

NAHUM CHAPTER 3

The miserable ruin of Nineveh.

Verse 1

Woe (affliction, tribulation, suffering) to the bloody city! (The city of bloodshed, the doomed city of Nineveh). It is all full of lies and robbery (everyone in the city was corrupt). Its victim never departs.

- Nineveh had committed countless crimes against humanity. Against so many victims.
- Nahum pronounces calamity over the city of blood, full of lies, full of plunder and never without victims. The cry of woe suggests the preparation for Nineveh's funeral.

Ezekiel 22:2-3

"Now, son of man, will you judge, will you judge the bloody city? Yes, show her all her abominations! "Then say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "The city sheds blood in her own midst, that her time may come; and she makes idols within herself to defile herself.

Verse 2 and 3

The noise of a whip and the noise of rattling wheels, of galloping horses, of clattering chariots!

Horsemen charge with bright sword and glittering spear. There is a multitude of slain, A great number of bodies, Countless corpses-They stumble over the corpses.

- Once more, the prophet paints a picture of the destruction of Nineveh.
- It is a sad, sorry picture of a once great city laid to waste. But there is no sympathy for Nineveh. She deserved all she got.

Verse 4

*Because of the multitude of harlotries (**prostitution, idolatries, orgies**) of the seductive (KJV: - **well-favoured, full of splendour and enticing**) harlot (**Nineveh**), the mistress of sorceries (**witchcraft**), who sells nations through her harlotries, (**prostitution**) and families (**Or tribes**) through her sorceries (**witchcraft**).*

- **Harlotries:** They pushed their idol worship on all the nations they conquered. They sold them to idol worship, to destruction.
- They also did everything imaginable under the sun. From actual prostitution, to idolatry, homosexuality, orgies, etc.
- **Harlot:** Nineveh looked like a woman without morals, full of trickery to deceive men.
- **Sorceries:** The Assyrian empire charmed, tricked and deceived impoverished and enslaved nations through their corrupt government policies and promised favours to all who joined them in war and plunder.
- Or maybe, even actual witchcraft. They were probably involved in actual black magic, divination and consultation of the dead to influence the course of events. Thousands of tablets in the Mesopotamian valley with hundreds of spells and magical incantations/ charms inscribed on them were discovered. Assyria was a very sinful nation. It was an abomination to God.

Verse 5

*"Behold (**See, pay attention**), I am against you," says the LORD of hosts; I am against you:*

- Nahum repeats this phrase, first mentioned in Nahum 2:13. In the first mention, the emphasis was on the military defeat of Nineveh. Now, the emphasis is on the humbling of city.

1Peter 5:5

... be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

- Nineveh walked in pride, and as a result had the Lord against them. How much better to be humble and receive the grace of God!

"I will lift your skirts over your face, I will show the nations your nakedness, and the kingdoms your shame."

- God would uncover her shame and expose her for who she truly was. The nations would see her for who she truly was and not be deceived again by her splendour.
- If sin is consistent without repentance, God eventually exposes it and it carries much shame.
- Sometimes God exposes us and lets us go through shame which leads us to humility then repentance but for Nineveh it was shame to humility to destruction.

Verse 6

*I will cast abominable (**wretched, disgusting, cursed**) filth upon you,*

- He would take the idols of Nineveh (**abominable filth**, the Hebrew word shiqquts often translated "abomination") and throw them back in their face.

2Kings 23:13

Then the king defiled the high places that were east of Jerusalem, which were on the south of the Mount of Corruption, which Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the people of Ammon.

Make you vile.

- The Hebrew word for **vile** is *nabel* which means (low, weak, foolish, hated),
- Nineveh walked high in their pride, but will certainly be brought low.

And make you a spectacle (KJV: gazing stock, a rare sight, a marvel, demonstration, exposition, a warning for all to see).

Verse 7

*It shall come to pass that all who look upon you will flee from you, and say, 'Nineveh is laid waste (**destroyed completely**)! Who will bemoan her (**grieve over, lament over, mourn over, and cry over?**) Where shall I seek comforters for you?'*

- Observers would flee from her in terror, leaving her abandoned and in ruins with no one to mourn her fate.

Verse 8

*Are you better than No Amon (**temple of Amon or Amen**) that was situated by the River that had the waters around her, whose rampart (**defensive wall, fortification**) was the sea, whose wall was the sea?*

- No Amon is the Hebrew name for the Egyptian city of Thebes. Thebes was another wealthy, mighty city that was destroyed completely in 663 B.C. The Assyrians in Nineveh knew this well, because it was their armies that destroyed Thebes. Nahum says, "Remember what you did to No Amon? The same is coming on you."

- Assyria was the dominant power, acknowledged and, on account of its tyranny and ambition, dreaded by all. How, then, could the Hebrews believe in the announcements of this prophet? Nahum felt their difficulty, and hence, in enforcing his teaching, he wisely turned from the future to the past, and, by referring to what God had done, he indicated what was yet to come. No Amon was a perfect example of what God was going to do. Nineveh thought she was invincible but the prophet draws a lesson from Assyria's own history to show that she was deceiving herself.

Verse 9

*Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength (**No Amon**), and it was boundless; Put and Lubim were your helpers.*

- Phut or Put was the third son of Ham (one of the sons of Noah) (Genesis 10:6 and in 1 Chronicles 1:8). The name Put (or Phut) is also used in the Bible for the people or nation said to be descended from him, usually placed in Ancient Libya. Phut was the founder of Libya. Put and Lubim were Libyans.

