

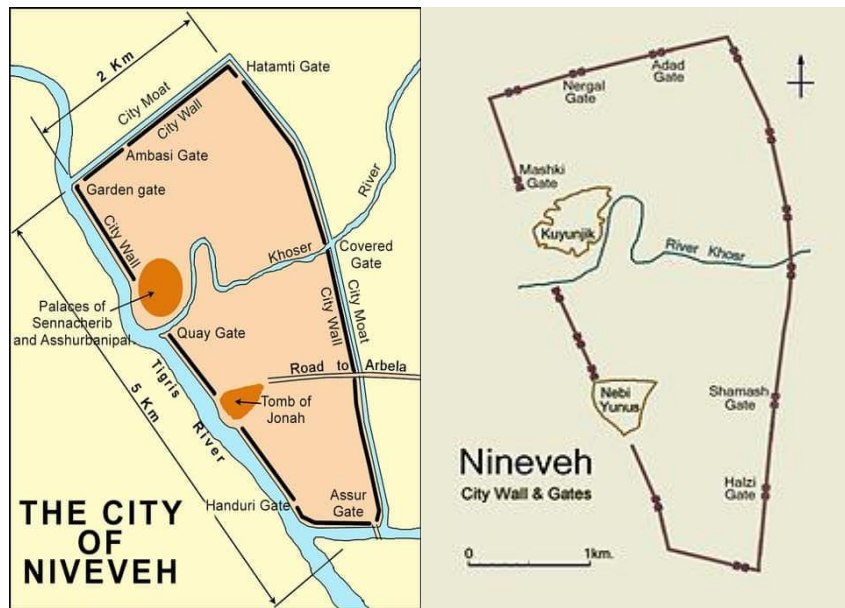
THE MINOR PROPHETS (Chronological Order)

NAHUM

LESSON EIGHT

Introduction:

1. **Nineveh:** “Greatest of the capitals of the ancient Assyrian Empire that flourished from about 800 to 612 B.C.... It was located on the east bank of the Tigris River in northeastern Mesopotamia in what is now Iraq, an area productive agriculturally and conducive to commerce. Its remains are distinguished by a rectangular perimeter wall that is approximately 2 km wide and 5 km long and also two mounds: Kuyunjik (Many Sheep) and Nebi Yunus (The Prophet Jonah) (*Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, p. 1162).



2. **Assyria's King:** “Sennacherib (704 – 681 B.C.) built the enormous 500 meter long southwest palace at Kuyunjik. Pictured on his reliefs are captive Philistines, Tyrians, Aramaeans, and others working under the supervision of the king himself. His “palace which has no equals” covered five acres and had 71 rooms, including two large halls about 180 feet long and 40 feet wide. He boasted that the materials for the palace included “fragrant cedars, cypresses, doors banded with silver and copper... painted brick... certain pegs of silver and copper, alabaster breccia, marble, ivory.” The rooms were embellished with 9,880 feet sculptured reliefs, which depicted Assyrian victories over enemy cities, including the Judaeans of Lachish captured in 701 B.C.” (*Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* p. 1163).

3. “The most significant gate was the Nergal Gate, which was situated in the north wall and guarded by a massive winged colossi. The city also contained gardens, nature reserves, and parks watered by a 30-mile-long aqueduct” (*Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, p. 1164).



4. The Fall Of Nineveh: The Assyrian ruler, Sardanapalus, shut himself up in Nineveh ready to endure what would be a two-year siege from the Medes and Babylonians. When the Tigris River inundated the city in the third year the flood overturned about 1200 feet of the city’s wall. Knowing his end was near, and not wanting to fall alive into the hands of the Babylonians and Medes, he “constructed in his palace an immense funeral pyre, placed on it his gold and silver and his royal robes, and then shutting himself up with his wives and eunuchs in a chamber formed in the midst of the pile, disappeared in the flames.” Probably due to the years of fierce cruelty and hatred forced on subject nations, unbridled revenge was kindled in the hearts of the Babylonians and Medes to totally destroy Assyria’s capital city. “The Medes and Babylonians did not leave one stone upon another in the ramparts, palaces, temples, or houses of the city that for two centuries had been dominant over all Western Asia” (Edited from *The Rise and Fall of Assyria*; F. Lenormant and E. Chevallier).

