

Nahum 1:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For now will I break his yoke from off thee, and will burst thy bonds in sunder.

Analysis

For now will I break his yoke from off thee (ve'attah eshbor mottehu me'alayikh, אֶתְתָּה אֲשָׁבֵר מִטְהוּ מַעַלְיךָ). The mot (מִתְהוּ, "yoke") symbolizes Assyrian domination and oppression—heavy tribute, political subjugation, and constant threat. Shavar (שָׁבַר, "break") indicates violent shattering, not gradual loosening. "Now" (attah, אֶתְתָּה) signals God's appointed time for deliverance has arrived. For over a century, Assyria had dominated the region; now God decrees their power broken.

And will burst thy bonds in sunder (umoseroteyka anaateq, וְמוֹסְרֹתֵיכְךָ אֲנָתָךְ). Moserot (מוֹסְרֹת, "bonds/fetters") describes chains or ropes binding captives. Nataq (נָתַק, "tear off/pull apart") means violent ripping—bonds don't dissolve but are forcibly torn apart. The imagery portrays complete liberation—not merely reduced oppression but total freedom from Assyrian bondage.

This promise found historical fulfillment when Assyrian power collapsed (612 BC), freeing Judah and other subjugated peoples. But ultimate fulfillment comes through Christ who breaks sin's yoke and death's bonds (Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18; Romans 6:6-7; Galatians 5:1). Christ liberates us from slavery to sin, Satan, and death—complete freedom secured through His death and resurrection. Where Nahum promises political liberation, Christ provides spiritual liberation with eternal implications.

Historical Context

For generations, Judah paid heavy tribute to Assyria (2 Kings 16:7-9, 18:13-16). Assyrian domination restricted political freedom, extracted wealth, and threatened national survival. The 'yoke' was real, oppressive, and seemingly permanent. Yet God promised to break it, and He did. When Babylon destroyed Nineveh (612 BC), Assyrian power evaporated. Judah experienced brief independence under Josiah before Babylonian dominance began. The pattern of successive empires (Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome) demonstrates that earthly powers rise and fall, but God's kingdom endures forever. Christ's kingdom—which liberates from sin's bondage—will never be destroyed (Daniel 2:44; Luke 1:33).

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What 'yokes' of oppression—sin patterns, relationships, fears—do you need Christ to break in your life?
2. How does God's promise to break Assyria's yoke encourage believers suffering under political, social, or spiritual oppression?
3. In what ways does Christ's liberation from sin's bondage surpass political liberation from earthly oppressors?

Interlinear Text

וְעַתָּה אָשָׁבֵר מִטְהָר מִשְׁלֵךְ יְהוָה מִזְרָחָת

H6258

For now will I break

H7665

his yoke

H4132

H5921

thy bonds

H4147

אָנוּתָה:

from off thee and will burst

H5423

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 10:27 (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.

Isaiah 9:4 (Parallel theme): For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.

Jeremiah 2:20 (Parallel theme): For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands; and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot.

Isaiah 14:25 (Parallel theme): That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders.

Psalms 107:14 (Parallel theme): He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.

Jeremiah 5:5 (Parallel theme): I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them; for they have known the way of the LORD, and the judgment of their God: but these have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds.