

Profit from

# The Minor Prophets

## 7: Nahum

“The burden against Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.”  
Nahum 1:1

As with most of the minor prophets, we know nothing of Nahum apart from what is written in the book that bears his name. We do not know where Elkosh was located but it is likely that it was in Judah.

### When Did Nahum Prophecy?

Jonah went to Nineveh, proclaimed His message, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” and the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and Nineveh was saved. But what happened to Nineveh after Jonah?

Jonah went to Nineveh sometime around 750BC. At that time Assyria — Nineveh was the capital city of Assyria — was a constant threat to both Israel and Judah. Assyria was the leading military power in the Near East. It was building its empire by bloodshed, massacre, cruelty, torture, destruction and plundering, of a kind and on a scale that has rarely been seen in history. The Assyrians were cruel and merciless and nothing was allowed to stand in their way. They soon had both Israel and Judah paying tribute and doing what they were told.

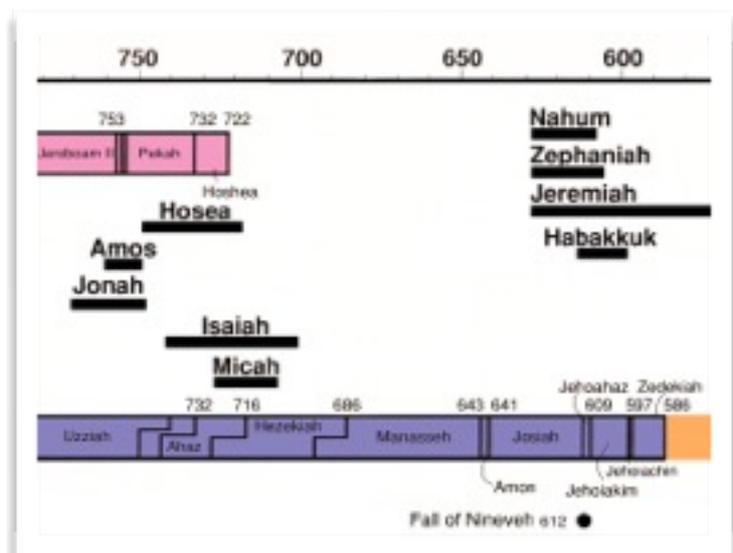
Jonah was sent to warn Nineveh that God had taken note of their wickedness and idolatry and was intent upon visiting them in judgement but to Jonah's dismay the Ninevites heeded his message and were spared. It was to Jonah's dismay because he knew what it meant. He remembered what God had said of the children of Israel to Moses

“They are a perverse generation, Children in whom is no faith. They have provoked Me to jealousy... they have moved Me to anger by their foolish idols. But I will provoke them to jealousy by those who are not a nation; I will move them to anger by a foolish nation.”

Deuteronomy 32:21 – 21

When Nineveh repented, Jonah knew that God was raising up that foolish nation to provoke His own people, Israel and Judah, who didn't trust Him, who also worshipped idols and provoked Him by their wickedness. God was raising up the Assyrians — the Ninevites to teach them a hard lesson.

We don't know how long Nineveh's repentance lasted or what difference it made but sooner or later the Assyrians went back to their old ways. In 722BC Jonah's fears began to be realised when Assyrians wiped out the northern kingdom of Israel. God protected Judah, gave them more time and sent more prophets to warn them but Assyria was still a threat. from a human point of view Assyria looked indestructible and Nineveh looked impregnable. Sennacherib had made Nineveh the greatest city in the world. He built a



splendid palace and a library that housed 20,000 stone tablets. He installed a water-supply — the world's first aqueduct and built a massive wall, eight miles in circumference, to protect everything.

That was the situation when about 100 years after Jonah, when Assyria was at the zenith of its power and Josiah was king in Judah, God sent Nahum with another message for Nineveh. Nahum was sent to announce the fall of Nineveh and the complete overthrow of Assyria and this time the judgment was irrevocable — there would be no repentance. Nineveh was destroyed in 612BC, never to be restored and the Assyrians disappeared from history.

You can read about these times in 2 Kings 14 – 23 and 2 Chronicles 26 – 35.

## **Outline**

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**The God You Are Up Against 1:2 – 11**

**Don't Think You Are Safe 2:12 – 14**

**Nineveh's End Is Good News For Judah 1: 15**

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## **Nahum's Message**

Nahum's message is a prophesy of judgement against Assyria. It begins with God saying, let me tell you who you are up against.

“God is jealous, and the Lord avenges;  
The Lord avenges and is furious.  
The Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries,  
And He reserves wrath for His enemies.”

Nahum 1:2

From there He tells the people of Nineveh what He is going to do to them and why He is going to do it. They needn't think they are safe. They needn't think their strength or superiority will save them. It doesn't matter that they rule the world. God is going to wipe them out.

“There is a multitude of slain,  
A great number of bodies, countless corpses—  
They stumble over the corpses—  
Because of the multitude of harlotries of the seductive harlot,  
The mistress of sorceries, who sells nations through her harlotries,  
And families through her sorceries.  
“Behold, I am against you,” says the Lord of hosts;  
“I will lift your skirts over your face,  
I will show the nations your nakedness, and the kingdoms your shame.  
I will cast abominable filth upon you,  
Make you vile, and make you a spectacle.”

Nahum 3:3 – 6

Nevertheless, Nahum's message was not primarily for the people of Nineveh; it was primarily a message for God's people, the people of Judah because in Nineveh's destruction lay their hope. The prophesy of Nineveh's destruction was an encouragement to them to remain faithful to God.

“Behold, on the mountains  
The feet of him who brings good tidings,  
Who proclaims peace!  
O Judah, keep your appointed feasts, perform your vows.  
For the wicked one shall no more pass through you;  
He is utterly cut off.”

Nahum 1:15

## **A Question To Think About**

- What can we learn from Nahum's prophesy that is relevant to our day?