Open English Translation
of the Bible

Nahum

Introduction

This document is about the destruction of Nineveh, the capital city of Ashur/Assyria—an ancient enemy of Yisrael/Israel, and was written between 663 and 612 B.C. The prophet Nahum was pleased that Yahweh destroyed Nineveh, because that was a sign that God does indeed punish sinners.
A large portion of the document is poetry, with some narrative portions also included. Unlike English poetry which can often focus on rhyme, Hebrew poetry often includes parallelism where the same thought is repeated or extended using different words. The *OET Readers' Version* tries to assist the reader by starting the second line in a parallel set with the symbol ≈.
It can take a little bit of effort to decipher this message—to see who's being spoken to—because it's often alternating between Yahweh declaring good news to his people, and declaring bad news to Nineveh.

Main components of this document

Yahweh's punishment of Nineveh *1:1-15*
The destruction of Nineveh *2:1–3:19*

Lighter type marks additions. Underscores join parts of a single source word.
Struck words are untranslated. The ◘ sign marks a verse with no text.
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Readers' Version

1:1 This document is a declaration about Nineveh city[1]
which was given to Nahum from Elkosh as a vision.

Yahweh's anger at Nineveh

2 Yahweh is a jealous[2] God who avenges.
Yahweh avenges and is full of anger.
He takes vengeance on his opponents,
and he continues to be angry with his enemies.
3 Yahweh is slow to get angry, but very powerful.
He certainly won't allow guilty people to go unpunished.
He walks among whirlwinds and storms,
and clouds are like dust stirred up by his feet.
4 He scolds the ocean and makes it sand.
He dries up all the rivers.
Bashan and Karmel wither up.
He makes the flowers wilt in Levanon.
5 The mountains shake when he appears,
and the hills melt.
The ground heaves at his presence—
actually the entire world and all its residents.
6 What can withstand his indignation?
Who can resist his fierce anger?
His anger is poured out like fire,
and rocks shatter in front of him.
7 Yahweh is good at sheltering us when trouble comes.
He recognises those go to him for protection.
8 He'll completely destroy his opponents with a rushing flood.
He will chase his enemies into the darkness.
9 Whatever is plotted against Yahweh,
he'll completely destroy it.
Trouble won't return a second time.
10 They'll get tangled up as if in thorns,
and they'll walk like drunks.
They'll be burnt up completely like dry stubble.
11 Someone in Nineveh made a decision,
to plot evil against Yahweh.
Someone with wicked plans.
12 This is what Yahweh says:
Even though the Assyrians are numerous and well equipped.
they'll be destroyed anyway and will be no more.
Although I've afflicted you my people,
I won't afflict you any more.
13 I'll free your neck from their harness.
I'll snap their chains that are holding you.
14 Yahweh has given instructions about you, Nineveh.
You'll have no more descendants to carry on your name.
I'll destroy your idols and images in your temples.
I'll dig your grave because you're despised.
15 My people, look, a messenger is running across the hills.
He'll be bringing good news—announcing peace.[3]
So celebrate your festivals Yehudah (Judah), and keep your promises,
because that wicked country won't invade you again—it'll be destroyed.

Nineveh's coming destruction

2:1 The ones who'll scatter you are getting ready to attack you.
Guard the city walls.
Watch the roads.
Be dressed for battle.
Gather your troops together.
2 Yahweh is restoring Ya'akov's (Jacob's) greatness,
like Yisrael's (Israel's) greatness before,
even though the invaders took their valuables and destroyed their vineyards.
3 The enemy's powerful warriors hold red shields,
and his soldiers are dressed in scarlet.
The metal on their chariots gleams
as they get them ready that day,
and their cypress spears are held ready.
4 Their chariots drive madly through the streets,
and rush back and forth across the town squares.
They look like flaming torches,
and dart across like lightning.
5 He calls his officers—
They stumble as they march.
They hurry to attack the city wall,
and to set up the movable roof for protection.
6 The river gates are forced open,
and the palace collapses in the flood.
7 She's[4] stripped ready to be taken away.
Her slave girls moan like doves as they beat their chests.
8 In the good days, Nineveh was like a refreshing pool of water.
but now they're fleeing from it.
"Stop, stop," they say, but no one comes back.
9 "Grab the gold, seize the silver."
There's no end to the treasure.
Plenty of valuable things.
10 Nineveh's all emptiness and desolation,
devastation and hearts melting.
Knees trembling and aching stomachs.
Their faces all gone very pale.
11 What happened to that 'lion's den'—
the place where young cubs were fed?
The place where the lion and lioness walked—
where the cubs were safe with nothing to terrify them.
12 The lion tore apart enough for the cubs,
and strangled prey for his lionesses.
He filled his lairs with prey
and his dens with torn flesh.

