

Nahum 1:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thus saith the LORD; Though they be quiet, and likewise many, yet thus shall they be cut down, when he shall pass through. Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more.

Analysis

Thus saith the LORD; Though they be quiet, and likewise many (koh amar YHWH im-shelemim vekhen rabbim, וְהִיא אָמֵן שְׁלָמִים וְכֵן כְּבָימִים). The prophetic formula "thus saith the LORD" introduces divine speech. Shalem (שְׁלָמִים, "complete/at peace") can mean intact, at ease, or feeling secure. Rabbim (רַבִּים, "many/numerous") emphasizes multitude—Assyria's vast armies and population. Despite appearing secure and numerous—seemingly invincible—they will fall.

Yet thus shall they be cut down, when he shall pass through (vekhen ngozu ve'avar, וְכֵן נְגֹזָז וְעָבָר). Gazaz (גָּזָז, "cut down/shear") describes cutting like shearing sheep or mowing grass—wholesale removal. "When he shall pass through" (ve'avar) could refer to God passing through in judgment (Exodus 12:12, 23) or the destroying army passing through Nineveh. Either way, the result is complete devastation. What seemed permanent will be swept away.

Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more (ve'initikha lo a'annekh od, וְיִתְעַנְּךָ לֹא אַעֲנֶךָ עוֹד). This sudden shift addresses Judah, contrasting Assyria's doom with Judah's deliverance. Anah (עֲנָה, "afflict/humble") acknowledges God used Assyria to discipline Judah. But now judgment shifts from Judah to Assyria. This demonstrates God's righteous governance: He disciplines His people through pagan empires, then judges those empires for their cruelty.

The promise "no more" anticipates ultimate deliverance in Christ who bore our affliction (Isaiah 53:4) so we'd never face God's wrath (Romans 8:1).

Historical Context

Assyria seemed invincible in the late 8th/early 7th centuries BC—vast empire, powerful armies, sophisticated administration. They had conquered nations from Egypt to Persia, from Anatolia to the Persian Gulf. Nineveh appeared secure and impregnable. Yet within Nahum's lifetime (or shortly after), the empire collapsed. The prophecy proved accurate: Assyria was 'cut down' in 612 BC, ceasing to exist as a distinct empire. Conversely, Judah—afflicted under Assyrian domination—was delivered. Though later conquered by Babylon (divine discipline continued), the promise of ultimate deliverance found fulfillment in Christ. The remnant survived; Assyria didn't. God's word proved true on both counts.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does Assyria's sudden fall despite appearing secure and numerous warn against trusting in earthly power and prosperity?
2. What does God's promise to afflict Judah 'no more' teach about the limited duration and ultimate purpose of divine discipline?
3. How does Christ's bearing of our affliction fulfill and surpass the promise that God will not afflict His people forever?

Interlinear Text

רַבָּ יִם וְכֹא שְׁלָמִים אָמַר יְהֹוָה אָמַר כִּי
H3541 Thus saith the LORD H518 Though they be quiet H3651 and likewise many
H559 H3068 H8003 H7227

וְכֹא שְׁלָמִים אָמַר יְהֹוָה אָמַר
H3651 yet thus shall they be cut down when he shall pass through
H1494 H5674

שְׁלָמִים אָמַר יְהֹוָה אָמַר
Though I have afflicted H3808 Though I have afflicted H5750
H6031 H6031

Additional Cross-References

Joel 2:19 (References Lord): Yea, the LORD will answer and say unto his people, Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith: and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen:

Revelation 7:16 (Parallel theme): They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

Isaiah 51:22 (References Lord): Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again:

Isaiah 8:8 (Parallel theme): And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.

Isaiah 31:8 (Parallel theme): Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a mighty man; and the sword, not of a mean man, shall devour him: but he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be discomfited.

Isaiah 17:14 (Parallel theme): And behold at eveningtide trouble; and before the morning he is not. This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us.

Isaiah 7:20 (References Lord): In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired, namely, by them beyond the river, by the king of Assyria, the head, and the hair of the feet: and it shall also consume the beard.

Isaiah 37:36 (References Lord): Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.

Isaiah 30:19 (Parallel theme): For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.

Nahum 1:15 (Parallel theme): Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off.

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