

Nahum

MEANING The Hebrew word “Nahum” means (“Comfort, consolation”), is a shortened form of Nehemiah (“Comfort of Yahweh”).

AUTHOR: Nahum

TIME WRITTEN: Somewhere between 663 and 612 B..

POSITION IN THE BIBLE:

- 34th Book in the Bible
- 34th book in the Old Testament
- 12th of 17 books of Prophecy
- 7th of 12 Minor Prophet Books
- 33 have preceded it. 32 to follow it.

CHAPTERS: 3

VERSES: 43

WORDS: 1,285

KEY WORD: The Judgment of Nineveh

TWO KEY PASSAGES:

1. **Nahum 1:7-8** - “The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him.
But with an overflowing flood he will make an utter end of its place, and darkness will pursue His enemies.”
2. **Nahum 3:5-7** - “Behold, I am against you,” says the LORD of hosts; “I will lift your skirts over your face, I will show the nations your nakedness, and the kingdoms your shame. I will cast abominable filth upon you, make you vile, and make you a spectacle. It shall come to pass that all who look upon you will flee from you, and say, ‘Nineveh is laid waste!’”

KEY CHAPTER: Nahum 1

1. The first chapter of Nahum records the principles of divine judgment resulting in the decree of the destruction of Nineveh and the deliverance and celebration of Judah.
2. Beginning with 1:9, the single thrust of Nahum’s prophecy is the retribution of God upon the wickedness of Nineveh.
3. Nineveh’s judgment is irreversible decreed by the righteous God who will no longer delay his wrath. Another Jonah will not be sent to call for their repentance.
4. Assyria’s arrogance and cruelty to other nations will come to a sudden end: her power will be useless against the mighty hand of Yahweh.
5. Nahum 1:2-8 portrays the patience, power, holiness and justice of the living God.
6. He is slow to wrath, but God settles His accounts in full.
7. While the book of Nahum concerns the downfall of Assyria, it is written for the benefit of the surviving kingdom of Judah. Israel had already been swallowed up by Assyria (722 B.C.)
8. The people in Judah who trust in the Lord will be comforted to hear of God’s judgment upon the proud and brutal Assyrians (1:5; 2:2)

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT NAHUM:

1. The only mention of Nahum in the Old Testament is found in 1:1.
2. **Luke 12:48** - “For everyone to whom much is given, from him, much will be required.”
 - a. Nineveh had been given the privilege of knowing the one true God.

- b. Under Jonah's preaching this great Gentile city had repented, and God graciously stayed His judgment.
 - c. However, a hundred years later, Nahum proclaims the downfall of this same city.
 - d. The Assyrians have forgotten their revival and have returned to their habits of violence, idolatry, and arrogance.
 - e. As a result, Babylon will so destroy the city that no trace of it will remain—a prophecy fulfilled in painful detail.
 - a. Nineveh fell to the Babylonians in 612 B.C.
 - b. Nahum also predicted in 3:11 that Nineveh would "be hidden." After its destruction in 612 B.C. the site was not discovered until A.D. 1842. (2,254 years later. It was hidden for a long time.)
3. By way of historical review:
- a. The conversion of the Ninevites in response to Jonah's message of judgment took place about 760 B.C.
 - b. The revival was evidently short-lived because the Assyrians soon returned to their ruthless practices.
 - 1. In 722 B.C., Sargon II of Assyria destroyed Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel.
 - 2. Led by Sennacherib, the Assyrians also came close to capturing Jerusalem in 701 B.C. during the reign of King Hezekiah.
 - 3. By the time of Nahum (660 B.C.) Assyria reached the peak of its prosperity and power under Ashurbanipal (669-633 B.C.).
 - 4. The king extended Assyria's influence farther than had any of his predecessors.
 - 5. Nineveh became the mightiest city on earth.
 - a. Walls 100 feet high and wide enough to accommodate three chariots riding side by side.
 - b. Dotted around the walls were high towers that stretched an additional 100 feet above the top of the walls.
 - c. In addition, the walls were surrounded by a moat 150 feet wide and 60 feet deep.
 - d. Nineveh appeared impregnable and could withstand a twenty-year siege.
 - e. Thus, Nahum's prophecy of Nineveh's overthrow seemed unlikely indeed.
 - 6. Assyrian power faded under Ashurbanipal's sons, Ashuretililani (633-629 B.C.), and Sinshariskun (629-612 B.C.)
 - a. In 1:8, Nahum predicted that Nineveh would end "with an overflowing flood," and this is precisely what occurred.
 - 1. The Tigris River overflowed its banks and the flood destroyed part of Nineveh's wall.
 - 2. The Babylonians invaded through this breach in the wall, plundered the city, and set it on fire.
 - b. As mentioned earlier, Nahum predicted in 3:11 that Nineveh would "be hidden." After its destruction in 612 B.C. the site was not discovered until A.D. 1842, some 2,254 years after its destruction.
 - 7. Therefore, Nineveh fell approximately 50 years after Nahum's prophecy of its destruction, never again to be rebuilt.

SUMMARY OF NAHUM

INTRODUCTION:

- A. When God finally convinces His prophet Jonah to preach to the people of Nineveh, the whole city responds with repentance and Nineveh escapes destruction.
 - 1. The people humble themselves before the one true God, but their humility soon changes to arrogance as Assyria reaches its zenith as the most powerful empire in the world.
 - 2. About a century after the preaching of Jonah, God calls Nahum to proclaim the coming destruction of Nineveh.
 - 3. This time there will be no escape, because their measure of wickedness is full.
 - 4. Unlike Jonah, Nahum does not go to the city, but declares his message from afar.
 - 5. There is no hope of repentance.
- B. There are three major divisions in the book:
 - 1. The Destruction of Nineveh is Decreed. (1)
 - 2. The Destruction of Nineveh is Described. (2)
 - 3. The Destruction of Nineveh is Deserved. (3)

THE DESTRUCTION OF NINEVEH IS DECREED. (1)

- A. Nahum begins with a very clear description of the character of Yahweh.
 - 1. Because of His righteousness, He is a God of vengeance (1:2).
 - 2. God is also characterized by patience (1:3) and power (1:3-6).
 - 3. While He is gracious to all that respond to Him, to those who rebel against Him will be overthrown (1:7-8).
 - 4. God is holy, and Nineveh stands condemned because of her sins (1:9-14).
 - 5. Nothing can stand in the way of judgment, and this is the message of comfort to the people of Judah in 1:15. The threat of Assyrian invasion will soon be over.

THE DESTRUCTION OF NINEVEH IS DESCRIBED. (2)

- A. Assyria will be conquered, but Judah will be restored (2:1-3).
- B. Nahum's description of the siege of Nineveh (2:3-7) and the sack of Nineveh (2:8-13) is one of the most vivid portraits of battle in Scripture.
 - 1. The storming warriors and chariots can almost be seen as they enter the city through a breach in the wall.
 - 2. As the Ninevites flee in terror, the invading army plunders the treasures of the city.
 - 3. The city is burned and cut off forever.

THE DESTRUCTION OF NINEVEH IS DESERVED. (3)

- A. Nahum closes his brief book of judgment with God's reasons for Nineveh's coming overthrow.
 - 1. The city is characterized by cruelty and corruption (3:1-7).
 - 2. Just as Assyria crushed the Egyptian capital city of Thebes in 664 B.C., Assyria's capital city will also be destroyed (3:9-10).
 - 3. Nineveh is fortified so well that defeat seems impossible, but God proclaims that its destruction is inevitable (3:11-19).
 - 4. None of its resources can deter divine judgment.

