



The Book Of Naham

Shows God's Wrath

As He Brings

Judgment

Compiled By Dr. Harold Bollinger

Nahum

OVERVIEW:

Rules, fouls, and penalties are part of any game and are regulated and enforced vigorously by referees, umpires, judges, and other officials. Every participant knows that boundaries must be set and behavior monitored, or the game will degenerate into chaos.

There are laws in the world as well—boundaries and rules for living established by God. But men and women regularly flaunt these regulations, hiding their infractions or overpowering others and declaring that might makes right. God calls this sin—willful disobedience, rebellion against his control, or apathy. And at times it seems as though the violators succeed—no whistles blow, no fouls are called, and individual dictators rule. The truth is, however, that ultimately justice will be served in the world. God will settle all accounts.

Assyria was the most powerful nation on earth. Proud in their self-sufficiency and military might, they plundered, oppressed, and slaughtered their victims. One hundred years earlier, Jonah had preached in the streets of the great city Nineveh; the people had heard God’s message and had turned from their evil. But generations later, evil was again reigning, and the prophet Nahum pronounced judgment on this wicked nation. Nineveh is called a “city of blood” (Nahum 3:1), a city of cruelty (Nahum 3:19), and the Assyrians are judged for their arrogance (Nahum 1:11), idolatry (Nahum 1:14), murder, lies, treachery, and social injustice (Nahum 3:1-19). Because of their sins, Nahum predicted that this proud and powerful nation would be utterly destroyed. The end came within 50 years.

In this judgment of Assyria and its capital city, Nineveh, God is judging a sinful world. And the message is clear—disobedience, rebellion, and injustice will not prevail but will be punished severely by a righteous and holy God who rules over all the earth.

As you read Nahum, sense God’s wrath as he avenges sin and brings about justice. Then decide to live under his guidance and within his rules, commands, and guidelines for life.

THE BLUEPRINT

Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire, is the subject of Nahum's prophecy. The news of its coming destruction was a relief for Judah, who was subject to Assyrian domination. No longer would Judah be forced to pay tribute as insurance against invasions. Judah was comforted to know that God was still in control. Nineveh is an example to all rulers and nations of the world today. God is sovereign over even those who are seemingly invincible. We can be confident that God's power and justice will one day conquer all evil.

1. Nineveh's judge (Nahum 1:1-15)

This message concerning Nineveh came as a vision to Nahum, who lived in Elkosh.

[2] The Lord is a jealous God, filled with vengeance and wrath. He takes revenge on all who oppose him and furiously destroys his enemies! [3] The Lord is slow to get angry, but his power is great, and he never lets the guilty go unpunished. He displays his power in the whirlwind and the storm. The billowing clouds are the dust beneath his feet. [4] At his command the oceans and rivers dry up, the lush pastures of Bashan and Carmel fade, and the green forests of Lebanon wilt. [5] In his presence the mountains quake, and the hills melt away; the earth trembles, and its people are destroyed. [6] Who can stand before his fierce anger? Who can survive his burning fury? His rage blazes forth like fire, and the mountains crumble to dust in his presence.

[7] The Lord is good. When trouble comes, he is a strong refuge. And he knows everyone who trusts in him. [8] But he sweeps away his enemies in an overwhelming flood. He pursues his foes into the darkness of night.

[9] Why are you scheming against the Lord? He will destroy you with one blow; he won't need to strike twice! [10] His enemies, tangled up like thorns, staggering like drunks, will be burned like dry straw in a field. [11] Who is this king of yours who dares to plot evil against the Lord?

[12] This is what the Lord says: "Even though the Assyrians have many allies, they will be destroyed and disappear. O my people, I have already punished you once, and I will not do it again. [13] Now I will break your chains and release you from Assyrian oppression."

[14] And this is what the Lord says concerning the Assyrians in Nineveh: "You will have no more children to carry on your name. I will destroy all the idols in the temples of your gods. I am preparing a grave for you because you are despicable and don't deserve to live!"

[15] Look! A messenger is coming over the mountains with good news! He is bringing a message of peace. Celebrate your festivals, O people of Judah, and fulfill all your vows, for your enemies from Nineveh will never invade your land again. They have been completely destroyed!

2. Nineveh's judgment (Nahum 2:1-3:19)

Nineveh, you are already surrounded by enemy armies! Sound the alarm! Man the ramparts! Muster your defenses, and keep a sharp watch for the enemy attack to begin! [2] For the land of Israel lies empty and broken after your attacks, but the Lord will restore its honor and power again.

[3] Shields flash red in the sunlight! The attack begins! See their scarlet uniforms! Watch as their glittering chariots move into position, with a forest of spears waving above them. [4] The chariots race recklessly along the streets and through the squares, swift as lightning, flickering like torches. [5] The king shouts to his officers; they stumble in their haste, rushing to the walls to set up their defenses. [6] But too late! The river gates are open! The enemy has entered! The palace is about to collapse!

