

LESSON 1 ~ NAHUM

In contrast to his predecessor Jonah, whose ministry resulted in the repentance of the Ninevites, the prophet Nahum proclaims the downfall of the great Assyrian city of Nineveh. The Ninevites have forgotten their revival and have returned to their habits of violence, idolatry, and arrogance. As a result, Babylon will so destroy the city that no trace of it will remain—a prophecy fulfilled in painful detail.

Author

The name “Nahum” means “comfort” or “consolation,” and his message of doom for Nineveh was doubtless a source of comfort to the inhabitants of Judah who had suffered under the cruelty of the Assyrians.

According to 1:1, the prophet was called the “Elkoshite.” Although the precise location of Elkosh is unknown, many scholars believe that Elkosh was a town in southern Judah (later called Elcese) between Jerusalem and Gaza. This would make Nahum a prophet of the Southern Kingdom and may explain his interest in the triumph of Judah (1:15; 2:2).

Date

Since the message of the book is a prediction of the destruction of Nineveh, it must have been delivered sometime before 612 B.C., when the city was destroyed by the Babylonians. It was clearly written after 663 B.C., the year that the capital of Egypt, Thebes (called “No Amon” in 3:8), was captured by Assyria. Since Thebes regained its independence in 654 B.C., and Nahum does not allude to that event, it may be that the book was written between 663 and 654 B.C.

Themes and Literary Structure

Nahum single-mindedly proclaims the doom of the Assyrian capital of Nineveh. Among the reasons for the condemnation of the city are the inhumanities of the Assyrian army (2:12), and the vices of the city (3:4). The nature of God, specifically His wrath, His holiness, His justice, and His power, makes it inevitable that His enemies will perish (1:2–10).

The brief book of Nahum can be divided into three parts: the destruction of Nineveh decreed (ch. 1), the destruction of Nineveh described (ch. 2), and the destruction of Nineveh deserved (ch. 3).¹

Understand The Background

An understanding of how God used Assyria to punish Israel and of Assyria’s arrogant attitude can be seen in Is 10:5-19, & Is 36-37.

¹*Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts : Old and New Testaments.* electronic ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996.

OUTLINE OF Nahum

I. The Destruction of Nineveh Is Decreed 1:1–15

- A. The General Principles of Divine Judgment 1:1–8
- B. The Destruction of Nineveh and Deliverance of Judah 1:9–15

II. The Destruction of Nineveh Is Described 2:1–13

- A. The Call to Battle 2:1, 2
- B. The Destruction of Nineveh 2:3–13

III. The Destruction of Nineveh Is Deserved 3:1–19

- A. The Reasons for the Destruction of Nineveh 3:1–11
- B. The Destruction of Nineveh Is Inevitable 3:12–19²

Study Questions For Nahum Chapter 1

1. The book of Nahum is about the destruction of what nation?

2. Name five characteristics of God that Nahum describes for us in chapter one.

3. Why was God preparing a grave for the Assyrians?

4. What were the good tidings being brought to Judah?

Application: We are told to consider the goodness and severity of God (Rom 11:22). Consider the passages in Nahum 1:2-3 and Hebrews 10:26-31. Explain God's goodness and severity as if your explaining it to someone who does not know God.

²*Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts : Old and New Testaments.* electronic ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996.

LESSON 2 ~ NAHUM

Study Questions For Nahum Chapters 2 - 3

1. Who is the destroyer who has come before their face? Whose face?
2. What will happen to Ninevah?
3. What does it mean that Ninevah was like a pool of water? What would it become?
4. What happened to the dwelling place of the lions?
5. What kind of city was Ninevah?
6. What particular sins did God say Ninevah was full of?
7. Who was going to grieve or comfort Ninevah?
8. What were the strongholds of Ninevah like?
9. How bad was the wound inflicted upon Ninevah?
10. What would be the reaction of surrounding nations?