



Patterson > In the light of the critical announcement, Nahum issues a four-fold command. Each of the imperatives is expressed asyndetically, thus producing a staccato effect and lending urgency and dramatic appeal to the scene. Nahum's admonitions are probably to be understood as irony, perhaps with a touch of sarcasm. The defenders are to "guard the fortress" and to "watch the road." They are urged to make Nineveh's fortifications secure, at the same time watching closely the routes that would lead the enemy to the city. Having seen to the city's protection, they are to draw up their courage (lit. "strengthen your loins") and gather all their strength in order to be ready for instantaneous action, mentally and physically. Because Nineveh's doom had already been announced (chap. 1), all such efforts were obviously destined for failure. Mighty Nineveh would be powerless before its assailants, despite any and all efforts to defend it.

² *For the LORD will **restore** the splendor of Jacob like the splendor of Israel, even though **devastators** have devastated them and destroyed their vine branches.*

Restore > (Strong's) to turn back

Devastators > (Strong's) a primitive root; to pour out, i.e. to empty, figuratively, to depopulate

³ *The shields of his mighty men are colored red, the warriors are dressed in scarlet, The chariots are enveloped in **flashing steel** when he is prepared to march, and the cypress spears are brandished.* ⁴ ***The chariots race madly in the streets, they rush wildly in the squares, their appearance is like torches, they dash to and fro like lightning flashes.***

Flashing > (Strong's) fire (literally or figuratively) ... burning, fiery, fire, flaming, hot

Steel > (Strong's) from an unused root meaning to divide; a cleaver

Keil and Delitzsch > The (Hebrew words used) is certainly not used for torches; but in both Arabic and Syriac (the word) signifies steel (see Ges. Lex.). But (they) are not scythes, which would suggest the idea of scythe-chariots (Michaelis, Ewald, and others); for scythe-chariots were first introduced by Cyrus, and were unknown before his time to the Medes, the Syrians, the Arabians, and also to the ancient Egyptians (see at Joshua 17:16). (The word) probably denotes the steel covering of the chariots, as the Assyrian war-chariots were adorned according to the monuments with ornaments of metal.

The chariots race madly ... > (Strauss) The chariots of the Assyrians, as we see them on the monuments, glare with shining things, made either of iron or steel, battle-axes, bows, arrows, and shields, and all kinds of weapons; the horses are also ornamented with crowns and red fringes, and even the poles of the carriages are made resplendent with shining suns and moons: add to these the soldiers in armor riding in the chariots; and it could not but be the case, that when illumined by the rays of the sun above them, they would have all the appearance of flames as they flew hither and thither with great celerity.

⁵ He ***remembers*** his nobles; they ***stumble*** in their march, they ***hurry*** to her wall, And the ***mantelet*** is set up.

Remembers > (Strong's) properly, to mark (so as to be recognized), i.e. to remember; by implication, to mention

Stumble > (Strong's) to totter or waver (through weakness of the legs, especially the ankle)

Hurry > (Strong's) to be liquid or flow easily, i.e. (by implication); to hurry (in a good or a bad sense)

Mantelet > (Strong's) to entwine as a screen; by implication, to fence in, cover over

Barnes > The Assyrian monuments leave no doubt that a Jewish writer is right in the main, in describing this as a covered shelter, under which an enemy approached the city; "a covering of planks with skins upon them; under it those who fight against the city come to the wall and mine the wall underneath, and it is a shield over them from the stones, which are cast from off the wall."



Assyrian attack on a town with archers and a wheeled battering ram;
Assyrian Relief, North-West Palace of Nimrud (Wikipedia)

⁶ *The gates of the rivers are opened and the palace is dissolved.*

The gates of the rivers ... > (Weirsbe) > (This is the first time I've seen this solution and am trying to find the referenced source ... see below) The fifth view is supported by the most natural sense of the language and by archeological remains. "Sennacherib ... dammed the ... Khosr [River], outside the city, and thus made a reservoir. Thompson and Hutchinson report that the water was restrained by a magnificent double dam with two massive river walls at some distance from Nineveh itself. In the ruins they found traces of the original dam gates, or sluices, by which the water flow to the city could be increased or reduced" (Maier, *The Book of Nahum: A Commentary*, p. 253^{*}). So perhaps at the beginning of the siege the enemy closed the floodgates. When the reservoirs were completely full, they threw open the gates and the palace collapsed.

(* I have a copy of this book coming in from Amazon. Looking forward to passing along his comments.)

Dissolved > (Strong's) to melt, i.e. literally (to soften, flow down, disappear)

Robertson > The "melting" here could be viewed as a description of the fear aroused among the inhabitants of the palace or as the collapsing of the palace walls (so the ancient versions) due to flooding or fire.

