

I. Nahum

a. Purpose: We will look at the authorship, purpose and other aspects of the book of Nahum so we would be more familiar with this part of the Bible and yearn to study it for ourselves.

b. Authorship

i. About Nahum

1. Little is known about this prophet.¹
2. The name “Nahum means “comfort.”²
3. **Nahum 1:1** said he’s from “*Elkosh*” but the location of that is uncertain and there are four suggested location of that city.³
4. Very likely “*Elkosh*” is somewhere in Judah even though the message is primarily for Israel, given Nahum’s concern for Judah in **Nahum 1:15**.⁴
5. Nahum wrote before the city of Nineveh was destroyed in 612 B.C but also after the Egyptian city of Thebes (Hebrew “*No-Amon*”) was destroyed but before it was restored in 654 BC since it would have little rhetorical force of being mentioned in **Nahum 3:8** that Nineveh is no better than Thebes.⁵

ii. Reasons why it is written by Nahum: It was to Nahum that the Word of God came to in this book: “*The oracle of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.*” (**Nahum 1:1**)

c. Purpose

- i. According to Mark Rooker: “The book of Nahum is devoted exclusively to the announcement of the destruction of the city of Nineveh, the prophecy gave hope to the people of Judah who had long been terrorized by Assyria’s constant and ominous threat.”⁶
- ii. According to John Walton: “The purpose of the book of Nahum is to pronounce the doom of Nineveh.”⁷
- iii. According to Richard Mayhue: “Under Jonah’s preaching in 760 B.C. the city of Nineveh repented, but soon returned to her violence, idolatry, and arrogance; the city of Nineveh seemed impregnable, but though God is slow to wrath, He settles in full in 612 B.C.”⁸

d. Structure

i. Shorter outline⁹

1. God’s Majestic Holiness (1)

¹ Elliott Johnson, “Nahum” in *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Victor), 1493.

² Elliott Johnson, “Nahum” in *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Victor), 1493.

³ Walter Kaiser, *The Promise-Plan of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 190.

⁴ Elliott Johnson, “Nahum” in *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Victor), 1493.

⁵ Elliott Johnson, “Nahum” in *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Victor), 1494-1496.

⁶ Mark Rooker, “The Book of Nahum” in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 16149-16151.

⁷ John Walton, “Nahum” in *A Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 651.

⁸ Richard Mayhue, *Ordination Practicum Syllabus* (Sun Valley, California: Self-Published for The Master’s Seminary), 86.

⁹ Richard Mayhue, *Ordination Practicum Syllabus* (Sun Valley, California: Self-Published for The Master’s Seminary), 86.

2. Nineveh's Judgment (2-3)
- ii. Longer outline¹⁰
 1. Title Verse (1:1)
 2. Nineveh's Judge (1:2-15)
 - a. The Manifestation of God (1:2-6)
 - b. The Lord's Care for Judah (1:7-12a)
 - c. The Joy of Deliverance (1:12b-15)
 3. The Lord's Judgment on Nineveh (2)
 - a. Nineveh's Attackers (2:1-5)
 - b. Nineveh's Defeat (2: 6– 13)
 4. Nineveh's Total Destruction (3)
 - a. Destruction and Humiliation of Nineveh (3:1-7)
 - b. The Futility of Nineveh to Defend Itself (3:8-17)
 - c. Funeral Lament (3:18-19)
- e. Closer look at Nahum
 - i. The character of God¹¹
 1. In order to understand why God would destroy Nineveh it is important to understand the attributes of God.
 2. God is a God of wrath: *"A jealous and avenging God is the Lord; The Lord is avenging and wrathful. The Lord takes vengeance on His adversaries, And He reserves wrath for His enemies."* (1:2)
 3. Being the God of wrath *"the Lord will by no means leave the guilty unpunished."* (1:3a)
 4. God is powerful enough to bring about punishment: *"great in power"* (1:3a)
 5. Yet *"The Lord is good,"* (1:7a)
 6. How is God good?
 - a. God's wrath at times is in defense of people: *"A stronghold in the day of trouble, And He knows those who take refuge in Him."* (1:7b)
 - b. Even with God's wrath remember *"The Lord is slow to anger"* (1:3a)= Remember God spared Nineveh before with the story of Jonah!
 - ii. About Nineveh
 1. First mentioned in **Genesis 10:11-12**: *"From that land he went forth into Assyria, and built Nineveh and Rehoboth-Ir and Calah, 12 and Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city."*
 - a. In the context of **Genesis 10:8-10** we learn that Nineveh was build by Nimrod.
 - b. Notice Nineveh was built in Assyria.
 2. It was the capital for the Assyrian empire.
 3. Many violent kings came from Nineveh.

¹⁰ Mark Rooker, "The Book of Nahum" in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 16194-16203.

¹¹ Walter Kaiser, *The Promise-Plan of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 190.