Verse 10

Yet she was carried away; She went into captivity;

- In spite of all No Amon's support and protection she was still subdued.

Her young children also were dashed to pieces at the head of every street;

- The young and innocent were not spared. They were brutally murdered and then stepped on in the streets as was usually done by cruel soldiers.

They cast lots for her honorable men,

- They cast lots on the important citizens, officials and governors, either to put scorn on them or to claim them as prisoners.

And all her great men were bound in chains.

- Great in status, strength, valour, wisdom, and so likely to cause chaos, if not put in chains.

Verse 11

You also will be drunk;

- Terrified and confused, Nineveh would stagger like a drunkard and flee for shelter.

You will be hidden;

- Maybe too weak and diminished to appear again thus they would be hidden.

You also will seek refuge from the enemy.

- Meaning, either you shall try to make an alliance with your other enemies for protection or beg for mercy from your captors, the Medes and Chaldeans.

Verse 12

All your strongholds are fig trees with ripened figs: If they are shaken, they fall into the mouth of the eater.

- As easily as ripe fruit falls from a shaken tree, so will the strongholds of Nineveh fall before the judgment of God. We often have our strongholds of sin and pride that we put great confidence in, but when they are ready to be shaken, they will fall to the ground.

Verse 13

Surely, your people in your midst are women!

- For Nineveh's defenders would be like helpless women.

The gates of your land are wide open for your enemies;

- The gates that were once a source of pride, assurance, exclusivity and defense would be wide open for all their enemies (the Medes and Chaldeans) to enter and would never be shut again.

Fire shall devour the bars of your gates.

- The Lord's fury would devour all their strongholds, their gates and the bars that lock them. The Ninevites would not be safe at all.

A message to Israel

Psalm 147: 13

For He has strengthened the bars of your gates; He has blessed your children within you. He makes peace in your borders, and fills you with the finest wheat.

A message to Nineveh

For He has weakened the bars of your gates; He has cursed your children within you. He makes war in your borders, and fills you with famine.

Verse 14

Draw your water for the siege!

- Store up plenty of water to drink before your enemies destroy you.

Fortify (**strengthen**) your strongholds (**refuge, fortresses**)! Go into the clay and tread the mortar! Make strong the brick kiln!

- Work hard but work in vain to protect yourselves.
- Nahum practically mocks the people of Nineveh, cheering them on to do the best they can in light of the coming judgment. They can prepare as many provisions and people they please, but it will all come to nothing against the judgment of God.

Verse 15

There the fire (**God's wrath and the wrath of the enemy**) will devour you (**eat you up, destroy you**), The sword (**of the Chaldeans**) will cut you off (**separate you from safety and refuge and help**); It will eat you up like a locust. Make yourself many-like the locust! (**KJV: cankerworm, caterpillar**) Make yourself many-like the swarming locusts!

- Collect as many people to fight for you, as many as a swarm of locusts.

Verse 16

You have multiplied your merchants more than the stars of heaven.

Genesis 26:4

"And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven..."

- You have a very large and prosperous number of business people who keep supplying you with money. Your resources cannot run dry. Your budgets are huge.

The locust plunders and flies away.

- Nahum compares the city's many merchants to a swarm of locusts that strips the land bare and flies away. In the same way, the merchants having made a profit in Nineveh in the good old days would flee the city before its downfall.

Verse 17

*Your commanders are like swarming locusts, and your generals like great grasshoppers (**numerous in number**), which camp in the hedges on a cold day; When the sun rises they flee away,*

- When trouble, war, and danger, like the parching sun, burn them, they flee away; they shift from the hedge they eat up.

And the place where they are is not known.

- You will look for them and you will not find them.

Verse 18

*Your shepherds (**magistrates, officers, counselors, rulers**) slumber (**sleep on the job**),*

*O king of Assyria; Your nobles (**brave, valiant, famous men**) rest in the dust (**are worthless and useless. waiting to be trampled upon**).*

Your people are scattered on the mountains, and no one gathers them.

- They are vulnerable to predators with no one to gather and protect them. The sinful and rebellious leadership of Nineveh will be powerless against the judgment of God.

Verse 19

*Your injury has no healing (**Nineveh**), your wound is severe (**fatal, serious, dangerous, with no cure leading unto death**). All who hear news of you will clap their hands over you (**rejoice**), for upon whom has not your wickedness (**thy sins, thy idolatry, luxury, thy tyranny, pride, oppression, and cruelty; thy illegal, unprecedented violence**) passed continually?*

- No kingdom, state, city, or family surrounding you can be named.
- Nahum ends his prophecy with a view of the righteous and their triumph over the unrighteous. This is something that the people of God need to be often reminded of, because it often goes against present appearances.

Read Psalm 37

Conclusion

There are certain principles that regulate the **divine government of God** and these principles cannot be changed. Men, through unbelief, are slow to accept these principles and to acknowledge the inevitable results of how they work. They are deceived by **present appearances**. They reason from things as they are, and conclude that, where there is **material prosperity**, things are okay. That this will and MUST continue at all costs. But we should learn a lesson from the story of Nineveh to know that wickedness may prevail for a while but God's judgment swiftly follows especially when His grace has been more than exhausted.

Do not be deceived by your youth and think you have all the time in the world. Do not be deceived by your current wealth and think that your resources will never run dry. Do not be deceived by the seemingly beautiful things of this world and miss out on the truly beautiful things in heaven. Do not trade the eternal for the temporary. Do not wait for a so called prophet to bring you a new word and revelation. Focus on God and His word alone and you will prosper in Him.