

Lesson 2. The Minor Prophets: Overview Study of Nahum

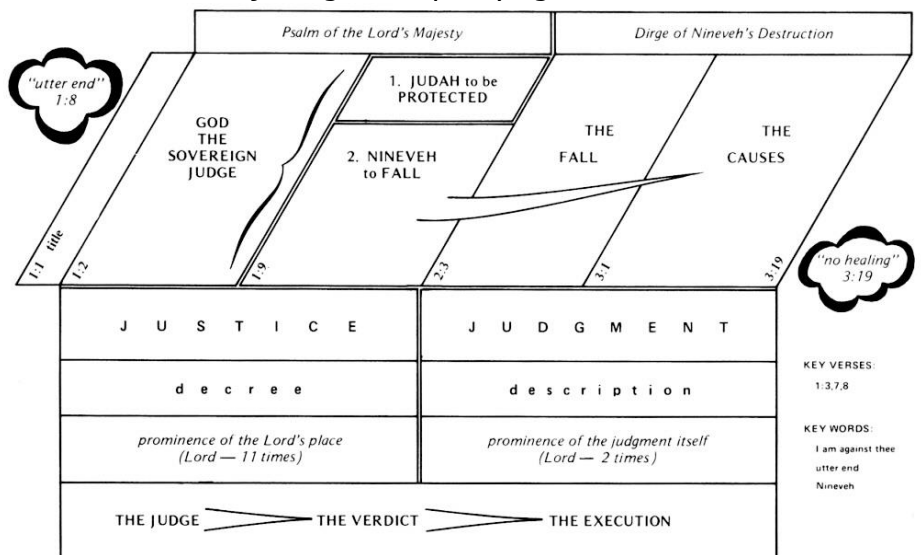
Purpose and Message

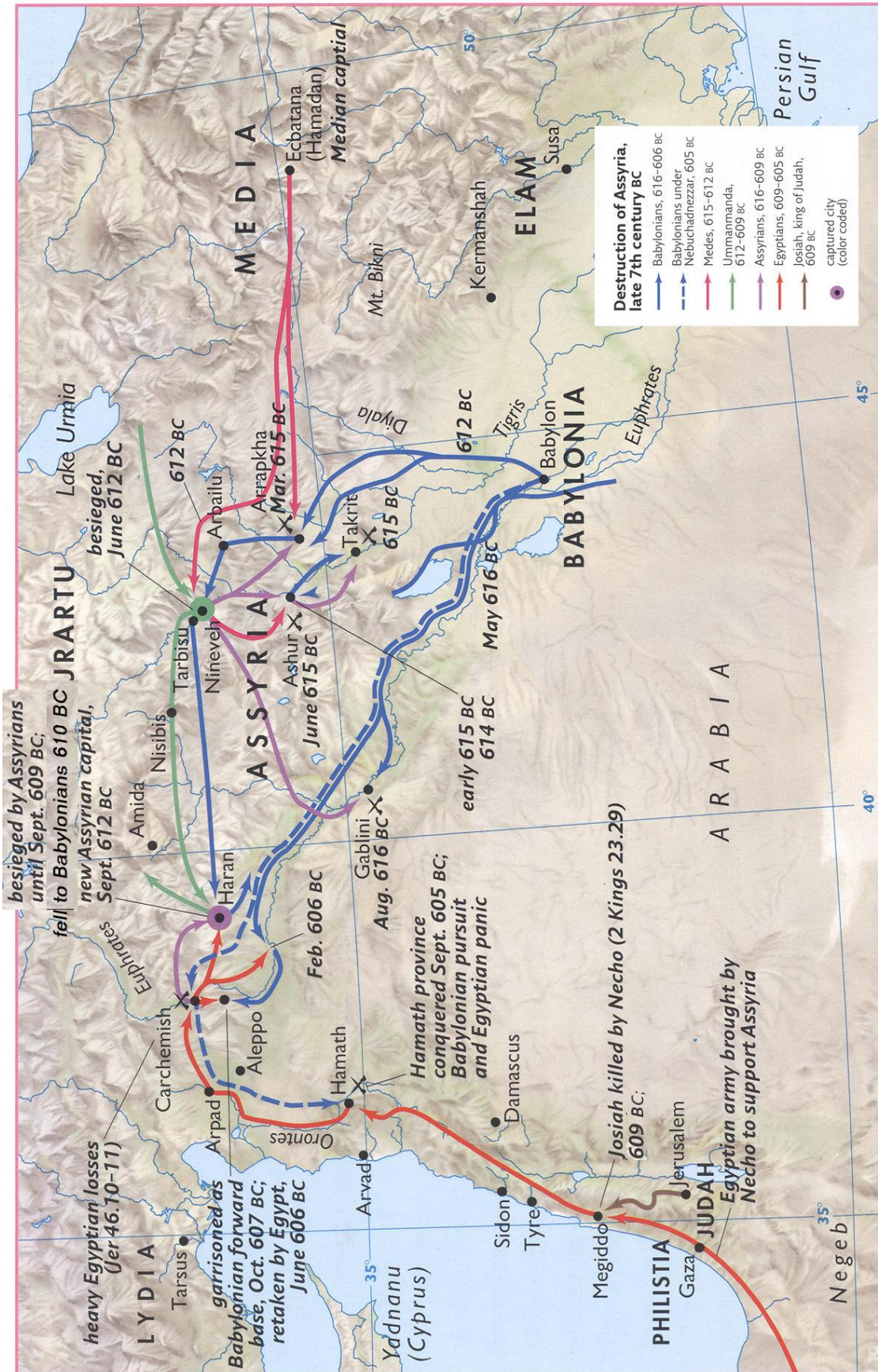
The purpose of the book was to pronounce the doom of Nineveh. This is an oracle of judgment similar to the oracles of judgment spoken against the nations as found most prominently in the major prophets. The message was that the days of Assyrian rule were coming to an end at the hands of the Lord. This was not just a case of the ebb and flow of history, but the action of the Lord’s punishment against Nineveh. He announced Nineveh’s doom, and he would accomplish it