4. One of them was Sennacherib: *“When it happened that night that the angel of the Lord went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men rose early in the morning, behold, all of them were dead. 36 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and returned home, and lived at Nineveh.”* (2 Kings 19:35-36)
 - a. In the context Sennacherib brought an invading force to Judah and surrounded Jerusalem.
 - b. In **verse 35** we see that the forces of Assyria were struck down overnight by an angel from God with deaths totaling up to 185,000.
 - c. In **verse 36** we see Sennacherib returning to Nineveh.
 5. When Nahum prophesied Assyrians' terrorized the ancient Near East for more than two centuries upon their enemies with gross violence such as being burned alive and having body parts amputated.¹²
- iii. Nineveh's sins
1. Plotting evil: *“From you has gone forth One who plotted evil against the Lord, A wicked counselor.”* (1:11)
 2. Violence: *“Woe to the bloody city, completely full of lies and pillage; Her prey never departs.”* (3:1)
 3. Sorceries: *“All because of the many harlotries of the harlot, The charming one, the mistress of sorceries, Who sells nations by her harlotries”* (3:4)
 4. Continual sins: *“For on whom has not your evil passed continually?”* (3:19b)
- iv. Fulfillment of Nahum's prophecy¹³
1. In 612 BC Nineveh was destroyed for good by a coalition of forces of Babylonians, Medes, and Scythians.¹⁴
 2. Fortifications were taken: *“All your fortifications are fig trees with ripe fruit— When shaken, they fall into the eater's mouth.”* (3:12)= The Babylonian Chronicle mentioned that fortified towns surrounding Nineveh began falling in 614 BC.
 3. Destroyed city gates: *“Behold, your people are women in your midst! The gates of your land are opened wide to your enemies; Fire consumes your gate bars.”* (3:13)= Obviously this would happen in order for the enemies to come in.
 4. Ninevites were drunk: *“You too will become drunk, You will be hidden. You too will search for a refuge from the enemy.”* (3:11; see also 1:10)= Greek Historian Diodorus Siculus described that enemy forces learned from deserters that Assyrian soldiers were

¹² Mark Rooker, “The Book of Nahum” in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 16136-16138.

¹³ What follows below is from Elliott Johnson, “Nahum” in *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Victor), 1495.

¹⁴ Mark Rooker, “The Book of Nahum” in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 16139-16140.

eating and drinking which led them to make an expected night attack.

5. Destroyed by flood according to **Nahum 1:8, 2:6, 2:8**= Greek Historian Diodorus Siculus described how in the third year of the siege heavy rains caused a nearby river to flood part of the city and broke its walls.
 6. Destroyed by fire: *“Behold, I am against you,” declares the Lord of hosts. “I will burn up her chariots in smoke, a sword will devour your young lions; I will cut off your prey from the land, and no longer will the voice of your messengers be heard.”* (2:13; see also **1:10, 3:15**)= Archaeologists have found layer of ash and proof of burning in the Temple and palace.
 7. Great massacre: *“Horsemen charging, Swords flashing, spears gleaming, Many slain, a mass of corpses, And countless dead bodies— They stumble over the dead bodies!”* (3:3)= Greek Historian Diodorus Siculus described a massacre.
 8. Plundering and pillaging: *“Plunder the silver! Plunder the gold! For there is no limit to the treasure— Wealth from every kind of desirable object. 10 She is emptied! Yes, she is desolate and waste! Hearts are melting and knees knocking! Also anguish is in [k]the whole body And all their faces are grown pale!”* (2:9-10)= According to Babylonian Chronicle they took a lot of spoils from the city, beyond counting.
 9. Soldiers fleeing: *“Your guardsmen are like the swarming locust. Your marshals are like hordes of grasshoppers Settling in the stone walls on a cold day. The sun rises and they flee, And the place where they are is not known.”* (3:17)= According to Babylonian Chronicle the army of Assyria ran away before their king.
 10. Idols destroyed: *“The Lord has issued a command concerning you: “Your name will no longer be perpetuated. I will cut off idol and image From the house of your gods. I will prepare your grave, For you are contemptible.”*” (1:14)= Archaeologists have found a headless statue of the goddess Ishtar in the ruins.
 11. Final destruction according to **Nahum 1:9, 1:14**= Never rebuilt.
- f. Place of this book in the Canon
- i. Antecedent Theology
 1. There are other Old Testament prophecies related to Assyria’s fall in **Isaiah 10:12-19, 14:24-25, 30:31-33, 31:8-9, Ezekiel 32:22-23, Zephaniah 2:13-15, Zechariah 10:11**.¹⁵
 2. The book of Nahum reveals in more details of this fall.
 - ii. Pointing to Christ
 1. *“Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good news, Who announces peace!”* (**Nahum 1:15**)→Echoed by **Romans 10:15**? *“How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is*

¹⁵ Elliott Johnson, “Nahum” in *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Victor), 1493.

written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!"

2. We must never forget that part of the good news is also God judges sinners who opposes God and opposes us.
3. This should make us more grateful for the Good News that saves us.