

## The Book of Nahum

### The Title, Author, and Date of Nahum

1. Title: “The oracle of Nahum”
  - a. Hebrew – נְחֻם נְחֻם
  - b. Greek – ὀράσεως Ναουμ
2. Author: Nahum
  - a. The name “Nahum” means “comfort/consolation.” It is a shortened version of Nehemiah (which means “comfort of YHWH.”)
  - b. The book is not quoted in the NT, but there is a possible allusion to *1.15* in *Ro 10.15* (*cf. Is 52.7*)
3. Date: It is difficult to know for sure.
  - a. We are not helped with any statement of his lineage, nor who the reigning king was.
  - b. The oracle would have been given before 612 B.C. (the fall of Nineveh), and likely before the death of King Ashurbanipal in 626 B.C. (Because after his death, the nation declined rapidly).  
The date of the book was likely c.660 B.C. during the reign of King Manasseh.

### The Background and Setting of Nahum.

1. Nahum prophesied this one single vision against Nineveh, the capital of Assyria.
2. Nineveh
  - a. The book is a sequel to the book of Jonah.
  - b. Jonah preached to Nineveh about 100 years before Nahum, and the entire city repented. But they did not spread the results to the next generation. Therefore, by the time of Nahum, 100 years later, the people were back to their idolatry and wickedness. It is for this that God pronounces judgement on them.
3. The Man
  - a. Nothing is known for certain about Nahum.
  - b. A contemporary of Jeremiah and Zephaniah.
  - c. “The significance of the writing prophets was not their personal lives; it was their message. Thus, background information about the prophet from within the prophecy is rare.” John MacArthur, in the *MSB*. p. 1279

## The Purpose and Message of Nahum

1. The **purpose** of the book is to **condemn Assyria for her arrogance and wickedness toward God and His covenant people** and by this, **give Jacob hope and encouragement**.
  - a. Once again, there is no call to repentance, nor any invitation to turn to God and be blessed (as God offered in the time of Jonah!). God simply declares how evil Assyria is, and the condemnation God intends to bring on them.
  - b. At the same time, God gives *comfort* (“Nahum”) to His covenant people through this.
  - c. Note: “The prophet’s name ‘comfort’ would not have meant much to the Assyrians, who could expect only the judgment of God. There is nothing comforting in that. However, the name ‘comfort’ would have brought great encouragement to the Hebrews as they considered God’s judgment upon their enemies. This would have assured them that God had not abandoned them, and was still concerned about their welfare. Thus, it would be seen that God was faithful to his promises.” Tom Vacek
2. The **message** of the book of Nahum is: **“God is going to destroy Nineveh (and, thus, Assyria).”**
  - a. Again, though the background of the prophet Nahum may be unclear, the *source and content of his message is not!*
  - b. Nineveh is condemned to destruction because of her arrogance. *cp. 1.14, and the rest of the book.*
3. The book begins with a description of YHWH’s character and power in relation to His adversaries (specifically, Nineveh) in chapter one. The rest of the book describes Nineveh’s power vs. God’s power, and the description and declaration of her destruction. No happy thoughts here for Nineveh!

## The Themes of Nahum

1. Character and power of God – *chapter 1*
2. Promise and provision of hope by God – *1.7, 12-13, 15; 2.2*
3. Wrath and condemnation of evil – *1.6, 14; 2.13; 3.5-7*
4. Direct statements of God’s opposition to Nineveh – *1.14; 2.13; 3.5-6;*
5. Key Verses: *1.2-3a; 1.14; 1.15; 2.13; 3.4; 3.5-6*

## The Outline of Nahum

1. Superscription – *1.1*
2. Description of God’s power and punishment of Nineveh 1.2-15
  - a. Description of God’s person and power 1.2-8
  - b. Description of God’s punishment 1.9-15
3. Description of God’s declaration and destruction of Nineveh 2.1-3.19
  - a. Destruction of Nineveh 2.1-12
  - b. Declaration of Nineveh’s destruction (*Why* they are being destroyed) 3.1-19

**Interpretive challenges** – none