



## Mercy & Judgment (Nahum) 2013

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Nahum = “comforter”

Elkoshite?

Jonah had reluctantly taken God’s message to Nineveh about 100 years before the ministry of Nahum, and to Jonah’s disappointment, Nineveh repented. No doubt Jonah wishes he had been given Nahum’s assignment...

Nineveh was the capital of ancient Assyria. It was built by Nimrod (Gen.10:11), who was “a mighty warrior on the earth” (Gen.10:8). Nineveh was second only to Babylon in size. It had 1200 - 200 foot towers and a 100 foot high wall with the foundation of polished stone and was so wide that three chariots could drive on top of it.

### THE TEXT

1:1-8 Nineveh would fall, never to rise again. It was the Medes who would be God’s instrument in bringing down the proud people of Nineveh and the ancient Assyrians.

1:14-15 God was going to wipe Nineveh into oblivion, and that news was the sweetest news that Israel, and anyone who had been subject to Nineveh’s “vileness” could ever hear! Hezekiah had reinstated the annual feasts, but people were hindered from going to Jerusalem to celebrate them as a result of Assyrian invasion in the land.

2:1 Nothing Nineveh could do would save her from the judgment God was going to bring upon her.

2:3-4

2:6 & 1:10 The Medes and Babylonians had signed a pact together to overthrow Nineveh. They were aided by Persians, Scythians, and Cimmerians. In their first attack they suffered heavy casualties. The Ninevites celebrated the initial victory with a drunken party. Ancient Nineveh was on the east bank of the Tigris river. Heavy rains caused the river to rise, and somehow the “river gates” were breached (2:6). The Medes and Babylonians then had immediate access into the city, and Nineveh fell.

2:8-10 Everyone in Nineveh is shocked at what has happened.

3:1-5 Nineveh's sin was vile, and God's judgment upon her was righteous.

3:8-13 Nineveh was proud, and never thought she would fall the way she did.

3:19 The book ends with a reminder of the cruelty on the ancient Assyrians, and the rejoicing that goes up when God's judgment finally falls upon them.

## LESSONS

### GOD IS GRACIOUS, MERCIFUL, & FORGIVING

- Certainly Nineveh is a tremendous example of God's desire and willingness to forgive even the most vile and heinous sins...details, John Phillips commentary, p.185.
- For generations Israel and the people of the Middle East had known nothing but an endless succession of Assyrian invasions; Shalmaneser III defeated Ahab & Ben-Hadad (I Kings 20:34; 22:1-3), then forced Jehu to pay tribute (I Kings 19:15-17; II Kings 8:7-15; 9:1-6); Tiglath-Pileser III (II Kings 15:19, 28-29; 16:10-16; I Chron.5:6, 26; II Chron.28:19-21; Isa.7:1-9:1); Shalmaneser V (II Kings 17:1-3); Sargon II (II Kings 17:6; Isa. 20:1-6; Sennacherib (II Kings 18:13-19:36); Esarhaddon (II Kings 19:37; 21:13-14; II Chron.33:11; Ezra 4:2-9); Ashurbanipal (II Kings 21:2; II Chron.33; Ezra 4:2, 9).
- Exodus 34:6...The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin...
- Note: We should not be at all surprised at Jonah initially running from God's call upon his life. Remember exactly why he ran? See Jonah 3:10-4:1-3. As vile and ruthless as the Assyrians were, even against the apple of God's eye (Israel), God desired to forgive them, and was delighted to do so when they truly repented.
- God wanted to save the people of Noah's day. That is why he had Noah preach for 120 years before judgment finally fell.
- I sent you prophets...Jer.7:25-26a; 25:4-7.
- Israel = 210 years before judgment, Judah over 100 years.
- God's amazing patience with sinful humanity is seen in the Abrahamic covenant. God deeded the promised land to Abraham, but it was four centuries before the land was actually possessed by Abraham's descendants. And guess what was the reason for the delay? See Gen.15:16; II Peter 3:3-13. Some people wrongly conclude that there is no God, or if He exists, that He doesn't care.

## GOD IS RIGHTEOUS, HOLY, AND WILL ONE DAY BOTH JUDGE AND PURGE THE WORLD OF SIN

Nahum was given his assignment to preach that Nineveh would fall at a time when there was not a cloud on the Assyrian horizon. Nahum preached when Nineveh was riding the crest of its triumphs.

Exodus 34:7b...Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished...

Zephaniah 1:14-15, 18; Read Revelation 16 ; II Thess.1:6-10.

1:15 Nahum anticipated the delight with which people would receive the news that Nineveh was overthrown and would never threaten Israel again. This is another prophecy that has both a historical and a future intention; See Isa.52:7; Rom.10:15; Rev.21:27.

### A PAST GENERATION'S REPENTANCE DOES NOT GUARANTEE A FUTURE GENERATION'S REVIVAL.

- The generation of Ninevites that would experience God's wrath knew well about the Ninevites who just a few years before had repented and were spared God's judgment. But despite this knowledge, they continued in their vile ways and ultimately perished.
- Judges 2:10-13

### SOME PEOPLE NEVER LEARN

- Balaam (Numbers 22-24; Joshua 13:22)
- Daniel 5
- I Cor.10:1-13

### CONCLUSION

- Is there someone listening tonight that needs to repent?
- Is there someone you know who needs to repent, and you are the one God is calling to warn them?
- Is there someone you know who needs to repent, but you don't want God to grant them repentance? Would you ask God to change your heart?