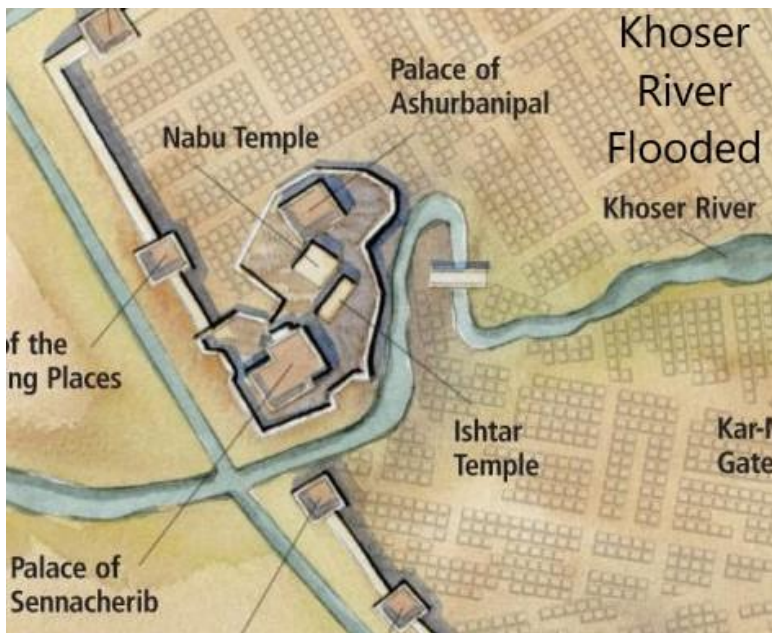


# Nahum 3

There are four descriptive declarations of the siege of Nineveh in Nahum:

1. First description of Nineveh's coming fall is 2:3-7
2. Second description of Nineveh's coming fall is 2:8-13
3. Third description of Nineveh's coming fall is 3:1-7
4. Fourth description of Nineveh's coming fall is 3:8-19







## Babylonian Account of the Fall of Nineveh

in 612 BC recorded on the clay tablets known as the **Babylonian Chronicles** which record events between 747-282 BC.

This text (seen here to the left) concerning the fall of Nineveh contains events between 615-609 BC. This particular copy was made between 550-400 BC.

The Chronicle known as **Chronicle 3** or ABC 3, describes the final years of the Assyrian Empire. The text is inscribed on a medium-size tablet, BM 21901 (96-4-9, 6), which measures 132 mm long and 69 mm wide. At one time it was broken into four pieces and, although the fragments have been joined, there are several surface flaws as well as a large lacuna in the center of the tablet.

The translation was adapted from A.K. Grayson and can be found in *Assyrian and Babylonian chronicles* (1975); some readings were adapted from Jean-Jacques Glassner, *Chroniques Mésopotamiennes* (1993). An introduction can be found [here](#).

Translation begins here:

[Y10] The tenth year of Nabopolassar (616-615 BC): In the month Ajaru, Nabopolassar mustered the army of Akkad and marched along the bank of the Euphrates. The Suheans and Hindaneans (people living south of Harran) did not do battle against him but placed their tribute before him.

In the month Âbu the army of Assyria prepared for battle in Gablini and Nabopolassar went up against them. On the twelfth of the month Âbu (July 4, 616) he did battle against the army of Assyria and the army of Assyria retreated before him. He inflicted a major defeat upon Assyria and plundered them extensively. He captured the Manneans, who had come to the Assyrians' aid, and the Assyrian officers. On the same day he captured Gablini.

In the month Âbu the king of Akkad and his army went upstream to Mane, Sahiri and Bali-hu. He plundered them, sacked them extensively and abducted their gods.

In the month Ulûlu the king of Akkad and his army returned and on his way he took the people of Hindanu and its gods to Babylon.

In the month Tašrîtu the army of Egypt and the army of Assyria went after the king of Akkad as far as Gablini but they did not overtake the king of Babylonia. So they withdrew.

In the month Addaru the army of Assyria and the army of Akkad did battle against one another at Madanu, a suburb of Arraphu (modern Kirkuk) and the army of Assyria retreated before the army of Akkad. The army of Babylonia inflicted a major defeat upon the Assyrian army and drove them back to the Zab river. They captured their chariots and horses and plundered them extensively. They took many [lacuna] with them across the Tigris and brought them into Babylon.

[Y11] The eleventh year (615-614): The king of Akkad mustered his army, marched along the bank of the Tigris, and in the month Ajaru he encamped against Aššur. On the [lacuna] day of the month Simanu he did battle against the city but he did not capture it. The king of Assyria mustered his army, pushed the king of Akkad back from Aššur and marched after him as far as Takrita'in, a city on the bank of the Tigris. The king of Akkad stationed his army in the fortress of Takrita'in. The king of Assyria and his army encamped against the army of the king of Akkad, which was stationed in Takrita'in, and did battle against them for ten days. But the king of Assyria did not capture the city. Instead, the army of the king of Akkad, which had been stationed in the fortress, inflicted a major defeat upon Assyria. The king of Assyria and his army turned and went home.

