian king, and inhabitants of Nineveh, to take care of their towers and garrisons, and fortify them, and fill them with soldiers: and

watch the way; in which the enemy came; secure the passes and avenues that lead to their city; stop his march, and prevent his access:

make [thy] loins strong; put on armour, gird on the sword, prepare for war:

fortify [thy] power mightily; increase thine army, exert all thy strength and courage, and do all that is in thy power to do, to oppose the enemy, and defend thyself; and when all is done, it will be in vain.

Ver. 2. *For the Lord hath turned away the excellency of Jacob, as the excellency of Israel*, etc.] Or, “will render” a recompence for, or “revenge the pride of Jacob”^{f53}; all that insolence, and those injuries done in a proud and haughty manner by Sennacherib king of Assyria to the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin; invading their land, taking their fenced cities, and besieging their metropolis; and in an audacious manner threatening them with utter destruction, unless they surrendered; and also by Shalmaneser, another king of Assyria, who had besieged and took Samaria the capital city of Israel or the ten tribes, and had carried them captive; and now Assyria, though it had been the rod of God’s anger, and the instrument of his chastisement and correction of his people, must in its turn suffer and smart for all this:

for the emptiers have emptied them out: the Assyrians, partly by their exactions and tributes they demanded, and partly by their spoil and plunder, had stripped Israel and Judah of all, or the greatest part, of their substance, wealth, and treasure:

and marred their vine branches; their children, their sons and daughters, slaying them, or carrying them captive. Israel and Judah are often compared to a vine, and so their posterity to branches: or “corrupted”^{f54} them, with superstition and idolatry. The Targum interprets it of their renowned cities; these, and towns and villages, being to the land as branches to the vine; and which had been ransacked and pillaged by the Assyrians, and now they should be paid in their own coin.

Ver. 3. *The shield of his mighty men is made red*, etc.] The shields of the soldiers in the armies of the Babylonians and Medes, those dashers in pieces that would come up against Nineveh, should be red; either with the blood of the slain, or thus coloured on purpose to inject terror to their enemies; or this may express the lustre of them, which being gilded, or

made of gold or brass, in the rays of the sun glittered, and looked of a fiery red; see the Apocrypha:

“Now when the sun shone upon the shields of gold and brass, the mountains glistered therewith, and shined like lamps of fire.” (1 Maccabees 6:39)

the valiant men [are] in scarlet; the generals and other officers of the army were clothed in scarlet; partly to show their greatness and nobleness, and partly to strike their enemies with terror, and to hide their blood should they be wounded, and so keep up their own spirits, and not encourage their enemies:

the chariots [shall be] with flaming torches in the day of his preparation; that is, when the Medes and Chaldeans, under their respective commander or commanders, shall prepare for the siege of the city, and to make their onset and attack upon it, the chariots used by them in war, which was common in those times, would have flaming torches in them; either to guide them in the night, or to set fire to houses or tents they should meet with, or to terrify the enemy: or “the chariots [shall be] as flaming torches”^{f55}; they should run with such swiftness, that the wheels, being of iron, or cased with it, should strike fire upon the stones in such quantities, that they should look like torches flaming:

and the fir trees shall be terribly shaken; with the motion of the chariots; or this may be interpreted of spears and lances, and such like instruments of war, made of fir; which should be in such great numbers, and with so much activity used against the Ninevites, that it would look like shaking a forest of fir trees. The Targum interprets these of the great men and generals of their armies glittering in dyed garments; and Kimchi’s father, of the princes and great men of the city of Nineveh, who would be seized with terror, and reel about like drunken men; and so all that follows in the next verse (^{344*}Nahum 2:4).

Ver. 4. *The chariots shall rage in the streets*, etc.] In the streets of Nineveh when taken; where they shall be drove in a furious manner from place to place, the men in them breathing out slaughter and death wherever they came. Kimchi understands this of the chariots of the Ninevites; who shall drive about in them in the streets of the city like madmen; not daring to go out to fight the enemy, being mightier and more numerous than they.

They shall jostle one against another in the broad ways; because of their numbers, and the haste they shall make to spoil and plunder the city; or the Ninevites shall jostle one against another, in their hurry and confusion to make their escape.

They shall seem like torches; either the chariots of the Medes and Chaldeans, for the reasons given in the preceding verse (^{311B}Nahum 2:3); or they themselves, because of their fierceness and cruelty; or the faces of the Ninevites, being covered with shame, so Kimchi; (see ^{231B}Isaiah 13:8).

