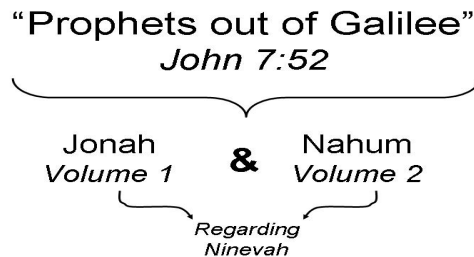


## NAHUM

- Nahum (meaning “consolation/comfort”) came approximately a century after Jonah and a century before the fall of Assyria (capital being Nineveh) to Babylon.
  - Nineveh consisted of ruthless, violent gangs; enemy Kings were kept in dog kennels and taken for walks on leashes – they would force the sons of captured enemies to kill their fathers



- Nahum (~660 BC) was a contemporary of Isaiah/Micah and preached that Judah should not fear the Assyrians (2 Kings 18:13-19; Isaiah 36 & 37) as this book would be a judgment on Nineveh (Assyria).
  - Nimrod had built both Babylon and Nineveh (Gen 10:10-11).
  - Nineveh had “wasted” their repentance at the time of Jonah, and now they would be judged
  - The headquarters of Jesus’ ministry was located in Capernaum. The term “caper” means “village,” so Jesus preached from the “village of Nahum” with essentially the same message as Israel had wasted their chance to turn to God.
- God had utilized the wicked nation of Assyria to judge the northern kingdom of Israel, and (similar to Hezekiah), God’s people may have wondered how God could have used such an evil people as the brutal Assyrians.

Assyria’s Prolonged Assault on Israel		
858-824BC	Jehu (Son of Omri) Paid Tribute	Shalmaneser III
810-782BC	Tribute Paid	Adad-Nirari III
745-727BC	First Deportation	Tiglath-Pileser III
727-722BC	Second Deportation	Shalmaneser V
721-705BC	Subjugation Under Exile	Sargon II
705-681BC	Invasion of Judah	Sennacherib II
680-669BC	Conquest of Judah	Esarhaddon

Kings of the Northern Kingdom of Israel During Assyria’s Conquest			
752-742BC	Menahem	Usurped from Shallum	2 Kings 15:14-22
742-740BC	Pekahiah	Son of Menahem	2 Kings 15:22-26
739-733BC	Pekah	Usurped from Pekahiah	2 Kings 15:27-31
732-722BC	Hoshea	Usurped from Pekah	2 Kings 15:30-17:6

<b>Kings of the Southern Kingdom of Judah During Assyria's Conquest</b>			
735-716BC	Ahaz	Paid Tribute to Tiglath-Pileser III	2 Kings 16:7-9
716-687BC	Hezekiah	Refused to Pay Tribute; Invaded by Sennacherib II	2 Kings 18, 2 Chronicles 32, Isaiah 37-38
687-642BC	Manasseh	Forced to Pay Tribute by Esarhaddon	2 Chronicles 33:1-11

<b>The Fall of Assyria After the Death of Ashurbanipal (633BC)</b> <i>Countries that Declared Independence from Assyria</i>		
625-605BC	Babylon	Nabopolassar
664-609BC	Egypt	Psammetichus I
640-609BC	Judah	Josiah
625-585BC	Media	Cyaxares

- Ironically, Ashurbanipal means “Ashur has given a son-heir” when in reality, Ashuretililani (the son of Ashurbanipal) lost control much of his inheritance.
  - Ashur (the winged sun) was the local false god of the Assyrians
- After the death of Ashuretililani (627BC), his brother (Sinsharishkun 627-612BC) continued to lose Assyrian power
- The Assyrian capital of Nineveh fell to a coalition of Media, Babylonians and Scythians circa 612BC.

22 Nahum 1-3

### **Read Nahum 1:1-7 ... The Character of the LORD (Yahweh)**

1:1 This is the only book in the Old Testament where it is both an oracle and a vision.

