

Nahum Notes

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Introduction:

Nahum means “comfort or consolation.”

- This prophecy is given against Nineveh, but is largely for the comfort of God’s people.
- Nahum was likely written around 630 BC. (Some say it could be as early as 713 BC.)

Nineveh included an area of over 300 sq. miles and nearly 1 million people. It was the largest, most powerful city of the Assyrians, and it served as their capital for some time.

- Nineveh was so completely destroyed (in 612 BC) that they couldn’t even find the ruins of it until the 19th century (1845 AD).

Chapter 1:

1:1-6 – Every Hebrew word of the OT that speaks of God’s judgment is included in the first 6 verses of Nahum.

- The length and breadth of this prophecy stands in stark contrast to the brevity of Jonah’s message. (Jonah3:4)

1:1 – “against Nineveh” – Around 100 years after Jonah’s message to the same city.

- In the time between Jonah and Nahum, Assyria had deported Israel and started to come against Judah.
- “Elkoshite” – Nobody knows exactly where this town is located.
 - Capernaum means “the city of Nahum” and may somehow be connected to this prophet.

1:2 – “God is jealous” – God is jealous for us...not jealous of us or anyone else.

- The first two commandments demands that we have no other gods before Him, for He is a jealous God. (Exod. 20:3-4)
- “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (Matt. 5:8)
 - The master passion of your life is your god.
- “The Lord avenges” – “‘Vengeance is Mine; I will repay,’ says the Lord.” (Rom. 12:19)
 - God’s vengeance is a response to an affront people have become to Him.
- “Lord” – The covenant name “Yahweh” is emphasized.

1:3 – “The Lord is slow to anger” – God is not judging these people in a spat of anger.

- Nineveh has willfully run out of time.
- People will often misinterpret the long-suffering of God as if He is endorsing their sin or as if they are getting away with it.
- “Lord has His way” – One of the major themes of the minor prophets is the sovereignty of God.

1:4 – “Bashan and Carmel” – In northern Israel. These were lush, fertile areas.

1:6 – “Who can stand before His indignation?” – This is a good question for unbelievers to ask.

- “His anger” – Holy love contains anger as one of its components. It is anger that gives the love strength to fight for and defend the one you love if they are being hurt.

- 1:7 – “The Lord is good” – A foundational truth...even in hardship or judgment. (Ps. 73:1)
- “stronghold in the day of trouble” – God doesn’t say that we won’t have trouble, but that we will have a refuge in the midst of our trouble.
 - “those who trust in Him” – This is the line that divides the world of humanity. People either trust in God or they do not.
- 1:8 – “an overwhelming flood” – This is likely referring to the armies of the Babylonians, Medes, and Scythians.
- 1:11 – “wicked counselor” – The Rabshakeh mocked Hezekiah’s God in 2 Kings 18.
- 1:12 – “they are safe” – This is an Assyrian judicial term for being pronounced innocent.
- 1:13 – “I will break off his yoke” – God killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night and broke the back of the army and the empire. (2 Kings 19:35-37)
- 1:14 – “cut off the carved image” – Archeologists that uncovered Nineveh found statues thrown in the mud with their heads cut off.
- “dig your grave” – Lit. “I will bury you.”
 - “you are vile” – In contrast to the goodness of God.
- 1:15 – “brings good tidings” – Quoted in Isa. 52:7 and Rom. 10:15.

Chapter 2:

- 2:1 – “Man the fort” – God is calling them to prepare for battle.
- 2:2 – “restore the excellence of Jacob” – God used Assyria to judge Israel, but they went too far. So He will no longer allow them to come against Judah and His people.
- 2:3 – “scarlet” – This is either picturing the opposing army covered in the blood of the Assyrians or it is speaking of the Medes who would often dye their military equipment red.
- “chariots” – The Babylonian war chariots.
 - Some try to say this is prophesying of the age of the automobile, but the context doesn’t support that.
- 2:6 – “the rivers” – The Tigris River.
- The Babylonians, Medes, and Scythians sieged the city for 2 years without success. But then the Tigris flooded due to heavy rains and washed out a stretch of the wall for 2 miles. The Assyrian leaders were partying and unprepared for a battle when the Babylonians and others flooded the city.
- 2:7 – “beating their breasts” – In mourning.
- 2:8 – “pool of water” – Nineveh contained many canals and pools of water.
- 2:9 – “spoil” – Many scholars believe the spoil of Nineveh exceeded the spoil of Babylon when it fell.
- The Assyrians will reap what they sow.

2:11 – “the lions” – The Assyrians adopted the lion as one of its main symbols.

2:13 – “heard no more” – Have you met an Assyrian lately?

Chapter 3:

3:1 – “bloody city” – They were a very cruel people.

3:3 – “stumble over the corpses” – There will be so many killed, they will have a difficult time walking over the dead bodies.

3:4 – “sorceries” – Reaching heightened spiritual experiences and demonic activity.

3:5 – “lift your skirts” – Exposed and humiliated.

3:6 – “make you vile” – Nahum 1:14.

3:8 – “No Amon” – Thebes.

- Assyria took Thebes in 665-661 BC. Thebes was previously thought to be unconquerable.

3:10 – “young children also were dashed into pieces” – The same children God was concerned about in Jonah 4:11.

- “all her great men were bound in chains” – Of all the most powerful nations throughout history, all have failed. God is faithful to prove to us that men cannot rule the kingdoms of men and succeed for long.

3:12 – “they are shaken” – Possibly as the wall of Nineveh fell.

3:13 – “are women” – The men of Nineveh either fled or were killed.

3:14 – “the brick kiln” – The water and mud that was used to build the city also ended up destroying it.

3:15 – “the fire will devour you” – Assyria’s king died in the flames of his palace.

3:16-17 – “merchants...commanders” – They are trusting in their economy and military.

3:17 – “on a cold day” – As insects are immobilized in the cold.

3:19 – “Your injury has no healing” – Nineveh has passed the point of no return.

- God knows when a people become so wicked that there is no more left to redeem out of them.