

Nahum

WHAT'S THIS BOOK ABOUT? Despite the great revival in the time of Jonah, Nineveh has now sunk to new lows, and God's judgment is on the way.

WHO WROTE IT? Nahum.

WHEN DID IT HAPPEN? Probably in the seventh century, prior to the destruction of Nineveh in 612 B.C.

WHERE DOES THIS BOOK FIT? During the time of the divided kingdom, approximately 150 years after Jonah's visit to the same city.

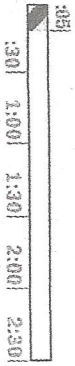
THE BREAKDOWN

- Chapter 1: God is kind to those who trust him but judges those who rebel
- Chapter 2: Nineveh will be conquered
- Chapter 3: God will ensure Nineveh's destruction

KEY CONCEPTS

"I am your enemy!"

READING TIME



"FOR EVERYONE TO WHOM MUCH IS GIVEN, FROM HIM MUCH WILL BE REQUIRED" (Luke 12:48). Nineveh had been given the privilege of knowing the one true God. Under Jonah's preaching this great Gentile city had repented, and God had graciously stayed His judgment. However, a hundred years later, Nahum proclaims the downfall of this same city. The Assyrians have forgotten their revival and have returned to their habits of violence, idolatry, and arrogance. As a result, Babylon will so destroy the city that no trace of it will remain—a prophecy fulfilled in painful detail.

The Hebrew word *nahum* ("comfort," "consolation") is a shortened form of *Nehemiah* ("Comfort of Yahweh"). The destruction of the capital city of Assyria is a message of comfort and consolation to Judah and all who live in fear of the cruelty of the Assyrians. The title of this book in the Greek and Latin Bibles is *Naoum* and *Nahum*.

WATCH WORD

jealous (eager, zealous for)—1:2

WORTH MEMORIZING

- 1:3
The Lord is slow to get angry, but his power is great, and he never lets the guilty go unpunished.
- 1:7-8
The Lord is good, a strong refuge when trouble comes. He is close to those who trust in him. But he will sweep away his enemies in an overwhelming flood. He will pursue his foes into the darkness of night.

THE MASCULINE PERSPECTIVE

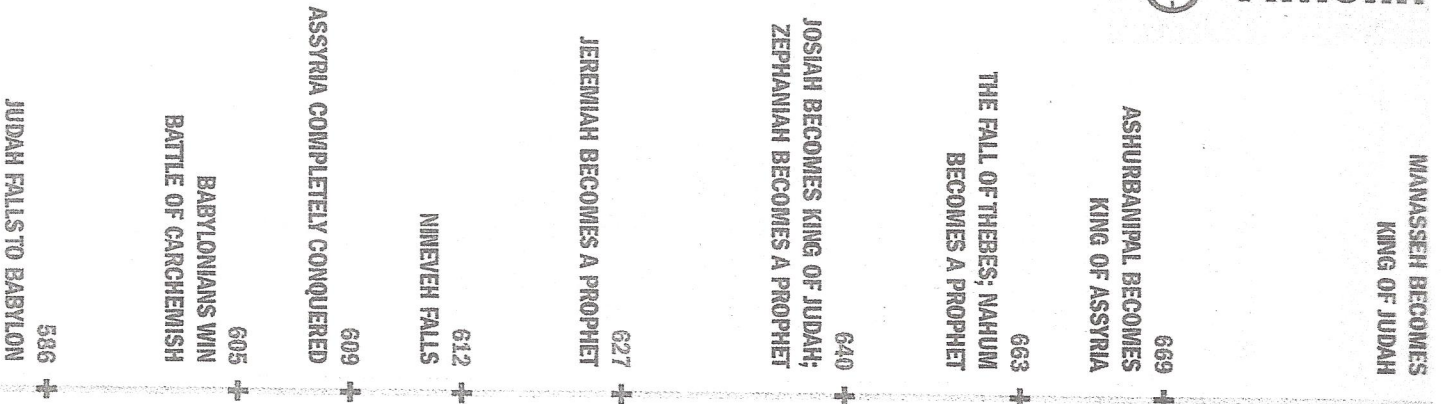
• **GOD'S JUDGMENT.** God will call us to account for what we do, even our attitudes and motives. We might not feel any consequences, so we might think we're getting away with dishonesty. But God will judge.

WHAT'S THE POINT OF Nahum?
++ ++
One generation's revival guarantees nothing for the next.

