

NAHUM.

Outline of Nahum.

The main subject of this book is Nineveh, the ancient capital city of the Assyrian Empire. The contents of the prophecy are the judgement by God.

At one time the city of Nineveh brought fear upon the nations, today it is only of interest to the archaeologists, God is in control.

Nineveh was destroyed in 612 B.C., according to the archaeologists. It is therefore believed that this text was written shortly before this event. In addition,

In [Nahum 3:8](#).

Nahum talks of the captivity of Thebes, the capital city of Upper Egypt as an event passed, this is known to have happened in 663 B.C. The material therefore must have been written between these dates.

We know very little about Nahum except that he came from Elkoshite. The location of this place not known with certainty.

Nahum was a prophet for the Southern Kingdom of Israel. The Northern Kingdom having already been taken into captivity by the Assyrian Empire about 100 years earlier but when the Assyrians attempted to attack the people of Judah, during the reign of Hezekiah, he turned for help to God and the Assyrians were defeated by a massive act of God. Soon after, the king of Assyria, Sennacherib was killed in a violent way by his own sons,

[Isaiah 37:1-38](#).

The Assyrians were known to be an evil nation, but God had used them to punish His people. Though Nineveh had repented of their sinful life during the times of Jonah the prophet, their return to the old cruel life now caused God to warn of His coming judgement.

Possible outline for the book of Nahum

God is jealous. [Nahum 1:1-15](#)

The Lord is slow to anger but great in power. [Nahum 1:1-8](#)

God warns Nineveh. [Nahum 1:9-11,14,15](#)

God sends encouragement to Judah. [Nahum 1:12-13](#)

God will judge Nineveh. [Nahum 2:1-13](#)

The invasion starts. [Nahum 2:1-4](#)

The city is captured. [Nahum 2:5-10](#)

The reason for the fall of Nineveh, pride. [Nahum 2:11-13](#)

"Behold, I am against you," says the Lord. [Nahum 3:1-19](#)

Because of your bloodshed of others. [Nahum 2:1-3](#)

Because of your worship of idols. [Nahum 3:4-7](#)

Because you ignored warnings. [Nahum 3:8-10](#)

Because of your pride, your not worth saving. [Nahum 3:11-19](#)

God is jealous.

[Nahum 1:1-15](#)

Nahum thinks about the past action by God upon His enemies. God is not jealous in the way a person is, Here it is describing His need to keep holiness and righteousness in His world, He wants to protect His relationship with His people, *"You shall have no other gods before Me"* [Exodus 20:3](#),

"You shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God"

[Exodus 34:14](#);

For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God."

[Deuteronomy 4:24](#);

"Now Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord, and they provoked Him to jealousy with their sins which they committed, more than all that their fathers had done."

[1 Kings 14:22](#).

God created all things and He wants to protect the perfect creation that He made, He is against any who chose to disobey Him, refuse to worship Him. We should give Him the glory for all He has done. The use of the word "burden" is describing the act of "lifting up", often this use is found when a judgement prophecy is given, God wants to remove the "burden" He has, See examples [Isaiah 13:1](#); [Isaiah 15:1](#); [Isaiah 17:1](#).

In verses 3-8: God speaks about Himself and His character. Three times in verse 2 we read the words the "Lord avenges". Nahum declares that God will deal with His enemies, "*The Lord is slow to anger*", it may take time but eventually He will carry out His judgement.

Vengeance is normally considered a sin,

[Matthew 5:38-48](#);

[Romans 12:17-21](#).

God cannot tolerate people ignoring His law, He is a just and holy God and cannot ignore the act of disobedience. Nineveh was a city full of evil, cruelty and idol worship, God has to judge.

Verses 3-6: We are then reminded just how much is controlled by God, the whirlwind, the storm, the clouds, the sea, the rivers, the flowers, the mountains, the world. Bashan was famous for the rich productive land, Carmel for the vineyards, God controls all the world.

>Verses 7,8: Though God is all powerful we are also reminded that He is good. He is a place of refuge, we should turn to Him for help. He knows, loves all who have faith in Him. He may appear forbidding but He loves His creation.

God will never change, discuss or negotiate the obedience of a person, if you break His law you must suffer the judgement.

God warns Nineveh.

[Nahum 1:9-11,14,15](#)

God sends a personal message to Nineveh, He knows all they are planning and will cause them to fail. The Assyrians had previously attacked Judah but God had stopped them,

[Isaiah 36 to 37](#),

But God was not going to let them attack again, instead the leaders will be like drunks and be devoured like a grass fire, verse 10.