Although the Assyrian Empire did not actually expire until the last decade of the seventh century (600’s), its breaking point came mid-century. At that time the revolts in the empire began to take their toll, and by the 640s and 630s Assyrian control was first lagging and then crumbling as the empire disintegrated. Within a few years of Ashurbanipal’s death (627), the Babylonians had achieved their independence; over the next two decades they, along with the Medes, dismantled the mighty Assyrian state. The centerpiece of the Assyrian collapse was the fall of Nineveh in 612, as prophesied by Nahum. Nineveh had been fashioned into the gem of the Assyrian Empire by Sennacherib (704–681 BC). He had nearly tripled the size of the city and made it his capital, constructing a magnificent palace there and beautifying the city with parks, a botanical garden, and a zoo. Its splendor was probably surpassed in the ancient world only by Nebuchadrezzar’s Babylon. Yet, despite its splendor, Nineveh represented the brutal wickedness of the Assyrians that the Lord had determined to punish—prophesied, for example, in Isaiah 14:24–25 and Zephaniah 2:13–15.

The kings of Judah during most of the period under discussion were Manasseh (695–642 BC) and Josiah (640–609 BC). However, Manasseh did repent of his wickedness toward the end of his reign (2 Chron 33:12–16). This occurred after he had been taken captive to Assyria, which may have been the result of his joining a conspiracy against

Ashurbanipal. The most likely occasion for Manasseh’s insubordination would have been in conjunction with the Babylonian revolt in 652 BC. This chronology also best fits the data on Thebes which was taken by the Assyrians in 664 BC, and accordingly the book of Nahum may tentatively be dated to 655–650 BC. However, some date it to Josiah which could place it around 630 to 612 BC.





Lesson 9 Nahum



The prophet predicts the fall of Nineveh

Key Verses

Nahum 1:2 (ESV)

² The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD is avenging and wrathful; the LORD takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies.

Nahum 1:7-8 (ESV)

⁷ The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him. ⁸ But with an overflowing flood he will make a complete end of the adversaries, and will pursue his enemies into darkness.

