Bible Synthesis IV

## OVERVIEW OF NAHUM

Nahum, "comforter," "consolation," was an Elkoshite (native of Elkosh). No one knows for certain where the site of Elkosh is today. Four sites have been suggested in the Introduction.

Two prophets spoke to and about Nineveh. These were Jonah (about 785 B.C.) and Nahum (650 to 630 B.C.). These were between 130 and 150 years apart. Jonah's message was one of mercy, while the message of Nahum was that of doom.

In Jonah we see the love and mercy of God.

In Nahum we see His holiness and justice.

Both of these are attributes of God. Both are seen in God's dealings with mankind. Nineveh had repented at the warning message of Jonah given earlier. But now the Ninevites have turned back to their sin and they are hardened in it.

## THE CITY OF NINEVEH

NINEVEH was the capital city of Assyria (1:1, 9; 3:5 …). The Assyrians carried Israel (Samaria) captive in 722 B.C. Nineveh in turn was destroyed in 612 B.C. We suggest the date of writing of Nahum to have been 630 B.C.

Nineveh, an ancient city situated on the east bank of the Tigris River, was founded by Nimrod (Gen. 10:11–12; Micah 5:6). He founded a number of cities in the area. Nineveh became strong during the time of the increasing apostasy of Israel and Judah. [See the Introduction for the list of the Assyrian kings which afflicted Israel.]

Nineveh was completely destroyed in 612 B.C. When Xenophon (pronounced *Zenuh-fun*), Greek historian and soldier (435–355 B.C.) and his army of 10,000 passed by the site of Nineveh, he thought the mounds were ruins of some Parthian city.

In 331 B.C., when Alexander the Great fought the battle of Arbela, near the site of Nineveh, he did not even know there had ever been a city there.

Napoleon camped near its site and was also unaware of it. That was 1804–15 A.D.

For years many scholars thought that references to Nineveh in the Bible were only mythical, so complete was its destruction. In 1845 Layard, in excavating the ruins across the Tigris from Mosul, unearthed thousands of inscriptions giving us the story of Assyria as written by the Assyrians.

To foretell the utter destruction of a city was something different. Empires fall, but usually their cities stand. Nahum predicted for Nineveh an utter end (1:8). This came to pass as he

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predicted. An empire that had been built upon violence, cruelty, and oppression was doomed to total destruction.

Nahum means "comforter." He gives comfort to a fearful people (1:7, 12–13). He gives warning to the wicked city of Nineveh.

## OUTLINE OF NAHUM

• *Nahum 1:*

### 1. Nineveh's Destruction Decreed —Nah. 1

#### (1) The Goodness and Severity of the LORD —1:1–8

• What kind of God is our God?

— As Judge, toward His adversaries, our God is:

| | |
|---|---|
| (1. Jealous | —1:2 |
| (2. Vengeful | —1:2 |
| (3. Wrathful | —1:2 |
| (4. Great in power | —1:3–6 |
| (5. Just (will not acquit the wicked) | —1:3 |
| (6. Indignant | —1:6 |

— Also, our God is —1:3, 7:

| | |
|---|---|
| (1. Slow to anger (longsuffering) | —1:3 |
| (2. Good | —1:7 |
| (3. A stronghold in the day of trouble | —1:7 |
| (4. Knowing them that trust Him | —1:7 |

— He will make an utter end of Nineveh —1:8

• It will be with "an overflowing flood." The Medes, Babylonians, and Scythians released the city's water supply and flooded the Koser River, which dissolved the sun-dried brick of which most of the buildings in the city were made. [See Zeph. 2:13–15.]

#### (2) The Overthrow of Nineveh and Rejoicing of Zion —1:9–15

***• Declaration of Doom —1:9–15***

-1. It will be complete destruction ["an utter end"] —1:9

-2. It is a certain destruction —1:10–14

-3. The tidings to Judah —1:15

• These terms are used in the following passages:
- This passage speaks of deliverance from Assyria.
- Isa. 52:7, using similar terms, speaks of deliverance from Babylon.
- Rom. 10:15, the Gospel of Christ — deliverance from sin …

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Nahum 1:1–8 — How does God describe Himself in these verses?

