**Old Testament Survey – Jonah/Nahum**

**Jonah**

Unique among the prophetic books of the OT. It is not a collection of the oracles of the prophet, rather it relates an episode in his life

Prophet: Jonah son of Amittai who prophesied during the reign of Israel King Jeroboam II (2 Kings 14:25) around 793-753 BC. (Was he the author?)

Background: during the height of north kingdom Israel, and the Assyrian empire was in a minor decline

Structure of the book:

Chapter 1: Jonah runs from the Lord

Chapter 2: Jonah’s prayer of Thanksgiving

Chapter 3: Jonah’s preaching and Nineveh’s repentance

Chapter 4: Jonah’s Anger at God’s compassion

Possible genre of the book: historical/factual account; or allegory/parable

Purpose of the book:

1) traditional understanding: Jonah = Israel. The book acts as a missionary book. God urges Israel to move beyond its theological exclusiveness and evangelize other nations. As God has compassion on Nineveh, so they too ought to love and forgive their enemies.

2) Alternative understanding: Jonah = Nineveh. Both faced an impending calamity (compare vs 3:10 and 4:6), Both took actions, neither action was sufficient to bring relief, but each was aided by an act of divine grace. Jonah was not spared his calamity after, and he received the treatment he desired God to show Nineveh. Jonah’s two accounts of anger (4:3-4, 8-9) towards the mechanism of God’s grace: Nineveh didn’t deserve more chances and Jonah had done nothing to earn protection. PURPOSE: God’s sovereign right to show compassion to whomever he will, even if their response might be tiny steps in the right direction.

Major theme of the book: Compassion of God. consider his compassion toward Nineveh/Jonah/Israel (2 King 14:24-27)

Questions:

1. Did Jonah’s thanksgiving in chapter 2 involve repentance? Did Nineveh’s repentance in chapter 3 necessarily mean conversion?

2. Jonah may be the first of the prophetic books chronologically, how does the message of this book set up the other books?

**Nahum**

Prophet: Nahum the Elkoshite, no written date given, but by internal evident it should be between 663BC – 612BC

Background: Israel had been a vassal nation under Assyria around that time. Assyria was renowned for its unrelenting cruelty as master of the nations, and it was at the height of its powers.

Main verse: 1:7-8

Structure of the book:

I. Introductory Psalm (1:1-8)

II. The doom of Nineveh and the deliverance of Judah (1:9-2:2) (the word “Nineveh” and “Judah” didn’t appear in original writing until 2:8 and 1:15)

III. The siege of Nineveh (2:3-3:19)

(2:11-13 Lion was the symbol of Assyria; 3:8-11 Thebes was conquered by Assyria)

Purpose of the book: Pronounce the doom of Nineveh. This was not just a case of the ebb and flow of history, but the sovereign act of the Lord.

Compare the books of Jonah and Nahum regarding the judgments they pronounced against Nineveh, why were the results different?