Outline - Nahum

- I. God's wrath against Nineveh
- II. The siege & fall of Nineveh
- III. The sin's which led to Nineveh's fall

King
Manasseh
of Judah
697-642 BC



- He did evil in the sight of the LORD
- He did despicable practices like nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel.
- He rebuilt high places that Hezekiah had destroyed,
- He erected altars for Baal and made an Asherah
- He worshiped all the host of heaven & served them.
- The Asherah he set in the house of which the LORD
- He burned his sons as an offering in the Valley of Hinnom, He used fortune-telling and omens and sorcery, and dealt with mediums and necromancers.
- He shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another
- Taken captive by Assyrians, repented and returned



Prophecy Against Nineveh

Nahum 1:8—3:19

Will be punished for idolatry, bloodshed, witchcraft
1:14; 2:12; 3:1-4

Will be destroyed by flood
1:8

No descendants will bear their name
1:14

Will be invaded by warriors
2:1-4

Will be like those who are drunk
3:11

Fortresses will fall
3:12

Soldiers will be weak
3:13

Gates will be opened to the enemy
3:13

Will be burned
3:13, 15

Will face siege by invading army
3:14

Will be unable to defend itself
2:5-6

Will be completely destroyed
1:15; 2:6-10, 13; 3:2-3, 19

3rd year or month of siege, the Khosr River, which ran through the city flooded

Nineveh was so utterly devastated its location was lost to memory until rediscovered in 1853

City was destroyed by the Babylonians, Medes & Scythians in 612 BC.

The king and his courtiers were surprised in the midst of their "carousings"

Broken wall from flood allowed the enemy to come in.

According to the ancient historian, Diodorus Siculus, the armies laid siege to the city for over two years or months.

The flood broke down the floodgates and part of the wall

fire played a great part in the destruction told by historians & ruins

The city was destroyed by the Medes, Babylonians and Scythians in 612 BC.

When gates the best defended and the hardest to capture taken no way of escape

City was destroyed so completely by the flood & enemies that when Alexander the Great fought the battle of Arbela nearby in 331 BC, he did not know a city had been there. Nineveh was never rebuilt.

Nahum preached during the reign of King Manasseh, one of the most evil kings in Judah's long history, a man who needed the pain of his own experience to teach him the lessons of being a good king. The book of Nahum mentions the recent fall of No-amon, or Thebes, which occurred in 663 BC (Nahum 3:8), as well as the coming destruction of Nineveh, which happened in 612 BC (1:1; 3:11-15). But when, during this more than fifty-year period, did Nahum preach? The Assyrian Empire, which had its capital at Nineveh, was at its most powerful in the first half of this period, having a stranglehold on Judah during King Manasseh's reign (2 Chr33:10-13). Also, while the book of Nahum mentions the destruction of Thebes, it does not mention its reconstruction, which took place in 654 BC. This leads to date Nahum's prophecy between the years of 663 and 654 BC. Manasseh was probably taken as a captive under the reign of Ashurbanipal the last powerful king and who put down a revolt lasting from 652 to 648 BC. Manasseh's great conversion took place late in his reign, ~648 BC, a mere half-dozen years before his death. That means Nahum preached during the darkest period in Judah's history to that point, a time filled with idolatry of all kinds in a nation that had fully turned its back on God.



Prophet's Visual Aids

What is Nahum using to help people Visualize

1:6

3:12

2:4

3:15-17

For each of the three books we will spend time developing an overview of the book by using bible study skills to understand the book by reading, looking at words or phrases that are repeated, that are peculiar, that make comparisons or contrasts, that are strange and that are prophetic.

The prophets went beyond simply explaining the crises the Israelites were facing in their own time. They explained how this fit into God's dealings with the nation and his eventual plan of redemption. Therefore, they present an overall view, or paradigm, which pervades their writings. There are eight basic points summed up in this interpretation of history;

1. God is Lord ("The Lord says"/"word of the Lord" etc)
2. Election of Israel
3. Rebellion of Israel
4. Judgment of God
5. Divine Compassion of God
6. Call to Repentance
7. Redemption & Restoration
8. Kingdom of God

A. DATE OF BOOK

655-650 BC if in reign of Manasseh or 630 to 612 BC if in reign of Josiah

B. ASSIGNMENTS FOR OVERVIEW OF OBADIAH

1. Completely read the book.
2. Reread the book
3. After reading go back through the book and look for six things:
 - a. Repeated Words and Phrases.
 - b. Peculiar Words and Phrases.
 - c. Comparisons and Contrasts.
 - d. Figurative Expressions.
 - e. Anything Strange.
 - f. Any prophetic statements
4. After reading the book look for passages of the book that fit into the "Prophetic Paradigm", Note this will be limited since Jonah is written as a narrative.
5. Fill in the study worksheet for Obadiah.

