

NAHUM

GOALS OF THE LESSON:

1. Learn the character of the people Nahum was preaching to.
2. Visualize the graphic imagery that Nahum presents Ninevah as.

Introduction: The most that is known about Nahum is given in 1:1. Thus, we know that Nahum was from Elkosh, but archaeology has not determined where Elkosh is located. The date of Nahum's ministry is 663-612 B.C., with the writing of the book possibly written at about 614 B.C. Nahum preaches solely to Ninevah, the capital of Assyria. It is interesting to note that about 120 years earlier Jonah had preached to this very city. Jonah had been very successful in turning the people of Ninevah from evil. Apparently the next generation did not continue the reverence toward God but turned back to their evil ways. Farrar gives a vivid description of the character of the Assyrian people:

“ Judged from the vaunting inscriptions of her kings, no power more useless, more savage, more terrible, ever cast its gigantic shadow on the page of history as it passed on the way to ruin. The kings of Assyria tormented the miserable world. They exult to record how “space failed for corpses”; how unsparing a destroyer is their goddess Ishtar; how they flung away the bodies of soldiers like so much clay; how they made pyramids of human heads; how they burned cities; how they filled populous lands with death and devastation; how they reddened broad deserts with carnage of warriors; how they scattered whole countries with the corpses of their defenders as with chaff; how they impaled “heaps of men” on stakes, and strewed the mountains and choked rivers with dead bones; how they cut off the hands of kings and nailed them on the walls, and left their bodies to rot with bears and dogs on the entrance gates of cities; how they employed nations of captives in making brick in fetters; how they cut down warriors like weeds, or smote them like wild beasts in the forests, and covered pillars with the flayed skins of rival monarchs.”

It was to this people that the nation of Israel was taken captive and destroyed. With all of this in mind, Nahum is sent to preach judgment.

The Survey Chart:

Take your Bible and skim through the book of Zephaniah, looking at the subheadings of each paragraph in each chapter. Record a few main events from each chapter on the diagonal lines of the survey chart.

1. As you fill out your survey chart, what do you think is the theme of the book?

Life Application:

2. What can we learn from the people of Ninevah about their inability to pass on to the next generation the knowledge of God?

1:1-15 In the space below, write your own thoughts about what you found interesting and questions you have. Be prepared to share your findings in class.

3. List the characteristics of God that are found in 1:2-8.

4. Explain the imagery found in 1:9-15.

2:1-13 In the space below, write your own thoughts about what you found interesting and questions you have. Be prepared to share your findings in class.

5. From 2:3, explain the phrase, “the shields of his warriors are red; his soldiers are clothed in crimson.” (NRSV)

6. Explain what 2:8 means.

3:1-19 In the space below, write your own thoughts about what you found interesting and questions you have. Be prepared to share your findings in class.

7. Explain the imagery given by Nahum in 3:5-7.

8. How was No Amon like Ninevah?

9. Explain the figure of the locusts in 3:17.

10. Why does the rest of the world clap their hands at the fall of Ninevah?

MAIN POINTS TO REMEMBER FROM THIS LESSON:

1. Severe destruction is coming upon Ninevah.
2. 1:14-- "I will make your grave, for you are worthless." (NRSV)