

Nahum 1

4-18-02

“Nahum the Undertaker of a Nation!”

1. **Intro! (1)**

- 1.1. **Rudyard Kipling** published his poem “Recessional” when Queen Victoria was celebrating 60 yrs on the British throne, which was at its peak.
 - 1.1.1. Not everybody liked it because it poked at their national pride. It warned that other empires had vanished before them, & that they might follow in their train. He wrote...
 - 1.1.2. Far-called, our navies melt away; on dune & headland sinks the fire:
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday is one with **Nineveh** & Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet, **Lest we forget – lest we forget!**
- 1.2. Our “criminal system” seems to be appropriately named, for often times it seems more concerned about **the criminal** than **the victim**.
 - 1.2.1. Nahum promises us though... “**The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, And will not at all acquit the wicked.**”
 - 1.2.2. In scripture we know God is the perfect judge, He dispenses justice perfectly!...**Just the right measure; at Just the right time; to Just the right people!**
 - 1.2.2.1. God cannot condemn an innocent person; or inflict a punishment that is either **too severe** or **too lenient!**
 - 1.2.3. **If you have been wronged, & feel your hands are tied remember, ...Gods Aren’t!**
 - 1.2.3.1. God will handle people you can’t! “**Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.**” (Rom.12:19)
 - 1.2.4. **One last thing on this...**God may choose to **delay** His judgment! He may even **dispense mercy** on them instead. It is **His choice**. But you can trust him to always do the **right thing!**
- 1.3. “What a difference a *day/century* makes!”
- 1.4. **Background:** Nineveh, 100 years after Jonah’s great revival.
 - 1.4.1. **Nahum** is the undertaker of a nation, chanting the death dirge over the world’s greatest city...**Nineveh!** {a “ticking time bomb” of a message!}
 - 1.4.2. Remember God used the Assyrians(Nineveh is the capitol) as a tool to deal with Judah. {But, they took it too far in their cruelty}
 - 1.4.3. The Assyrians had destroyed Samaria(*only 40 years after Jonah’s visit*). - They displaced the 10 tribes. - 21 years later they assaulted Judah. Even taking their king **Manasseh**, put a hook through his nose, bound him w/shackles, & carried him off to the then subordinate land of Babylon. (2 Chron. 33)

- 1.4.4. So, in 612bc the Assyrians fall to the Babylonians.
- 1.4.5. Only 100 years later. Their grandchildren!
 - 1.4.5.1. Q: But, how has our nation gone downhill in 100 yrs?
- 1.5. Nahum = comfort. {shortened form of Nehemiah}
 - 1.5.1. Only comfort is to Judah; definitely not to Nineveh.
 - 1.5.2. We don't know anything more about him. He is not mentioned anywhere else in scripture.
- 1.6. Elkoshite(*Elkokosh*) – still a mystery to us.
- 1.7. Theme: The book focuses on the Holy character of God, who cannot allow sin to go unpunished.
 - 1.7.1. Ch.1 Nahum “Declares” Nineveh’s fall.
 - Ch.2 Nahum “Describes” Nineveh’s fall.
 - Ch.3 Nahum “Defends” Nineveh’s fall.
- 1.8. Outline: God is Jealous! The Lord is slow to anger! The Lord has His way! The Lord is Good!

2. GOD IS JEALOUS! (2)

- 2.1. On one hand the Lord is a refuge(*stronghold*) for those who trust in Him(7); but on the other hand He maintains His vengeance(3 x's) against his enemies(2).
- 2.2. Q: What does it mean for God to be jealous?
 - 2.2.1. God's jealousy & anger is NOT like ours! – He displays a “sinless version”!
 - 2.2.2. Jealousy is a sin if it means being envious of what others have & wanting to possess it, but it's a virtue if it means cherishing what we have & wanting to protect it.
 - 2.2.3. He is not a “fly off the handle God”! Or, an “out of control” God!
 - 2.2.4. He deserves total obedience & will not permit any rivals.
 - 2.2.5. This was a “self-revelation” at Sinai, “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,”
 - 2.2.6. It is like the jealousy of a husband over his wife, or the mother over her child.

