**Lesson 20**

**28 February - 1 March 2022**

**Genesis 42-47**

***Another Perspective*: Nahum**

**Timeline and Map –** Timewise, Nahum is the 5th minor prophet that God sent, which means that his name goes on blank #5. He lived and ministered about one hundred years after Jonah, so the date of his ministry was about 660 b.c. Like Jonah, his message was directed toward the people of Nineveh, so we will draw a second “talking head” near Nineveh on the map and label it with Nahum’s name.

**Nahum’s Message –** The *Women’s Study Bible* (*WSB)* tells us that “Nahum was God’s messenger to announce the fall of Nineveh and the complete overthrow of Assyria…Nahum’s book is a **sequel** **to**, and **a dramatic** **contrast** **with**, the book of Jonah…To Jonah’s dismay, the Ninevites listened to his message, repented, and were spared God’s judgment. This repentance, however, did not last beyond 745 b.c., when Nineveh became the leading military power in the Near East. In 722 b.c. the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom of Israel. Nineveh was destroyed in 612 b.c., marking the end of the Assyrian empire.” (*WSB*, page 1419)

**Interesting Concepts in Nahum’s Book –** The very first verse of Nahum’s book is unusual because it gives two titles for the book, the only Old Testament book to do so. Nahum begins by saying “an *oracle* concerning Nineveh”. What does that mean? An oracle is any prophetic proclamation, so we could reword the opening line to read, “a prophecy concerning Nineveh”. Then Nahum goes on to say, “the book of the *vision* of Nahum of Elkosh”. The word “vision” tells us *how* God communicated His message to Nahum.

Then in verses 2-8 of chapter 1 we find a kind of song or psalm that praises the Lord descriptively. As the *WSB* points out, “These verses praise God as He has been and will be throughout world history. It presents God’s attitude toward, and action relating to, His enemies and His people.” (*WSB*, page 1421) But the rest of Nahum’s book describes in detail how the Assyrians will be overthrown and utterly destroyed, never to rise to power again. This happened in 612 b.c. when the Babylonian army conquered the Assyrians.

It is also interesting to note the meaning of Nahum’s name. Nahum means “comfort”, and his message would have been a great comfort to the people of Judah, who had been oppressively ruled by Assyria for over a hundred years.

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***Bible Study Fellowship’s Perspective:*** *The following comments were taken from Lessons 25 and 26 of the BSF course on Genesis.*

**The Test of Harsh Treatment – “**We will study Joseph’s continued testing of his brothers through several encounters before he reveals his own identity…**Joseph’s harsh treatment of his brothers is not explained, but he appears purposeful in putting them in situations that expose their hearts.** By seeing God work through his many trials, Joseph had learned to trust God’s sovereign control over negative circumstances. He could trust God was working for the good of His people…**God awakened the brothers’ consciences through three days in prison and fear for their own lives.**

 lesson 25, pg. 4

**Jacob’s Response to the Issue of Sending Benjamin to Egypt –** Jacob initially resisted the idea of sending Benjamin to Egypt with the nine older sons, but **“Jacob yielded and gave permission for Benjamin to go, seeing no alternative**…He sent a lavish gift but **“most importantly, Jacob sought the mercy of God Almighty on behalf of Benjamin and his other sons.** He recognized that only God could protect them from ‘the man’ and allow their safe return. Verse 14 records his words, ‘As for me, if I am bereaved, I am bereaved.’ This literal translation from Hebrew does not express doubt of fatalism but recognition that the matter was now in God’s hands, however it turned out. He acknowledged that God has the right to do whatever He wishes. **Yielding to God often requires letting go of control and comfort, even of things held dear.**  Faith grows as we trust God in ways that feel costly.”

 lesson 26, pg. 2

**The Brothers’ Reaction to the Dinner Invitation –** “The invitation raised their suspicions They were sure Joseph planned to accuse them of theft because of the money in their sacks after last trip…’He wants to attack us and overpower us and seize us as slaves and take our donkeys.’ **Interestingly they described the very treatment they had imposed on Joseph years earlier when they attacked, overpowered, seized and sold him into slavery.** Their fear reflected their guilt.” lesson 26, pg. 2

**The Steward’s Assurance – “**The steward quickly reassured the brothers that they were not being accused of stealing…He treated them with the hospitality offered to guests, not as suspects or prisoners. The brothers prepared their gifts to present to Joseph when he arrived at noon. They expected harsh treatment, as on the first visit, but instead they received kindness. They seemed to be kept guessing, on guard and evaluating what would happen next. **God used both unexpected hardship and surprising kindness to awaken their consciences.”** lesson 26, pg. 2