

## NAHUM: THE MAN AND HIS WORK

Presented to the Fairview Memorial Missionary Baptist Church Winter Bible Study  
on Tuesday, February 11, 2014  
by Elder Stephen Skinner

*"The style of the book of Nahum is the most vivid, perhaps of all the Old Testament writers. In majesty it almost equals Isaiah. In the rapidity of its motion, its energy, its movement, in the imagination displayed he even surpassed Isaiah. This is one of the finest pieces of literature in all the world."*

B. H. Carroll

Scripture Lesson: Nahum 1:1-15

Note: Dates in this presentation, unless otherwise noted are "Before the Common Era" (BCE), and therefore get smaller as years pass; e.g., 800 BCE is 100 years before 700 BCE.

### **Author**

Nah 1:1 *The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.*  
The name Nahum means "comfort," or "consolation" or "consoler." The name is appropriate for one carrying this message. The message of Nineveh's fall would have been a comfort to Judah.

Nothing is known about Nahum except that he was from Elkosh, of which even the general location is not known.

There is at least four theories (but no certainty) regarding the location of Elkosh"

1. Close to the east bank of the Tigris River, a day's journey north of the site of Ninevah;
2. In Galilee, at a place identified by many with the modern El-Kawze, near Ramieh;
3. Capernaum, the name of which means "Village of Nahum;"
4. Beyond Bet Gabre, of the tribe of Simeon. A place in the South seems appropriate considering the interest the prophet takes in the Southern Kingdom.

### **Date**

Nineveh which was located on the east bank of the Tigris River, fell in 607-606. Since Nahum writes of the destruction of the city in the future, the book must pre-date 607. Nahum 3:8 refers to the capture and destruction of Ho-amon (the Egyptian Thebes) as having already happened. Therefore, the book was written between 663 and 607. There are indications that possibly the book was written toward the end of this period, most likely being between 613 and 607.

### **Political Circumstances**

Assyria (of which Nineveh was the capital) had already destroyed Samaria (capital of Israel) in 722-721. The Assyrians were cruel to those they conquered. Their kings are depicted gloating over the brutally gruesome punishments inflicted on those they conquered. The leaders of defeated cities were often publicly tortured and mutilated before they were executed. Whole populations were deported to other lands the Assyrians had conquered. The Assyrians were dreaded, feared, and despised.

### **To Whom the Book Was Written**

Some of it was addressed to Judah (1:12, 13, 15), but most of it was addressed to Nineveh (1:11, 14; 2:1,13; 3:5-17, 19) or its king (3:18). The book, however, is meant for Judah and Israelite readers in Judah.

### **Literary Form**

Note first that, contrary to some of the other prophets of the era, Nahum was "the book of the vision" of Nahum. It was not to be delivered in person but to be written and sent.

150+ years earlier Jonah was instructed by God to go to Nineveh--a command that caused him some difficulty when he disobeyed.

The presentation of Nahum is intense. The language is poetic with frequent use of metaphors and similes, vivid word pictures, repetition and many short phrases.

Rhetorical questions are used to emphasize God's indignation toward injustice.

### **Basic Theme of the Book**

The book of Nahum concerns the Lord's judgment on Nineveh for her oppression, cruelty, idolatry and wickedness. It ends with the destruction of the city.

According to Romans 11:22, God is kind but also stern:

*Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*

Similar doctrine is expressed in Nahum:

Nahum 1:3

*The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.*

Nahum 1:7

*The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.*

Nahum declares the universal sovereignty of God. God is Lord of history and of all nations, and as such, he controls their destinies.

Nahum mentions two primary sins of Nineveh:

1. They had no mercy with all their great strength; they just killed destroyed and plundered with no remorse;
2. Their greed and lustful pleasures cause them to be corrupt in all their dealings with other nations.

Nahum's prophecy is an answer from God to the cry of an oppressed and outraged people of Judah, for all the suffering that the Assyrians had brought. The thought of the Assyrian empire coming to an end brought a joyful satisfaction of a punishment that was justly due.

## **Outline of the Book of Nahum**

Nahum 1:1	Introduction to the prophet Nahum and his "burden"
Nahum 1:2-11	God's holy judgment
Nahum 1:12-15	The fall of Nineveh is proclaimed
Nahum 2:1-12	The siege and overthrow of Nineveh
Nahum 2:13	The reason for Nineveh's destruction
Nahum 3:1-17	Nineveh was an example of sin reaping God's judgment
Nahum 3:18-19	The king of Assyria's destruction brings great joy

### **An Earlier Prophecy**

Jonah was sent by to Nineveh 150+ years earlier. Comparison of Jonah's prophecy with that of Nahum shows a contrast.

Jonah was commanded by God to GO TO Nineveh to prophecy to and warn the city (nation).

Nahum was commanded to write a "book of the vision" and send it to Nineveh.

The book of Jonah emphasizes the prophet and contains only one prophecy in the whole book.

