



The Prophet Nahum

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Introduction

Author: The author of the Book of Nahum identifies himself as Nahum (in the Hebrew his name means “Consoler” or “Comforter”), which is what Nahum brings to Judah about the destruction of Nineveh. The Elkoshite (Nahum 1:1) has many theories and one is that this is where Nahum is from, probably a town near Judah. Another theory is that it refers to the city later called Capernaum (which literally means “the village of Nahum”) at the Sea of Galilee.

Date of Writing: Given the limited amount of information that we know about Nahum, the best we can do is narrow the timeframe in which the Book of Nahum was written to between 663 and 612 B.C. Two events are mentioned that help us to determine these dates. First, Nahum mentions Thebes (No Amon) in Egypt falling to the Assyrians (663 B.C.) in the past tense, so it had already happened. Second, the remainder of Nahum's prophecies came true in 612 B.C.

Purpose of Writing: Nahum did not write this book as a warning or “call to repentance” for the people of Nineveh. God had already sent them the prophet Jonah 150 years earlier with His promise of what would happen if they continued in their evil ways. The people at that time had repented but now lived just as bad if not worse than they did before. The Assyrians had become absolutely brutal in their conquests (hanging the bodies of their victims on poles and putting their skin on the walls of their tents among other atrocities). Now, Nahum was telling the people of Judah to not despair because God had pronounced judgment and the Assyrians would soon be getting just what they deserved. We learned earlier that Assyria had taken into captivity around 722 B.C., the sister nation of Judah (Israel) to the north where they would remain for 170 years.

Chapter 1, The Coming Judgment of Nineveh

Nahum 1:1-15

A. The character of the God who brings judgment.

1. (Nahum 1:1) The burden of Nahum.

“The burden against Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.”

a. **The burden:** In the prophets, a **burden** is a “heavy” message of weighty importance, heavy in the sense that it produces sorrow or grief.

b. **Against Nineveh:** The capital of the Assyrian Empire was Nineveh, the city that heard the preaching of Jonah a hundred and fifty years before and repented. Nahum will address a city that has slipped back into sin, and is again ripe for judgment.

1. Nineveh was the famous capital of Assyria. Previous cities like Asshur and Calah were ancient capitals of Assyria, but Nineveh became most famous in the seventh century B.C. when King Sennacherib (705-681) made Nineveh his capital, the empire expanded and became prosperous.

2. Among other things, the Prophecy of Nahum shows us that God not only deals with individuals as individuals, He also deals with nations as nations. This is the prophecy that sets forth, more clearly than any other, the truth concerning the wrath of God, in its national application. Nations will be held to account by God. Let’s go to Psalm “He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter chiefs over the wide earth.” (Psalm 110:6). Let’s cross reference that with Isaiah 2:1, “He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.

3. Nineveh was an ancient and famous city. It was founded by the first world dictator, Nimrod (Ref. Genesis 10:11) From Nineveh's walls, temples, palaces, inscriptions, and reliefs, mute yet elaborate witness is given to a city that flourished up to its destruction in 612 B.C. Accordingly, the magnificent buildings, artistic designs, and water-supply projects of Nineveh have resulted in its being likened to ancient Versailles, a major city of the biblical world (*Major Cities of the Biblical World*)



Figure 1-1, Nineveh and surrounding countries. This map also shows the route Assyria would take in trying to overthrow Jerusalem during the reign of Sennacherib king of Assyria and Hezekiah, king of Judah

https://www.google.com/?gws_rd=ssl#q=free+domain+map+pictures+of+nineveh+assyria

c. **The book of the vision:** This was more than a message communicated to Nahum in words or phrases from God. Because this is a **vision**, in some way Nahum *saw* it.

When we see the vivid, descriptive way Nahum writes we understand that **the book** records what he saw in his **vision**.

1. Isaiah 2:1 says: *The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.* Isaiah *saw* a *word*, and in some sense Nahum did also.

d. **Nahum the Elkoshite**: We don't know anything else about **Nahum** or the city of Elkosh. 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 (Matthew 4:13, Mark 9:33, John 2:12) was named after **Nahum** (*Kephar-Nahum*, "City of Nahum").

