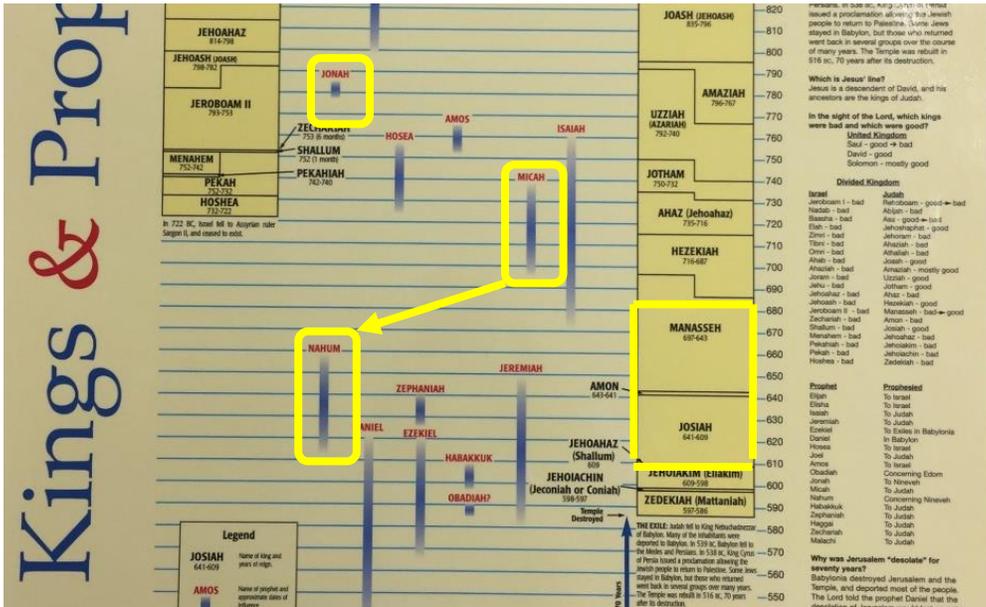


Book of Nahum

Chapter 1:1-15

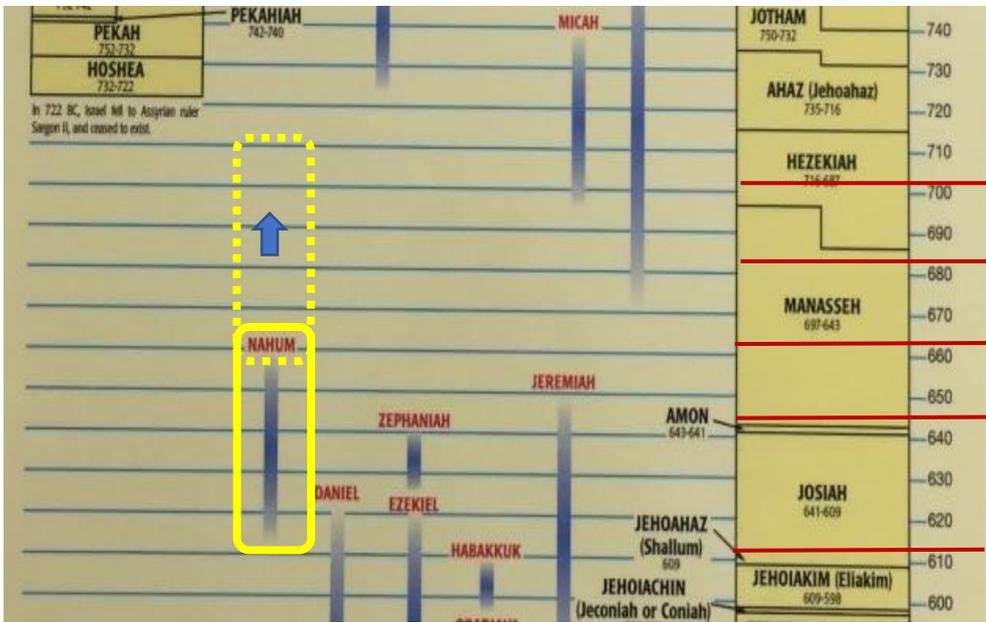
¹The oracle of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.



“Nahum” Means “Comforter”

Nahum prophesied somewhere between 663 – 645 BC

Reading II Chronicles 33-35 would be very helpful in understanding the environment during the writing of Nahum



Sennacherib's army at Jerusalem 701 B.C.