Nahum receives a vision as an oracle from God (Psalm 36:1; Jeremiah 23:33-38 → Acts 7:38; Romans 3:2 → 1 Pet 4:11).

- The location of Elkoshite (meaning “gathered of God”) could be the same as Capernaum; Kapher means “village of”, so Caper (Kapher) – Naum (Nahum)
- The word “oracle” means “a burden” (maśśā נִצְרָה) communicated by God and is usually used in the sense of judgment. An “oracle” can also infer lifting of a burden – as in lifting one’s voice in prayer. Habakkuk will also receive an oracle.

1:2 Three times in this single verse, God is associated with vengeance (Deuteronomy 32:35; Rom 12:19).

- The term “jealous” (qannōw נִצְרָה) carries love connotations for His people. (Exodus 34:14; Deuteronomy 4:24, 5:9, 6:15; Joshua 24:19; Psalm 78:58; 2 Corinthians 11:2)
- God is characterized as “jealous” eight times in Scripture because God doesn’t want any rivals. God is the Sovereign Creator who is above and beyond anything in creation.

1:3 God is slow to anger, but God will ALWAYS punish sin. God is just and holy (Exodus 34:5-7; Numbers 14:18). The Assyrians (like Israel) had taken advantage of God’s grace, patience and love (Romans 2:3-5; 2 Peter 3:9).

1:4 The sea often refers to this world’s chaotic system (Isaiah 57:20-21; Mark 4:39) of which God can command. Even the lushest land will dry and die: Bashan (pastures), Carmel (vineyards), Lebanon (forests). There is a similar verse in Isaiah 33:9.

- Natural phenomenon is used as a sign of God’s presence and power.

- The act of rebuking the sea to dry it may refer to the Exodus (Psalm 106:9)
- 1:5 “Mountains” often represent governments, kingdoms, and authorities, and even Gentiles will come to respect the Lord (Acts 22:21).
- 1:6 The wrath of God is likened to fire as a representation of judgment. Two rhetorical questions are asked where the correct answer is that no one can endure God’s fiery judgment.
- 1:7 God’s character is portrayed as being eternally loving, kind and gracious while also being portrayed as holy and just (Romans 11:22).
- God brings judgment, but He is also the refuge of His people (Psalm 27:1; 28:8; 46:1-2; Isaiah 17:10; 25:4; Jeremiah 16:19; Joel 3:16).
  - God’s “knows” the heartfelt attitude of His people. The word “know” incapsulates an intimate relationship with those who trust in Him.

**Read Nahum 1:8-15 ... The Annihilation of the Adversaries of the Lord**

1:8 In 612 BC (the third year of siege), the Khosr (a tributary of the Tigris) flooded Nineveh sweeping away 2 ½ miles of the Nineveh’s protective wall. This occurred during November which is a very wet month.

- The Medes (who were the allies of Babylon at that time) went through the breach and burned the city (Nahum 2:6)
- Nahum references a flood several times (Nahum 1:8; 2:6; 3:8)

<b>Destruction of Nineveh</b>	
<i>(Nahum 1:10)</i>	
1 Entangled Thorns	Sinful lifestyle – pleasure banquets - to the end
2 Drunkard’s Drink	Assyrian army given plentiful alcohol to boost morale
3 Dry Straw	Nineveh utterly burned

1:9 Although Nineveh was powerful, God would make an end of their world domination. It is madness and vanity to plot against the only living God.

1:10 Nahum mentioned intoxication/drunkenness several times (Nahum 1:10; 2:5; 3:11)

- Instead of paying the troops, the Assyrian King rewarded his troops with alcohol just prior to the Nineveh invasion. There was very little defense by the Assyrian army against the invading armies who breached Nineveh’s city walls; the invaders killed everyone in the city.
- Throughout Scripture, “thorns” are a representation of the consequences of sin (Genesis 3:17-18)

1:11 The wicked counselor is considered to be Sennacherib who invaded Judah (2 Kings 18:13). This wicked counselor, Sennacherib, symbolizes the beast of the Tribulation.

