

# Nahum

## The Minor Prophets—part 7

November 14, 2021

### **DAY 1: The character of God**

1. Nineveh, the capital of Assyria had been the dominant world power for over a century. One hundred years prior to the prophet Nahum, the prophet Jonah preached to the evil and wicked Ninevite people and miraculously took Jonah's message seriously. They repented, and God relented of His threat to end their evil empire.

2. But over the next two generations, Nineveh reverted back to their wicked oppression.

3. Nahum is called upon to carry God's message to the people of Nineveh and the king.

*Nahum 1:2 The LORD is a **jealous** and **avenging** God; the LORD takes **vengeance** and is filled with **wrath**. The LORD takes vengeance on his foes and vents his wrath against his enemies. <sup>3</sup> The LORD is **slow to anger** but **great in power**; the LORD will not leave the guilty unpunished.*

4. The message of judgment is based on the holiness of God and His love for people. When wickedness, evil and oppression thrive people are hurt.

5. Nahum begins his introduction of the letter with the character of God. God is:

#### 6. **Jealous:**

God is not jealous in the way a junior high boy is "jealous" regarding his girlfriend. That kind of jealousy hovers over the girl friend, and smothers her to "protect" her, but in reality to protect him from losing her.

God's jealousy of us is the opposite. If you insist on drifting away from Him He will let you chase after some other "first love" but because He knows that's a bad idea, He goes to work to make your life more difficult to get you to choose a different path—the one back to Him!

#### 7. **Avenging, vengeance, wrath:**

God is committed to not letting evil win, whether in the world or in your life. His method is to make evil pay such a price that people will be stopped in their tracks from trying that again.

#### 8. **Slow to anger:**

Human anger, vengeance and wrath is triggered instantaneously, and often for petty reasons. If God were "quick" to anger, who would be left to live?

#### 9. **Great in power:**

There is no evil so powerful or wide that God cannot put an end to it.

*Nahum 1:7 The LORD is **good**, a **refuge** in times of trouble. He **cares** for those who trust in him, <sup>8</sup>but with an overwhelming flood he will make an end of Nineveh; he will pursue his foes into the realm of darkness.*

10. What strikes you from today's devotional?

## DAY 2: The message to Nineveh and the message to God's people

1. Nahum's message is mainly directed at Nineveh. But the message is also overheard by God's people who are in exile and slavery.

*Nahum 1:8 ...but with an overwhelming flood he will make an end of Nineveh; he will pursue his foes into the realm of darkness. <sup>9</sup> Whatever they **plot against the LORD** he will bring to an end; trouble will not come a second time. <sup>10</sup> They will be entangled among thorns and drunk from their wine; they will be consumed like dry stubble. <sup>11</sup> From you, Nineveh, has one come forth who **plots evil against the LORD** and **devises wicked plans**.*

2. What is the sin Nahum preaches that has brought about such destruction from the Ninevites?

3. Nahum points out two additional things:

a. What end result does God want to accomplish?

b. How does Nahum describe the judgment they will face? (v. 10)

*Nahum 1:12 This is what the LORD says: "Although they have allies and are numerous, they will be destroyed and pass away."*

4. Nineveh rested its hopes on its own power, oppression and slavery. In addition, they made covenants with other nations to have allies, attempting to "secure" their "security." What will come of their schemes?

5. And now the people of God "overhear" Nahum's message, now directed to them.

*Nahum 1:12b Although I have afflicted you, Judah, I will afflict you no more. <sup>13</sup> Now I will break their yoke from your neck and tear your shackles away."*

6. Nahum delivers the stunning coming end of Nineveh in as complete a way as can be imagined.

*Nahum 1:14 The LORD has given a command concerning you, Nineveh: "You will have no descendants to bear your name. I will destroy the images and idols that are in the temple of your gods. I will prepare your grave, for you are vile."*

7. God's people "overhear" this amazing message of hope. Could this finally become true?

*Nahum 1:15 Look, there on the mountains, the feet of one who brings good news, who proclaims peace! Celebrate your festivals, Judah, and fulfill your vows. No more will the wicked invade you; they will be completely destroyed.*

8. What strikes you from today's devotional?

### DAY 3: The utter destruction of Nineveh predicted in graphic detail

1. This stunning prophecy begins with a wake-up call. Perhaps, even now, judgment could have been avoided.

*Nahum 2:1 An attacker advances against you, Nineveh. Guard the fortress, watch the road, brace yourselves, marshal all your strength!*

*Nahum 2:2 The LORD will restore the splendor of Jacob like the splendor of Israel, though destroyers have laid them waste and have ruined their vines.*

2. What are God's ultimate purposes He wants accomplished through judgment? (v. 2)

*Nahum 2:3 The shields of the soldiers are red; the warriors are clad in scarlet. The metal on the chariots flashes on the day they are made ready; the spears of juniper are brandished. <sup>4</sup> The chariots storm through the streets, rushing back and forth through the squares. They look like flaming torches; they dart about like lightning. <sup>5</sup> Nineveh summons her picked troops, yet they stumble on their way. They dash to the city wall; the protective shield is put in place. <sup>6</sup> The river gates are thrown open and the palace collapses. <sup>7</sup> It is decreed that Nineveh be exiled and carried away. Her female slaves moan like doves and beat on their breasts. <sup>8</sup> Nineveh is like a pool whose water is draining away. "Stop! Stop!" they cry, but no one turns back. <sup>9</sup> Plunder the silver! Plunder the gold! The supply is endless, the wealth from all its treasures! <sup>10</sup> She is pillaged, plundered, stripped! Hearts melt, knees give way, bodies tremble, every face grows pale.*

3. Nahum pictures the overthrow of the city in graphic detail!

a. What is the response of Nineveh's soldiers?

b. How effective are the city's defenses?

c. What is the response of the people of Nineveh? (vv. 7-8 and the last sentence of verse 10).

d. What is the response of the invading army? (Vv. 3-4, 9-10).

