

Nahum

The date of writing is unknown, although it was certainly before 614 BC, when Nineveh fell to the Babylonians and after the Northern Kingdom was destroyed (2:2) around 721 BC. The reference to No-Amon (3:8), which is Thebes (“No, the city of the god Amon”), implies that the Assyrians had captured this well fortified city, which occurred around 667 BC. So, Nahum would seem to date between 665 and 620 BC.

Target Audience: Judah (1:15)

The Plot: God will cause the seemingly invincible Nineveh to fall because of its extreme wickedness.

1:1 – 11 Who can stand before the Creator? The Lord is a stronghold in the day of trouble (1:7)

1:12 – 13 The Lord will release the people of God from Assyrian affliction.

1:14 Assyria will fall

1:15 Judah, stick with the program!

2:1 – 3:19 Description of the power of Nineveh being destroyed.

Notes:

1. No Messianic prophecies were detected by the ancient rabbis.
2. Nahum is not quoted in the New Testament except through a parallel with Isaiah 52:7 which is quoted in Romans 10:15.
3. God had used Assyria to execute His vengeance on the Northern Kingdom (Hosea, Amos, and perhaps Joel). Nahum 3:15 – 17 sounds like Joel, lending credence to the idea that Joel’s locusts were describing the Assyrian army.
4. Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah, but by this time had reverted to their old ways.
5. Some presume that Nahum was among the exiles carried away by the Assyrians, now living far from the Promised Land. However, all such theories are speculation.

Obscure References

- 1:1 Nahum’s home town, Elkosh, is likely to be identified with a small town in Galilee but all identification is uncertain. The fact that Capernaum (“Village of Nahum”) bears his name is not supported by any other evidence as his home.
- 1:4 Bashan: Cattle country in the northeast of Israel
Carmel: The mountain that juts into the Mediterranean Sea, representing prime farmland.
- 1:8 Some have taken 1:8 and 2:6 to be a prediction of the method used by the Babylonians to breach the wall of Nineveh. The Babylonians diverted the Tigris River to beat against the base of the wall for a year so that it became undermined and collapsed.
- 3:8 The fortifications of No-Amon supposedly were greater than those of Nineveh. Nahum asks the question of Nineveh, “If you conquered No-Amon, someone else certainly can conquer you.”
- 3:9 Cush: Ethiopia.
Mitsraim: Egypt.
Put and Lubim: Libya.