

Nahum – A Vision – An Oracle - to Assyria

Part 1

In this week's lesson I am going to read aloud to you, we'll read some texts aloud to each other, I'll share some data or concepts that might help us understand Nahum better. And, of course, we'll talk about what we think and what we feel.

We're only going to focus on the introduction to this scroll: Nahum 1: 1-8. We'll do the rest next week.

It might help you picture the reading if you have seen Nolen's Odyssey. The intro sets the tone.

Nahum is a very short scroll. If you read it or listen to it two or three times before our talk you will begin to get the flavor of it.

Catherine's Bias – most of you are past experts on finding commentators and historians and philosophers etc. I don't have that skill set. My craving is to know the text, to hear the story, to see how it fits with other parts of the Bible. It is a gift to me that you also allow my voice in our conversations

Notes and Descriptions

Time of writing: 663-612 BCE (130-150 years after Jonah)

Oracle – A direct, authoritative, communication or revelation originating from God. The word is often translated from *massa* meaning a burden or heavy pronouncement.

Vision – A supernatural revelation given while a person is awake or in a trance state.

Elkosh – home of Nahum is frequently thought as Alqosh in Assyria

Nahum – the name means *comforter* or *consolation*.

Elohim – The God of majesty, power, and creation. God above all gods. You might notice when it is used in this text. *Elohim* you also might remember is

the name the Assyrians in Jonah's time used in their confession and repentance. These are a people for whom **power** is the focus.

Yahweh – The God of the covenant with Israel.

Jesus – Yahweh Saves – I and my father are one. You'll notice I am writing Jesus as the name of God in the questions to help me and us remember that Jesus is the God of the Hebrew Scriptures. *Before Abraham was, I Am.*

Bashan – is located in a rich hilly region, east of the Jordan River. It was known for strong cities, large oaks and fat cattle. You might find it helpful to read Amos 4:1 to understand why the place and its citizens are mentioned here.

Carmel – Is a lush coastal mountain range in northern Israel. Its name means "God's vineyard". Obviously Mount Carmel is in this area as was Naboth's Vineyard. The stories about both events shape Hebrew thinking.

Lebanon – A majestic mountain range known for its snow-covered peaks. Hosea compared the future restoration of Israel as the pleasant fragrance and beauty of Lebanon

Literary devices:

1. Couplets – the second line backs up or enhances the first.
2. Chiasm/Palistrope – You might take a look at the structure of this scroll to see where you think the center of the message might be for you.
3. Antiphony – a responsive alternating performance or piece. You will find antiphony in chapter 1 as a song of the character of God
 - a. Verses 2 and 3
 - b. Verses 4-6 and verse 7
4. Concrete objects, people, events, weather, can be both real, representing a concept, and metaphor for something else.
5. Connected in some ways to the concepts above, a prophecy can be applicable to more than one time or event.
6. Repetition of words or phrases. (Like Oracle and vision) indicate importance.

Questions

1. Why would God ask someone who lived near Assyria to be the prophet to them?
2. What do you think was Nahum's goal? What do you think he wanted for Assyria?
3. How is Nahum the same or different than Jonah?
4. Two prophets; not one but two for a violent foreign nation – more than a century apart. Why do you think Jesus has worked so hard with Assyria, one of the most arrogant/violent nations in history?
5. What do you make of two different prophets in two different time periods warning Assyria.
6. Metaphors and object lessons: Do you think Jesus' mission to Nahum is a parallel for His desire to save Lucifer and His battle with evil in heaven.
7. Do you think there is a parallel in Nahum of when Jesus said to Jerusalem, *How can I give you up?* Where?
8. What do you think will be parallels to this in Revelation? Just a note here, we need to know the Old Testament to understand that last scroll.
9. What do you make of the antiphonal descriptions of God?
10. I am going to ask us to read the following 9 verses. Why do you think this phrase or descriptor of Jesus is included in Nahum's vision and scroll intro
 - a. Nahum 1:3
 - b. Exodus 34:6,7
 - c. Numbers 14:18
 - d. Psalm 103:8
 - e. Psalm 145:8
 - f. Joel 2:13
 - g. Jonah 4:2
 - h. Nehemiah 9:17
 - i. Jonah 1:3

11. What do you think of this mix of verses about the Jesus of the Old Testament.
 - a. Nahum 1: 6, 7
 - b. Isaiah 42: 13-15
 - c. Job 38:1
 - d. Psalm 107:25
 - e. Isaiah 29:6
 - f. Isaiah 43: 1,2
 - g. Matthew 7:24-27
 - h. Luke 8:24
12. What are the qualities of the people who live in Bashan and Carmel that make the mountains tremble?
13. How do they compare with values in our time.
14. How do you think these qualities compare to Matthew 27:51, Revelation 6:14 and Revelation 16.20.
15. Just in case, by some odd quirk of event you haven't had a chance to share your feelings and reactions and and...let's do it now.

Thank you Steve for the work you do to post this and all the rest of our contributions.

I wish you all gentle unexpected blessings.

Catherine