

Fairview Memorial Winter Bible Study 2023

Major Thought from the Minor Prophets

Elder Luke Spurgeon

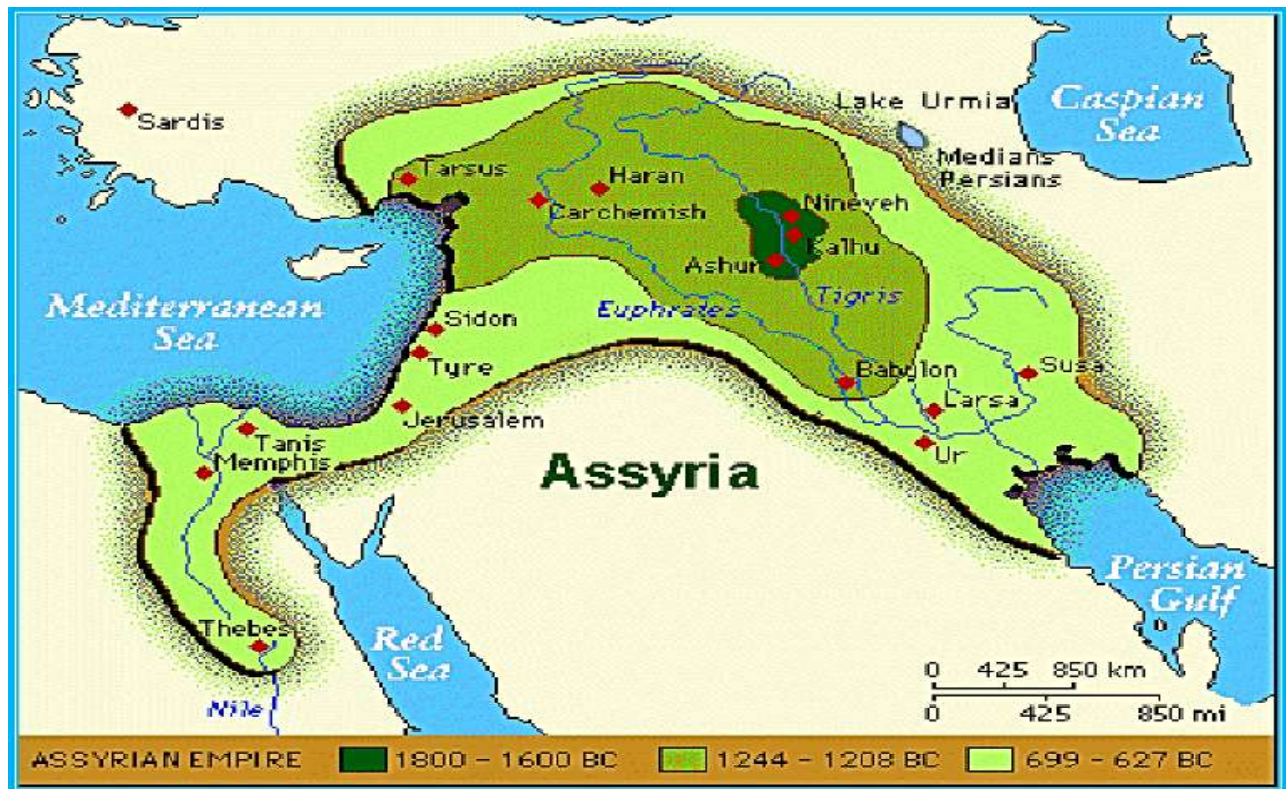
Nahum – The Judgement of Nineveh

“The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God.” Psalm 9:17

“The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.” Nahum 1:1

Our objective in this lesson is to study the book of Nahum and what was God’s purpose in using him in the Holy writ for the time then and for our benefit now.

The book of Nahum was most likely written in 626-612bce (the date of the destruction of Nineveh).



Nahum – Hebrew Nachum is comfortable and comes from the Hebrew word Nacham which means repent and also comfort. Comfort comes from with strength. True repentance towards God brings about great comfort from Him.

Burden – Hebrew Massa is utterance or an oracle or weighty message. No doubt Nahum was heavily burdened with the weight of his message from the Lord.

Nahum was from the town of Elkosh which according to historians was probably a village in Galilee. It's also possible that the town Capernaum was named from Nahum. However we don't find Elkosh anywhere else in the Bible.

Nahum was burdened with speaking to Nineveh and I believe the children of Israel.

Judgement according to Webster's 1828 dictionary – In law, the sentence of doom pronounced in any cause, civil or criminal, by the judge or court by which it is tried. Webster also says judgement is a remarkable punishment; an extraordinary calamity inflicted by God on sinners.

Nineveh was the capital city of Assyria.

Assyria comes from Hebrew **Ashshur** which is successful, also the Assyrians descended from the second son of Shem Asshur, who built Nineveh.

Nahum Chapter 1:2-3 shows us there is no one like our God!

“God *is* **jealous**, “and the Lord **revenge**th; the Lord revenge, and is furious; the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and He reserveth *wrath* for his enemies.” Nahum 1:2

- **Jealous** is the Hebrew word **quanna** and the word refers directly to the attributes of God's justice and holiness, as He is the sole object of human worship and does not tolerate man's sin. An example of God's jealousy is found in Exodus 20: 5, “Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me;”
- **Revenge**th is the Hebrew word **Naqam** which means to avenge, take vengeance, punish. A couple examples that Nahum would have known about are Deuteronomy 32:35, “To me *belongeth* vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in *due* time: for the day of their calamity *is* at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.” Also Deuteronomy 32:43, “Rejoice, O ye nations, *with* his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, *and* to his people.” Also God's revenge is expressed in Romans 12:19.

