

Pastor Grady Covin

The Mission

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## Nahum 1.7-15

So tonight I want to continue in our study of Nahum, which like I mentioned last week is a sequel to the book of Jonah which we studied a few weeks ago. It's only three chapters long and it gives us in essence the story or the prophecy of what is about to happen to the great city of Nineveh and the nation of Assyria. And how God eventually will judge them and destroy them for their sin and for turning back to their wicked ways.

If you were here for our study through Jonah, then you already know the history of the Assyrians and how Jonah was sent to them to pronounce God's judgment upon them. But to Jonah's surprise, when he went there and preached, they responded in repentance. And God saved the entire city of Nineveh and He spared their nation, at least temporarily from judgement.

But now, they've turned back to their evil ways and back to their old way of life and because of that, God is going to judge them once and for all.

And so that's the history leading up to this book. And here in the first chapter, this is going to be another prophet and with another message. And like we learned last week, this is the prophet Nahum, who's name means comfort. And that and the fact that he is an Elkoshite, which just means he is probably from somewhere in Judah, that's all we really know about him. But of course the book is not about him, it's about the attributes of God and what He is about to do to the Assyrians on behalf of His chosen people.

And therein lies the connection between the meaning of Nahum's name and the people of Judah and Israel, because what God is about to do, will no doubt bring comfort to God's people.

To not have to worry everyday about their neighbors coming over and killing them, that in itself would be a great comfort. To be able to live in peace without the threat of harm to one's life is a great comfort. And one that many of us no doubt take for granted sometimes.

And so last week we started to look at three declarations a Nahum makes about God and Nineveh.

The first declaration and the one we got through last week is, that God is jealous and that Nineveh will fall. And that truth we find in chapter 1.

And then the second declaration and the one we'll be looking at tonight is that God Is Judge and we'll learn **how** Nineveh will fall. And that truth takes up chapter 2.

And then thirdly, next time, we'll be learning how God Is Just as the prophet tells us **why** Nineveh will fall. And that last truth will incorporate chapter 3.

So again, this book for the most part, is about the judgment of God; but the judgment of God, like we learned last week can also be a comfort to God's people.

When God's judgement is against our enemies, and we realize that this judgement is God's way of protecting us, then that should be a comfort to us. And it would have been for Israel and for Judah during this time in history. Because when this prophecy was first given, the Assyrians were still in power. They had already exiled the Northern Kingdom, which was Israel, and they had tried to take captive the southern kingdom of Judah. And had it not been for a miracle of God sending angels to kill some 185,00 Assyrian soldiers, they would have taken them captive.

And even though it would be another forty, or fifty years before Nahum's prophecy would actually come to fulfillment, it still had to bring God's chosen people some level of comfort, to know that God hadn't forgotten about them. And that He **would** one day get His vengeance; just like He promised.

And when it did come to pass, then that had to be an even greater comfort to the people of Judah and Israel.

And by the way, that should also give us great comfort. To know that many of the prophecies and promises of God have already been fulfilled just exactly like they were prophesied or promised, that should give us great hope and comfort about the future.

And the promises and prophecies that we learned about in our study of Revelation not long ago, we can be confident that they will come to pass just like God said.

Now, if you'll remember back to our study of Jonah, God's remedy, wasn't what Jonah really wanted to see. Jonah, after he finished preaching, expected the people of Nineveh to reject the message he had relayed to them from God. And he fully expected and desired in his heart of hearts for God to destroy the people of Nineveh.

But the people didn't reject the word from God, but instead chose to repent, and because of their willingness to repent, God chose to save them. And of course, God is always right. God knows what is best at any given time. And that's why He reserves vengeance for Himself and doesn't give over that right over to us. And whatever method He chooses, and whatever timing He chooses will always be right and it will always be right on time.

And again, we know from history, that God's judgement would come upon the nation of Assyria, but it wouldn't come for some forty or fifty years.

Now, like we learned last week, the Babylonians during this same time period, began to take power from the Assyrians. And from 626 B.C. to the final battle which was around 609 B. C. the Babylonians fought to take control as the new world power and they were eventually successful, which is the fulfillment of the judgment that God through the prophet Nahum had prophesied.

And so this is the fulfillment of the first declaration that we looked at last week in verses 1-7. That God is jealous and that Nineveh will fall.

Now, in verse 7, Nahum invites us to consider two opposing attributes of God. One is the goodness of God and one is the severity of God”

Verse 7 says, The Lord is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble; And He knows those who trust in Him. 8 But with an overflowing flood He will make an utter end of its place, And darkness will pursue His enemies.

In other words, though “God is love”, God is also light. And so His love is a holy love. And as a result, He is a refuge for those who trust Him, but He is an “overwhelming flood” to those who don't trust Him and who are His enemies.

And in verses 9-11 and also in verse 14, God through the prophet Nahum speaks to the leaders of Nineveh.