1:2 jealous

(Heb. *ganno'*) (Josh. 24:19) H7072: This Hebrew term is related to a root word that can mean "to be eager, zealous for" (1 Kin. 19:10, 14), or even "to be furious" (Zech. 8:2). One of God's names is *jealous* (Ex. 34:14). When the expression "the Lord your God is a jealous God" is used in the Old Testament, it is usually associated with an injunction against idol worship (Ex. 20:5; Deut. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15). God's jealousy for His people is a claim for exclusive allegiance rooted in His holiness (Josh. 24:19) and His role as their Creator and Redeemer (Ps. 95:6, 7; 96:2-5). We tend to associate jealousy with a self-serving emotion that usually results from feelings of inadequacy. God's jealousy, in contrast, proceeds from His holiness. Because He alone is the Holy One (Is. 6:3; 40:25), He will tolerate no rival (Ex. 20:5).

Timelin





If you're unfamiliar with Nahum, you will receive a blessing as you study his book. He's one of the most literary of the prophets, employing a wide range of styles and techniques in writing. One of his most memorable verses is Nahum 1:15: "Behold on the mountains the feet of him who brings good tidings, who proclaims peace!"

A word of background will help you better appreciate Nahum. Under the preaching of Jonah, Assyria's capital had repented of her sin and been spared God's judgment. But a newly rebellious generation arose and went back on the warpath against the Israelites. About forty years after Jonah, Assyria invaded Israel. That's when God moved Nahum to announce that Assyria's days were numbered, and to comfort God's people with the assurance that the Lord would bring all nations to justice in His time. Reflecting on tumultuous events, Nahum wrote: "The LORD has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet" (1:3).

Nahum's prophecies, which date about 640 B.C., can read with this general outline in mind: Chapter 1: The Lord is the judge of Nineveh. Chapter 2: God's judgment on Nineveh will be swift and violent. Chapter 3: God will utterly destroy Nineveh.

We all face storms in life. Nahum reminds us that God is not absent in the storm. Though the skies grow dark, the wind howls, and the dust flies, God never loses sight of His children. He sees our plight, and He is fully in control.



KEY THOUGHT:

Though nations mock, strut, intimidate, and terrorize the innocent, one day the world will reap what it sows; but God's people have Good news to take to the world.



KEY VERSE:

"Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good tidings, who proclaims peace! O Judah, keep your appointed feasts, perform your vows. For the wicked one shall no more pass through you; he is utterly cut off."

Nahum 1:15



KEY ACTION:

Though skies are often dark, we must realize God is not absent from the storm; and He never loses sight of His children.



KEY PRAYER:

Thank You, God! You are good, a refuge in times of trouble.

INTRODUCTION TO
NAHUM

BACKGROUND

After the revival inspired by Jonah's ministry in Nineveh, Assyria quickly returns to its cruel ways, destroying Samaria in 722 B.C. during the reign of Sargon II. Assyria then sets its sights on Judah, and Sennacherib attacks Jerusalem in 701 B.C. Only by turning to God is King Hezekiah able to save the city (2 Kgs 18-19; 2 Chr 32), even while Assyria takes some people into exile. Under King Esarhaddon (681-669 B.C.), Judah becomes subject to Assyria. The early years of the reign of Ashurbanipal (669-633 B.C.) mark the peak of Assyria's power, demonstrated by its capture of Thebes.

While the prophet Nahum is believed to be the author of this book, the only biblical information about him appears in 1:1, where his hometown (Elkosai) is identified by calling him an Elkoshite. The Hebrew name *Nahum* means "comfort, consolation."

MESSAGE

Like the prophet Obadiah, who focused on one nation, Nahum's message focuses on a foreign nation—Assyria. While the prophet's message may seem stern, it comforts the people of Judah by proclaiming that God will destroy

the cruel Assyrians who conquered the

northern kingdom of Israel and elicited fear in Judah. Assyria was at the height of its influence at the time of Nahum's prophecy. The city of Nineveh had fortifications that would allow it to withstand a twenty-year siege. While Nahum's prophecy of its destruction may have been difficult to envision at that time (1:8; 3:15-17), it would come to pass less than fifty years later. The Tigris River overflowed, the floodwaters destroyed parts of the immense wall, and the Babylonians invaded through the holes in the wall, plundering the city and setting it on fire.

TIME

Nahum wrote sometime before 612 B.C. The vivid description of the fall of Thebes (3:8-10) points to Nahum writing shortly after this event (circa 664 B.C.). The absence of discussion of the restoration of Thebes indicates that Nahum wrote between its fall and its restoration in 654 B.C.

Nahum proclaims the fall of Nineveh as a future event. Since chapter 1 does not note the king during whose reign Nahum prophesies, a date of 663-654 B.C. places Nahum's ministry during the reign of Manasseh of Judah.

