

**A LOOK AT THE BOOK
NAHUM
DEALING WITH DEPRAVITY AND SUICIDE BOMBERS**

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*How can God allow people He loves to suffer?
Is He asleep, in the face of attacks on His people?
Doesn't He care about suicide bombers, and nations that want to destroy God's people?*

AUTHOR

Of the prophet Nahum's background little is known.

He is said to be from Elkosh, but the location of this city is disputed.

DATE

The date of the book can be approximately identified.

The conquest of Thebes (661 B.C.) is viewed as a past event (3:8-10).

The fall of Nineveh (612 B.C.) is yet future.

BACKGROUND

There is an interval of about 150 years between the work of Jonah and that of Nahum.

Nineveh has become corrupt again.

They have attacked God's people willfully and violently, and sought their destruction.

This was probably just what Jonah feared would happen if God preserved Nineveh!

This time no repentance results from the warning.

The result is the downfall and destruction of Nineveh.

PURPOSE AND THEME

The message of Nahum focuses on the judgment and destruction of Nineveh.

Its purpose is to demonstrate that God is still protecting His people and cursing those who curse them, even when they rebel against Him.

You can't touch Israel without dealing with the God of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3).

Assyria will be destroyed for her depravity and for her intentional attacks against Israel.

Suicide bombers ultimately destroy themselves!

Their destiny isn't 72 virgins!

Their destiny is a face-to-face encounter with the God of Abraham!

Second purpose: to encourage Israel to trust God and to follow His revealed will for them.

He is watching over them.

He will deliver them.

ORGANIZATION

Four parts (organized by chapters except chapter 3: 3:1-7; 8-19):

I. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NINEVEH'S JUDGMENT 1

The prophet begins with a prediction of judgment.

Introduction of Nahum, the messenger 1:1

He calls his message an "oracle."
The word refers to a burden.
This is a "heavy" message.

The character of God, the Judge 1:2-8

Following the introduction, the prophet describes some key elements in God's character.

1. Avenging 1:2
God is One who avenges His enemies.
God cares about what happens to the people He loves.
God avenges the attacks of those who seek to destroy His loved ones.
2. Patient 1:3a
But, He is also patient—"slow to anger."
Nineveh would have been fully aware of God's patience.
But God's patience has limits.
He can't allow the wicked to go unpunished!
He can't allow them to destroy His people.
3. Powerful 1:3b-6
He further describes God as powerful.
God exercises His power to judge the wicked.
He exercises His power to control His creation.
The following two descriptions of God also demonstrate His power:
He exercises His power to protect those who trust Him (7).
He exercises His power against those who oppose Him (8).
4. Stronghold of believers 1:7
He is a stronghold for those who seek refuge in Him.
5. Destroyer of enemies 1:8
God's power is exercised against those who oppose Him (8):
General statement (8) => application to Nineveh (9-14)
He makes an end of Nineveh as He does of ALL His enemies.

The judgment of Nineveh, the enemy 1:9-14

Following the description of God's character, His verdict and judgment against Nineveh are announced (The principle in operation).

What is true of God's enemies in general is true of Nineveh in particular.

1. Cause for judgment 1:9-11
Rebellion results in judgment.
They plot against the Lord 9a
They won't get a second chance to plot against Him 9b
They are trapped, drunken and, as a result, are consumed 10
The fruit of their rebellion has resulted in one who opposes the Lord 11
Therefore, the Lord will judge them.
2. Comfort for Judah 1:12-13
Words from the Lord to Judah
Note the quotation marks through the next few verses!
Obedience results in deliverance.
The oppressor will be overcome by God's power 12a
God's affliction of Judah is over 12b
Judah will be freed from Nineveh's yoke 13

3. Command for judgment 1:14
Words from the Lord to Nineveh
Divine decree: judgment of the enemy.

. **The deliverance of Judah, the victim 1:15**

The result of 1:14.
In contrast with the judgment of Nineveh, the deliverance of Judah is promised.
A messenger is coming with good news.
He announces "Peace!"

II. DESCRIPTION OF NINEVEH'S JUDGMENT 2

Next Nahum describes the invasion and destruction of the city.

. **Call to arms 2:1-2**

Warning and call to arms because God is going to avenge Israel.
("You're going to need it!") 1
Promise of restoration of God's people 2
"Like Jacob" -draws attention to his character ("the deceiver").
Focuses on Jacob's attempts to scheme to earn a blessing for himself.
"Like Israel" -who "wrestled with God" successfully.
When he acknowledged his dependence on God for blessing, God poured out His blessing on him and changed his name (and his character).

. **Futility of resistance 2:3-5**

Description of the invasion.
All of the attempts at defense are pictured as futile.

. **Description of overthrow 2:6-12**

The city is captured and all of its wealth is removed.
Finally, the city is totally destroyed.

1. Intrusion 2:6
2. Lament 2:7
3. Defection 2:8
4. Spoilation 2:9
5. Defeated 2:10-12 Paints picture of their defeat.

. **Summary warning repeated 2:13**

III. CAUSES OF NINEVEH'S JUDGMENT 3:1-7

In conclusion, Nahum reports the causes for judgment.

. **Murderous warfare 3:1-3**

The city will be destroyed because of its murdering-lying-robbing.

. **Harlotry with other nations 3:4-7**

The city will be destroyed because of its harlotry with other nations.
They "seduced" the other nations for their own profit.

1. Description of harlotry 3:4
2. Results of harlotry 3:5-7--describes judgment appropriate for harlots!

IV. CERTAINTY OF NINEVEH'S JUDGMENT 3:8-19

. Illustration of Thebes 3:8-10

He uses the example of Thebes, which had also been great and *considered itself indestructible; yet God destroyed it.* 8-10

Secure location 8

Adulterous alliances 9a

Strong 9b

"Just like you!" 9c

She was destroyed 10

Even so, Nineveh would be destroyed. 11-19

. Futility of defense 3:11-18

Their attempts to resist will be of no use (11-17)

Like Thebes 11a

Your strongholds will be easily consumed 11b-12

Your army will be as strong in battle as an all-woman army 13a

Your gates will be as helpful for protection as open gates 13b

Your own weapons will destroy you 14-15a

Your merchants and leaders will defect, plunder you, and flee 15b-17

Your people will not be regathered 18

They will be completely removed from the earth (18-19).

. Impossibility of protection 3:19a

The destruction cannot be prevented.

("Fatal"-reminder of computer realm-"Fatal Error"

When you get at "Fatal Error" message, it's too late to do anything about it!)

. Rejoicing of the afflicted 3:19b

Those whom you have afflicted will rejoice at your destruction!

What do we learn from the book of Nahum?

What does it teach us about God?

What does it teach us about God's people?

What does it teach us about the enemies of God's people?

What lessons does it contain for our life tomorrow morning?

Key verse to meditate on: 1:7

***"The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble.
He cares for those who trust in Him."***