

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 9-23-12 PM NOTES  
NAHUM  
#36 in Series, "The Glory of God in the Old Testament"

I. God's Judgment on Nineveh Declared (Chapter 1)

A. God Is Jealous (1:2a)

**Deuteronomy 4:24 (NKJV)** "For the Lord your God *is* a consuming fire, a jealous God."

**Deuteronomy 6:15a (NKJV)** "for the Lord your God *is* a jealous God among you..."

**1 Corinthians 10:22a (NKJV)** "Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?"

**2 Corinthians 11:2a (NKJV)** "For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy."

B. God Is Vengeful (1:2b)

**Romans 12:19 (HCSB)** "Friends, do not avenge yourselves; instead, leave room for His wrath. For it is written: Vengeance belongs to Me; I will repay, says the Lord."

C. God Is Wrathful (vv. 2c, 6)

**Nahum 1:6 (HCSB)** "Who can withstand His indignation? Who can endure His burning anger? His wrath is poured out like fire, even rocks are shattered before Him."

**Revelation 6:16b (NKJV)** "...the wrath of the Lamb!"

D. God Is Patient (v. 3)

**2 Peter 3:8-9 (HCSB)** "8 Dear friends, don't let this one thing escape you: with the Lord one day is like 1,000 years, and 1,000 years like one day. 9 The Lord does not delay His promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance."

**Romans 15:5 (NKJV)** "Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus."

E. God Is Omnipotent (vv. 3-5)

“But seeing that He is clothed with omnipotence, no prayer is too great for Him to answer, no need too great for Him to supply, no passion too strong for Him to subdue; no temptation too powerful for Him to deliver from, no misery too deep for Him to relieve.”

—Arthur Pink

F. God Is Just (v. 3)

**Nahum 1:3a (ESV)** “The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, and the Lord will by no means clear the guilty.”

**Romans 3:26 (NKJV)** “to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

G. God Is Good (v. 7)

**Psalms 52:1b (NKJV)** “The goodness of God *endures* continually.”

**Psalms 107:8 (NKJV)** “Oh, that *men* would give thanks to the Lord *for* His goodness, and *for* His wonderful works to the children of men!”

II. God’s Judgment of Nineveh Described (Chapter 2)

III. God’s Judgment on Nineveh Defended (Chapter 3)

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NAHUM

#36 IN Series, “The Glory of God in the Old Testament”

**Nahum 1:1 (NKJV)** “The burden against Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.” In the very first verse of Nahum, his prophesy is called a “burden”, a “book”, and a “vision”. The Hebrew word translated “burden” means “oracle”, an utterance, or something that is carried. The prophets often called the message that God gave them to deliver a burden. It weighed heavily on them until they proclaimed it. The word “book” indicates that it is a unified message and not a series of disjointed proclamations. This prophesy is also a “vision”. This emphasizes that the content originated with God and not the man Nahum. In fact what Nahum prophesies is so incredible that if it had originated with man, no one would believe it. The key place in this vision, this book, this burden is Nineveh. The key person in this book is God Himself. I know of no short passage of Scripture (other than perhaps Psalm 139) that tells us as much about the specific perfections of God as the book of Nahum.

To show you the importance of this book, let me ask you a question. If a person worships a god who that doesn't line up with the God who reveals Himself in Scripture, what do you call that god? You would call it an idol. Idolatry takes place in churches all the time and especially on Sundays. People in mainline churches sing from a Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, or Assembly of God hymnal about God, but the god they have in mind as they sing is not the God revealed in Scripture. That makes them just as much an idolater as the remote tribesman in the rain forest who bows before an idol of wood or stone. The reason I am making such a big deal about this is that the book of Nahum says a lot about some of the perfections of God that a large segment professing Christians reject. People love to hear about this God of grace, mercy and love. Many pick and choose the perfections of God like someone chooses food off of a cafeteria line. Someone will bring up the subject of God's wrath and inevitably someone will say "My god is a god of love, not wrath". The blunt response to that is "Then your god is an idol". To pick and choose the perfections of God that you will accept means that the god that person is worshipping is not the God of the Scriptures. The God of the Scriptures is a God of love and a God of wrath. He is a God of mercy, but He is also a God of Justice. To worship the one true God, we must accept every attribute, every perfection that is revealed about Him in His Word. His love doesn't cancel out or negate His wrath.

