

Nahum 2:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Take ye the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold: for there is none end of the store and glory out of all the pleasant furniture.

Analysis

Nahum asks rhetorically: 'Art thou better than populous No' (heteytivi miNo-Amown). No-Amon (Thebes) was Egypt's ancient capital, one of the greatest cities of antiquity, located on the Nile with sophisticated defenses. It 'sat among the rivers, that had the waters round about it, whose rampart was the sea, and her wall was from the sea.' The Nile and surrounding waterways provided natural defenses, making Thebes seem as secure as Nineveh. Yet Assyria itself had conquered and destroyed Thebes in 663 BC (recent memory when Nahum prophesied). The question devastating: if mighty Thebes fell despite its defenses and allies, how can Nineveh expect to escape? This demonstrates a crucial principle: past victories don't guarantee future success; former glory doesn't prevent future judgment. Nineveh itself had destroyed Thebes, proving that no city is invincible. Now Nineveh will experience the same fate it inflicted on others. This is divine justice: those who live by the sword die by the sword; those who show no mercy receive none.

Historical Context

Thebes (No-Amon) was one of history's greatest cities, capital of Egypt's New Kingdom, home to massive temples and monuments. In 663 BC, Assyrian king Ashurbanipal conquered and sacked Thebes despite its legendary defenses, carrying away enormous plunder and destroying much of the city. This recent event would have been well-known to Nahum's audience. By pointing to Thebes'

fall, Nahum argues that if that great city could not stand against Assyria, Nineveh cannot stand against God's judgment. The same empire that destroyed Thebes would itself be destroyed. Historical accounts confirm Thebes never fully recovered from Assyrian devastation, just as Nineveh would never recover from Babylonian-Median conquest. The parallel demonstrates God's sovereign control over empires—raising up and bringing down according to His purposes.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does the example of Thebes falling despite its greatness warn against trusting in past glories or present strengths?
2. What does this passage teach about the principle of divine retribution—experiencing the same judgment you inflicted on others?
3. How should the certainty that all earthly empires eventually fall affect Christian perspectives on politics and nationalism?

Interlinear Text

בַּזָּהָב	כֶּסֶף	בַּזָּהָב	וְאֵין יָהִי עֵצָה	
Take ye the spoil	of silver	Take ye the spoil	of gold	for there is none end
H962	H3701	H962	H2091	H7097
לְתִכּוֹן הַ	כְּבוֹד	מִכֹּל	כֵּל יִ	חֲמֻדָּה:
of the store	and glory		furniture	out of all the pleasant
H8498	H3519	H3605	H3627	H2532