

# Zephaniah 2:13-15

(likely written sometime between 623-617 BC)

## ASSYRIA to the North

2:13 – “And he will stretch out his hand against the north  
and destroy Assyria,  
and he will make Nineveh a desolation,  
a dry waste like the desert.

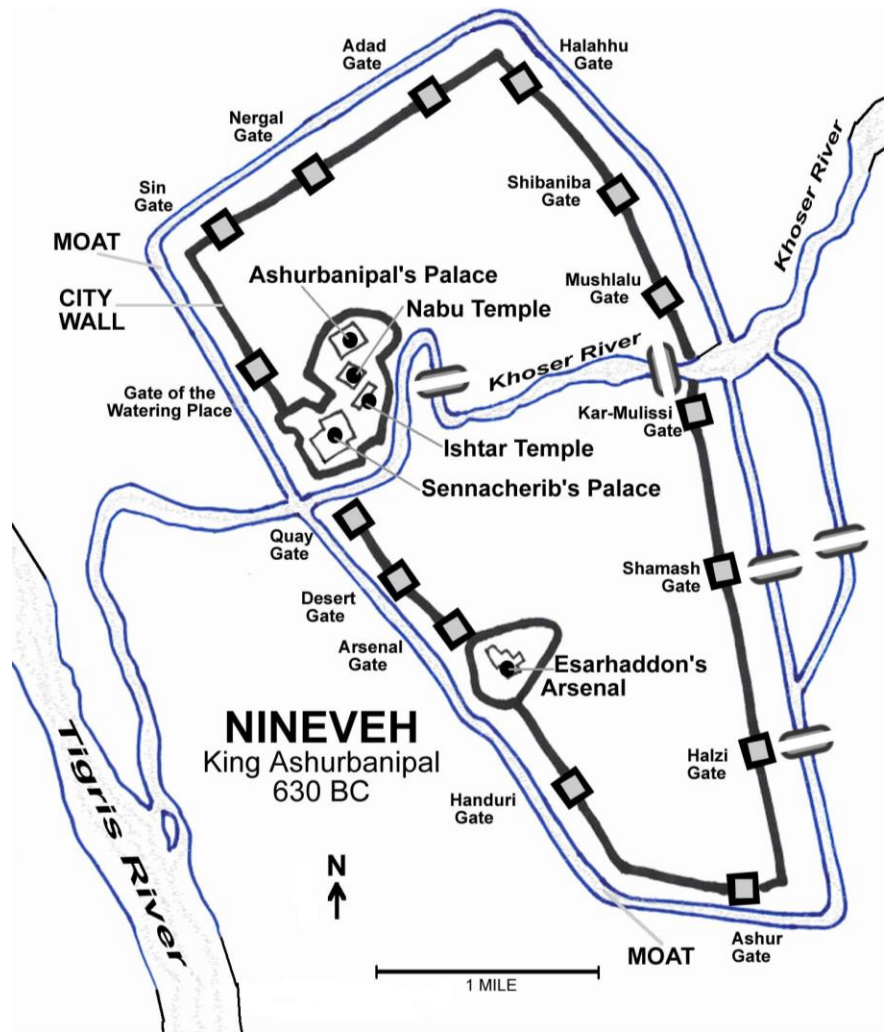
804 [e]	853 [e]	6 [e]	6828 [e]	5921 [e]	3027 [e]	5186 [e]
'aš·šūr;	'eṭ-	wî·'ab·bêḏ	ṣā·pō·wn,	'al-	yā·dōw	wə·yêṭ
— אַשּׁוּר	אֶתְ	וַיִּאַבֵּד	צָפוֹן	עַל-	יָדוֹ	וַיִּט 13
Assyria	-	Destroy	the north	against	His hand	And He will stretch out
N-proper-fs	DirObjM	Conj-w   V-Piel-ConjImperf-3ms	N-fs	Prep	N-fsc   3ms	Conj-w   V-Qal-ConjImperf.Jus-3ms