Nahum reveals the attributes of God with the backdrop of the city of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire. The city of Nineveh should sound familiar to you. Just two weeks ago we looked at the book of Jonah. God sent Jonah to this same city of Nineveh to call the people to repentance. The people repented – every last person – in this massive city and God withheld his judgment. Now about 100 years have passed since Jonah preached in Nineveh. The Assyrians evidently didn't pass on to their children the worship of the one true God, Jehovah. By the time we get to Nahum in the early 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, the vileness of the nation was seemingly worse than it was in Jonah's day. Nahum issues no call to repentance. It is too late for that. The message of Nahum is a coming judgment that is certain. That ought to underscore for us the importance of reaching and disciplining our children. We are only one generation away from becoming a pagan nation that does not know God.

By way of introduction to the book of Nahum, let me share some things about the Assyrians and the city of Nineveh in particular. Assyria was the dominant world power in the mid-east when Nahum wrote this book, this burden, this vision. They were known for their cruelty. There are some artifacts in the London Museum that depict the brutality that the Assyrians unleashed on their conquered enemies. These "reliefs" [graphic arts sculptures or engravings] depict men impaled by spikes, mutilated bodies, and piles of heads. When they conquered a city, they would depopulate it and then resettle it with people from other cultures so there would be no more trouble from the people of that defeated city. That is exactly what they did when they defeated the northern kingdom and its capital Samaria in 722 BC. The capital city of Assyria, Nineveh was a sight to behold! It was located on the east side to the Tigris River close to what is today the city of Mosul, Iraq. Stories were told throughout the region about their size, power and wealth. There were two walls around the city that ran for miles and miles. The inner wall was the highest, and by some accounts were 100 feet high and so wide that three chariots could run side by side on the top of the walls. On the outside of the two sets of walls was a moat that was 150 feet wide and 60 feet deep. Nineveh seemed like an impregnable city. Every nation in the region feared the Assyrians. They had tried to conquer Jerusalem when Hezekiah was king, and they only failed because God supernaturally stepped in and delivered the people of Judah (2 Kings 19:35). Even though Jerusalem was spared when an angel of the Lord killed 185,000 of the Assyrians, Assyrian records indicate that the Assyrians destroyed almost 50 cities in Judea.

The people of the southern kingdom of Israel lived in fear of these Assyrians. Nahum's prophesy of judgment on the Assyrians brought great comfort to the People of Judah. The name Nahum means comfort. God's message to the Assyrians was that their time had run out. God's patience with their sinful ways had run out.

## I. God's Judgment on Nineveh Declared (Chapter 1)

In Nahum 1, we have seven perfections of God proclaimed. Many of these perfections would be voted out by our postmodern culture if they had a vote. Let's look at the perfections of God that He reveals about Himself in Nahum 1.

A. God is Jealous (V 2a)

**Nahum 1:2a (NKJV)** "God *is* jealous..." This may be the least understood of the perfections of God. In fact, to most people the phrase "perfection of jealousy" seems like an oxymoron. We think of jealousy as a flaw, not a perfection. Yet, the Bible states multiple times that God is a jealous God. **Deuteronomy 4:24 (NKJV)** "For the Lord your God *is* a consuming fire, a jealous God." **Deuteronomy 6:15a (NKJV)** "for the Lord your God *is* a jealous God among you..." **1 Corinthians 10:22a (NKJV)** "Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?" **2 Corinthians 11:2a (NKJV)** "For I am jealous for you with godly [God like] jealousy." When the word "jealous" is applied to God, it has no connotation of envy, covetousness or wanting what someone else has. This word when it is used of God means to have a zeal for that which belongs to you. Jealousy involves protecting what belongs to you. God owns us by right of creation. God created us to glorify Him and when a rival comes into our life, God will not tolerate it. God made us for Himself, that He might hold an exclusive place in our worship, our affection, and our obedience. When something takes His place, we find that our God is a jealous God (though I'm not aware of any praise songs written about this perfection of God).

