

THE PROPHETS: NAHUM

INTRODUCTION

The Book of Nahum, part of the Old Testament's Minor Prophets, zooms in on the downfall of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire. Nahum's prophecy vividly portrays God's judgment on this powerful city, which had oppressed and terrorized many nations, including Israel. Written around 660-630 BCE, as the Assyrian Empire was declining and before Nineveh fell in 612 BCE, Nahum's message reassured Israel of God's justice and sovereignty during a tumultuous time of political upheaval and military threats.

In the bigger picture of Scripture, Nahum shows us God's unwavering commitment to justice and righteousness. It reveals that God holds all nations accountable for their actions and will judge them according to his standards. Nahum's prophecy also emphasizes God's faithfulness to his people, promising deliverance and restoration in the face of oppression. The book uses powerful imagery and poetic language to depict God actively working in history, bringing justice and vindication to his people.

Today, Nahum challenges us to trust in God's justice and to understand that evil will not go unpunished. It encourages us to find hope and security in God's faithfulness and protection, even in difficult times. Ultimately, Nahum's prophecy reminds us that God's ways are higher than ours, and his justice will prevail in the end.

IMAGE FOR UNDERSTANDING

When we think about Nahum, we should think about an overwhelming flood. Nahum 1:7-8 reads, "The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him. But with an overflowing flood he will make a complete end of the adversaries and will pursue his enemies into darkness." The picture of an overwhelming flood is a clear image in which the waters are so powerful that no one can stand against them—the floodwaters fill the streets and houses, penetrating every nook and cranny within reach. In a similar way, when God declares that he is against the Assyrians, he suggests that he is against them in a way that cannot be stopped.

BOOK ORGANIZATION

Nineveh's Destruction:

Chapter 1: Decreed

Chapter 2: Described

Chapter 3: Deserved

JESUS IN THE BOOK OF NAHUM

While Jesus is not explicitly mentioned in the book of Nahum, we find themes and concepts that resonate with his teachings and actions.

1. **Justice and Judgment:** Nahum depicts God as a righteous judge who punishes the wickedness of Nineveh. This reflects Jesus' teachings about God's final judgment of all people (Matthew 25:31-46), emphasizing God's fairness and the certainty of his judgment against evil.

2. **God's Sovereignty and Protection:** Nahum highlights God's sovereignty over nations and his protective care for his people. Similarly, Jesus taught about God's providential care for his followers (Matthew 6:25-34) and his promise of his continual presence with his disciples (Matthew 28:20).
3. **Promise of Salvation and Deliverance:** Despite its focus on judgment, Nahum also hints at God's promise of salvation and deliverance for his people. This foreshadows Jesus' role as the Savior who brings salvation to all who believe in Him (John 3:16-17).
4. **Peace and Restoration:** The destruction of Nineveh in Nahum ultimately leads to a vision of peace and restoration. Jesus, as the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), brings reconciliation and peace between God and humanity through his sacrificial death and resurrection (Colossians 1:19-20).

In summary, while Nahum does not directly mention Jesus, its themes of justice, salvation, peace, and God's sovereignty reflect and anticipate Jesus' teachings and redemptive work as revealed in the New Testament.¹

BIBLE STUDY SPECIFICS: HOW TO APPROACH THE BOOK OF NAHUM

OBSERVATION

- As you pay attention to the speaker, make sure to take note of who is speaking and how he speaks.
- Pay special attention to the recipient of the prophet's words. This book was not written directly to God's people.
- Note any contextual information given in the headings
- Pay attention to differences that stand in contrast with the book of Jonah. In Jonah we see the compassion of God but here we see the judgment of God. In Jonah we saw deliverance from water, but here we see destruction by water. What other differences do you observe?

INTERPRETATION

- **Literary context:** This book was not written as a simple warning or "call to repentance." God had already sent Jonah and now judgment was coming!² As you read and seek to interpret the text, remember that God had already sent a warning!
- **Historical context:** When we consider that the destruction of Nineveh was prophesized and actually came true, we must remember that God's Word is reliable. The things foretold in this book actually came to pass. Despite Nineveh's fortifications, the city was destroyed by the nation of Babylon after the Tigris River overflowed its banks and damaged the wall. The Babylonians breached the wall, plundered the city, and set it on fire just as Nahum predicted (1:8, 2:6 and 1:10; 2:13; 3:13, 15).³
- **Cultural Context:** The Assyrians were incredibly brutal in their conquests—doing things like hanging their victims' bodies on poles and using their skin to decorate their

¹ This section was created via Artificial Intelligence but approved by human editors!

² <https://www.gotquestions.org/Book-of-Nahum.html>

³ Blake Holmes, The Watermark Institute, 201

tents. Nahum was telling the people of Judah not to lose hope because God had declared judgment, and the Assyrians would soon get what was coming to them⁴.

APPLICATION

- Read considering Christ. Nahum is all about justice. How can we as Christians be encouraged by God's justice today.
- Is there a sin to repent from? The Assyrians were guilty of ignoring God's message of repentance. How can we, in a similar fashion, be stubborn in our ways and refuse to repent?

PRAYER

- Sit with the Lord and spend some time praying for foreign nations. Ask God to grow your heart in love for those who have no regard for or knowledge of God.
- Nahum brought a message of judgment and destruction. The good news of the gospel is that through Jesus we don't have to face eternal judgment. Spend some time thanking God for the gift of his Son and the good news of the gospel.

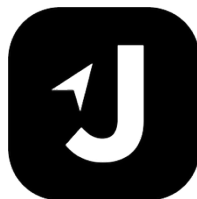
CHURCH HISTORY: WHAT HAS CHURCH HISTORY SAID ABOUT THE BOOK OF NAHUM

"The remainder are the books which are strictly called the Prophets: twelve separate books of the prophets which are connected with one another, and having never been disjoined, are reckoned as one book; the names of these prophets are as follows:—Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi; then there are the four greater prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel. The authority of the Old Testament is contained within the limits of these . . . books."

—Augustine on the Canon, AD 39

"There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, "Thy will be done," and those to whom God says, in the end, "Thy will be done." All that are in Hell, choose it. Without that self-choice there could be no Hell. No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it. Those who seek find. Those who knock it is opened."

—C.S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce*



⁴ <https://www.gotquestions.org/Book-of-Nahum.html>