

Nahum • A prophecy against Assyria

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We're going to be doing the book of Nahum tonight, so open your Bible to the Old Testament minor prophet of Nahum. It's just three chapters long and we're going to find out tonight what the book of Nahum and the prophecies of Nahum were all about.

In case you were wondering. I'll just tell you right now a little spoiler, but it's primarily directed concerning the Assyrian Nation and their capital city, which was Nineveh. Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian Empire.

And you say, "Well, what are the Assyrians important for?" Well, by the time Nahum wrote this, they had already conquered, invaded, and took captive the entire Northern Kingdom of Israel. The Southern Kingdom of Judah is still standing, but the Northern Kingdom is essentially gone. They've been obliterated.

And this book is about the judgment that God is going to bring upon the Assyrian Empire, and particularly the Ninevites. But real quickly here concerning the author, we don't really know very much about this man Nahum. In fact, we don't know anything other than what he says about himself.

And that is that his name is Nahum, the Elkoshite. We think that Elkosh was probably where he was from, like a town in which he lived. His name, interestingly enough, means comfort and encouragement. And that's interesting because even though this book is primarily about the judgment that God was going to bring upon the Assyrians, the message of this book was primarily directed to Judah for their comfort and encouragement. Why?

Well, because the Assyrians were the world power at that time, and they had already conquered their brothers and sisters in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and there was a constant threat that Assyria would come and conquer them. In fact, they tried and almost succeeded, had the Lord not intervened.

But this was a constant threat. So hearing through the prophet Nahum that God had not forgotten the sins of the Assyrian Empire, and He was going to call them to account and bring judgment, would've been a very comforting and

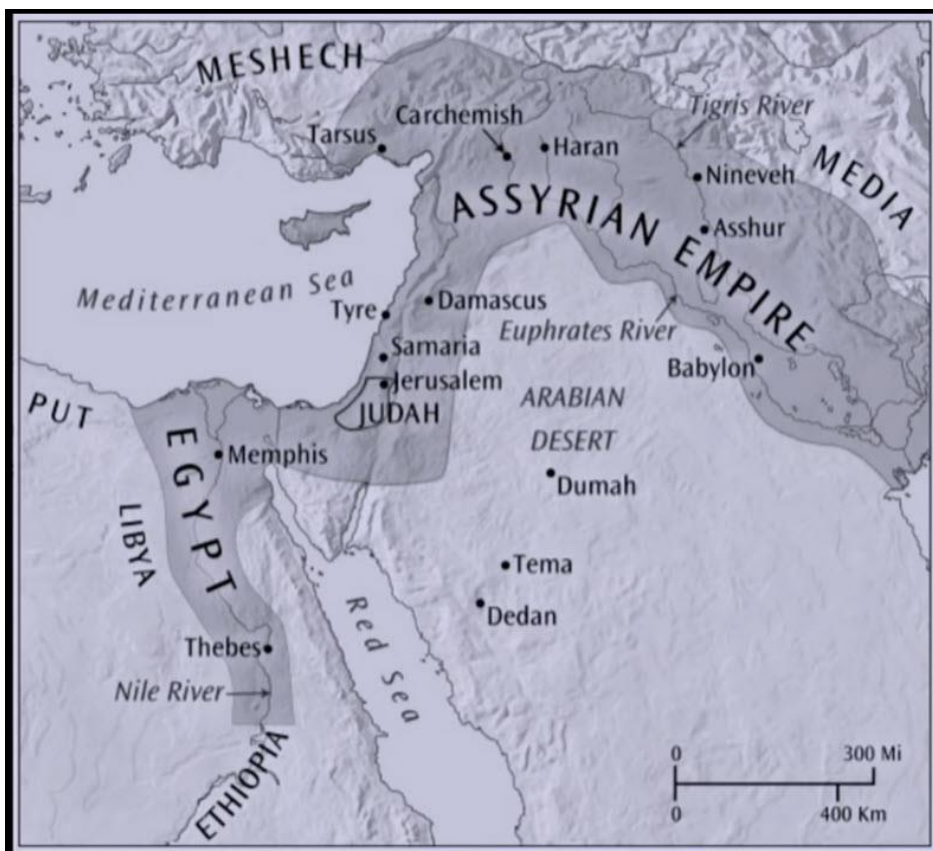
encouraging message for the people of Judah, in a sense of knowing that their sins, the sins of the Assyrians, were not going to be overlooked.

