

The Expectation of Nineveh's Destruction

Nahum 3:1-10

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July 10, 2022 a.m.

Introduction: Having considered Nineveh's doom exclaimed or declared (1:1-14), & explained or described (1:15-2:13), note with me here this morning how Nineveh's doom is expected or deserved (3:1-19). The first 10 verses give us the **precedence** for judgment & then tonight we will see the last 9 verses set forth the **evidence** of judgment. We are again reminded of Nahum's parallel themes - the majestic person of God & the manifested power of God. Other themes found in Nahum's prophecy include: (1) God's righteous judgment of sin [see Genesis 18:25]; (2) God's sovereignty & power over nations [see Isaiah 40:15-17]; (3) God's previous mercy & kindness toward Nineveh [see Jonah]; & (3) God's comfort for Judah [Nahum's name means "consolation" or "comforter"] - God has not forgotten His oppressed people. Note the key verse of the chapter - 3:5a.

I. The precedence for judgment (:1-10)

A. The **reality** of God's **predicted** wrath (:1-7)

1. The **sins** of Nineveh (:1, 4)

- a. "*Bloody city*" - Assyrians were one of the most cruel, bloodthirsty of peoples. "The atrocious practice of cutting off hands and feet, ears and noses, gouging out eyes, lopping off heads and then binding them to vines or heaping them up before city gates; the utter fiendishness by which captives could be impaled or flayed alive through a process in which their skin was gradually and completely removed - this planned frightfulness systematically enforced by the '*bloody city*' was now to be avenged" (Maier). There are reports of captives forced to carry the heads of their fellow-soldiers in a procession through the streets.

Note: Is such cruelty limited to ancient times? Consider the depravity of the human heart:

(1) Russian torture of civilians & soldiers in Ukraine.*

(2) Uvalde, Texas shooting - innocent children & teachers.

(3) Highland Park, Illinois parade shooting.

- b. "*Full of lies and robbery*" - broken truces and promises for help or protection, characterized by violence and robbery.
- c. "*The prey departeth not*" - summarizes their ceaseless pillaging.
- d. "*Well-favoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts ('black arts')*" - references the most wicked of females, prostitutes and sorceresses:
 - (1) Women who sought money & domination beyond acceptable social & religious norms.
 - (2) Likewise Nineveh sought money & power by illegitimate means; bartered in human lives.

2. The **sights** (and sounds) in Nineveh (:2-3) [This seems like an eye-witness account]

- a. Sounds (:2a) - noise of the whip; rattling of the chariot wheels.
- b. Sights (:2b-3) - prancing horses; jumping chariots (bounding over obstacles); flashing swords, numerous corpses (no end in sight; everywhere one turns, he stumbles over another body).

3. The **shame** for Nineveh (:5-7)

[Verse 5 repeats 2:13 - emphasizes the seriousness & assuredness of the Divine threat. These should be the most feared words a nation could ever hear from God! Compare Genesis 12:2-3. "Since the Almighty has spoken twice, Nineveh is doubly doomed" (Maier).]

- a. Disgraced (:5) - skirts lifted over the face - humiliating exposure; speaks of the captives of war being displayed naked (see Isaiah 47:2-3 & compare punishment for harlots - Hosea 2:2-3).

[Illustrate: Compare and contrast > even wicked Assyrians considered it a disgrace for a woman to be shown nude - contrast today's wicked society, in its fixation on immodest clothing trends (Hollywood stars, etc.) and its addiction to pornography.]

- b. Defaced (:6) - with "*abominable filth*" - vile and repulsive (cf. Mal. 2:3).

- c. Disdained (:7) - an object of disgust ["*Nineveh is laid waste*" - "...an exclamation of astonishment and joy (cf. 3:19)" (Maier).]

B. The **results** of God's **previous** wrath (:8-10)

1. No's (No-Amon, Thebes) **description** (:8-9)

- a. Her identification - Thebes - named by the Greeks; previously named No-Amon or "city of Amon" (Egyptian sun-god – human body with a ram's head).
 - (1) The city was located on both banks of the Nile River.
 - (2) The city had 2 temples: Karnak (330 feet long & 170 feet wide) & Luxor (ruins today).
 - (3) The city covered an area 27 square miles (see Phillips's description, pp. 196-97).
- b. Her location - "*situate among the rivers*" - branches of the Nile River; "*water round about*" - the channels, moats, and canals (400 miles South of Cairo).
- c. Her affiliations - military alliances with "*Ethiopia*" (also called Abyssinia), "*Egypt*," "*Put*" (Somaliland?), "*Lubim*" (Libya?)

2. No's (No-Amon, Thebes) **destruction** (:10)

- a. Captivity - not only defeated, but her people deported (foretold in Jeremiah 46:25).
- b. Children - since infants & sickly children were difficult to transport, they were often disposed of cruelly - cf. Hos. 10:14; Isa. 43:16, 18; Ps. 137:9; II Kgs. 8:12.
 - (1) "This shocking massacre of children occurred 'at the head (*top*) of all streets,' probably the concourse of several thoroughfares, where the atrocity would be more spectacular & could be witnessed by larger groups" (Maier).
 - (2) Today the massacre of children is more "private" – it is called abortion.
- c. "Chattel" - gambling for human lives ("*cast lots for her honorable men*") - led away in chains.

Summary: What the Assyrians did to Thebes in 663 B.C. will soon happen to Nineveh (612 B.C.).

Application: See Galatians 6:7-8.

*Recall again the phrase "*bloody city*" in reference to Nineveh in Nahum 3:1. John Phillips, writing in 1998, said: "Much that is said of Nineveh can be said of Moscow & the Kremlin. Who can count the millions of people that have been killed to spread communism around the world? What nation is more guilty of treachery in its treaty obligations than Russia? Assyrian promises were also notoriously untrustworthy & vengeance was on the way."

Conclusion: The city of Nineveh would fall in 612 B.C. (confirmed by the Babylonian Chronicle). Nahum's oracle depicts Nineveh's doom exclaimed (or declared), explained (or described), & expected (or deserved). Such doom is revealed through the lenses of God's majestic person and His manifested power. What lessons lie herein for us today? G. Campbell Morgan suggests: "The first fact is that to believe in the love of God is to be quite sure of His wrath." God's wrath is revealed against man's pride, cruelty, and impenitence. "It is impossible today to be complacent in the presence of the misery, the bloodshed, the brutality, the cruelty manifested, and if we are complacent, we may be sure that God is angry. Whenever or wherever humanity is wronged and spoiled, the anger of God is not only aroused, it becomes active" (Morgan). The cry of Israel in the O.T. asking where is God during her hour of need is the cry of many today in a world of terrorism and savagery. Where was God on 9/11? Where was God during the recent mass shootings? The assurance given through Nahum to God's people of that day and the answer that can be given to people of the world today is that God, who is good and righteous and powerful, does see and will respond. Our God is "*The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty...*" (Exodus 34:6-7). As through the eyes of Asaph in Psalm 73, one needs to view the temporal prosperity of the wicked in light of their ultimate destruction (the sure & certain punishment of unrepentant sinners, Proverbs 29:1 & Psalm 2:12). And one needs to view the momentary suffering of the righteous in light of their eternal delight. Our God is merciful and good, yet powerful and holy. His sovereign rule over the nations of the world will be manifested not only in the judgment of sinful people but in the deliverance of His chosen people. Remember the charge recorded in 2:13 & 3:5, "*Behold, I am against thee saith the Lord of hosts.*" On whose side are you? The choices are made clear in John 3:16-18, & verse 36. What is your decision?