Wikipedia > In 612 BC, the Babylonians mustered their army again and joined with Median king Cyaxares encamping against Nineveh. They laid siege to the city for three months and, in August, finally broke through the defenses and began plundering and burning the city.

The **Septuagint** translates this verse as > *⁶The gates of the cities have been opened, and the palaces have fallen into ruin,*

⁷ *It is fixed: she is **stripped**, she is carried away, and her handmaids are moaning like the sound of doves, **beating** on their breasts.*

It is fixed > (Strong's) to station, in various applications (literally or figuratively) ... appointed, deputy, erect, establish

Barnes > The first word should be rendered, "And it is decreed; She shall be laid bare. It is decreed."

Stripped > (Strong's) to denude (especially in a disgraceful sense)

Beating > (Strong's) to drum, i.e. play (as) on the tambourine

⁸ *Though Nineveh was like a pool of water throughout her days, now they are fleeing; “**Stop, stop**,” but no one turns back.*

Stop, stop > (Strong’s) to stand, to stand!

The **Septuagint** translates this verse as > ⁸ *And as for Nineve, her waters shall be as a pool of water: and they fled, and staid not, and there was none to look back.*

⁹ *Plunder the silver! Plunder the gold! **For there is no limit to the treasure** —wealth from every kind of desirable object.*

For there is no limit ... > Can you just imagine what was available?!



Joined by a clasp in the shape of entwined animal heads, this finely worked gold necklace is one of six retrieved from a tomb containing the personal items and remains of two Assyrian queens.

A total of 157 objects, including a gold anklet weighing more than two pounds, were found in the tomb, one of three discovered during an excavation at a palace in the ancient city of Nimrud in Iraq. The tombs, which are thought to date from the eighth century B.C., contained an astonishing amount of riches—more than 50 pounds of gold and semiprecious stones.



Sennacherib’s Prism

The following is Sennacherib's information regarding his encounter with King Hezekiah:

As for Hezekiah the Judahite, who did not submit to my yoke: forty-six of his strong, walled cities, as well as the small towns in their area, which were without number, by levelling with battering-rams and by bringing up seige-engines, and by attacking and storming on foot, by mines, tunnels, and breeches, I besieged and took them. 200,150 people, great and small, male and female, horses, mules, asses, camels, cattle and sheep without number, I brought away from them and counted as spoil.

(Hezekiah) himself, like a caged bird I shut up in Jerusalem, his royal city. I threw up earthworks against him? the one coming out of the city-gate, I turned back to his misery. His cities, which I had despoiled, I cut off from his land, and to Mitinti, king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron, and Silli-b?l, king of Gaza, I gave (them). And thus I diminished his land. I added to the former tribute, and I laid upon him the surrender of their land and imposts?gifts for my majesty.

As for Hezekiah, the terrifying splendor of my majesty overcame him, and the Arabs and his mercenary troops which he had brought in to strengthen Jerusalem, his royal city, deserted him.

In addition to the thirty talents of gold and eight hundred talents of silver, gems, antimony, jewels, large carnelians, ivory-inlaid couches, ivory-inlaid chairs, elephant hides, elephant tusks, ebony, boxwood, all kinds of valuable treasures, as well as his daughters, his harem, his male and female musicians, which he had brought after me to Nineveh, my royal city. To pay tribute and to accept servitude, he dispatched his messengers..

¹⁰ *She is emptied! Yes, she is desolate and **waste**! Hearts are **melting** and knees knocking! Also **anguish** is in the whole body and all their faces are **grown pale**!*

Waste > (Strong's) to annihilate

Melting > (Strong's) to liquefy; figuratively, to waste (with disease), to faint (with fatigue, fear or grief)

Anguish > (Strong's) writhing (in childbirth); by implication, terror

Clarke > She is empty, and void, and waste - The original is strongly emphatic; the words are of the same sound; and increase in their length as they point out great, greater, and greatest desolation > בוקה ומבוקה ומבולקה > Bukah, umebukah, umebullakah > She is void, empty, and desolate.

Grown pale > (Strong's) properly, illuminated, i.e. a glow; as noun, a flush (of anxiety)

¹¹ *Where is the den of the lions and the feeding place of the young lions, where the lion, lioness and lion's cub prowled, with nothing to disturb them?* ¹² *The lion tore enough for his cubs, killed enough for his lionesses, and filled his lairs with prey and his dens with torn flesh.*

Barnes > The messengers of her king had asked, ³⁴ *Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah? Have they delivered Samaria from my hand? (2 Kings 18:34).* And now of her it is asked, "Where is Nineveh?"

