

Introduction to Nahum
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Author:

Nahum is the author of the book. His name (נַחֻם *Nachum*) means “consolation.” Jonah (Jon 3:2-4), Nahum (Nah 1:1; 2:8; 3:7, 18), and Zephaniah (Zep 2:13) all prophesied to/against Nineveh.

Audience:

Nahum wrote to his fellow Israelites in Judah (Nah 1:15).

Date of Ministry:

Nahum prophesied sometime between 663-620 B.C. The author mentions the fall of the Egyptian city of Thebes which occurred in 663 B.C. (Nah 3:8). He also predicts the fall of Assyria, which occurred in 612 B.C., so the book was written sometime in between.

Historical Background:

Nahum writes about the cruelty of Nineveh and prophecies its destruction by God. Nineveh was an ancient city that was originally built by Nimrod (Gen 10:8-11). The city was located on the eastern bank of the Tigris River, north of the Babylonian empire, and had existed for millennia before its fall in 612 B.C. The Ninevites were known for their great cruelty. Dr. Elliott Johnson writes:

Nineveh was the capital of one of the cruelest, vilest, most powerful, and most idolatrous empires in the world. For example, writing of one of his conquests, *Ashurnasirpal II* (883–859) boasted, “I stormed the mountain peaks and took them. In the midst of the mighty mountain I slaughtered them; with their blood I dyed the mountain red like wool.... The heads of their warriors I cut off, and I formed them into a pillar over against their city; their young men and their maidens I burned in the fire” (Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, 1:148). Regarding one captured leader, he wrote, “I flayed [him], his skin I spread upon the wall of the city ...” (ibid., 1:146). He also wrote of mutilating the bodies of live captives and stacking their corpses in piles. *Shalmaneser II* (859–824) boasted of his cruelties after one of his campaigns: “A pyramid of heads I reared in front of his city. Their youths and their maidens I burnt up in the flames” (ibid., 1:213). *Sennacherib* (705–681) wrote of his enemies, “I cut their throats like lambs. I cut off their precious lives [as one cuts] a string. Like the many waters of a storm I made [the contents of] their gullets and entrails run down upon the wide earth.... Their hands I cut off” (ibid., 2:127). *Ashurbanipal* (669–626) described his

treatment of a captured leader in these words: “I pierced his chin with my keen hand dagger. Through his jaw...I passed a rope, put a dog chain upon him and made him occupy...a kennel” (ibid., 2:319). In his campaign against Egypt, Ashurbanipal also boasted that his officials hung Egyptian corpses “on stakes [and] stripped off their skins and covered the city wall(s) with them” (ibid., 2:295). No wonder Nahum called Nineveh “the city of blood” (3:1), a city noted for its “cruelty”! (3:19).¹

God threatened to judge the Ninevites a century before Nahum. He did this through the preaching of Jonah (who preached circa 793-753 B.C.), who declared, “Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown” (Jon 3:4). The Ninevites responded positively to the preaching of Jonah, as “the people of Nineveh believed in God” (Jon 3:5). And, “When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it” (Jon 3:10). For whatever reason, the following generations resorted back to their cruel ways and put themselves back under divine judgment. Whereas Jonah emphasized God’s grace toward Nineveh’s repentance (Jon 3:10; 4:2), Nahum emphasized God’s wrath (Nah 1:2, 6) because of their pride and wickedness (Nah 3:1-4).

Though historically a pagan and violent people, God used the Assyrians as His tool to destroy Israel in 722 B.C. because of their rebellion against Him (read 2 Ki 17:3-23; 18:9-12). Judah also rebelled against God and practiced many of the sins committed by Israel (2 Ki 17:19). The Assyrians came against them in 701 B.C. and captured 46 cities in Judah and besieged Jerusalem (2 Ki 18:13-37). However, because the Assyrians blasphemed God (2 Ki 18:29-35), and because king Hezekiah humbled himself (2 Ki 19:1) and prayed to the Lord (2 Ki 19:15-19), God intervened and killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night (2 Ki 19:20-37).