And we mentioned in our previous study concerning the Assyrians related to the book of Jonah, right? You remember, you guys remember the book of Jonah? It wasn't that long ago. We went through, well, Jonah was called to go to the same city and preach. He actually had to go to Nineveh, and he preached a message saying, in 40 days, you guys are toast, and they responded, and they repented.

But that was about a hundred years ago from Nahum's standpoint. And they have since, of all those people who had repented, have now since died. They have continued their evil dealings and it's time now for judgment. So this is kind of, as far as the message of Nahum goes, this is kind of the sequel to the book of Jonah.

So here we are. Just to kind of give you an idea of how large the Assyrian Empire was in terms of how it had conquered. Let me put a map up on the screen here for you.

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So you can see in the dark gray areas are the Assyrian Empire, and you can see that it led way up to the area where Abraham was originally from and down through the whole nation of Israel, and then on into Egypt. They had conquered all of Egypt and the Philistines and Tyre and Sidon and all those other people's groups had been completely conquered by the Assyrians.

And you'll remember when we went through our study of Jonah, we talked about how cruel the Assyrians were. I mean, they weren't just a conquering people, they were known for their incredible cruelty, barbarism, as far as how they treated the people that they conquered. And so the prophecies of Nahum, in addition to being a word of comfort and encouragement for the Jews, was a word of wrath toward the Assyrian army.

And one other interesting point about this, before we get into the text, is that just a few years after Nahum was given this message, the Assyrians were conquered, and they were completely obliterated. Now you know who conquered them? The Babylonians and the Babylonians are ultimately going to come down and conquer Judah too because of their lack of repentance.

But for right now, the Babylonians are God's spanking spoon, His instrument of judgment. And so that's going to be happening here.

So, let's get into Chapter 1, it begins by saying ¹“*An oracle concerning Nineveh...*” and your Bible if you have a New King James says, “*A burden of Nineveh.*” And that is actually what the Hebrew word means, literally translated.

But the root of the Hebrew means to lift up referring to something that is placed upon something by force or pressure, to lift up and place on, in a sense. And so it came to mean this idea of giving this message, this idea of a burden. And that's why the ESV translators used the word oracle there.

It goes on to say ¹“*...the book of the vision of Nahum of Elkosh.*” And then here is the message and what we're going to find, by the way, in chapter 1, this is a fascinating chapter from the standpoint that we learn a lot about the character of God in this chapter. And some of it might make you feel uncomfortable. We'll see how it goes.

Verse 2, it says, ²“*The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD is avenging and wrathful;...*”. Now, I want you to notice as he goes on here in verse 2 to speak of who were the recipients of God's wrath. It says, “*...the Lord*

takes vengeance on (and then it says) his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies.”

Notice that. You might even highlight those in your Bible, adversaries and enemies, and that is who the wrath of God is for. All right, now. First of all, I need to go back and talk about this idea of God being jealous. Because I've talked to Christians who find it very strange that the Bible makes reference to God being jealous. And the reason they find that difficult, to kind of stomach, is because they have come to learn in their own lives that jealousy is a very negative and very destructive emotion, and we see that. I think we've all felt jealousy at some time in our lives and it wasn't good. And it is for us, it is a bad thing. But the reason, here's what you have to understand, the reason jealousy is a bad thing is because we have mingled it with our sinful nature.

Now, keep in mind, God doesn't have a sinful nature. So something like jealousy without sin is not a bad thing, okay. Because God says I am a jealous God. So, and we know that God doesn't sin. So, we find here God's jealousy comes from pure motives, whereas our jealousy comes from the opposite.