1. We don't know exactly when Nahum gave this prophecy. He mentions the destruction of the Egyptian city *No Amon* (Thebes) in Nahum 3:8 and Thebes fell to the Assyrians in 663 B.C., so Nahum must have been written after that. Nineveh was destroyed 50 years after No Amon (612 B.C.).

2. It is likely that Nahum was written during the *height* of Nineveh's power. It was concerned with Nineveh, and was delivered almost certainly when she was at the height of her power.

2. (Nahum 1:2-8) The judgments of a merciful God.

"God *is* jealous, and the LORD avenges; the LORD avenges and *is* furious. The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves *wrath* for His enemies; 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. He rebukes the sea and makes it dry, and dries up all the rivers. Bashan and Carmel wither, and the flower of Lebanon wilts. The mountains quake before Him, the hills melt, and the earth heaves at His presence, yes, the world and all who dwell in it. Who can stand before His indignation? And who can endure the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by Him. The LORD *is* good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him. But with an

overflowing flood He will make an utter end of its place, and darkness will pursue His enemies.”

a. **The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked:** Nahum begins his prophecy by considering the *character* of the God who brings judgment.

- **God is jealous:** How can it be said that God is **jealous**? “For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God” (Exodus 34:14). God is the potter and we are the clay and He does not desire that we go after other gods for the maker has a right to use that which He has made in way He so chooses. Let’s review the potter clay reference and says, “Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker, to him who is but a potsherd among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, 'What are you making?' Does your work say, 'He has no hands'? 10 Woe to him who says to his father, 'What have you begotten?' or to his mother, 'What have you brought to birth?’” (Isaiah 45:9-10)
- **The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries:** Man needs to understand that he can’t fight against God and hope to prevail. Everyone who sets himself or herself against God will end up receiving His both His wrath and His vengeance which cast self-indignation upon one’s self.
- **The LORD is slow to anger:** God is far more patient than man. Though there is a time and place where He does display His **anger**, it doesn’t come quickly or capriciously (randomly). God’s sword of justice is in its sheath: not rusted in it; it can be easily withdrawn, but held there by that hand that presses it back into its sheath, crying, ‘Sleep, O sword, sleep; for I will have mercy upon sinners, and will forgive their transgressions. Imagine how the world would be if we humans exercised a smidgeon of patience towards one another. On the other hand imagine a world that does not exercise patience and always have their swords drawn at the ready?
- **And great in power:** Knowing God’s power should make us *trust* in His help (because He is able to help) and to *fear* His judgment (knowing that He judges with **power**). Again in order for us to understand this power, we must also

understand that God works on His own timetable not ours; again there is that patience that needs to say, “I will wait upon the Lord.”

- **Will not at all acquit the wicked:** God is not like an unjust judge who simply lets the guilty go out of a false sense of compassion. We can't just figure that God will say, “Let's let bygones be bygones” when we get to heaven. Sin must be accounted for, because He **will not acquit the wicked**. Every sin will be paid for - either in hell or at the cross - but God **will not acquit the wicked**. Now there is something that needs to be understood and that's when we sin, acknowledge it before God, beg for forgiveness and most importantly repent, we are judged right then and there as not guilty of said sin.
- **The LORD has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm:** God's power is so great that it controls the mightiest forces known to man. A huge **whirlwind** (tornado) or **storm** is nothing to God, because He **has His way** in them and He also uses the forces of nature to exact both justice, judgment and chastisement on a sinful world.
- **His fury is poured out like fire:** When God is resisted long enough and rejected strongly enough, eventually His judgment comes. He is **slow to anger**, but when it does come **His fury is poured out like fire**. Understanding this should make man quick to repent and wary of presuming on God's patience. But, many who are reprobates (immoral) fail to recognize this to their own peril.
- **The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble:** Those who love Him and trust Him see the goodness of God, and find protection in His **stronghold** - which is the LORD Himself. Remember that it is only a *day*; it is not a week, nor a month, and God will not permit the devil to add an extra hour to that day; it is a 'day of trouble.' There is an end to all our grief.
- **He knows those who trust in Him:** Not only does He know them in the sense of identification, but also in the sense of *relationship*. **Trust** implies relationship, and God **knows those who trust in Him**. Once more, dear friends, this word 'know' here means *loving communion* and it is through that communion that God knows us; he knows our prayers and tears, he knows our wishes, he knows that we are not what we want to be, but he knows what we do desire to be. He knows