The book of Nahum emphasizes the prophecy and the only things mentioned regarding the prophet is that he was from Elkosh.

Jonah was initially disobedient which caused him some difficulties.

Nahum was obedient to God's command.

In Jonah Nineveh (Assyria) was obedient and was spared.

In Nahum Nineveh was disobedient. In only 150+ years the nation of Assyria became so bad that it had to be destroyed.

In Jonah Nineveh repented.

In Nahum Nineveh rebelled and were destroyed.

### **Application**

God reveals himself to us in scripture. Since God does not change, He is today the same God as He was 2600 years ago. His attitude toward sin has not, and will not, change. So, Nahum's message to enemies of God applies today to the enemies of God.

### **Application #1**

#### **God's Holy Wrath**

Men speak of being "saved." But, saved from what? Before men begin to understand the significance of grace and mercy they have an understanding of the wrath of God from which they are saved.

God's wrath or anger is mentioned more in scripture than God's love. The wrath of God is a fearful thing, but, also a very beautiful thing. God could not be perfect if He did not hate sin--especially sin which dishonors His Son. It is of necessity by God's nature that He eternally destroy sin.

Jonah had been sent by God to Nineveh 150+ years before Nahum's book. He did not go saying that, "God, loves you." Rather he preached that they needed to repent; and they did, and were "saved" from God's wrath. But, they had gone back to their old ways and God passed judgment on them.

Nahum 1:1-8

*The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.*

*God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies. The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.*

*He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth.*

*The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein.*

*Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.*

*The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.*

*But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies.*

John 3:36

*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

Psalm 7:11-13

*God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.*

*If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready.*

*He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.*

Because God is holy, He hates all sin; because He hates all sin; His anger burns against the sinner every day.

The wrath of God can be divided into that which can be seen now and the wrath that is to come.

### **The Wrath of God Presently Revealed**

The wrath of God is revealed every moment of every day.

Romans 1:18

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;*

So who is unrighteous and without godliness?

Romans 3:10, 11

*As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:  
There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

The wrath of God is revealed to every man outside of Christ. There are only two types of people in the world; those who have been reconciled to God by Christ, and those who are the enemies of God, to whom the wrath of God is revealed and awaits.

We are either the children or the enemies of God--enemies subject to His wrath.

A world full of cemeteries is witness to the wrath of God--"thou shalt surely die." Die now, naturally, and eternally without end.

### **The Wrath of God to Come**

Revelation 6:15-17

*And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;  
And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:  
For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*

No one is excluded--the least to the greatest that are without Christ will be eternally subject to the wrath of God.

Isaiah 53:10-12

*Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.  
He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.  
Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*

Only trust in Christ alone saves from the wrath of God.

Men cannot fathom the wrath of God and therefore cannot fathom the love of God.

John 3:36 (see above) (he who believes in the Son. . .)

There will no escape from God. God will pour out his wrath eternally in hell on unbelievers, Satan and his demons.

Those who are "saved" from the unfathomable wrath should be on their knees in prayer-- and indeed will praise Christ eternally for facing the Wrath of God in their place.

## **Application #2**

### **Rejoicing Because of the Exercise of the Wrath of God**

Nahum 3:19

*There is no healing of thy bruise; thy wound is grievous: all that hear the bruit of thee shall clap the hands over thee: for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?*

When the saints in glory see the wrath of God executed on Satan, his demons and ungodly men, it will be no occasion of grief, but of rejoicing.

Luke 13:28, 29

*There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.*

Revelation 14:9-11

*And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*

Revelation 19:2, 3

*For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.*

*And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.*

Exodus 29:18

*And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar: it is a burnt offering unto the LORD: it is a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD.*

Why the saints in glory will rejoice because of the suffering of the wicked:

- because of their perfect holiness and conformity to Christ, the holy Lamb of God;
- because they will love only what God loves, and hate what God hates;
- because the justice of God is glorified in the sufferings of the damned;
- because of the manifestation of the power and majesty of God;
- because the contrast will magnify their own happiness;
- because they see the grace and love to them--how great a benefit they have.

Let the ungodly be warned:

- there will be no comforting consideration for those who perish at last; there will never be one tear shed for them;
- they will receive no pity from the created inhabitants of heaven; they will see them rejoicing with God and over their condemnation;
- God will exercise no pity toward them.

### **Conclusion**

Nahum wrote the "book of the vision of Nahum" and delivered it to Nineveh.

The book declared the omnipotent power of God.

The Lord is a "stronghold" to them that trust him and He will avenge their enemies.

God declared his anger with Nineveh and the Assyrian empire as a whole

God stated that his wrath would totally destroy Nineveh.

Nineveh's bruise would not be healed and there would be rejoicing over her fall.

The prophecy of Nineveh came to pass. Nineveh fell to never exist again.

This book illustrates to men of all eras how God deals with unrepentant sinners.