They shall run like the lightnings; exceeding swiftly, with irresistible force and power; the above writer interprets this of the Ninevites also, running from one end of their city to the other in the utmost confusion, not knowing what to do; but the whole of these two verses (^{311B}Nahum 2:3,4) seem to be a description of their enemies.

Ver. 5. *He shall recount his worthies*, etc.] Either the dasher in pieces, (^{311B}Nahum 2:1), the kings of Babylon and Media, shall call together their general officers, and muster the forces under them, and put them in mind of their duty, and recount the actions of their ancestors in former times, in order to animate and encourage them to the siege and attack of the city of Nineveh; or the king of Assyria shall recount and muster up his nobles, and the troops under them, to sally out against the enemy, and meet him in the field, and give him battle:

they shall stumble in their walk: being many, and in haste to obey the orders of their commander, shall stumble and fall upon one another; or else the Ninevites in their march out against the enemy shall be discomfited and flee before him, or be dispirited and flee back again:

they shall make haste to the wall thereof; of Nineveh; that is, the Medes and Chaldeans shall make haste thither, to break it down or scale it; or the Ninevites, failing in their sally out, shall betake themselves in all haste to their city walls, and defend themselves under the protection of them:

and the defence shall be prepared; or the “covering”: the word^{f56} used has the signification of a booth or tent, to cover and protect; here it signifies something that was prepared, either by the besiegers, to cover them from the darts and stones of the besieged, as they made their approaches to the walls; or which the besieged covered themselves with from the assaults of the besiegers; rather the former.

Ver. 6. *The gates of the rivers shall be opened*, etc.] Of Diava and Adiava, or Lycus and Caprus, between which, according to some writers,^{f57} Nineveh was situated; or the gates of the city, which lay nearest to the river Tigris, are meant; or that river itself, the plural for the singular, which overflowing, broke down the walls of the city for two and a half miles, and opened a way for the Medes and Chaldeans to enter in; of which (see Na 1:8):

and the palace shall be dissolved; by the inundation, or destroyed by the enemy; meaning the palace of the king, which might be situated near the river; or the temple of Nisroch the Assyrian deity, or Jupiter Belus; for the same word^{f58} signifies a temple as well as palace.

Ver. 7. *And Huzzab shall be led away captive*, etc.] The Targum translates it the queen; and Jarchi and Aben Ezra, after R. Samuel, take it to be the name of the queen of Assyria; so called, as every queen might, from her standing at the king's right hand, (^{<980>}Psalm 45:9) who, when the royal palace was destroyed, was taken out, and carried captive with the rest, who before was in a well settled and tranquil state and condition: or perhaps the king himself is designed, who may be represented as a woman, as follows, for his effeminacy; conversing only with women; imitating their voice; wearing their apparel; and doing their work, spinning, etc. which is the character historians^{f59} give of the last king of the Assyrians: some^{f60} take it to be the idol Venus, worshipped by the Ninevites: though it may be meant either of the palace itself, as Kimchi's father, which was firm and well established; or rather Nineveh itself, thought to be stable and secure, the inhabitants of which should be carried into a strange land:

she shall be brought up; the queen, or the king, out of the palace or private retirement, where they were in peace and safety; or Nineveh, and the inhabitants of it, out of their secure state and condition:

and her maids shall lead [her]; her maids of honour, supporting her on the right hand and left, ready to sink and faint under her misfortunes: this may also be understood of towns and villages, and the inhabitants of them, that should go into captivity along with Nineveh:

as with the voice of doves, tabering upon their breasts; mourning like doves, inwardly and secretly, not daring to express their sorrow more publicly, because of their enemies; but knocking and beating upon their

breasts, as men do upon tabrets or drums, thereby expressing the inward grief of their minds; (see ³³⁷⁶Ezekiel 7:16).

Ver. 8. *But Nineveh [is] of old like a pool of water*, etc.] This was a very ancient city, built by Nimrod, as some say; or rather by Ashur, as appears from (⁰¹⁰⁰Genesis 10:10,11) and it was like fish pool, full of people, as it was in the times of Jonah, who for their number may be compared both to water and to fish; and likewise full of wealth and riches, which for their instability may be signified by water also; and moreover, like a pool of standing water, had never been liable to any commotions and disturbances, but had remained from the beginning in a tranquil and prosperous state; besides, some regard may be had in a literal sense to its situation, being watered by the river Tigris, and which was for its profit and defence: so some copies of the Septuagint read the words,

“Nineveh is like a pool of water, the waters are her walls:”

and the Syriac version is,

“Nineveh is as a lake of water, and is among the waters;”

(see Na 1:6):

yet they shall flee away; the waters out of the pool, the sluices being opened, or the banks broken down; or the people out of the city, breaches being made in its walls, or its gates opened, and the enemy entering; when everyone would flee for his life, and make his escape in the best manner he could:

stand, stand, [shall they cry]; either the generals and officers of the king of Assyria’s army, to the soldiers running away; or the more courageous inhabitants of the city, to those that were timorous and seized with a panic, fleeing in the utmost consternation; or the enemy, as Kimchi, who shall call to them to stop, promising to spare their lives upon a surrender of them to them:

but none shall look back; and stand to hear what is said unto them, but make the best of their way, and flee with all their might and main.

