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Article 34: Nahum at a Glance

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NAHUM AT A GLANCE

This book predicts the utter destruction of the wicked city of Nineveh by an angry God who would use the invading Babylonian armies to accomplish His will.

BOTTOM LINE INTRODUCTION

PREPARE YOURSELF, NINEVEH. THIS TIME, NO MORE MERCY.

Some eight centuries B.C., a great revival took place in Nineveh under the preaching of Jonah. But 150 years had gone by and the city's terrible sin was now terminal. It was thus Nahum's mission to pronounce divine judgment. This book is therefore given over to the total destruction of the second greatest pagan city in the Old Testament (with Babylon being the first). In summary: Obadiah predicted the destruction of Edom. Nahum predicted the destruction of Nineveh. Zephaniah predicted the destruction of Judah. Jeremiah predicted the destruction of Babylon. Ezekiel predicted the destruction of Egypt and Russia. Daniel predicted the destruction of Persia.

The time span between the ministry of Jonah and that of Nahum is a classic example of Gen. 15:16. *"For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full."*

FACTS REGARDING THE AUTHOR OF THIS BOOK

1. Who? **Nahum.** He predicted the total destruction of Nineveh (Nahum 3:1-19).
2. What? The **Book of Nahum.**
3. When and where? 650 B.C., from northern Israel.
4. Why? To predict the total destruction of Nineveh.
5. To whom? The city of Nineveh and the nation Assyria.

KEY EVENTS

1. A graphic "blow by blow" account of the city's terrible destruction
2. A listing of the sins leading to the destruction of Nineveh

KEY INDIVIDUALS

1. **Nahum:** Old Testament prophet who predicted the destruction of Nineveh by the Babylonians

KEY PLACES

1. **Nineveh:** bloody and wicked capital city of the Assyrian Empire, located on the Tigris River, to be utterly overrun and destroyed by the Babylonians, as predicted by Nahum

UNIQUE FEATURES

1. Events in the book of Nahum serve as a classic (and tragic) example of Exodus 1:8 -

"Now there rose up a new king over Egypt who knew not (i.e., had no respect for the God of) *Joseph*." Thus, to paraphrase this verse to fit Nahum's book – "Now there rose up a new king (entire generation) over Nineveh who knew not (had no respect for the God of) *Jonah*."

2. The name of Nahum means "the comforter." The New Testament Galilean headquarters of Jesus was a city named Capernaum, which literally means, "the village of Nahum." Many thus believe Capernaum was named after this prophet.
3. The book has only one theme, the terrible and total coming destruction of Nineveh. At the time of this prophecy, Nineveh appeared to be impregnable, with its walls 100 feet high and broad enough for chariots to drive upon them. It had a circumference of some 60 miles and was adorned by more than 1,200 towers. Nineveh fell in 612 B.C. (some 18 years after this prophecy), being completely destroyed by the Medes from the north and the Babylonians from the south.
4. Nahum not only predicted the fall of Nineveh, but the very manner in which it would fall. (Note 1:8a: "*an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place.*") History tells us that Nabopolassar, leader of the Babylonian invasion forces, besieged the city for three years, leading three massive attacks against it, and failing each time. Because of this, the Assyrians inside Nineveh rejoiced and began holding drunken parties. But suddenly the Tigris River overflowed its banks and sent its wildly churning waters against the walls of the city. Soon it had washed out a hole, into which gap rushed the Babylonians, and the proud city was destroyed.
5. The destruction of Nineveh was so great that Alexander the Great marched his troops over the same desolate ground which had once given support to their mighty buildings and did not even know there had once been a city there. The city itself was not excavated until as recently as A.D. 1845.
6. Nahum and Obadiah were the only Old Testament prophets who pronounced doom on a pagan nation without also mentioning the sins of Israel.
7. Nahum documents the cruelty of Assyria which has been called the arch villain of the Old Testament, more ruthless by far than Israel's other foes.
8. Nahum's description of Nineveh's destruction is by far the most graphic in all the Bible (2, 3).

COMPARISON WITH OTHER BIBLE BOOKS

1. Obadiah: these were the two Old Testament books with but a simple theme:

- Obadiah – the destruction of Edom
- Nahum – the destruction of Nineveh

2. Jonah:

- Jonah preached repentance to the city of Nineveh
- Nahum prophesied destruction of the city of Nineveh

3. Isaiah and Romans:

Nahum spoke of a messenger on the mountains, bringing the good news of deliverance from Assyria (1:15):

- Isaiah, writing some 100 years before Nahum, used similar words to describe the good news of deliverance from Babylonian exile (Isa. 40:9; 52:7).
- Paul, writing some 700 years later, used similar words to describe deliverance from sin through the good news of Jesus (Rom. 10:15).

TITLES FOR AND TYPES OF JESUS

1. The Patient but Punishing God (1:3-8)
2. The Destroyer of Nineveh (2, 3)