OUTLINE

- I. God's Wrath**
- A. The power of God's judgment
 - B. A warning for Assyria
- II. Judgment of Nineveh**
- A. Siege of a city
 - B. God is against Nineveh

- 1:1-6
- 1:7-15
- 2:1-13
- 3:1-19

BASIC SURVEY**NAHUM**

AUTHOR: "The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite" (1:1 KJV). Nahum either wrote the prophecies or dictated them to another.

DATE: Sometime between 663 and 612 BC.

INTEN WORDS OR LESS

Powerful, wicked Nineveh will fall before God's judgment.

DETAILS, PLEASE

"Woe to the bloody city!" (3:1 KJV), Nahum cries. Nineveh, capital of the brutal Assyrian Empire, has been targeted for judgment by God Himself, who will "cast abominable filth upon you, make you vile, and make you a spectacle" (3:6 NKJV) for sins of idolatry and cruelty. Nahum's prophecy comes true when the Babylonian Empire overruns Nineveh in 612 BC.

QUOTABLE

- > The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked (1:3 KJV).
- > The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him (1:7 NIV).

UNIQUE AND UNUSUAL

Nahum is a kind of Jonah, Part 2. Though the city had once avoided God's judgment by taking Jonah's preaching to heart and repenting, now, more than a century later, it will experience the full consequence of its sins.

SO WHAT?

Even the most powerful city on earth is no match for God's strength. Neither is the biggest problem in our individual lives.

READ NAHUM 1 AND PSALMS 12-15.

- One-Month Course: your next reading is on page 162. →
- Three-Month Course: your next reading is on page 162. →
- Six-Month Course: your next reading is on page 160. →

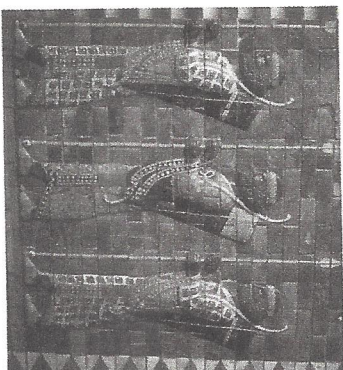
CLOSER LOOK

THE FALL OF MIGHTY NINEVEH

Many people concede that the Bible contains an accurate record of Israel's history. But they're not ready to admit that the Bible is the very Word of God. Fulfilled prophecy, however, is definitive proof of the Bible's divine inspiration.

About 630 BC, when Nahum described the soon-coming doom of Nineveh, capital of the Assyrian Empire, it didn't seem likely. The Assyrians were an oppressive warrior state; they were unspeakably cruel to the nations they conquered—and they were at the very height of their power. Nineveh itself was protected by five walls, with the inner wall one hundred feet high and four chariot-widths thick. And since Nineveh was at the junction of two rivers, it was guarded on several sides by water. “The river was her defense, the waters her wall” (Nahum 3:8 NIV).

Nevertheless, Nahum prophesied that Nineveh would be conquered (Nahum 2:1–4; 3:1–3, 14–15). And he predicted exactly how it would fall: “But with an overflowing flood He will make an utter end of its place. . . . The gates of the rivers are opened” (Nahum 1:8; 2:6 NKJV).



Babylon conquered Nineveh, possibly with the assistance of Babylonian archers such as the ones shown in this mosaic.

Less than twenty years later, armies of Babylonians and Medes surrounded Nineveh. After two years of siege, the attackers built a dam on the Khoser River (which ran through the city). Then, in 612 BC, they opened the river gates and the resulting flood washed away part of the wall, allowing them to enter. So complete was Nineveh's destruction that when Alexander the Great fought a battle nearby in 331 BC, he saw no evidence that a city had ever been there.

READ NAHUM 2 AND PSALMS 24–25.

● Six-Month Course: your next reading is on page 162.



HIDDEN TREASURE

GOD PROTECTS HIS PEOPLE

One of the most comforting promises in the Bible is found in the book of Nahum: “The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him” (Nahum 1:7 NIV). This not only speaks of supernatural protection in times of war and danger, as does Psalm 91, but is a promise we can look to during *any* troubled times—whether periods of economic chaos, family disagreements, when accused by enemies, or anytime things get out of control and we need divine help. God genuinely loves and cares for us. (See Psalm 55:22.) As Peter stated in the New Testament, “Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you” (1 Peter 5:7 NLT).

READ NAHUM 3 AND PSALMS 26–27.

