



# Nahum



THRU**the**BIBLE

NOTES & OUTLINES WITH

*J. Vernon McGee*

MINOR PROPHETS



# Nahum

**WRITER:** Nahum. “Nahum” means *comforter*. He is identified (Nahum 1:1) as an Elkoshite. This is all that is known of the writer of this book. Elkosh was a city in Assyria, a few miles north of the ruins of Nineveh. Nahum could well have lived there and have prophesied to Nineveh, as Daniel did to Babylon later on. The most likely explanation, however, is that there was a village by this name in Galilee. Jerome recorded that a guide pointed out to him such a village as the birthplace of Nahum—but this was a millennium after Nahum lived. Dr. John D. Davis gives the meaning for “Capernaum” as *the village of Nahum*. If “Capernaum” is a Hebrew word, then this is the evident origin.

**TIME:** There are many dates assigned to this book and this prophet. Dates are given anywhere from 720 to 636 B.C. by conservative scholars. It seems reasonable to locate him about 100 years after Jonah and about 100 years before the destruction of Nineveh—between 660 and 612 B.C. He probably lived during the reign of Hezekiah and saw the destruction of the Northern Kingdom.

**THEME:** The burden (judgment) of Nineveh (Nahum 1:1).

**MESSAGE:** Nahum sounds the death-knell of Nineveh and pronounces judgment, by total destruction, on Assyria. God was just in doing this. Jonah, almost a century before, had brought a message from God, and Nineveh had repented. However, the repentance was transitory, and God patiently gave this new generation opportunity to repent (Nahum 1:3). The day of grace ends, and the moment of doom comes (Nahum 3:19). Assyria had served God's purpose (Isaiah 10:5) and would be destroyed. The destruction of Nineveh, according to the details that are given in this written prophecy, is almost breathtaking.

This is a message of comfort to a people who live in fear of a powerful and godless nation. God will destroy any godless nation. Some folk think *Nahum* should be called *Ho-hum!* However, Nahum is a thrilling book to study. It reveals the other side of the attributes of God. God is love, but God is holy and righteous and good.

## **OUTLINE:**

- I. Justice and goodness of God, Chapter 1:1-8**
- II. Justice and goodness of God demonstrated in decision to destroy Nineveh and to give the gospel, Chapter 1:9-15**
- III. Justice and goodness of God exhibited in execution of His decision to destroy Nineveh, Chapters 2, 3**
  - A. Annihilation of Assyria, Chapter 2
  - B. Avenging action of God justified, Chapter 3

## COMMENT:

### I. Justice and goodness of God, Chapter 1:1-8

V. 1—Nineveh was the capital of ancient Assyria. About 100 years before Nahum, Jonah preached in Nineveh, and the city turned to God. In Nahum’s day the city had turned again from God, but Nahum did not go there. Jonah reveals the love of God; Nahum reveals the justice of God. Nahum issues the sentence of God upon a godless and sinful civilization (see notes on Jonah).

“Burden” is *judgment* (see Isaiah 13).

V. 2—“Jealous,” according to Webster, means *exacting exclusive devotion*. God demands that His people worship Him alone (Exodus 20:3-6).

“Revenge” (κῶν) is rightly translated *avengeth* in the *New Scofield Reference Bible*.

V. 3—The goodness of God is seen in His judgment. He is “slow to anger.” He was over 100 years in executing the judgment He had announced through Jonah. Although the repentance under Jonah delayed the judgment of God for more than a century, He cannot “at all acquit the wicked,” for He is just and righteous.

V. 4, 5—The entire world must be judged on the basis of verse 3.

V. 6—There is only one place of safety and security (Acts 4:12).

V. 7—The Lord is good, and He will save.

V. 8—The Lord is just, and He must judge. Nineveh experienced the salvation of God before the judgment of God.

### II. Justice and goodness of God demonstrated in decision to destroy Nineveh and to give the gospel, Chapter 1:9-15

V. 9—Nineveh is to be totally destroyed.

V. 11—Some identify this “wicked counselor” as Sennacherib (2 Kings 18:13-16; Isaiah 37:14-38).

V. 14—“Grave”—God said, in substance, “I’ll bury you.” The Assyrian has disappeared from the stage of history.

V. 15—This speaks of deliverance from Assyria. (See Isaiah 52:7—here the deliverance is from Babylon. See Romans 10:15—here the deliverance is from sin for the sinner, salvation.)

### **III. Justice and goodness of God exhibited in execution of His decision to destroy Nineveh, Chapters 2, 3**

#### **A. Annihilation of Assyria, Chapter 2**

V. 1—The picture is of a hammer, the handle of which is held by God. Total destruction of Assyria was accomplished by the Medes and Babylonians.

W. 2-13—This is a detailed prophecy which is today an accurate historical record.

“Chariots” (vv. 3, 4) is not a prediction of the automobile. To say that it reveals a woeful ignorance of this prophecy.

God is justified in saying He is against Assyria (v. 13) because of her crimes. In Ezekiel (Ezekiel 38:3; 39:1), Russia had not yet appeared when the prophecy was given, yet God is still just because of antagonistic atheism.

#### **B. Avenging action of God justified, Chapter 3**

W. 1, 2—This describes the internal condition of the city. Lies mark the total culture. They make slaves.

W. 3, 4—This characterizes the external condition of the city. They were a brutal and cruel enemy. They sold slaves.

V. 5—God opposes this (see Nahum 2:13).

V. 7—They are hated and dreaded by other nations.

V. 8—“No-amon,” or Thebes, capital of Upper Egypt, had been destroyed by Sargon of Assyria and should have been an example to Assyria.

V. 9—Thebes had been protected by buffer states—Ethiopia at the south, Egypt at the north—and by desert on both ends.

V. 10—Thebes was destroyed.

W. 11-18—This is a detailed description of the destruction of Nineveh.

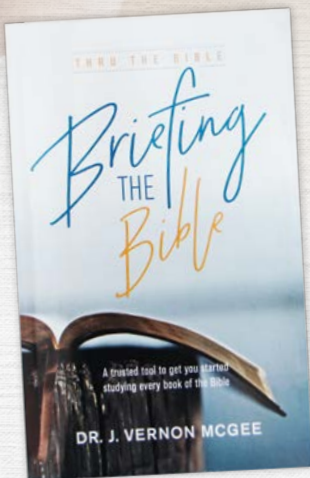
V. 19—There is now no healing, no turning to God. God had been slow to anger, but He does not clear the guilty.

God will save today (cf. Jonah).

God will destroy tomorrow (cf. Nahum).

God does not change; men do.

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