

Through the Bible Book by Book

Old Testament

by Myer Pearlman

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Nahum

Theme: The book of Nahum has but one outstanding theme; namely, the destruction of Nineveh. It is a sequel to the message of the prophet Jonah, by whose ministry, the Ninevites were lead to repentance and saved from impending doom. It is evident that they repented of their former repentance, and so gave themselves to idolatry, cruelty, and oppression, that one hundred and twenty years later, Nahum pronounced against them the judgment of GOD in the form of utter destruction.

"Nahum's object was to inspire his countrymen, the Jews, with the assurance that, however alarming their position might seem, exposed to the attacks of the mighty Assyrian, who had already carried away the Ten Tribes, yet that not only should the Assyrian fail in his attack on Jerusalem (Isaiah Chs. 36, 37), but Nineveh his own capital would be taken and his empire overthrown; and this not by arbitrary exercise of the Lord's power, but for the iniquities of the city and its people."

Author: Practically nothing is known concerning Nahum. He was a native of Elkosh, a village which some believe to have been in Galilee. He prophesied most during the early part of the reign of Josiah since he mentions the fall of No-Amon or Thebes (3:8) which occurred in the latter part of Manasseh's reign.

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- I. The Lord the Righteous Judge (Ch. 1).
- II. The Lord's Righteous Judgment (Chs. 2, 3).

I. The Lord the Righteous Judge (Ch. 1)

Before describing the judgment of Nineveh, the prophet describes the judge, the Lord, whom he shows to be, not an unjust, capricious executioner, but one who is slow to anger, who waits patiently for the fruits of repentance before punishing.

"Nahum is the complement of Jonah. Jonah reveals the judgment on Nineveh withdrawn, and Nahum, the judgment on Nineveh executed. The Ninevites repented of their repentance described in Jonah, whereupon GOD repented of His mercy shown them at that time, and poured

out His wrath on them. Of that wrath one says, 'The permanent value of the book is that it sets before the mind as no other book of the Old Testament, the picture of the wrath of GOD.' Do not let us imagine when we think of the anger of GOD, that it is anything like the hot, passionate, blind, foolish, blundering of a man in a temper. He is slow to anger; yet once having crossed over in the presence of things which demand a new attitude of vengeance, He is as irresistible as a hurricane that beats the sea into fury, or the simoom that sweeps the land with desolation.

Note how the words, '**jealous, vengeance, wrath, anger, indignation, fierceness, fury,**' describe the overwhelming fact of the anger of GOD. In man, wrath becomes his master, and drives him; GOD is always master of His wrath and uses it."

The following are the contents of this section:

1. The theme of the book: the burden of Nineveh (v. 1).
2. GOD is a jealous GOD visiting judgment on His adversaries, yet He is slow to anger, and in judgment remembers those that trust Him (vv. 2-8).
3. It is vain for the Assyrians to imagine that they can resist the Lord and destroy His people (vv. 9-11).
4. For GOD will surely deliver His own (vv. 12-14)
- 5 Because the Lord will deliver His people, they are to remain loyal to Him and to His service (v. 15).

II. The Lord's Righteous Judgment (Chs. 2, 3)

"Nineveh, the destruction of which is foretold by the prophet, was at that time the capital of a great and flourishing empire. It was a city of vast extent and population, and was the center of the principal commerce of the world. Its wealth, however was not altogether derived from trade. It was 'a bloody city' 'full of lies and robbery' (3:1).

It plundered the neighboring nations; and is compared by the prophet to a family of lions, which 'fill their holes with prey, and their dens with ravin' (2:11, 12). At the same time it was strongly fortified: its colossal walls are said by Diorus Siculus to have been a hundred feet high, and wide enough on the summit for three chariots to be driven abreast on them; with fifteen hundred towers bidding defiance to all enemies. Yet, so totally was it destroyed that in the second century after CHRIST, not a vestige remained of it; and its very site was long a matter of uncertainty - Angus-Green.

"Extensive excavations and marvelous discoveries have of late years been made in the mounds of Nineveh. Botta began his labors in 1842; Layard, in 1845; Rassam, in 1852; and Loftus, in 1854. The results of their researches as to extent, character and variety of marbles, sculptures, and inscriptions, brought to light, have confounded cavilers at the sacred Scriptures, entranced with delight antiquaries and archaeologists, and astonished the whole world."

The following is the contents of this section:

1. The siege and capture of the city (2:1-13).
2. The sins of the city (3:1-7)
3. Her doom will be as sure as that of the Egyptian city of No-Amon, a city that was once populous and powerful (3:8-19).

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