In the month Arahsamna the Medes went down to Arraphu and [lacuna].

[Y12] The twelfth year (614-613): In the month Âbu the Medes, after they had matched against Nineveh [lacuna], hastened and they captured Tarbisu, a city in the district of Nineveh. They went along the Tigris and encamped against Aššur. They did battle against the city and destroyed it. They inflicted a terrible defeat upon a great people, plundered and sacked them. The king of Akkad and his army, who had gone to help the Medes, did not reach the battle in time. The city was taken. The king of Akkad and Cyaxares met one another by the city and together they made an entente cordiale. Later, Cyaxares and his army went home. The king of Akkad and his army went home.

[Y13] The thirteenth year (613-612): In the month Ajaru the Suheans rebelled against the king of Akkad and became belligerent. The king of Akkad mustered his army and marched to Suhu. On the fourth day of the month Simanun (May 11, 613) he did battle against Rahi-ilu, a city which is on an island in the middle of the Euphrates and at that time he captured the city. He built his [lacuna] The men who live on the bank of the Euphrates came down to him. [lacuna] he encamped against Anati and the siege engines he brought over from the western side [lacuna] he brought the siege engines up to the wall. He did battle against the city and captured it. The king of Assyria and his army came down and the king of Akkad and his army went home.

[Y14] The fourteenth year (612-611): The king of Akkad mustered his army and marched to Assyria. The king of the Medes marched towards the king of Akkad and they met one another at [...] -u. The king of Akkad and his army crossed the Tigris; Cyaxares had to cross the Radanu, and they marched along the bank of the Tigris. In the month Simanu, the Nth day, they encamped against Nineveh.

From the month Simanu until the month Âbu - for three months - they subjected the city to a heavy siege. On the Nth day of the month Âbu they inflicted a major defeat upon a great people. At that time Sin-šar-iškun, king of Assyria, died. They carried off the vast booty of the city and the temple and turned the city into a ruin heap The [lacuna] of Assyria escaped from the enemy and, to save his life, seized the feet of the king of Akkad.

On the twentieth day of the month Ulûlu (Septemer 14, 612) Cyaxares and his army went home. After he had gone, the king of Akkad dispatched his army and they marched to Nasibina. Plunder and exiles [lacuna] and they brought the people of Rusapu to the king of Akkad at Nineveh. On the [lacuna] of the month [lacuna] Aššur-uballit ascended to the throne in Harran to rule Assyria. Up until the [lacuna] day of the month [lacuna] the king of Akkad set out and in [lacuna]

[Y15] The fifteenth year (611-610): In the month Du'ûzu the king of Akkad mustered his army and marched to Assyria victoriously. He marched about of [lacuna] and Šu[lacuna], plundered it and carried of its vast booty.

In the month Arahsamna the king of Akkad took the lead of his army personally and marched against Ruggulitu. He did battle against the city and on the twenty-eighth day of the month Arahsamnu he captured it. He did not leave a single man alive. [lacuna] He went home.

[Y16] The sixteenth year (610-609): In the month Ajaru the king of Akkad mustered his army and marched to Assyria. From the month Simanu until the month Arahsamna he marched about victoriously in Assyria. In the month Arahsamna the Medes, who had come to the help of the king of Akkad, put their armies together and marched to Harran against Aššur-uballit, who had ascended the throne in Assyria. Fear of the enemy overcame Aššur-uballit and the army of Egypt that had come to help him, and they abandoned the city, and crossed the Euphrates. The king of Akkad reached Harran, fought a battle, and captured the city. He carried off the vast booty of the city and the temple. In the month Addaru the king of Akkad left his troops and their camp, and went home. The Medes, who had come to help the king of Akkad, withdrew.

[Y17] The seventeenth year (609-608): In the month Du'ûzu Aššur-uballit, king of Assyria, with a large army from Egypt crossed the river Euphrates and marched against Harran to conquer it. They

captured [lacuna] (a town on the road to Harran). They defeated the garrison which the king of Akkad had stationed inside. When they had defeated it they encamped against Harran. Until the month Ulûlu they did battle against the city but achieved nothing. The king of Akkad went to help his army but did not join battle. He he went up to Izalla and the numerous cities in the mountains [lacuna] he set fire to their [lacuna]

At that time the army of [lacuna] march as far as the district of Urartu. In the land [lacuna] they plundered their [lacuna] The garrison which the king of [lacuna] had stationed in it set out. They went up to [lacuna]. The king of Akkad went home.

[Y18] In the eighteenth year (608-607): In the month Ulûlu the king of Akkad mustered his army and [lacuna].

Let the one who loves Nabû and Marduk keep this tablet and not let it stray into other hands.

