

Nahum - Outline

Author: Nahum, of the city of Elkoh (Elkosh), of which there are four traditional locations assigned to this place.¹

- A city on the left bank of the Tigris with a similar name
- A town in Galilee
- Capernaum, which literally means “village of Nahum”
- A city in southern Judea, in the territory of Simeon, which is the most favored of the four because of the focus of the message

The name Nahum is only used twice in the bible, here and in Luke 3:25, where it refers to a person in the genealogy of Jesus of Nazareth. It is likely that they are not the same person since he is only 10 generations removed from Jesus’ birth. His name means “consolation” or “consoler” which is symbolic of his message.²

Date: Dating the book of Nahum is estimated by the mention of two specific events in the text. First, the fall of Thebes of Egypt (No-amon in the text, 3:8-10) in 663 BC to the Assyrians, whose capital was Nineveh. Second, the future fall of Nineveh (1:1; 2:8; 3:7) in 612 BC to the Babylonians.³ It is only my opinion but the former could simply be a historical reference and the actual writing took place closer to the fall of Nineveh, since it is the major focus of the book.

790	780	770	760	750	740	730	720	710	700	690	680	670	660	650	640	630	620	610	600
	Jonah 783-753 bc		Hosea 752-722 bc																Habakkuk 609-598 bc
			Amos 760-753 bc	Micah 738-698 bc								Nahum 663-612 bc							Joel 609-586 bc
Israel - Northern Kingdom - 931-722 bc							Israel to Assyria 722 bc								Zephaniah 641-628 bc				
Judah - Southern Kingdom - 931-586 bc																			
					Isaiah 735-681 bc														Jeremiah 626-582 bc
																			Ezekiel 593-571 bc
																			Daniel 605-535 bc

Occasion: Nahum is writing to the southern kingdom of Judah about the coming destruction of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, who was the regional military and political dominant force at the time. The people of Judah had witnessed the northern tribes being conquered and horribly mistreated by the Assyrians and their subsequent relocation to foreign cities and the repopulation of the Israelite cities with people of foreign origin (2 Kings 17) in 722 BC. After that, Assyria also sought to expand into Judah, Egypt, and beyond.

Manasseh would have been king in Judah (696-643 BC) when Thebes of Egypt fell in 663 BC and while Judah and much of the region was falling under Assyrian control. Josiah would have been king in Judah (640-609 BC) during which the fall of Nineveh would have occurred in 612 BC to the Babylonians at which time the capital was moved west to Harran.⁴ A few years later Josiah was killed in a battle with Pharaoh Neco of Egypt who was rebelling against Assyria (2 Kings 23:28-30).⁵

This was also a time when many reforms were taking place in the land at the leadership of Josiah after the book of the Law was found in the temple while repairs were being made and it was read to Josiah. In spite of the many reforms that Josiah performed, God had determined that Judah would suffer the same fate as their northern tribal brothers (2 Kings 23:26-27) because of Manasseh’s early allowance and participation in idolatry.

Summary: Nahum begins with a general description of God’s patient withholding of His wrath which

- 1 (Orr “Elkoshite”; Meyers)
- 2 (Orr “Nahum, the Book of”)
- 3 (Galan et al. 145-147)
- 4 (“Assyria”)
- 5 (“Manasseh of Judah”)

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will come as swift as the forces of nature when the time is right for executing His judgment on the Assyrian Empire, whose capital is Nineveh. Nahum then give a more detailed those who conquer them and how complete the destruction will be. The message of Nineveh's destruction continues, in which Nahum uses the example of the defeat of Egypt at Thebes and beyond as an example of what will happen to them. Finally, he concludes by remarking how even though they had expanded their power and influence, there would be great rejoicing at the announcement of the cities destruction.

Group ⁶	C	V	Description
God is Awesome	1	1	Introduction
		2-8	God is patient but when He decides to act, He is swift and powerful
		9-13	Plans against the Lord are futile and will end in failure
		14	God's promised destruction
		15	Nahum's prophetic view of Judah's future
The Overthrow of Nineveh	2	1-2	God will restore even though their foe is a formidable one
		3-7	A description of Nineveh's conqueror's army
		8-12	Nineveh's complete and utter destruction described
		13	God's message to Nineveh
Nineveh's Complete Ruin	3	1-7	Nineveh's brutal past actions are listed as reasons for God's actions
		8-15a	Just like Assyria caused their enemies to suffer, so too God will cause the Assyrians to suffer a similar fate with no one coming to their aid
		15b-19	Though the Assyrians expanded their control to many lands and regions, rejoicing will occur when news of their downfall is reported

Key Words: Old Testament, Prophecy, Nahum, Outlines



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⁶ (NASB) "Group" column from the headings in the NASB text.

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