our aspirations, our sighs, our groans, our secret longings, our own chastening of spirit when we fail; he has entered into it all. He says, ‘Yes, dear child, I know all about you; I have been with you when you thought you were alone. I have read what you could not read, the secrets of your own heart that you could not decipher I have known them all, and I still know them.

b. How important it is to know that **the LORD is good!**

- God is good in His very being - it is His very *nature* to be good
- God is good independently – He does not need man to help Him in His goodness
- God is eternally and unchangeably good; He has always been and will always be
- God is good in each one of His Divine Persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- God is good in all His acts of grace which is His unmerited favor
- God is good in all His plans and purposes for our life; only those who reject His plan for salvation will suffer in eternity

c. **With an overflowing flood He will make an utter end of its place:** Taking into account the character of God, though His **slow to anger** and **good**, He cannot forever overlook the sin and rebellion of the Assyrians. Their end in judgment will come like **an overflowing flood**.

1. The **overflowing flood** was fulfilled both figuratively and literally. According to secular accounts, during the final siege of Nineveh by the Persian army, the Medes and the Babylonians, unusually heavy rains caused the rivers to flood and to undermine the city’s walls, which then collapsed . . . the invading armies entered the city through this breach in its defenses.

2. The **utter end of its place** was also literally fulfilled. Not only were these people lost from history, even the city was lost until it was discovered by archaeologists, beginning in the 1840’s.

B. Nineveh destroyed, Judah delivered.

1. (Nahum 1:9-11) The destruction of Nineveh.

“What do you conspire against the LORD? He will make an utter end *of it*. Affliction will not rise up a second time. For while tangled *like* thorns, and while drunken *like* drunkards, they shall be devoured like stubble fully dried. From you comes forth *one* who plots evil against the LORD, a wicked counselor.”

a. **He will make an utter end of it:** Nineveh was ripe for a devastating judgment. This was not a harsh chastening; this was utter destruction to come upon the city. The promise “**Affliction will not rise up a second time**” sounds encouraging, until we realize that it **will not rise up a second time** because the judgment will be so severe the *first time*.

1. God tried to warn Nineveh through Jonah and as we’ve seen repented for a time, but God will not give them a second chance. God has a message for the backsliding believer and says, “But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?” (Galatians 4:9).

b. **They shall be devoured like stubble fully dried:** The dry leftover stalks of grass are ready to be **devoured** by the smallest flame. This is how ripe Nineveh is for judgment, and how complete the fire of judgment will be when it comes.

2. (Nahum 1:12-13) The deliverance of Zion.

“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; for now I will break off his yoke from you, and burst your bonds apart.”

a. **Though they are safe:** The enemies of Zion looked mighty; they were **safe** and **many**. Yet they will be devastated by the judgment that the LORD promised.

b. **Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no more:** God's people looked weak and **afflicted**; yet God promises that they will be strengthened and restored. The power of their oppressors will be broken (**I will break off his yoke from you**).

1. Could not the believer today, who is trapped or oppressed by sin, ask God to break the yoke of sin? It must be done with a complete willingness to *walk* in the freedom God gives, but only God can **break off** the power of the things that bind us. What yolk are you carrying? Is it the yolk of lust, greed, adultery etc.? To try and overcome these sinful behaviors one's own attempt can be an overwhelming task. But asking God to break the chains of the bondages I've just mentioned is easy if we just believe and pray; I am living proof of that!

3. (Nahum 1:14) The end of the wicked in Assyria.

