

Nahum 3:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity: her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets: and they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains.

Analysis

Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity (gam-hi lagolah halekah bashevi)—despite all advantages and allies, Thebes went into exile (golah, הַלָּא) and captivity (shevi, שָׁבֵד). **Her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets** (gam olaleyha yeruttechu berosh kol-chutzot)—even infants were dashed (ratash, רָתַשׁ) at street corners. This horrific detail describes Assyria's own brutal warfare tactics, now recalled to demonstrate what awaits Nineveh.

And they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains (ve'al-nikhbadayha yaddû goral vekhol-gedoleyha rattqu baziqim)—nobles (nikbad, נִכְבָּד) were divided by lot (goral, גּוֹרָל like property, and great men (gadol, גָּדוֹל) were bound in chains (ziqqim, זִקְקִים). This was Thebes' fate at Assyria's hands. The implied warning: Nineveh will suffer identically. The nation that showed no mercy in conquest will receive none. Divine justice operates on the principle: as you did, so shall be done to you.

Historical Context

Assyrian warfare included systematic atrocities. Their own annals describe dashing children against stones, enslaving populations, dividing nobles as spoils, and binding leaders in chains for public humiliation. When Ashurbanipal

conquered Thebes in 663 BC, these horrors were inflicted on Egypt's ancient capital. The city never fully recovered. Nahum's prophecy announces Nineveh will experience identical treatment—and history confirms it. In 612 BC, Babylon showed Nineveh the same mercy Assyria had shown others: none. The principle Jesus later taught was demonstrated: 'With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again' (Matthew 7:2). Assyria measured out cruelty; cruelty was measured back.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the graphic detail about children being killed demonstrate the full horror of warfare and sin's consequences?
2. What does the principle of measure-for-measure judgment teach about God's justice and moral governance of history?
3. How should Christians balance the justice of God's retribution with grief over human suffering and the call to show mercy?

Interlinear Text

ה יא גם

H1571

H1931

Yet was she carried away

H1473

לְגַלְהָה

בָּלָק הָ

H1980

בָּשָׁ בִּ

H7628

גַּם

H1571

עַלְלֵי יְהָ

her young children

H5768

וְיָרַטְשָׁוּ

H7376

בְּרֵאשִׁ

H7218

חוֹצֵז וְתַ

כָּל בָּרְאֵשִׁ

H2351

יעַל

H5921

for her honourable men

and they cast

H3513

נְכַבְּדָה יְהָ

H3032

וְכָל גּוֹבֵל

H1486

בְּדוֹלֵי יְהָ

and all her great men

H1419

בְּזִקְנִים: רְתִיקָה

were bound

in chains

H7576

H2131

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 20:4 (Parallel theme): So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.

Joel 3:3 (Parallel theme): And they have cast lots for my people; and have given a boy for an harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink.

Hosea 13:16 (Parallel theme): Samaria shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up.

Obadiah 1:11 (Parallel theme): In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them.

Isaiah 13:16 (Parallel theme): Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished.

Lamentations 2:19 (Parallel theme): Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord: lift up thy hands toward him for the life of thy young children, that faint for hunger in the top of every street.

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