

Nahum 2:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Where is the dwelling of the lions, and the feedingplace of the young lions, where the lion, even the old lion, walked, and the lion's whelp, and none made them afraid?

Analysis

Where is the dwelling of the lions (ayyeh me'on arayot, אֶיְיֶה מְעֹן אֲרָיוֹת)—Nahum's rhetorical question mocks Nineveh's vanished power. Assyria consistently used lion imagery to represent itself: palace walls featured carved lion hunts, kings compared themselves to lions, lions symbolized royal might. The me'on (מְעֹן, dwelling/den) suggests a secure lair where predators rest between hunts.

And the feedingplace of the young lions (umire'eh lakkephirim)—the place where young lions (kephirim, כִּפְרִיִּים) feed. **Where the lion, even the old lion, walked, and the lion's whelp, and none made them afraid** (asher halakh aryeh lavi sham gur aryeh ve'eyn macharid)—multiple words for lion (aryeh, אֲרִיָּה; lavi, לָבִיא; gur, גֹּר) emphasize the imagery: mature lions and cubs prowling fearlessly, with none to make them afraid (macharid, מַחְרִיד). This described Assyria perfectly: predatory empire dominating without fear of reprisal, devouring nations at will. The past tense ('where IS?') implies it's gone—the lion's den is empty, the predator destroyed.

Historical Context

Assyrian royal iconography heavily featured lions. Palace reliefs from Nineveh (now in museums) show elaborate lion hunts, symbolizing the king's power over chaos and enemies. Assyrian kings took titles like 'mighty lion' and 'ferocious wild bull.' The empire's military strategy was deliberately terroristic—creating fear to

subjugate populations. For centuries, Assyria prowled the ancient Near East unchallenged, devouring nations. But in 612 BC, the lion's den fell silent. The predator became prey. Babylon and Media destroyed Nineveh so thoroughly that its location was forgotten for over 2,000 years—the ultimate answer to 'where is the dwelling of the lions?'

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does Nahum's use of Assyria's own lion imagery against them demonstrate God's sovereign control over empires and their symbols?
2. What does the rhetorical question 'where is the dwelling?' teach about the transience of earthly power compared to God's eternal kingdom?
3. How should this verse shape Christian responses to seemingly invincible oppressive powers in our own time?

Interlinear Text

אֵיִה H346	מֶעֹן H4583	אֲרִי הַ H738	וּמִרְקָה הַ H4829	הַ וְאֵ H1931		
	Where is the dwelling	and the lion's	and the feedingplace			
לְכַפֵּר יִם H3715	אֲשֶׁר H834	הָלַךְ H1980	אֲרִי הַ H738	לִבִּי יֵא H3833	שָׁם H8033	גֹּרֵם H1482
of the young lions		walked	and the lion's	even the old lion		whelp
אֲרִי הַ H738	וְאֵין H369	מִמֶּרֶדֶת H2729				
and the lion's		and none made them afraid				

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 5:29 (Parallel theme): Their roaring shall be like a lion, they shall roar like young lions: yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry it away safe, and none shall deliver it.

Jeremiah 2:15 (Creation): The young lions roared upon him, and yelled, and they made his land waste: his cities are burned without inhabitant.

From KJV Study • kjevstudy.org