4. The imagery of a lion's den and lions is how Nineveh thought of themselves, a kind of "king of the forest," untamable, ferocious identity.

*Nahum 1:11 Where now is the lions' den, the place where they fed their young, where the lion and lioness went, and the cubs, with nothing to fear? <sup>12</sup> The lion killed enough for his cubs and strangled the prey for his mate, filling his lairs with the kill and his dens with the prey.*

*Nahum 1:13 "**I am against you.**" declares the LORD Almighty. "I will burn up your chariots in smoke, and the sword will devour your young lions. I will leave you no prey on the earth. The voices of your messengers will no longer be heard."*

5. What strikes you from today's devotional?

## **DAY 4: False hopes, lies, justifications, pride**

1. This message begins with the list of offenses which have deserved divine judgment.

*Nahum 3:1 Woe to the city of blood, full of lies, full of plunder, never without victims!*

2. Judgment is coming.

*Nahum 3:2 The crack of whips, the clatter of wheels, galloping horses and jolting chariots!*

*<sup>3</sup> Charging cavalry, flashing swords and glittering spears! Many casualties, piles of dead, bodies without number, people stumbling over the corpses—*

3. There are more reasons for judgment. Nahum uses the imagery of prostitution as a metaphor for Assyria “alluring” the nations around her, “captivating” and then capturing them.

*Nahum 3:4 ...all because of the wanton lust of a prostitute, alluring, the mistress of sorceries, who enslaved nations by her prostitution and peoples by her witchcraft.*

*Nahum 3:5a I am against you,” declares the LORD Almighty.*

4. Judgment will not just be retributive, but will be a lesson for the surrounding nations. The *shame* of sin will become apparent and obvious!

*Nahum 1:5b “I will lift your skirts over your face. I will show the nations your nakedness and the kingdoms your shame. <sup>6</sup> I will pelt you with filth, I will treat you with contempt and make you a spectacle. <sup>7</sup> All who see you will flee from you and say, ‘Nineveh is in ruins—who will mourn for her?’ Where can I find anyone to comfort you?”*

5. Apparently, Nineveh had prided itself on its strength and defenses. They had compared themselves to strong cities in modern day Egypt, protected by fortresses, surrounded by water defenses.

*Nahum 3:8 Are you better than Thebes, situated on the Nile, with water around her? The river was her defense, the waters her wall. <sup>9</sup> Cush <sup>d</sup> and Egypt were her boundless strength; Put and Libya were among her allies. <sup>10</sup> Yet she was taken captive and went into exile. Her infants were dashed to pieces at every street corner. Lots were cast for her nobles, and all her great men were put in chains.*

6. There are several traits of sin that are exposed in Nineveh.

“We know better. We’ll be more careful than those who weren’t careful. We’re too strong to be defeated. No one will find out what we’re doing. We won’t be held accountable.”

7. Underline the lies and justifications in the point above that resonate with you.

8. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

## DAY 5: The fall of the proud and “mighty”

1. The language in this last message sounds like it is meant directly for the arrogant king of Assyria, with secondary meaning for the Assyrian army and the citizens.

2. Notice how God addresses each of the king’s false hopes:

*Nahum 3:11 You too will become drunk; you will go into hiding and seek refuge from the enemy.*

<sup>12</sup> *All your fortresses are like fig trees with their first ripe fruit; when they are shaken, the figs fall into the mouth of the eater.*

a. The mighty fortresses in which they trusted. How did that turn out?

<sup>13</sup> *Look at your troops— they are all weaklings.*

b. Their “mighty troops.” How did that turn out?

*The gates of your land are wide open to your enemies; fire has consumed the bars of your gates.*

c. The metal and wooden gates to the city. How did that turn out?

<sup>14</sup> *Draw water for the siege, strengthen your defenses! Work the clay, tread the mortar, repair the brickwork!* <sup>15</sup> *There the fire will consume you; the sword will cut you down— they will devour you like a swarm of locusts. Multiply like grasshoppers, multiply like locusts!*

d. The last-minute efforts to “button everything up.” God is mocking the king who had commanded these operations to be done before the invasion. How did that turn out?

<sup>16</sup> *You have increased the number of your merchants till they are more numerous than the stars in the sky, but like locusts they strip the land and then fly away.*

e. The king had trusted an enormous amount of plunder as his security. How did that turn out?

<sup>17</sup> *Your guards are like locusts, your officials like swarms of locusts that settle in the walls on a cold day— but when the sun appears they fly away, and no one knows where.*

f. The king had organized a strong army and command structure. How did that turn out?

<sup>18</sup> *King of Assyria, your shepherds slumber; your nobles lie down to rest. Your people are scattered on the mountains with no one to gather them.* <sup>19</sup> *Nothing can heal you; your wound is fatal. All who hear the news about you clap their hands at your fall, for who has not felt your endless cruelty?*

3. Nahum’s concluding illustration envisions for the king his utter devastation and defeat.

4. What strikes you from the book of Nahum?