I found a couple interesting quotes. Let me show you this from J.I. Packer, one of my favorite authors. He wrote,

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“God's jealousy is not a compound of frustration, envy, and spite, as human jealousy so often is, but appears instead as a... praiseworthy zeal to preserve something supremely precious.” – J.I. Packer

Isn't that interesting? So you're saying, “Okay, so God's jealousy is to preserve something that is supremely precious. What is supremely precious to God?” Look at the next quote from Ray Ortlund. This is interesting. He says,

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“The jealousy of Yahweh is his profoundly intense drive within to protect the interests of his own glory.” – Ray Ortlund

God is jealous to protect His glory. Now remember, this is jealousy without sin. Okay? So, it's really interesting here, that in the interest of His glory, He expresses His jealousy and His wrath.

All right. Notice those things, those two things are put together. This is His perfect and righteous justice in the face of human rebellion. And the reason that God is jealous to preserve His glory, related to wrath, is because without wrath He is unjust. And if He is unjust, He is not God. And if He is not God, there is no glory.

And so, He is jealous to preserve and to uphold His glory. And in so doing, He must express wrath in the face of human sin. He must. There's no getting around it. You and I can get around it. We can see something happening in front of us that is wrong, I mean, just flat-out wrong and we can ignore it.

God cannot. He cannot. If He did, He would be unjust, okay. And God is perfectly just, so you know, He must express wrath. Now, this is really interesting, isn't it? I mean, you kind of hear these things and you think, "Wow, okay, this is interesting. How does this all get put together with this loving, gracious, wonderful, good God that we serve?" Well, look what he goes on to say. He's not done talking about the character of God.

Verse 3, it says, ³*"The Lord is slow to anger..."* Well, that's another interesting thing about His character. So this wrath, He doesn't come about it quickly or easily, right? He will express it. He must express it ultimately, but it doesn't come easy. It says, ³*"The Lord (adlibbed "He") is slow to anger and great in power, and the Lord will by no means clear the guilty."*

Did you catch that? He will by no means clear the guilty. Now some of you are thinking, "Oh, okay. That's really bad news for me because I think I'm guilty." Well, "Me too." So, what is the Bible telling us here? That He will in no way clear the guilty. Does this mean that God won't forgive? No, of course not. He will forgive.

We know that from the scripture in the New Testament 1 John 1:9 (ESV), *"If we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us of all unrighteousness."* So yeah, we know that He forgives, but you see, even in his forgiveness, He still has to punish sin.

You see what the beauty of the gospel is you guys? He punished His son for you. Why? Somebody had to get punished. It had to happen. Why did Jesus have to come and die on the cross? It had to happen. God had to punish sin, otherwise, He'd be unjust. The beauty is He chose to punish His son in your place and His son went willingly to that place of punishment.

That's what makes the gospel so beautiful. That's what makes our understanding of Jesus's sacrifice so beautiful. Understanding as we do from the Old Testament that God says, right here in Nahum, He ³ “...*will by no means clear the guilty.*” You didn't...your guilt didn't get cleared. It got punished.

You just didn't take the punishment. He did, through Jesus, His son. You got forgiven, as a byproduct. Wow! Just you know, blows my mind!

All right, we're in the middle of verse 3. He's still talking about God, ³“...*His way is in whirlwind and storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.*” ⁴ *He rebukes the sea and makes it dry; he dries up all the rivers; Bashan and Carmel wither; the bloom of Lebanon withers.* ⁵ *The mountains quake before him; the hills melt; the earth heaves before him, the world and all who dwell in it.* ⁶ *Who can stand before his indignation? (And of course, that's a rhetorical question. As is the next one) who can endure the heat of his anger? (No one, No one) His wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken into pieces by him.*”

Wow! This is an interesting character sketch, isn't it? It's kind of this picture of the wrath of God breaking out against the sin and the rebellion of mankind. And it's all, given to us in this picturesque language that talks of the power of God and the immensity and the gravity of sin and on and on and on and on...

