

## Nahum Lesson 01

Nahum Chapter 1

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**Introduction:** We begin a new study in the book of Nahum this week. The book of the prophecy of Nahum is singular in its subject: the destruction of Nineveh. Nineveh was the capital city of Assyria and to that degree represented the Assyrian Empire and its coming ruin by Babylon and Media.

The book was probably written at about the time of Assyria's threatening invasion of Judah and against Jerusalem as recorded in II Kings 18-19. The object of the book likely was to encourage beleaguered Jerusalem with the assurance of the eventual destruction of Nineveh.

As the prophecy of Nahum commences, the prophet sets forth the power and righteous judgment of God in verses 1-8. Then, the inevitable overthrow of Assyria in verses 9-15.

### I. The Vision of Nahum

*Nah 1:1 The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.  
Nah 1:2 God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.*

The Book of Nahum begins with Nahum making his burden known. The word so translated (asmassa) has the sense of a heaviness. The burden can be physical, mental, spiritual or a combination of the listed. Little is known about Nahum.

The name Capernaum of New Testament times literally means the 'village of Nahum' and probably refers to the prophet once living there. Elkos evidently was a hamlet in Galilee where Nahum was born. The name Nahum means 'comfort' or 'encouragement.' That seems to be the greater thrust of the book by his name: to comfort Judah and Jerusalem.

The burden of Nahum essentially was that God was going to judge Nineveh and Assyria, the enemies of Judah. After a brief introduction, the prophet says what he has to say by the will of God.

Verse 2 shows us that God is jealous and protective of His people and will take vengeance against those who molest them. Recall that God promised to bless those who blessed the seed of Abraham and curse those who cursed them.

We possess the potential to be jealous over those whom we love, such as a spouse or a child.

Nahum announced that God would take vengeance against His enemies—the enemies of His people. God has reserved wrath against them. As noted in verse 1, the focus of God’s vengeance and wrath was against Nineveh who had sorely injured Israel and more recently Judah.

*Nah 1:3 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.*

*Nah 1:4 He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth.*

*Nah 1:5 The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein.*

The prophet begins an amazing section describing the greatness of Jehovah God. Though God will avenge His enemies, He is slow to anger.

*“The LORD God is merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin” Exodus 34:6-7.*

God will not at all acquit the wicked. The phrase “not at all acquit the wicked” literally is ‘will not in acquitting acquit’ or treat as innocent. The clear application of this promise is against Nineveh, but the promise certainly extends to all wickedness.

If not sooner, certainly later, God will punish sinful men. God is omnipotent. He has his way in the power of nature. His greatness is such that clouds are dust under His feet. It is He “who walketh upon the wings of the wind” Psalm 104:3.

In verse 4, the prophet hearkens back to great miracles done by God such as the parting of the Red Sea as well as the Jordan River. Though Bashan and Mount Carmel were renowned for their luxuriant growth through bountiful rainfall.

Jehovah God could and had on occasion sent drought to these areas.

Recall Elisha on Mount Carmel. The greater point is that God had the power to do as He pleased, even with the weather. No doubt verse 5 is referring back to when Mount Sinai quaked and smoked (Exodus 19:18 and Judges 5:5), Nahum refers further to the power of God.

*Exo 19:18 And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.*

*Judges 5:5 The mountains melted from before the LORD, even that Sinai from before the LORD God of Israel.*

God's presence as a burning fire can burn the entire world if He so chooses.

*Nah 1:6 Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.*

*Nah 1:7 The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.*

Likening the power and wrath of God to a mighty volcano, Nahum asked, who can stand before Him? The answer is apparent. No one can stand before the wrath of God!

In verse 7, we see in contrast to the power and wrath of God detailed above, Nahum described the mercy and goodness of God. God is good! He is a refuge for help in the day of trouble. Furthermore, God knows those who trust in Him. He knows His own. God has promised to bless those who trust in Him. See Psalms 2:12, 34:17-8, 40:4, and 84:11-12. Those promises hold true to this day.

*Psa 34:17 The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.*

*Psa 34:18 The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.*

*Psa 84:11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.*

*Psa 84:12 O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.*

## **II. Darkness Would Pursue their Enemies**

*Nah 1:8 But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies.*

*Nah 1:9 What do ye imagine against the LORD? he will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time.*

*Nah 1:10 For while they be folden together as thorns, and while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry.*

Nahum, after pausing to give God due praise and glory now returns to his original theme: judgment upon Nineveh. Notwithstanding the mercy and goodness of God to those who trust Him, the wrath of God would soon be poured out upon Nineveh like a destructive flood. God would soon make an utter end of the place.