(Source: <https://www.livius.org/sources/content/mesopotamian-chronicles-content/abc-3-fall-of-nineveh-chronicle/>)

### **From Britannica:**

“Battle of Nineveh, (612 BCE). Determined to end Assyrian dominance in Mesopotamia, Babylonia led an alliance in an attack against the Assyrian capital, Nineveh. The city was comprehensively sacked after a three-month siege, and Assyrian King Sinsharushkin was killed. Although his successors clung to power for a while, the days of Assyrian ascendancy were gone. In 626 BCE, however, a new king, Nabopolassar, sensed that the hold of Assyria’s rulers was weakening. It took Nabopolassar ten years to expel Assyrian forces from Babylonia itself, and in 616 BCE he led an invasion of Assyria. By then, other discontent peoples were eager to enlist in the Babylonian cause, including several from what is now Iran. Soon, Nabopolassar was heading an army that included the people of Susa—a city-state in the foothills of the Zagros mountains—and the Scythians, mounted nomads (and formidable cavalrymen) from the steppe. The Medes, a people from the plains of northwestern Iran, marched south to take the Assyrians’ original home city of Assur in 614 BCE, after which they too struck an alliance with Nabopolassar. Together, under Babylonian leadership, the allies moved against the Assyrian capital, Nineveh. Resistance was fierce, and it was three long months of fighting before it fell. The city was sacked, and Assyria’s King Sinsharushkin killed. Even then, the Assyrians rallied around a new, would-be ruler, Ashurballit, but he was finally defeated in 608 BCE.



**Nahum 3:1** – “Woe to the bloody city,  
all full of lies and plunder—  
no end to the prey!

1. Nineveh’s sinfulness described as:
  - a. Bloody city
  - b. Full of lies
  - c. Full plunder
  - d. Prey or victims
2. This builds on (or, is connected to) the last verses of chapter 2 describing the lions’ den which was figurative for Ashurbanipal’s palace which was filled with torn meat or plunder.

**3:2** – “The crack of the whip, and rumble of the wheel,  
galloping horse and bounding chariot!

**3:3** – Horsemen charging,  
flashing sword and glittering spear,  
hosts of slain,

heaps of corpses,  
dead bodies without end—  
they stumble over the bodies!

1. Nahum returns to describe the coming battle of 612 for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time.

**3:4** – “And all for the countless whorings of the prostitute,  
graceful and of deadly charms,  
who betrays nations with her whorings,  
and peoples with her charms.

**3:5** – “Behold, I am against you,  
declares the Lord of hosts,  
and will lift up your skirts over your face;  
and I will make nations look at your nakedness  
and kingdoms at your shame.

**3:6** – I will throw filth at you  
and treat you with contempt  
and make you a spectacle.

**3:7** – And all who look at you will shrink from you and say,  
“Wasted is Nineveh; who will grieve for her?”  
Where shall I seek comforters for you?

**This is the fourth declaration of the siege of Nineveh:**

5. First description of Nineveh’s coming fall is 2:3-7
6. Second description of Nineveh’s coming fall is 2:8-13
7. Third description of Nineveh’s coming fall is 3:1-7
8. Fourth description of Nineveh’s coming fall is 3:8-19

**3:8** – “Are you better than Thebes  
that sat by the Nile,  
with water around her,  
her rampart a sea,  
and water her wall?

**3:9** – Cush was her strength;  
Egypt too, and that without limit;  
Put and the Libyans were her helpers.

**3:10** – Yet she became an exile;  
she went into captivity;  
her infants were dashed in pieces  
at the head of every street;  
for her honored men lots were cast,  
and all her great men were bound in chains.

**Thebes was used as an example of Nineveh’s fall. Now the fall of Nineveh is described for the fourth time:**

**3:11** – “You also will be drunken;  
you will go into hiding;  
you will seek a refuge from the enemy.

**3:12** – All your fortresses are like fig trees  
with first-ripe figs—  
if shaken they fall  
into the mouth of the eater.

**3:13** – “Behold, your troops  
are women in your midst.  
The gates of your land  
are wide open to your enemies;  
fire has devoured your bars.

**3:14** – “Draw water for the siege;  
strengthen your forts;  
go into the clay;  
tread the mortar;  
take hold of the brick mold!

**3:15** – There will the fire devour you;  
the sword will cut you off.  
It will devour you like the locust.  
Multiply yourselves like the locust;  
multiply like the grasshopper!

**The different classes of people in Nineveh on the day of battle are described:**

**3:16** – You increased your merchants  
more than the stars of the heavens.  
The locust spreads its wings and flies away.

**3:17** – Your princes are like grasshoppers,  
your scribes like clouds of locusts  
settling on the fences  
in a day of cold—  
when the sun rises, they fly away;  
no one knows where they are.

**3:18** – Your shepherds are asleep,  
O king of Assyria;  
your nobles slumber.  
Your people are scattered on the mountains  
with none to gather them.

**The End: A final description of Nineveh's fate and a rhetorical question highlighting their unceasing oppression on the people in the Middle East.**

**3:19** – There is no easing your hurt;  
your wound is grievous.  
All who hear the news about you  
clap their hands over you.  
For upon whom has not come  
your unceasing evil?