

EX OMNIBUS MINORIBUS
PROPHETIS NEMO VIDETUR
AEQUARE SUBLIMITATEM,
ARDOREM ET AUDACES
SPIRITUS NAHUMI . . .

Out of all the minor prophets, none can equal
in the least the sublimity, ardor and daring spirit of Nahum.

The Right Reverend Robert Lowth (1710-1787),
Bishop of Oxford and Oxford Professor of Poetry

- "Nahum was a great poet. His word-pictures are superb, his rhetorical skill is beyond praise. . ."

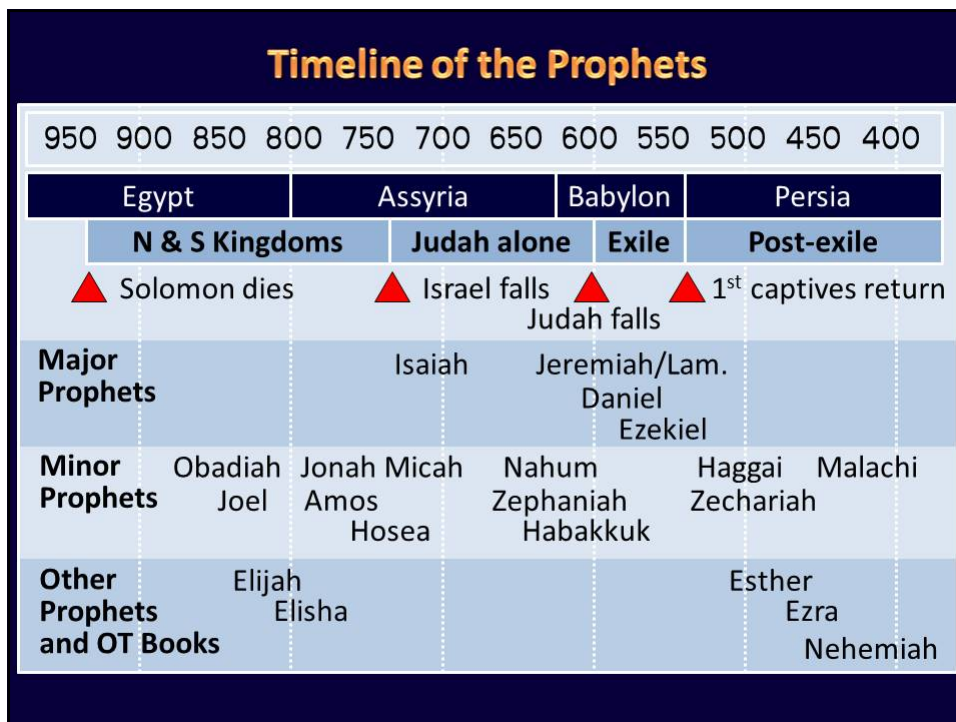
J. A. Bewer, *The Literature of the Old Testament*,
3rd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962) 148.

- "It is everywhere agreed that stylistically Nahum easily heads the list of the minor prophets, excelling even Amos, and himself excelled in all Biblical literature only by Isaiah. Many of his deft, vivid, word-pictures are fully worthy of Isaiah himself. Some of their forcefulness is evident, even in translation, but much is inevitably also lost."

H. D. Hummel, *The Word Becoming Flesh*
(St. Louis: Concordia, 1979), 339-42.



- "Though the rhythm and metre of Nahum are not so smooth and regular as is the case with some Hebrew prophets, yet in some respects the poetry of Nahum is unsurpassed in the OT. His excellence is not in sublimity of thought, depth of feeling, purity of motive, or insight into truth and life. It is rather in his **descriptive powers**. He has an unexcelled capacity to bring a situation vividly before the mind's eye. . . . Accurate and detailed observation assists in giving his pictures verisimilitude."

J. M. P. Smith, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Micah, Zephaniah and Nahum* (ICC, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1985), 273-74.



