

DECEMBER 17

Nahum 1-3

You might ask, what is the point of the book of Nahum? Good question. Lots of prophets wrote of the downfall of Nineveh and Assyria. We just read some of that in Micah. If I was going to hazard a guess, I would suggest that this prophecy was used by God to spook (shock) the Assyrians into letting the newly repentant and "born again" King Manasseh of Judah out of his Assyrian captivity.

About 100 years earlier, Nineveh had fallen on hard times and was shocked into repentance by the preaching of Jonah. Assyria had grown slowly, biding its time and had now come almost to the stature of an empire. After the Assyrians took the northern kingdom of Israel into captivity, they were humbled in trying to take Jerusalem. This was a setback and now they feared the God who dwelt around the mountains of Jerusalem. Even though Judah and Jerusalem pledged allegiance to Assyria, it never mentions the Assyrians coming to Jerusalem. Even in 2 Chronicles 33:11, when it says that Manasseh was taken with thorns and hooks to Babylon by the Assyrians, it never says they took Manasseh from Jerusalem. From secular documents it says that Manasseh attended an event in Assyria. That is probably where he was taken captive, and possibly for fear of Yahweh, Manasseh was removed from Nineveh to a prison in Babylon.

During that time Amon, Manasseh's son, would have run the government, though not officially as king. In the meantime, Manasseh came to his right mind, repented and was saved. God had an assignment for Manasseh. Manasseh wasn't able to undo his horrible wrongs and influence in Jerusalem and Judah. He couldn't change the heart of his son Amon, but it does appear that the repentant and humbled Manasseh might have used his last years to influence his grandson Josiah. Josiah went on to be the godliest king of Judah, and through his reforms and influence, eight godly young people formed four godly families and had four godly teenagers who were taken to Babylon and became key leaders used by God to protect Israel during the Babylonian captivity.

I think this violent little letter by Nahum struck the heart of the new Assyrian king. He would have known of Jonah and the 185,000 men Assyria had lost outside of Jerusalem, slaughtered by no human hand. When he heard this message and remembered that his father had imprisoned Manasseh, he, like the kings before him, felt the dread of Israel's God, and returned Manasseh to Jerusalem.

If you want to see where Nahum fits in the history of the Old Testament, look at the chart, "Kings of Judah and Israel and the Preexilic Prophets," at the end of this document.

If you have the [Bible Knowledge Commentary](#) and if you are interested in seeing how vile and violent Assyria was, and how exact this prophecy of Nahum was, then you might be interested in reading the "Introduction to the Book of Nahum," [Bible Knowledge Commentary-OT](#), p. 1493.

Nahum 1

Vs. 1-6 Notice how threatening and violent this sounds. It actually will sound kind of like events we'll read about in Revelation. Verse 3 is a comfort, but when God has been ignored long enough and His judgment starts to roll, it rolls to completion.

V. 7 This is one of a few breaks in this chapter where God declares His protection of Judah and Jerusalem.

Vs. 8-11 This is God threatening the rulers of Assyria. Actually, Nineveh was taken by a literal flood. Their army came as a "flood" among the nations, but God used their enemies to make a real flood against them. I think v. 11 might be a reference to Rabshakeh in 2 Kings 18:17. It's a bad idea to get on the bad side of Yahweh. After all, how often can you afford to lose 185,000 men?

Vs. 12-13 God is declaring deliverance for Israel in spite of Assyria's strength.

V. 14 God will make an end to Assyria.

V. 15 In contrast to the message of Rabshakeh, a messenger will come to Zion declaring the good news of Assyria's demise. Paul and the Holy Spirit used this verse in Romans 10:15. The good news of deliverance we bring into the harvest is about a million times better.

Nahum 2

Vs. 1-9 Apparently there is imagery in this vision of the destruction of Nineveh that reflects some of what actually happened.

V. 2 Note again. This is confirmation that God is bringing this destruction because of what has happened to Israel. So, if the king of Assyria is listening, he will try to do something nice for Israel. Sending King Manasseh back might have been a noble-looking peace offering.

V. 3 The Assyrians would have seen these red shields as an allusion to the army of Babylon.

Vs. 10-13 This is God mocking the pride and power of Assyria. God would humble them.

Nahum 3

Vs. 1-7 The destruction of Nineveh was so complete, that years later Alexander the Great rode by and had no idea that the ruins he saw had once been this city.

Vs. 8-10 Although Egypt had power and lots of allies, when Assyria brutally took Thebes, none of these things helped. In the same way, Assyria shouldn't think its strength or allies would be a help. In fact, it was the allies of Assyria, the Medes and the Babylonians, who finally destroyed Nineveh.

Note that this event in Egypt is already past. It took place in 663 A.D., which gives us a little help in putting the date of this book in the reign of Manasseh.

Vs. 11-19 Again, this is all very graphic and violent. If it was read in Hebrew to the king of Assyria, with that guttural, throaty sound, it might have even been that much more frightening.

