

The Holy Prophet Nahum

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Old Testament Prophets
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I.

II. The Prophet Nahum (*Ναουμ*)

- A. name means “comfort” or “consolation” in Hebrew
- B. commemorated by Church on 1 December
- C. one of the 12 Lesser Prophets, was from the village of Elkosh (Galilee). He lived during the VII Century BC... Details of the prophet's life are unknown. He died at age 45 and was buried in his native region.¹
- D. The Old Testament Book of the Prophet Naum contains prophecy of the ruin of the Assyrian city of Ninevah because of its iniquity, the destruction of the Israelite kingdom, and of the blasphemy of king Sennacherib against Jehovah.²
- E. When Prophet Jonas (c. 760-755) had preached to the Ninevites, they repented. With the passage of time, moral gangrene and atrophy were corroding the foundations of their society. The ninevites forgot Prophet Jonas’ message and God’s mercy, and returned to their former wickedness. They were guilty of wanton carnage, savage cruelty, commercial corruption, and bad faith in political and diplomatic circles which outraged the conscience and sensitivities of other nations. Prophet Naum declared the righteous judgment of the Creator through prophesying and warning them to change their minds and convert.³
- F. passages (Septuagint versions better)
 - 1. Destruction- Nahum 2:1-9
 - 2. Remnants- Nahum 2:10-12
 - 3. Aftermath- Nahum 3:5-7
 - 4. Overall affect- Nahum 3:18-19
- G. Josephus (b. A.D. 37 or 38) records: “All these things happened to Nineve about one hundred and fifteen years later.” The lake surrounding Nineve overflowed and flooded the city. Furthermore, a fire, coming from the wilderness, burned that part of the city which was situated at a higher elevation.⁴

III. He speaks of Christ

- A. on the spread of the Gospel...
 - 1. Nahum 1:15 (note the parallel to Romans 10:14-15)
- B. on the end of Jewish feasts and sacrifices...
 - 1. Nahum 1:15-2:1
 - 2. St. Athanasius writes: Now observe; that city, since the coming of our Saviour, has had an end, and all the land of the Jews has been laid waste; so that from the testimony of these things (and we need no further proof, being assured by our own eyes of the fact) there

¹ Janos, Fr. Stephen, trans. *Reference Book for Clergy-Servers*- Tome 2 (September -February). Moscow: Moscow Patriarchate, 1978 & 1979.
<http://www.oca.org/pages/orth_chri/Feasts-and-Saints/December/Dec-01.html>

² Ibid.

³ Holy Apostles Convent. *The Lives of the Holy Prophets*. Buena Vista, CO: Holy Apostles Convent, 1998, p.270.

⁴ Ibid., p. 271.

must, of necessity, be an end of the shadow. And not from me should these things be learned, but the sacred voice of the prophet foretold, crying; [*Nahum 1:15*]; and what is the message he published, but that which he goes on to say to them, [*Nahum 1:15 (2:1 LXX)*]... Who was he then, O Jews, as I said before? ...behold our Saviour who went up, and 'breathed upon the face, and said to His disciples, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' (John 20) For as soon as these things were done, everything was finished, for the altar was broken, and the veil of the temple was rent; and although the city was not yet laid waste, the abomination was ready to sit in the midst of the temple, and the city and those ancient ordinances to receive their final consummation.⁵

C. breathing on the Disciples

1. Nahum 2:1
2. St. Cyril of Jerusalem states: The fellowship of the Holy Spirit He bestowed on the Apostles; for it is wrtten, [*John 20:22*]. This was the second time He breathed on man (His first breath [Genesis 2:7] having been stifled through wilful sins); that the Scripture might be fulfilled, *He went up breathing upon thy face, and delivering thee from affliction.* (Nahum 2:1, based on LXX version. Hebrew text varies greatly.)⁶

D. the Incarnation (notably, Hypostasis)

1. Nahum 2:6-7 (**ἡ υποστασις απεκαλυφθη**)
2. The word 'revealed' (apekalyfthe, aorist passive indicative or apekalyfto) may also mean 'uncovered' or 'made known.' "The Son is not made, nor is He one of God's works, but is the begotten of the Father without the witnessing presence of any created being.... Hath it not been said in the passage, [*Nahum 2:6 Vulgate*]?(St. Ambrose, *Of the Christian Faith*, 3)⁷

E. the role of mountains in Our Lord's ministry

1. Nahum 1:15
2. Transfiguration
3. Crucifixion
4. Ascension

IV. He beholds the glory of God

- A. "The burden of Nineve: the book of the vision of Naum the Elkesite." (Nahum 1:1)- the whole book
- B. "God is jealous and the Lord avenges" Nahum 1:2-6
 1. "The Foundation and Strength of Hope and Faith is Fear"⁸
- C. "The Lord is good to them that wait on him" Nahum 1:7-10

V. He is a sign for his generation

- A. cf. III.B & III.C
- B. "Out of thee shall proceed a device against the Lord" Nahum 1:11-15
- C. The vision of the destruction of Nineveh- Nahum 2. Gives hope to the Israelites.

VI. He preaches repentance

- A. cf. III.B, III.C, IV.B

VII. He unites prophesy with miracles

- A. cf. I.F & I.G

VIII. He speaks of the Church

- A. cf. II.A, II.B, II.C

⁵ St. Athanasius, *Easter Epistle of 329*, ch. 8, quoted from Robertson, Archibald. *Select Writings and Letters of Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria*, vol. IV of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, ed. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999, p. 509.

⁶ St. Cyril, *Cat. Lect. XVII*, ch. 12, quoted from Gifford, Edwin Hamilton. *The Catechetical Lectures of St. Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem*, vol. VII of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, ed. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999, p. 127.

⁷ *Holy Prophets*, p. 278.

⁸ *The Treatises of Cyprian*, ch. 20. Wallis, Ernest, trans. *Hippolytus, Cyprian, Caius, Novatian, Appendix*, vol. V of Ante-Nicene Fathers, Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, ed. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999, p. 539-540.