

## 31. Jesus in Nahum

March 2, 2017

Last Sunday I told you guys that the best way to conquer the fear of people and demonic attack is to fear our God; to be in awe of His presence; to remember His faithfulness. Because He is God Almighty who judges individual soul and give eternal life or eternal death depending on the individual's choice.

But generally the vast majority of people don't have the fear of God at all, because they don't care to know the truth of the Holy God or they adapt a horribly wrong theology that was invented by the demonic force – "the loving God will not send anyone to hell." If the human race realizes who God is; how patient He is; how loving He is; yet how holy and righteous He is and how much He hates our sins, we wouldn't do what we often do – sin. I am not only talking about those famous criminals, murderous dictators, and corrupted politicians, but we ourselves who know the Word of God, should know better, still continue in sin.

God hates sin, God hates pride. When those two get combined, it is like pushing God to the limit. It is a really, really bad idea.

Tonight we are going to look for Jesus in the Book of Nahum which, in my opinion, is the only Book solely dedicated for a foreign kingdom. Though Judah is mentioned a few times in the Book, it is pretty much for the inhabitants of Nineveh, the capital city of the Assyrian Empire.

### A. JESUS IN THE NAME OF NAHUM

Little is known about Nahum except that he came from the town of Elkosh, the location of which we can't identify with certainty, either. The name "Nahum" is an abbreviated form of the name 'Nehemiah', which means "Comfort of Yahweh." It may be that Elkosh was in the region of Galilee, because the city of Capernaum was named after Nahum – Kepharnahum, "City of Nahum". We all know that Jesus used Capernaum as His base during His earthly ministry.

Speaking of comfort, Jesus our Lord is our Comforter, because He is the answer to all of our sorrows.

*2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, 17 comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.*

### B. JESUS IN HIS HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

Yes, it is true that the Lord used Assyria to punish the wayward Israel for their idolatry. But it is His vengeance against the Assyrian Empire that committed so many cruelties against everyone around them. In addition to their pride that came out with cruelties, they were total idol worshippers.

Some might have wondered why God was after them yet not other nations. Nineveh had the responsibility to follow the Lord, because the Lord had already spared them about 100 years ago. You can say that the Book of Nahum is a sequel of the Book of Jonah.

To Jonah's displeasure, he was chosen to deliver the prophecy from God to these people. The problem with Jonah was that he knew God all too well that if the people of Nineveh repented, God would forgive them and relent His punishment against them. The people of Nineveh gladly received a stern doomsday warning from God through a very reluctant Hebrew nationalist prophet Jonah who couldn't be happier if every single person in Nineveh died. More than a half million people repented and turned their hearts to God in his half-hearted three day crusade. Jonah would have loved to prophesy what Nahum was doing to the people of Nineveh.

Obviously, the revival of the Assyrian Empire was short lived. By the end of the second generation, they were worse than before. While Nahum's message was directed especially to the Assyrians, he was careful to encourage the people of Judah as well.

*Nahum 1:3 The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, And will not at all acquit the wicked. The Lord has His way In the whirlwind and in the storm, And the clouds are the dust of His feet.*

The Lord sent two prophets – Jonah about 785 B.C., and Nahum, about 630 B.C.; about 150 years apart. Jonah's was a message of mercy; Nahum's, a message of judgment.

I could be wrong on this one, but I believe that the Lord our God purposely chose one particular heathen Gentile kingdom that was absolutely ungodly, cruel, and against Israel to show them His mercy and righteous indignation. By doing so, He also showed us the preview of His Son's two visits to earth – first to extend the salvation through Christ in His mercy, second to judge all the nations with His righteous indignation at the Second Coming of Christ.

When it comes to God's judgment toward others, we think that the Lord is taking too much time and extends His mercy to them too much. But we are always grateful to Him for His long suffering patience and mercy toward us, don't we?

By the way, when this prophet Nahum prophesied the divine judgment against Assyria, it had reached the zenith of its power, and its downfall probably appeared impossible to many. How little we humans know about the future!!!

### **C. JESUS IN THE DELIVERANCE OF JUDAH**

*Nahum 1:12, 13, 15 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." 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.*

In ancient days, the news had to be carried by couriers, and the watchmen on the walls scanned the horizon hoping that messengers would bring good news. In this case, it was good news indeed: the courier would announce that Nineveh was fallen and the Assyrian army defeated. Judah could now live in peace and enjoy her annual feasts and regular religious festivals to the Lord.

