

The Book of Nahum

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| A Great Name with a Great Meaning | In Hebrew, "Nahum" means "to comfort." Much like Micah (who is like the Lord), Nahum's name carries special significance in the book in light of his message. |
| Nahum and Jonah Go Together Like Butter and Toast | God called Jonah to preach a message of repentance to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. Nahum, however, completes the Assyrian picture. Though the Ninevites repented when Jonah came to town, their repentance didn't last. As a result, God called Nahum to prophesy Assyria's outright destruction and fall. That message was a comfort – <i>a nahum</i> – to God's people because Assyria was ruthless towards them. |
| Just How Evil Were the Assyrians? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In 745, Tiglath-Pileser III marched against Jerusalem and destroyed everything in his wake. Fortunately, he couldn't destroy the city. 2. Shalmaneser V, who succeeded TPIII put Hoshea on the Israelite throne. When Hoshea refused to send him tribute, he marched against the Northern Kingdom of Israel and Samaria (the capital). 3. Sargon II successfully destroyed Samaria in 722 BC. The Northern Kingdom was no more. 4. Isaiah saw all of this in a prophetic vision: "your land is desolate, your cities are burned with fire, your fields – strangers are devouring them in your presence; it is a desolation as overthrown by strangers" (Isaiah 1:7) |
| So, God Raises Up Nahum | Nahum enters the picture to complete God's message to Assyria started by Jonah. Consequently, they are the two Hebrew prophets who preached – largely – to the Gentiles (Assyria). In a nutshell, Nahum got to do what Jonah wanted to do. |
| Where Nahum Was from Is Also Very Important | Nahum identifies himself as an Elkoshite (Na 1:1). Elkosh was a city in southern Judah, thereby making him a prophet from the Southern Kingdom of Judah. That's important because Assyria had conquered the Northern Kingdom, but Judah remained. However, the people of Judah feared Assyria would destroy them the same way they destroyed the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Assyria wouldn't destroy them, Nahum prophesies. That was a comfort to them. Unfortunately, though, the same empire that destroyed the Assyrians – the Babylonians – would destroy Judah in 587 BC. |
| Key Verse | "The Lord is slow to anger and great in power. He will not leave evil unpunished." (Na 1:3) |
| Key Theme | God is just and He is right when He judges. Though he may choose to grant mercy for a time (Jonah), he will not leave evil unpunished if it continues (Nahum). |

Chapter One: God Appears to Judge Evil Among the Nations

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| Similar to Micah's Introduction | <p>In Micah, God shows up with thunder, lightning, clouds, etc. much like he did at Mt. Sinai when he made a covenant with Israel. In Micah though, he shows up in this way to judge God's people. In Nahum, he shows up in this way to judge the nations: namely Assyria.</p> <p><i>² The Lord is a jealous and avenging God; the Lord takes vengeance and is filled with wrath. The Lord takes vengeance on his foes and vents his wrath against his enemies. ³ The Lord is slow to anger but great in power; the Lord will not leave the guilty unpunished. His way is in the whirlwind and the storm, and clouds are the dust of his feet (2-3).</i></p> |
| Why the Lord Judges Evil Nations | <i>⁷ The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him, ⁸ but with an overwhelming flood he will make an end of Nineveh; he will pursue his foes into the realm of darkness. (7-8)</i> |
| The Fate of Evil Nations | <i>¹⁴ The Lord has given a command concerning you, Nineveh: "You will have no descendants to bear your name. I will destroy the images and idols that are in the temple of your gods. I will prepare your grave, for you are vile." (14)</i> |
| The Fate of the Righteous | <p>Is not only complete, but prophetic in terms God's ultimate purpose for them. Their feet will one day be beautiful. Paul applies this to people who share the Gospel.</p> <p><i>Look, there on the mountains, the feet of one who brings good news, who proclaims peace! Celebrate your festivals, Judah, and fulfill your vows. No more will the wicked invade you; they will be completely destroyed (15).</i></p> |

Chapter Two: Nineveh's Fall

Nahum prophesied somewhere between 663 and 654 BC. Nineveh fell in 612 BC. Nahum's prediction of Nineveh's destruction is exactly how Nineveh fell to the Babylonians:

1. The Troops marched.
2. The Chariots rode.
3. The city walls were breached.
4. Armies and people were destroyed.
5. The treasures were looted.

The shields of the soldiers are red; the warriors are clad in scarlet. The metal on the chariots flashes on the day they are made ready; the spears of juniper are brandished. ⁴ The chariots storm through the streets, rushing back and forth through the squares. They look like flaming torches; they dart about like lightning. ⁵ Nineveh summons her picked troops, yet they stumble on their way. They dash to the city wall; the protective shield is put in place. ⁶ The river gates are thrown open and the palace collapses. ⁷ It is decreed that Nineveh be exiled and carried away. Her female slaves moan like doves and beat on their breasts. ⁸ Nineveh is like a pool whose water is draining away. "Stop! Stop!" they cry, but no one turns back. ⁹ Plunder the silver! Plunder the gold! The supply is endless, the wealth from all its treasures!

Chapter Three: Why Assyria Fell

Chapter 3 describes why Assyria Fell and the results and consequences for the nation as a whole. Nahum prophesies that God judged Assyria because they were guilty of spilling innocent blood. They were guilty of slaughtering people who couldn't defend themselves, who had done nothing to prove their wrath.

It Starts with a Woe for Shedding Innocent Blood

Woe to the city of blood, full of lies, full of plunder, never without victims! (1)

What God Will Do to Such a Nation

⁵ "I am against you," declares the Lord Almighty. "I will lift your skirts over your face. I will show the nations your nakedness and the kingdoms your shame. ⁶ I will pelt you with filth, I will treat you with contempt and make you a spectacle. (5-6)

How Other Nations Respond to Nations Like Assyria Falling

¹⁸ King of Assyria, your shepherds slumber; your nobles lie down to rest. Your people are scattered on the mountains with no one to gather them. ¹⁹ Nothing can heal you; your wound is fatal. All who hear the news about you clap their hands at your fall, for who has not felt your endless cruelty? (18-19)

Key Application

God is at work in history in every age. He will not allow violent, arrogant, and/or evil empires to endure. Assyria is just an example. God is grieved by the death of the innocent and the righteous. Consequently, his goodness and justice compel him to orchestrate the downfall of oppressive nations.