



Nahum

Judgment On Nineveh

Introduction

Nahum: “comfort” and “avenging”

Date: 663 (Thebes) to 612 B.C. (Nineveh)

- Power Struggle: Assyria-Babylon
- Succession: 639, Ashurbanipal’s last inscription; 630, no presence in Syria-Palestine; 627 death
- Babylon: 627, Assyrian ruler disappears, rise of Nabopolassar (former Assyrian official), 616, Babylon invades Assyria

Theme: Judgment on Nineveh

Message: YHWH will avenge harm that Assyria inflicted on His covenant people!

Almighty Appears (1:2-11)

Avenge (1:2-3a): 'YHWH is jealous, avenging' (Isa 6)
[Why does such a description of God seem so foreign to us?]

– Paradox?: 'Master of wrath' and 'slow to anger'

Affect (1:3b-11): 'Earth is laid waste before Him'
[What is the result of God's appearance in creation?]

– Punish or Protect? fear-all (3-5), fire-adversary (6),
fortress-allegiance (7), flood-Assyria/Nineveh, 'her'
(8), 'one who plotted evil' = king of Assyria (11)

Assyria Annihilated (1:12-3:19)

Assyrian king taunted as Judah celebrates (1:12-15)

YHWH will judge the wicked, free the oppressed, 2x



Assyria Annihilated (1:12-3:19)

“Though **they (Assyrians)** are at full strength & many, **they** will be cut down and pass away.

Though I have afflicted **you, (Judah, 2fs)**
I will afflict **you** no more.

And now I will break **his yoke (king of Assyria)**
from off **you** and will burst **your bonds (Judah).**”

YHWH has given a command about **you (king, 2ms):**

“No more shall **your** name be perpetuated . . .
I will make **your** grave, for **you** are vile.” (1:12-14)

Assyria Annihilated (1:12-3:19)

Assyrian king taunted as Judah celebrates (1:12-15)

YHWH will judge the wicked, free the oppressed, 2x

Assyrian king taunted as oppressed celebrate (3:18f)

Sheep scattered, king wounded, his enemies cheer

Assyria Annihilated (1:12-3:19)

Assyrian king taunted as Judah celebrates (1:12-15)

Dramatic call to alarm! (2:1-10)

Watchman warns of siege; defeat, exile, plundered

Dramatic call to alarm! (3:14-17)

Watchman warns of siege; defeat, devoured, empty?

Assyrian king taunted as oppressed celebrate (3:18f)

Nineveh

In the 7th c. B.C., Nineveh was transformed from being a major metropolis to being the capital of the empire. In choosing Nineveh as his capital, Sennacherib launched a massive rebuilding program. He built a magnificent palace and cut a processional way through the center of the city from the palace to the bridge crossing the Tigris. **His workers constructed an intricate system of aqueducts and canals to bring water into the city to irrigate an extensive garden . . .**

Nineveh

According to classical tradition (Diodorus and Xenophon), just before Nineveh fell, a succession of very high rainfalls deluged the area. The Khoser River swelled and the reservoir was breached. **The waters rushed through the overloaded canal system, breaking a gaping hole in the city wall and flooding the city. When the waters receded, the Babylonians stormed into Nineveh and conquered the city.**

Grayson, "Nineveh," *ABD* 4:1119

Assyria Annihilated (1:12-3:19)

Assyrian king taunted as Judah celebrates (1:12-15)

Dramatic call to alarm! (2:1-10)

Taunt against Assyria (2:11-12)

Assyria had been the fierce lion, devouring its prey

Taunt against Assyria (3:8-13)

Like Thebes, Nineveh to fall, devoured & neutered

Dramatic call to alarm! (3:14-17)

Assyrian king taunted as oppressed celebrate (3:18f)

Assyria Annihilated (1:12-3:19)

Assyrian king taunted as Judah celebrates (1:12-15)

Dramatic call to alarm! (2:1-10)

Taunt against Assyria (2:11-12)

Announcement of judgment: destroyed (2:13)

“I am against you, declares YHWH of hosts’

Announcement of judgment: disgraced (3:5-7)

Taunt against Assyria (3:8-13)

Dramatic call to alarm! (3:14-17)

Assyrian king taunted as oppressed celebrate (3:18f)

Assyria Annihilated (1:12-3:19)

Assyrian king taunted as Judah celebrates (1:12-15)

Dramatic call to alarm! (2:1-10)

Taunt against Assyria (2:11-12)

Announcement of judgment: destroyed (2:13)

Funeral song: blood & betrayal (3:1-4)

Announcement of judgment: disgraced (3:5-7)

Taunt against Assyria (3:8-13)

Dramatic call to alarm! (3:14-17)

Assyrian king taunted as oppressed celebrate (3:18f)

Summary

Though God used the Assyrians to punish His people, the Divine Warrior would soon appear to exact vengeance on Nineveh. Nahum 'laments' their fall, taunting them and urging others to celebrate their demise. Nahum's (נַחוּם) prediction and promise of God's vengeance (נִקְמָה) would bring much comfort but also challenge Israel to seek refuge in Him!

“Nahum invites a celebration of divine sovereignty & justice, affirming that God's retributive justice is good news.... At the same time, it expresses a challenge to trust and submit to God, and not be counted among His adversaries.”
(Renz, *Theological Interpretation of the Old Testament*, 285)