HIDDEN TREASURE

WHEN GOD GETS ANGRY

Many people are troubled by Old Testament images of God as an angry, vengeful deity. Nahum 1:2 (NIV) says, “The LORD takes vengeance and is filled with wrath. The LORD takes vengeance on his foes and vents his wrath against his enemies.” Some people wonder if God evolved from a God of wrath into a God of love. No. He says, “I am the LORD, I change not” (Malachi 3:6 KJV). God has *always* been love (1 John 4:8), but He has also always been just. Nahum goes on to say, “The LORD is slow to anger but will not leave the guilty unpunished” (Nahum 1:3 NIV). The Assyrians were vicious and greedy and the Bible states, “The LORD is good. . . but. . . he will make an end of Nineveh” (vv. 7–8 NIV).

READ ISAIAH 30–31.

Self-Assessment on Trusting God

Read: Nahum 1:7 | Habit: Trusting God

Before beginning this exercise, review "A Model for Self-Assessment" on page 903.

► *Quote for reflection* — "We must cease striving and trust God to provide what He thinks is best and in whatever time He chooses to make it available. But this kind of trusting doesn't come naturally. It's a spiritual crisis of the will in which we must choose to exercise faith." —Charles R. Swindoll

► *Definition* — Trusting God is the attitude of our heart, soul and mind in which we have complete faith in the goodness, power and sufficiency of God.

► *Meditate on the following passage*: "The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him" (Na 1:7).

► *Evaluation* — Trusting God is not a passive submission or surrender to circumstances.

Trusting God is an active process we develop through such disciplines as gratitude, remembrance, Scriptural engagement and walking in obedience. None of us fully trusts God, for if we did we'd never be tempted to sin. If we completely trusted him we'd never doubt that his holy will is what is best for us. Nevertheless, we can learn to grow in trust. Is the direction of your life headed toward greater trust? Do you feel less anxious and fearful? Are you eliminating worry from your life? Are you attempting to surrender all to God, knowing he is good and faithful?

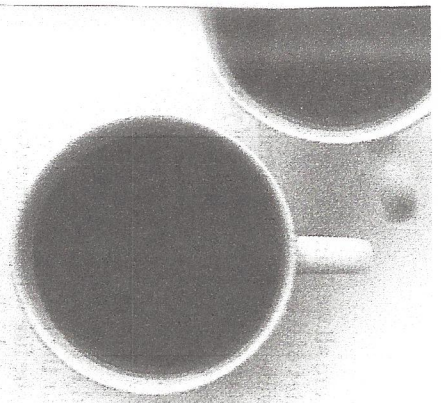
Trusting God is the attitude of our heart, soul and mind in which we have complete faith in the goodness, power and sufficiency of God.

Drill-down questions:

1. What causes me to be anxious and fearful?
2. What causes me to worry?
3. Can I identify the promises God has made to me in Scripture?
4. Which conditional promises have I failed to keep?
5. Am I overly concerned about demonic influences?
6. Do I trust that God will provide justice? Am I comforted by that fact, or am I tempted to seek personal vengeance when I'm wronged?
7. Do I find myself doubting that God exists? Do I sometimes doubt his attributes (such as goodness or mercy)?
8. Am I able to wait patiently on the Lord?

PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY: Trusting God is an ability we develop through gratitude, remembrance, Scriptural engagement and obedience.

For your next reading, go to page 1117.



Time to Talk

When John Gray wrote *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*, he tapped into a way of describing differences between men and women that has been recognized by—well, everyone. Every day we see "What she said/what he heard" emails and comic strips because we recognize their truths, such as "When she says, 'Let's go shopping,' he hears, 'Let's go drain the life force from your body.'" Men and women are from different worlds, Gray asserts, so there is always the chance for aggravation in a marriage to escalate into frustration, anger, and despair about ever being understood.

To communicate successfully, you must understand these differences in order to bridge them. For example, it helps if you know that men often complain because they are asking for solutions, while women often complain because they want to be acknowledged. Partners must decipher what is being asked for, and they must decipher if what they are giving is what is being asked for. In *White Men Can't Jump*, Rosie Perez's character tells Woody Harrelson's character that she is thirsty. He gets her a glass of water, which she throws on him. "What are you doing?" he asks, bewildered because he knows he had found a simple, surefire solution to an obvious problem. "I want you to empathize with my thirst," she responds.

In *The Secret of Staying in Love*, John Powell suggests that couples distinguish between discussion of ideas and dialogue about feelings so that they can ask for what they really need. Successful communication is not only what is being talked about, but how that content is shared. And it's worth the work.

7 minutes on communication

Thought for Today
based on Nahum 1:2-3

"Successful marriages are built and maintained by successful communication. Sounds simple, but it's not."

Jim and Sally Conway,
Traits of a Lasting Marriage

Read Together:
He Reads: James 1:19
She Reads: Ephesians 5:19-20

Pray Together:
Help us, heavenly Father, learn to communicate well with each other.