“The LORD has given a command concerning you: “Your name shall be perpetuated no longer. Out of the house of your gods I will cut off the carved image and the molded image. I will dig your grave, for you are vile.”

a. **Your name shall be perpetuated no longer:** The city of Nineveh was once instantly recognized as one of the great “power cities” of the world. God promises to bring this wicked city so low that they lose their legacy and **name** among the nations.

b. **I will dig your grave, for you are vile:** In this vivid and almost extreme imagery, God warns Nineveh of its coming judgment and destruction, because evidently their sins were so prominent that God called them vile. More than likely this involved a lot of immoral acts i.e., fornication, adultery, divorcing one's wife without cause, thereby casting her into the streets without any assistance etc., that God would use the word *vile* to characterize their sins.

4. (Nahum 1:15) Blessing in Judah.

“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.”

a. **Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good tidings, who proclaims peace!** The contrast between the fate of the godly and wicked is nothing but *good news* to Nahum and the people of God.

1. Isaiah 52:7 uses a similar expression, but Isaiah marvels at the *beauty* of the *feet of him who brings good news*. Nahum would certainly agree, because those who bring good tidings have beautiful feet; they partner with God for the salvation of men. The feet speak of activity, motion, and progress, and those who are active and moving in the work of preaching the gospel have *beautiful* feet that are as swift as a deer and mighty as a bull.

2. In Isaiah 52:12-15 and chapter 53, the good news is the coming of the Messiah. In Nahum, the good news is the defeat of the enemies of God’s people. Revelation 17:1-18 and Revelation 18:1-24 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. Let’s go to Revelation and said:

“Rejoice over her, O heaven! Rejoice, saints and apostles and prophets! God has judged her for the way she treated you.” **21** Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, and said: "With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again. **22** The music of harpists and musicians, flute players and trumpeters, will never be heard in you again. No workman of any trade will ever be found in you again. The sound of a millstone will never be heard in you again. **23** The light of a lamp will never shine in you again. The voice of bridegroom and bride will never be heard in you again. Your merchants were the world's great men. By your magic spell all the nations were led astray. **24** In her was found the blood of

prophets and of the saints, and of all who have been killed on the earth” (Rev. 18:21-24).

Notice in these verses (which is an end-times prophecy), how revelations talk about marriage no longer occurring anymore (for the saints, vs. 23), and of how the entertainment industry will come to no more as well (vs. 22).

b. O Judah, keep your appointed feasts, perform your vows: Knowing the grace and mercy of God to His people should not make the believer *careless* in obedience, it should make the believer more careful to obey every word of the LORD.

1. One thing the believer must understand that though you are a child of Christ does not exempt you from temptations; it is the yielding to temptations that brings one into sin. Jesus told us that when we are tempted He will always show us a way out; we just have to be strong enough in our faith to take it (1 Cor. 10:13).

Chapter 2, Nineveh Conquered

Nahum 2:1-13

A. The battle of Nineveh.

1. (Nahum 2:1-2) A call to battle.

“He who scatters has come up before your face. Man the fort! Watch the road! Strengthen *your* flanks! Fortify *your* power mightily. For the LORD will restore the excellence of Jacob like the excellence of Israel, for the emptiers have emptied them out and ruined their vine branches.”

a. **He who scatters:** In his vision (Nahum 1:1), now the prophet sees a mighty army coming against the city of Nineveh.

1. The mighty army described included the Persians, Medes, Babylonians and even the Scythians (a very barbaric tribe) who exact the Lord’s wrath upon Nineveh and all of Assyria.

b. **For the LORD will restore the excellence of Jacob:** In this case, part of God’s restoration for His people is connected to judgment and destruction of their enemies, those who have emptied them out and ruined their vine branches which would be the 10 tribes in the north and the nation of Judah to the south who will have been significantly chastised. Now, God will through His rod of chastisement (Assyrian captivity), into the fire. They now will face destruction from he who scatters.

