

## The Expectation of Nineveh's Destruction (Part II)

*Nahum 3:11-19*

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**Introduction:** This morning we looked at the **precedence** for Nineveh's judgement by considering the reality of God's predicted wrath (:1-7) as well as the results of God's previous wrath (:8-10). Tonight we come to the **evidence** of Nineveh's judgment. The key themes we identified this morning are in evidence here as well: (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. Tonight we will see Nineveh pictured as a drunken man & Nineveh portrayed as a disgraced people.

### II. The evidence of judgment (:11-19)

#### A. Nineveh is **pictured** as a **drunken man** (:11-13)

- 1.. The illustrating of her fall - pictured as honor-less, helpless, hopeless (:11-13) >
  - a. Her men drinking to make themselves courageous, yet they became cowards? "The confusion, helplessness, & shame of a drunkard is like that of a defeated nation or city" (Chisholm).
  - b. Her drinking symbolizes being drunk with the cup of God's wrath? (see Jeremiah 25:14-16).
  - c. Her fortress would fall like ripe fig shaken from the tree (:12).
  - d. Her warriors would be terrified and become like women (women did not typically fight in wars in that day) (:13).

Summary: "People feeling the effects of judgment were shown to be reeling like drunkards & staggering stupidly; such a comparison indicated that they were overwhelmed by the onrushing force of events over which they had no control & about which they could neither think sanely nor come to proper conclusions" (Phillips).

2. The hiding of her ruins (:11) >
  - a. "*Thou shalt be hid*" - so complete was her destruction that the site remained unknown until 1842, when uncovered by excavation (French & British archaeologists).
  - b. Though she sought refuge (help from other nations?), none was found.

#### B. Nineveh is **portrayed** as a **disgraced people** (:14-19)

1. Satirical call to battle (:14-15a).
  - a. Store up water against the siege; fortify the walls; ready bricks to repair holes.
  - b. The city will be destroyed by fire.Summary: "Their preparations would do them little good, for once a nation has been weighed in the divine balances & found wanting, no military maneuvers will avail. Nineveh seemed to be prospering when Nahum prophesied, but her day was done" (Phillips).
2. Symbolical comparison (:15b-18).
  - a. Though as numerous as locusts (crowded city population), her destruction is also likened to a locust plague (the devastation caused by locusts).
  - b. Her military leaders and princes are compared to the locusts, whose wings have been warmed in the sun and then fly away - the leaders flee from the city.
  - c. Her officials (viceroys?) are likened unto shepherds, who, rather than planning & organizing Nineveh's defense, are found sleeping (figuratively used of death).

Summary > 3:19 - Restoration is hopeless [the city never permanently rebuilt].

Rejoicing is endless ["a gesture of malevolent joy and exultation..." (Maier) & compare Revelation 18:20-21].\*

Retribution is ruthless [repayment - "...even in its dying gasp and ignominious burial, the bloody city will be the object of wide ridicule" (Maier)].

\*While all the nations hated to be ruled by Assyria, they nevertheless desired to be like Assyria – wealthy, powerful, prestigious. “And deep down, we would like to have that kind of power. The thought of being on top can be captivating. But power is seductive, so we should not scheme to get it or hold on to it. Those who lust after power will be powerfully destroyed, as was the mighty Assyrian Empire” (LAB).

Application: Nahum ends his message with a question just like Jonah. “Jonah ended by God asking (Jonah) how can He not spare repentant Nineveh? Nahum’s question is essentially how can God not judge wicked Nineveh? God in His mercy receives those who come to Him in faith & repentance. God in His justice must judge the unrepentant. It is eternally better to experience God’s grace & mercy than to be sentenced according to His justice” (RSB).

Note: “There is no remedy for apostasy – only judgment. God always rewards apostasy with catastrophe. Thus Nahum’s message to Nineveh is a warning to the apostatizing world of today” (Phillips). Examples?? Abortion; LGBT+ issues.

Conclusion: The city of Nineveh would fall in 612 B.C. (confirmed by the Babylonian Chronicle). Again, the concluding verse is in the form of a rhetorical question. The only other book of the Bible to end so is fittingly the Book of Jonah. Nahum’s oracle depicts Nineveh’s doom exclaimed, explained, and expected. Such doom is revealed through the lenses of God’s majestic person and His manifested power. I repeat the lessons we considered this morning from G. Campbell Morgan. He 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). Longman suggests that Nahum’s message theologically is to present God as the Divine Warrior who judges evil. 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. 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. 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 again the charge recorded in 2:13 and 3:5, “*Behold, I am against thee saith the Lord of hosts.*” On whose side are you? For those who know Christ as personal Savior, the promise is: “*If God be for us, who can be against us*” (Romans 8:31). For those without Christ, John 3:18 says that they are “*condemned already.*” Where do you stand tonight?