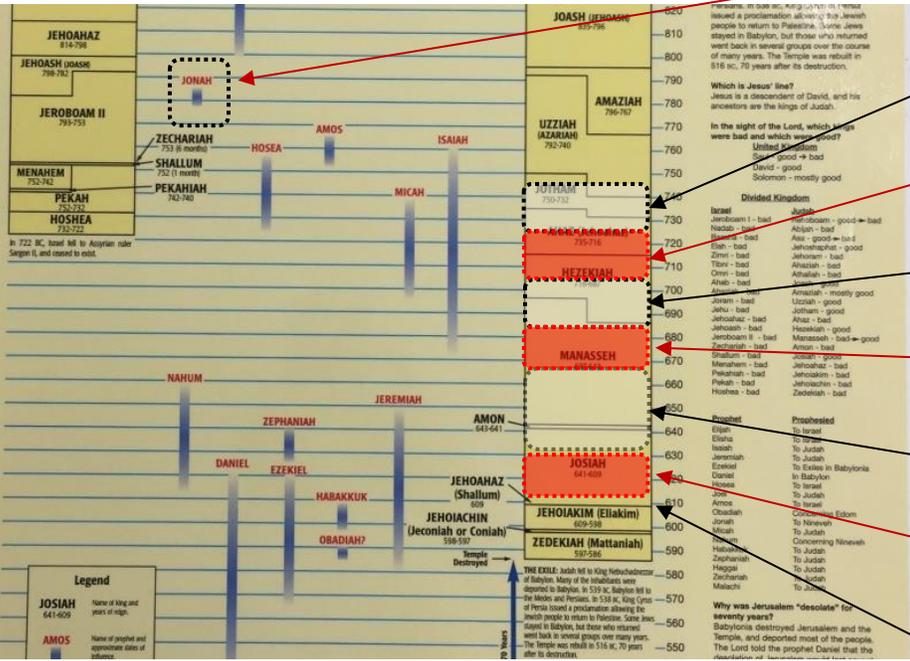
Sennacherib's death 681 B.C.

Destruction of Thebes 663 B.C.

Rebuilding of Thebes 645 B.C.

Destruction of Nineveh 612 B.C.

Kings & Prophets



- Shalmaneser III or Asshur-danil or Asshur-nirari
- Tiglath-Pileser III 744-727
- Sargon II 721-705
- Sennacherib 705-681
- Esarhaddon 681-669
- Ashurbanipal 668-631
- Civil War 631-612
- Final Destruction of Nineveh 612

Oracle > (Redmond) The word translated *oracle* is a Hebrew word with the basic meaning of *carry, burden, or pronouncement* ... one definition of this term is “An oracle is any divine pronouncement through a prophet that directs human action in the present or foretells future events”.

The oracles of the biblical prophets possess the following important characteristics:

1. They originate with God
2. They are directed primarily toward specific nations or individuals
3. They are intended to encourage or correct God’s people
4. They emphasize the sovereignty of God

Elkoshite > The general opinion is that Nahum’s birthplace is unknown at this time. However, Jerome (374 AD – 420 AD) states “Elkosh was situated in Galilee, since there is to the present day a village in Galilee called Helcesaei (others Helcesei, Elcesi), a very small one indeed, and containing in its ruins hardly any traces of ancient buildings, but one which is well known to the Jews, and was also pointed out to me by my guide,”

A M Hodgkin > The time in which he prophesied, from internal evidence, seems to have been between the fall of No-Amon (Thebes) in Upper Egypt, 663 B.C., and the fall of Nineveh, 606 B.C., for he speaks of the one as past (Nahum 3:8–10) and the other as future (Nahum 1:8, 14).

(Thebes was rebuilt in 645 B.C. ... a fact not mentioned by Nahum ... therefore, he probably wrote his book between 663 B.C. and 645 B.C.)

² A ***jealous*** and ***avenging*** God is the LORD; the LORD is ***avenging*** and *wrathful*. The LORD takes ***vengeance*** on His adversaries, and He ***reserves*** wrath for His enemies.

Jealous > (Wiersbe) Jealousy is a sin if it means being envious of what others have and wanting to possess it, but it's a virtue if it means cherishing what we have and wanting to protect it. A faithful husband and wife are jealous over one another and do everything they can to keep their relationship exclusive. "Jealous" and "zealous" come from the same root, for when you're jealous over someone, you're zealous to protect the relationship. Since God made everything and owns everything, He is envious of no one, but since He is the only true God, He is jealous over His glory, His name, and the worship and honor that are due to Him alone. In the second commandment, God prohibited the worship of idols and backed up the prohibition with this reason: "for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God" (Ex. 20:5).

