

## Nahum: Revenge or Consolation

*“Such is the sheer religion of...[the] Book of Nahum – thoroughly Oriental in its sense of God’s method and resources of destruction; very Jewish...in the bursting of its long pent-up hopes of revenge...we [the Christian West] should not attribute so much personal passion to the Avenger. With our keener sense of law, we should emphasize the slowness of the process” - G. A. Smith in 1903, Julia M. O’Brien, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004], 27.*

*“none of the Minor Prophets seem to equal Nahum, in boldness, ardor, and sublimity. His prophecy too forms a regular and perfect poem...it is truly majestic; the preparation for the destruction of Nineveh, and the description of its downfall and desolation, are expressed in the most glowing colors, and are bold and luminous in the highest degree” - R. Lowth, Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews (London, 1839), 234.*

### TIME PERIOD (663–612 BCE)

King of Judah	Years of Reign	Important Events in Judah & the World	
<b>Hezekiah</b> חִזְקִיָּהוּ	727-698	734-732	Syro-Ephramite invasion of Judah
		722	Fall of Samaria to Sargon, exile of ten tribes to Assyria
		701	Sennacherib’s invasion of Judah, fall of 46 cities, siege of Jerusalem
<b>Manasseh</b> מְשֵׁנָה	697-642	<b>663</b>	Assyria reaches Thebes (No-Amon) in Egypt – height of Assyrian power
<b>Josiah</b> יְאֹשִׁיָּהוּ	639-608	630’s	Assyria weakens dramatically – Judah regains lands and
		626	Death of Ashurbanipul of Assyria; Babylonia regains independence under Naplonasser
		622	Reading of the Sefer Torah and mass return of the Jewish people
		<b>612</b>	FALL OF NINEVEH
		608	Death of Josiah

### STRUCTURE:

1. THEOPHANY (1:2-1:8) – Nahum announces God’s reappearance
2. MESSAGE TO JUDAH (1:9-2:1) – No more suffering under Assyria

3. FALL OF NINEVEH (2:2-2:14) – Description of Nineveh’s fall
4. JUSTIFICATION FOR NINEVEH’S DESTRUCTION (ch. 3)

NAHUM'S USE OF EARLIER TEXTS:

NAHUM	EARLIER SOURCE MATERIAL
<p><b>NAHUM 1</b></p> <p><b>2</b> The Lord is a jealous and vengeful God and is full of wrath; the Lord avenges Himself upon His adversaries, and He bears a grudge against His enemies.</p> <p><b>3</b> The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, but He will surely not acquit; the Lord-His way is with a tempest and with a storm? and cloud is the dust of His feet.