

## The Fall of Nineveh, Continued

### Nahum 3

Nahum 3 - *“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— <sup>4</sup> 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.*

*<sup>5</sup> “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. <sup>6</sup> I will cast abominable filth upon you, make you vile, and make you a spectacle. <sup>7</sup> 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?”*

*<sup>8</sup> 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? <sup>9</sup> Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was boundless; Put and Lubim were your helpers. <sup>10</sup> 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.*

*<sup>11</sup> You also will be drunk; you will be hidden; you also will seek refuge from the enemy.*

*<sup>12</sup> All your strongholds are fig trees with ripened figs: if they are shaken, they fall into the mouth of the eater.*

*<sup>13</sup> 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.*

*<sup>14</sup> Draw your water for the siege! Fortify your strongholds! Go into the clay and tread the mortar! Make strong the brick kiln! <sup>15</sup> 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!*

*<sup>16</sup> You have multiplied your merchants more than the stars of heaven. The locust plunders and flies away.*

*<sup>17</sup> Your commanders are like swarming locusts, and your generals like great grasshoppers that camp in the hedges on a cold day. When the sun rises they flee away, and the place where they are is not known.*

*<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?”*

## Background Notes

Chapter 2 gave us a vivid description of the battle that resulted in the fall of Nineveh, and the description of the battle continued in chapter 3. *“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” (v2-3).*

An ancient historian wrote the following about the fall of Nineveh: “In two battles fought on the plain before the city, the rebels defeated the Assyrians. So great was the multitude of the slain that the flowing stream, mingled with their blood, changed color for a considerable distance.” This is certainly testimony to what Nahum predicted about the fall of Nineveh.

In verses 8-10 reference was made to the destruction of *“No Amon.”* “No Amon” was ancient Thebes, in Upper Egypt. Assyria conquered Thebes in 663 BC. The Egyptian city of Luxor today is the location of ancient Thebes, and if you visit Luxor on a trip to Egypt, you can see some of the ruins of Thebes.

These verses, by the way, help us to date the prophecy of Nahum. Obviously Nahum prophesied the fall of Nineveh after the fall of Thebes in 663 BC, and before the fall of Nineveh in 612 BC. So a ballpark figure for the date of Nahum’s prophecy would be about 650 BC.

The point of these verses about the destruction of Thebes is that just as Assyria destroyed Thebes of Egypt with cruel and evil atrocities, so Nineveh of Assyria would be destroyed. Thebes’ allies were not able to rescue her, and likewise Nineveh would be helpless., with no one to help. Nineveh’s children would be dashed to pieces in public, as Assyria had done in Thebes (v10). And Nineveh’s great men would be taken away in chains, just as Assyria had done to the leaders of Thebes (v10).

Verse 11 says that Nineveh would be “hidden.” This is probably a reference to the fact that Nineveh would be completely destroyed, and never be rebuilt. Thebes was rebuilt, but not Nineveh. In fact, Nineveh was so completely buried by the sands over the centuries, that when Alexander the Great traveled through this area about 200 years later, he was unaware that he was marching over the ruins of once-great Nineveh. So well was Nineveh “hidden,” its ruins were only rediscovered by archaeologists in 1842 – 2400 years after it was conquered and destroyed. This is yet another testimony to the detailed accuracy of the Bible!

## Doctrinal Points

## 1. God is against those who practice sin.

Nahum 2:13 says, *“Behold, I am against you,” says the Lord of hosts.*” And in Nahum 3:5 we read, *“Behold, I am against you,” says the Lord of hosts.*” Why was God “against” Nineveh? God was against Nineveh because of her sins. What sins? Look at verse 1: *“Woe to the bloody city.”*

Assyria was well known for her cruel practices and atrocities. Nineveh was a city of blood. A commentary on the prophecy of Nahum says: “Nineveh earned this title of ‘bloody city’ by her atrocious practice of cutting off hands and feet, ears and noses, gouging out eyes, lopping off heads and then binding them to vines, or heaping them up before city gates... Captives would be impaled, or they were filleted alive through a process in which their skin was gradually and completely removed.”

Nineveh was a bloody city, but let me ask you a question. As God looks down on our own nation today and sees the thousands of unborn babies that are cruelly murdered by the horrible practice of abortion, does He not also describe our country as a “nation of blood”? God holds nations accountable, as well as individuals.

Nineveh was also full of lies and robbery. Her victims “never departed” - she lived by continuously plundering other nations. Nineveh was also guilty of sexual sin and witchcraft (v4). Certainly this Scripture has something to say to the sinful practices that surround us today in our country - even by those who call themselves Christians: lying, robbery, taking advantage of others, sexual sin, participating in occult practices (witchcraft). God is against those who practice sin.

## 2. God will judge those who practice sin.

God does not sweep sin under the rug and pretend it never happened. God must judge nations and individuals that practice sin - otherwise He wouldn't be God! In verses 5-7, an illustration is given of how Nineveh's sin would be exposed. The graphic illustration pictured a sinful woman's nakedness being exposed in a shameful and humiliating way, and excrement being thrown on her (v6).

Nineveh would reap what she had sown. Her sins would be exposed and she would be totally disgraced. Verse 12 is very descriptive. Just as ripened figs drop easily off the fig trees when it's shaken, so the city of Nineveh would fall right into the mouths of the Medes and the Babylonians.

Verse 13 was not meant to be a put-down of women! In that culture, describing an army composed entirely of women was not a sign of strength. And that's the point! Nineveh's defense was weak.

Once again, archaeology confirms the accuracy of verses 14-15. The ruins show that Nineveh's defenders built counter-siege ramps (v14), and that she was burned by fire (v15).

Verses 15-17 described Nineveh and the Assyrians like a locust plague. They swarmed upon and conquered their enemies, including the northern kingdom of Israel, and many of the towns of the southern kingdom of Judah. Now the Assyrians would be cut down, stripped bare, plundered and looted as if a locust plague had come upon them (v15-16). Nineveh would no longer be the locust plague - her generals and commanding officers would become like locusts that fly away and disappear (v17).

The end of Nineveh and the Assyrian Empire was vividly portrayed in verses 18-19. The leaders were dead. The people were scattered. Nineveh was completely destroyed, never to be rebuilt. Just as it is today, clapping hands was a sign of rejoicing in ancient days. Everyone rejoiced at the news of Nineveh's demise (v19)!

God judged Nineveh for her sin, and our holy God must judge every nation and every person who practices sin. God will judge those who practice sin.

## Practical Application

### Let's thank the Lord that there is an escape from the wrath of God!

In verse 11 we read, *"You also will be drunk."* That is, Nineveh would be drunk with the cup of God's wrath because of her sin. God's great wrath is directed against sin.

John 3:36 says, *"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life, and He who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."* Notice that there is no neutral position. The wrath of God abides on the unbeliever.

But praise God, there is an escape from the wrath of God, and John 3:36 also gives us the escape: *"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life."*

I trust that you have escaped from the wrath of God against sin. The escape is available only because the Lord Jesus Christ willingly went to the cross and died for our sins. As our substitute, **He suffered the wrath of God against sin.** Through Jesus Christ's substitutionary death, there is an escape from the wrath of God that is directed against sin.

Nineveh had repented at the preaching of Jonah, but she had returned to her evil ways. Now she had reached the point of no return. She would experience the wrath of God.

But God has provided a way of escape for us! If we take His way of salvation through Jesus Christ, we do not have to experience the wrath of God. Let's thank the Lord that there is a way of escape from the wrath of God!