Nahum provides the divine perspective that God was the primary cause of Nineveh’s fall (Nah 1:13-14; 2:13; 3:5), and He accomplished this through the Babylonians and Medes whom He used as His disciplinary agents (Nah 3:1-4).

Nahum’s Message:

God is going to judge and destroy Nineveh (Nah 1:15; 2:13; 3:5).

Outline:

1. Introduction – Nah 1:1
2. Judgment declared – Nah 1:2-15
3. Judgment delivered – Nah 2:1—3:19

¹ Elliott E. Johnson, “Nahum,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1494.

Nahum 1:1-15

The oracle [נִשְׁבָּע *massa* – *oracle, message, burden*] of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite. ² A jealous [i.e. protective of what belongs to Him] and avenging [נָקַם *naqam* 3x – God avenges His people who have been mistreated; [Deu 32:35, 41](#); [2 Th 1:6](#); cf. [Rom 12:19](#)] God is the LORD; the LORD is avenging and wrathful [against the arrogant Ninevites]. The LORD takes vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves wrath for His enemies [i.e. it builds up over time]. ³ The LORD is slow to anger and great in power [see [Ex 34:6](#); [Num 14:18](#); [Jon 4:2](#); [2 Pet 3:9](#)], and the LORD will by no means leave *the guilty* unpunished [i.e. the guilty Ninevites]. In whirlwind and storm is His way, and clouds are the dust beneath His feet [a picture of God's greatness]. ⁴ He rebukes the sea and makes it dry; He dries up all the rivers [like He did for Israel at the Red Sea and Jordan River; see [Ex 14:21](#); [Josh 3:14-17](#)]. Bashan and Carmel wither; the blossoms of Lebanon wither [green lands made dry]. ⁵ Mountains quake because of Him and the hills dissolve [what is strong to people is easily shaken by God; see [Ex 19:18](#)]; indeed the earth is upheaved by His presence, the world and all the inhabitants in it. ⁶ Who can stand before His indignation? Who can endure the burning of His anger? [certainly not the Assyrians] His wrath is poured out like fire and the rocks are broken up by Him [Assyria apparently forgot their previous defeat by God; see [2 Ki 19:35-36](#)]. ⁷ The LORD is good [cf. [Ps 106:1](#); [107:1](#); [136:1](#)], a stronghold in the day of trouble [more secure than a home, city, or refuge in the mountains], and He knows those who take refuge in Him [see [Ps 27:1](#); [37:39](#)]. ⁸ But with an overflowing flood He will make a complete end of its site [*flood* = a picture of military invasion; see [Isa 8:7-8](#); [Jer 47:2](#); [Dan 9:26](#); [11:40](#)], and will pursue His enemies into darkness [battles usually ceased at night, but not so with the Lord, who is not hindered by darkness]. ⁹ Whatever you [Nineveh] devise against the LORD, He will make a complete end of it. Distress will not rise up twice [against Judah]. ¹⁰ Like tangled thorns, and like those who are drunken with their drink [i.e. consumed with alcohol], they are consumed as stubble completely withered [or, “Surely they will be totally consumed like entangled thorn bushes, like the drink of drunkards, like very dry stubble” (NET); i.e. God will consume them in judgment]. ¹¹ From you [probably a reference to Sennacherib] has gone forth one [Rabshakeh] who plotted evil against the LORD, a wicked counselor [cf. [2 Ki 18:17, 35](#)]. ¹² Thus says the LORD, “Though they [Assyrians] are at full *strength* and likewise many, even so, they will be cut off and pass away. Though I have afflicted you [Judah], I will afflict you no longer. ¹³ “So now, I will break his [Assyrian] yoke bar from upon you [Judah], and I will tear off your shackles [God is the primary cause of Assyria's destruction]; cf. [Nah 2:13](#); [3:5-6](#).” ¹⁴ The LORD has issued a command concerning you [Assyria]: “Your name will no longer be perpetuated. I will cut off idol and image from the house of your gods [which cannot save]. I will prepare your grave, for you are contemptible.” ¹⁵ Behold, on the mountains the feet of him [a herald] who brings good news [concerning Assyrian defeat], who announces peace [because the conflict is over]! Celebrate your feasts [victory feasts], O Judah; pay your vows. For never again will the wicked one pass through you; he is cut off completely.