The darkness of judgment would soon pursue the enemies of God and His people. The actual fall of Nineveh evidently was aided by the city being flooded. See Nahum 2:6.

The prophet now abruptly addresses Nineveh and Assyria. He tersely asked them what they contemplated against the Lord and His people. Without expecting an answer, Nahum announced that God would soon make an utter end of Nineveh. The day was coming when they would be destroyed.

Never again would Nineveh rise up against Judah. They would have no second chance to do so. Even though Nineveh was like woven thorns in their military strength, yet in their drunkenness, they would be devoured like dried stubble.

One of the sins of Nineveh was their drunkenness. In an hour of such drunkenness, Nineveh would be destroyed like a wildfire sweeping over dry stubble and briars.

*Nah 1:11 There is one come out of thee, that imagineth evil against the LORD, a wicked counsellor.*

*Nah 1:12 Thus saith the LORD; Though they be quiet, and likewise many, yet thus shall they be cut down, when he shall pass through. Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more.*

The one coming out of Nineveh imagining evil against the Lord likely was Sennacherib or possibly Rabshekah his general. The word translated as wicked (leylb beliya ál) is Belial, also meaning 'worthless one.' The speaker is now Jehovah Himself. The "they" likely refers to the Assyrian army as they stood off near Jerusalem.

God through Nahum foretold how that the Assyrian army would be destroyed like a cut down tree. This would happen when the Assyrian army passed through Judah. This very well may be a warning of the destruction of the Assyrian army outside of Jerusalem as described in II Kings 19:35. If that be the case, then the dating of the book of Nahum clearly is prior to 710 B.C. and during the reign of Hezekiah.

God then turned His attention to Judah. Though He had afflicted them in corrective chastisement by Assyria, He promised that He would do so no more. That is, God would not again chasten Judah by Assyria.

*Nah 1:13 For now will I break his yoke from off thee, and will burst thy bonds in sunder.*

*Nah 1:14 And the LORD hath given a commandment concerning thee, that no more of thy name be sown: out of the house of thy gods will I cut off the graven image and the molten image: I will make thy grave; for thou art vile.*

God vowed to break off the yoke of bondage by Assyria against Judah. He promised to tear up the bonds which Assyria had laid upon Judah. The tearing up the bonds was the tribute imposed by Sennacherib upon Hezekiah. II Kings 18:14.

*2Ki 18:14 And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have offended; return from me: that which thou putttest on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.*

God issued a decree that the name of Sennacherib and his dynasty would be cut off. The pagan idol and idolatry of Nineveh and Assyria would be destroyed. Even as Assyria had destroyed the pagan gods of other nations (II Kings 19:17-18), so their pagan idols would be destroyed when Babylon (and Media) swept over them.

*2Ki 19:17 Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands,  
2Ki 19:18 And have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them.*

Sennacherib, king of Nineveh, king of Assyria was vile—literally ‘cursed.’ He would perish and be buried in the temple of his pagan god Nisroch.

*Nah 1:15 Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off.*

The first half of the verse is quite similar to Isaiah 52:7 and refers to the same thing.

*Isa 52:7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!*

The good tidings was the news that Jerusalem had been delivered, the Assyrians had been destroyed (II Kings 19:35), and peace now was at hand. The thought became a proverb of good news and was referred to by the Apostle Paul in Romans 10:15, referring to the good news of the gospel of Christ.

*Rom 10:15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*

God, through the prophet, directed Judah to observe her holy festivals and keep her vows before God. The wicked Assyrians would no longer march through their land. Sennacherib, king of Nineveh, was about to be completely cut off. God would spare Hezekiah as He had promised.

The Pulpit Commentary Made these comments about verse 15.

**Behold upon the mountains**, etc. Isaiah ([Isa 52:7](#)) uses these words to proclaim the coming of Messiah (comp. [Isa 40:9](#); [Rom 10:15](#)). The messengers come from the East across the mountains of Palestine, announcing the fall of Nineveh and the consequent peace and security of Judah—a type of the overthrow of God’s enemies and the safety of his Church.

There may be an allusion to the custom of spreading tidings by beacon fires.

**Keep thy solemn feasts**. Judah is exhorted to resume the observation of her solemnities, which were interrupted during the enemy’s occupation of the country, or which could not be properly attended by the distant inhabitants. Judah must offer her praises and thanksgivings for deliverance, and **perform the vows** which she made unto the Lord in the time of peril.

**The wicked** (Hebrew, *Belial*) **shall no more pass through thee**. *Belial* is here the adversary, the opposing army (see verse 11).

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*Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

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**Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.**