

**A PERSONAL  
VERSE BY VERSE COMMENTARY**

**NAHUM**

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**Nah. 1:1 The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.**

The message of this book is identified as a burden, a message of doom, against Nineveh, the capital of the mighty Assyrians. It was located on the banks of the Tigris River. The prophet through whom God chose to deliver this message is identified as Nahum the Elkoshite. Commentators differ and can only speculate regarding more specific identification.

**Nah. 1:2 God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.**

This message begins with a bold statement that YHWH, the self-existent, eternal God, is furious. The Hebrew for *jealous* is a reference to anger; for *revengeth* the reference is to avenge or punish. *Furious* is a reference to “hot anger and rage.” Point is made that YHWH’s vengeance and wrath is directed toward His adversaries and enemies.

From the very beginning of God’s dealings with the nation of Israel, He established Himself as a jealous God.

Ex. 20:3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Ex. 20:4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

Ex. 20:5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God....

We need to remember that God sent the reluctant Jonah to preach repentance to Nineveh, and at that time they believed God and repented in sackcloth and ashes.

Jonah 3:5 So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

Jonah 3:6 For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered *him* with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

Research indicates that Nahum’s prophecies followed that of Jonah by some 100-150 years. Evidently, by this time the Ninevites had returned to their idolatrous ways and once again incited God’s anger.

**Nah. 1:3 The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.**

**Nah. 1:4 He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth.**

**Nah. 1:5 The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein.**

Verse 5 indicates that the Ninevites must not have followed God very long since point is made that YHWH is slow to anger. Most of the time God’s longsuffering and patience is equated with weakness, but He very clearly states that to be a wrong conclusion; He is exceedingly great (from the Hebrew) in power. He will not allow the wicked to go unpunished.

“the LORD hath his way...” – The rest of this section is a word picture of God’s power. He is the power behind the whirlwind (hurricanes, tornadoes), and the clouds are like specks of dust scattered by the movement of His feet. The sea and rivers are subject to His command. When He chooses not to replenish their waters, the productivity of the nations is diminished. He can cause the mountains to quake/shake, the hills to melt (landslides, volcanoes), and the earth to burn (hot sun with no rain, flow of lava). The whole world and all its inhabitants are at His mercy.

**Nah. 1:6 Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.**

The two questions at the beginning of this verse are rhetorical; the obvious answer—no one. YHWH is THE authority and power of the universe and nothing or no one can prevent Him from doing anything He so chooses. At this time His anger is flowing hot and no place of refuge (from the Hebrew) can withstand it.

**Nah. 1:7 The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.**

In light of the above characterization, the prophet emphasizes that YHWH is good. I think this is a statement of contrast to those at whom His anger is directed—those who are evil and wicked. He is a strong hold, a source of defense; “He takes care of those who take refuge in him,” (CJB) those who look to Him in faith.

This is a reminder that God never promised that trusting Him as LORD would prevent us from experiencing trouble. He did promise that He would take care of His own in time of trouble.

Scripture is clear that God is good--loving, kind, merciful, righteous, just and holy. There is never a question about His actions being right and just. We may not always understand at the time—e.g., Joseph sold into slavery by his brothers, Job’s afflictions, Jesus dying on the cross, etc.--but it does not change the fact.

**Nah. 1:8 But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies.**

In His righteousness, God is going to completely destroy Nineveh, His enemies. They will experience “misery, destruction, death...sorrow, and wickedness.”

**Nah. 1:9 What do ye imagine against the LORD? he will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time.**

No matter what plans those in Nineveh may make to stand against YHWH, His victory will be complete. Nineveh will not be allowed to rise to power again.

**Nah. 1:10 For while *they be* folden together *as* thorns, and while they are drunken *as* drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry.**

The Ninevites are pictures as a tangled mess of thorns and drunk, easily devoured by the coming fire of judgment.

**Nah. 1:11 There is *one* come out of thee, that imagineth evil against the LORD, a wicked counsellor.**

I've never really noticed this verse before. All of a sudden the prophet makes reference to "a wicked counselor" from Nineveh, one who imagines evil against YHWH. The Hebrew for *imagineth* is a reference to weaving, fabricating and plotting with malicious intent. I couldn't help but think of references to another "Assyrian" that I have encountered in my studies of the scripture, especially throughout the book of Isaiah. It became clear to me (as taught by Chuck Missler) that he is a type of the Antichrist to come. Could this verse also have double reference? I think that Nahum was making specific reference to the king of Assyria.

**Nah. 1:12 Thus saith the LORD; Though *they be* quiet, and likewise many, yet thus shall they be cut down, when he shall pass through. Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more.**

**Nah. 1:13 For now will I break his yoke from off thee, and will burst thy bonds in sunder.**

YHWH is declaring that though He has allowed the Assyrian and his armies, which are great in number, to afflict the Israelites in the past, they will not be allowed to do so again. He is going to deliver His people from the oppressive rule of the Assyrians.

"quiet" = complete (literally or figuratively); especially friendly  
The NIV interprets this to mean many allies, while some other translations interpret it to mean many at full strength. Both would seem to apply.

Point is made that YHWH is sovereign and in control concerning everything that affects His people.

**Nah. 1:14 And the LORD hath given a commandment concerning thee, *that no more of thy name be sown: out of the house of thy gods will I cut off the graven image and the molten image: I will make thy grave; for thou art vile.***

I think the NIV gives a clear expression of the meaning of this verse.

You will have no descendants to bear your name. I will destroy the carved images and cast idols that are in the temple of your gods. I will prepare your grave, for you are vile.

I am reminded that prophecy is unique to YHWH. He is telling the Assyrians their fate in advance. Though they have rejected Him as their LORD, He will be proven LORD of all.

**Nah. 1:15 Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off.**

This verse is a word of encouragement to the people of Judah. The message this time is a good one, a message of peace and safety. They are encouraged to respond with thanksgiving and obedience to the LORD by keeping their solemn

feasts and honoring their vows to YHWH. He is not going to allow the wicked Assyrian to bother their nation again; he is going to be completely destroyed.

I think it is interesting that the wording seems to be more in reference to a single person—“he is utterly cut off.” Again, I think there is reason for double reference. The area of the Assyrian empire later became part of the Roman Empire—the land from which the Antichrist will emerge. Although he will be a source of great affliction to the people of Israel, the time will come when he will be completely destroyed by God also. When that happens, the Lord Jesus will assume the throne and Israel will once again keep their solemn feasts.