Webster > Definition of *jealous*

1: hostile toward a rival or one believed to enjoy an advantage

2a: intolerant of rivalry or unfaithfulness

b: disposed to suspect rivalry or unfaithfulness

3: vigilant in guarding a possession

Avenging ... vengeance > (Strong's) to grudge, i.e. avenge or punish

Reserves > (Strong's) to guard; figuratively, to cherish (anger)

³ The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and ***the LORD will by no means leave the guilty unpunished***. In whirlwind and storm is His way, and clouds are the dust beneath His feet. ⁴ He rebukes the sea and makes it dry; He dries up all the rivers. ***Bashan and Carmel*** wither; the blossoms of Lebanon wither. ⁵ Mountains quake because of Him and the hills dissolve; indeed, the earth is upheaved by His presence, the world and all the inhabitants in it. ⁶ Who can stand before His indignation? Who can endure the burning of His anger? His wrath is poured out like fire and the rocks are broken up by Him.

The Lord will by no means leave ... > (Barnes) (after discussing the evil present with Nineveh states) But, amid this mass of evil, one thing was eminent > direct antagonism to God. The character is very special. It is not simply of rebellion against God, or neglect of Him. It is a direct disputation of His Sovereignty. Twice the prophet repeats the characteristic expression, "What will ye devise against the Lord?" "devising evil against the Lord;" and adds, "counselor of evil" *Nahum 1:11*. This was exactly the character of Sennacherib, whose wars, like those of his forefathers, (as appears from the cuneiform inscriptions.)

Carmel and Bashan > Remember last week's lesson? They are coming back! Later

Jeremiah 50:19 > *And I shall bring Israel back to his pasture, and he will graze on Carmel and Bashan, and his desire will be satisfied in the hill country of Ephraim and Gilead.*

⁷ *The LORD is good, a **stronghold** in the day of trouble, and He knows those who take refuge in Him.* ⁸ ***But with an overflowing flood He will make a complete end of its site, and will pursue His enemies into darkness.***

Stronghold > (Strong's) a fortified place; figuratively, a defense

Refuge > (Strong's) to flee for protection; figuratively, to confide in

Barnes > It is a habit, which has this reward; "the trusters in Him," "the takers of refuge in Him."

But with an overflowing flood ... > (Barnes) that is, of Nineveh, although not as yet named, except in the title of the prophecy

Benson > Bishop Newton is of opinion that the words allude to the manner in which it was taken. "Diodorus informs us," says he, "that there was an old prophecy, that Nineveh should not be taken till the river became an enemy to the city; and in the third year of the siege, the river, being swollen with continual rains, overflowed part of the city, and broke down the wall for twenty furlongs; then the king, thinking that the oracle was fulfilled, and the river become an enemy to the city, built a large funeral pile in the palace, and, collecting together all his wealth, and his concubines and eunuchs, burned himself and the palace with them all; and the enemy entered the breach that the waters had made, and took the city."

(Ken > Please be aware that there is great dispute with some of the facts mentioned by Benson above. If the city was, indeed, taken as described > then Nahum 1:8 is a prophecy to that event.)

⁹ *Whatever you devise against the LORD, He will make a complete end of it. Distress will not rise up twice.*

Whatever you devise against the Lord > This is the first of the two entries mentioned by Barnes illustrating the mindset of Nineveh's kings. The comments made to King Hezekiah were not simply war words ... they came from his belief system. (Sennacherib was one of the most famous kings of Nineveh. You might want to spend some time studying his legacy.)

Distress > (Strong's) tightness (i.e. figuratively, trouble);

David Branon > When a defendant stands before a judge, he or she is at the mercy of the court. If the defendant is innocent, the court should be a refuge. But if the defendant is guilty, we expect the court to exact punishment. In Nahum, we see God as both a refuge and a judge. It says, "The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble" (Nahum 1:7 niv). But it also says, "He will make an end of Nineveh; he will pursue his foes into the realm of darkness" (Nahum 1:8 niv). Over 100 years earlier, Nineveh had repented after Jonah preached God's forgiveness, and the land was safe (Jonah 3:10). But during Nahum's day, Nineveh was plotting "evil against the Lord" (Nah. 1:11). In chapter 3, Nahum details Nineveh's destruction.

