

Nahum 2:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

She is empty, and void, and waste: and the heart melteth, and the knees smite together, and much pain is in all loins, and the faces of them all gather blackness.

Analysis

Nahum describes Thebes' horrific fate, which prefigures Nineveh's coming judgment: 'Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity: her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets' (gam-hi lagolah halekah bashevi gam olaleyha yerattechu berosh kol-chutzoth). The brutal imagery—infants dashed against stones in public view—depicts the horror of ancient warfare. 'And they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains' (ve'al-nikhbadeyha yaddû goral vekhol-gedoleyha rattqu baziqim). Leading citizens divided as spoils, nobles enslaved and chained—this was Thebes' fate at Assyria's hands in 663 BC. Now Nahum prophesies Nineveh will suffer identically. This isn't vindictive schadenfreude but divine justice: measure for measure, those who brutalized others will themselves be brutalized. It demonstrates God's moral governance of history—evil doesn't go unpunished forever, and oppressors will face accountability. The passage is sobering, showing the terrible cost of sin and the reality of divine judgment.

Historical Context

Assyrian warfare was notoriously brutal. Their own inscriptions boast of atrocities committed against conquered peoples—impalement, flaying, mass deportations, destruction of cities. The treatment of Thebes in 663 BC exemplified this cruelty. Ashurbanipal's annals describe carrying away enormous plunder and devastating the city. Now Nahum prophesies that Nineveh will experience the same horrors it

inflicted. Historical accounts of Nineveh's fall in 612 BC describe similar devastation—the city sacked, burned, its inhabitants killed or enslaved. The precise fulfillment of Nahum's prophecy demonstrates God's justice: those who live by violence die by violence. It also warns all nations that cruelty and oppression will not go unpunished.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the principle of measure-for-measure judgment (experiencing what you inflicted on others) demonstrate God's justice?
2. What does this passage teach about the terrible cost of sin and the reality of divine judgment against wickedness?
3. How should the certainty of divine retribution affect Christian responses to evil—both confidence in ultimate justice and urgency in evangelism?

Interlinear Text

בָּקָה	וְמַבְלָקָה	וְמַבְזָקָה	וְלִבָּה	נַמְסָה	וְלִפְקָד
She is empty H950	and void H4003	and waste H1110	and the heart H3820	melteth H4549	smite together H6375
בָּרַךְ יְמִ	וְסַלְמָלָה	בְּכָל	מַתְנָה יְמִ	וְפָנִים	כָּלָם
and the knees H1290	and much pain H2479	H3605	is in all loins H4975	and the faces H6440	H3605

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 22:14 (Parallel theme): I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

Joel 2:6 (Parallel theme): Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness.

Daniel 5:6 (Parallel theme): Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.

Jeremiah 30:6 (Parallel theme): Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness?

Isaiah 24:1 (Parallel theme): Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.

Isaiah 21:3 (Parallel theme): Therefore are my loins filled with pain: pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth: I was bowed down at the hearing of it; I was dismayed at the seeing of it.

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