Nahum

Timeline	847 BC Assyria extracts tribute from Jehu of Israel.	750 BC Jonah reluctantly preaches in Nineveh and the people repent.	732 BC Damascus falls to Assyria.	722 BC Sargon II of Assyria destroys Samaria and takes many from Israel into exile.	701 BC Assyria invades Judah, destroys many cities, but Jerusalem is spared.
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World Events

847 BC
Assyria extracts tribute from Jehu of Israel.

750 BC
Jonah reluctantly preaches in Nineveh and the people repent.

732 BC
Damascus falls to Assyria.

722 BC
Sargon II of Assyria destroys Samaria and takes many from Israel into exile.

701 BC
Assyria invades Judah, destroys many cities, but Jerusalem is spared.

“The Lord is slow to anger but great in power; the Lord will never leave the guilty unpunished. His path is in the whirlwind and storm, and clouds are the dust beneath His feet” (1:3).

Who wrote Nahum?
The prophet Nahum (1:1)

Who were the recipients?
While Nahum’s prophecy is about the coming destruction of Nineveh, its message also brings hope to the people of Judah, who were suffering under Assyrian oppression, reminding them of Assyria’s eventual defeat.

When was Nahum written?
663–612 B.C.

Where did it happen?
Nahum’s prophecy must be understood against the backdrop of the painful oppression of Israel and Judah by Assyria. The northern kingdom of Israel had already been conquered by Assyria (722 B.C.). Now Judah was experiencing the Assyrian cruelty. Just as God had appointed Assyria to judge Judah for their sin, the cup of His wrath would be poured on Nineveh, the Assyrian capital, when the city fell to the Medes and the Babylonians (612 B.C.).

What is Nahum about?
• *God is faithful to His people, even though they have repeatedly turned away from Him.*

• *Evildoers will ultimately be destroyed. Reasons for divine judgment on Nineveh are given: the inhumane oppression administered by the Assyrian army (2:12) and the wickedness of the city (3:4).*

Why should women read Nahum?
Nahum is a reminder to women that God is a God of justice. He

does not allow evil to go unpunished. While perhaps at times the evil seem to get away unscathed, in the end the Lord will fight all. There will be eternal punishment for those who do not repent and turn to Him. Those who seek to live godly lives in Christ Jesus will experience persecution. But in the midst of oppression, you can rejoice that God is for you.

How do you read Nahum?

Nahum appropriately describes his prophecy as an oracle and a vision. His message is characterized by vivid imagery and picturesque language. Nahum’s name (hly, “comfort”) and Isaiah’s thematic verse, “comfort, comfort My people” (Is 40:1), suggest common ground. The reason for the comfort is God’s faithfulness—both to His own people, to restore them, and to their avengers (Assyria), to destroy them.

The Assyrian oppression caused God’s people to question how He could tolerate such evil. The Lord’s word through Nahum to the people of Judah was vivid and precise. Assyria’s hand had been heavy on Judah, but her own end was near. God was going to judge her. The book opens with an affirmation of God’s awesome power and an announcement of His coming wrath on Nineveh.

While the book of Nahum is unpleasant in many ways, its message does give hope to the people of Judah. Having been subjected to the harsh oppression of the Assyrians for more than a century, they were despondent. But, through Nahum’s message, their hope would be renewed. They would again embrace the truth that their God is a God of justice. And He does come to the aid of those who trust in Him.

Outline

- I. The Case Against Nineveh (1:1-15)
 - A. The Evidence (1:1-8)
 - B. The Confrontation (1:9-11)
 - C. The Judgment (1:12-15)
- II. The Destruction of Nineveh (2:1-13)
 - A. The Siege of the City (2:1-6)
- III. The Degrading of the City (2:7-13)
 - A. The Humiliation of Nineveh (3:1-19)
 - B. The Shame (3:5b-17)
 - C. The Epitaph (3:18-19)

ON SCRIPTURE

The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. —Nahum 1:3

We are born and God says, “I have launched you onto the sea from the shore of birth. You’re going to go into the little port we call death. In the meantime, you are free to romp around all you want—just remember that you are going to answer for what you’ve done when you get over there.” So we throw our weight around and make demands, declaring that we can do as we please. We boast about our freedom. We’ve got a little freedom, all right, but remember, we can’t change God Almighty’s course. God has said that those who follow Jesus Christ and believe in Him shall be saved, and those who refuse shall be damned. That’s settled—eternally, sovereignly settled. But you and I have freedom in the meantime, to do anything we want to do. And though most people think very little about it, we’re going to answer for that someday, according to the sovereign will of God.