We all worship something or someone. We are worshipping creatures by nature. Just as you cannot stop a river from flowing, you can only divert it; even so we cannot stop worshipping but we can divert our worship away from God. When we do we provoke Him to jealousy. He will tolerate no rivals. Why? It is because He alone is the one true God and He alone is worthy of our worship. Your worship may be diverted to possessions, other persons, pleasure or projects, but you will worship. When the object of our worship is not the one true God, His jealousy is revealed and His jealousy brings His judgment.

B. God Is Vengeful (V 2b)

**Nahum 1:2b (NKJV)** "...the Lord avenges; the Lord avenges and *is* furious. The Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries..." Three times in verse 2 we are told that God avenges or takes vengeance. The word in Hebrew means that God punishes or inflicts a penalty. The Bible forbids individuals to take vengeance. The reason that He forbids us to take vengeance is that this is something that only He does. **Romans 12:19 (HCSB)** "Friends, do not avenge yourselves; instead, leave room for His wrath. For it is written: Vengeance belongs to Me; I will repay, says the Lord." God's vengeance is just as much a part of His perfections as His love.

C. God Is Wrathful (V 2c, 6)

**Nahum 1:2c (NKJV)** "...He reserves *wrath* for His enemies". **Nahum 1:6 (HCSB)** "Who can withstand His indignation? Who can endure His burning anger? His wrath is poured out like fire, even rocks are shattered before Him." God's wrath was indeed released on the wicked city of Nineveh. Does the Bible really say much about the wrath of God? If you check out a concordance, you will find that there are actually more references to the anger, fury, and wrath of God than to His love [From Arthur Pink, *The Attributes of God*, Page 97]. Some Christians who accept the wrath of God seem somewhat ashamed of it. I suspect that some think of the wrath of God as being sort of like a divine temper tantrum. His wrath is one of His perfections. The wrath of God is not emotional; it is judicial. We read in **Revelation 6:16 (NKJV)** of the "...wrath of the Lamb!" This shows us that wrath is a part of the perfections of God the Son as well as God the Father. At the cross, we see the wrath of God connected to his love. Jesus bore our wrath because of the great love wherewith He loved us.

D. God Is Patient (V3)

**Nahum 1:3 (NKJV)** "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." The Lord is not impulsive or quick with His vengeance and wrath. **2 Peter 3:8-9 (HCSB)** "Dear friends, don't let this one thing escape you: with the Lord one day is like 1,000 years, and 1,000 years like one day. <sup>9</sup> The Lord does not delay His promise, as some understand delay, but is **patient** with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance." He is called in **Romans 15:5 (NKJV)** "...the God

of patience...” A famous atheist (I think that it was Robert Ingersoll) after a speech touting atheism pulled his watch from his pocket and said, “According to the Bible, God has struck men to death for blasphemy. I will blaspheme God and then give Him five minutes to strike me dead.” After uttering blasphemies, Ingersoll would stand in silence until 5 minutes had passed. He would then yell, “See there is no God”. A well known preacher from London, Joseph Parker commented, “And did the American gentleman think he can exhaust the patience of God in five minutes?”

#### E. God Is Omnipotent (V3-5)

**Nahum 1:3-5 (NKJV)** “<sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>He rebukes the sea and makes it dry, and dries up all the rivers. Bashan and Carmel wither, and the flower of Lebanon wilts. <sup>5</sup>The mountains quake before Him, The hills melt, and the earth heaves at His presence, yes, the world and all who dwell in it.” What a picture of His omnipotence! He walks above the clouds, dries up rivers, and moves mountains. Nineveh will be no problem for Him! I love what Arthur Pink says about His omnipotence: “But seeing that He is clothed with omnipotence, no prayer is too great for Him to answer, no need too great for Him to supply, no passion too strong for Him to subdue; no temptation too powerful for Him to deliver from, no misery too deep for Him to relieve” [Arthur Pink, Page 56].