And we can start to probably, if we're not careful, we could get kind of caught up in it and kind of go, “Wow, this God is just...is nothing but wrath.”

So lest we think that God is wholly motivated by wrath and anger. Look what the prophet goes on to remind us of in verse 7. The first four words in the ESV are the most important, ⁷“*The Lord is good,...*” Yes, He expresses wrath against sin, but He's good.

The Lord is good. In fact, Nahum says, He's “⁷... *a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him.*” Are you taking refuge in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross today? He knows you. He knows you.

Now this is interesting because as humans we struggle to understand how God could be both good and wrathful at the same time, because he's told us two things that seem very much polar opposites to us.

He has told us early in this chapter that He's wrathful, that He's a God of vengeance, and then He says, and yet I am good. And we tend to look at those two characteristics, and we think,

“Well, that doesn't compute. How in the world could God be both?”

Well, “God is both, and not only is God both. He is both at the same time.”

That's the interesting thing about God. He never suspends one part of His character to express another. In other words, what I mean by that is, He doesn't suspend His goodness in order to exercise or express His wrath. And He never suspends His justice in order to express His goodness. He is simply who He is, and He doesn't change, and He doesn't shift. His mood doesn't shift.

Any Bible passages that talk about God's anger, cooling or something like that, or God relenting, or something like that, are spoken in human terminology to help us understand God's response. But don't think that God is like you or like me.

We have to...I have to suspend my goodness. Well, I don't have any goodness, but I have to suspend acting good in order to act vengefully, okay. I have to take whatever goodness I understand and set it aside so that I can be vengeful. On the other hand, if I want to be good, I have to take things like vengeance, and that's another thing, I have to set it aside.

God never does that. Never...ever...He simply is who He is. And I know that's hard to grasp. But whenever we talk about the nature of God, it better be hard to grasp because we're talking about the eternal, almighty, unknowable God, apart from Him revealing Himself. Do you understand that God is unknowable?

Now, He has revealed himself graciously. Had He not revealed Himself, we would be cut off and clueless. We would, you know yeah. All that we know about God, He has revealed to us graciously, mercifully, and so we can't sit and just think about God and figure out who He is. It's beyond us. We can know what He has told us, but even then we can't even know how He is, what He's told us.

I had somebody write me just this week and wanted me to explain to Trinity, which I've gotten many times.

Pastor Paul, “Can you explain the Trinity to me?”

I've told you many times I've gotten that question and my answer's always the same.

“No, I can't explain the Trinity to you.”

Nobody can. If anybody says they can, I've had some people say,

“Well, I heard it's like water, it can be like steam, and it can be like ice, and it can be like liquid, but they're like all H₂O.”

“Have you ever heard that one?”

People like to do that one, and it is like, “Well, yeah, but that's really, really crude.” Not crude in the sense of obscene. It's crude as in it is very vague.

God goes way beyond any illustration of water. Because why? Water is created, God is uncreated. He is the Creator and He is not someone that we can compare to His creation. We just can't. Because God is other. He is other than what we are, and what we know. All right.

So having spoken now about God's goodness, Nahum goes on in verse 8 to say, ⁸“*But with an overflowing flood he will make a complete end of the adversaries, and will pursue his enemies into darkness.*” I want you to notice there again the words adversaries and enemies. How do you become an adversary or an enemy of the Lord?

Because I would imagine somebody reading this thinking,

“Well, I don't want to be an adversary of God. I don't want to become an enemy of God in any way.”

So how do you do that?

Well, it's really pretty simple. You do it by resisting the Lord, by rejecting His word, and by rejecting His will. And just basically hardening your heart and saying,

“I don't care, I don't care. I will serve no God, no God's going to tell me what to do.”

God resists the proud, the Bible tells us (**added for context** *James 4:6 ESV* ...*Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”*) and so that is how we make ourselves an adversary or an enemy.