I. **THE AUTHOR: Nahum**

- A. “Nahum” means “Consolation or consoler.” In a sense Nahum’s name has a symbolical meaning for the book. He gives comforting counsel to the people of God whose God is a God of all nations, including the cruel Assyrian Kingdom whose capital city, Nineveh, will be destroyed by the Holy God bringing vindicating wrath on the idolatrous nation
- B. His home: Elkosh – He is an Elkoshite (1:1).
1. Elkosh is not a place that can be located for certain.
 - a. Some have thought it was a town north of Nineveh.

- b. Some have thought that “Elkosh” is another name for “Capernaum” which means “village of Nahum.” Nahum may be from the village located on the northern portion of the Sea of Galilee, which would be part of the Northern Kingdom conquered by Assyria in 722 B.C.

II. THE DATE OF THE BOOK (663 B.C. – 654 B.C.)

- A. History documents the fall of No- amon (Egyptian Thebes) which is known in Nahum 3:8. Thebes fell to cruel Assur-bani-pal (668 B.C. – 625 B.C.), in 663. Therefore, after 663 B.C. and before 654 when Thebes regained her independence, the Book could have been written. It was written before 612 B.C. when Nineveh and Assyria fell to the Medes and Babylonians, which is still future in the Book of Nahum.

III. THE THEME OF THE BOOK

- A. The destruction of the idolatrous “bloody and rapacious” capital city of the Assyrian Empire is the single theme of the Book.
 - a. Judah’s sins are not addressed.
 - b. Israel’s sins or demise are not addressed.

IV. TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK

- A. The character of God is Nahum’s distinctive focus
 - 1. He is “jealous,” “full of wrath,” and “takes vengeance” on His idolatrous adversaries (1:2)
 - 2. He is “good” and knows those who take “refuge” in him as “a stronghold” (1:7)
 - 3. Though “all powerful,” God “slow to anger” yet does not “clear the guilty” (1:3)

V. THE POETIC CHARACTER OF THE BOOK

- A. “Among the minor prophets Nahum holds the highest place. His prophecy is a poem, stately, orderly, and impressive, all the parts of which are well arranged and mutually conducive to the unity of the whole. It is eminently tuneful and rhythmical, the words ‘re-echoing to the sense,’ and is full of force, the colouring brilliant, the picturing lifelike.” (*W.J. Deane, Pulpit Commentary, Nahum, p. v.*)

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK:

I. NINEVEH’S DOOM BY JEHOVAH’S DECREE (Chapter 1)

- A. The goodness and severity of Jehovah (v.2-8)
- B. The completer overthrow of Nineveh (v. 9-15)

II. THE SIEGE AND DESTRUCTION OF NINEVEH BY JEHOVAH’S DECREE (Chapter 2)

- A. Assault upon Nineveh – her doom (v. 1-7)
- B. The flight of the people and plundering of the city (v. 8-15)

III. NINEVEH’S SINS AND HER INEVITABLE DOOM (Chapter 3)

- A. Nineveh’s fate a consequence of her own sins and crimes (v.1-7).
- B. The fate of No-Amon is to be the fate of Nineveh (v.8-19).

QUESTIONS:

1. Knowing God is slow to anger who can escape His wrath?
2. What “good tidings” is being published in Judah?
3. What is God admonishing Nineveh to do in 2:1-4?
4. Is Nahum 2:6 merely figurative language?
5. Why is Nineveh described as “the dwelling of the lions” (2:11-12)?
6. What sinful crimes made Nineveh fit for God’s judgment?
7. How does Nahum describe the coming shame of Nineveh?
8. Where is No-amon located?
9. What is ironic in Nahum comparing Nineveh to No-amon?
10. What are Nineveh’s fortresses like before her conqueror?

11. What three identities of strength and watchfulness will be of no avail for Assyria before God's judgment upon their capital city?

12. How will the other nations greet the news of Nineveh's downfall?