

## **THE BOOK OF NAHUM – NAHUM 1:2-8**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. Have you ever found yourself struggling to comprehend why evil people and nations continue to thrive and oppress people?
2. The book of Nahum takes us back to a nation of people that were known for their violence and oppression of others, the nation of Assyria.
3. God sent the prophet Jonah to them and they repented but now, many years later, things have changed (**Jonah 3:4-5**).
4. Will God continue to allow the Assyrians to oppress the nations, including His own people in Judah?

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **I. NAHUM'S LIFE & TIMES**

- A. Who was the prophet Nahum?
- B. His name means "comfort" in Hebrew.
  - i. This is ironic since his message is about God's judgment on Nineveh and the Assyrians (**Nah. 1:1**).
  - ii. While his words would not be comforting to them, it would be to their enemies, which included the people of Judah (**Nah. 1:7**).
- C. We are also told that he is "of Elkosh."
  - i. But does this mean he is a descendant of Elkosh or is it his hometown?
  - ii. Most scholars believe it's his hometown, but no one knows where it was.
  - iii. Four locations have been suggested such as Capernaum which means "city of Nahum" or the modern city of Al-Kush where his tomb is supposedly located.
- D. What about the timeframe of Nahum's ministry and prophecy?
- E. Nahum is one of the minor prophets with no clear historical markers in the text.
- F. However, since he refers to the fall of the Egyptian city of Thebes as a past event, his ministry and writing most likely took place after 663 B.C. (**Nah. 3:8**).
- G. And since he predicts the fall of Nineveh which took place in 612 B.C., we can place his prophecy in the middle of seventh century B.C. (**Nah. 1:8; 2:1, 13**).
- H. All of this points to his ministry taking place during the reign of Manasseh, one of the worst kings of Judah who turned back to God late in life (**2 Chron. 33:10-13**).

#### **II. NAHUM'S MESSAGE TO JUDAH & ASSYRIA**

- A. Nahum's message is good news to God's people.
- B. Nineveh, Assyria's great city, will fall.
- C. The major theme of Nahum is that while God is merciful and slow to wrath, He is a just God, He hates evil, and He will bring justice against the wicked and those who oppress the innocent.
- D. This book can be broken down into three major sections.
- E. In the opening section of the book, Nahum proclaims that God will overthrow Nineveh (**Nah. 1:2-15**).

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- i. This opening Psalm includes a partial acrostic poem about God’s sovereignty (**Nah. 1:2-11**).
  - ii. Many believe Nahum quotes from Exodus to highlight both God’s mercy and justice (**Nah. 1:3; Exod. 34:6-7**).
  - iii. This section contrasts God’s judgment on the nations and the deliverance of His faithful remnant (**Nah. 1:7, 15; Isa. 52:7; cp. Rom. 10:15**).
- F. The second section describes the fall of Nineveh (**Nah. 2:1-13**).
  - i. Here Nahum describes the invading armies of Babylon (**Nah. 2:3-7**).
  - ii. As God has once used Assyria to punish the nations, even the northern kingdom of Israel, so now, God brings judgment against them (**Nah. 2:13; Isa. 10:24-27**).
  - iii. While God overthrows this wicked, He will restore His people (**Nah. 2:2**).
- G. The third and final section is a woe mocking Nineveh and Assyria (**Nah. 3:1-19**).
  - i. God condemns the Assyrians for their violence and sin (**Nah. 3:1**).
  - ii. Using the imagery of a shameless prostitute, locusts, and sleeping shepherds, God condemns their idolatry and vice (**Nah. 3:4-6; 17**).
- H. The Assyrian’s penchant for violence and sin have finally led to its downfall.
- I. The book closes with a call to rejoice over God’s judgment of the king of Assyria (**Nah. 3:18-19**).

### **III. NAHUM’S MESSAGE FOR US TODAY**

- A. While God’s judgment against the violent and oppressive nation of Assyria may have been good news for Nahum’s day, what benefit does it have for us today?
- B. Nahum reminds us that in the face of violence, oppression, and suffering in human history, God is not blind and uncaring.
- C. Although He is longsuffering, He will not overlook injustice forever (**Nah. 1:3**).
- D. Because God is just, He will act and overthrow wicked nations (**Dan. 2:21, 44-45**).
- E. This is also true for wicked people – those who sow the seeds of violence, sin, and oppression will not escape God’s wrath (**Gal. 6:7; Rom. 1:18**).
- F. As Nineveh was once deserving of God’s wrath and given a chance to repent, so it is with us today (**Rom. 3:10-19, 23**).
- G. And if we don’t turn from sin to God in Christ, we will have to face the judgment of God too (**Rom. 2:6-11; 5:8-9**).
- H. May we learn from Nahum and seek refuge in Christ today (**Nah. 1:7; 2 Cor. 6:2**)!

### **CONCLUSION**

- 1. When we find ourselves struggling in the face of evil and oppression, let us remember that God sees and will act on behalf of His people (**2 Thess. 1:6-7**).
- 2. Let us let Nahum’s message help us look to the day when God’s people will be free of sin and suffering (**Rev. 21:4; Matt. 25:31-46**).
- 3. And while we wait, may we put our faith in Him and seek to also save others from His wrath (**Matt. 28:18-20; Rom. 10:11-15**).