4057 [e]	6723 [e]	8077 [e]	5210 [e]	853 [e]	7760 [e]
kam·mid·bār.	ṣî·yāh	liš·mā·māh,	nî·ne·wêh	'eṭ-	wə·yā·sêm
כַּמְדְּבָר:	צִיָּה	לְשִׁמְמָה	נִינְוָה	אֶת-	וַיַּשֵּׁם
as the wilderness	as dry	a desolation	Nineveh	-	and make
Prep-k, Art   N-ms	N-fs	Prep-l   N-fs	N-proper-fs	DirObjM	Conj-w   V-Qal-ConjImperf.Jus-3ms

1. Nineveh and the Assyrian Empire had oppressed Israel since the days of King Ahaz (736-715 BC).
  - a. Isaiah 7-8 around 732 BC
  - b. Rezin ruled in Syria 754-732 BC and Pekah ruled in Norther Israel 740-732.
  - c. Ahaz goes to Tiglath-pileser III for help against Rezin and Pekah. Ahaz then met Tiglath-pileser III in Damascus after the Syrian city had fallen to the Assyrians according to 2 Kings 16:9-10:  
“The king of Assyria complied by attacking Damascus and capturing it. He deported its inhabitants to Kir and put Rezin to death. Then King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria. He saw an altar in Damascus and sent to Uriah the priest a sketch of the altar, with detailed plans for its construction.”
  - d. Since 732 BC Assyria was Judah’s protector and claimed suzerainty /suz-era-enty/ over the kingdom
  - e. 731 Assyria set up a king in Northern Israel: Hoshea
  - f. In 722 BC Assyria destroys and deports Northern Israel
  - g. In 701 BC Sennacherib invades Judah, destroys all the fortified cities and threatens Jerusalem
2. Nineveh, the last nation mentioned, was the strongest empire at the time of Zephaniah
3. Nineveh falls 5 years later in 612 BC (or, 5-9 years later after Zephaniah made this prophecy)
- 4.

5. "Dry waste like a desert"
- Nineveh had a great canal system with the Khoser River running through it and sat alongside the Tigris River.
  - By 401 BC Xenophon records as he traveled past Nineveh that it had become desert sand, because by the time the Greeks marched through the Middle East to take the Persian Empire the city of Nineveh could no longer be identified and the culture was itself ancient history. He did not find a trace of the city since it was buried in sand.



2:14 – "Herds shall lie down in her midst,  
 all kinds of beasts;  
 even the owl and the hedgehog  
 shall lodge in her capitals;  
 a voice shall hoot in the window;  
 devastation will be on the threshold;  
 for her cedar work will be laid bare.

6893 [e]	1571 [e]		1471 [e]	2416 [e]	3605 [e]	5739 [e]	8432 [e]	7257 [e]
qā'at	gam-		gō-w,	hay·tōw-	kāl-	'ā-dā-rīm	bə·tō·w·käh	wə·rā·bə·šū
קֶאֱתַלְ	גַּם-	—	גֹּי	חַיְתוֹ-	כָּל-	עֲדָרִים	בְּתוֹכָהּ	וְרָבְצוּ 14
the pelican	both		of the nation	beast	every	the herds	in her midst	And shall lie down
N-fs	Conj		N-ms	N-fsc   3ms	N-msc	N-mp	Prep-b   N-msc   3fs	Conj-w   V-Qal-ConjPerf-3cp

	2474 [e]	7891 [e]	6963 [e]	3885 [e]		3730 [e]	7090 [e]	1571 [e]
	ba·ḥal·lō·wn	yə·šō·w·rēr	qō·wl	yā·lī·nū;		bə·kəp·tə·re·hā	qip·pōd,	gam-
—	בַּחֲלוֹן	יִשׁוֹרֵר	קוֹל	יִלְיִנוּ		בְּכַפְתְּרֶיהָ	קִפְדַּ	גַּם-
	in the windows	shall sing	their voice	shall lodge	on the capitals [of] her [pillars]	the bittern		and
	Prep-b, Art   N-cs	V-Piel-Imperf-3ms	N-ms	V-Qal-Imperf-3mp		Prep-b   N-mpc   3fs	N-ms	Conj

	6168 [e]	731 [e]	3588 [e]	5592 [e]	2721 [e]
	'ê-rāh.	'ar-zāh	kî	bas·saḥ,	ḥō·reb
	עָרָה:	אֲרָזָה	כִּי	בַּסַּף	תָּרַב
	He will lay bare	the cedar work	for	at the threshold	Desolation [shall be]
	V-Piel-Perf-3ms	N-fs	Conj	Prep-b, Art   N-ms	N-ms