And when I say, I know that there are Christians who have very tender consciences related to this kind of language, and there are people who will have said to me,

“Well, Pastor Paul I did this when I was younger, and I think I made myself an enemy of God.”

And I'm not...the Bible here when it talks about His enemy, or His adversaries is not talking about God's children making stupid mistakes. I mean, stumbling and stuff like that. We do that all the time. We're talking here about an unbroken lifestyle of ongoing opposition and rebellion against the Lord from which someone refuses to repent. Okay. That's what we're talking about here.

That's who's going to become an enemy, ultimately, of God. Now, up until the point that person dies, God is going to do everything in His power to reach that person. We see that in the Bible, over and over, God continually speaks to people whose hearts are hard, calling upon them to repent, showing Himself mighty, and giving them every opportunity.

But if somebody is determined to be an enemy of God, then ultimately that's what they're going to be. But again, this is not...this is...we're not talking about Christians who make mistakes, who sin and then come to the Lord and say, “Forgive me, Lord.”

I have to constantly remind people of that passage I already quoted in 1 John 1:9 (ESV paraphrased) *“If we confess our sins, he's faithful and just (to forgive us our sins) and will forgive us (cleanse us of all unrighteousness) will forgive us.”*

I have come to learn that there are a great many Christians who believe that they are potentially living in a persistent state of sin. Because they've done something in the past and because that thing that they did is still affecting their lives.

Let me give you an example. I know I'm kind of getting a little off here. Marriage can be a very very challenging situation for a lot of people and many people have fallen into a divorce and then gotten remarried, sometimes even multiple times, and then finally come to the Lord. And realize that what they have done has been contrary to God's word.

And they know, they know that...they know that...they know. They've been made aware that they have sinned through their repeated marriage, divorce, and

remarriage, and that sort of thing. And yet they've come to the Lord now. And even though they've come to the Lord, they believe they're still living in perpetual sin, because they're still married to the person that they shouldn't have gotten married to. And I have to remind people, when we confess our sins, He's faithful and just and will forgive us, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And the reason I bring that up is because there is Christian teaching that is circulating, and I don't know how popular it is, but I run into it occasionally. And this Christian teaching essentially says, if you were married and divorced and then you married somebody else and then you came to understand that you were living in sin. The only way to reverse that is to divorce your current spouse and go back to your old, your original spouse, or to remain unmarried if that person has already moved on.

And that's essentially taking the idea that two wrongs make a right. Because my Bible says God hates divorce, and once you, once you come into a situation of relationship with Jesus Christ, we all come into a relationship with Jesus Christ as sinners. All of us, and some of us have sinned in different ways when we come into that relationship.

Some people have come into that relationship with Jesus with a string of bad decisions, as it relates to marriage and divorce. Some of us had other decisions, that were equally as bad, but we all came into our relationship with Jesus dealing with the burden of sin. Jesus lifts that burden when we come to him, confess our sin, and asks to be forgiven, and then we move on right where we are.

Does that make sense? You move on right where you are. It's kind of like my brother, he was convicted a number of years ago. He wrote me a note and said, he said, and this wasn't a divorce issue in his case at that point, but he said to me,

“I made a move with my family. I took a job and made a move, and I didn't pray about it. And so am I, because I'm here living in this town, working in this job. And I'd never asked the Lord's direction. I didn't care.”

Even though he was a believer at the time, he said,

“Am I living in perpetual sin because I'm living here in this town working?”

No. When we confess our sins, He's faithful and just, and will forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Now move on where you are, right? Now,

if you're doing something that is sinful from the standpoint of ongoing stuff, like cheating or stealing, it's like stop, but I think you get the difference. All right. Okay.

All right. Now the prophet is going to go on here in verse 9 and following to describe such enemies of the Lord as we've been talking about here up to this point.

