

Nahum

Judgment and Destruction

of Nineveh

By Timothy Sparks

TimothySparks.com

Some material adapted from Tod Kennedy:

<http://www.spokanebiblechurch.com/study/Bible%20Walk%20Through/Nahum-briefing.htm>

Theme

- God will judge and destroy Nineveh
- Nineveh's destruction due to Assyria's idolatry, atrocities and treatment of God's people, Israel
- Nahum tells about God's goodness and vengeance as he prophesies the fall of Nineveh, “the bloody city” (3:1)
- Nahum's message is to comfort Judah and pronounce Nineveh's doom

The Name “Nahum”

- Nahum is the shortened form of Nehemiah, both names come from the Hebrew root *naham*, meaning either sorrow, repentance/regret or comfort, depending on the context
- According to Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, the various meanings reflect the origin of *naham*, the idea of breathing deeply

The Name “Nahum”

- This word is used in statements such as Gen. 6:6-7 (God regrets having made man), Ex. 32:14 (God changes his mind upon Moses' plea) or 1 Sam. 15:11 (God regrets making Saul king)
- “Comfort, yes, comfort My people” (Is. 40:1) and “Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me” (Ps. 23:4)

Nahum, the Prophet

- Nahum was from Elkosh
 - The site of this village is unknown, though the most likely place is in Galilee or Judah
- Nothing else is known of Nahum
- Depending on Nahum's dates, the kings of Judah who reigned during Nahum's time were Manasseh (686-642 BC), Amon (642-640 BC), and Josiah (640-609 BC)

History

- Nineveh is the location for the books of Jonah and Nahum
- Jonah shows God's grace to those who obey his call to repentance; Nahum shows God's judgment on those who turn away from God's grace after having experienced it
- Jonah went to Nineveh around 750 BC— about 100 years later Nahum predicted (650 BC) the destruction of Nineveh due to their sinfulness (occurred 612 BC)

History

- By the time of Nahum, Assyria had already defeated and exiled Israel (722 BC) and was a continuing threat to Judah
- After Jonah's ministry to Nineveh, Nineveh regained some of its stability and power, but Assyria failed to teach future generations God's message that Jonah delivered
- Assyria continued to harass Judah

History

- Jeremiah said that God would punish Babylon as he had punished Assyria because of their treatment of Israel and Judah (Jer. 50:17-20)
- Nahum predicted that God would destroy Nineveh, which happened in 612 BC
- The Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar finished off Assyria at the battle of Carchemish in 605 BC

Nineveh

- Capital of Assyria
 - During Nahum's time it was the “queen city of the earth, mighty and brutal beyond imagination, head of a warrior state built on the loot of nations. Limitless wealth from the ends of the earth poured into its coffers. Nahum likens it to a den of ravaging lions, feeding on the blood of nations (2:11-13)” (Halley's Bible Handbook)

Archaeology & Nineveh

The New Unger's Bible Dictionary: “The remains of Nineveh are a silent witness to the glory of Assyria under Sennacherib (705-681 BC) and his successors Esarhaddon (681–669 BC) and Ashurbanipal (669–626 BC). The Kuyunjik Mound yielded not only the vast palace of Sennacherib but also the royal residence and famous library of Ashurbanipal in which were housed 22,000 inscribed clay tablets. These are important for their accounts of the creation and Flood and because they furnish scholars with invaluable background material for OT studies.”

Archaeology & Nineveh

- In 1845, Sir A. H. Layard, called “the father of Assyriology,” identified two mounds in Turkey (modern Iraq) as the site of Nineveh
- The ruins of the palaces of the Assyrian kings have been discovered and the hundreds of thousands of inscriptions that give the history of Assyria as the Assyrians wrote it remarkably confirm the biblical account
- The Library of Ashurbanipal is on one of the most important archeological discoveries

Archaeology & Nineveh

- The Library of Ashurbanipal originally contained 100,000 volumes, of which about 1/3 are in the British Museum
- King Ashurbanipal had his scribes search and copy the libraries of ancient Babylon—2,000 years before his time—preserving to the present day knowledge of primitive Babylonian literature

Nahum & the Dead Sea Scrolls

- Fragments of a commentary on Nahum 2:11-13 were found in Cave 1 at Qumran near the Dead Sea and are the earliest witnesses to the text of the book

The Fall of Nineveh

- The fierceness of the onslaught (2:4-6; 3:1-3)
- Nineveh overtaken (2:7-10)
- The lion (national symbol of Assyria) will have its dwelling place and offspring destroyed (2:11-13)
- God will strip “the seductive harlot” and throw filth on her (3:4-6)
- “The gates of your land are wide open for your enemies” (3:13)

The Fall of Nineveh

- “There the fire will devour you, the sword will cut you off; it will eat you up like a locust” (3:15)
- “Your injury has no healing, your wound is severe. All who hear news of you will clap their hands over you, for upon whom has not your wickedness passed continually?” (3:19)
- It was the largest city in the world for about fifty years until it was sacked by an unusual coalition of Medes, Persians, Babylonians, Scythians and Cimmerians in 612 BC (1:8-9)

Key Words & Phrases

- **Against** (5 times)
 - 1:1, 9, 11; 2:13; 3:5
- **Cut (down/off)** (5 times)
 - 1:12, 14-15; 2:13; 3:15

Verses to Remember

- 1:2
 - Mt. 25:46; 2 Thess. 1:6-9; 2 Pet. 2:4;
Jude 6
- 1:3, 7
- 3:7

Outline by Chapter

Ch. 1: Sentence of Nineveh's destruction

Ch. 2: Description of Nineveh's destruction

Ch. 3: Explanation of Nineveh's destruction

Chapter 1: The Sentence of Nineveh's Destruction

- The basis for God's judgment is God's character: holy, just, omnipotent, sovereign, good and reliable
- Nineveh has become God's enemy and God will destroy her
- God will prepare Nineveh's grave (1:14)
- The chapter ends with a message of comfort to Judah who was struggling under Assyrian domination (1:15)

Chapter 2: Description of Nineveh's Destruction

- The Lord will bring the Medes and Babylonians against Nineveh (2:1)
- While announcing this judgment, Nahum also says that the Lord will restore the excellence of Israel
- The coming destroyers of Nineveh are unstoppable (2:3-10)
- God is against Nineveh (2:11-13)

Chapter 3: Explanation of Nineveh's Destruction

- Woe to Nineveh for her treatment of other people and nations: pillage, prey, whips, swords, corpses, selling nations—all are part of the reason for the Lord's judgment (3:1-4)
- God will disgrace her (3:5-7); no help (3:8-10), no place to hide, no protection; fire will destroy Nineveh; the military will be like locusts and grasshoppers in the cold—not moving (3:11-17)
- Everyone who hears of her destruction will be overjoyed (3:18-19)

Trivia

Can you fill in the blanks?

The Lord is _____,

A stronghold in the day of _____;

And He knows those who _____

1:7

Memory Verse Review ***(Joel—Micah)***

- Joel 2:32a—“And it shall...”
- Amos 3:3—“Can two...”
- Obad. 3—“The pride...”
- Jonah 3:2b—“Preach to it...”
- Micah 7:18a—“Who is...”

Memory Verse for Nahum

1:3a

“The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked”