

# NAHUM

## INTRODUCTION

1. AUTHOR – Nahum means "comforter" or "consolation". He was from Elkosh, a town probably in Judah.
2. DATE – It must have taken place after the fall of Thebes as described in 3:8-10. That happened in 661 BC. He predicted the fall of Nineveh that happened in 612 BC. So the book was probably written in 650-620 BC which would make him a contemporary of Jeremiah and Zephaniah.
3. READERS – The book is written to both Judah and Assyria and is approximately 150 years after the repentance of Nineveh under Jonah.
4. THEME – See 1:7-8 where the prophet announced that God would destroy both Nineveh and Assyria. That news should be a comfort to God's people.
5. KEY VERSES – 1:3, 1:14, 2:2, 3:7, and 3:18

## OUTLINE

1. GOD'S GREATNESS IS SEEN IN HIS JUSTICE. CH 1:1-2:2
  - A. He will not leave wicked Assyria unpunished. Ch1:1-11
  - B. He will restore His people and throw off their chains. Ch 1:12-2:2
2. GOD DESCRIBES THE DESTRUCTION OF NINEVEH. CH 2:3-13  
There is a great deal of detail in the description of the destruction in this prophecy. A great flood destroyed part of Nineveh's walls of defense allowing the Medes and Chaldeans to easily defeat the city.
3. THE REASON FOR AND CERTAINTY OF NINEVEH'S FALL. CH 3

## IMPORTANCE OF NAHUM

1. Nahum clearly bases all of God's actions on God's character. It is because He is jealous that He takes vengeance (1:2) and because He is good that He is a refuge (1:7). God always acts consistent with Who He is.
2. Salvation is not inherited. Just because there was a great repentance under the preaching of Jonah is no guarantee for future generations. We must be faithful in prayer and example to our children.
3. The judgment of God works in two ways. The same event that punishes the people of Nineveh for their wickedness freed God's people from their oppression. God's future judgment will punish evil and vindicate those who have trusted in Him.
4. God warned the people of Nineveh by the destruction of Thebes. We too must learn lessons from others to avoid similar punishments.

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1 – This is what happens when someone hears the word of the Lord and then turns from it. When Jonah preached to the Ninevites, they repented. Now a generation or so later, they have reverted to their wickedness and God sent Nahum to preach that they would be destroyed. There is a very interesting change in 1:3. Usually a verse like this reads, "The Lord is slow to anger, abounding in mercy." This one reads, "The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, and the Lord will by no means clear the guilty." This is because instead of showing grace this time, he will show judgment. The concept continues with V7-8. "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him. But with an overwhelming flood he will make a complete end of the adversaries, and will pursue his enemies into darkness."

There is debate about the ones to whom this book is addressed. Is it to Nineveh? Then it is one of the few books of the Bible addressed outside Israel. Or is it to Israel/Judah? It asserts that the Lord will take vengeance on Nineveh for its treatment of God's people. The judgment of God impacts all of creation from the seas and mountains to the flowers. At the same time this would be a great encouragement for the people of Judah as Nineveh was their enemy. V13 "And now I will break his yoke from off you and will burst your bonds apart." Who God is depends on whether we oppose him or serve him. The Lord will judge and take vengeance on his enemies. He will be vindicated. That action will also bring rescue for those who seek to put their refuge in him. Also in this chapter is the verse quoted in Romans 10 saying, "Behold, upon the mountains, the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace!"

2 – It must work this way. For the Lord to vindicate and deliver Judah, he must destroy Nineveh. That seems to always happen by the use of another army that invades. So this chapter is about the invasion of the army against Nineveh. The destruction will be devastating. V2 "For the Lord is restoring the majesty of Jacob like the majesty of Israel, for plunderers have plundered them and ruined their branches." The destruction will be thorough. V13 "Behold, I am against you, declares the Lord of hosts, and I will burn your chariots in smoke, and the sword shall devour your young lions. I will cut off your prey from the earth and the voice of your messengers shall no longer be heard."

3 – This chapter pronounces further woe on Nineveh. V1 "Woe to the bloody city, all full of lies and plunder – no end to the prey!" There will be shame as well as destruction. V18-19 "Your shepherds are asleep, O king of Assyria; your nobles slumber. Your people are scattered on the mountains with none to gather them. 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?" How important it is for us to realize that God does punish sin, all sin, even our sin. The only hope we have is that he punished our sin by placing it on Jesus and punishing him instead of us. What grace God has shown us! How we do not deserve any of it! Praise him!