

4/10/16

Nahum 1

Having looked at a full introduction to the book of Nahum, we want to begin our verse by verse exposition of Nahum, the seventh Minor prophet.

1. God had spared Nineveh at the preaching of Jonah, but now 100 year later, 660-50 B.C. , Nahum is called to pronounce judgments to Nineveh for returning to her vile, sinful life.

2. Fifty-years after the proclamation of this judgment Judah would be comforted hearing of God's righteous vindication of His holiness in judging Assyria in 612 B.C, according to the meaning of the name of Nahum "comfort or consolation." Nah. 1:1, 14-15

* Nahum's division.

- I.** The proclamation of the destruction of Nineveh. Nah. 1
- II.** The description of the destruction of Nineveh. Nah. 2
- III.** The vindication of the destruction of Nineveh. Nah. 3

1:1-15 The proclamation of the destruction of Nineveh.

1:1 The introduction to the prophecy of Nahum.

1:1a The nature of the message.

- 1) The word burden "messa", some times translated "oracle refers to the prophetic Divine doom coming to Nineveh.
 - a) This is found throughout Scripture. "The **burden** against Babylon, the prince in Jersalem and other. Is. 13:1; 23:1; Ezk. 12:10; Hab. 1:1
 - b) The word also is used in a teachnical way for introducing the divine revelation.
 - * "This is the **burden** such as in Isaiah and Malachi. Is. 14:28; Mal. 1:1
- 2) The judgment was against the incredible capital of the Assyrian Empire, Nineveh, the modern-day city of Mosul in Iraq.
 - a) Established by Nimrod. Gen. 10:11
 - b) There was Nineveh proper and four large cities that were situated on the edge of the trapezium Nineveh proper, a metropolis believed to have been 300-350 square miles.
 - c) Nineveh was bounded on three sides by rivers, on the northwest the Khosr, on the west by the Tigris, and on the southwest by the Gazr Su and the Upper or Great Zab and on the fourth side by mountains, which ascended from the rocky plateau.
 - d) It was fortified artificially all around on the river-sides with dams, sluices for inundating the land, and canals on the land side with ramparts and castles. Kiel
 - e) The outer wall was 60 miles around, 100 feet high, wide enough for three chariots to be driven abreast on it.

- f) Spaced around the wall 50 towers, 200 feet high guarded the city.
- g) The inner wall of the city was only three miles in diameter, its villages and suburbs stretched over 20 miles.
- h) A constant and dreadful enemy of Israel.

1:1b The mode of revelation.

- 1) The source of his proclamation was divine revelation, a vision.
 - a) The word for vision “chazawn”, refers to the revealed judgment of Nineveh made known directly from God.
 - * Many of the prophets indicate the same thing. Is. 1:1; Ezk. 1:1; Dan. 2:9
 - b) A vision is made known being awake.
 - * A dream is while one is asleep.
- 2) Nahum identified himself, as the recipient of this vision.
 - a) Nahum “Nachuwu” means “comfort” or “consolation” found only this time in Hebrew, a shortened form of Nehemiah, “comfort of Yahweh”.
 - * His proclamation of judgment over Assyria would comfort Judah. Nah. 1:14-15
 - b) The name Nahum is found one time in the genealogy of Jesus, but it is not the prophet Nahum. Lk. 3:25
 - 1)) The Assyrians had taken the Northern Kingdom into captivity and the Southern kingdom had been under tribute constantly.

- 2)) God would vindicate Himself of all their sins against His grace and patience after forgiving them, righteous judgment!
- 3) Nahum identified his hometown, “Nahum the Elkoshite.”
 - a) Some say it was a town in Assyria, north of the site of ancient Nineveh, “Al-Kush”, modern day Mosul, east of the Tigris River.
 - * But Nahum never went into captivity!
 - b) Still others say it was a village 20 miles south-west of Jerusalem in Judah, around the same vicinity as Micah of Moresheth.
 - c) Jerome said it was a small village in the north of Galilee.
 - * The city of Capernaum on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee means “city of Nahum”, be good evidence of his Galilean origin.
 - d) The possible scenario could of been that Nahum migrated to the south of Judah after the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C. , but this is all conjecture!

1:2-8 The credentials of God to judge Assyria.

1:2-3b The holiness of God qualified Him.

- 1) “God is jealous” was saying God’s holiness and jealousy are one. vs. 2a
 - a) The word jealous “qannow”, basically means God is an intolerant of rivals.