2. (Nahum 2:3-7) The battle decided

“The shields of his mighty men *are* made red, the valiant men *are* in scarlet. The chariots *come* with flaming torches in the day of his preparation, and the spears are brandished. The chariots rage in the streets, they jostle one another in the broad roads; they seem like torches, they run like lightning. He remembers his nobles; they stumble in their walk; they make haste to her walls, and the defense is prepared. The gates of the

rivers are opened, and the palace is dissolved. It is decreed: she shall be led away captive, she shall be brought up; and her maidservants shall lead *her* as with the voice of doves, beating their breasts.”

a. **The chariots come with flaming torches:** Nahum can see it all in his vision. The battle for Nineveh is fierce and bloody, and though **the defense is prepared** they will be conquered.

1. The chariots rage in the streets, they jostle one another in the broad roads; they seem like torches, they run like lightning: The chariots of the invading army roar through the city streets and their iron wheels scrape the cobble stone pavement as they twist and turn creating sparks of fire that seem like torches. They shall jostle one against another in the broad ways; because of their numbers and the haste they shall make in trying to escape the invading army as large crowds run along the streets in confusion and chaos.

b. **She shall be led away captive:** The prophet not only sees the battle, he sees the outcome - Nineveh will fall before this mighty army, and she will be humbled and led away captive even as the Assyrians led other nations in captivity.

B. Nineveh in defeat.

1. (Nahum 2:8-12) Nineveh brought low and spoiled.

“Though Nineveh of old *was* like a pool of water, now they flee away. “Halt! Halt!” *they cry*; but no one turns back. Take spoil of silver! Take spoil of gold! *There is* no end of treasure, or wealth of every desirable prize. 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. Where *is* the dwelling of the lions, and the feeding place of the young lions, where the lion walked, the lioness *and* lion’s cub, and no one made *them* afraid? The lion tore in pieces enough for his cubs, killed for his lionesses, filled his caves with prey, and his dens with flesh.”

- a. **Nineveh of old was like a pool of water:** Nahum says the troops defending Nineveh are like a pool of water that drains away to no use. They are useless in defending the city.
- b. **Take spoil of silver! Take spoil of gold!** An impressive confirmation of this prophecy is that nothing of all this gold and silver has been discovered in the ruins of Nineveh by archaeologists. Nineveh was indeed stripped bare.
- c. **Where is the dwelling of the lions:** The **lion** was one of the national emblems of the Assyrian Empire, and they crushed and plundered other nations like lions destroying prey. Now Nahum asks, “**Where is the dwelling of the lions?**” God has brought them low, who once were so mighty.



Figure 2-1, Assyrian Lion signifying Kingship and power

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2. (Nahum 2:13) The LORD vows to conquer Nineveh.

“Behold, I *am* against you,” says the LORD of hosts, “I will burn your chariots in smoke, and the sword shall devour your young lions; I will cut off your prey from the earth, and the voice of your messengers shall be heard no more.”



Figure 2-2, An Assyrian carrying a young lion.

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a. **Behold, I am against you:** What a terrible thing to hear from God! The principle of Romans 8:31 is true for the believer: *If God is for us, who can be against us?* Accordingly, the opposite is also true; if God is **against you**, then who can be for you?

1. **Says the LORD of hosts:** It is bad when God is against you; it is even worse when **the LORD of hosts** is against you. This title refers to God's place as

Commander in Chief over all the armies of heaven where He is called Jehovah Sabaoth.

2. It is also a terrible thing to become friends with the world and have God as an enemy; what do I mean by that? The book of James says, “You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (James 4:4).

3. The young lion talked about earlier are those young Assyrian warriors who will be slaughtered in battle and cut off from any escape attempt.

b. **The voice of your messengers shall be heard no more:** Nineveh enjoyed its status as a power-center of the world, and relished the fact that the **voice** of her **messengers** commanded attention in palaces all over the world. That day would come to an end under the judgment of God.

Chapter 3, Nineveh the Wicked City

Nahum 3:1-19

A. The sin within Nineveh.

1. (Nahum 3:1-4) The violence and immorality in Nineveh.

