

NAHUM (Teacher's Edition)

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AUTHOR & WHEN THE BOOK WAS WRITTEN-

This book was written by a prophet known as "Nahum the Elkoshite" (1:1). Though his name means, 'comfort, encourage', this is all we know about this spokesman for the Lord. Even the location of his home, Elkosh, is uncertain. By a strange irony, the city in Galilee most closely associated with the ministry of Jesus was Capernaum. The name Capernaum in the Hebrew language means "the village of Nahum." We can date the book. In Nahum 3:8-10, the fall of the Egyptian city of Thebes is recounted. This occurred in 663 B.C. Nineveh fell, as Nahum predicted, about 612 B.C. Since the book looks back to one event and forward to another, it was probably written between 663-612 B.C. Jonah had already uttered his message of warning, and Nahum was followed by Zephaniah, who also predicted the destruction of the city, predictions which were remarkably fulfilled when Nineveh was destroyed apparently by fire, and the Assyrian empire came to an end, an event which changed the face of Asia.

ABOUT THE BOOK, BASIC THEMES & TRUTHS & APPLICATIONS-

The Assyrian oppression created a troubling question. How could God allow such inhumanity to go unanswered? Nahum responded to Assyrian tyranny with a message marked by its vivid language. Assyria's might had been heavy upon Judah, but Nahum announced that God would destroy them.

Hence, the book opens with an affirmation of God as an avenging God. The fierceness of His wrath is pictured in terms of the destruction of nature.

For over a century, the Assyrians seemed to have had an uncontrolled reign, but now God was responding. His judgment is likened to an approaching storm. Perhaps the people of Judah doubted God's justness since Assyria seemed to have no restraints. Nahum, however, sought to dispel this notion.

This is why it is important to see that the book teaches the **sure judgment** of God against those who **oppose His will** and **abuse His people**. Acts of inhumanity are acts **against God**, and He will serve as the ultimate and final judge. God sometimes uses a pagan nation as an instrument of His judgment, just as He used the Assyrians against the nation of Israel. But this does not **excuse** the pagan nation from God's laws and requirements. It will be judged by the **same standards** of righteousness and holiness that God applies to all the other people of the world.

As the sovereign, all-powerful God, He has the right to **work His purpose** in the world. **Judgment against sin** is a part of the work that He must do in order to remain **a just and holy God**.

This book so well portrays the **seriousness of sin** in the sight of God. His mercy and grace may cause him to withhold His judgment for a while, but a **day of reckoning will come**. Nahum calls us to **serious self-examination** and warns against the subtle sin of believing that life can be **lived apart from the will and ways** of God. This great book chides us for becoming overly smug and secure in our faith as evidenced by Assyria, which was used as God's instrument and then becomes the object of God's wrath. The words directed at Nineveh should cause fear and serious searching of the heart: "**Behold, I am against you.**" (2:13)

Graciously, His judgment against the sinful is offset by His mercy toward the faithful. To the proud, arrogant and the rebellious He comes with condemnation. To the humble, contrite, repentant and faithfully devoted He comes with comfort.

This truth of God's judgment upon sin and the sinner should prompt believers to a **zealous vision of world evangelization**. Those we fail to reach with the gospel will indeed suffer **the wrath of God**.

One other lesson we see is that **misuse and abuse of other people** is sin in God's sight. Assyria's wickedness in their conquering was displeasing to God. We must remember Jesus' admonition of the second great commandment: treat your neighbor as yourself!

A POSSIBLE KEY WORD-

This entire book revolves around one issue, which is my key phrase: **THE JUDGMENT OF NINEVEH**.

KEY VERSE(S) AND CHAPTER-

Nahum so well describes the true nature of God- **merciful but just**. I believe these attributes are described in my key verses: **Nahum 1:7, 8** and in my key chapter: **Nahum 1**. Nahum **1:2-8** supremely portrays the **power, holiness and justice** of God. He is slow to anger, but His wrath will come and all His accounts will be settled.

JESUS REVEALED IN THE BOOK-

Probably the greatest vision of Jesus in the book comes from the dual nature of God: Jesus came first **for salvation** (His were also the feet that brought the good news in 1:15), but He will come again **in wrath to judge the nations**.

THE HOLY SPIRIT REVEALED IN THE BOOK-

The gift of the prophet and prophecy are the working of the Spirit. Also, the **summoning of nations against Nineveh** was the work of the Spirit.