- The term “wicked” (בְּלִיָּאָה בְּלִיָּאָה) means the “worthless” one. (1 Samuel 1:16, 25:17; 2 Samuel 20:1; Job 34:18; Psalm 101:3; Proverbs 6:12, 15:27, 19:28).
- The Septuagint translates “wicked” as the “lawless” one (Deuteronomy 13:13). It is used as the title of the devil in the New Testament (2 Corinthians 6:15).

1:12 Assyria was at full strength when they fell to Media and Babylon.

- God was responsible for the affliction of Israel by Assyria as He will be responsible for the Tribulation persecution, but His affliction will subside for the millennial reign.

- 1:13 God had used Assyria as a burden to bring Israel back to himself. At this point, god would judge Assyria, so that they would no longer burden Israel.
- 1:14 The term “cut off” references the lineage and ancestry of a person (in this case, the king of Assyria). The Lord would also “cut off” the idolatrous practices, so that they would no longer produce additional idolatrous practices.
- Assyria’s “house of false gods” became a grave for Sennacherib when he was killed worshipped his idols (2 Kings 19:37)
  - An “idol” was carved while an “image” was something cast in metal. (Deuteronomy 27:15)
  - Assyria had a pantheon of false gods who would be destroyed, and their idols would be taken by the conquerors to their own idolatrous temples.
  - The primary false gods of Assyria include: Bel, Ishtar, Sin, Nergal, Ashur, Ninurta, Nabu, Shamash, Nuska, Adad.
  - The Hebrew term for “vile” (qallōwtā :קָלוּתָא) comes from the same root word (hāqêl קָהַל) which means “light.” This is similar to Belshazzar’s judgment that he had been weighed in the balance and found lacking (Daniel 5:27).
- 1:15 As quoted in Rom 10:15 (Is 52:7), even the humblest parts (the “dirty” feet) are elevated when associated with the gospel message (Eph 6:15; Is 61:1).
- This happened “locally” when Sennacherib was called away (Is 37:37-38).
  - Judah is called to a faithful walk with the Lord as He has destroyed Nineveh. Nineveh had been utterly demolished and wiped out.

**Read Nahum 2:1-13 ... The Destruction of Nineveh**

- 2:1 This verse foretells of the coming Medo-Babylonian invaders.
- Scripture contains several prophecies against Nineveh (Isaiah 10:5-27; Micah 5:4-5)
- 2:2 God enjoys reconciliation and restitution for the physical nation (Jacob) as well as the spiritual (Israel). The vine branches symbolized Israel’s ability to bear fruit.

<b>Conquest of Nineveh by Medo-Persian Military</b>	
<i>(Nahum 2:3)</i>	
<b>Prophecy</b>	<b>History</b>
1 Warrior shields died red	Military color of Media & Babylon Shields
2 Valiant men dressed in scarlet	Military cloaks were also dyed red
3 Fittings on chariots flashing fire	Blades were attached to the wheels of the chariots

- The Medes and Babylonians used the blood of bulls mixed with red dye to paint their shields and cloaks red. The color red was used to intimidate opposition as well as to conceal their own blood. The thought was that if an enemy saw blood, they would be invigorated to attack.
- 2:4 Assyrian suburbs were located outside of the city walls, and the cavalry of the invaders had captured the suburbs as they rode their horses and chariots through the suburbs as if trampling them.
- The Babylonians utilized infantry, cavalry, and chariotry which were the three major components of contemporary armed forces.
  - The Babylonians were known to use the challenges of natural obstacles of the countryside to their benefit (they learned this from the large parts of Southern Babylonia that were marshland).