- 2.2.7. Since God is jealous over His people & for His glory, therefore He must punish sin.
 2.2.7.1. He has a deep, indeed fiercely protective commitment, to his people.

- 2.3. **Q:** Can God be **envious**? (Envy = resentment towards another)
 2.3.1. No, He has no rivals to be envious over.
 2.4. **Q:** How do you **feel** when you hear God is jealous for you?
 2.5. **Q:** What should **we** be jealous over?

3. **THE LORD IS SLOW TO ANGER! (3a)**

- 3.1. Another one of the scariest verses, “*the Lord will not at all acquit the wicked.*”
 3.2. **Q:** What does it mean that God is **slow to anger**?
 3.2.1. Not quick tempered; God does not have “temper tantrums”;
 3.2.2. He patiently waits for sinners to hear His word & repent.
 3.3. **Q:** Has God “ever” acted w/a **quick temper**?
 3.4. **Q:** How do you **feel** when you hear God is **slow to anger**?

4. **THE LORD HAS HIS WAY! (3b-6)**

- 4.1. **Q:** What does it mean when we hear **the Lord has His way**?
 4.1.1. He has His way because His way is best! And, He is totally in control.
 4.2. **Q: How far** does this extend in His kingdom?
 4.3. **Q:** How do you **feel** when you hear **the Lord has His way**?
 4.4. **Q:** Can “**your way**” ever supercede “**His way**”?
 4.5. Vs.4-6 shows how he commands **the forces of nature**. And that no **one can stand** before His anger.
 4.6. (4) He opened the red Sea.
 4.7. (5) He can turn off the rain & make the most fruitful areas dry up.
 4.7.1. **Bashan**(on their east); **Carmel**(on their West); **Lebanon**(north)
 4.7.2. At Sinai He made **the mountain shake**.

- 4.8. When storms blow into your life remember, it is another promise God is near... for “**the clouds are the dust of his feet**”!
- 4.8.1. When we had our last “1 day storm” what was its results?
Everything is blooming in my backyard now!
- 4.8.2. **Q: Have you ever asked the Lord to **make you like Him**?** Then don't fear the storms that blow into your life, for the storm brings **blessings & rich fruit** to be harvested later!

5. **THE LORD IS GOOD! (7-15)**

- 5.1. **The enemy** would be **destroyed**, & **His people** would be **safe**.
- 5.2. **Q:** How would you define **the Lord is Good**?
- 5.3. **Q:** How does this statement make bring you comfort, “**the Lord is Good**”?
- 5.4. **Q:** How has the Lord shown his goodness to you lately?
- 5.5. **(7) Stronghold (See Ps.46)**
- 5.5.1. This was **Martin Luther's** favorite Psalm.
- 5.5.2. From it penned “A Mighty Fortress is our God”.
5.5.2.1. **Quote** it.
- 5.5.3. During the sitting of the Diet of Augsburg(*ogs-borg*) he **sang it every day**. Playing his lute standing at the window & looking up to heaven.
- 5.5.4. This hymn became **the battle cry** of the people, a great source of **strength & inspiration** even for those who were martyred for their convictions.
- 5.5.5. The 1st line of this popular hymn is **inscribed on his tomb** & may still be read today in Wittenberg.
- 5.5.6. It was **also an inspiration** for Horatio Spafford's, “It is well with my Soul”.
- 5.6. **Ps.46** - What assurance, He'll take care of all our problems & fears.
- 5.6.1. He's our **refuge**...He'll **Hide** us.
5.6.1.1. Lit. “A place to go quietly for protection.” (Phillips)
- 5.6.2. He's our **strength**...He'll **Help** us.
5.6.2.1. These 2 go together like bacon & eggs.
- 5.7. There are times in our lives where we need a hiding place/a refuge.
- 5.7.1. **It is ok to hide – we just can't “stay hidden”!**
- 5.7.2. **Example:** In a battle scene, it is ok to dig a foxhole for cover, but you shouldn't just bury yourself out of fear.