God has certain plans that He is going to carry out. “The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet” (Nahum 1:3). When God is carrying out His plans, He is moving in a certain direction. When the enemy comes along (exercising the little freedom God has given him to be an enemy of God) and intersects the will and purpose of God, then there’s trouble. As long as we move in the will of God, everything goes smoothly. But when we get out of the will of God, then we have trouble on our hands.

—The Attributes of God II

NAHUM

Here's how you get to Nineveh: first, catch a flight to Baghdad, Iraq; second, rent a car and drive for several hours northward on the highway that follows the Tigris River. When you get to the city of Mosul, take the bridge that lets you cross the river to the eastern side. Now stop.

See those two big mounds of earth there? That's all that's left of the great ancient city of Nineveh, capital of the Assyrian Empire.

Surprised to find nothing more? You shouldn't be if you've read the book of Nahum. Nineveh was destined for destruction. And the reason lay in how the Assyrians chose to act.

This is an aggressive empire we're talking about here. The Assyrians wanted more land, more money, more power. And they were willing to do just about anything to get it.

Like a mobster shaking down some poor shopkeeper, the Assyrians would go to one of their neighboring nations and demand a large, annual payment (a *tribute*) of money and goods. If the neighbor couldn't or wouldn't pay up, in would come the Assyrian army and attack with terrible violence. The victorious Assyrians would put a new ruler on the throne of the neighboring nation, someone who was more likely to keep the tribute rolling in. And then if that didn't work, the Assyrians would just conquer the other nation for good and make it part of their empire. Let's not even get into how they treated their prisoners—very cruelly.

And this very thing had happened to the ten northern tribes of Israel. In 722 B.C., the Assyrians had captured the northern capital of Samaria and deported most of the population to Assyria. Later on, they also invaded the southern nation of Judah and demanded tribute.

If you were a Jewish person, you had plenty of reasons to hate and fear the Assyrians. But what was God going to do with them?

The prophet Jonah preached to the Ninevites

and saw temporary repentance. The prophet Nahum, on the other hand, had a much different message for Nineveh: destruction was coming. At last God was going to judge this evil city. It happened in 612 B.C., when the Babylonians finally defeated Assyria and captured Nineveh. The city was rebuilt in time. But eventually it ended up in the wastebasket of history for good. So, intrepid traveler, those two mounds of earth in front of you stand for a lesson that's good to learn: with God, justice always comes in time. In our human court systems, criminals may go free and victims may go unavenged. But God's judicial system never fails.

He is merciful *and* just. He extends the opportunity of forgiveness to all, but those who persistently refuse to accept His forgiveness must eventually face the consequences.

Author: Nahum

Date: Between the destruction of Thebes and the destruction of Nineveh (around 663–612 B.C.)

What in the world is going on?

663 B.C. Ashurbanipal becomes king of Assyria, succeeding his father Esar-haddon

663 B.C. Thebes, the capital of Egypt, is destroyed

ca. 660 B.C. Nahum becomes a prophet to Judah

642–640 B.C. Amnon reigns in Judah

640–609 B.C. Josiah reigns in Judah

628 B.C. Zoroaster, the founder of Zoroastrianism, is born in Rhages, Iran

627 B.C. Jeremiah reluctantly becomes a prophet

626 B.C. Nabopolassar revolts against Assyria and founds the Neo-Babylonian Empire

625 B.C. Zephanian becomes a prophet to Judah

621 B.C. Harsh laws to punish crime are instituted by Draco, the first lawgiver in Athens; the term *draconian* is coined from his name.

616–578 B.C. Tarquin (Lucius Tarquinius Priscus), an Etruscan, is king of Rome

612 B.C. Although God spared Nineveh during Jonah's day, the city is destroyed at this time

612–609 B.C. The Assyrian Empire crumbles, thanks to the conquering Scythians, Medes, and Babylonians

610 B.C. Greek poet Sappho is born

610 B.C. Habakkuk's prophecy to Judah

610–595 B.C. Merod-Baladan, king of Assyria, and Sargon, king of Judah

NAHUM

THE BIG PICTURE

The prophet Nahum ministered in Judah during a time of great fear. Judah had barely survived attacks from the brutal Assyrians. This enemy was indifferent to their suffering and well known for its cruelty and oppression. Assyria's bloodthirsty armies had long since destroyed Judah's sister nation, the kingdom of Israel. The people of Judah now lived in constant fear of being overrun.

Nahum, whose name means "comfort," was God's prophet of consolation during these troubled times. His words were meant to lift the hearts of Judah's oppressed people and to address their unspoken doubts. Nahum reminded the people that God is a powerful refuge for those in trouble. He told them that God would judge Judah's cruel oppressors and that Judah would someday regain her status of significance and wholeness.

