

Message #5

Nahum 2:8-13

In our pledge of allegiance we say we are “one nation under God.” If we don’t change our ways soon, the entire nation will say we are “one nation under God’s judgment.”

About 100 years before Nahum wrote this, Jonah had gone to Nineveh and preached the truth of God and the whole city repented.

We may remember from Jonah that Jonah went to Nineveh and told them God would destroy them in 40 days (Jonah 3:4). It took three days for Jonah to go through the entire city and proclaim that and when he did the people believed the word of God (Jonah 3:5). The political leadership also believed the word of God (Jonah 3:6-8). So God did not end up destroying Nineveh (Jonah 3:10). When the book of Jonah ends, Jonah was angry with God for not destroying the city (Jonah 4:9).

The grace of God is such that if there is repentance, God will change His course of action from cursing to blessing. That is what happened with Nineveh.

Well this response to God and His word was short lived. The city of Nineveh and the Assyrian leadership went right back to their old ways. Just like a dog returns to its own vomit, the people went right back to the evil and sin that brought judgment on them in the first place.

So God sent Nahum to proclaim their judgment was now “fixed” (Nahum 2:7). It was too late to stop the judgment of God.

It didn’t matter to God how powerful they were, God would destroy them. There is a lesson to see here:

NO MATTER HOW POLITICALLY OR MILITARILY POWERFUL A GODLESS POWER MAY BE, GOD WILL EVENTUALLY DESTROY THEM.

Now the peculiar feature of the dispensation in which we live is the focus on the individual and not the national. God was dealing with National Israel in these O.T. books, but now He is dealing with Individual Gentiles all over the world.

However, since God is the God of all nations, this text does have ramifications for any nation or any individual.

So the application we make is not so much national as it is individual. God is perfectly capable of targeting individuals just as He is perfectly able to target nations.

There are sixteen prophetic facts that are developed here in Nahum:

PROPHETIC FACT #1 – It does not matter how dominant the person/power once was. **2:8a**

The fulfillment of God’s judgment prophecy has nothing to do with the impressive size or dominance of the person or power.

When God made these predictions, Nineveh was the dominant city of the world. It was a place filled with people. It was a refreshing place to be and a refreshing place to live.

There was no major trouble or turmoil there. Life was safe and secure and God says that is all about to change. Just because a person seems to have great power or prominence means nothing to the great and glorious God.

PROPHETIC FACT #2 – God will put such panic and terror in them that they will flee. **2:8b**

God would use His power to cause the people to flee. Even though at the time the people seemed so secure, God says I will use My power to create such a desperate set of circumstances that will cause the people to flee.

PROPHETIC FACT #3 – God will so attack them that no one will turn back. **2:8c**

Once God did this, there would be no turning back. Even though some were trying to get people to turn back and stay, they would flee. Now we are not sure who is saying “stop, stop.” It could be the political leaders or the military leaders or the religious leaders or perhaps even the invading enemy; but regardless of who it is, the people will not listen.

The point is no one will listen to the leadership because it is not leading them to real safety in a relationship with God. It is a big mistake for people to trust a leadership who is not pointing people in the true, right ways of God.

The irony of this message is that if the people would turn back to God and to His word, they could stop running. God wants the people trusting in Him and His word and you don’t want to turn back to follow a leadership that is leading you to judgment.

PROPHETIC FACT #4 – God will plunder all of the accumulated wealth. **2:9**

God would literally sanction foreign powers to come in and take their wealth. God commands this political power to come to nothing. People love their wealth and God says I will take it all away.

People who are wealthy often think they are invincible. When God decides to send judgment, He will do what He wants with everything they have.

It is interesting that in historical records there were vast amounts of wealth that had been accumulated by various Assyrian Kings in Nineveh: Ashernasirpal, Shalmanaser, Tiglath-Pileser, Sargon, Sennacherib and Esarhaddon.

They had accumulated vast inventories of silver and gold and other treasures.

God says in My judgment you will lose it all. It is no coincidence that in multiple archeological discoveries made from Nineveh, not one cent of gold, or silver or treasures has ever been found.

You may think with your investments and savings that you don't need to be too serious about God and His word. You may think you have real security in your gold and silver. God says when I send My judgment, I'll take it all away.

PROPHETIC FACT #5 – God will make the people/power empty. 2:10a

Now the next three Hebrew words, Empty, Desolate, Waste are very close in Hebrew spelling: Empty (buqah)- empty in the sense of depopulation (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p.109). Desolate (mebuqah) - a devastation that is perplexing and confusing (*Ibid.*, p. 446). Waste (mebullaqah) - an emptying of something to the point of voiding it out (*Ibid.*, p. 124).

Nahum says God is going to empty you to the point of depopulation of this city.

Several years before Nahum wrote this, Hezekiah prayed, when he knew the Assyrians were about to attack. Here is what he prayed:

“O LORD, the God of Israel, who are enthroned above the cherubim, You are the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth” (II Kings 19:15).

God is the God who is over every power and every individual on the face of this earth. He can bless; He can curse. He can prosper; He can destroy. He can make a power full or make it empty. He is God. What He would do here was make it empty. He would literally empty the city.

PROPHETIC FACT #6 – God will make the people/power desolate. 2:10b

Nahum says God is telling you that He is about to devastate you to the point that people will be very perplexed about what God has done.