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1 **RV 1:1–3:19 · Cross-ref.** Isa 10:5-34; 14:24-27; Zeph 2:13-15.

2 **RV 1:2 · Note** Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, Yahweh often compares peoples who worship idols (instead of him, the creator) similar to a spouse that has an affair.

3 **RV 1:15 · Cross-ref.** Isa 52:7.

4 **RV 2:7 · Note** Possibly referring to the city of Nineveh itself, or possibly to its queen.

Readers' Version

13 Commander-in-chief Yahweh declares that he's
against you.
He'll burn your chariots up in smoke,
and your young men will be killed with swords.
He'll take your prey away from you,
and the voices of your messengers won't be heard anymore.
3:1 The city of bloodshed will have a bad end.
It's full of lies and stolen property.
Always taking plunder—never letting go.
2 The sound of whips and the rattling of wheels.
Horses galloping and chariots jolting.
3 Charging horsemen, flashing swords, glittering spears.
Many slain—heaps of corpses.
Uncountable bodies—people trip over them.
4 That will happen because the beautiful prostitute had
so much business.
She's the mistress of witchcraft.
She attracts other countries with her prostitution.
She attracts other peoples with her sorceries.
5 Commander-in-chief Yahweh declares that he's against
you.
He'll lift your skirt up over your head,
and show your nakedness to the other countries.
Show your shame to the various kingdoms.
6 I throw disgusting filth at you
and treat you with contempt.
I'll make a spectacle of you.
7 Everyone who sees you will run away
and say, 'Nineveh is destroyed.'
Who will weep for her?
Where can I find someone who'll comfort her?
8 Are you better than No city[5] was,
where the Nile surrounded and protected her?
Where the water was one of her secure walls.
9 Kush (Ethiopia) and Mitsrayim (Egypt) were her
strength,
and her strength had no limit.
Put and Libya were her allies.
10 Yet No was taken as an exile—
taken into captivity.
Her young children were dashed to pieces at the top of
every street.
Her captors threw dice for her leading citizens.
All her leading men were bound in chains.
11 You, too, will become drunk.
You'll look for places to hide.
You'll try to find somewhere to be safe from your enemies.
12 All your fortresses will be like fig trees
with the early fruit now ready.
When they're shaken
the fruit falls right into the mouth of the eater.
13 See, your troops are like weak women.
Your city gates will be opened wide to your enemies—
their cross-bars will be destroyed by fire.
14 Get water from the wells to store for the siege.
Strengthen your fortifications.
Fetch clay and start working it.
Get the molds ready to make bricks.
15 Even so, fire will devour you.
The sword will cut you down.
They'll chew you up like locusts.
You need to multiply like locusts and grasshoppers.
16 You have so many merchants—
more than the stars in the sky.
Like locusts, they strip valuables and then fly away.
17 Your many guards are like locusts,
and you have a swarm of officials.
On a cold morning they settle on the walls,
but when the sun rises they fly away
to some place that nobody knows about.
18 You, king of Ashur (Assyria),
your shepherds have fallen asleep.
Your leading citizens have settled down for a break.
Your people will be scattered across the hills,
with no one to gather them again.
19 Your pain will get no relief—
your wound is too severe.
Everyone who hears the news about you will do a high-five,
because there's no one who hasn't experienced your cruelty.

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5 **RV 3:8 · Note** Ancient No-Amon—modern Luxor in Mitsrayim.