

July 2024

## **What's the Point....of Nahum?** **Mark Garner**

*The book of Nahum shows us God's holiness as well as his compassion; it shows us the severity of rejecting God, as well as the refuge and peace that comes from putting our faith in our Heavenly Father. Even as God forewarns the Assyrians with vivid imagery, he also promises that he will be a refuge for everyone who trusts in him.*

### ***A Refuge In Times Of Trouble (Overview Of Nahum)***

The book of Nahum is a prophecy against Assyria and its capital Nineveh, yet it is also a message for every time. Every era's "Assyrians" rely on force and similar tactics to get their way, and they can never be satisfied. This world is full of bad news, yet Jesus has come to bring good news to those who believe in him. In Nahum, "the hills melt away" before God; similarly, the closer we are with God, the world's appearances begin to melt away so that we can see him more clearly.

The images of the earth trembling before God also remind us of the significance of God's presence (Nahum 1:1-14). This Scripture uses the image of a holy fire, and it uses the word wrath a number of times; while the Lord cannot have fellowship with sin, he also promises to be a refuge for those who humbly put their faith in him. This imagery reminds us of the futility of relying on human strength and worldly thinking, while it also shows us God's desire to save us and redeem us.

God would indeed break Assyria's yoke\*, and only he can break today's "Assyrian" yokes on us (1:12-13). They may be fearsome, and they have many allies, and indeed they can harm us in this world. Yet when we turn to Jesus in our troubles, he can free our spirits from this world's empty thinking and from its pointless ways.

\* Nineveh, Assyria's capital, fell to the Babylonians in 612 BC (the book of Nahum was most likely written between 650 BC and 620 BC), and the Assyrian Empire collapsed not long afterwards.

There truly is one who brings good news (Nahum 1:15-2:13), our Prince Of Peace who brings a new covenant of peace. When we turn to Jesus, he can remove the hardness and uncleanness from our hearts, the Lord will renew us inwardly, and he will restore the ruins in our hearts that our straying and the world's harshness have caused.

Just as Nineveh and the Assyrian Empire are now mere ruins (Nahum 3), God also exposes the emptiness and futility of the world's ways and its thinking. God endured Assyria's violence for many years before he fully exposed their futility and weakness; he did this in his own time and in his own way. Indeed, when we let our Heavenly Father open our eyes, we can see that through Jesus he has already shown us the foolishness of this world's ways and its false promises.

The book of Nahum reminds us that in this world there will always be times of trouble, and plenty of people who reject God and the message of Jesus; and it reminds us that God himself will deal with them in his own way. Jesus has triumphed over every earthly force, over every worldly pretension, over all of the accuser's schemes; he has even overcome death itself. Only he holds the truth, only he is the Way, and he alone gives us redemption and eternal life and lasting meaning.

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## **What's the Point....of Nahum?** **Caleb Dillinger**

Nahum is an interesting prophetic book because it actually deals a lot with judgment on a nation OTHER than God's people. Nahum the prophet gives two main messages: Assyria (referenced in the message by its capital, Nineveh )is condemned for its evil, and at the same time, Israel is encouraged to remember that God will never give up on them, even when things feel horrible. To boil that down to relevant 21st century messages: God pay attention to you wrong doings and your plight, and his love for his people knows no bounds. Important messages for today!

The first of three chapters is dedicated to rebuking the Lord's enemies, which chapter two makes clear is in fact Nineveh/Assyria. They have attacked God's people, Israel, and God has allowed that because of Israel's sin. But, God isn't pleased with death or abuse of imprisonment simply because he allows it. Chapter one makes a point to declare how big and powerful God is, and how he will protect Judah.

Chapter two reflects on Israel's destruction at the hands of the Assyrians, and the Lord's power to restore them. Nahum also repeats the Lord's judgment on Nineveh. Whenever sinful people of the world think they have the upper hand, God uses words like Nahum's to remind them that he is a much higher power, and ultimately in control. And when you choose to go against God, you don't win.

The third and final chapter recounts some history of great nations or cities or military powers that all fell at one point or another. When God is against you, no might on earth is sufficient. Nahum also makes it clear this judgment from God is just - the Assyrians were committing evil, doing wrong. This is not God randomly or excessively punishing. This is justice.

Reading prophets like Nahum today is worthwhile because it keeps us humble, reminding us that God is the ultimate power and ultimate redeemer. It reminds us that God doesn't let his people suffer forever. There are times, there are seasons, but God doesn't abandon his people. God always gets justice. That's the point of reading Nahum today.