Verse 9 says, ⁹“*What do you plot against the Lord? He will make a complete end; trouble will not rise up a second time.*” ¹⁰“*For they are like entangled thorns, like drunkards as they drink; they are consumed like stubble fully dried.*” Now that's just kind of in a general sense, talking about the enemies of the Lord.

Now, verse 11, he's going to speak directly to Assyria ¹¹“*From you (He says) came one who plotted evil against the Lord, a worthless counselor.*” Now in verse 12, he speaks to Judah, ¹²“*Thus says the Lord, “Though they are at full strength and many (Now he's talking about the Assyrians to the Jews in Judah.) (Repeated first sentence again) “Though they are at full strength and many, they will be cut down and pass away. Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no more.*” ¹³“*And now I will break his yoke from off you and will burst your bonds (or chains if you will) apart.*” And this was obviously a very comforting, very encouraging word for the people of Judah.

Now in verse 14, the prophet turns again to Nineveh, and he says, ¹⁴“*The Lord has given commandment about you: “No more shall your name be perpetuated; from the house of your gods I will cut off the carved image and the metal image. I will make your grave, for you are vile.*”

And then, what sounds like a very familiar verse says in verse 15, ¹⁵“*Behold, upon the mountains, the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace! Keep your feasts, O Judah; fulfill your vows, for never again shall the worthless pass through you; he is utterly cut off.*”

And I'm sure that verse sounds somewhat familiar to you about the feet of Him who brings good news, right? Well, it's actually very similar to a passage in Isaiah. Let me show it up on the screen for you. Isaiah chapter 52, verse 7 says,

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Isaiah 52:7 (ESV)

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news,

who publishes peace, (very similar) who brings good news of happiness, (but in this case) who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

So these are very similar declarations, but the difference between Nahum and Isaiah is that Isaiah is speaking of the beauty of the feet of those who bring good news, of the salvation of the Lord. And Nahum is declaring how good are the feet of those who bring the welcome news of peace, that an enemy will be defeated, and the Lord will do the work.

All right, chapter 2. Chapter 2 is interesting in that it includes a series of small, kind of, literary snapshots of portraying the fall of Nineveh. So we're going to read through this chapter fairly quickly. It says, ¹*"The scatterer has come up against you. Man the ramparts; watch the road; dress for battle; collect all your strength. ² For the Lord is restoring the majesty of Jacob as the majesty of Israel, for plunderers have plundered them and ruined their branches. ³ The shield of his mighty men is red; his soldiers are clothed in scarlet. The chariots come with flashing metal on the day he musters them; the cypress spears are brandished. ⁴ The chariots race madly through the streets; they rush to and fro through the squares; they gleam like torches; they dart like lightning. ⁵ He remembers his officers; they stumble as they go, they hasten to the wall; the siege tower is set up. ⁶ The river gates are opened; the palace melts away; ⁷ its mistress is stripped; she is carried off, her slave girls lamenting, moaning like doves and beating their breasts. ⁸ Nineveh is like a pool whose waters run away. "Halt! Halt!" they cry, but none turns back."*

This is an interesting poetic picture here of the troops of Nineveh trying to defend the city, but becoming like pools of water that drain away and are absolutely useless in any sort of defensive way.

He goes on verse 9, *"Plunder the silver, plunder the gold! There is no end of the treasure or of the wealth of all precious things. ¹⁰ Desolate! Desolation and ruin! Hearts melt and knees tremble; anguish is in all loins; all faces grow pale!*

Now there's just a few verses left in the chapter, but before we read verses 11 and 12, you need to know, and this is important to know in order to understand these verses that the lion was the symbol, one of the national symbols, of Assyria. Okay, the lion. Keep that in mind.

Verse 11, *"Where is the lions' den, the feeding place of the young lions, where the lion and lioness went, where his cubs were, with none to disturb? ¹² The lion tore enough for his cubs and strangled prey for his lionesses; he filled his caves*

with prey and his dens with torn flesh. (Speaking of the past of Assyria and all of their conquerings) ”

And then he says, ¹³ *“Behold, I am against you, declares the Lord of hosts, and 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 no longer be heard.”* Wow! So you can see some incredible little snapshots of the fall of Nineveh, which of course happened a few years after this word was given.