Summary:

Nahum had received a vision of God's judgment concerning the Assyrians who had been afflicting Judah (Nah 1:1). In the vision, God is revealed as jealous, avenging, wrathful, slow to anger, and all powerful, and will not leave the guilty Assyrians unpunished for their violent behavior to His people (Nah 1:2-3a). This would have been good news to the Judahites who had suffered for many years under Assyria's cruelty. In picturesque language, Nahum describes God's greatness, saying, "clouds are the dust beneath His feet" (Nah 1:3b), and He causes seas and rivers to dry up and beautiful lands to wither (Nah 1:4), and mountains and hills to shake at his presence (Nah 1:5). Nahum then asks, "Who can stand before His indignation? Who can endure the burning of His anger? His wrath is poured out like fire and the rocks are broken up by Him" (Nah 1:6). The implication is that God is big enough to accomplish what He declares. In contrast to the Assyrians, whom He will destroy, Nahum reveals, "The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knows those who take refuge in Him" (Nah 1:7). The humbled Judahites would have been encouraged by this. But, to the arrogant Assyrians, God was going to pursue and destroy them. Though human enemies usually stopped the battle at sunset because they could not see to engage the enemy, God is not hindered by such obstacles, and promises to "pursue His enemies into darkness" (Nah 1:8b). Whatever Nineveh may devise against the Lord, He will bring an end to it (Nah 1:9), and will consume them completely in destruction (Nah 1:10). Nahum seems to allude to an historical event in which Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, sent one of his wicked counselors, Rabshakeh, against Jerusalem to destroy it (Nah 1:11; cf. 2 Ki 18:13-37). However, because king Hezekiah humbled himself and sought the Lord, God rescued the city and destroyed the Assyrian army (2 Ki 19:1-37). Just as God had defeated the Assyrians once before, he would defeat them again, even though "they are at full strength" (Nah 1:12a). And, though God had afflicted Judah because of their sin, He promises, "Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no longer" (Nah 1:12b). Assyrian oppression would come to an end, and God says to Judah, "I will break his yoke bar from upon you, and I will tear off your shackles" (Nah 1:13). But concerning Assyria, the Lord states, "Your name will no longer be perpetuated. I will cut off idol and image from the house of your gods. I will prepare your grave, for you are contemptible" (Nah 1:14). God controls and judges the Gentile nations of the world and sometimes brings about their downfall directly (i.e. Sodom and Gomorrah), and other times through the agency of other nations. This would be the case with the Assyrians, as God would destroy them completely through a military alliance of the Babylonians and Medes. "So complete was its destruction that when Xenophon passed by the site about 200 years later, he thought the mounds were the ruins of some other city. And Alexander the Great, fighting in a battle nearby, did not realize that he was near the ruins of Nineveh."² Assyria's destruction

² Elliott E. Johnson, "Nahum," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1499.

would be “good news” because it meant peace for Judah, who could then celebrate their feasts without fear of attack, for their enemy had been “completely cut off” (Nah 1:15).

