

Nahum 3

5-16-02

“Nineveh’s Nose-Dive!”

1. Intro:

- 1.1. Re-cap!
- 1.2. Judah would soon be able to sing the little jingle for “Roto-Rooter”?
 - 1.2.1. *“And away goes troubles down the drain...Roto-Rooter!”*
 - 1.2.2. Judah could sing(temporarily) as Nineveh/Assyria was to be destroyed.
- 1.3. As a reminder: “God is the perfect Judge. He dispenses justice perfectly. With just the right measure, at just the right time, to Just the right people.”

2. NINEVEH’S NOSE-DIVE! (1-4)

- 2.1. **Lies** – The Assyrians were clever diplomats who **lied** to other nations...then **broke their promises & destroyed** them.
 - 2.1.1. They would “**promise peace**” to cities they besieged, but brought only **destruction** upon them.
 - 2.1.2. Lets see an **example** in 2 Kings 18,19.
- 2.2. **2 Kings 18**
 - 2.2.1. (1-8) **Hezekiah on clean up duty!**
 - 2.2.2. (4) **How could this happen?** {what if one of the Mammoth bones we found when we built this building paid for our whole building project? - And to show “how God did it” we put one of the bones in our foyer as a reminder of “look what God has done!” - But after many generations of the use of this church they were ready for the next project & focused on **what God used**, rather than on **God!**}
 - 2.2.3. **Do we struggle with “The Bronze Thing” in our life?** {The Bronze thing is any thing that we place our trust in!}
 - 2.2.3.1. Maybe our trust isn’t placed in “**The Bronze Thing**”...but how about in “**The Plastic Thing?**”(credit card)
 - 2.2.3.1.1. **That’s trusting in a bank to give you \$ that is not yours, whenever you ask for it, when ever you need it!**
 - 2.2.3.2. Maybe your trust is in “**The Flesh Thing**”(humans)!
 - 2.2.3.3. Maybe your trust is in “**The Get Rich Quick Thing?**”
 - 2.2.3.3.1. Like trusting in: “Luck”, “Pachenga”, or “Lotto” to solve your problems, or to put you on easy street.

- 2.2.4. (13,14) Here is Assyria's "promised peace"
 - 2.2.5. (15,16) Paying bribes never pays!
 - 2.2.5.1. We try to **expedite matters** but to no avail. (We're saying, "Hurry up God, you're too slow!")
 - 2.2.6. (17-22) Rabshakeh talks trash!
 - 2.2.6.1. See question in vs.19.
 - 2.2.7. (23-32) The enemy always has a **bargain** to offer!(23)
 - 2.2.7.1. But every bargain always comes with an "until"(32)
 - 2.2.7.2. Wow, captivity never sounded better!!!???
 - 2.2.8. (34-37) Ultimate blasphemy.
- 2.3. **2 Kings 19**
- 2.3.1. 1st he sought **the Lord**(vs.1) Then, he sought a **Prayer Partner** (vs.2)
 - 2.3.2. (14) **Spread your matter before the Lord!**
 - 2.3.2.1. Q: Where do you spread your matter? (neighborhood, church friends, girls in the office, guys at work?)
 - 2.3.2.2. "**Lay em & leave em!**" – **Lay them** before the lord; & **leave Him** to answer them!
 - 2.3.2.3. Whenever bitter & threatening words are flung at us, let us go up to the house of God!
 - 2.3.2.4. **Ps.73:17** "Until I went into the sanctuary of God; Then I understood their end."
 - 2.3.3. (15-19) **What a great prayer!** (combo of: Adoration; Supplication, & holy arguments & reasoning's)
 - 2.3.4. (20) **Why is God going to answer?...**because they **prayed!**
 - 2.3.4.1. Phillips Brooks, "*Prayer is not conquering God's reluctance, but taking hold of God's willingness!*"
 - 2.3.5. **Read 2 Chron.32:7,8**
- 2.4. **Back to Nahum!**
- 2.5. "Depraved dictators who authorize the heartless slaying of innocent victims will someday answer to God for their crimes against Him & humanity!" (www)

- 2.5.1. Like, **Nicolae Ceausescu**(chow-shes-Que) The Romanian politician who was overthrown in December 1989, and executed for crimes against the state.
- 2.5.2. Or, the Ben-Ladens of our day...the same applies.
- 2.6. (4) **Why did Nahum use this metaphor?**
 - 2.6.1. The chief deity of Nineveh was **Ishtar**, goddess of sexual passion, fertility, & war.
 - 2.6.2. **"You are what you eat/worship!"** - People become like the god they worship.
 - 2.6.2.1. **Ps.115:8 "Those who make them are like them; So is everyone who trusts in them."**
 - 2.6.3. **"What we believe determines how we behave!"**
 - 2.6.3.1. Thus we should never really be shocked when a "Columbine" happens, or a when a suicide bomber strikes.
 - 2.6.3.2. If people believe life is meaningless, we came here by random chance, there is no creator, there are no absolutes, there is no heaven or hell, there is no final judgment, you believe in living for self, & you do what ever makes you feel good. **Then** we should never be shocked & ought to expect more "acts of terror" to happen in our society!!!
 - 2.6.3.3. **"What we believe determines how we behave!"**

3. **PUBLICLY EXPOSED! (5,7)**

- 3.1. This is very descriptive!
- 3.2. **Lift Your skirts over your face** – in ancient times, prostitutes were often shamed by being "publicly exposed"...this is what God promised to do w/Nineveh.
- 3.3. No one would **grieve** for her, none would bring her **comfort!**

4. **ASSYRIA'S WEAKNESS & DEFEAT! (8-17)**

- 4.1. Nahum uses a **number of images** here to show their **weakness & defeat**. {Thebes; a drunk; ripe figs; women; Insects; shepherds & sheep; & a mortal wound}
- 4.2. **Thebes!** (8-10)
 - 4.2.1. **A lesson from history**. Thebes(**No-Amon**); {today Karnak & Luxor[*King Tut discovered in 1922*] in upper Egypt} felt safe from any attack...but it went down.