About 300 years after God had done this to Nineveh, Alexander the Great was in the vicinity and was puzzled by the fact that he could not find even one remnant of Nineveh's existence.

God literally did fulfill this. He did this with one of the most powerful cities in the world.

PROPHETIC FACT #7 – God will make the people/power waste. 2:10c

God would authorize enemies to come and take everything away. He would literally void out the people, the power and the city.

God can bless and God can demolish. That is certainly true from this text and from history. He can void out the biggest, the strongest and the most dominant.

PROPHETIC FACT #8 – God will melt their hearts. **2:10d**

In Psalm 110:6, God promises that a judgment will come that will be terrifying. He says, “He will judge among the nations; He will fill them with corpses; He will shatter the chief men...” That is a scary prediction. God is tracking down individuals to destroy them.

We cannot think of a city of Nineveh just being a place of brick and mortar. This is a city filled with people who could not care less about God and His word. God says when I bring my judgment, it will be terrifying.

What is described here is a fear that starts in the heart, goes to the knees, affects the whole body and ends up in a person’s face.

The word “melt” is one that means to melt the heart with terrifying fear that it flows down to the rest of the body (*Ibid.*, pp. 488-489). The kind of fear described here is one in which there is no part of the person’s existence that is not afraid.

God can cause things to happen that can cause a person to be afraid and terrified in all of their heart. God is completely sovereign over what happens in a person’s individual heart.

Security is found in the Lord; move away from the Lord and one will become very insecure.

PROPHETIC FACT #9 – God will make their knees knock. **2:10e**

The truth is not only is security found in the Lord, but also so is courage. Courage comes from the Lord but also so does fear. God will not permit one who mocks Him to have confidence or courage. They will live their lives in fear and panic.

What God describes here is a fear that is so scary that one’s knees are shaking.

You get away from God and His word and you look at this world and you will end up petrified. You stay close to God and His word and you will end up with confidence and courage.

PROPHETIC FACT #10 – God will attack the whole body. **2:10f**

God’s judgment would be so scary that knees knock; the heart melts to the point that the body is physically sick and affected. I don’t know if you have ever been this scared but you cannot think right or function right.

PROPHETIC FACT #11 – God will make all of their faces pale. **2:10g**

The emphasis here is on “all.” In other words, everyone would be affected by this ferocious judgment. It would drain the color out of everyone’s face.

PROPHETIC FACT #12 – God will remove their ferocious dominance. **2:11-12**

The Ninevites saw themselves as untouchable. They thought they were totally protected like lions in a den. They had a phony confidence that nothing could touch them or disturb them.

They saw themselves as strong and mighty and untouchable. God says you have been trusting in the wrong things and I am about to destroy it.

They were about to learn God was in control and they weren’t. They were at one time the most powerful political predator on the earth and now they would become the prey.

PROPHETIC FACT #13 – God is against you. **2:13a**

These are not words you want to read or hear. What you want to hear is what Paul wrote: “If God is for us who can be against us.” You never want to read God saying, “I am against you.” This is a real possibility.

In fact, you will notice the pronoun “I” occurs three times in this verse. This is God, Himself, stating this. God says I will use all of My sovereign power and work to be directed against you.

When God says, “I am against you,” it is, as one commentator said, “terrifying.” That phrase is used here in **Nahum 2:13** and 3:5. That phrase is found ten times in the book of Ezekiel (5:8; 13:8; 21:3; 26:3; 28:22; 29:3, 10; 35:3; 38:3; 39:1). The phrase is used in Jeremiah (50:31; 51:25).

Now when God says I am against you, it means one has no chance to escape or chance to experience His grace or forgiveness. He has made a Personal decision to turn against someone and made a determination to specifically use His sovereign power against them.

PROPHETIC FACT #14 – God will burn up their military. **2:13b**

Assyria had an intimidating military that had many intimidating chariots. Those chariots were the war machines of the day.

Each chariot had a driver and typically a couple of soldiers in it. One of the soldiers was a skilled archer with a bow and arrows and the other was skilled with a spear. When someone would see those chariots coming, they would realize we have no chance.

God says those chariots are nothing for Me. I will simply burn them up. All of their warfare technology and equipment were no match for God. It never is.

He would either sovereignly direct the Medes and Persians and Babylonian Empire to come to literally burn them up or He could send some Sodom and Gomorrah type fire out of heaven to consume them. Either way, they are the targets of His anger and wrath.

PROPHETIC FACT #15 – God will cut off their ability to attack. **2:13c**

This power had acted like young lions attacking whomever they wanted. They had pounced on defenseless people and stripped what they had from them and God says I will do that to you.

God is basically saying I will do to this whole nation what I did to Sennacherib, your arrogant leader. He surrounded Jerusalem and intended to attack and destroy the next day and God caused 185,000 soldiers to die in the night (II Kings 19:35). Sennacherib went back home and he was killed while worshipping His false idols (II Kings 19:35-36).

PROPHETIC FACT #16 – God will put an end to their message and messengers. **2:13c**

Never again would the false leaders communicate their false messages to people. God says I will track them down and destroy them.

This power and these leaders would never be heard from again. They would never again be a factor in anything.

People need to think very seriously about their relationship with God. If you are a person who is in some form of power and you don't care about God and His word, you need to know your future is not bright.

You can reach a point where God says I am sick of you, I am done with you and I will destroy you. If you don't think He will do it, look at Nineveh because that is literally what He did do.