Verse 11: God speaks of "the plotter", the king of Assyria, then in verse 14, God tells him what will happen, his family rule will end because he will have no family, the idol gods will be destroyed, and his life is about to end,

See [2 Kings 19:37](#).

Why will these happen? "For you are vile."

God sends encouragement to Judah.

[Nahum 1:15](#)

God tells the people of Judah that they will not be attacked again by the Assyrians, so return to peace and restore your religious feasts.

It is possible that many Jews had made promises, vows to God during this period of the trial, God tells them "you can now keep your promises, there is no danger" "*the wicked one shall no more pass through you;*"

God will judge Nineveh.

[Nahum 2:1-13](#)

The Medes and the Babylonians joined together in 612 B.C. to attack Nineveh. This chapter is a vivid description of this event as seen by Nahum in his vision.

Verses 1-4: The invading army appears, it is seen by the watchmen on the city walls. The soldiers prepare to fight, verse 1, as God speaks to Israel, "you soon will be united as one nation", verse 2.

Verses 3,4: The approaching army has great power, weapons, chariots and the men are armoured, already blood covers their shields. The chariots entered the city, racing everywhere, destroying the people.

Verses 5-10: The city is captured. The king "he", calls his best officers and leaders to protect the city walls, but they behave as if drunk, they are too late.

The river Khoser actually flows through the city, gates protect the gaps in the walls. It appears that the invading army dammed up the river then released it, destroying the gates and surrounding walls, just as God planned, the city is to be destroyed. This invading army are actually instruments of judgement for God. Verss 7,8: The survivors are marched off to become slaves, Nahum compares the sight to water draining from a pool.

Verse 9: The city is looted, the riches of each house and temple being taken by the soldiers, the Assyrian people watched their riches disappear, to scared to object. The people of Nineveh are being treated as they had treated the other nations.

Verses 10,11: The image of the lion was often used by the Assyrians, they often also behaved like a lion, complete destruction of those they attacked, taken all that they could at great cost to the people. Nahum has the vision from God when this "lion" is destroyed. The destruction of the city was so complete that for many centuries no one knew what was buried there.

Verse 13: Over a hundred years before the Assyrians had been warned by God through Jonah, they had turned from their evil ways so judgement had been suspended by God. Now, having returned to their evil ways, judgement was about to be dealt out, no one will fear them again.

"Behold, I am against you," says the Lord.

[Nahum 3:1-19](#)

Why Nineveh will be destroyed. Nahum gives three reasons for their punishment:-

1) Nahum 3:1-3. Nineveh was built upon murder and the shedding of blood. Historians tell us that the Assyrians were clever diplomats but often broke any promises made to other nations. Often they killed people just for the pleasure of it, then piled the bodies up as a warning to others. God does not like the death of innocent people,

see [Deuteronomy 19:11-13](#)

2) [Nahum 3:4-7](#).

Their idol worship. Nineveh is like a prostitute, they used witchcraft, the occult, lust, greed and violence. The goddess they worshipped, Ishtar, the chief god of the nation, always involved sexual passions as part of the worship. Nineveh's way of life had brought disgrace upon herself, now God has to display their evil ways to the other nations, *"I will lift your skirts over your face, I will show the nations your nakedness,"* verse 5.

3) Verses 8-19: Nahum now examines the history of the nation, the defeat of the Egyptians, at No-Ammon (Thebes) in 663 B.C., Thebes, the capital of Upper Egypt, was protected by being surrounded by water, but that did not stop the Assyrians. The leaders chained up, the people were made slaves, the children *"dashed to pieces"*. Nahum now tells Nineveh that it is her turn now, their pride will be destroyed by the coming armies. The Assyrians were about to "drink the cup of God's wrath, become drunk, not know what to do. Nahum prophesied that the attacking army will find it easy to take over the nation, *"just like ripe figs dropping into the open mouth of a person,"* verse 12. The Assyrian people will be like women, scared and weak, unable to fight or stop the enemy entering the city, setting fire to the houses and have no strength to put out the fires with water.

Verses 15-17: The Assyrians were full of pride, over confident that they cannot be attacked. Nahum now describes the coming army as a plague of locust, eating and wiping everything out, just like your merchants had spread out across the nations collecting all the riches and treasure of the people.

Nahum predicts that the king and leaders will be asleep, like dust or locust on a cold day but then run away, scared, followed by the people running to the mountains. Sheep without a shepherd, or unable to recover from an injury.

Vers 19: The other nations would rejoice as the Assyrian nation is destroyed. Then Nahum ends the prophecy with a question, "Who has not felt the evil cruelty of this nation?" God knows all things and will eventually punish evil.

Compare [Amos 1 to 2](#).