[7] Nineveh's exile has been decreed, and all the servant girls mourn its capture. Listen to them moan like doves; watch them beat their breasts in sorrow. [8] Nineveh is like a leaking water reservoir! The people are slipping away. "Stop, stop!" someone shouts, but the people just keep on running.

[9] Loot the silver! Plunder the gold! There seems no end to Nineveh's many treasures—its vast, uncounted wealth. [10] Soon the city is an empty shambles, stripped of its wealth. Hearts melt in horror, and knees shake. The people stand aghast, their faces pale and trembling.

[11] Where now is that great Nineveh, lion of the nations, full of fight and boldness, where the old and feeble and the young and tender lived with nothing to fear? [12] O Nineveh, you were once a mighty lion! You crushed your enemies to feed your cubs and your mate. You filled your city and your homes with captives and plunder.

[13] "I am your enemy!" says the Lord Almighty. "Your chariots will soon go up in smoke. The finest of your youth will be killed in battle. Never again will you bring back plunder from conquered nations. Never again will the voices of your proud messengers be heard."

[3:1] How terrible it will be for Nineveh, the city of murder and lies! She is crammed with wealth to be plundered. [2] Listen! Hear the crack of the whips as the chariots rush forward against her. Wheels rumble, horses' hooves pound, and chariots clatter as they bump wildly through the streets. [3] See the flashing swords and glittering spears in the upraised arms of the cavalry! The dead are lying in the streets—dead bodies, heaps of bodies, everywhere. People stumble over them, scramble to their feet, and fall again. [4] All this because Nineveh, the beautiful and faithless city, mistress of deadly charms, enticed the nations with her beauty. She taught them all to worship her false gods, enchanting people everywhere.

[5] "No wonder I am your enemy!" declares the Lord Almighty. "And now I will lift your skirts so all the earth will see your nakedness and shame. [6] I will cover you with filth and show the world how vile you really are. [7] All who see you will shrink back in horror and say, 'Nineveh lies in utter ruin.' Yet no one anywhere will regret your destruction."

[8] Are you any better than Thebes, surrounded by rivers, protected by water on all sides? [9] Ethiopia and the land of Egypt were the source of her strength, which seemed without limit. The nations of Put and Libya also helped and supported her. [10] Yet Thebes fell, and her people were led away as captives. Her babies were dashed to death against the stones of the streets. Soldiers cast lots to see who would get the Egyptian officers as servants. All their leaders were bound in chains.

[11] And you, Nineveh, will also stagger like a drunkard. You will hide for fear of the attacking enemy. [12] All your fortresses will fall. They will be devoured like the ripe figs that fall into the mouths of those who shake the trees. [13] Your troops will be as weak and helpless as women. The gates of your land will be opened wide to the enemy and set on fire and burned.

[14] Get ready for the siege! Store up water! Strengthen the defenses! Make bricks to repair the walls! Go into the pits to trample clay, and pack it into molds!

[15] But in the middle of your preparations, the fire will devour you; the sword will cut you down. The enemy will consume you like locusts, devouring everything they see. There will be no escape, even if you multiply like grasshoppers. [16] Merchants, as numerous as the stars, have filled your city with vast wealth. But like a swarm of locusts, they strip the land and then fly away. [17] Your princes and officials are also like locusts, crowding together in the hedges to survive the cold. But like locusts that fly away when the sun comes up to warm the earth, all of them will fly away and disappear.

[18] O Assyrian king, your princes lie dead in the dust. Your people are scattered across the mountains. There is no longer a shepherd to gather them together. [19] There is no healing for your wound; your injury is fatal. All who hear of your destruction will clap their hands for joy. Where can anyone be found who has not suffered from your cruelty?

MEGATHEMES

THEME: God judges

EXPLANATION:

God would judge the city of Nineveh for its idolatry, arrogance, and oppression. Although Assyria was the leading military power in the world, God would completely destroy this “invincible” nation. God allows no person or power to usurp or scoff at his authority.

IMPORTANCE:

Anyone who remains arrogant and resists God’s authority will face his anger. No ruler or nation will get away with rejecting him. No individual will be able to hide from his judgment. Yet those who keep trusting God will be kept safe forever.

THEME: God rules

EXPLANATION:

God rules over all the earth, even over those who don’t acknowledge him. God is all-powerful, and no one can thwart his plans. God will overcome any who attempt to defy him. Human power is futile against God.

IMPORTANCE:

If you are impressed by or afraid of any weapons, armies, or powerful people, remember that God alone can truly rescue you from fear or oppression. We must place our confidence in God because he alone rules all of history, all the earth, and our lives.

TIMELINE

Manasseh becomes king of Judah 697 B.C.
Ashurbanipal becomes king of Assyria 669
The fall of Thebes; Nahum becomes a prophet 663
Josiah becomes king of Judah; Zephaniah becomes a prophet 640
Jeremiah becomes a prophet 627
Nineveh falls 612
Assyria completely conquered 609
Babylonians win battle of Carchemish 605
Judah falls to Babylon 586

An invitation is given to open your heart's door.

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

Holy Bible: Living Bible Translation

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print