- 4.2.2. (8b) It also had **water** around her(Nile) which was supposed to be her defense. But it fell just the same.
- 4.2.3. (9) Thebes had **many allies** but they couldn't protect her.
- 4.2.4. (10) What Assyria did to the people of Thebes would in turn be done to them.
 - 4.2.4.1. Their **children** dashed to pieces; **leaders** made slaves; & the **people** would become expelled.
- 4.2.5. Nahum's argument – "If this happened to Thebes, why can't it happen to Nineveh?"
- 4.3. **A Drunk!** (11)
 - 4.3.1. "Like drunkards, the Ninevites would be *lacking* sense of direction under attack, frantically seeking to hide."¹
- 4.4. **Ripe Figs!** (12)
 - 4.4.1. All of Nineveh's defenses will fall before its enemy, like ripe figs fall from a tree when shaken!
- 4.5. **Women!** (13)
 - 4.5.1. They would be drained of strength...you bunch of girls!
 - 4.5.2. This passage was not to demean women. We have many examples of women of strength in scripture(Deborah, Rahab, Ruth, Esther, & Jael).
 - 4.5.3. But, in the **ancient world** it was a **masculine society**, where women were kept secluded & certainly weren't expected to participate in battles.
- 4.6. **Insects!** (14-17)
 - 4.6.1. **3 different ways the locust destroy:**
 - 4.6.2. [1] **In Great Numbers:**(15) How ever many you were it would not stop the invasion!
 - 4.6.3. [2] **The Merchants of her city:**(16) They will turn on their city & strip it bare like locusts.
 - 4.6.4. [3] **Their Leaders:**(17) her leaders flee in fear, vanishing into oblivion.

¹ Elliot B. Johnson; Nahum pg.1503 (from Swindoll pg.67)

- 4.7. **Shepherds & Sheep!** (18)
- 4.7.1. Assyria was like a scattered flock...w/sleeping shepherds.
- 4.7.2. They will be scattered, never to be regathered!
- 4.7.3. For centuries no one knew were Nineveh itself lay buried. It was finally uncovered in 1845 by archeologists.
- 4.8. **A Mortal Wound!** (19)
- 4.8.1. They also were like a wounded body w/no way to be healed!

5. **CURING THE INCURABLE!** (19)

- 5.1. There are no “consequence-less” sins!
- 5.2. There is a **cause & effect** nature of morality!
- 5.3. **Jeremiah** used the same image concerning God’s people...except he promised to **heal them!** (see Jer.30:12-17)
- 5.3.1. See, Gods purpose for **Judah** would be different from His purpose for **Nineveh**.
- 5.3.2. God would chasten **Judah** in love to *teach her a lesson*; He would judge **Assyria** in anger to *destroy her* for her sins!
- 5.4. **Curing the Incurable!**
- 5.5. They needed to be saved from **Themselves**, & from **Their Enemies**.
- 5.6. **[1] From Themselves:** (12-15)
- 5.6.1. In Isaiah’s day Judah was a **sick nation** (Is.1:5-6) “Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, And the whole heart faints. From the sole of the foot even to the head, There is no soundness in it, But wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; They have not been closed or bound up, Or soothed with ointment.”
- 5.6.2. This sickness only got worse in Jeremiah’s day!
- 5.6.3. Illness usually brings us to **pity** – But here, this illness is more like **contracting** a disease brought on by **immorality!**
- 5.6.4. It is a disease that is “**incurable**” (17:9 “The heart is deceitful above all things, And **desperately**(incurably sick) wicked; Who can know it?”)

- 5.7. **[2] From Their Enemies:** (16,17)
- 5.7.1. Here God retrieves the irretrievable!
- 5.7.2. Here God enlarges the theme of “**Grace**” by 1st dwelling on their hopeless, incurable, & severe situation. Then providing a promise of Restoration any ways!
- 5.7.3. (vs.17) WHY? “**because...**” God will not have it said, “no one cares for them!”
- 5.7.3.1. **Ezek 36:22** ““Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, **but for My holy name's sake**, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went.”
- 5.7.3.2. “This is **unflattering** to the sinner, yet **reassuring!**”
- 5.7.3.3. This snuffs out **human merit** which constantly seeks to creep back in & undermine **Pure Grace!**
- 5.8. **END:** As Jonah ended w/a question so does Nahum...(NIV) “**for who has not felt your endless cruelty?**”
- 5.8.1. God punishes cruel nations that follow inhumane policies & brutal practices.
- 5.8.2. The sins of national leaders are known by God & eventually judged.
- 5.8.3. If you question this...**go search for Nineveh!**
- 5.9. “God is the perfect Judge. He dispenses justice perfectly. With just the right measure, at just the right time, to Just the right people.”