- 1)) But not like fallen human jealousy of being selfish, possessive and tainted by sin.
 - 2)) God's jealousy is absolute devotion to us to insure the best in life.
 - * The exact form is used only one other time, "But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the LORD, for He *is* a holy God. He *is* a **jealous** God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins." Josh. 24:19
 - 3)) The word holy appears 123 time in the book of Exodus and Leviticus.
- b) The holiness of God demands His jealousy and the jealousy of God is the evidence of His holiness.
- 1)) God was jealous over His covenant people Israel, His wife, who had been judged for her sins. Ex. 34:14; Duet. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; Is. 59:17, Ezk. 5:13
 - 2)) God had joined Israel exclusively to His service and swore to protect her from all her enemies, this is the jealousy in our text, He was going to destroy Nineveh. Nah. 1:13; 2:1, 2
- 2) God was about to execute righteous justice. vs. 2b-e
- a) The word avenges "baqam", does not mean to take vengeance vindictively to satisfy ones anger to get even.

- * The word refers to His perfect righteous justice in judgment of sin and evil.
- b) The word furious confirms and emphasizes His holy righteous anger against their sin and evil by His jealousy.
- 1)) Three times the covenant name of God is stated "Yahweh" and three times the word for "avenge two time, vengeance one time.
 - 2)) The angels cry out three times before His throne, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD of hosts." Is. 6:3a-c; Rev. 4:8
- c) The righteous justice of God falls on two categories of people. vs. 2d-e
- 1)) "The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries", those that oppress His people and oppose Him. vs. 2d
 - 2)) "And He reserves *wrath* for His enemies", guards over it to be poured out in judgment. vs. 2e
- 3) No one can ever accuse God of being to quick to judge. vs. 3a-b
- a) God is the epitome of patience, "slow to anger and great in power." vs. 3a
 - 1)) The word slow "arek", means literally long nostril, He is not controlled by his anger, wrath or His emotions, but by Hi perfect holiness and justice.
 - 2)) The great power "gadowl koach" refers to His incredible ability and control to overcome and vindicate

Himself in judgment over anyone.
2Pet. 3:9; Jonah 4:2

- b)** God the heavenly judge in His heavenly court-room can not ignore sin, “And will not at all acquit *the wicked.*” vs. 3b
- 1))** The word acquit “naqah”, means to be found innocent or free of guilt.
 - 2))** The justice of God cannot be corrupt.
Ps. 1; Rom. 2:3-5, 2Thess. 1:3-12

1:3c-6 The power of God over nature creation and man qualified Him.

- 1)** God is in controls the weather of nature in picturesque language. vs. 3c-d
 - a)** God being greater moves the winds and storms of the earth for the seasons and existence the animals. vs. 3c
 - b)** The clouds being “the dust of His feet” is a theophany, as if God is running in the sky, kicking up dust. vs. 3d
 - 2)** 58 of the 87 times clouds are found in Scripture, the context are theophanies.
 - 3)** He is separate and above His creation.
- 2)** God is in control of the waters on earth. vs. 4
 - a)** God controls the oceans, “He rebukes the sea.” vs. 4a
 - * “Or *who* shut in the **sea** with doors, When it burst forth *and* issued from the womb; When I made the clouds its garment, And thick darkness its swaddling band; When I fixed My limit for it, And set bars and doors; When I said, ‘This far you may come,

but no farther, And here your proud waves must stop!” Job 38:8-11

- b)** God brings draughts, “makes it dry”. vs. 4a
- * “And he said: “The LORD roars from Zion, And utters His voice from Jerusalem; The pastures of the shepherds mourn, And the top of Carmel withers.” Amos 1:2
- c)** God dries up the water source, “And dries up all the rivers.” vs. 4b
- 1))** “*As* water disappears from the **sea**, And a river becomes parched and dries up.” Job 14:11
 - 2))** “And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, “*As* the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word.” 1Kings 17:1
 - 3))** According to the word of the LORD, Elijah went and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. The ravens fed him with bread and meat in the morning, and in the evening; and he drank from the brook, till the brook **dried up**, for there had been no rain. 1Kings 17:5-7
- d)** God causes the vegetation to wither, “Bashan and Carmel wither, And the flower of Lebanon wilts.” vs. 4c-d
- 1))** Bashan is the highlands region across the Jordan directly east from Carmel.

- 2)) Carmel is the east west mountain range to the Mediterranean in upper Israel by the port of Hypha.
- 3)) Lebanon mountains runs north south in Lebanon west of the Beqa Valley, north of Israel.
- 4)) The three are known for their fertile land and forests.
 - a) Hiram floated cedars from Lebanon to Joppa on rafts by the sea for the building of the temple. 1Kings 5:9
 - b) The area of Lebanon belongs to Israel, God gave it to Abraham, but it was never occupied.
- 3) God shakes the earth through earthquakes. vs. 5
 - a) The mountains quake before Him. vs. 5a
 - 1)) Amos dated his prophecy “in the days of Uzziah king of Judah and Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the **earthquake.**” Amos 1:1
 - 2) God made the earth quake at the crucifixion and the removal of the stone from the tomb. Matt. 27:54; Matt. 28:2
 - b) The hills melt. vs. 5b
 - * Through landslides and flashfloods.
 - c) The earth heaves at His presence. vs. 5c
 - 1)) Creation acknowledges its Creator.
 - 2)) Creation is subject to its Creator.
 - d) So does every person, “Yes, the world and all who dwell in it.” vs. 5d