“Woe to the bloody city! It *is* all full of lies *and* robbery. *Its* victim never departs. 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; because of the multitude of harlotries of the seductive harlot, the mistress of sorceries, who sells nations through her harlotries, and families through her sorceries.

a. **Woe to the bloody city!** In his prophetic vision, Nahum takes a tour of the city of Nineveh and observes how ripe it is for judgment. He sees it is a busy city, full of the noise of a whip and the noise of rattling wheels, of galloping horses, of clattering chariots used by the soldiers of the city. Yet it is busy with violence, deception, prostitution and idolatry.

1. Not only were the rulers of Assyria terribly cruel, they *boasted* of the cruelty on monuments that exist in museums to this day.



Figure 3-1, Assyrian army leads Israel's men women and children captives to Assyria

https://www.google.com/?gws_rd=ssl#q=free+domain+pictures+of+Assyrian+army

2. One of the ancient monuments discovered in the ruins of ancient Assyria has this inscription by King Ashurnasirpal II (reign began in 833 B.C.) of a conquered city. "Their men, young and old, I took as prisoners. Of some I cut off the feet and hands; of others I cut off the noses, ears, and lips; of the young men's ears I made a heap; of the old men's heads I build a minaret" (Ref. Hawlinson's "Five Great Monarchies" Vol 2, p85, note). Also, see next page.



Figure 3-2, Assyrian Cruelty at work; cutoff heads, hands and feet

http://www.biblehistory.com/assyria_archaeology/archaeology_of_ancient_assyria_archaeological_discoveries.html

b. **Who sells the nations through her harlotries:** It was bad enough that Nineveh indulged in this sin for herself; it was worse that she led the **nations** into violence, deception, and idolatry. For this, the judgment of God was coming.

1. “Thousands of tablets uncovered in the Mesopotamian valley show abysmal superstition. Hundreds of sorcery incantations have been brought to light.”



Figure 3-3, Assyrian superstition of a man-lion representing a powerful king

<https://www.google.com/search?q=free+domain+pictures+assyrian+man+lion&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=S1DaU9OpEqGh8AHbmYHIAQ&ved=0CDQQsAQ&biw=1920&bih=1003>

2. (Nahum 3:5-7) The wicked city is humbled.

“Behold, I *am* against you,” says the LORD of hosts; “I will lift your skirts over your face, I will show the nations your nakedness, and the kingdoms your shame. I will cast abominable filth upon you, make you vile, and make you a spectacle. It shall come to

pass *that* all who look upon you will flee from you, and say, ‘Nineveh is laid waste! Who will bemoan her?’ Where shall I seek comforters for you?’

a. **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.

1. This reminds us the principle of 1 Peter 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!

2. The bible says, “Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18). We see where Nineveh’s pride led to her destruction. This fact leaks into the individual who refuse to be humble before the Lord while being prideful of their place in life and prideful of all their accomplishments. The bible says, “ because "All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, **25** But the word of the Lord endures forever." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you” (1 Peter 24-25). A person must realize that as the grass fades, so will both their beauty and life and a person’s glory of being the greatest singer or being the greatest basketball player will one day fade away as the flower, but the Word of God endures forever.

b. **I will cast abominable filth upon you, make you vile, and make you a spectacle:** The strength of the word of the LORD almost surprises us here. He will take the idols of Nineveh (**abominable filth**, the Hebrew word *shiqquts* often translated “abomination”) and throw them back in their face.

c. **Make you vile:** The idea behind the Hebrew word for **vile** (*nabel*) is that something is made weak, foolish, and contemptible. Nineveh walked high in their pride, but will certainly be brought low with no one to comfort them (**Where shall I seek comforters for you?**).

1. Again, this was literally fulfilled The ancient Greek historian Diodorus Siculus wrote of the destruction of Nineveh: “So great was the multitude of the slain that the flowing stream, mingled with their blood, changed its color for a considerable distance . . . They plundered the spoil of the city, a quantity beyond counting.” Boice.