Nahum 2:1-13

The one who scatters has come up against you [i.e. the Babylonians and Medes driven by God]. Man the fortress, watch the road; strengthen your back, summon all *your* strength [Nahum sarcastically calls for the Assyrians to defend themselves].² For the LORD will restore the splendor of Jacob like the splendor of Israel, even though devastators [Assyrians] have devastated them and destroyed their vine branches [In contrast to Assyrian destruction, God promises restoration to His people].³ The shields of his [i.e. Babylonian & Mede] mighty men are *colored* red, the warriors are dressed in scarlet [red shields and uniforms = perhaps a form of psychological warfare], 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 [probably the suburbs just outside the city walls], they rush wildly in the squares, their appearance is like torches, they dash to and fro like lightning flashes.⁵ He [the Assyrian king] remembers his nobles; they stumble in their march, they hurry to her wall [main wall of the city], and the mantelet is set up [mantelet = moveable shelter].⁶ The gates of the rivers are opened and the palace is dissolved [likely destroyed by a recent rain flood].⁷ It is fixed [in God's decree]: She [Assyria] is stripped, she is carried away, and her handmaids are moaning like the sound of doves, beating on their breasts [knowing captivity has come].⁸ Though Nineveh *was* like a pool of water throughout her days, now they are fleeing; “Stop, stop,” [shout the city leaders] but no one turns back [or “Nineveh is like a pool whose water is draining away. ‘Stop! Stop!’ they cry, but no one turns back” (NIV)].⁹ Plunder the silver! Plunder the gold! [i.e. take the riches of Assyria] For there is no limit to the treasure—wealth from every kind of desirable object.¹⁰ She is emptied! Yes, she is desolate and waste! [proleptic statement of Assyria's fall] Hearts are melting and knees knocking! Also anguish is in the whole body and all their faces are grown pale! [because of the devastation]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*? [i.e. the lion's den is now empty]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.¹³ “Behold, I am against you [primary cause of destruction; Nah 3:5; cf. Jer 50:29-32],” declares the LORD of hosts. “I will burn up her chariots in smoke [destroy Assyria's military machinery], a sword will devour your young lions [i.e. the invading army will destroy the Assyrian soldiers]; I will cut off your prey from the land [not be able to attack the defenseless], and no longer will the voice of your messengers be heard [who come demanding submission and tribute from others].”

Summary:

The *Central Idea of the Text* is that God brings an invading army against Nineveh to destroy it. Nahum opens his prophecy with a sarcastic call to the Ninevites to defend themselves, saying, “Man the fortress, watch the road; strengthen your back, summon all *your* strength” (Nah 2:1). The effort, of course, is futile, for the primary attacker is God Himself, against whom no one can stand. Part of the reason for the attack against Nineveh

is God's intention to "restore the splendor of Jacob like the splendor of Israel" (Nah 2:2a). Though Judah has been devastated by the Assyrians, God would destroy them and put an end to their aggression. Nahum describes the battle, saying, "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" (Nah 2:3). Blood-red shields and uniforms were used by the Babylonians as a means of psychological warfare to strike fear in the enemy. Then the battle erupts, as "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" (Nah 2:3-4). The Assyrians stumble to meet the enemy as they hurry to defend the walls of the city and set up their defenses (Nah 2:5). Nahum then declares, "The gates of the rivers are opened and the palace is dissolved" (Nah 2:6). There is historical evidence that just before Nineveh's destruction, the city had experienced a series of rainfalls that had caused the Khoser River to swell and damage the city walls, creating an opening for the Babylonians and Medes to enter through. If correct, this would show how God used inclement weather to damage the city's walls in preparation for the Babylonians and Medes, thus ensuring their military success. The events of Nineveh's destruction are "fixed" according to God's sovereign will as the city is stripped and carried away in battle and the Assyrian handmaids are left moaning the destruction (Nah 2:7). The city is likened to a pool of water that drains away and no one turns back, though the leaders shout "Stop, stop" (Nah 2:8). The attackers are called to plunder the city of its great wealth as the residents melt in fear (Nah 2:9-10). The great plunderers would be plundered. Assyria is described as a ravenous lion and Nineveh as its lair, and both the people and their city are destroyed (Nah 2:11-13). God then states unequivocally to the Assyrians, "Behold, I am against you" (Nah 2:13a). Though the Lord used the Babylonians and Medes, under the leadership of Nabopolassar and Cyaxeres, it was ultimately God who brought about their destruction, saying, "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" (Nah 2:13b). God is patient and had waited over 100 years for the Assyrians to repent, but they refused. As Judge, God finally rendered a decision against Nineveh and, because of their arrogance and sin, He brought about their destruction.