- 4) No one can escape or survive the day of judgment. vs. 6
 - a) The first rehtorical question present a person standing before the tribunal of God, under his holy indignation, “Who can stand?” vs. 6a
 - 1)) There is only one right answer, “No one!”
 - 2)) The cherubim cover their feet and face from the Shekinah glory, as they fly overhead. Is. 6:2; Ezk. 1
 - * “for all have sinned and **fall short** of the glory of God.” Rom. 3:23
 - 3)) The indignation “zaan”, again refers to the holy righteous judgment of God when God charges and accuses and passes judgment on people or nation.
 - b) The second rehtorical question gives the picture of God’s authority pronouncing the verdict and sentence. vs. 6b
 - * The word endure “quwn”, means to maintain oneself and survive it, being perfect, just and true.
 - c) The picture of the horrific consequences on the person or nation that is unservivalble. vs. 6c-d
 - 1)) His fury “chemah”, his hot displeasure poured out like a consuming fire, but never implying annihilation.
 - 2)) The rocks indicating an illustration of the mode of the Old Testament stoning to death.

* “For we know Him who said, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. And again, “The LORD will judge His people. It is a **fearful thing** to fall into the hands of the living God.” Heb. 10:30-31

1:7-8 The perfect justice of God qualified Him.

- 1) This is based on one of God’s attributes, “The LORD is good” and knows His own. vs. 7a
 - a) The word goodness “towb” means pleasant and agreeable in every sense.
 - b) Goodness is one of the moral attributes of God and is immutable, the attribute that describes God as unable to change, He cannot increase or decrease in goodness, for better or worse, “The goodness of God endures continually.
 - * “And the LORD passed before him “Moses” and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and **abounding in goodness** and truth”. Ex. 34:6; Jonah 4:2
 - c) God’s moral attribute of goodness is communicable to man and is responsible for man’s potential for goodness, but it is not perfect nor consistent for his bent since the fall is evil. Gen. 6:5
- 2) The righteous can depend on God for protection, “A stronghold in the day of trouble.” vs. 7b

- a) The word stronghold “ma; owz”, means a place of safety, refuge, a fortress.
 - * One who looks to God, seeks, rests and commends themselves to God.
 - b) The word trouble “tsarah”, is the times of distress, afflictions, trials and tribulations for ever generation.
- 3) God knows who trusts in Him. vs. 7c
- a) The knowledge that God possesses is not learned or acquired, but is innate and is Omniscient, He knows all things.
 - * God cannot learn anything!
 - b) The word trust “chacah”, means to seek refuge and protection with full confidence in God. 2Pet. 2:9; Ps. 25:8
 - * A total confidence, as a child to a parent!
 - c) The word “trust” complement to the word “stronghold” confirming the complete dependency on God. 2Tim. 2:19
- 4) The unrighteous can be sure God knows His opponents. vs. 8
- a) The prophetic manner of Nineveh’s destruction was to be by the over-flowing of the Tigris River, “But with an overflowing flood He will make an utter end of its place.” vs. 8a
 - * Never to rise again. Nah. 1:14a-b; Nah. 2:11; Nah. 2:6
- 5) The complete desperation of the Assyrians, “And darkness will pursue His enemies.” vs. 8b

- 1)) “She is empty, desolate, and waste! The heart melts, and the knees shake; Much pain *is* in every side, And all their faces are drained of color.” Nah. 2:10
- 2)) “Surely, your people in your midst *are* women! The gates of your land are wide open for your enemies; Fire shall devour the bars of your *gates*.” Nah. 3:13

1:9-15 The certain execution of the judgment over Assyria by God.

1:9-11 The futility of escaping God’s judgment in spite of Assyria’s clever plans.

- 1) The condemnation of Nineveh is expressed with irony by God, “What do you conspire against the LORD? He will make an utter end of it.” vs. 9a-b
 - a) The word conspire “chashab”, means to thing by way of plans or devises, in order to stratagize to be victorious.
 - b) God is mocking the Assyiran declaring that nothing they devised or planned would avail or avert their destruction and final end, as a race, nation and culture.
 - * When is the last time you heard of an Assyrian”?
- 2) The confirmation of their ceasing to exist is confirmed by God, “Affliction will not rise up a second time”. vs. 9c
 - a) In other words there will be no need for a second visitation or assalt on the city then or in the future.