Ver. 9. *Take ye the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold*, etc.] Of which there was a great quantity in this rich and populous city: these are the words of the prophet, or of the Lord by the prophet, to the Medes and Chaldeans, to seize the spoil of the city, now fallen into their hands;

suggesting that this was by the order and will of God, though they saw it not: or of the generals of the army of the Medes and Babylonians, giving leave to the common soldiers to take part of the plunder, there being enough for them all, officers and private men:

for [there is] none end of the store [and] glory out of all the pleasant furniture: no end of the wealth which had been hoarded up, and of their household goods and rich apparel, which their coffers, houses, and wardrobes, were full of, the value of which could not be told. The king of Assyria, perceiving that he, his family, and his wealth, were like to fall into the hands of the enemy, caused a pile of wood to be raised, and in it heaped his gold, silver, and royal apparel, and, enclosing himself, his eunuchs, and concubines in it, set fire to it, and destroyed himself and them. It is said^{f61} there were no less in this pile than a thousand myriads of talents of gold, which are about fourteen hundred millions sterling, and ten times as many talents of silver, together with apparel and furniture unspeakable; and yet, after all this, the princes of the Babylonians and Medes carried off vast quantities. The Babylonian prince loaded several ships with the ashes of the pile, and a large quantity of gold and silver, discovered to him by an eunuch, a deserter; and the Median prince, what of the gold and silver left out of the pile, which were many talents, that fell into his hands, he sent to Ecbatana, the royal city of Media^{f62}.

Ver. 10. *She is empty, and void, and waste,* etc.] The city of Nineveh, empty of inhabitants, being killed, or having fled; and stripped of all its treasures and riches by the enemies; its walls and houses demolished and pulled down, and laid in ruins, and become a heap of rubbish; (see Gill on “Na 1:8”). Various words are here used to ascertain and confirm the thing; and there is an elegant play on words or likeness of sounds, which our language will not express:

and the heart melteth; the heart of every inhabitant of Nineveh melted with fear at the approach of their enemies, their entrance into the city, and plunder of it; flowed like water, or melted like wax; (see ^{<9214>}Psalm 22:14):

and the knees smite together; like people in a fright, and when a panic has seized them; and as it was with Belshazzar, (^{<9716>}Daniel 5:6):

and much pain [is] in all loins; like that of women in travail; or of persons in a sudden fright, which gives them a pain in their backs at once:

and the faces of them all gather blackness; like a pot, as the Targum adds; being in great distress and disconsolation, which make men appear in a dismal hue, and their countenances look very dark and gloomy; (see ²⁰¹⁶ Joel 2:6).

Ver. 11. *Where [is] the dwelling of the lions?* etc.] Of the kings of Assyria, comparable to lions for their strength, courage, and cruelty, tyranny, and oppression; such as Pul, Tiglathpileser, Shalmaneser, and Sennacherib. So the Targum,

“where are the habitations of kings?”

these are the words, either of the prophet, or of the people that had seen this city in its glory, and now see it in its ruins; and so desolate and waste, as that it could scarcely be said where it once stood:

and the feedingplace of the young lions? the sons of the kings of Assyria, the princes of the blood, and who were of the same blood, temper, and disposition of their ancestors, and were born, brought up, and educated, in Nineveh the royal city. So the Targum,

“and the dwelling houses of the princes,”

or governors:

where the lion, [even] the old lion, walked: not Nebuchadnezzar, as Jerom, who entered into Nineveh the den of those lions, or seat of the Assyrians, and took it, and walked about in it, as the conqueror and possessor of it; but rather Nimrod, that old lion and tyrant, if he was the first founder of this city, as some say; though it does not seem so much to design any particular person, but the kings of Assyria in general, even the most cruel and savage, as the old lion is. So the Targum in the plural number,

“whither the kings went;”

and the lion’s whelp, and none made [them] afraid: there were none to resist their power, curb their insolence, and put a stop to their cruelty and oppression; or make them afraid of pursuing such methods. The Targum is,

“there they leave their children, even as a lion that continues in hunting with confidence, and there is none that terrifies.”

