

Valley Bible Church - Bible Survey

Lesson 55, January 31, 1999, The Books of Obadiah and Nahum,

INTRODUCTIONS AND OUTLINES TO

THE BOOKS OF OBADIAH AND NAHUM

We have spent several weeks in the minor-prophets starting with those prophets who were contemporary with Isaiah in order to consider them in their historical context.

Refer to Prophet Chart, lesson 42, Intro. To the Prophets

We were able to accomplish this by taking only one book, the book of Obadiah, out of Bible book order. Now we move on to those prophets who were operating at the time of Jeremiah. They are Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah. (SEE CHART)

INTRODUCTION AND OUTLINE, THE BOOK OF OBADIAH

Introduction:

Obadiah 1:3 and 4--" . . . *You who live in the clefts of the rock, In the loftiness of your dwelling place, Who say in your heart, ' Who will bring me down to earth.' You build high like the eagle, Though you set your nest among the stars, From there I will bring you down declares the Lord.*"

Edom is settled in Mt. Seir, a mountainous region south of the Dead Sea, and no doubt, you have heard of their capital city, *Petra*.

Petra is one of the wonders of the world. Hewn out of the 2000 foot, soft red sandstone cliffs, it can only be reached through a narrow canyon which is a mile long banked by walls 200 to 250 feet high, and is carved into the mountain side like an "eagles nest (v 4). This made it an almost impenetrable fortress, and a perfect place for the Edomite to retire after raids against their enemies.

And their enemies, likely as not, were the Israelites.

The vendetta began with Jacob and Esau and didn't end until the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in AD. 70. The descendants of Esau, the Edomites:

1. Rejected Moses request to pass through their land (Num. 20:14-20)
2. Opposed King Saul (I Samuel 14:47)
3. Fought against and were subdued by David (I Kings 11:14-17)
4. Confronted Solomon (I Kings 11:17-24)
5. Opposed Jehashaphat (2 Chron. 20:22)
6. Rebelled against Jehoram (2 Chron. 21:8)
7. They seem never to fail in aiding any army that attacked Israel.

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8. During the period of the Maccabees they again became bitter enemies of the Jews and even at the time of Jesus they opposed the Jews through their representative, Herod the Great, who became ruler of Judea and massacred the babies in Bethlehem in an attempt to kill the Christ.

Obadiah means "servant of Jehovah" and he is one of four prophets about whom we know absolutely nothing. Habakkuk, Haggai, and Malachi are the others. Some consider him to be the same Obadiah who led in the restoration of the temple under Josiah in BC. 627.

I tend to side with historians who believe verses 10-16, 20 imply Jerusalem was already overthrown thus placing his prophecies, more likely, immediately after the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in BC. 588. They believe Edom was involved in the capture of the king of Judah and other fleeing nobles and was rewarded by participation in the sacking of the city. This would date him as a contemporary of Jeremiah.

I. DESTRUCTION OF EDOM (Verses 1-16)

Of all the nations who caused havoc for the Jews, Assyria, Chaldee, and Edom were the worst. Three prophets were commissioned to announce their destruction: Nahum predicts the destruction of the Assyrians; Habakkuk foretells the downfall of the Chaldeans; and Obadiah prophecies the doom of the Edomites.

A. Doom Declared (1-9)

1. Certain (1-4)

The prophet heard of an international conspiracy among "the nations initiated by the Lord, to not only overthrow the powerful and fortified Edom, but to completely devastate them.

2. Complete (5-9)

The thoroughness of the defeat is explained by stating that thieves steal until they "have enough," grape gatherers even "leave some gleanings," but Edom will be totally wasted. Even Edom's allies would take part in the ambush and everyone, "wise man" or "mighty man" will "be cut off from the mountain of Esau by slaughter." (v. 9)

B. Doom Described (10-16)

1. Reasons (10-14)

Retribution is coming for a pattern of progressive violence against his brother Jacob's descendants and: Verse 11--Standing by while Jerusalem was invaded (Ps 137:7); Verse 12--Rejoicing over their captivity; Verse 13--Taking part in sacking the city; Verse 14--Setting traps to capture escaping Jews

2. Results (15-16)

God's present judgment which is recorded in history was just a preview of an ultimate "Day of the Lord" when all nations will meet Christ's judgment, and be forced to bow.

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II. DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL (Verses 17-21)

The plight of the nations of Israel and Judah is only temporary, while the end of the Edomite reign of terror will be permanent.

A. Condition (17-18)

The reversal of Judah's plight will come when the Messiah steps in to establish His Millennial Kingdom and holiness and justice prevail.

B. Completion (18-21)

When the Messiah sets up His kingdom, the boundaries of His kingdom will expand to include all the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This will include the mountains of Esau in the south, the land of Philistia in the west, and the entire area of Gilead to the east, and much, much more!

The vision of Obadiah ends with this great statement: ". . . **the kingdom shall be the Lords**"

Under the great stress of a world gone mad, John, while writing the book of Revelation found great comfort in echoing that though when he wrote, "*The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.*"

Lesson:

I see Obadiah as an example of the fulfillment of the warning contained in Gods call of Abram in Genesis 12:3 when He said, ". . . *I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. . .*"

INTRODUCTION AND OUTLINE, THE BOOK OF NAHUM

Introduction:

Just as with Obadiah, we know little about the prophet Nahum. He is from Eikosh, but we dont know for sure where that is. It may be Capernaum, which means town of Nahum, but obviously the message is more important than the man.