</p>	<p><b>EXODUS 34</b></p> <p><b>6</b> And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed: Lord, Lord, benevolent God, Who is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving kindness and truth,</p> <p><b>7</b> preserving loving kindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and rebellion and sin; yet He does not completely clear [of sin] He visits the iniquity of parents on children and children's children, to the third and fourth generations."</p> <p><b>1</b> וַיַּעֲבֵר ה' עַל-פָּנָיו וַיִּקְרָא ה' אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן אַרְךָ אַפַּיִם וְרַב-חַסֵּד וְאֱמֶת:</p> <p><b>2</b> וַיִּצַר חֹסֶד לְאֵלִים נִשָּׂא עֵינָיו וּפְשַׁע וְחַטָּאָה וְנִקְהָה לֹא וְנִקְהָה פִּקְדוֹ עֵינָיו אֲבוֹת עַל-בָּנִים וְעַל-בָּנֵי בָנִים עַל-שְׁלֹשִׁים וְעַל-רִבְעִים:</p>
<p><b>NAHUM 1</b></p> <p><b>4</b> He rebukes the sea and dries it up, and He has dried up all the rivers; Bashan and Carmel are cut off, and the blossoms of the Lebanon are cut off.</p> <p><b>5</b> Mountains quaked because of him and the hills melted, and the land raised up from before Him-and the inhabited earth and all who dwell thereon.</p>	<p><b>ISAIAH 34; AMOS 9</b></p> <p><b>9</b> The land mourns, it has been cut off; he disgraced the Lebanon, it was cut off; the Sharon became like the plain, and Bashan and Karmel have become emptied.</p> <p><b>13</b> Behold days are coming, says the Lord, that the plowman shall meet the reaper and the treader of the grapes the one who carries the seed, and the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt.</p> <p><b>ט</b> אָבֵל אֲמַלְלָה אֶרֶץ הַחֲפִיר לְבָנוֹן קָמַל הָיָה הַשָּׂרוֹן כְּעֵרְבָה וְנִעַר בָּשָׁן וְכַרְמֵל:</p> <p><b>ה</b> הַרִימֹת רָעִשׁוּ מִמֶּנּוּ וְהַגְּבָעוֹת הִתְמַגְּגוּ וְתִשָּׂא הָאָרֶץ מִפְּנֵיו וְתִבֵּל וְכָל-יוֹשְׁבֵי בָהּ:</p> <p><b>יג</b> הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נֹאֵם-ה' וְנִגַּשׁ חוֹרֵשׁ בְּקִצֹר וְדֶרֶךְ עֲנָבִים בְּמִשְׁךְ הַזֶּרַע וְהִטִּיפוּ הַהָרִים עֹסִיס וְכָל-הַגְּבָעוֹת תִּתְמַוְּגְנָה:</p>
<p><b>NAHUM 1</b></p> <p><b>9</b> What do you think of the Lord? He will make a full end; the trouble will not rise twice.</p>	<p><b>ISAIAH 10; HOSEA 7</b></p> <p><b>23</b> For destruction and annihilation the Lord God of Hosts performs in the midst of all the land.</p> <p><b>כג</b> כִּי כֹלָה וְנִחְרָצָה ה' אֱלֹקִים צְבָאוֹת עֹשֶׂה בְּקֶרֶב כָּל-הָאָרֶץ:</p>