Chapter 3 begins by saying, *“Woe to the bloody city, (which means, of course, the city of bloodshed) all full of lies and plunder—no end to the prey! ² The crack of the whip, and rumble of the wheel, galloping horse and bounding chariot! ³ Horsemen charging, flashing sword and glittering spear, hosts of slain, heaps of corpses, dead bodies without end—they stumble over the bodies! ⁴ And all for the countless whorings of the prostitute, graceful and of deadly charms, who betrays nations with her whorings, and peoples with her charms. ⁵ Behold, I am against you, declares the Lord of hosts, and will lift up your skirts over your face; ... ”*

And that's an ancient reference to exposing one's shame. And in this case, the guilt of Nineveh. In fact, he says here at the end of verse 5, *“...and I will make nations look at your nakedness and kingdoms at your shame. ⁶ I will throw filth at you (I'm not going to comment on that) and treat you with contempt and make you a spectacle. ⁷ And all who look at you will shrink from you and say, “Wasted is Nineveh; who will grieve for her?” Where shall I seek comforters for you?”* There's nobody who's going to grieve and comfort, you know, for Nineveh because everybody hates them. They've conquered everybody and everybody's happy to see them fall.

Some questions here. Verse 8, *“Are you better than Thebes that sat by the Nile, with water around her, her rampart a sea, and water her wall?”* And you should know that the Assyrians conquered Thebes of Egypt. And so, God is asking, *“Are you better? Thebes fell to you. Are you not going to fall to anybody?”*

⁹ *“Cush was her strength; Egypt too, and that without limit; Put and the Libyans were her helpers. ¹⁰ Yet she became an exile; she went into captivity; her infants were dashed in pieces at the head of every street; for her honored men lots were cast, and all her great men were bound in chains.”*

And now the Lord tells them that the same fate awaits them. Verse 11, “*You also will be drunken; you will go into hiding; you will seek a refuge from the enemy.*”¹² *All your fortresses are like fig trees with first-ripe figs—if shaken they fall into the mouth of the eater.*” And that's simply a way of saying that their fortresses would fall easily.

¹³ “*Behold, your troops are women in your midst...*” Which is to say, lacking courage. Don't send me any nasty grams. This is just a Bible understanding. He says, “*...The gates of your land are wide open to your enemies; fire has devoured your bars.*”¹⁴ *Draw water for the siege; strengthen your forts; go into the clay; tread the mortar; take hold of the brick mold!*” In other words, prepare yourself for the siege.

¹⁵ “*There will the fire devour you; the sword will cut you off. It will devour you like the locust. Multiply yourselves like the locust; multiply like the grasshopper!*”¹⁶ *You increased your merchants more than the stars of the heavens. The locust spreads its wings and flies away.*¹⁷ *Your princes are like grasshoppers, your scribes like clouds of locusts settling on the fences in a day of cold—when the sun rises, they fly away; no one knows where they are.*¹⁸ *Your shepherds are asleep, O king of Assyria; your nobles slumber. Your people are scattered on the mountains with none to gather them.*¹⁹ *There is no easing your hurt; your wound is grievous. All who hear the news about you clap their hands over you. (And this last statement is really quite fascinating) For upon whom has not come your unceasing evil?*” In other words, can you think of anybody who has not tasted of the evil of your sword?

So, the Book of Nahum a fairly short Old Testament book, but once again, reiterating to us, showing us again, God is a God of justice. He is a God of righteous judgment, and He will call nations to account. And that includes the nations that are in the world today.

Do you understand that even the nations today will be held accountable for their actions? And so, we can get pretty upset when we see things going on in the world and the unrighteousness, and the corruption, the oppression. But God is a God of justice. He's good, but He's a God of justice.