Ver. 12. *The lion did tear in pieces enough for his whelps,* etc.] The metaphor is still continued; and the kings of Assyria are compared to lions

that hunt for their prey, and, having found it, tear it in pieces, and carry home a sufficiency for their whelps. It is a notion that is advanced by some writers, as Herodotus^{f63}, that the lioness, the strongest and boldest creature, brings forth but once in its life, and then but one; which Gellius^{f64} confutes by the testimonies of Homer and Aristotle; and it appears from the prophet here to be a false one, as well as from (³⁹⁰Ezekiel 19:2,3) thus the Assyrians made war on other nations, and pillaged and plundered them, to enlarge their dominions, provide for their posterity, and enrich their children:

and strangled for his lionesses; that is, strangled other beasts, as the lion first does, when it seizes a creature, and then tears it in pieces, and brings it to the she lion in the den with its whelps. These “lionesses” design the wives and concubines of the kings of Assyria, among whom they parted the spoils of their neighbours. So the Targum,

“kings bring rapine to their wives, and a prey to their children;”

that is, riches, which they have taken from others by force and rapine: thus Cicero^{f65} observes of the kings of Persia and Syria, that they had many wives, and gave cities to them after this manner; this city for their headdress, this for the neck, and the other for the hair; the expenses of them:

and filled his holes with prey, and his dens with ravine; as the lion fills his dens and lurking holes with the prey he has seized and ravined; so the kings of Assyria filled their palaces, treasures, magazines, towers, cities, and towns, with the wealth and riches they took by force from other nations; as the Targum,

“and they filled their treasuries with rapine, and their palaces with spoil.”

Ver. 13. *Behold, I [am] against thee, saith the Lord of hosts*, etc.] Against Nineveh, and the whole Assyrian empire, for such rapine, violence, and oppression, their kings had been guilty of; and if he, who is the Lord of hosts, of all the armies of heaven and earth, was against them, nothing but ruin must inevitably ensue: or, “I come unto thee”^{f66}; or will shortly come unto thee, and reckon with thee for all this; will visit thee in a way of wrath and vengeance. The Targum is,

“behold, I will send my fury upon thee:”

and I will burn her chariots in the smoke; either those in which the inhabitants of Nineveh rode in great splendour about the city; or those which were used in war with their enemies; and this he would do “in the smoke”; or, “unto smoke”, as the Vulgate Latin version; or, “into smoke”, as the Syriac^{f67}; easily, quickly, at once, suddenly, so that they should evaporate into smoke, and be no more; or, with fire, as the Targum; that is, as Kimchi interprets it, with a great fire, whose smoke is seen afar off; and may be figuratively understood of the smoke of divine wrath, as Aben Ezra explains it:

and the sword shall devour thy young lions; the swords of the Medes and Chaldeans shall destroy the princes, the sons of their king. The Targum interprets this of towns or villages destroyed thereby:

and I will cut thy prey from the earth; cut them off that they should no more prey upon their neighbours; and what they had got should be taken away from them, and be of no use to them:

and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard; in foreign courts, demanding homage and subjection; exacting and collecting tribute; blaspheming the God of heaven, and menacing his people, as Rabshakeh, a messenger of one of these kings, did; and which is mentioned by most of the Jewish commentators as being then a recent thing. Some render it, “the voice”, or “noise of thy jaw teeth”^{f68}; alluding to the lion’s breaking the bones of its prey, which is done with a great noise; signifying that such cruelty and oppression the Assyrians had been guilty of should be used no more; or rather, as R. Judah ben Balaam observes, as it signifies the noise of the teeth devouring the prey, it is as if it was said, I will cut off thy prey from the earth; and Ben Melech says that, in the Persian language, grinding stones are expressed by this word, and teeth are called grinders; (see ^{2113B}Ecclesiastes 12:3).

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", (^{<98>}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 ^{<349>}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, (^{<3453>}Psalm 105:34 ^{<3514>}Jeremiah 51:14, 27) and what we translate “spoileth” is used of stripping, or putting off of clothes, (^{<0923>}1 Samuel 19:24 ^{<2183>}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, (^{<3485>}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, (^{<2135>}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 (^{<6107>}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 (^{f127}Jeremiah 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 excandescens”, Piscator, Tarnovius; “dominus irae aestuantis, [sive] fervoris”, Burkius.

- ft21 -- **zw[ml hwhy bwj** “bonus Dominus ad robur”, Burkius; “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”, Burkius.
- 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”, Burkius.
- ft43 -- Antiqu. 1. 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 -- **ϣpm** “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, Burkius.
- 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, Burkius.
- 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 -- *ἄσϛ[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.