		<b>15</b> But I chastised them, I strengthened their arms, yet to Me they attribute evil.	<b>טו</b> וְאֵנִי יִסְרֹתִי חֲזַקְתִּי זָרוּעֹתֵם וְאֵלַי יִחְשְׁבוּ-רָע.
<b>NAHUM 2</b> <b>1</b> Behold on the mountains the feet of a herald announcing peace. O Judah, keep your feasts, pay your vows-for the wicked one shall no longer continue to pass through you; he has been completely cut off.	<b>א</b> הִנֵּה עַל-הַהָרִים רַגְלֵי מְבַשֵּׂר מִשְׁמִיעַ שְׁלוֹם חֲגִי יְהוּדָה חֲגִיךָ שְׁלָמִי נִדְרֶיךָ כִּי לֹא יוֹסִיף עוֹד לְעִבְרָךְ (כְּתִיב לְעִבְרוֹ) בְּךָ בְּלִיעַל כָּלָה נִכְרָת:	<b>ISAIAH 52</b> <b>7</b> How beautiful are the feet of the herald on the mountains, announcing peace, heralding good tidings, announcing salvation, saying to Zion, "Your God has manifested His kingdom."	<b>ז</b> מֵה־נְאוֹו עַל-הַהָרִים רַגְלֵי מְבַשֵּׂר מִשְׁמִיעַ שְׁלוֹם מְבַשֵּׂר טוֹב מִשְׁמִיעַ יְשׁוּעָה אִמְרָ לְצִיּוֹן מַלְאֲךָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ:
<b>NAHUM 2</b> <b>2</b> The scatterer who came up before you is besieged by a siege. Watch the way! Strengthen your loins! Fortify your power mightily.	<b>ב</b> עֵלָה מִפִּיץ עַל-פְּנֵיךָ נִצּוֹר מְצוּרָה צַפֵּה-דָרוֹךְ חֲזַק מִתְנַיִם אֲמֵץ כַּח מְאֹד:	<b>ISAIAH 29</b> <b>3</b> And I will encamp in a circle upon you, and I will besiege you with a camp of siege, and I will erect upon you siege works.	<b>ג</b> וְחִנֵּיתִי כְדוֹר עֲלֶיךָ וְצָרְתִי עֲלֶיךָ מִצָּב וְהִקִּימְתִי עֲלֶיךָ מְצָרֹת:
<b>NAHUM 2</b> <b>3</b> For the Lord has restored the pride of Jacob as the pride of Israel, for the emptiers have emptied them out and destroyed their branches.	<b>ג</b> כִּי יָשַׁב ה' אֶת-גְּאוֹן יַעֲקֹב כְּגְאוֹן יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי בְקִקְוֹם בְּקִקְוִים וְזִמְרֵיהֶם שָׁחֲתוּ:	<b>AMOS 6</b> <b>8</b> The Lord God swore by Himself. The Lord God of Hosts says; I abhor the pride of Jacob, and I hate his palaces, and I will deliver the city and the fullness thereof.	<b>ח</b> נִשְׁבַּע ה' אֱלֹקִים בְּנַפְשׁוֹ נֹאֵם-ה' אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת מִתְאָב אֲנֹכִי אֶת-גְּאוֹן יַעֲקֹב וְאֶרְמַנְתִּיו שָׁגַאתִי וְהִסְגַּרְתִּי עִיר וּמְלֹאָהּ:
<b>NAHUM 2</b> <b>10</b> Plunder silver! Plunder gold! And there is no end to the treasures-to sweep out [Nineveh] of all precious vessels. <b>11</b> Empty, yea, emptied out and breached; and the heart melts, the knees stumble, and there is trembling in all loins; and the faces of all of them have gathered blackness.	<b>י</b> בָּזוּ כֶסֶף בָּזוּ זָהָב וְאֵין קֶצֶף לְתַכּוּנָהּ כְּבֹד מִכָּל כְּלֵי חֲמֻדָּה: <b>יא</b> בּוֹקָה וּמְבוּקָה וּמְבֻלְקָה וְלֵב נִמַּס וּפְקֵ בְרַפְיִים וְחִלְחָלָה בְּכָל-מִתְנַיִם וּפְגִי כָלֵם קָבְצוּ פְאֻרוֹר:	<b>ISAIAH 24</b> <b>3</b> The land shall be emptied and it shall be pillaged, for the Lord has spoken this thing.	<b>ג</b> הַבּוֹק תְּבוּק הָאָרֶץ וְהַבּוֹז תְּבוֹז כִּי ה' דִּבֶּר אֶת-הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה:
<b>NAHUM 3</b>		<b>HOSEA 12; MICAH 3</b> <b>1</b> Ephraim has surrounded me with lies, and the house	<b>א</b> סָבְבַנִי בְלֹחֶשׁ אֶפְרָיִם וּבְמַרְמָה