Nahum's words were also intended for the people of Nineveh, Assyria's capital. Nahum predicted Nineveh's imminent doom, and God's judgment arrived soon after the prophet spoke. The Medes and Babylonians plundered Nineveh, and the Assyrian Empire soon crumbled. Nineveh's demise was a consequence of her harsh treatment of others, especially the people of God.

A century earlier, the prophet Jonah had gone to Nineveh. At that time the city had been spared destruction because her people had repented. But their failure to follow God led to severe consequences in Nahum's day. Repentance is never a one-time thing. We must continually redirect our course back into line with God's plan. True repentance means that we will follow through on our promises to obey and will do so by the power of the Holy Spirit.

SPIRITUAL RENEWAL THEMES

RESCUED FROM FEAR

Our fears can destroy us if we allow them to control our lives. The people of Judah lived under the threat of Assyrian attack for many years. Nahum comforted them by turning their eyes away from their cruel enemy and toward their powerful and loving God. He urged them to make God their source of strength. God will help us in all our spiritual battles too. Our enemies are the spiritual forces that try to deter us from following God's plan for our lives. If we focus our attention solely on the struggles we face, we could feel overwhelmed. But if we keep our eyes fixed upon God, who loves us and desires our best, our fear will melt away. We can count on God to help us in all our spiritual battles.

A. JUDAH'S COMFORT IN GOD'S

CHARACTER (1:1 – 15)

1. God's Justice (1:1 – 3)
2. God's Sovereignty (1:4 – 6)
3. God's Mercy Toward His People (1:7)
4. God's Judgment Toward His Enemies (1:8)
5. God's Good News of Restoration and Spiritual Renewal (1:9 – 15)

B. ASSYRIA'S FEAR AT GOD'S

JUDGMENT (2:1 – 3:19)

1. Judgment Predicted (2:1 – 2)
2. Judgment Described (2:3 – 10)
3. Judgment Justified (2:11 – 3:19)

Essential Facts

PURPOSE:

To prophesy the overthrow of Assyria, illustrating that God is all-powerful, that he hates wickedness and that he is able to help those who are oppressed and in trouble.

AUTHOR:

The prophet Nahum.

AUDIENCE:

The people of Judah and Nineveh.

DATE WRITTEN:

Sometime between 663 and 612 BC, during the period preceding Nineveh's fall in 612 BC.

SETTING:

In Nahum's day, Assyria controlled most of the ancient Near East and had already destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel (722 BC).

KEY VERSE:

"The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him" (1:7).

KEY PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS:

Nahum, the people of Judah and the people of Nineveh.

KEY PLACE:

The Assyrian capital city of Nineveh.

LIVING LIFE GOD'S WAY

God created us to function best when we do things his way. The people of Nineveh broke all of God's laws and commands. They continued in their destructive behavior for quite some time before the consequences caught up with them. But God's inevitable judgment did come. We need to live life within the boundaries of God's revealed will. Rejecting God's commands will always lead to pain and devastation.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSEVERANCE

Nahum was not the first of God's prophets to warn Nineveh of impending destruction. Over one 100 years earlier, Jonah had called the Ninevites to repentance. At that time the city had responded to Jonah's message and was spared destruction. But apparently the Ninevites failed to follow through on their initial promises. Their behavior reverted to their original wicked ways and quickly deteriorated even further. Spiritual growth doesn't happen all at once. It is a growing, continual process requiring perseverance. Spiritual growth also demands action. We need to follow through on our promises to change, or we will end up as Nineveh did—wrecked beyond recognition.

IN LIKE A FLOOD

Historians record that the walls of Nineveh were damaged during an overflow of the Tigris River, allowing the Babylonians to invade and conquer. This fulfills the word of prophecy in Nahum 1:8: "But with an overwhelming flood he will make an end of Nineveh."

NAHUM

What's in a Name?

The name Nahum means "comforter."

DID YOU KNOW?

KNOW

▶ Although Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah, it was eventually destroyed as predicted in the book of Nahum, at least 100 years after Jonah's visit.

In the Word

Nahum's prophecy is addressed to the city of Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria. The book of Nahum predicts the fall of Nineveh and the entire kingdom of Assyria. The Assyrians had overrun and taken captive the nation of Israel.

THE MIGHTY FALL

Historians believe that Nineveh had become the mightiest city on earth, with walls 100 feet high, a 60-foot moat, aqueducts, irrigation canals and enough stored rations to withstand a 20-year siege. The ruins of Nineveh still exist in the modern-day country of Iraq.

