



PART 4 THE TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS

It is advisable first to read the Preface in Part 1, also the Introduction to the Minor Prophets which precedes the Study on Hosea and to read each book prior to studying it. The section on each prophet is a complete Bible Study. Only a brief summary of the words of *The Voice of the Lord* (*red italics*) can be conveyed.

NAHUM

INTRODUCTION

His name means *Comfort* and has the same Hebrew root as in *Nehemiah*. Nahum was a contemporary of the prophets Zephaniah and Habakkuk, also Jeremiah in the early part of his ministry. The theme of the Book of Nahum is the fall of the Assyrian capital, Nineveh, for the sins of brutality, corruption and idolatry. Nahum's message of Nineveh's judgement also gave *comfort* and hope to the oppressed people of Judah.

The borders of the Southern Kingdom (Judah) had long been threatened by Assyria, especially since the destruction of the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C. Nineveh's wicked and cruel King Sennacherib had unsuccessfully besieged Jerusalem in 701 B.C. (Isaiah 37: 33 - 38)

The prophet Jonah had earlier warned the people of Nineveh but the Lord revoked His judgement of destruction on their repentance. This reformation was short-lived with the return of Assyrian wickedness – hence the oracle of Nahum conveying the righteous anger and vengeance of the Lord.

The *Voice of the Lord* spoke through Nahum during the reign of Judah's good King Josiah. Nahum's visions were received between the pillage of Thebes 663 B.C. and before the fall of Nineveh in 612. (Nahum 3: 8)

Read Nahum Chapter 1

Nahum's oracle revealed –

- * The kindness and mercy of God to those who trusted Him.
- * His wrath against the wicked, including Assyria's idolatrous and evil rulers.

The prophet described God's righteous anger in the judgement of storm, drought, earthquake and fire, causing the downfall of nations that work evil in His sight.

*The Lord is slow to anger and great in power and will by no means clear the guilty.
The Lord has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm,
and the clouds are the dust of His feet.*

Nahum 1: 3

The Lord promised His people that the Assyrians would not afflict Judah a second time.

The power of the Assyrian empire would come to an end.

A MESSAGE OF PEACE

Thus says the Lord: Though they be in full strength and likewise many, even so shall the Assyrians be cut down.

For now will I break his yoke from off you (Judah) and will burst your bonds asunder.

Nahum 1: 12a 13

The *Voice of the Lord* through Nahum continued to pronounce loving-kindness and mercy to Israel. Such prophetic words brought good news of deliverance and peace to the people of Jerusalem.

*Behold! Upon the mountains the feet of him
who brings good tidings, who publishes peace!*

Nahum 1: 15a

These words of deliverance and hope at that time were also a prophetic message of the coming of Christ, the Prince of Peace.



FALL OF NINEVEH PROPHESED

Read Nahum Chapter 2

In his prophesy, Nahum vividly described the strategy of attack, the fighting in the streets and Nineveh's hopeless defence against the onslaught of the besieging army.

The enemy (Medo-Babylonian) would open the captured sluice gates to deluge and destroy the defences and foundations of the city and palace.



Behold, I am against you (Nineveh) says the Lord of hosts and I will burn your chariots in the smoke, and the sword shall devour your young lions. And I will cut off your prey from the earth, and the voice of your messengers shall no more be heard.

Nahum 2: 13

The images of lions were important symbols of Nineveh's power and glory.

The Assyrians having preyed upon the surrounding nations would become the prey as Nineveh's great wealth was plundered.

THE JUDGEMENT OF NINEVEH

Read Nahum Chapter 3

Nineveh was ripe for the Lord's judgement and punishment. Assyria's kings had shown no pity in conquest, many people in the surrounding nations being massacred.

Behold, I am against you, says the Lord of hosts, and I will lift up your skirts over your face, and I will let the nations look on your nakedness, O Nineveh, and the kingdoms on your shame.

Nahum 3: 5

Nineveh would be pillaged and stripped as if devoured by a plague of locusts; and like locusts her numerous rich merchants and officials would fly away.

All who look on you will flee from you and say, Nineveh is laid waste; who will pity and bemoan her? Where then shall I seek comforters for you?

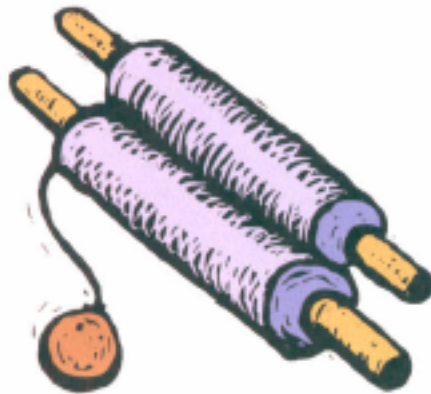
Nahum 3: 7

Nahum declared God's almighty hand controlling the destinies of nations, for the fall of Nineveh meant the end of the Assyrian empire. Nineveh's destruction was so complete that its location was unknown for centuries.

*There is no healing of your hurt; your wound is grievous.
All who hear the news about you clap their hands.
For upon whom has not your evil come continually?*

Nahum 3: 19

Nahum's detailed and descriptive prophecy of the fall of Nineveh, was fulfilled according to the *Voice of the Lord*.



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