Study Skills for The Minor ProphetsASSIGNMENTS FOR BOOK OF NAHUM

	Looking for -	
A	Repeated Words and Phrases	
B	Peculiar Words and Phrases	
C	Comparisons and Contrasts	
D	Figurative Expressions	
E	Anything Strange	
F	Any prophetic statements	

	Looking for -	Nahum
A	God says /word of the Lord	
B	Election of Israel Relationship of Nineveh to God	
C	Rebellion of Israel Rebellion of Nineveh	
D	Judgment of God	
E	Divine Compassion of God	
F	Call to Repentance	
G	Redemption & Restoration	
H	Kingdom of God	

Nahum 1 God's Wrath Against Nineveh

¹ The burden against Nineveh.

The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.

² God *is* jealous, and the LORD avenges;

The LORD avenges and *is* furious.

The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries,

And He reserves *wrath* for His enemies;

³ The LORD *is* slow to anger and great in power,

And will not at all acquit *the wicked*.

The LORD has His way

In the whirlwind and in the storm,

And the clouds *are* the dust of His feet.

⁴ He rebukes the sea and makes it dry,

And dries up all the rivers. Bashan and Carmel wither,

And the flower of Lebanon wilts.

⁵ The mountains quake before Him,

The hills melt,

And the earth heaves at His presence,

Yes, the world and all who dwell in it.

⁶ Who can stand before His indignation?

And who can endure the fierceness of His anger?

His fury is poured out like fire,

And the rocks are thrown down by Him.

⁷ The LORD *is* good,

A stronghold in the day of trouble;

And He knows those who trust in Him.

⁸ But with an overflowing flood

He will make an utter end of its place,

And darkness will pursue His enemies.

⁹ What do you conspire against the LORD?

He will make an utter end *of it*.

Affliction will not rise up a second time.

¹⁰ For while tangled *like* thorns,

And while drunken *like* drunkards,

They shall be devoured like stubble fully dried.

¹¹ From you comes forth *one*

Who plots evil against the LORD,

A wicked counselor.

¹² Thus says the LORD:

"Though *they are* safe, and likewise many,

Yet in this manner they will be cut down

When he passes through.

Though I have afflicted you,

I will afflict you no more;

¹³ For now I will break off his yoke from you,

And burst your bonds apart."

¹⁴ The LORD has given a command concerning you:
 "Your name shall be perpetuated no longer.
 Out of the house of your gods I will cut off
 the carved image and the molded image.
 I will dig your grave,
 For you are vile."

¹⁵ Behold, on the mountains
 The feet of him who brings good tidings,
 Who proclaims peace!
 O Judah, keep your appointed feasts,
 Perform your vows.
 For the wicked one shall no more pass through you;
 He is utterly cut off.

Nahum 2 Destruction of Nineveh

¹ He who scatters has come up before your face.
 Man the fort!
 Watch the road!
 Strengthen *your* flanks!
 Fortify *your* power mightily.

² For the LORD will restore the excellence of Jacob
 Like the excellence of Israel,
 For the emptiers have emptied them out
 And ruined their vine branches.

³ The shields of his mighty men *are* made red,
 The valiant men *are* in scarlet.
 The chariots *come* with flaming torches
 In the day of his preparation,
 And the spears are brandished.

⁴ The chariots rage in the streets,
 They jostle one another in the broad roads;
 They seem like torches,
 They run like lightning.

⁵ He remembers his nobles;
 They stumble in their walk;
 They make haste to her walls,
 And the defense is prepared.

⁶ The gates of the rivers are opened,
 And the palace is dissolved.