His name means "comfort," but his message is anything but comfortable to Nineveh. It is an "oracle," an official message from God, of doom. Or, as the *NKJV* puts it a "burden" or "heavy message" against that city. Perhaps his name applies better to the inspiring news of deliverance in their time of deepest peril for Jerusalem and the rest of Judah.

Jonah preached to Nineveh and the people repented, from the king down to the lowest citizen. That repentance bought them 150 extra years, but the people didnt pass on their attitude to their children and within 100 years they had reverted to their previous arrogance, idolatry, and violence.

Assyria also became rich and powerful. They defeated many of their enemies, enslaved Israel, destroyed Samaria in BC. 722, and nearly captured Jerusalem in BC. 701. Its borders extended south and west all the way into Egypt.

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Nahum probably wrote after witnessing the fall of Israel, sometime between BC. 648-620. Unlike Jonah, he did not call them to repentance, but proclaimed their impending doom, in which "her name would be utterly cut off, " and "God would personally dig her grave." (1:14)

There is no doubt Nahums prophecy came true with the destruction of Nineveh which came as Media under King Cyaxares allied with Babylon under Kings Nab. and Neb. (Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar) in BC. 612.

I. DESTRUCTION DECLARED (Chapter 1)

Nahum is a thrilling book that reveals the other side of God. God is a God of love, but He is holy and righteous, just and good.

A. Gods Attributes (1:1-8)

The entire basis for Gods action against Assyria and for Judah is supported by His very nature, His attributes. He is all-knowing (v 1), righteous (v 2), longsuffering (v 3), all-powerful (vv3-6), and holy (v 8). These aspects of His character will govern His acts.

1. Patience (1-3a)

God will punish the wicked, protect and avenge His own, but He is "*slow to anger*" giving more than ample time for repentance. This should not be mistaken for weakness, however, for He will "*by no means leave the guilty unpunished.*"

2. Power (3b-5)

Whirlwinds, storms, clouds, the sea, rivers, mountains, crops, all are part of "*the theater in which his power and majesty are showcased.*"-- MacArthur Study Bible notes

3. Presence (6-8)

"Who can stand . . . Who can endure . . . But with an overflowing flood He will make a complete end of its site, . . . "

This was unique. Normally empires fell, but cities survived. Babylon, for instance, was passed on from the Persians to the Greeks, but Nineveh was reserved for a complete end. When Alexander the Great was marching his armies eastward he stood on this very sight knowing that the capital of a great world empire lay under his feet. This was true of Napoleon as well.

B. Gods Anger (1:9-15)

Nahum based his warning to Nineveh and his message of peace for Judah on the revealed character of God.

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1. Purpose (9-14)

Gods' purpose is to eliminate Nineveh as a threat to His people. He will do such a good job, he will never have to do it again. (v. 9) "He will make a complete end of it" (v. 9) "They are consumed . . . completely withered." (v. 10) "Your name will no longer be perpetuated." (v. 14) "Gods will be cut off" (v.14) "I will prepare your grave." (v. 14)

2. Protection (15)

Judah is now under the protection of their God. they may celebrate their feasts and pay their vows (worship again) knowing that Assyria will no longer be a threat.

II. DESTRUCTION DESCRIBED (Chapter 2)

Chapter 2 is a detailed account of the fall of Nineveh. It is fascinating to study it against historical accounts of the battle.

A. Nineveh Attacked (2:1-10)

From the initial warning in verse 1--"Watch your back," through the account of enemy chariots and weapons (v 3), the war machines (v 5), the flooding (v 6), the routing (vv 7-8), the plundering (v 9), to the utter hopelessness in v 10), the defeat is complete.

Verse 6 was especially fascinating to me. The city was impenetrable with the mighty walls and wide moats surrounding it and the mighty Tigris river protecting one side.

One of the methods the assaulting armies used was to send spies in to open the gates that controlled the river, flooding much of its center, then using that route to enter the city.

B. Nineveh Assailed (2:11-13)

As if to rub it in Nahum asks, "*Where is the den of lions . . . etc.*" From a proud pride of lions with no one to fear, Nineveh has become the prey.

And then he closes the chapter with the words nations should fear most. "*Behold, I am against you, declares the Lord of hosts.*"

III. DESTRUCTION DESERVED (Chapter 3)

The prophet Nahum ends by reviewing the major charges against Nineveh as evidence that its destruction was righteous.

A. Accusation One (3:1-3)

"*Woe to the bloody city*" The study of history verifies that Assyria was one of the most ruthless, cruel, and bloodthirsty of all nations.

They not only waged bloody battles but tortured, killed, and enslaved their enemies.

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B. Accusation Two (3:4-7)

"All because of the many harlotries of the harlot." The nation was guilty of spiritual and moral harlotry, worshiping perverse idols themselves and leading many other nations into prostitution as well.

C. Accusation Three (3:8-19)

They failed to learn from the example of the Egyptian city, No-amon which had the same problems and suffered the same fate for the same reasons. This prophecy is remarkable in that, while it was written to inspire fear of impending doom to the Assyrians, it could also inspire the Jews with the assurance. No matter how alarming their position might seem with Israel in captivity and threats from all sides, yet God had the power and the will to carry out His plan for His people.