2. Adam Clarke, writing before the discovery of the ruins in Nineveh in 1840, quotes an author commenting on the disappearance of the city: “What probability was there that the capital city of a great kingdom, a city which was *sixty* miles in compass, a city which contained so many *thousand* inhabitants, a city which had walls a *hundred* feet high . . . And yet so totally was it destroyed that the place is hardly known where it was situated . . . Great as it was formerly, so little of it is remaining, that authors are not agreed even about its situation.”

B. Nineveh is ripe for judgment.

1. (Nahum 3:8-11) Because of the way God judged other cities, Nineveh is ripe.

“Are you better than No Amon *that was* situated by the River, that had the waters around her, whose rampart *was* the sea, whose wall *was* the sea? Ethiopia and Egypt *were* her strength, and *it was* boundless; Put and Lubim were your helpers. Yet she *was* carried away, she went into captivity; her young children also were dashed to pieces at the head of every street; they cast lots for her honorable men, and all her great men were bound in chains. You also will be drunk; you will be hidden; you also will seek refuge from the enemy.”

a. **Are you better than No Amon:** **No Amon** is the Hebrew name for the Egyptian city of Thebes. Thebes was another wealthy, mighty city that was destroyed completely. 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.”

b. **You also:** We are like the Ninevites. We see empires and nations judged in our own day and in history, just like the Assyrians saw Thebes destroyed. Yet we, like the Ninevites, somehow think that we will be spared, despite our sinful arrogance and rebellion.

1. Not only the United States, but several other countries are of the opinion that they are beyond destruction by any invading force. The Assyrians had this mentality; so did the Persians, the Greeks, The Romans, Germany and more recently the Soviet Union. All the aforementioned countries were either reduced from their former greatness or to utter destruction to never rise again. There is an old saying, “those who disregard history are doomed to repeat it.”

2. (Nahum 3:12-15) Because of her own weakness, Nineveh is ripe.

“All your strongholds *are* fig trees with ripened figs: If they are shaken, they fall into the mouth of the eater. 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*. Draw your water for the siege! Fortify your strongholds! Go into the clay and tread the mortar! Make strong the brick kiln! There the fire will devour you, the sword will cut you off; it will eat you up like a locust. Make yourself many; like the locust! Make yourself many; like the *swarming* locusts!”

a. **Your strongholds are fig trees with ripened figs:** 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 they are ready to be shaken and fall to the ground.

b. **Fire shall devour the bars of your gates:** Archaeologists document the burning of Nineveh. The excavators of Nineveh have remarked on the large deposits of ash, which are evidence of a gigantic conflagration.

c. **Draw your water for the siege:** 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.

3. (Nahum 3:16-19) Because her leaders are weak, Nineveh is ripe.

“You have multiplied your merchants more than the stars of heaven. The locust plunders and flies away. Your commanders *are* like *swarming* locusts, and your generals like great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges on a cold day; when the sun rises they flee away, and the place where they *are* is not known. Your shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria; your nobles rest *in the dust*. Your people are scattered on the mountains, and no one gathers them. Your injury *has* no healing, your wound is severe. All who hear news of you will clap *their* hands over you, for upon whom has not your wickedness passed continually?”

a. **Merchants . . . commanders . . . generals . . . shepherds . . . nobles:** Each of these classes of leaders were numerous in Nineveh, but they all would be ineffective and come to nothing in the day of judgment. Despite their numbers, still **your people are scattered on the mountains, and no one gathers them**. The sinful and rebellious leadership of Nineveh will be powerless against the judgment of God.

b. **All who hear news of you will clap their hands over you:** Nahum ends his prophecy with a view of the righteous and their triumph over the unrighteous. Righteousness triumphing over unrighteous is something that the people of God often need to be mindful of because it often goes against worldly view where many things are considered as part of progressiveness, which involve accepted immoral behaviors.

1. Because Nineveh was so well known, renowned for its violence and cruelty, no wonder Nahum sees the nations applauding when the city is judged and destroyed.

