

Nachum (Nahum) – Part 1

The book of **Nachum (Nahum)** dramatically portrays **God** overwhelming Assyria to relieve *His* oppressed people. It was certainly a harsh message for Israel's enemies, but for the people of **Y'hudah**, it was a message of hope. The little prophecy of **Nachum**, while it is written by a Hebrew against the capital of a Gentile world power (**Nineveh**), is not a nationalistic treatise, but a denunciation of rampant militarism and tyranny, especially as it affects **God's** people. Although **God** uses pagans to punish *His* people's apostasy and sin, the tool itself is also liable to punishment.

The main theme of the book is the impending judgment of **Nineveh** by the **Lord** (1:1, 8; 2:8–13; 3:7–19) by which **He** would deliver *His* people (1:12–15; cp. vv. 7–8). **Adonai** would pay back **Nineveh** and the **Assyrians** in the same way they had mistreated their enemies. Since they were known for scattering their captives in brutal death marches, the **Lord** would send a scatterer (2:1) to disperse the **Assyrians** in retaliation for their cruelty (3:18–19; cp. 3:10). Since the **Assyrians** delighted in shedding blood and piling up the corpses of their foes, **He** would transform Nineveh into a city of blood with piles of its own corpses (3:1–3).

¹ This is a prophecy about Ninveh, the book of the vision of Nachum the Elkoshi: ² Adonai is a jealous and vengeful God. Adonai avenges; He knows how to be angry. Adonai takes vengeance on His foes and stores up wrath for His enemies.

Like a **jealous** (or zealous) husband, **God** would tolerate no rivals for **Israel's** affection, whether other so-called gods (Exodus 34:14–16) or foreign nations and their kings.

³ Adonai is slow to anger, but great in power; and He does not leave the guilty unpunished. Adonai's path is in the whirlwind and storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet.

That **God was slow to anger but great in power** indicates *His* wrath was not that of a hot-tempered tyrant. Neither was *His* compassion based on *His* inability to defeat those who oppressed *His* people. By no means would He *leave the guilty unpunished*, whether of *His* own people or their enemies (Exodus 34:7).

⁴ He rebukes the sea and leaves it dry; He dries up all the rivers. Bashan and the Karmel languish; the flower of the L'vanon withers.

Bashan and the Karmel languish (and even the **flower of L'vanon** (Lebanon) because of a severe drought, parching the most fertile lands in **Isra'el** (Isaiah 33:9) - from the east, **Bashan** in **Transjordan**, to the northwest borders of the storm god **Ba'al's** home territory near **Mount Carmel** and the **Lebanon** mountains.

⁵ The mountains quake before Him, and the hills dissolve; the earth collapses in His presence, the world and everyone living in it. ⁶ Who can withstand His fury? Who can endure His fierce anger? His wrath is poured out like fire, the rocks broken to pieces before him. ⁷ Adonai is good, a stronghold in time of trouble; He takes care of those who take refuge in him. ⁸ But with an overwhelming flood, He will make an end of [Ninveh's] place, and darkness will pursue His enemies.

When **He** punishes, no one can withstand Him. Yet **He takes care of those who take refuge in him**. His judgment would sweep like *an overflowing flood* through **Assyria**, destroying **Nineveh**, her capital.

⁹ What are you planning against Adonai? He is making an end [of it]; trouble will not arise a second time. ¹⁰ For like men drunk with liquor, they will be burned up like tangled thorns, like

straw completely dry. ¹¹ Out of you, [Ninveh,] He came, one who plots evil against Adonai, who counsels wickedness.

These words are addressed to the **Assyrians**. **God** was about to destroy them. The *one who plotted evil against the LORD* would fall. This probably refers to **Sennacherib** or to the insolent **Rabshakeh**.¹

*¹² Here is what Adonai says: "Though they be many and strong, they will be cut down, they will pass; and though I have made you suffer, I will make you suffer no more. ¹³ Now I will break His yoke from your necks and snap the chains that bind you. ¹⁴ Adonai gave this order concerning you: you will have no descendants to bear your name; from the house of your god I will cut off carved image and cast metal image; I will prepare your grave, because you are worthless."*²

Though the Assyrians **are** currently **safe**, **they will be cut down**. Though **Isra'el** had been **afflicted**, it will be afflicted **no more**, for **God will break off** the **Assyrians'** yoke from His people. Next, the **Lord** addresses the **Assyrian** king directly. His **name** would be forgotten, his idol-temple would be pillaged, and the **Lord** would **prepare** his **grave**, because he was **worthless**.

In your household, you might find tensions rising, possibly due to conflicts or unmet expectations, as in the strained relationships described in Nahum 1. To address this, initiate a family meeting focused on reconciliation. Use this time to openly discuss grievances, listen actively to one another, and pray together for healing. By fostering an environment where communication and forgiveness are prioritized, you can transform your home into a safe haven that reflects God's love and grace.

In our next post, we will continue to learn about the **Prophecy of Nahum (Nahum)**.

¹ William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1138.

² Nahum 1:1-14.