

NAHUM: GOD'S JUDGMENT OF NINEVEH

II: God's Judgment On Nineveh Predicted

(Nahum 1:15-2:10)

I. Introduction

- A. Nineveh of Assyria had repented under Jonah's preaching over one hundred years before Nahum was written, but their devotion to God had not been transmitted to their children, so the people of Nineveh had reverted back their past sins. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, "Introduction to the Book of Nahum: Theme," p. 1292)
- B. Meanwhile, the Assyrians had destroyed Samaria of the Northern Kingdom in 722 B. C. and nearly captured Jerusalem in Hezekiah's day in 701 B. C., so Assyria and its capitol of Nineveh were ripe for divine judgment.
- C. God's judgment on Nineveh is foretold in Nahum 1:15-2:10, so we view this passage for our application:

II. God's Judgment On Nineveh Predicted, Nahum 1:15-2:10.

- A. Though Assyria had long been a dreaded enemy for the people of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, God's prophet Nahum predicted that one day Judah's people would hear the good news from a messenger who brought the report that Nineveh had fallen, what would be news of peace for Judah, Nahum 1:15a.
- B. The people of Judah were thus to keep their feasts to the Lord and fulfill their vows made to Him in apparent request for God's deliverance from Assyria, for Judah would never have the worthless Assyrian pass through her again because Assyria would be utterly destroyed, Nahum 1:15b. "Many cities of the ancient Near East were rebuilt after being destroyed . . . but not Nineveh," Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1495.
- C. Nahum 2:1-2 explained that God would call the people of Nineveh to prepare for an attack, for the Lord was going to restore the majesty of Israel following Assyria's plundering of her and ruining her country.
- D. The Assyrians had red-colored shields created by "painting them or overlaying them with copper (Ezek. 23:14); their tunics were scarlet; their chariots flashed with steel (with flaming torches) because they attached scythes at right angles to the axles; they also used fir trees (cypress spears)," Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to Nahum 2:3.
- E. During the attack, the chariots would race wildly through the streets and the officers would stumble as they went hastening to the wall and preparing the siege tower for battle, Nahum 2:4-5.
- F. Nahum 2:6 ESV predicted that the river gates would be opened, and the palace would melt away, and secular historians validate this: "Diodorus wrote that in the third year of the siege heavy rains caused a nearby river to flood part of the city and break part of the walls (Bibliotheca Historica 2. 26. 9: 2. 27. 13) . . . (T)he Kosr River, entering the city from the northwest at the Ninlil Gate and running through the city in a southwesterly direction, may have flooded because of heavy rains, or the enemy may have destroyed its sluice gate." (Ibid., Bible Know. Com., O. T.)
- G. Nineveh is personified as a mistress stripped of her valuables and carried off in captivity, her slave girls lamenting like mourning doves and beating their breasts in grief, Nahum 2:7.
- H. The city is also likened to a pool whose waters run away, Nahum 2:8a. When invaded, the people of Nineveh would try to flee as predicted in Nahum 2:8b, but many would be captured.
- I. Nahum 2:9 predicted how the invaders would plunder Nineveh's silver and gold and vast treasure of other valuables that she had taken from other nations. "According to the Babylonian Chronicle, 'Great quantities of spoil from the city, beyond counting, they carried off. The city [they turned] into a mound and ruin heap.'" (Luckenbill, Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia, 2:420, as cited in Ibid., B. K. C., O. T.)
- J. Nahum then told of the desolation, fear and anguish the people of Nineveh would face in this destruction of their city, Nahum 2:10. "Archaeological excavations at Nineveh have revealed charred wood, charcoal, and ashes" with "a layer of ash about two inches thick" lying "clearly defined in places on the southeast side" of the temple at Nineveh. (Ibid., citing R. Campbell Thompson and R. W. Hutchinson, A Century of Exploration at Nineveh, 1929, pp. 45, 77) This record supports the Biblical record of the great destruction of Nineveh.

Lesson: *As archaeological evidence and secular historical records testify, Nahum's prediction about the fall and destruction of the once-dreaded Assyrian capital of Nineveh was not only true, but very devastating to its people.*

Application: (1) *Though God's punishment may be long in coming as it was for Nineveh, a city God once evangelized through Jonah, persistent rebellion against the Lord is eventually severely punished, so we must revere the Lord and depart from sin.* (2) *Since God in the Noahic Covenant ordered all nations not to murder (Genesis 9:5-6), and the Assyrians greatly violated that law, God's severe judgment of the Assyrians for that sin should cause us to depart from all forms of murder, be it abortion on demand or even hatred according to 1 John 3:15.*