1. The great, advanced, sophisticated city would be a place where herds would graze and rest.
  - a. Herds
  - b. Beasts
  - c. The order of creation has been reversed. Instead of man ruling the beasts, the beasts inhabit the remains of the city of man. And, do not appear to be challenged or threatened with expulsion.
2. The great buildings and paneled palaces would become a place for wild animals to find shelter.
  - a. Owl (pelican?) and hedgehog (or, porcupine) lodge on capitals
  - b. Owls hooting from the window ledges
3. Threshold devastated
4. The wooden paneling that covered the stone or brick walls deteriorated exposing the stone/brick blocks.

2:15 – “This is the exultant city  
 that lived securely,  
 that said in her heart,  
 “I am, and there is no one else.”  
 What a desolation she has become,  
 a lair for wild beasts!  
 Everyone who passes by her  
 hisses and shakes his fist.

3824 [e]	559 [e]	983 [e]	3427 [e]	5947 [e]	5892 [e]	2063 [e]
bil·bā·bāh,	hā·'ō·mē·rāh	lā·be·ṭaḥ,	hay·yō·wō·še·bet	hā·'al·lī·zāh	hā·'îr	zōṭ
בְּלִבָּהּ	הֵאָמְרָה	לְבֶטַח	הַיּוֹשֶׁבֶת	הַעֲלִיזָה	הָעִיר	זֹאת
in her heart	that said	securely	that dwelt	rejoicing	the city	This [is]
Prep-b   N-msc   3fs	Art   V-Qal-Prtcpl-fs	Prep-l   N-ms	Art   V-Qal-Prtcpl-fs	Art   Adj-fs	Art   N-fs	Pro-fs

4769 [e]	8047 [e]	1961 [e]	349 [e]	5750 [e]	657 [e]	589 [e]
mar·bêš	lə·šam·māh,	hā·yē·tāh	'êk	'ō·wd;	wə·'ap·sî	'ā·nî
מַרְבֵּץ	לְשָׂמָה	הֲיָתָה	אֵיךְ	עוֹד	וְאִפְסִי	אֲנִי
a resting place	a desolation	has she become	how	besides me	and [there is] none	I [am it]
N-ms	Prep-l   N-fs	V-Qal-Perf-3fs	Interjection	Adv	Conj-w   N-msc	Pro-1cs

3027 [e]	5128 [e]	8319 [e]	5921 [e]	5674 [e]	3605 [e]	2416 [e]	
yā·dōw.	yā·nî·a'	yiš·rōq	'ā·le·hā,	'ō·w·bêr	kōl	la·ḥay·yāh,	
יָדוֹ:	וַיָּנִיעַ	יִשְׂרָק	עָלֶיהָ	עוֹבֵר	כָּל	לְחַיָּה	
his fist	and shake	shall hiss	by her	who passes	Everyone	for beasts	
Punc	N-fsc   3ms	V-Hifil-Imperf-3ms	V-Qal-Imperf-3ms	Prep   3fs	V-Qal-Prtcpl-ms	N-ms	Prep-l, Art   N-fs

1. A city celebrating and secure in Zephaniah's day would fail
  - a. "exultant" – *haallizah* – means "jubilant" and "triumphantly happy"
  - b. "lived securely" deep in Assyrian territory surrounded by walls and canals for moats
2. After judgment:
  - a. "desolation" – *lesammah* – "waste", "a horror"
  - b. "lair for wild beasts"
    - i. A place for beasts to lay down and rest
  - c. People who pass by scorn the remains and show contempt:
    - i. "hisses"
    - ii. "shakes fist" – as in "away with her" she deserves her fate
      1. Nahum 3:19, another hand gesture at Nineveh's fate:  
"All who hear the news about you clap their hands over you.  
For upon whom has not come your unceasing evil?"
3. "I am, and there is no one else."
  - a. Self-sufficient
    - i. Same claim as:
      1. Babylon in Isaiah 47:8
      2. Laodicea in Revelation 3:17
  - b. All other nations and cities depend on Nineveh: protection, economy, culture, etc.