The lion tore enough ... > (Clarke) The lion did tear - This verse gives us a striking picture of the manner in which the Assyrian conquests and depredations were carried on. How many people were spoiled to enrich his whelps - his sons, princes, and nobles! How many women were stripped and slain, whose spoils went to decorate his lionesses - his queen, concubines, and mistresses. And they had even more than they could assume; their holes and dens - treasure-houses, palaces, and wardrobes - were filled with ravin, the riches which they got by the plunder of towns, families, and individuals. This is a very fine allegory, and admirably well supported.

Robertson > The lion motif is particularly appropriate. History attests that Sennacherib compared himself to a lion, decorating his palace freely with sphinxlike lion statues. Other Assyrian kings referred to themselves as lions and adorned their palaces with various artistic representations of the lion. Reliefs of the Assyrian kings on the lion hunt appear frequently on the palace walls.

¹³ *"Behold, I am against you," declares the LORD of hosts. "I will burn up her chariots in smoke, a sword will devour your young lions; I will cut off your prey from the land, and no longer will the voice of your messengers be heard."*

The Septuagint clearly imparts the message of this verse > ¹³ *Behold, I am against thee, saith the Lord Almighty, and I will burn up thy multitude in the smoke, and the sword shall devour thy lions; and I will utterly destroy thy prey from off the land, and thy deeds shall no more at all be heard of.*

Behold, I am against you ... > (Robertson) God himself stands against the tyrant. The full weight of this divine antipathy must be appreciated: I am against you. Up to this point, the prophet has served as spokesman for the Lord. But now the Lord himself steps forward to reinforce his own determination. The Lord's word comes as the voice of a committed aggressor.

(Compare the author's previous comments to those written earlier in his commentary regarding **Nahum 1:11**. I've included the referenced verse)

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**Nahum 1:11** > <sup>11</sup> *From you has gone forth one who plotted evil against the LORD, a wicked counselor.*

This stubborn rebellion against the will of God on the part of the city of Nineveh has produced a leader, a prince who has turned passive resistance into active opposition. The feminine singular you refers to the city of Nineveh, as did the "her" of v. 8 in this same section. The womb of wickedness which is Nineveh has produced a horrid monstrosity, a son of "Belial," as the text reads literally (here translated he who schemes ruthlessly).

The precise origin of this term belîya'al is difficult to determine. It may have originated by the conjoining of two words: belî, meaning "without," and ya'al, meaning "value" or "worth." A son of Belial would be a "worthless one." The context in Scripture for the usage of the term points consistently to a person who is depraved, despicable. A few examples may serve to vivify its significance and to provide a framework for understanding Nahum's use of the term.

- The law code of Deuteronomy anticipates a situation in which "sons of Belial" may lead astray the inhabitants of a city, luring them into the worship of another god (Deut. 13:14).
- The use of the same phrase in the book of Judges to describe the debased men who demanded the opportunity to abuse sexually the overnight guests of their neighbor probably intends to set the narrative in terms of the provisions of deuteronomic law about "sons of Belial" (cf. Judg. 19:22; 20:13).
- Other valid instances of the perverseness of the "sons of Belial" may be seen in Eli's sons, who were glutting themselves with the fattest portions of the sacrifices and fornicating with the women who served the tabernacle (1 Sam. 2:12ff.).
- In Nabal, the wealthy fool who refused to aid David (1 Sam. 15:17).
- In Sheba, the arrogant rebel who instigated a revolt against David (2 Sam. 20:1).
- In the two scoundrels who were bribed by Jezebel to testify falsely against Naboth (1 K. 21:10, 13).
- And in those who resisted the rule of Solomon's son when he was young and indecisive (2 Chr. 13:7).



Nahum alone of the prophets uses the term belîya'al, and he employs it twice (1:11; 2:1).

**Nahum 1:11** > *From you has gone forth one who plotted evil against the Lord,  
A wicked counselor.*

**Nahum 1:15** > *Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good news, who  
announces peace! Celebrate your feasts, O Judah; pay your vows. For never again will  
the wicked one pass through you; He is cut off completely.*

This “counselor of Belial” is evidently the king, the leader of this wicked people. He conspires against the Lord himself, and not merely against his nation. In terms of a specific individual, Nahum could be referring to Sennacherib, who is described elsewhere in Scripture as one who set himself not merely against Israel, but “against Yahweh” (2 K. 18:32b–35). But although Sennacherib at the time of his invasion of Palestine in 701 B.C. fits the bill of this “counselor of Belial” who has come forth out of Nineveh, the phrase is best understood as having a more general application. Not only Sennacherib, but all those wicked kings and leaders of the enemies of God’s people who have come forth from Assyria manifest the characteristics of that brutal figure described by Nahum.