<p><b>1</b> Woe to the city of blood; it is all lies, full of robbery; the prey departs not.</p>	<p><b>א</b> הוּ עִיר דְּמַיִם כְּלֵה כַחַשׁ פָּרֵק מִלֵּאָה לֹא יִמִּישׁ טָרְף:</p>	<p>of Israel with deceit, but Judah still rules with God, and with the Holy One he is faithful.</p> <p><b>10</b> Each one builds Zion with blood and Jerusalem with injustice.</p>	<p>בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיְהוּדָה עַד רָדַעַם־אֱלֹהִים יָעִים־קְדוּשִׁים גְּאָמֹן:</p> <p><b>י</b> בָּנָה צִיּוֹן בְּדַמַיִם וְיְרוּשָׁלַם בְּעוֹלָה:</p>
<p><b>NAHUM 3</b></p> <p><b>3</b> The horseman raises himself and the blade of the sword and the burnished spear and the many slain-yea, the heaps of corpses. There is no end to the bodies, and they shall stumble over their bodies.</p>	<p><b>ג</b> פָּרַשׁ מֵעֶלְהָ וְלֵהֵב חָרֵב וּבָרַק חֲנִית וְרֵב חֶלֶל וְכַבֵּד פֶּגֶר וְאִין קֶצֶה לְגוֹיָה וְנִשְׁלֹו (כְּתִיב יִכְשְׁלוּ) בְּגוֹיֵתָם:</p>	<p><b>LEVITICUS 26; AMOS 8</b></p> <p><b>37</b> Each man will stumble over his brother, [fleeing] as if from the sword, but without a pursuer. You will not be able to stand up against your enemies.</p> <p><b>3</b> And the songs of the temple shall be wailings in that day, says the Lord God: corpses shall increase; everywhere "Cast away, remove!"</p>	<p><b>לז</b> וְנִשְׁלֹו אִישׁ־בְּאֶחָיו כְּמִפְנֵי־חָרֵב וְרִדְף אִין וְלֹא־תִהְיֶה לְכֶם תְּקוּמָה לִפְנֵי אֲבִיבֵיכֶם:</p> <p><b>ג</b> וְהִילִילוּ שִׁירֹת הַיְכָל בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא נֹאֵם ה' אֱלֹקִים רַב הַפֶּגֶר בְּכָל־מְקוֹם הַשְּׁלִיָה הֵס:</p>
<p><b>NAHUM 3</b></p> <p><b>4</b> Because of the many harlotries of the harlot, charming and enchanting, who delivers nations with her harlotries, and families with her enchantments.</p> <p><b>5</b> Behold! I am against you, says the Lord of Hosts, and I will uncover your skirts upon your face-and I will show the nations your nakedness, and the kingdoms your shame.</p>	<p><b>ד</b> מְרַב זָנוּנֵי זוֹנָה טוֹבַת חֵן בְּעֵלֶת כְּשִׁפִּים הַמְכַרְת גוֹיִם בְּזָנוּנֶיהָ וּמְשַׁפְּחֹת בְּכִשְׁפֶיהָ:</p> <p><b>ה</b> הִנְנִי אֵלֶיךָ נֹאֵם ה' צְבָאוֹת וְגִלִיתִי שְׁנֵיךָ עַל־פְּנֵיךָ וְהִרְאִיתִי גוֹיִם מֵעֶרְךָ וּמִמְלַכּוֹת קְלֹנָה:</p>	<p><b>HOSEA 1, 4; MICAH 1</b></p> <p><b>2</b> At the beginning of the Lord's speaking to Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea: Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry and children of harlotry, for the land goes astray from following the Lord.</p> <p><b>12</b> My people takes counsel of his piece of wood, and his rod declares to him. For the spirit of harlotry has caused them to err, and they have gone astray lewdly from under their God.</p> <p><b>13</b> They sacrifice upon the mountaintops and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and styraxes and elms, because its shadow is good; therefore your daughters commit</p>	<p><b>ב</b> תַחֲלַת דְבַר־ה' בְּהוֹשֵׁעַ וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־הוֹשֵׁעַ לֵךְ קַח־לְךָ אִשָּׁת זָנוּנִים וְיִלְדֵי זָנוּנִים כִּי־זָנָה תִזְנֶה הָאָרֶץ מֵאַחֲרַי ה':</p> <p><b>יב</b> עַמִּי בְעֵצוֹ יִשְׁאֵל וּמִקְלוֹ יִגִּיד לוֹ כִּי רֹחַ זָנוּנִים הִתְעָה וַיִּזְנוּ מִתַּחַת אֱלֹהֵיהֶם:</p> <p><b>יג</b> עַל־רֵאשֵׁי הַהָרִים יִזְבְּחוּ וְעַל־הַגְּבוּעוֹת יִקְטְרוּ תַחַת אֱלֹן וְלִבְנֵה וְאֵלֶה כִּי־טוֹב צֶלֶה עַל־כֵּן תִּזְנֶינָה:</p>

	<p>harlotry, and your daughters-in-law commit adultery.</p> <hr/> <p><b>7</b> And all its graven images shall be crushed, and all its hires shall be burnt with fire, and all its idols I will lay waste; for from the hire of a harlot it gathered, and to the hire of a harlot shall they return.</p>	<p>בְּנוֹתֵיכֶם וְכָל־אֵשְׁרֵיכֶם תִּנְאַפְּנֶה:    <b>ז</b> וְכָל־פְּסִילֵיהָ יִכָּתֹשׁ וְכָל־אֲתֻנֵּיהָ יִשְׂרָפוּ בְאֵשׁ וְכָל־עֲצָבֶיהָ אֲשִׁים שְׂמִמָּהּ כִּי מֵאֲתָנָן זֹנֶה קִבְּצָה וְעַד־אֲתָנָן זֹנֶה יָשׁוּבוּ:</p>
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