

Old Testament Survey—Nahum

Due to the NANC conference two weeks ago and our Missions conference last week, it's been couple of weeks since we've been in our current Old Testament Survey series. So let's do something to get our minds back in the mode of thinking about the Old Testament. Let's take a *quiz!*

Review Quiz:

1. What prophet is known as the "weeping prophet"?
 - a. Jeremiah
 - b. Isaiah
 - c. Ezekiel
2. What prophet ministered to the common people in Judah?
 - a. Micah
 - b. Hosea
 - c. Jonah
3. Who is the main character(s) in the book of Jonah?
 - a. Jonah
 - b. The Sailors
 - c. The Ninevites
 - d. None of the above
4. Jeremiah ministered in Judah during the time of the Babylonian captivity. Who was his counterpart that ministered in Babylon?
 - a. Isaiah
 - b. Ezekiel
 - c. Hosea
5. What prophet, because of his devotion to his unfaithful wife, is a vivid picture of the unconditional love of God?
 - a. Amos
 - b. Micah
 - c. Hosea
6. What prophet attacked the social injustice of God's people, and confronted the unethical practices of businessmen in the northern kingdom?
 - a. Amos
 - b. Micah
 - c. Isaiah
7. Which of the following is *best* known for his teaching on the "Day of the Lord"?
 - a. Ezekiel
 - b. Joel
 - c. Obadiah
8. Which prophet confronted the nation of Edom for its sin against Israel?
 - a. Obadiah
 - b. Ezekiel
 - c. Joel
9. Which of the following is known as the prince of the prophets?
 - a. Isaiah
 - b. Jeremiah
 - c. Ezekiel
10. Which prophet personally demonstrated that it's possible to live for God outside the Promised Land.
 - a. Amos
 - b. Daniel
 - c. Joel

Bonus: Who probably is the author of Lamentations?

- a. Isaiah b. Jeremiah c. Micah

This evening, we arrive at the little known book of Nahum.

Discuss: What stands out about the book of Nahum?

Who wrote the book?

--Nahum

--His name means "comfort" and is related to the name Nehemiah, meaning "The LORD comforts." (NIV Study Bible)

--He was from the home town of Elkosh (unsure of location; may have been from Capernaum in the north, or near Beth Jabrim sw of Jerusalem, acc. to Rowland). It's possible that Nahum was an exile, possibly a northerner.

When was the book written?

--7th century B.C.

--Note the following time indicators:

1. In 3:8-10, Nahum speaks of the fall of Thebes, which happened in 663 B.C.
2. In all three chapters, he prophesied Nineveh's fall, which did not happen until 612 B.C.

Therefore, Nahum gave this oracle between 663 and 612, probably towards the end since he represents the fall of Nineveh as imminent (2:1; 3:14).

Why was the book written?

--Nahum presents the wrath of God. It is a prediction of the inevitable destruction of Nineveh (see 1:1-2, 8). Nineveh was at its peak under Ashurbanipal (669-633). At this time Judah was a vassal to Assyria.

--Important to see the connection between Nahum and Jonah.

--Nahum is a backdoor message of encouragement and hope for Israel. Though Nahum's message had to do with the destruction of Nineveh, he probably never gave it to the Ninevites.

Discuss: How would a book like this encourage God's people in Israel?

Important Facts about Nineveh:

--in 704 made capital of Assyria

--very powerful city (3 chariots could ride abreast on top of its city walls; 140 feet wide moats, 60 feet deep; 1200 defense towers; 7 miles of wall around the city!!!)

--possibly in 612 the Tigris overflowed and made the walls weak and vulnerable (2:8).

The Downfall of Nineveh in 612: (see Jack Finnegan, *Light from Ancient Past*, p. 180-4)

--A flood

--A fast of 100 days to propitiate the gods (just like in Jonah)

--The night before the destruction, there was a drunken orgy (as in Daniel with Belshazzar).

--The city was destroyed and forgotten until 1842 when it was discovered.

What is the outline of the book?

I. A Psalm of God's Majesty (1)

II. Description of Nineveh's Destruction (2)

III. Reasons for Nineveh's Destruction (3)

(Wood, p. 320)

I. Verdict of Vengeance (ch 1)

II. Vision of Vengeance (ch 2)

III. Vindication of Vengeance (ch 3)

(G. Campbell Morgan)

What is the message of the book in one sentence?

Nahum reminds us that a holy God takes right and wrong seriously (He will execute His wrath towards the ungodly).

What contribution does the book make to biblical theology (that is, how does this book relate to the rest of the Bible)?

1. *Nahum teaches us about the wrath of God.*

We see a view of God that is seldom discussed. Let's survey the chapters and observe God's attributes.

In chapter one, God is described as:

- v 2 jealous, avenging, takes vengeance, filled with wrath
- v 3 slow to anger, great in power, will not leave the guilty unpunished
- v 6 His indignation, His anger, His wrath
- v 7 He is good, a refuge in times of trouble, one who cares for those who trust

In chapter two, God is described as:

- v 2 the One who restores the splendor of His people, Judah
- v 13 One who is "against" Nineveh [What a fearful thought!]
- v 13 He is the "LORD Almighty"

In chapter three, God is described as:

- v 5 One who is "against" Nineveh, and who repays it for its wickedness

Summary: In Nahum's prophecy, we see the righteousness of God. God's holiness demands that He both bring retribution toward rebellious unbelievers (like Assyria) and show compassion toward His own people (Archer, 360).

2. *Nahum teaches us that the mightiest of nations can't stand before the Lord.*

See: 1:9, 12, 14

Scan through the book to observe the things that God says He disliked about Nineveh:

- 1:9 they plot against the Lord
- 1:11 they plot evil against the Lord and counsel wickedness
- 1:14 they had carved images and idols and temples; they were vile
- 2:1 they had a "warrior" mentality (very brutal; see 3:1-3)
- 3:4 engaged in harlotry, sorcery, witchcraft, prostitution

3. *Nahum gives a sober warning that nations built upon selfishness, greed, and force won't stand. They have within them the seeds of destruction.*

(see Kyle Yates, *Lessons*)

Discuss: How would you use the book of Nahum to prove the point, "Might does not make right."

Remember, God's patience with oppressive nations has a limit.

4. *The book of Nahum is a powerful evidence of the authority of God's Word.*

How so? Is there a city of Nineveh today??? No!

The predictions of the prophets (and the subsequent fulfillments) bolster our confidence in the Word of God. In what ways?