⁷ It is decreed:
 She shall be led away captive,
 She shall be brought up;
 And her maidservants shall lead *her*
 as with the voice of doves,
 Beating their breasts.

Nahum 2 Destruction of Nineveh

- ⁸ Though Nineveh of old *was* like a pool of water,
 Now they flee away.
 "Halt! Halt!" *they cry*; But no one turns back.
- ⁹ Take spoil of silver!
 Take spoil of gold!
There is no end of treasure,
 Or wealth of every desirable prize.
- ¹⁰ She is empty, desolate, and waste!
 The heart melts, and the knees shake;
 Much pain *is* in every side,
 And all their faces are drained of color.
- ¹¹ Where *is* the dwelling of the lions,
 And the feeding place of the young lions,
 Where the lion walked, the lioness *and* lion's cub,
 And no one made *them* afraid?
- ¹² The lion tore in pieces enough for his cubs,
 Killed for his lionesses,
 Filled his caves with prey,
 And his dens with flesh.
- ¹³ "Behold, I *am* against you," says the LORD of hosts,
 "I will burn your chariots in smoke,
 and the sword shall devour your young lions;
 I will cut off your prey from the earth, and
 the voice of your messengers shall be heard no more."

Nahum 3 Woe to Nineveh

- ¹ Woe to the bloody city!
It is all full of lies and robbery.
Its victim never departs.
- ² The noise of a whip
 And the noise of rattling wheels,
 Of galloping horses,
 Of clattering chariots!
- ³ Horsemen charge with bright sword and glittering spear.
There is a multitude of slain,
A great number of bodies,
Countless corpses—
They stumble over the corpses--
- ⁴ Because of the multitude of harlotries
 of the seductive harlot,
 The mistress of sorceries,
 Who sells nations through her harlotries,
 And families through her sorceries.
- ⁵ "Behold, I *am* against you," says the LORD of hosts;
 "I will lift your skirts over your face,
 I will show the nations your nakedness,
 And the kingdoms your shame.
- ⁶ I will cast abominable filth upon you,
 Make you vile,
 And make you a spectacle.
- ⁷ It shall come to pass *that* all who look upon you
 Will flee from you, and say,
 'Nineveh is laid waste!
 Who will bemoan her?'
 Where shall I seek comforters for you?"
- ⁸ Are you better than No Amon
That was situated by the River,
That had the waters around her,
Whose rampart was the sea,
Whose wall was the sea?
- ⁹ Ethiopia and Egypt *were* her strength,
 And *it was* boundless;
 Put and Lubim
 were your helpers.
- ¹⁰ Yet she *was* carried away,
 She went into captivity;
 Her young children also were dashed to pieces
 At the head of every street;
 They cast lots for her honorable men,
 And all her great men were bound in chains.

Nahum 3 Woe to Nineveh

¹¹ You also will be drunk;
 You will be hidden;
 You also will seek refuge from the enemy.

¹² All your strongholds *are* fig trees with ripened figs:
 If they are shaken,
 They fall into the mouth of the eater.

¹³ Surely, your people in your midst *are* women!
 The gates of your land are wide open for your enemies;
 Fire shall devour the bars of your *gates*.

¹⁴ Draw your water for the siege!
 Fortify your strongholds!
 Go into the clay and tread the mortar!
 Make strong the brick kiln!

¹⁵ There the fire will devour you,
 The sword will cut you off;
 It will eat you up like a locust.
 Make yourself many--like the locust!
 Make yourself many--like the *swarming* locusts!

¹⁶ You have multiplied your merchants more than the stars
 of heaven.
 The locust plunders and flies away.

¹⁷ Your commanders *are* like *swarming* locusts,
 And your generals like great grasshoppers,
 Which camp in the hedges on a cold day;
 When the sun rises they flee away,
 And the place where they *are* is not known.

¹⁸ Your shepherds slumber,
 O king of Assyria;
 Your nobles rest *in the dust*.
 Your people are scattered on the mountains,
 And no one gathers them.

¹⁹ Your injury *has* no healing,
 Your wound is severe.
 All who hear news of you
 Will clap *their* hands over you,
 For upon whom has not your wickedness passed continually?