Key Events

1010-970	King David's Reign
970-931	King Solomon's Reign
931 BC	Israel splits into Northern and Southern Kingdoms
722 BC	Assyria Conquers Northern Kingdom (Israel)
701 BC	Assyria Fails to Capture Jerusalem
612 BC	Babylonians/Medes Conquer Nineveh
605 BC	Battle of Carchemish
605 BC	Siege of Jerusalem (1 st Wave)
597 BC	Siege of Jerusalem (2 nd Wave)
586 BC	Fall of Jerusalem (3 rd Wave)
539 BC	Medo-Persians Conquer Babylon

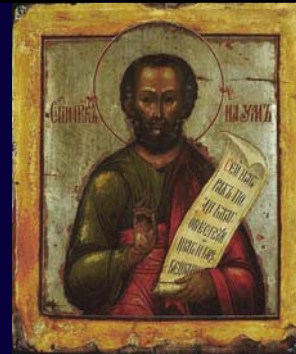



The Minor Prophets and Their Message

	Hosea The Lord loves Israel despite her sin. 755-715 B.C.	Joel Judgment precedes Israel's spiritual revival. 835-796* B.C.	Amos God is just and must judge sin. 765-750 B.C.
	Obadiah Retribution must overtake merciless pride. 848* B.C.	Jonah Divine grace is universal in its sweep. 780-750 B.C.	Micah Bethlehem-born Messiah will deliver mankind. 740-690 B.C.
▲ EXILE ▼	Nahum Doom is to descend on wicked Nineveh. 630 B.C.	Habakkuk Justification by faith is God's way. 625 B.C. or earlier	Zephaniah The day of the Lord must precede kingdom blessing. 625-610 B.C.
	Haggai The Lord's temple and interests deserve top priority. 520 B.C.	Zechariah The Lord will remember his people Israel. 520-515 B.C.; Zech 9-14 after 500	Malachi Let the wicked be warned by the certainty of judgment. 433-400 B.C.

Nahum

- Nahum prophesied the fall of Nineveh, capital city of the Assyrian Empire, which took place in 612 BC. Assyria destroyed the Northern Kingdom in 722 BC, and may have conquered Judah in 701 BC but for the angel of the Lord (Isaiah 37). Assyria's shadow had long hung over Judah.
- Nahum was written after the Egyptian city of Thebes fell to Assyria in 663 BC.
- It states that the Assyrians were abiding in full strength, which preceded their withdrawal before Scythian invasions of 628 BC.
- These dates place Nahum in Judah during the reigns of Manasseh (695–642) and Josiah (640–609). His contemporaries would have been Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk.
- Nahum's name means "full of consolation or comfort", hence "consoler" or "compassion." Tradition places Elkosh in Galilee*.



* May be Capernaum (village of Nahum).

Nahum's theme

- Nahum anticipates divine vengeance upon Judah's Assyrian oppressors. 35 of 47 verses are predictive in character, with 34 devoted to the future destruction of Nineveh.
- *Halley's Bible Handbook* states: "Two of the Prophets had to do with Nineveh: Jonah, about 785 B.C., and Nahum, about 630 B.C.; about 150 years apart. Jonah's was a message of Mercy; Nahum's, a message of Doom. Together they illustrate God's way of dealing with nations: prolonging the day of grace, in the end visiting punishment for sins" (p. 368).
- Nahum shows that despite the unjust and lawless nature of a nation, God is slow to anger (1:3), but He will not always delay His intervention and punishment.
- God had judged Israel and Judah for their wickedness, and now He was to judge the Assyrians. Assyria had reached the zenith of its power, and its downfall probably appeared impossible to many at the time of Nahum's prophecy.

Theme

- Nahum deals with the destruction of Nineveh, which fell to the Medes and Babylonians in 612 BC.
- 35 of Nahum's 47 verses (74%) are predictive, with 34 related to the future fall of Nineveh, which would come within a few decades.
- Nahum 3:19b summarises this theme:

All who hear news of you
will clap *their* hands over you,
for upon whom has not your
wickedness passed continually?

Nahum's Twinned Subthemes

God is a **God of Justice**
who will punish the wicked
and **avenge** his OWN (Nahum 1:2).

God is a
Just Governor of the nations
who will punish wicked Nineveh
and **restore** his OWN (Nahum 2:1-2).