¹⁰ *Like tangled thorns, and like those who are drunken with their drink, they are consumed as stubble completely withered.*

Barnes > Historically, the great defeat of the Assyrians, before the capture of Nineveh, took place while its king, flushed with success, was giving himself to listlessness; and having distributed to his soldiers victims, and abundance of wine, and other necessaries for banqueting, the whole army was negligent and drunken."

(Ken > Again, please be aware that there is great dispute with *some* of the facts of the above comments. The source for the information found in the notes for both verse 7 and again here in verse 10 was *Ctesias the Cnidian* from the 5th century BC ... relayed by *Diodorus Siculus* born in 90 BC. If the information from them is as described then verse 10 is also a prophecy to that event.)



This wall panel relief is from the North Palace (Nineveh)

¹¹ *From you has gone forth one who plotted evil against the LORD, a wicked counselor.*

From you has gone forth one ... > This is the second of the two entries mentioned by Barnes illustrating the mindset of the kings of Nineveh.

O Palmer Robertson > Nahum alone of the prophets uses the term *belîya'al*, and he employs it twice (1:11; 2:1 [Eng. 1:15]). This “counselor of Belial” is evidently the king, the leader of this wicked people. He conspires against the Lord himself, and not merely against his nation. In terms of a specific individual, Nahum could be referring to Sennacherib, who is described elsewhere in Scripture as one who set himself not merely against Israel, but “against Yahweh” (2 K. 18:32b–35). But although Sennacherib at the time of his invasion of Palestine in 701 B.C. fits the bill of this “counselor of Belial” who has come forth out of Nineveh, the phrase is best understood as having a more general application. Not only Sennacherib, but all those wicked kings and leaders of the enemies of God’s people who have come forth from Assyria manifest the characteristics of that brutal figure described by Nahum.

¹² *Thus says the LORD, “Though they are at full strength and likewise many, even so, they will be cut off and pass away. Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no longer.* ¹³ *“So now, I will break his yoke bar from upon you, and I will tear off your shackles.”*

Thus says the Lord, ... > (Barnes) Literally, "If they be entire," i. e., sound unharmed, unimpaired in their numbers, unbroken in their strength, undiminished, perfect in all which belongs to war; "and thus many even thus shall they be mown down (or shorn), and he passeth away".

J Vernon McGee > In the context the expression "quiet, and likewise many," (KJV) although a literal translation of the Hebrew, does not seem to make much sense. Actually, the Hebrew here represents a transliteration of a long-forgotten Assyrian legal formula. Excavation in the ruins of ancient Ninevah, buried since 612 B.C., has brought to light thousands of ancient Assyrian tablets, dozens of which contain this Assyrian legal formula. It proves, on investigation, to indicate joint and several responsibility for carrying out an obligation. Nahum quotes the LORD as using this Assyrian formula in speaking to the Assyrians, saying in effect, "Even though your entire nation joins as one person to resist me, nevertheless I shall overcome you."

⁴*The LORD has issued a command concerning you: "Your name will no longer be perpetuated. I will cut off idol and image from the house of your gods. **I will prepare your grave, for you are contemptible.**"*

I will prepare your grave, ... > As mentioned by Robertson in his notes on verse 11 > this has to be either written to Assyria as a nation ... or one of its kings.

However, aspects of the verse ring true with Sennacherib's death. The scriptures say that while he was worshipping in the house of his god Nisroch, his two sons, Adrammelech and Sharezer, smote him there that he died, (**2 Kings 19:37**)

Wikipedia > After his eldest son and crown prince, Ashur-nadin-shumi was killed by the Elamites, Sennacherib originally designated his second eldest son, Arda-Mulissu (known as Adrammelech in Hebrew writings), as his heir, but later replaced him with a younger son, Esarhaddon, in 684 BC, for unknown reasons. Sennacherib ignored repeated appeals from Arda-Mulissu to be reinstated as heir. Sennacherib was assaulted and murdered by Arda-Mulissu and another son, who hoped to seize power for themselves, in 681 BC.

¹⁵***Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace! Celebrate your feasts, O Judah; pay your vows. For never again will the wicked one pass through you; he is cut off completely.***

Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good news > compare to **Isaiah 52:7** > *How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news.* The context of the Isaiah passage is, as in Nahum, freedom promised to Jerusalem.

But there is a caveat ... and one that should have been understood as it was certainly preached by the prophet Jeremiah. Yes ... the Assyrians would soon be gone ... but the sin of the Southern Kingdom would continue in spite of the revival under Josiah (see the timeline below as we conclude this chapter.) The Lord remains righteous.

