

## 7. Nahum

### I. Background and Context

- A. The book is named after its author, the prophet Nahum of Elkosh. Nahum's name means "comfort." As one of the first prophets prophesying to Judah after the fall of Samaria, his words are full of comfort to God's people.
- B. Nahum refers to the fall of Thebes (3.8-10, 664/663 B.C.) and predicts the fall of Nineveh (2.3-4, 612 B.C.), putting his writing sometime between the two dates.
- C. As Nahum writes of the fall of Assyria and the destruction of Nineveh, his book is the sequel to the book of Jonah. Whatever repentance brought about during Jonah's time, however genuine, would not last beyond 745 B.C., when Tiglath-pileser III's brutal campaign of expansion began.<sup>1</sup>

### II. Outline

- A. Introduction (1.1)
- B. A Psalm Descriptively Praising the Lord (1.2-8)
  1. The Lord takes his vengeance on his guilty adversaries (1.2-3a)
  2. The Lord rules creation in majesty, and no one can stand before his wrath (1.3b-6)
  3. The Lord delivers those who take refuge in him (1.7)
  4. The Lord destroys his adversaries (1.8)
- C. The Lord's Coming Judgment on Nineveh and the Deliverance of Judah (1.9-15)
  1. The destruction of the wicked, plotting Nineveh (1.9-12a)
  2. Judah, having been afflicted by the Lord, is freed from Assyrian bondage (1.12b-13)
  3. The termination of vile, idolatrous Nineveh (1.14)
  4. Peace and deliverance for Judah (1.15)
- D. Focus on Nineveh: The Lord's Coming Judgment (2.1-13)
  1. The beginning of the attack on Nineveh (2.1)
  2. Reasons for judgment: the Assyrians' plundering of Judah, though Judah's restoration by God is planned (2.2)
  3. Attacking soldiers and military action at Nineveh (2.3-5)
  4. The fall and plundering of Nineveh (2.6-9)
  5. A taunting song portraying Nineveh's destruction because of the city's lust for conquest (2.10-12)
  6. The Lord speaks a word of judgment (2.13)
- E. Again, Focus on Nineveh: More concerning the Lord's Coming Judgment (3.1-19)
  1. Reasons for judgment: the violence, lying, and greed of Nineveh (3.1)
  2. Military action at Nineveh and the ensuing slaughter of the Assyrians (3.1)
  3. Reasons for judgment: the wickedness of Nineveh (3.4)
  4. The Lord speaks a word of judgment (3.5-7)
  5. Comparison with the conquest of Thebes (3.8-11)
  6. A taunting song presenting Nineveh's inevitable destruction because of the city's incessant evil (3.12-19)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1709.

<sup>2</sup> *ESV Study Bible*, 1711.

III. “Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no longer.” (Nah. 1.12)

Assyrian Ruler	Reign	Affliction	Significance and Biblical References
Shalmaneser III	858-824 B.C.	Exacted tribute from “Jehu, son of Omri” according to the Black Obelisk	Defeated at Qarqar in 853 B.C. by a Syrian coalition that included “Ahab the Israelite”
Adad-nirari III	811-783	Exacted tribute from Jehoash of Israel	His attacks on Damascus enabled Jehoash to recover Israelite cities lost previously to Hazael (2 Kings 13.25)
Tiglath-pileser III (Pul)	745-727	Invaded the land and exacted tribute	To avoid deportation, Menahem paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser III (Pul) (2 Kings 15.19-20); Pul deported the Transjordanian tribes (2 Kings 15.29; 1 Chron. 5.26); Pul aided Ahaz of Judah against Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Israel (2 Kings 16.5-10; 2 Chron. 28.16-21)
Shalmaneser V	727-722	Exacted tribute from Hoshea of Israel; took the northern kingdom (Israel) into exile	Hoshea refused to pay tribute and sought Egypt for help, the Assyrians besieged Samaria (2 Kings 17.3-6; 18.9-12)
Sargon II	722-705	Took credit for the invasion and exile of the northern kingdom (Israel) that began under Shalmaneser V	Sargon II may be the unnamed king of Assyria in 2 Kings 17.6
Sennacherib	705-681	Invaded Judah	Sennacherib besieged Lachish and forced tribute from Hezekiah (2 Kings 18.13-16); he besieged Jerusalem and demanded Hezekiah’s surrender (2 Kings 18.17-19.9); the Lord delivered Jerusalem from Sennacherib (2 Kings 19.10-37). See also 2 Chron. 32; Is. 36-37.
Esarhaddon	681-669	Exacted tribute from Manasseh of Judah	Mentioned at 2 Kings 19.37 as successor to Sennacherib (see also Ezra 4.2)
Ashurbanipal	669-627	Exacted tribute	Increasing tensions from Babylonia required Assyria’s direct attention. The increased political freedom of the western city-states is reflected in the reforms instituted by Josiah <sup>3</sup>

IV. Comfort for Israel

- A. “The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD is avenging and wrathful; the LORD takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies. The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and the LORD will by no means clear the guilty” (1.2-3).
- B. “Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no more. And now I will break his yoke from off you and will burst your bonds apart” (1.12-13).
- C. “Behold, upon the mountains, the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace! Keep your feasts, O Judah; fulfill your vows, for never again shall the worthless pass through you; he is utterly cut off” (1.15).
- D. “The LORD is restoring the majesty of Jacob as the majesty of Israel” (2.2).

<sup>3</sup> *ESV Study Bible*, 1714.