Nahum 1:9–15 — How does God declare Nineveh's doom in these verses?

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•Those feet have traveled a long way. They are dusty, dirty, caked with dried mud. They carried the body, with the head and with the tongue which had a vital message for Judah: Nineveh has been destroyed. This took place in August of 612 B.C.

• *Nahum 2:*

## 2. Nineveh's Destruction Depicted —Nah. 2

### (1) The Execution of the Decree — Nineveh Besieged —2:1–10

***• Description of doom —2–1–13***

• Nineveh sat complacently, because she had walls 100 feet high and wide enough for 4 chariots to go abreast, with a circumference of 80 miles, and adorned with 1200 towers. A moat 140 feet wide and 60 feet deep surrounded those sides not protected by the Tigris River. The city could maintain its own food supply indefinitely. But what are bricks, mortar, and moats to God? Nothing seemed more unlikely than the destruction of this great fortress — a total destruction forecast by Nahum!

-1. Description of the invading army —2:1–4

•The invading forces were under Cyxares the Mede and Nabopolassar the Babylonian (father of Nebuchadnezzar) —2:1

•Assyria had invaded and spoiled Jacob —2:2
"For the LORD hath turned away the excellency of Jacob, as the excellency of Israel …" Israel is a vine (Isa. 5:1–7).

•Blood red shields, scarlet clothing, mighty chariots with flaming torches — a terrifying sight to the Ninevites —2:3

•Definitely NOT a description of the automobile. It refers to the invasion of Nineveh in 612 B.C. Their chariots will move very fast ("they shall run like the lightnings") —2:4

-2. Futile preparations by Nineveh —2:5

•Nineveh will prepare their defense, but it will be in vain (2:6–10).

-3. Description of the defeat —2:6–10

•The Medes, Babylonians, and Scythians released the city's water supply and flooded the Koser River, which dissolved the sun-dried brick of which most of the buildings in the city were made. —2:6

•Their defeat and captivity —2:7–8

•They looted — they shall be looted —2:9

•Nineveh's condition following defeat —2:10

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Nahum 2 — What details does God give here of the destruction of Nineveh?

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**"Salting the Oats"**

Nahum 3:1–4 — What reasons does God give, in these verses, for the destruction of Nineveh?

Nahum 3:5–19 — In this final passage of Nahum how does God set forth the certainty of His final judgment of Nineveh?

### (2) The Fallen City Contrasted with Its Former Glory —2:11–13

• God's likeness of Assyria: As lions —2:11–13
- Nineveh, the habitation of fearless lions —2:11
- They were once very savage —2:12
- But the LORD of hosts will defeat them —2:13

• *Nahum 3:*

## 3. Causes for Nineveh's Destruction Described —Nah. 3

### (1) The Sins of Nineveh —3:1–4

• The *reasons* for the destruction of the city are given in this section.

-1. Fierceness, ruthlessness, bloodthirstiness —3:1–3
- •Bloody city — full of lies and robbery ("prey" = plunder) —3:1
- •They will be conquered. They will reap what they have sown —3:2–3

-2. Filthiness, immorality, vileness —3:4
- •They sell nations and families through these things.

### (2) Nineveh's Fate Sealed —3:5–19

-1. God's purpose to judge —3:5–7
- •The LORD of hosts is against them —3:5
- •They will be a "gazingstock" —3:6b–7a
- •None will mourn her destruction —3:7b

-2. Comparison with No (Thebes) —3:8–10
- •No was sacked by Assyria in 663 B.C.
- •The story of the conquests of Assyria is a story of great cruelty —3:8–10

-3. God's judgment is inevitable —3:11–19
- •"Thou shalt be hid" —Assyria was not discovered by modern man until 1842. —3:11
- *Notice the delight among nations at Nineveh's destruction —3:19

END OF NAHUM

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