#### F. God Is Just (V3)

**Nahum 1:3a (ESV)** “The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, and the Lord will by no means clear the guilty...” When we say that God is just, we are saying that He eventually sets all things right. When injustice prevails here, we take comfort that His justice will eventually prevail. God would never clear the guilty. His justice explains why we could never earn our salvation. God is just and our sins have separated us from Him. God’s justice requires that our sins be paid for and the payment for sin is death. When Jesus paid for our sin on Calvary’s cross, the payment was made and God’s justice was satisfied. **Romans 3:26 (NKJV)** “to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” Because of the cross, God could remain just by demanding that our sin be paid for and yet through sending His Son, we became the justifier of all who would repent of sin and savingly believe on Jesus. When we deny the “hard” perfections of God, we minimize the work of Christ on the cross.

#### G. God Is Good (V7)

**Nahum 1:7 (NKJV)** “The Lord *is* good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him.” In the midst of proclaiming that God is jealous, vengeful, and wrathful, Nahum says that He is also good. There is no contradiction between these perfections of God. **Psalms 52:1b (NKJV)** “The goodness of God *endures* continually.” The original Saxon meaning of God was “the good”. To those who love Him and are called according to His purpose, He causes all things to work together for good in our lives. I say with the Psalmist in **Psalms 107:8 (NKJV)** “Oh, that *men* would give thanks to the Lord *for* His goodness, and *for* His wonderful works to the children of men!”

As God declares His judgment on Nineveh, Nahum reminds us that this God who is our God is jealous, vengeful, wrathful, patient, omnipotent, just, and good.

## II. God’s Judgment of Nineveh Described (Chapter 2) [Read 2:1-4]

Verse 4 sounds like West Knoxville at 5:30 PM, but it is actually a description of war. In verse three, the ones battling the Assyrians are clad in scarlet with scarlet shields. Scarlet was the color worn by the armies of the Meads. In verse 6 we see what will happen when the Meads attack in their scarlet uniforms and shields. **Nahum 2:6 (NKJV)** “The gates of the rivers are opened, and the palace is dissolved.” God says something about the Assyrians in 2:13 that should cause cold chills to run up our spine. **Nahum 2:13 (NKJV)** “‘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.’” The symbol of the Assyrian Empire was the lion (see 2:11-12). God says to the Assyrians, “I am against you”. When God is against a nation, the size of their armies and the

sophistication of their weaponry is irrelevant. God will take them down. That is exactly what He did with Assyria.

Not many years after Nahum wrote this, here is what happened. The Meads, in alliance with the Babylonians and the Scythians, laid siege to the city in 612 BC. During the siege huge amounts of rain came down and the rivers that had been so beneficial to the Assyrians overflowed and beat against the huge walls of Nineveh until great sections of the wall just fell away. Look back at **Nahum 1:8a (NKJV)** “But with an overflowing flood He will make an utter end of its place...” **Nahum 2:6 (NKJV)** “The gates of the rivers are opened, and the palace is dissolved.” The attackers flooded into the city and sacked it. Before the invaders could grab him, the King of Assyria gathered himself and his household together in a huge funeral pyre and burned himself, his wives, and his concubines to ashes. The invaders so completely plundered the city that there was nothing left of it. **Nahum 2:10 (NKJV)** “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.” Archeologists didn’t even find ancient Nineveh until 1842 (170 years ago). With all of their military might, God used little raindrops to bring them down. When God is against a person or nation, He will bring them down, even using raindrops!

### III. God’s Judgment on Nineveh Defended (Chapter 3)

In the third chapter, Nahum gives a defense of the harsh judgment against the Assyrians. The charge was, “Assyria didn’t deserve all of this.” Nahum answers with a resounding “Yes, they did”! **Nahum 3:1-3 (NKJV)** “<sup>1</sup> Woe to the bloody city! *It is* all full of lies *and* robbery. *Its* victim never departs. <sup>2</sup> The noise of a whip and the noise of rattling wheels, of galloping horses, of clattering chariots! <sup>3</sup> 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”. They were filled with violence, lies and dishonesty. God was patient and granted repentance to the generation of Jonah, but succeeding generations were more perverse than those before them.

In verses 4-7, Nahum says the whole Assyrian culture was corrupt and God brought them down and was justified in doing so. A good summary is **Nahum 3:18-19 (NKJV)** “<sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> 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?”

### CONCLUSION

Assyria passed from power and prominence with amazing speed. In a short period of time they passed from being one of the most powerful nations on earth to being forgotten. Don’t ever think we are immune to such a fall. When God says “I am against you” it is over.