

Nahum

Short book, 3 chapters, Minor Prophet

Written to the Jews, Prophesying the destruction of Nineveh

Which makes the book of Nahum a great compliment to the book of Jonah.

The two books combined allow us to see a complete picture of the character of God.

Jonah Recap

God tells Jonah to speak to Nineveh and cry against it for their wickedness is come up before him. He enters the city and says; "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

The King of Nineveh commanded:

1. Both man and beast not to eat
2. But for all people to cry mightily unto God
3. Turn from the evil they were doing
4. Just maybe God will turn and repent and not destroy us.

And God responds the same way He would to any repented people, He forgives them and does not destroy them!

Two Main Points we learned

*That even the most wicked and horrific of people, God can reach! (The Assyrian king of Nineveh repented and asked for Mercy) Something he never granted anyone himself

God will forgive **anyone that repents!!

Gods Character as revealed in each book:

Jonah – Gods relentless Grace, His mercy and forgiveness

Nahum – The relentless march of the judgment of God against all sinners worldwide.

Both reveal that God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35) His grace and His judgment are equally imparted to all! –We will talk more about this later

The purpose of Nahum's book, then, was to announce Nineveh's fall and thereby comfort the Judean Jews with the assurance that their God was indeed sovereign and just.

The story that Nahum told is a story of the utter and irrevocable destruction of a great city and a great people.

Nahum told the story as prophecy, but what he predicted is now history

The prophet predicted that God would destroy the proud and cruel capital of the Assyrian Empire: Nineveh.

So thorough was Nineveh's destruction that for century's travelers passed over its ruins without knowing that this mighty and terrible city lay buried beneath their feet. Only in fairly modern times (1842, to be exact) have archaeologists laid bare its ruins.

Such was the literal and complete fulfillment of Nahum's prophecy

All the prophets were impressed with a characteristic of God that shaped their prophecies.

-*Isaiah* saw God's holiness.

-*Jeremiah* saw God's judgment.

-*Ezekiel* saw God's glory.

-*Micah* saw God's leadership. **And Nahum saw God's wrath.**

Nahum used four words to describe God's Anger "**furios,**" "**avenging,**" "**wrathful,**" and "**angry.**" They all occur in a very brief passage, 1:2-3, heightening Yahweh's anger.

"**Furious**" presupposes love and expresses an emotional, subjective action.

God's jealousy is not self-centered or petty, **but instead it expresses His zealous concern for the welfare of those He loves.**

"**Avenging**," which occurs three times in these two verses, does not mean taking revenge, as we may think, **Example**...but rather the executing of retribution: paying back to someone what that one deserves. It expresses a volitional action, an objective rather than a subjective response.

"**Wrath**," vengeance or punishment as the consequence of anger.

"**Angry**" has the idea of being flushed with anger, red in the face, if you will. It occurs in the dual form in Hebrew, suggesting the two nostrils that flare when one gets angry.

The obvious impression Nahum wanted to create was that of a **very, very angry God**.

Nahum's proclamation concerning the character of God.

First Yahweh is **jealous and avenging** (1:2a). The order of these aspects of God's anger indicates that His passion precedes His action.

Second proclamation is that He is **avenging and wrathful** (1:2b). Here the order is reversed; God's action grows out of His passion.

The **third** proclamation, that Yahweh takes vengeance on His adversaries and reserves wrath for His enemies (1:2c), reveals that **God directs His passion and action discriminately, not carelessly** **This is a very important revelation of God's anger**, because it is the reverse of what usually characterizes human anger. **People are often controlled by their anger, but God controls His anger.** God's passion leads to action, but only against those whom God chooses to make the objects of His wrath.

His anger is discriminating, unlike human anger

Often human anger is:

-Out of control.

-Anyone near it gets hurt, not just the object of one's anger.

(The father, who has bad day at work, comes home yells at his wife and kids, misdirected anger.)

That is never true of God's anger. He is slow to anger; He never "explodes" or "looses His temper."

His anger is measured; He is never out of control.

His anger is focused on the particular object or objects of His wrath.

Innocent people never suffer because of His anger.

He never makes mistakes because He is angry.

He is always in full control of Himself and of everything that happens when He is angry.

We turn now from Nahum's vision of the anger of God to his vision of the vengeance of God.

Nahum revealed: The Why and the When

why God acts in vengeance—the reason for divine judgment;

when God acts in vengeance—the time of divine judgment;

Why does God act in judgment? According to Nahum, there is a God-ward reason and a man-ward reason. In 1:11 we have the sin against God: pride.

"There is one come out of thee, that imagineth evil against the LORD, a wicked counselor."

This was the fundamental sin of the Assyrians against God.

We see it clearly in Sennacherib's invasion of Jerusalem (cf. Isa. 36). Pride, expressed in rebellion against God's sovereign control over His creation, was one of Nineveh's greatest sins.

The other sin, for which God judges, is manward: cruelty. We see this in 3:1-4.

The Assyrians were notorious for their oppression and cruelty toward their fellow men.

These were the two great sins of Assyria—Godward and manward—and they are the primary reason God gets angry and acts in judgment.

Jesus taught that the two greatest commandments were Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind and Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. When people do this, they are not proud or cruel.

Why does God judge? He judges to punish pride and to protect people.

When does God judge? What is the timing by which God judges?

God judges after He exercises **long patience**. A hundred years earlier, God had sent Jonah with a message and Nineveh repented. **But they returned to their former pride and cruelty**. Now, after long waiting, God was about to avenge. He waits for people to repent, but if they do not, He steps in to judge. **His Judgment is certain!**

2 Pet. 2: 4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; **5** And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; **6** And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrhah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly

2 Pet. 3-9, 10 The Lord is not **slack concerning his promise**, as some men count slackness; but is **longsuffering** to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish**, but that all should come to repentance. **Vs 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night**

We turn now to the abiding message of this book, for our own age and for every age.

One aspect of the message of Nahum is what it says about God. **Nahum teaches the reader that to believe in God's love is to be sure of His wrath.**

John 3:17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. –

Yet in saving the world, billions will spend eternity in Hell rather than with Jesus in the place he prepared for us?? How is this right?

Because of His love there is a Hell!

God is Love

1Jn 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

Rev. 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

If God is never angry, He does not really love. His anger grows out of His love.

Can you look at sin, pride, oppression, and cruelty and not be moved? Then you do not love.

Do you not care that pride is keeping people from acknowledging their need for God in your country?

Do you not care that women are being abused and children neglected by fathers who are so selfish that they think only of their own pleasures? If not, you are incapable of love.

If God cannot burn with hatred, He is a God incapable of love. **To believe in His love is to be sure of His wrath.**

God's love always interprets His wrath. Whenever we observe some instance of God's vengeance, we must remember that it springs from His love.

We cannot always make the connection, and we may not be able to explain the connection to others, but there is a connection. **God's vengeance proves the depth of His love.**

Parents who love their children discipline them. Likewise, God disciplines because He loves.

There is a message of hope in Nahum. It is the revelation that God's wrath is discriminating. God is absolutely just. He will not punish the innocent with the guilty (cf. Gen. 18:23-32). "Abraham asking God to spare Sodom, 50, 40, 20, 10... He will not lose control when He judges. **Nahum 1:7 reminds us that "Yahweh is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knows those who take refuge in Him."**

Dr. Constable says the message of this book is:

"God's discriminating anger and vengeance against pride and cruelty arise from His great love for people."

(Dr. Constable)