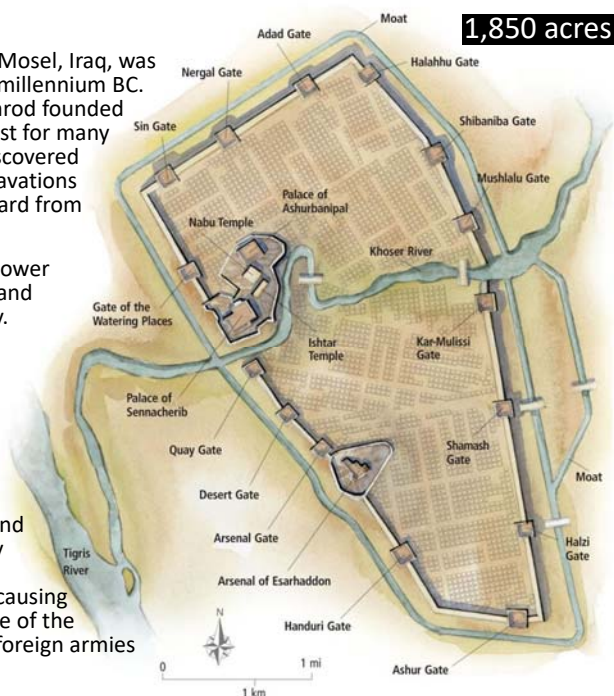


Nineveh

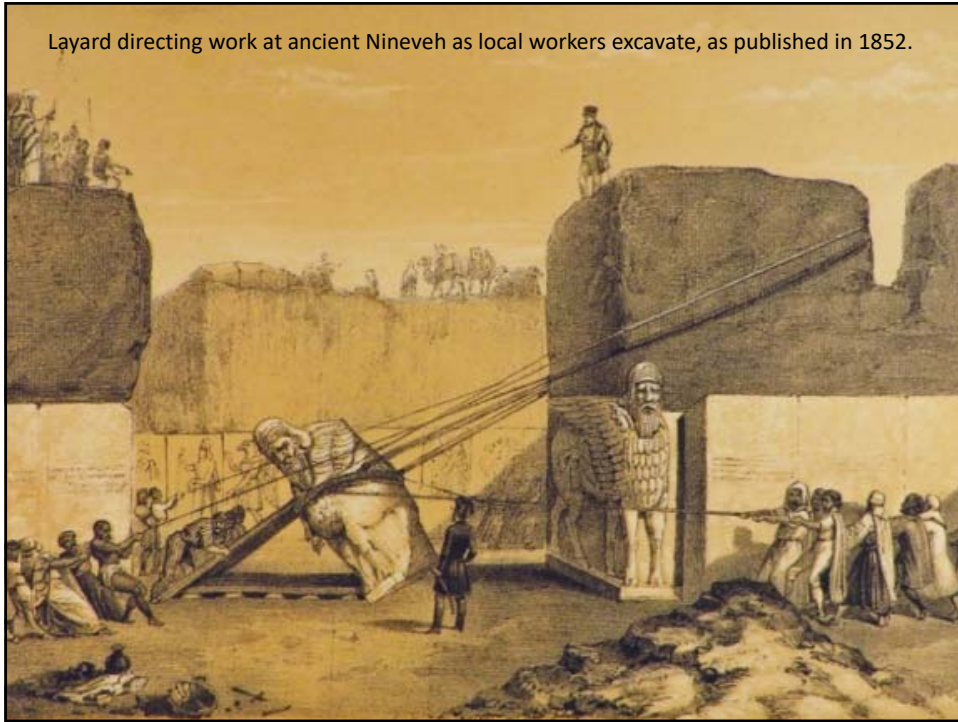
Nineveh, near modern-day Mosul, Iraq, was first settled in the seventh millennium BC. According to the Bible, Nimrod founded the city (Genesis 10:11). Lost for many centuries, the site was rediscovered around 1820 AD. Major excavations took place under Henry Layard from 1845 to 1854 (right).

A great revival of Assyrian power occurred around 1,000 BC, and Nineveh became a royal city. It contained public squares, parks, botanical gardens, and even a zoo. One great archaeological find was the library of King Ashurbanipal (669-627 BC; see Ezra 4:10).

Nineveh fell to the Medes and Babylonians in 612 BC. They dammed the rivers that supplied water to the city, causing a flood to break through one of the perimeter walls, giving the foreign armies access to the city.



Layard directing work at ancient Nineveh as local workers excavate, as published in 1852.



