

SURVEY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT: NAHUM

The burden against Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.
(Nahum 1:1)

The Man Nahum

- Name: *The name 'Nahum' means 'consolation'. His name conveys the overall theme of his message: consolation from Jehovah to Judah.*
- Audience: *His message concerns Nineveh, although unlike Jonah, he never went there. Hence, his message is for Judah.*
- Family: *He is called the Elkoshite. No one knows where this place is.*
- Times: *Israel has already gone into exile; Judah alone exists. Assyria was at the height of its power then. Nineveh (capital city of Assyria) fell in 612 BC. Since this prophecy concerns the fall of Nineveh, so it must have been preached before 612 BC. 3:8-10 make reference to a fall of Thebes (No-Ammon), an Egyptian city. Thebes fell in 663 B.C. Hence, Nahum must have preached between 663 – 612 BC.*

The Book Nahum

- Chapter 1 Destruction of Nineveh Decreed
(What God Will Do)
- Chapter 2 Destruction of Nineveh Described
(How God Will Do It)
- Chapter 3 Destruction of Nineveh Deserved
(Why God Will Do It)

The Message Of Nahum

Nahum preached this message at a time when Assyria (Nineveh) was at the height of its power. Hence to most people, it is an unbelievable message! Perhaps even some in Judah would greet it with derision! Is it possible that Nineveh the city of strong and tall walls, the city that has everything, is it possible that it will be conquered? Yet within 50 years, it happened! And not just happened, but what Nahum prophesied about how the city will fall happened exactly. Read Nahum 3:11-19 and then read the history book concerning Nineveh's fall!

The Book of Nahum highlights the following four truths about God:

God as Sovereign King

Nahum pictured God as the sovereign Ruler of the universe who controls both nature and nations, judging them and using them as instruments of judgment in accordance with His will. Not even mighty Assyria, the most powerful nation on earth in Nahum's day, would be capable of withstanding the Lord's judgment. The Lord would also destroy Nineveh's idols (1:14), demonstrating His sovereignty over the Assyrian gods.

God as Warrior

For Nahum the Lord was, first and foremost, the divine Warrior par excellence. The book begins with a terrifying portrayal of the angry, avenging warrior who comes in the storm and frightens all of nature with His battle cry (1:2-6). In this opening theophany Nahum employed many of the same motifs used by Assyrian kings to describe their prowess and exploits in battle. In so doing he emphasized that the Lord, not the king of Assyria, was the most powerful of all warriors. Twice in the book (2:13; 3:5) the Lord, in His role of "Lord Almighty," or "Lord of Armies," personally announced He would defeat Nineveh.

God as Judge

Assyria's judgment was well deserved. She had exploited and cruelly treated other nations (cf. 3:1, 4), including God's own people (1:15). Although the Lord had used the Assyrians as an instrument to punish Judah (1:12-13), they had interpreted their success in a different light, proudly attributing it to their own power (cf. Isa. 10:5-19; 36:4-21). Viewing this arrogance as an evil plot against His sovereign authority (1:9, 11), the Lord announced He would destroy the rebellious Assyrians, avenging His oppressed covenant people in the process.

God as Israel's Protector

God's judgment of Nineveh would be an expression of His zealous devotion to His covenant people (cf. 1:2). Though God had used the Assyrians to chastise Judah, He announced through Nahum that the Assyrian oppression was about to end (1:13, 15). In delivering Judah from the Assyrian yoke, He would once again demonstrate His goodness to His people and prove that He does indeed take notice of those who are loyal to Him and trust Him for protection (1:7).

Do not mistake the patience of God as the impotence of God!!