

Nahum: Jesus the Avenger

I. Chapter 1 What God will do

II. Chapter 2 How God will do it

III. Chapter 3 Why God will do it

Ok when was the last time you heard a message taught out of the book of Nahum or for that matter when was the last time you read the three chapter book of Nahum? A great many Christians couldn't tell you a thing about the book and they probably wouldn't fare much better after they read it. You see, Nahum writes not to Israel now to Judah but rather he write too the capital of Assyria Nineveh or pending judgment and doom. This would be one book that you may want to put a reference of 2 Tim. 3:16-17 right next to the name of the book. You see Paul told Timothy that *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."* And that includes this little book of judgment upon a foreign city. Nahum presents God as Holy and judgment as certain upon unrepentant hearts. *"Hey, wait a minute"*, you say, *"I thought Jonah went to Nineveh and the whole city repented?"* Well they did but that was close 150 years earlier and the Ninevehites had been back up to their old ways for better than 50 years and in fact they had become even worse. Nahum's name means *"comfort"* and I bet Jonah prior to his change of heart would have read the cover off this book finding *"comfort"* in their destruction!

I. Chapter 1 What God will do

The book starts with this simple introduction in 1:1 *"The burden against Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite."* The only info we are given of Nahum is his

location as he is called an “Elkoshite” though we can’t be certain the location it is interesting to note that Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee means “City of Nahum” which would make his home area similar to that of Jonah’s right in the area of first invasion from the people of Nineveh.

Nahum makes a very important point as to the nature of God in 1:2-3 saying, *“God is jealous, and the Lord avenges; the Lord avenges and is furious. The Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves wrath for His enemies; the Lord is slow to anger and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked.”* God is not jealous of us, He is jealous for us and as such His jealousy will come forth even though He is *“slow to anger and great in power”* He will not acquit the wicked. People really struggle with this concept of God’s jealousy as Oprah said during one of her shows; *“I was raised a Baptist and we were too hung up on traditional ways. I was sitting in church and heard that God is a jealous God. I asked ‘Why?’ Come on-let’s get over it!”* It’s apparent that she related God’s “jealousy” in human terms making God to be insecure. Think of it in terms of a doctor who is jealous of cancer in a patient he isn’t jealous of the cancer, he doesn’t wish he had himself! No his jealousy brings him to action against the cancer as He realizes its potential to destroy the person so prescribes actions that though may be painful are designed to eradicate the cancer from the person he cares about. How unfortunate it is that some folks misunderstand God’s patience as indifference and cease that as an opportunity to continue in self destructive ways. Nahum says in 1:7-8 *“The Lord is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him. But with an overflowing flood He will make an utter end of its place, and darkness will pursue His enemies.”* Oh how we love the truth of the first part of this verse but seem to

think that the 2nd part contradicts the first. 18 years after Nahum uttered these words the combined armies of the Babylonians and the Medes after a three month siege against the Nineveh gained access. They had given up until God caused it to rain for an extended period of time causing the Tigris river to overflow its banks (Aug. 612 BC.) This in turn weekend the 100 foot high over 50 wide wall which stretched 3 miles long and 1 ½ miles wide. The walls were surrounded on the outside by 150 foot wide 60 foot deep moat with 1200 100 foot towers upon the walls for the archers. What made the Ninevehites even more venerable was that upon seeing the attacking army retreat threw a drunken orgy that lasted for weeks so that as 1:10 says, “*while drunken like drunkards*” thinking they were safe (verse 12) the invading armies came in through the breach and cut them down.

Now take a look at verse 1:15 as we are told, “*Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good tidings, Who proclaims peace!*” his is also quoted in Isa. 52:7 as well as Roman’s 10:15. The context of this is that of the judgment of the Ninevehites being “good tidings”. Saint’s God’s judgment is good news because it means that He wins and evil loses.

II. Chapter 2 How God will do it

In these 13 verses God speaks through Nahum as to how He will destroy Nineveh saying in 2:3-4 that “*The shields of his mighty men are made red, the valiant men are in scarlet. The chariots come with flaming torches in the day of his preparation, and the spears are brandished. The chariots rage in the streets, they jostle one another in the broad roads; they seem like torches, they run like lightning.*” It seems as though Nahum is looking beyond just the destruction of Nineveh to a yet future time during the tribulation and possibly describes tanks. Though the Ninevehites in 2:5-6 “*make haste to her walls,*

and the defense is prepared” God had *“The gates of the rivers are opened, and the palace is dissolved.”* This according to 2:8 caused Nineveh of old to become like a pool of water. So destroyed and ravished was Nineveh according to verse 10 it became empty and desolate and was one of the things skeptics would use to discredit the Bible until 1847 when the city was rediscovered archeologically. What a freightening sentence coming from the Lord is 2:13 where we read the Lord say, *“Behold, I am against you”!* These words are as true as the words of John 3:16 and ought to cause us to go to a world that has had numerous opportunities to turn to God’s love and away from his wrath. Hebrews 10:31 tells us that *“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”* Isaiah 55:6 says that we ought to *“Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near.”*

III. Chapter 3 Why God will do it

Nahum speaks of four reasons why He is going to judge the city:

1. **Cruelty** 3:1 *“Woe to the bloody city! It is all full of lies and robbery. Its victim never departs.”* They would commit mass murder upon every city they would conquer and pile up the decapitated heads in a pyramid outside the city. They would make deals with the folks inside the city then murder them and take their city.
2. **Carnality** 3:4 *“Because of the multitude of harlotries of the seductive harlot, the mistress of sorceries, who sells nations through her harlotries, and families through her sorceries.”* The word “sorceries” is where we get our word “pharmacy” from theirs was a drug culture that led them into satanic and demonic activity.

3. **Arrogance** 3:8 “*Are you better than No Amon that was situated by the River, that had the waters around her, whose rampart was the sea, whose wall was the sea?*” This very city in Egypt was attacked the same way by the Assyrians only a few years earlier and yet they didn’t take any lessons from this themselves.
4. **Immorality** 3:13 “*Surely, your people in your midst are women!*” Historical records confirm not only widespread immorality it also showed widespread Homosexuality.

The final verses 16-19 describe the leadership of the nation asleep while the people were being scattered on the mountains. Such an indictment from God upon the Ninevehites should serve as a warning to every nation that has turned away from God.