BY THE NUMBERS

3 CHAPTERS
47 VERSES
1,112 WORDS

NAHUM IN REVIEW

HOT SEAT

1. I am the great city Nineveh, yet that prophet Nahum calls me the city of what?

MINUTIAE & MISCELLANY

2. "The Lord is slow to anger but _____" (Fill in the blank.)

- A. Swift to avenge
- B. Great in power
- C. Quick to forgive
- D. Faithful in righteousness

WHERE IN THE WORLD

3. Nahum compares Nineveh to a city called Thebes. Where is Thebes located?

MINUTIAE & MISCELLANY

4. "His wrath is poured out like _____"

- A. Blood
- B. Wine
- C. Fire
- D. Water

HOT SEAT

5. I am the great city Nineveh! Yet what does that prophet Nahum say my guards and officials are like?

TIME TRAVELER

6. You are a soldier as described in Nahum. What color are your shields?

HABAKKUK IN REVIEW

TIME TRAVELER

1. You are a ruthless and impetuous nation of people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwellings not their own. Who are you?

HOT SEAT

2. I am a horseman in the Babylonian army. How fast are my horses?

- A. Swifter than leopards
- B. Faster than the dawn
- C. Quicker than lightning
- D. Speedier than the rains

MINUTIAE & MISCELLANY

3. What does Habakkuk say the earth will be filled with?

- A. The blood of the warriors of light
- B. The knowledge of the glory of the Lord
- C. An army of locusts from the eastern winds
- D. The cattle on a thousand hills

MINUTIAE & MISCELLANY

4. "Woe to him who builds a city with _____" (Fill in the blank.)

TIME TRAVELER

5. You are a man who has built his "house by unjust gain." You have "plotted the ruin of many peoples, shaming your own house." What will the stones of your walls do?

- A. Crumble to dust
- B. Fall upon you
- C. Seek abundant gain
- D. Cry out

MINUTIAE & MISCELLANY

6. "The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a _____" (Fill in the blank.)

ANSWERS:

NAHUM: 1. 1. Babylonians (1:6) 2. A (1:1) 3. 3. (3:1) 4. C (1:6) 5. 5. (1:9) 6. 6. (2:3) 7. 7. (2:14) 8. 8. (2:14) 9. 9. (2:9-11) 10. 10. (3:1) 11. 11. (3:1) 12. 12. (3:1) 13. 13. (3:1) 14. 14. (3:1) 15. 15. (3:1) 16. 16. (3:1) 17. 17. (3:1) 18. 18. (3:1) 19. 19. (3:1) 20. 20. (3:1) 21. 21. (3:1) 22. 22. (3:1) 23. 23. (3:1) 24. 24. (3:1) 25. 25. (3:1) 26. 26. (3:1) 27. 27. (3:1) 28. 28. (3:1) 29. 29. (3:1) 30. 30. (3:1) 31. 31. (3:1) 32. 32. (3:1) 33. 33. (3:1) 34. 34. (3:1) 35. 35. (3:1) 36. 36. (3:1) 37. 37. (3:1) 38. 38. (3:1) 39. 39. (3:1) 40. 40. (3:1) 41. 41. (3:1) 42. 42. (3:1) 43. 43. (3:1) 44. 44. (3:1) 45. 45. (3:1) 46. 46. (3:1) 47. 47. (3:1) 48. 48. (3:1) 49. 49. (3:1) 50. 50. (3:1) 51. 51. (3:1) 52. 52. (3:1) 53. 53. (3:1) 54. 54. (3:1) 55. 55. (3:1) 56. 56. (3:1) 57. 57. (3:1) 58. 58. (3:1) 59. 59. (3:1) 60. 60. (3:1) 61. 61. (3:1) 62. 62. (3:1) 63. 63. (3:1) 64. 64. (3:1) 65. 65. (3:1) 66. 66. (3:1) 67. 67. (3:1) 68. 68. (3:1) 69. 69. (3:1) 70. 70. (3:1) 71. 71. (3:1) 72. 72. (3:1) 73. 73. (3:1) 74. 74. (3:1) 75. 75. (3:1) 76. 76. (3:1) 77. 77. (3:1) 78. 78. (3:1) 79. 79. (3:1) 80. 80. (3:1) 81. 81. (3:1) 82. 82. (3:1) 83. 83. (3:1) 84. 84. (3:1) 85. 85. (3:1) 86. 86. (3:1) 87. 87. (3:1) 88. 88. (3:1) 89. 89. (3:1) 90. 90. (3:1) 91. 91. (3:1) 92. 92. (3:1) 93. 93. (3:1) 94. 94. (3:1) 95. 95. (3:1) 96. 96. (3:1) 97. 97. (3:1) 98. 98. (3:1) 99. 99. (3:1) 100. 100. (3:1)