- 5.7.3. **Example:** Storm out at sea. You can run down below to warm up your hands, drink some coffee, but you must get back up on deck to care for the ship.
- 5.7.4. The key isn't "**escapism**" but "**rejuvenation**".
- 5.7.5. "**trouble**" = "in tight places".
- 5.7.5.1. **Q:** Are you in a tight place today? – Run to Jesus, **not to escape**, but to **receive strength** to get back to face your problem or fear.
- 5.7.6. **Result?** - **Therefore we will not fear!**
- 5.7.7. **Our Refuge is Personal**(1a) – "God is our **refuge**..."
- 5.7.8. **Our Refuge is Powerful**(1b) – "God is our...**strength**"
- 5.7.9. **Our Refuge is Permanent**(2,3) – "**even though**(any of these things happen!)
- 5.7.10. **Amidst all the "change" that might befall us...No Fear!**
- 5.8. "**Just the Facts ma'am!**"
- 5.8.1. (8) **Flood** – **Diodorus wrote that in the third year of the siege heavy rains caused a nearby river to flood part of the city and break part of the walls.** (*Bibliotheca Historica* 2. 26. 9; 2. 27. 13).
- 5.8.2. (9) **Utter end** – **Many cities of the ancient Near East were rebuilt after being destroyed**(e.g., Samaria, Jerusalem, Babylon)**but not Nineveh.**
- 5.8.2.1. **Nineveh has been sand dunes for over 2000 years now.**
- 5.8.3. (10a) **Drunken** – Diodorus Siculus (ca. 20 B.C.) wrote, "The Assyrian king ... distributed to his soldiers meats and liberal supplies of wine and provisions ... While the whole army was thus carousing, the friends of Arbakes learned from some deserters of the slackness and drunkenness which prevailed in the enemy's camp and made unexpected attack by night"[*BibliothecaHistorica* 2.26.4]
- 5.8.4. (10b) **Devoured/Fire** – Archeological excavations at Nineveh have revealed **charred** wood charcoal, and ashes. "There was no question about the clear traces of **the burning of the temple** (as also in the palace of Sennacherib), **for a layer of ash about two inches thick** lay clearly defined in places on the southeast side about the level of the Sargon pavement" (R. Campbell Thompson and R. W. Hutchinson, *A Century of Exploration at Nineveh*. London: Luzac, 1929, pp. 45, 77)
- 5.9. (11) This is speaking of Sennacherib.
- 5.10. (12,13) Their heavy yoke would be taken off!

- 5.11. (14) **See the 3 declarations** in this verse:
- 5.11.1. #1 - Sennacherib's dynasty became extinct w/his great grandson's suicide(14).
- 5.11.2. #2 - (14) **gods/carved images/molded image** – Campbell Thompson and R. W. Hutchinson reported that **the statue of the goddess Ishtar lay headless** in the debris of Nineveh's ruins ("The British Museum Excavations on the Temple of Ishtar at Nineveh, 1930-1," *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology*. 19, pp. 55-6).
- 5.11.3. #3 – Of course his death.
- 5.11.4. **See why?** – **For you are vile** or contemptible!
- 5.12. (15) Good news from the courier...Nineveh would be destroyed!
- 5.12.1. Rom.10:15, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!" [from Is.52:7]
- 5.13. We said earlier, "God may choose to **delay** His judgment! He may even **dispense mercy** on them instead. It is **His choice**. But you can trust him to always do the **right thing!**"
- 5.13.1. **Q: Do you fully trust the Lord to "do the right thing" in your circumstance?**
- 5.13.2. **Gen.18:25**(Abraham said) "**Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?**"