**9 What do you conspire against the Lord? He will make an utter end of it. Affliction will not rise up a second time.**

**10 For while tangled like thorns, And while drunken like drunkards, They shall be devoured like stubble fully dried.**

**11 From you comes forth one Who plots evil against the Lord, A wicked counselor.**

**14 The Lord has given a command concerning you: “Your name shall be perpetuated no longer. Out of the house of your gods I will cut off the carved image and the molded image. I will dig your grave, For you are vile.”**

And so God informs the leaders of Assyria that He knows their plots and their plans, and He's going to cause everyone of their plans to fail.

And all through the scriptures we have examples of how God did the same thing to other nations and leaders. When proud nations plot against God, listen to what the Psalmist says will happen.

**Psalm 2:1, Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves,**

**And the rulers take counsel together, Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, 3 “Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us.”4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision.**

God just laughs at them and then He turns their schemes into confusion. And the Assyrians would be no exception.

**Verse 10 says, For while tangled like thorns, And while drunken like drunkards, They shall be devoured like stubble fully dried.**

The leaders of Assyria would be like a drunk who's stumbled into a thicket of briars and can't get out, not able to make a right decision, not able to think straight. And because they can't think straight or make the right decision, they're going to be completely destroyed, just like the dried up stubble which is burned up in a prairie fire. And nothing is going to be left, but the ashes.

**And then in verse 11, He says, From you comes forth one Who plots evil against the Lord, A wicked counselor.**

The plotter mentioned here in verse 11 is the king of Assyria, and you can read all about this account in the 2 Kings 18-18 and in 2 Chronicles chapter 32 and also in the book of Isaiah in chapter 37.

And then in verse 14 God makes three declarations against the king of Assyria. In verse 14 Nahum says,

**14 The Lord has given a command concerning you:  
“Your name shall be perpetuated no longer.**

In other words, your dynasty will end and you will have no descendants; And then secondly he says and;

**Out of the house of your gods, I will cut off the carved image and the molded image.**

In other words, your false gods and idols, they're not going to do you any good when I come for you, because you and them are going to be destroyed.

And that too ought to be a lesson to us. When it's all said and done and when our life is over, all the things we've accumulated over the years; all the prestige and fame and fortune will pass away or be passed down to somebody else. And all that will matter is what we did for Jesus and for the kingdom of God.

And then lastly he says,

**I will dig your grave, For you are vile.”**

In other words, his life will end, when God prepares his grave.

And just the same, every man has an appointed time; and when it comes, he'll be put in the grave just like this king of Assyria.

And many will be just like this king when they die. They will be so sure while they're alive that their plans will succeed. But then suddenly and unexpectedly they'll realize they were wrong.

Now, what was the reason? Why would God do all these things to this king and to this nation?

Well, God gives us the answer there in the last part of that verse. He says, "For you are vile!" In other words, he was an unrepentant sinner. And all unrepentant sinners are considered by God to be the same. They're vile. And one day He will give them what they think they want, but not what they were expecting.

And then in verses 12-13 and also in verse 15, God speaks to Judah.

**12 Thus says the Lord: "Though they are safe, and likewise many, Yet in this manner they will be cut down When he passes through. Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no more;**

**13 For now I will break off his yoke from you, And burst your bonds apart."**

God says, even though the Assyrian armies outnumber you; and even though they have more allies than you do, that doesn't mean they're going to win, because I will be on your side. Judah

would have God on their side, and when we have God on our side; that's all we need! Amen!

And even though God had used the Assyrians in the past to chastise Judah, that wouldn't happen this time. This time, God would break that yoke and He would remove the shackles that Assyria had put on Judah, and finally they would be freed from Assyria once and for all.

And one day, God's going to do the same thing to Satan and all of his demon angels. God will deliver His children in the end; once and for all! And we can rest in that promise.

Now, in ancient days, news was carried by couriers, and the watchmen on the walls would constantly scan the horizon hoping that messengers would bring good news. And in this case, it was good news indeed: the courier would announce that Nineveh was fallen and the Assyrian army defeated and in disarray.

**15 Behold, on the mountains The feet of him who brings good tidings, Who proclaims peace! O Judah, keep your appointed feasts, Perform your vows. For the wicked one shall no more pass through you; He is utterly cut off.**

So finally, Judah could live in peace and worship the Lord and enjoy all the annual and regular feasts and religious festivals.

And by the way, we find this same statement in **Isaiah 52:7**, where the messenger announced the defeat of Babylon.

**How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, “Your God reigns!”**

And of course Paul also quotes this same verse in

**Romans 10:15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!”**

And how fitting that we end here with this verse, since it's Christmas. When the good news as never before came into the world as a little baby. When God in flesh brought us hope and the promise of eternal life.

And though to Judah, the goods news was that Assyria would be completely destroyed and could never again invade her land; to those of us who trust in Christ, it means that God through His Son Jesus has completely defeated sin, and death, and Satan, and that now we're free to enjoy the blessings of our salvation, which include not only eternal life in heaven, but also an abundant life in the here and now. Amen!