Nahum 1:5-6 also shows us a brief image of when God returns to destroy the entire world in His justice as we see in II Peter 3:10.

Nahum 1:7-15 expresses the goodness of God to them that trust in Him but the punishment and vengeance due to His enemies. Nahum also calls out the wicked councilor, most likely the Assyrian king Sennacherib and makes the people aware of his fate. This chapter finishes with hope for God's people; a messenger is bringing great

news! Romans 10:15, “How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”

Nahum 2:1-13 God explains Nineveh and the Assyrian people’s destruction. God encourages the Assyrians through Nahum to keep the **munition**, which is the Hebrew word **metsurah** which means fortification or fenced city, strong hold. They will no doubt plan to stand strong in their seemingly impenetrable city, but they will fall. According to Maurer, The river wall on the Tigris (the west defense of Nineveh) was 4,530 yards long. On the north, south, and east sides, there were large moats, capable of being easily filled with water. Traces of dams for regulating the supply are still visible, so that the whole city could be surrounded with a water barrier. Besides on the east, the weakest side, it was further protected by a lofty double rampart with a moat 200 feet wide between its two parts, cut in the rocky ground. The moats or canals, flooded by the Ninevites before the siege to repel the foe, were made a dry bed to march into the city, by the foe turning the waters into a different channel: as Cyrus did in the siege of Babylon.

Nahum 3:1-19 God explains the reasons for his judgments to be brought upon the Assyrian people and what He plans to do to them to bring them to shame. Nahum 3:4-6, “Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the wellfavoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts. Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts; and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame. And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazingstock.” He compares them to No-Ammon who also was very populated, strong and situated among rivers like them yet she fell too. He again encourages the Assyrian people to fortify and strengthen themselves, however it will be to no avail. They will be punished and destroyed as a nation.

When you think of Nineveh what comes to mind? From a child we are taught of a place called Nineveh where a famous preacher named Jonah finally preached a sharp warning to the great city. “The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold a greater than Jonas is here.” (Matthew 12:41) Jonah was about 150 years before Nahum. No doubt Nahum knew about the repentance of Nineveh and God’s mercy extended to them. However, what happened within the 150 years after the people of Nineveh repented?

Most historians agree that Nahum’s writing was addressing Hezekiah’s reign in Judah with the Assyrian host led by King Sennacherib planning to capture and enslave them. This account can be found in II Kings chapters 18 and 19 and also in Isaiah chapter

37. The greater sin I believe in which Sennacherib and the Assyrian host did wasn't their desire to capture and enslave the people of God but their pride and railing against The Lord. Rabshakeh spoke to the Jews in their language on the wall to discourage them and also sent a letter from King Sennacherib to Hezekiah to discourage him and rail against the Lord. At this time the Assyrian people and nation had become one of if not the strongest nation in the known world. They had been able to defeat all of their other enemies. Just 8 years earlier Sennacherib had carried away much of the children of Israel from Samaria. He wanted all of Judah and especially Jerusalem. Hezekiah in his distress did the best thing he could do. "And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord." (Isaiah 37:14) Hezekiah and Isaiah trusted in the Lord for deliverance and Praise God He delivered again! The angel of the Lord destroyed 185,000 of the Assyrian army and Sennacherib went home with his tail between his legs. At home in the house of his god Nisroch his own sons killed him. "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity." (Isaiah 40:15-17)

Nahum knew about what had happened with Judah and Assyria and describes vividly many of the occurrences during Hezekiah's reign. He warns of God's impending final judgement upon Assyria. He also shares of God's goodness upon his people even though for periods of time He allowed them to be punished through their enemies capture and treatment of them. He will continually take care of and be with them. Why would God not allow for time for repentance like He did in Jonah's day? What was so different with the conditions of Nineveh and Assyria now compared to 150 years earlier? "I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for *there is* a time there for every purpose and for every work." (Ecclesiastes 3:17) Assyria had forgotten God! Not only had they forgotten his goodness and mercy towards them they had continued to draw away many of the people of God to the worship of their gods and partake in their sins. God could not continue to allow the Assyrian people to live in such sin and rejection of Him. The judgement was due and rewarded by our Holy God to this people.

For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil." Ecclesiastes 12:14

"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his *days* be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong

his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God.” Ecclesiastes 8:11-13

Many times in our lives we see people who seem to be wicked prospering. It seems like everything goes right for them and we continually struggle each and every day. We need not fret. Justice will be served. We must run our race and trust God will make every wrong right.

Read Psalms 73 and Romans 2:1-11

We definitely serve a longsuffering and merciful God. However, He will eventually judge the righteous and the wicked. I’m very concerned with the sinfulness and lack of repentance from individuals and from our country as a whole. Assyria was warned once again of God’s judgement upon them and they neglected to repent. Their dominating power, pride, allies, and strength of the fortified city made them feel unbreakable. In about 612 bce. Babylon destroyed them. I’m so thankful for the land of the free and the home of the brave, but has she become another Assyria? Will our sinfulness and lack of repentance bring about the judgements of God upon her? He most certainly would be just with the previous circumstances and current sinful state of our nation to punish us as he did Assyria. “For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” (I Peter 4:17-18)

Luke 13:5, “except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

I John 1:8-9, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

“He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.” Matthew 13:37-43