

# The Book of Nahum

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

- Nahum's name means "comfort".
- We do not know where Elkosh is, some speculate in Judah, or Israel, or even Assyria.
  - "It is possible that Nahum's hometown of Elkosh became known as the city of Capernaum mentioned in the New Testament, since the latter means 'the village of Nahum.'" – AMG Concise Bible Survey
- Reese dates the writing of this book to 628 B.C., about 140 years after Jonah.
- The theme is God's judgment upon Nineveh and the Assyrian empire.
  - "The theme of the prophecy of Nahum is the complete and final destruction of Nineveh. Jonah had already warned the city of its danger, and a temporary respite had been gained by repentance. But the people soon returned to their evil ways, and Nahum was sent to declare the doom of the city, without promise of relief.
 

"Nineveh was one of the greatest cities of ancient times, the capital of the flourishing Assyrian empire. At the time when Nahum delivered his prophecy, Assurbanipal was at the height of his power. His capital was the center of the trade and commerce of the world. Yet it was a 'bloody city, all full of lies and robbery,' having plundered the neighboring nations, and was ripe for destruction. Within a short time the prophet's words came true; the great city was laid low, scattered ruins still marking the place where it stood." – F.B. Meyer
  - Nineveh and Assyria fell in 612 B.C.
- Outline by B.H. Carroll
  - Chapter 1 – A Verdict of Vengeance
  - Chapter 2 – A Vision of Vengeance
  - Chapter 3 – A Vindication of Vengeance

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- vs. 1 – The opening verse is remarkable:
  - The prophecy is a "burden" – the pronouncement of judgement and doom.
  - It is described as a book – the only prophet, minor or major, described so. Perhaps it was delivered by way of pen and paper instead of voice.
- vs. 2-6 – What a powerful description of God and His might! He is the Righteous Judge and none may stand before His wrath.

- vs. 3 – The patience of God by no means suggests He is too weak to execute His judgement or neglectful of doing so. It is in His great power that He allows us mercy to repent. Compare to Exodus 34:6-7 and II Peter 3:9-10
- vs. 4 – “Bashan was richest in pastures; Carmel, according to its name, in gardens and vineyards; Lebanon, in vines also and fragrant flowers, but chiefly in the cedar and cypress; it had its name from the whiteness of the snow, which rests on its summit.” – Albert Barnes
  - These pictures of fertility and beauty might become barren deserts when God pours out His vengeance.
- vs. 7 – What a change! Compare to the Great Shepherd’s care in John 10.
- vs. 8 – flood – not just the picture of destruction by a flood, but also prophetic in that the fall of Nineveh was in part because of sudden flooding of the Tigris River.
- vs. 9 – God’s past mercy is not guarantee of future mercy.
- vs. 10 – I think the thorns picture their perceived safety which has caused them to be overconfident and proud. Yet God will utterly destroy them.
- vs. 11 – “Likely Sennacherib, who had blasphemed God, viciously attacked God’s people, and the sent the ‘wicked counselor,’ Rabshekah, to demoralize the people with taunts and boasts.” – Reese’s Chronological Bible. See II Kings 18:28-35.
- vs. 12 – J. Vernon McGee points to a note in the *New Scofield Reference Bible* that says the phrase “quiet and likewise many” is an Assyrian legal term “to indicate joint and several responsibility for carrying out an obligation.”
- vs. 13 – While many see this as pointing to the Jews, in context I think it is talking about smashing the power of Assyria into oblivion.
- vs. 14 – The dynasty, culture, religion – everything about the Assyrians – buried and forgotten!
- vs. 15 – Celebrating the news of the fall of Assyrian oppression. Isaiah 52:7 uses similar language concerning the fall of the Babylonians.