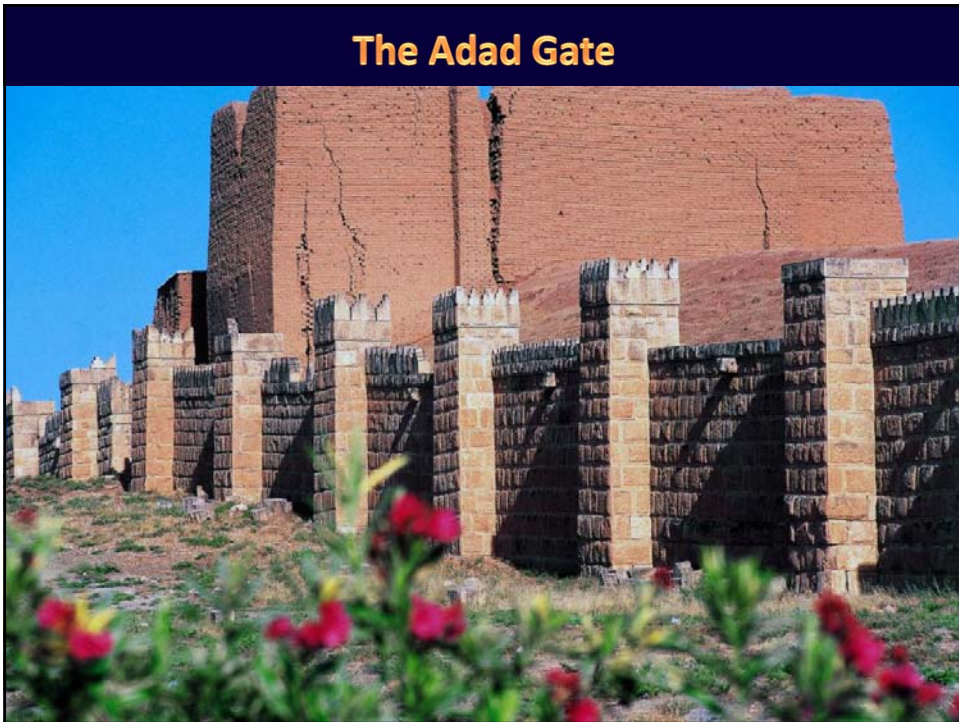
One of the original 15 gateways into Nineveh
(Destroyed by ISIS in April 2016)



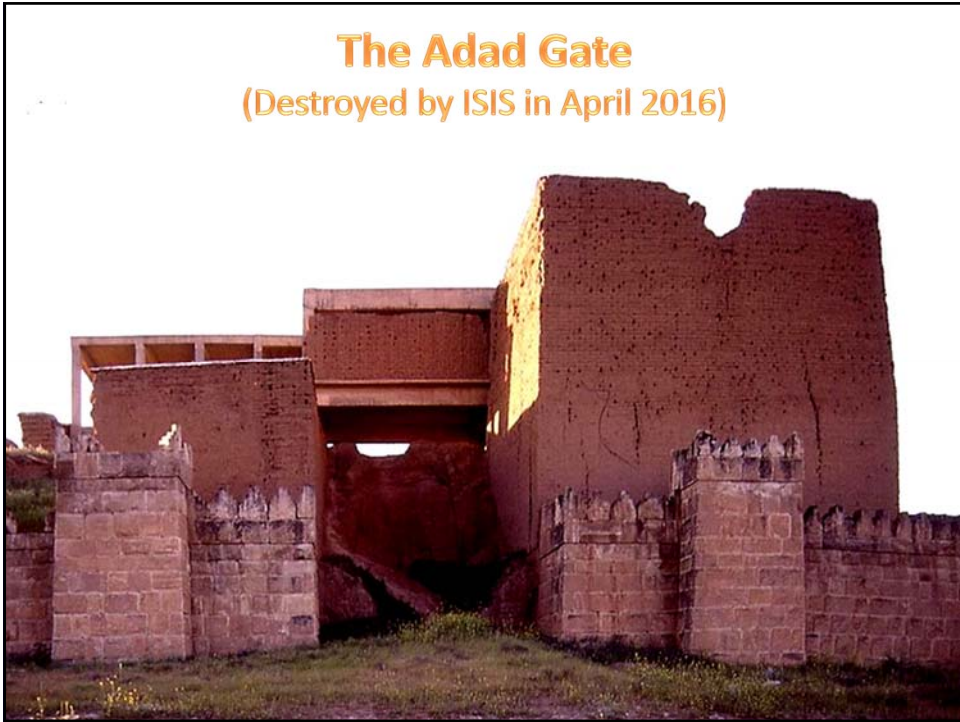
The Nergal Gate



The Adad Gate



The Adad Gate
(Destroyed by ISIS in April 2016)



The Adad Gate
(Destroyed by ISIS in April 2016)



