

Nahum 1:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Amid prophecies of Nineveh's doom, Nahum offers hope to Judah: "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." The Hebrew hinneh al-heharim raglei mevasser mashmia shalom chogi Yehudah chaggayikh shallelmî nedarayikh ki lo-yosif od la'avor-bak beliyya'al kullo nikhrat (הנֶּה עַל-הַהֲרִים בְּגַלְּיָה מַבְשֵׂר מְשֻׁמֵּעַ שָׁלוֹם כָּגִיל וְהַזָּה חֲגִיר) announces Assyria's defeat as good news for Judah.

"Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings" (hinneh al-heharim raglei mevasser) uses mevasser (מַבְשֵׂר), meaning herald or messenger bringing good news. The imagery of feet on mountains suggests a runner arriving with news of victory—Nineveh has fallen! Isaiah 52:7 contains nearly identical language, which Paul applies to gospel preaching in Romans 10:15: "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

"O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts" (chogi Yehudah chaggayikh) commands resuming normal worship. Under Assyrian threat and domination, festivals may have been disrupted or celebrated in fear. Now, with the oppressor destroyed, Judah can worship freely. "Perform thy vows" (shallelmî nedarayikh) uses shalam

(מִלְּאָמָּה), meaning to complete or fulfill—pay what you promised God in desperation during crisis.

"The wicked shall no more pass through thee" (lo-yosif od la'avor-bak beliyya'al) promises permanent deliverance. Beliyya'al (בְּלִיְּאָל, "wicked/worthless") characterizes Assyria's evil. "He is utterly cut off" (kullo nikhrat) announces complete destruction. This prophecy was fulfilled when Babylon destroyed Nineveh in 612 BC, ending Assyrian power forever.

Historical Context

Nahum prophesied between 663 BC (after Assyria's conquest of Thebes, mentioned in 3:8) and 612 BC (before Nineveh's fall). For over a century, Assyria had terrorized the ancient Near East with brutal military campaigns. They destroyed Israel's northern kingdom (722 BC) and nearly conquered Judah during Hezekiah's reign (701 BC). Assyrian inscriptions boast of horrific atrocities—impaling victims, burning cities, deporting entire populations. Nahum announces God's judgment against Nineveh for their violence and cruelty. Unlike Jonah's earlier message that brought Nineveh to temporary repentance (c. 760 BC), Nahum declares judgment is now irreversible. The prophecy was precisely fulfilled in 612 BC when Babylon and Media destroyed Nineveh so completely that its location was lost for over 2,000 years.

Nahum demonstrates God's sovereign justice over nations—He judged Israel for covenant unfaithfulness through Assyria, then judged Assyria for exceeding their mandate with excessive cruelty. The book assures God's people that He sees oppression and will vindicate them. While fierce in judgment against the wicked, God remains 'a stronghold in the day of trouble' for those who trust Him (1:7).

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does Nahum 1:15 deepen your understanding of God's character, particularly His holiness, justice, and mercy?
2. What specific attitudes, thought patterns, or behaviors does this verse call you to examine and change in light of the gospel?
3. How does this passage point forward to Christ and His redemptive work, and how should that shape your worship and obedience?

Interlinear Text

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 52:7 (Peace): How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

Romans 10:15 (Peace): And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

Acts 10:36 (Peace): The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)

Luke 2:10 (Good): And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

Luke 2:14 (Peace): Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.