And He will call man to account. I am so thankful that Jesus has taken our penalty. You know it's interesting, the Bible does talk about all believers or all people rather one day standing before the judgment of God (**paraphrased 2 Corinthians 5:10**). And that's true, we all will, but I have to remind Christians every so often. That you will not stand before God for your sin.

You will not stand before God for your sin. As a believer, if God were to bring up one single sin, then what Jesus did on the cross wasn't enough, but it was enough and it was finished, completed, paid in full. That's such an important...I talk to Christians all the time who know that they're forgiven, or at least they say they're forgiven, but they believe they will stand before God for their sin. And I have to remind them, Jesus already did that for you, and that's an important thing.

Now you will stand before God but the way you will stand before God, as a believer, is that your works will be judged to see what rewards you will get. Now Paul tells us in Corinthians (**2 Corinthians 13-15 ESV paraphrased**) that there will be some who will have no works with which to be rewarded and he speaks of them as like a man escaping through the flames. He himself will be saved, it says, but barely from the standpoint of he has nothing to show for his life of salvation. He'll be saved. And the reason that you can live a life of no good works and still be saved, and I know this is going to mess with some of your theology, is because we're not saved by works. We are not saved by works.

Paul tells us that very clearly in **Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV paraphrased)**, “...*not by works, so that no man may boast.*” So is it possible for somebody to get to heaven and to be welcomed into heaven, but have absolutely nothing with which God will reward him? Yeah, it's possible because we get to heaven by faith.

Faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross. Confidence. Are you confident today that what Jesus did on the cross was for you? Then you are saved. Now we want to live our lives for Him. He gave His life for us. We want to give our lives for Him. And I've heard Christians say, well, if you're doing things just for reward, that's the wrong motive.

Well, I got a problem with that conclusion. Jesus talked a lot about rewards. I mean, He told a lot of parables about rewards. And if it was this big taboo that you're never supposed to think about, why did he bring it up so much? He talked a lot. (**Matthew 25:14-30 ESV paraphrased**) He talked about the master coming back and saying to the servant “Here, you did good let me give you more.” Right? You remember those? So it's like hey, I want to hear the Lord say, “Well done.” I hope you do too! Well done good and faithful servant. I don't think that's automatic. I don't think we can assume that's what we're going to hear, but that's what we want to hear.

So, “What do we do?”

We're going to live our lives for Him. We're going to take what He's given to us, the giftings, the resources, the abilities that God has given us and we're going to use them for His glory. Jesus, I want to serve you. I want to bring glory to your name. I want to love you. I want to love other people. I want to be open.

And that's really the key, you guys, just being open. I encourage you to start your day, "Lord, I'm yours." because you know that's worship. That's worship right there. "Lord, I'm yours." That's what Paul says, **(Romans 12:1 ESV paraphrased)** *"In view of God's mercy, offer yourselves as living sacrifices holy and pleasing to God, which is your spiritual act of worship."*

Lord, I give myself to you, I am yours. Use me today, however. It might be to utter a prayer for somebody who will never know that you prayed for them. It might be to give somebody a hug and a word of comfort and to share a scripture verse of encouragement. Who knows? Who knows? Doesn't matter. Just be open. Just be available. "Lord, I'm yours today. I'm yours. Use me today."

Let's pray. "Heavenly Father, we have seen a great deal here in the Book of Nahum about your character. And we have seen you declare your righteousness and justice that expresses itself in wrath and vengeance against the rebellious, hardened heart of man, who refuses to repent.

But we have also seen a declaration that you are good, that you are slow to anger, that you are a gracious God. And we have been reminded, Lord, in this study that Jesus took for us, the wrath of God. Consumed the wrath of God on the cross. And Lord, we just want to say again, our confidence is in Jesus not in ourselves to be good or to act just the right way. Our confidence Lord is in you, to cleanse us and wash us by faith when we trust in the finished and completed work of Jesus Christ, where our sins were paid in full.

We thank you and praise you, Lord God. In the name of Jesus our Savior and King. Amen."