

NAHUM: GOD'S JUDGMENT OF NINEVEH
V: The Comforting Completeness Of God's Judgment On Abusers
(Nahum 3:12-19)

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. Nahum 3:12 reveals the comforting completeness of God's judgment on Israel's abusers of Nineveh, and we study the passage for insight, application, and edification (as follows):

II. The Comforting Completeness Of God's Judgment On Abusers, Nahum 3:12-19.

- A. The people of Nineveh were known for their cruel treatment of everybody else around them, so when it came time for God to punish the city for its wickedness, the fall of Nineveh would be actually comforting to many.
- B. Accordingly, like the first yield of figs in the spring before the regular summer crop arrived when one could simply shake the fig branches and the tender spring figs fall to the harvester below, so "Nineveh's defenses would easily and quickly succumb to the attackers," Nahum 3:12; *Ibid.*, p. 1503.
- C. Nineveh's troops would lose courage "and become like women, afraid and defenseless," Nahum 3:13a; *Ibid.*
- D. The reference to the gates of the city being wide open to Nineveh's enemies and being burned in Nahum 3:13b may refer to an action some scholars believed were taken by the invaders: Assyria's king Sennacherib had dammed the Khosr River outside of Nineveh with a great double dam, so "perhaps as the beginning of the siege the reservoirs were completely full," and the enemy "threw open the gates and the palace collapsed" with a great surge of water that came crashing down from the dam, *Ibid.*, p. 1500-1501. The enemy then set fire to the city gates and their bars and rushed into the city to destroy its people and to plunder, *Ibid.*, p. 1503.
- E. An important need for a city under siege is clean drinking water, and another is the replacement of clay bricks on the wall where the attackers have started to tear it down, so God's prophet ordered the people of Nineveh to draw water for the siege and to tread the clay mortar and take hold of the brick mold only to be devoured by fire and sword, devoured like a locust plague destroys plant life, Nahum 3:14-15a; *Ibid.*
- F. Continuing with the figure of a locust plague, the prophet urged the people of Nineveh to multiply themselves like locusts to defend their city, something that would be impossible at that time, for the people of Nineveh had increased their wealth by trading with many merchants only to see that wealth stripped by the figurative locusts of the many attacking soldiers, Numbers 3:15b-16.
- G. Still using the figure of locusts, Nahum pictured Nineveh's princes and scribes as grasshoppers and locusts who would settle on the fences in a cold day only to fly away and disappear when the sun rose to warm them, Nahum 3:17. "Similarly, in panic the guards on the walls would also suddenly vanish," *Ibid.*, p. 1504.
- H. Nahum 3:18-19 may refer to Assyria's last king Ashur-uballit (612-609 B. C.) "who tried to hold together the Assyrian Empire in the city of Haran, until it finally crumbled completely in 609, three years after Nineveh's fall," *Ibid.* "In surveying his devastated empire, he would realize that his leaders (shepherds and nobles) were dead," figuratively sleeping the sleep of death, "and that people who were not taken captives were scattered, never again to be gathered," *Ibid.*; Nahum 3:18.
- I. Accordingly, there was no easing of Nineveh's hurt, her wound was fatal, all who heard the news about her fall would clap their hands in joy over her fall, for Nineveh's unceasing evil had come upon all the other nations around her, Numbers 3:19 ESV. "Readers today know from the Book of Nahum that God's wrath will eventually fall on inveterate [die-hard] sinners, and can be comforted by knowing that those who turn to Him are safe," *Ibid.* The prophet's name, "Nahum," means "consolation" or "comfort" (*Ibid.*, p. 1493), so his prophecy on the fall of violent, abusive Nineveh would be a comfort to the people of Israel.

Lesson: *News of the violent, permanent fall and devastation of Nineveh was a great comfort to the people of Israel who had suffered so much from Assyria's abusiveness, and it serves to encourage those who suffer abuse at the hands of the ungodly that God will eventually completely handle the abusers in complete divine justice.*

Application: *(1) If we have acted abusively toward others, may we confess it and make amends as the Lord directs to avoid His eventual sure punishment. (2) If we are the abused, may we confidently trust in God for deliverance.*