We've seen that God had no problem scaring kings and humbling them. Nebuchadnezzar was a great lesson. In what we are reading in Revelation, it shows us that the only thing holding God back from mastering all nations is His own patience in seeing people in the harvest saved. Jesus told His disciples not to fear rulers. Why? Because He is in control behind the scenes in an infinitely wise and intricate way, bringing *justice to victory*. (Matt. 12:20) If we get dragged before kings, it's because He wants us dragged there to give testimony to Him, of His gracious offer and sacrifice, and of His coming in glory and judgment.

Revelation 8

V. 1 I can only think that this was a very solemn thirty minutes, showing the importance of this *seventh seal*. According to those theologians who think in "points and sub-points," all of what follows is actually a sub-point of this seventh seal. The book and its seals are the actual book of judgment. What is about to happen next will make the first six seals look like a warm up, which actually was what they were. By now people on the earth are responding to what God has done, but as bad as that was, it is nothing compared to what is about to hit the earth. The 144,000 are out and working. The antichrist has revealed himself and has shown he is a supernaturally skilled organizing- and consensus-winning dynamo. He has brought order to the world order and made a peace agreement with Israel that is agreed upon by all nations. Imagine that. In the new religious tolerance that the antichrist creates, believers are being persecuted and killed; because, after all, all religions accept Jesus. However, Jesus doesn't accept any other religion, nor do His disciples. People are either thinking about God or they are not. I think it is during this time that the two witnesses also rise to prominence in Jerusalem. I think that the events we are about to witness are

called down by these witnesses, so that when God allows the antichrist to kill them, the entire world will rejoice.

Vs. 2-4 I believe the prayers of these saints are prayers for God's justice. Now the angel mixes them with the coals from the altar of sacrifice and holiness, and judgment will begin.

Vs. 5-6 Now Jesus will literally get His wish. *I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled!* (Luke 12:49) I'm guessing in all of this, the earth is about to experience a massive and yet somewhat progressive meteor storm. Notice that when the judgments begin, it looks like they all happen pretty near each other.

V. 7 There is no way to imagine this. Talk about throwing the entire world into an emergency. And in all of it, the 144,000 are working in the harvest, under the radar, under that smoke. And, everyone in the world is mad at those two guys in Jerusalem, but they can't do much about them. They're too busy putting out fires, literally. And to think, this happened because of all the little pieces that got through the atmosphere. I have a feeling that wherever this third of the earth is, it is far enough away from Israel that Israel will have relative peace.

Vs. 8-9 This is the second trumpet and a big piece gets through. We don't know which ocean gets hit, but we see the result. Who can say what the *blood* means. Maybe it is simply appearance, but the effect is amazing. Not only are the ocean's waters poisoned, so that a third of the aquatic life dies, but the tidal wave also destroys a third of all merchant shipping. I have no idea how destructive this will be to commerce or to every city near the ocean. Also, what will be the ramifications of having poisoned oceans? And again, the 144,000 are working away in the harvest. Some people are getting saved and others are really, really getting mad at the two rats in Jerusalem.

Vs. 10-11 The third trumpet and yet another big piece gets through. Did you know that the Great Lakes hold about one-third of the fresh water in the world?

V. 12 This is hard to understand. I have read that if the earth were struck by enough big meteors, that it would create such a dense cloud of dust on earth that it could fill the atmosphere and block the sun's rays, possibly throwing the world into an ice age. We won't have an ice age, but the world will be changed. And what will that mean for any and all communication, for satellite guidance and tracking and for air travel?

V. 13 There is an eagle in heaven directly over John, talking. And basically it says that the people on earth haven't seen anything yet. Everything so far has had a "natural" look to it. To be in the path of a meteor shower is just bad luck, right? Things are about to get "spiritual."

But in all of this, keep in mind that some people will be opening their hearts to God. This is the last great harvest. What mercy and love in the midst of judgment. In all the confusion, the 144,000 are quietly working in that very dark harvest. As disciples our hour is now. We need to be doing our part in our field's harvest.

Psalm 136

God's love is the common element in all of the things mentioned. In fact, it is God's loyal love. In the list of events in this psalm are nice things and awful things. The constant is the loyal love of God. As we are seeing in Revelation, in the middle of tremendous judgment, His love is still operating to save those who are willing to turn to Him. Regardless of what comes into our lives, His *steadfast*, faithful, loyal *love*, because of Christ, is always working and *endures forever*.

Vs. 1-9 This is God's love to us in the creation.

Vs. 10-16 This is God's love by saving Israel out of Egypt.

Vs. 17-22 This is God's love by protecting Israel in the wilderness and giving them victory in the land.

Vs. 23-26 This is God's love in the present. He reigns in the world, yet He attends to our needs with *His steadfast love*.

Proverbs 30:7-9

I think it is healthy to be a little fearful and weary of the sin within us. Get us off our meds (the Word) and we are capable of anything. We are weaker than we think. Isn't it interesting when the Lord gave His disciples the prayer that was to "tune" their praying, at the end is the reminder of their weakness. *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.* (Matt. 6:13. RSV) One of the benefits of being a disciple, living close to the Lord, utterly dependent, is that we see ourselves, but we know His love and strength. To see ourselves without Him would be awful.