2. In Psalms 73:1-28, Asaph dealt with this same problem. It seemed to him that the wicked constantly prospered and lived at ease. It troubled him so much that he doubted his own walk with God; he first asked the following:

“1 Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. 2 But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. 3 For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. 4 They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. 5 They are free from the burdens common to man; they are not plagued by human ills. 6 Therefore pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence. 7 From their callous hearts comes iniquity; the evil conceits of their minds know no limits. 8 They scoff, and speak with malice; in their arrogance they threaten oppression.

However, after careful consideration, Asaph concluded the following: “Until I went into the sanctuary of God; Then I understood their end. 18 Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. 19 Oh, how they are brought to desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors” (Psalm 73:17-19).

3. For Nahum, Asaph, and for us today, we take comfort in knowing that the judgments of the LORD are faithful and true. We don't need to envy the unrighteous or seek vengeance against them ourselves. Nahum and Asaph each show us that God is more than able to take care of them and us, each according to His promise.

Conclusion: The judgment of God is often times swift and complete; some think without mercy. However, many nations and people bring on God's judgment upon themselves. Man was not meant to rule over other men with an iron fist, but to serve the Living God, yet many people either do not accept this or outright reject God's providence to their own detriment. God establish governments to bridle the sinful nature of man, but those whom He has chosen to lead said governments are held accountable in how they treat God's children. The wonderful lesson I learned from reading Nahum was that when we think people or nations are getting away with injustice, one thing is for certain: judgment day is coming. The judgment for us Christians has already happen when we accepted Jesus Christ into our lives and when we sinned and sought forgiveness through repentance, thereafter we were judged not guilty. The judgment seat of Christ called The Bema Seat Judgment will be a time of rewards for what one did in the body. The judgment of the nations is called the sheep/goat judgment where after Jesus Christ wins the battle of Armageddon, He sets the sheep on His right hand and the goats on His left. He then tells the goat nations to depart from Him into the lake of fire that burns forever. However,

these judgments I just described are final judgments, but there may indeed one day come upon various nations a judgment that will either destroy them or reduce their standing in the world to literally nothing. As we've studied Nahum we've seen through history where nations thought more evil than others God used these evil nations as a form of chastisement upon His once chosen people (Ref. Jeremiah 3:8 and Hosea 1:9). That's why in the beginning of Nahum's prophecy we see him asking why God exacts His punishment upon them from a nation more evil than Israel ever thought to be. Those nations that did come against the Northern Kingdom of Israel (Assyria) and the Southern Kingdom of Judah (Babylon) were eventually destroyed and never heard from again, but Israel still stands because of God's promise to the patriarchs that Israel will once again be His people (in time). To explain this properly concerning Israel and Judah becoming one nation again let's go to the book of Ezekiel and said:

“**16** Son of man, take a stick and write on it, 'For Judah, and the people of Israel associated with him'; then take another stick and write on it, 'For Joseph (the stick of Ephraim) and all the house of Israel associated with him.' **17** And join them one to another into one stick, that they may become one in your hand. **18** And when your people say to you, 'Will you not tell us what you mean by these?' **19** say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am about to take the stick of Joseph (that is in the hand of Ephraim) and the tribes of Israel associated with him. And I will join with it the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, that they may be one in my hand.

You may ask why are Joseph and Ephraim included with Israel and Judah? Joseph, as including the two great tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, is put for the whole of the ten tribes, and Ephraim is specified as being the leading tribe, and this makes necessary the addition, “and all the house of Israel his companions,” to show that the whole northern kingdom is included.

Lastly, remember that the 10 tribes of the Northern Kingdom were taken into Assyrian captivity and never came out and they were called the 10 lost tribes of Israel. Nevertheless, here is what God says about those lost tribes: “And say to them, Thus said the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, where they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land” (Ezekiel 37:21-22).

My prayer is that through my commentary of the book of Nahum has given you a better understanding of prophecy as a whole and a greater understanding of this beautiful book itself. Twenty-five percent of the bible is prophecy and should never be overlooked because not only is all of mankind included in prophecy, but nations as well including the United States.