*Isaiah 52:7 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!"*

In Isaiah, the good news is the coming of the Messiah. In Nahum, the good news is the defeat of the enemies of God's people.

Many, many centuries before Nineveh, the whole earth was filled with corruption and violence in the days of Noah. Until the day when Noah entered the ark, the people of earth were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage and laughing at Noah's ark and his unseen God, Then, the flood came and destroyed them all. The very flood that judged the entire human race by burying them under the water lifted up the Noah's family to safety.

Revelation 17 and 18 describe the fall of Babylon, representing the world system and all of its support structure. Revelation 18:9-19 shows how the kings and merchants of the earth mourned the fall of Babylon, but Revelation 18:20 through 19:6 shows how heaven rejoiced over the fall of the world system. What was mourned on earth was applauded in heaven, and the same principle applies in Nahum's prophecy of Nineveh's fall.

Gleeful gloating at the misfortune of others is not in this context. Rather, it is a pleasure at the vindication of God and His promises. Oh, how we need to remember this! It is so easy to fall into the thinking of gloating over disasters or losses of some ungodly people who stood against God's Word and our lives. To our amazement, the Lord loves our enemies as much as He does us.

In 612 B.C., the Medes and the Babylonians united to attack Nineveh, and the Lord used them to judge the evil city. Chapter two is a vivid description of what happened as seen by Nahum in the vision God gave him.

The pride, cruelty, and idolatry of Nineveh and Assyria asked for the end of God's patience in chapter 3. Nahum emphasizes the same truth that was declared by the Prophet Amos: God punishes cruel nations that follow inhumane policies and brutal practices.

## **D. THE CHARACTERS OF GOD**

As we study chapter 1 of this Book, we must refresh ourselves with the characters of God that we remember who He is and what He loves and what He hates. He is not a jolly good old man who smiles at everything and ignores wrong.

### **1) God is jealous**

God's jealousy is love in action. He refuses to share the human heart with any rival, not because He is selfish and wants us all for Himself, but because He knows that upon that loyalty to Him protects our very moral life. God is not jealous of us, He is jealous for us.

Since God made everything and owns everything, He is envious of no one. But since He is the only true God, He is jealous over His glory, His name and the worship and honor that are due to Him alone. That is the reason the Lord tells us in His Ten Commandments:

*Exodus 20:5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,*  
*Deuteronomy 4:24 For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.*

## **2) God avenges**

We commonly think of vengeance as a sin, and it usually is. In fact, both Jesus and Paul warned about it in Matt. 5:38-48 and Romans 12:17-21. But a just and holy God would not allow evil people ignoring and disobeying His law continually and do nothing about it.

Man needs to understand that he can't fight against God and hope to prevail. Everyone who sets themselves against God will end up receiving His vengeance.

Let's make one thing very, very clear. God does not dish out His vengeance to someone who does not deserve it. His vengeance is the end result of His righteous and holy wrath. When God takes vengeance by judging people, it's because He is a holy God and His judgment is completely justified.

## **3) God is slow to anger**

His anger is never a fit of rage or a temper tantrum, nor is it selfish and out of control. His righteous indignation goes against all that defied His authority and disobeys His law.

## **4) God is so powerful**

If the Lord's anger is not a holy anger, and if He were not slow to anger, I don't believe that there would be any human being left on the face of earth. He could easily wipe out everything. God is so powerful, yet He has His anger under His complete control. That is the true definition of meekness. Meekness is not weakness, rather it is strength under control.

In our human ignorance, people throw their puny fists at God as if they can punch Him out who is in heaven. I wonder how often He chuckles at our pathetic ignorance.

## **5) God will not at all acquit the wicked**

God's justice is thorough and complete. There is no one who can get off through technicalities in God's court. There is no loophole, no excuse, no bribe, and no jury. He is the Supreme Judge who knows all things and hates sin.

God is not like an unjust judge who can be bought and let the guilty get off. Sin must be accounted for – either in hell or at the cross where Jesus has blotted out our sins once and for all.

## **6) God is our Stronghold in the day of trouble**

*Nahum 1:7 The Lord is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble; And He knows those who trust in Him.*

Those who love Him and trust Him see the goodness of God, and find protection in His stronghold – which is the Lord Himself.

Nahum reminds us that God is just and He will judge sin. We should rejoice in God's justice, not because we can take pleasure in the death of the wicked, but because God has made a way for us to escape. We rejoice in the cross, because there, God judged His own Son instead of us. He stood in our place, the Righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, and restore His people.