Nahum 3:1-19

Woe to the bloody city [because of Assyrian cruelty], completely full of lies *and* pillage; *her* prey never departs.² The noise of the whip, the noise of the rattling of the wheel, galloping horses and bounding chariots!³ Horsemen charging, swords flashing, spears gleaming, many slain, a mass of corpses, and countless dead bodies—they stumble over the dead bodies!⁴ *All* because of the many harlotries of the harlot, the charming one [who seductively allures other nations into alliance and then betrays and destroys them; see Isa 36:16-17], the mistress of sorceries, who sells nations by her harlotries and families by her sorceries [i.e. using spells to predict the future and control others].⁵ “Behold, I am against you,” declares the LORD of hosts; “And I will lift up your skirts over your face [exposing Nineveh to others], and show to the nations your nakedness and to the kingdoms your disgrace [Nineveh, who had destroyed and enslaved others, would now be shamed].⁶ “I will throw filth [i.e. excrement] on you and make you vile, and set you up as a spectacle.⁷ “And it will come about that all who see you will shrink from you and say, ‘Nineveh is devastated! Who will grieve for her?’ where will I seek comforters for you?” [i.e. no one cares Nineveh is destroyed]⁸ Are you better than No-amon [i.e. Thebes], which was situated by the waters of the Nile, with water surrounding her, whose rampart *was* the sea, whose wall *consisted* of the sea?⁹ Ethiopia was *her* might, and Egypt too, without limits. Put and Lubim were among her helpers.¹⁰ Yet she became an exile, she went into captivity [by the Assyrians]; also her small children were dashed to pieces at the head of every street [the murder of innocent babies in open places; probably in front of parents]; they cast lots for her honorable men, and all her great men were bound with fetters [the great were brought low].¹¹ You too will become drunk [i.e. totter and stumble], you will be hidden. You too will search for a refuge from the enemy [but will find none].¹² All your fortifications are fig trees with ripe fruit—when shaken, they fall [easily] into the eater’s mouth [to be consumed].¹³ Behold, your people are women in your midst! [unable to stand against the strong invading army] The gates of your land are opened wide to your enemies; fire consumes your gate bars.¹⁴ Draw for yourself water for the siege! Strengthen your fortifications! [i.e. do your best to defend yourselves] Go into the clay and tread the mortar! Take hold of the brick mold! [to reinforce the walls]¹⁵ There fire will consume you, the sword will cut you down; it will consume you as the locust *does*. Multiply yourself like the creeping locust, multiply yourself like the swarming locust.¹⁶ You have increased your traders more than the stars of heaven—the creeping locust strips and flies away.¹⁷ Your guardsmen are like the swarming locust. Your marshals are like hordes of grasshoppers settling in the stone walls on a cold day. The sun rises and they flee, and the place where they are is not known.¹⁸ Your shepherds are sleeping, O king of Assyria; your nobles are lying down. Your people are scattered on the mountains and there is no one to regather *them*.¹⁹ There is no relief for your breakdown, your wound is incurable. All who hear about you will clap *their* hands over you [in celebration of your defeat], for on whom has not your evil passed continually?

Summary:

In chapter three, Nahum addresses Nineveh as the “bloody city” that was built up through violence, lies, and whose prey never departs (Nah 3:1). However, the people who once destroyed and plundered others would now experience the same, as the prophet graphically describes the sights and sounds of the invading army of the Babylonians and Medes (Nah 3:2-3). God would bring this destruction upon the Assyrians because of their abuses of other nations. Nahum declares this was “All because of the many harlotries of the harlot, the charming one, the mistress of sorceries, who sells nations by her harlotries and families by her sorceries” (Nah 3:4). Nineveh’s leaders lured other nations by offering them peaceful alliances (cf. Isa 36:16-17), only to betray them afterwards. In their efforts to subjugate others, the Assyrians also practiced sorcery to predict the future, thus seeking a political and military advantage. But God governs His universe by moral laws, and Nineveh’s violence aroused the Judge of all the earth to judge them. The Lord said of Nineveh, “Behold, I am against you” (Nah 3:5a), and then renders judgment, exposing her “disgrace” and covering her with “filth” (Nah 3:5-6). Subsequently, there would be none to grieve its destruction (Nah 3:7). Thebes, like Nineveh, was a strong city surrounded by fortifications, both natural and manmade (Nah 3:8-9); however, the Assyrians brutally attacked and destroyed the city in 663 B.C., slaughtering children in the streets and humiliating the “honorable men” who were taken away in chains (Nah 3:10). Just as Thebes was helpless to stop the Assyrian destruction, so Nineveh would be helpless to stop the invading army sent by God (Nah 3:11); and just as ripe figs easily fall from the fig tree, so Nineveh would fall to those who desired to consume it (Nah 3:12). The people of Nineveh are described as weak, as the strong gates of the city would be burned as the invading army enters (Nah 3:13). In sarcastic language, the Ninevites are told to strengthen themselves and their fortress for the attack (Nah 3:14), but this will not help, as the city would be destroyed by fire and sword (Nah 3:15a). Though the residents of the city are multiplied like a swarm of locusts (too many to count), they will quickly flee away when the attack comes (Nah 3:15b-17). The nation’s leaders (shepherds and nobles) are described as sleeping on the job, and the king of Assyria is helpless (Nah 3:18a). His people “are scattered on the mountains and there is no one to regather them” (Nah 3:18b). The king of Assyria is made to realize the consequences of his evil leadership, with the result, “There is no relief for your breakdown, your wound is incurable” (Nah 3:19a), and all who suffered under Nineveh’s oppression will rejoice at its destruction, for the city only offered evil continually (Nah 3:19b).

The reasons God brought Nineveh and the Assyrian Empire down are the same reasons He will humble any similar people. Any nation or city that lusts for conquest, practices violence and brutality to dominate others, abuses its power, oppresses the weak, worships anything but Yahweh, or seeks help from the demonic world shares Nineveh’s sins and can expect her fate. (Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible*, Na 3:19)

God Moves Hearts and Circumstances

Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. (Gen 45:5-7)

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. (Gen 50:20)

The patriarchs became jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt. Yet God was with him, and rescued him from all his afflictions, and granted him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he made him governor over Egypt and all his household. (Acts 7:9-10)

“Whatever the LORD pleases, He does, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps” (Psa 135:6).

“Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD.” (Job 1:21)

“Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?” (Job 2:10)

The LORD of hosts has sworn saying, “Surely, just as I have intended so it has happened, and just as I have planned so it will stand” (Isa 14:24)

“I am the LORD, and there is no other; besides Me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known Me; that men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun that there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other, the One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these.” (Isa 45:5-7)

“Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, ‘My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure’; calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.” (Isa 46:9-11)

There is no one who can understand all His ways, or stop what He has set in motion. All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will in

the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’” (Dan 4:35).

The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up. The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts. He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with nobles, and inherit a seat of honor; for the pillars of the earth are the LORD’S, and He set the world on them. He keeps the feet of His godly ones, but the wicked ones are silenced in darkness; for not by might shall a man prevail. (1 Sam 2:6-9)

The king’s heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes. (Prov 21:1)

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying: Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, “The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah.” (Ezra 1:1-2)

And they observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy, for the LORD had caused them to rejoice, and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria toward them to encourage them in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel. (Ezra 6:22)

Blessed be the LORD, the God of our fathers, who has put such a thing as this in the king’s heart, to adorn the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem, and has extended lovingkindness to me before the king and his counselors and before all the king’s mighty princes. Thus I was strengthened according to the hand of the LORD my God upon me, and I gathered leading men from Israel to go up with me. (Ezra 7:27-28)