- The Babylonians broke down irrigation ditches in order to flood the fields with water as they felt comfortable pitching their camp in the middle of swamped areas and awaiting the Assyrian army.
  - Although Media and Babylon were allied, the conquest of Nineveh was primarily carried out by the Medes.
- 2:5 Invading soldiers would amass with a covering over them as they charged the city wall and gate. This covering was a way of protecting the invading army.
- Archeologists have found that Babylon was making use of iron imported from Cilicia. Iron tools have been discovered in Babylon including nails, daggers, razors, bedsteads, and pot-stands.
- 2:6 The Tigris flooded and swept away a large amount of Nineveh's fortress walls.
- 2:7 A common practice of Assyrian conquests was to shame the royalty, but in this case, Assyria's queen mother would be publicly stripped naked (Nahum 3:5; Isaiah 47:2-3; Hosea 2:10).
- 2:8 Nineveh has been self-sufficient as their world system and military excursions overwhelmed (drowned) their enemies (Isaiah 8:8). However, at the downfall of Nineveh, her military would flee and not turn back to assist.
- 2:9 Assyria had historically plundered the nations she conquered, but it would all be lost.
- Archeologists have found that the main hall was 40 feet by 150 feet with bronze lions and white marble bulls as decorations.
  - A true treasure of Nineveh was their great library of Akkadian tablets.
- 2:10 Seven destruction descriptions correspond to a woman in labor (Is 21:3):  
 1.desolation 2.decimation 3.devastation 4.hearts melt 5.knees tremble 6.loins shake  
 7.every face grows pale
- Lions were a symbol of Assyria, and Biblically symbolic of ferocity (Zephaniah 3:3)
  - There is word play between the descriptions of similar sounding Hebrew words of waste (balaq בָּלַק), desolate (mebuqah מְבוּקָה), and empty (būqāh בִּזְרוּקָה).
  - It is thought that these three words make up an onomatopoeic ("words that sound like the description of the activity) as "buqah, mebuqah, balaq" is said to sound like the breaking of pottery.
- 2:11 Assyrian kings referenced themselves as "lions," and they kept lions as pets. This verse is a description of the rapacious hunger of Assyria's children as the parental hunters feed their children's pride and confidence (similar to modern day youth wearing clothing that states "No Fear").
- 2:12 The strong, self-assured men (lions) in this depraved nation would pursue any cruelty (mauling) to provide for the desires of their children (cubs) and wives (lionesses).
- 2:13 This world leading nation, Assyria, should have been wary because God was against them, and Nineveh would be burned to the ground.
- The "Lord of Hosts" is the military title referencing God as the military commander of the armies of heaven.

### Read Nahum 3:1-3 ... Defining Characteristics of the Conquest of Nineveh

## Ninevah's Three Phased Defeat

(Nahum 3:1-3)

1 Totally Deceitful	}	<i>Immoral State</i> (3)
2 Full of Plunder		
3 Never without Prey		
4 Crack of the whip	}	<i>Judgment</i> (7)
5 Rumble of the wheel		
6 Galloping horse		
7 Jolting chariot		
8 Charging horseman		
9 Flashing sword		
10 Shining Spear		
11 Heaps of Slain	}	<i>Fallen State</i> (3)
12 Mounds of Corpses		
13 Dead Bodies without End		

3:1 The “bloody city” makes reference to the innocent blood that had been spilled by Assyria (Habakkuk 2:12). Assyria would brutally torture those that they conquered: impaling people alive; skinning people and hanging the skins on the city walls while also covering their furniture with human skin; dragging people to their death; putting hooks in the ears and nose of those conquered.

- Much of Assyria’s violence was needless spectacle as they hung people by their hands and feet until they died.
- The term “prey” portrays Assyria as a lion (Nahum 2:11-12) as the defeated nations were their prey.

3:2-3 The details of the conquest of Nineveh are documented in Nahum chapter 2.

### Read Nahum 3:5-7 ... The LORD of Hosts is against Nineveh

3:4 Prostitution is frequently likened to idolatry; inappropriately and wrongfully giving/selling something of value.