- 1)) God said this to Judah, “And I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab; I will wipe Jerusalem as *one* wipes a **dish**, wiping *it* and turning *it* upside down.” 2Kings 21:13
- 2)) The nations at the return of Jesus will not avail or avert their judgment. Ps. 2; Jer. 10:10; Mal. 3:21 Rev. 19
 - b) So complete was the desruction of Ninevah that for about 2,000 years it was considered a myth until 1842 when it was discovered by Lazard and Botta. There was no trace found when Alexander passed in 331 B.C.
- 3) The illustration is vivid to affirm the prophetic judgment to come. vs. 10
 - a) God likened Nineveh condtion as entangle thorns, dead, drey and destructive to themselves and other fit only to be burned in the fire. vs. 10a
 - * “There the fire will devour you.” Nah. 3:15a
 - b) God likened their condition as “drunken *like* drunkards”. vs. 10b
 - * Thinking the city could never be taken they engage in a drunken feast and the city was taken, like Belshazzar and the Medes. Nah. 3:11; Dan. 5
 - c) The repetition is for emphasis on the certainty of the prophetic judgment to

come, “They shall be devoured like stubble fully dried.” vs. 10c

4) The proclamation of the leading culprit. vs. 11

- a) The reference to the one coming from Assyria to plot evil against Yahweh is Sennacherib. vs. 11a
- 1)) The word evil “ra”, means a person of bad thought, deed and action.
 - 2)) The word plot “chashab” is the same as “conspire in verse 9a, to plan or devise, directly against Yahweh.
 - 3)) Hezekiah had rebelled against the King of Assyria. 1Kings 18:7
- b) The wicked counselor most likely refers to Rabshakeh, who was sent by Sennacherib to speak to the men on the wall, challenging and blaspheming Yahweh. 2Kings 18:13-35; Is. 36
- 1)) He is called a “wicked counselor” “b@liya; al”, it means a worthless, good for nothing and unprofitable person.
 - 2)) God through Isaiah declared not an arrow would be shot, no Assyrian would enter the city and sent one angel to kill 185,000 Assyrians. Is. 37:36-37; 2Chron. 32:22
 - 3)) When Sennacherib returned to Nineveh his sons killed him with the sword as he was worshipping in the house of Nisrock his god. 2Kings 19:37; 2Chron. 32:21; Is. 37:37-38

1:12-13 The futility of escaping God’s judgment in spite of their security and numbers.

- 1) God would destroy the Assyrians and Nineveh, inspite of their security and multitude. vs. 12a-b
 - a) The phrase “though they are safe” refers to their false confidence that the city of Nineveh was invincible and unpenettable. vs. 12a-b
 - * The authority is the words of LORD, Yahweh.
 - b) The phrase “likewise many” refers to the population. vs. 12c
 - 1)) The population of Nineveh in the days of Jonah 120,000 infants, so it could have been on million. Jonah 4:10
 - 2)) It is believed the population at the time of Nahum was much greater, maybe two million?
 - c) The instrument of God would be the Mede, Chaldean and Scythians. “Yet in this manner they will be cut down When he passes through.” vs. 12d
- 2) God had used Assyria to chasten Judah will relieve her by destroying Nineveh. vs. 12e-13
 - a) “Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no more.” vs. 12e-f
 - 1)) “you” refers to Judah.
 - 2)) Assyria was the rod of God’s anger. Is. 10:5-19

- b) The metaphor of plowing is used, “For now I will break off his yoke from you, And burst your bonds apart.” vs. 13
- 1)) “His yoke” refers to Assyria.
 - 2)) “Your bonds” refers to Judah.

1:14-15 The outcome of God’s judgment of Assyria.

- 1) The proclamation of the extinction of the Assyrians. vs. 14
 - a) The authority is divine and absolute, “The LORD has given a command concerning you.” vs. 14a
 - b) The Assyrians would cease to exist as a nation, “Your name shall be perpetuated no longer.” vs. 14b
 - c) The verdict was against their gods, “Out of the house of your gods I will cut off the carved image and the molded image.” vs. 14c
 - d) Their destiny was inhilation, “I will dig your grave, For you are vile.” vs. 14d-e

1:15 The proclamation of comfort to Judah.

* Vs. 15 in Hebrew text is Vs. 1 of Ch. 2.

- 1) The proclamation is that the news of Assyria’s destruction would comfort Judah, “Behold, on the mountains The feet of him who brings good tidings, Who proclaims peace!” vs. 15a-c
 - a) Nahum is quoting Isaiah. Is. 52:7

- b) The text is also used by Paul for the “good news of the gospel” peace “Shalownm”. Rom. 10:15
- c) Isaiah is using it for the Second Coming of Jesus for the remnant of Israel.
- 2) The celebration would be they would be able to carry out their feasts without fear, “O Judah, keep your appointed feasts, Perform your vows.” vs. 15d-f
- 3) The confirmation was sure, “For the wicked one shall no more pass through you; He is utterly cut off.” vs. 15g-h