- The treacherous seduction of Assyria was to lure nations into tributes while forcing them to serve false Assyrian gods.
- Ishtar was a major goddess of Assyria (goddess of war and sexual love with many temple prostitutes).
- Although Jonah had shared the true God with Nineveh a century prior, they reverted to idolatrous practices.

3:5 Twice (witness) God informs Assyria that He is against them (Nahum 2:13).

- The act of “lifting the skirt over the face” was a sign of shame; the Lord would bring shame on Assyria in the same way that Assyria brought shame to their conquered nations. (Jeremiah 11:26; Ezekiel 16:37; Hosea 2:3).

3:6-7 Assyria had only conquests, and no allies. Many people live that way today (professionally and relationally) who will become joyful onlookers as sin’s consequences occur (Nahum 3:19)

### Read Nahum 3:8-13 ... Nineveh Compared to Other Destroyed Kingdoms

3:8-9 No-amon (Amon being the chief god of Egypt with a man’s body and ram’s head) refers to Thebes (27 sq. miles with 100 gates) had been the capital of upper Egypt with a number of allies: Cush (Ethiopia), Put (Solmalia), Libya, and the extent of Egypt, but in 663 BC (shortly before Nahum was written),

- Thebes had fallen and were exiled to Assyria. God sees the downfall of Egypt's god (Amon – Num 33:4) while man is more interested in the material (Thebes) defeat.
- 3:10 As cities were conquered, children were killed for several reasons:
- Children couldn't travel very well (2 Kings 8:12; Psalm 137:9)
  - Child deaths cut off hopes of those conquered (Isaiah 13:16, 18)
  - Child deaths made those conquered demoralized (Hosea 10:14; 13:16)
- 3:11 The Assyrian king distributed extra drink to his military to boost morale resulting in drunken defenses. (Nahum 1:10)
- 3:12 Assyria would be easily defeated; the fortress walls had been washed away by the Tigris flooding; the Assyrian military were intoxicated; Assyria had no allies.
- 3:13 As women are traditionally physically weaker than men, so Assyria's forces would be weaker. (Jeremiah 50:37; Is 19:16)

**Read Nahum 3:14-19 ... Nineveh As A Doomed Nation**

- 3:14 As at the end of Job, scripture sometimes turns to cynicism.
- Although Assyria would prepare for the siege by preparing water sources, the flooding of the Tigris River would be the downfall of Nineveh.
  - Although Assyria would build heavier fortified walls, greater than 2 miles of the wall would collapse as the flooding Tigris washed away the heavy fortified walls.
- 3:15 No kings are named in the destruction of Nineveh; the king of Nineveh is never named.
- The Assyrian King Sinsharishkun locked himself in his castle during the siege (along with his wives and concubines), and then he commanded the castle to be burned down around them.
  - At the death of Sinsharishkun, his brother (Ashurballit II) became king of the dwindling Assyria, but he refused to submit. He fought his way out of Nineveh and transferred the capital to its final location at Harran.
- 3:16-17 Locusts destroy the land and leave as merchants who exploit national resources; court officials and scribes are also filled with consumption before disappearing

<b>No Authority of Nineveh Had Power to Stop God's Assault</b>	
Military Could Not Help	Nahum 3:15
Commercial Power Could Not Help	Nahum 3:16
Government Could Not Help	Nahum 3:17

- 3:18 In the end, Assyria would lose its powerful leaders as Babylon would rise to become the new world power.

<b>Leaders (Religious &amp; Political) Sleep while Sheep Perish (Nahum 3:18)</b>	
1	Shepherds Slumber
2	Officers Sleep
3	Sheep Scatter

- 3:19 The world would applaud the downfall of villainous Assyria. The Assyrian empire had shown cruelty in all of their conquests. Although God had utilized Assyria to humble Israel, God also held Assyria accountable for their cruelty. (Isaiah 10:5-19)