

Our Journey Through

The Book of Nahum

Mike Butler
Southside Baptist Church
First Edition
2024

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Introduction:

Welcome to the Book of Nahum

So why study the Book of Nahum? I suspect most Christians view it as an ancient text that probably has very little applicability to our modern world. But they are so wrong. The Book of Nahum is timeless and is as relevant today as when it was written over 2,500 years ago. Why is that? Because the story of Nineveh is the story of God's plan of redemption. Although Nahum may appear to be a warning of God's wrath, which it is, it is also a story of God's grace. That's because long before God sent Nahum to Nineveh with a message of destruction He sent Jonah with a message of redemption. Likewise, before giving the apostle John a message of end-times judgment in Revelation God sent Jesus with the ultimate message of salvation. So as we watch our own society tragically fall deeper into sin we realize we've heard this story before - through Nahum. And although God has offered His mercy and grace to all who will accept Christ, mankind is now on a slippery slope of sin and apathy that will take them to the point that when the antichrist emerges, **"...All who dwell on the earth will worship him..."** (Revelation 13:8 KJV). Society is not at that point yet, but as we watch the slow fade happen we can see them getting closer to that day.

And that's why the Old Testament story of Nahum is still relevant today.

Context:

The Book of Nahum is God's prophetic warning to the ancient city of Nineveh; the capital of the powerful Assyrian Empire. But what is most tragic about Nineveh's destruction is the fact it may have been avoidable. Over a hundred years earlier God sent the reluctant Jonah to warn the people of Nineveh to turn from their wicked ways (Jonah 1:1-2). Initially Jonah was hesitant to share God's message in Nineveh because the Assyrians were violent enemies of Israel and Jonah feared them. But eventually he went and shared God's message of redemption (Jonah 3:1). What happened next is

one of the Bible's most beautiful examples of God's infinite grace. Grace even offered to those who deserve punishment (as we all do). As a result, Nineveh turned to God and was spared, **"⁵ So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. ⁶ For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes [a sign of great remorse]. ⁷ And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: ⁸ But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. ⁹ Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? ¹⁰ And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not."** (Jonah 3:5-10 KJV)

Yet over time the people of Nineveh fell away from God and reverted back to immorality and idolatry. So God sent His prophet Nahum to pronounce judgement. But this time they did not repent of their sin and turn back to God. So the magnificent city and the empire it represented was destroyed in 612 B.C., and remained largely unknown until rediscovered by archeologists in the mid-nineteenth century. Nahum may have predicted this situation when he said of Nineveh, **"...*thou shalt be hid*..."** (Nahum 3:11 KJV)

So with that brief introduction we're now going to take a journey together to the city of Nineveh by following our guide, the prophet Nahum. Along the way we'll learn about the Assyrian people, their history, culture and influence, conflicts with Israel and their eventual destruction. But while on our journey we'll also discuss an interesting parallel with a modern nation we all know well. A nation founded on Godly principles, by people who proudly proclaimed **"In God We Trust"**. But like Nineveh, this modern nation is quickly falling away from the Lord and the consequences are prophetic and inevitable. Yet as we explore this connection, we will find comfort knowing that as believers in Christ we have the same task as Jonah and Nahum. To share the story of God's saving grace in a land that desperately needs Jesus.

And there is yet another connection we can make through this story as we compare the promised destruction of the Assyrian Empire at the time of Nahum with the warning God gives every individual who rejects His offer of grace. We'll explore this parallel by looking at the promised destruction of Satan's empire in the Book of Revelation, and in doing so see some interesting comparisons. Through this we will see a profound truth

— like Nineveh, all individuals and empires are offered God's grace-based redemption, but we are also warned of the eventual consequence of rejecting God's offer.

I look forward to taking this journey with you as we walk in Nahum's footsteps and see the story unfold from his perspective.

I pray you will be encouraged by this study.

Mike

Author and Timing:

Very little is known about the prophet Nahum because the Bible and historical records provide very few clues. His name in Hebrew means “*comfort*” or “*consolation*”. A title that may foretell the comfort Israel would feel when their enemy the Assyrians were later destroyed. Nahum 1:1 indicates he was an Elkoshite, but scripture doesn't tell us if he was born there or simply lived there. Either way, the historical record of Elkosh is sparse and its exact location is unknown to modern historians. Some believe it was located in northern Iraq, others believe it was near the Israelite village of Capernaum (“*Nahum's Village*”), and still others believe it was in southern Judah; an area mentioned in Nahum 1:15. But who Nahum was and where he was from is not critical to the story. What is important is his role as a prophet of God and the message he was commanded to share. Nahum was one of twelve “*minor*” Prophets, which included – Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. The term “*minor*” does not mean insignificant. It simply means their prophecy and writings were short and more focused. Unlike the “*major*” Prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah who had broader and longer messages. But the “*minor*” Prophets are no less important. They still spoke for God and brought clarity to His guidance, expectations, warnings and promises.

Exactly when Nahum lived is also debatable although most scholars place him in the seventh or eighth-century B.C. This broad date range is indicated by triangulating several sources of information:

- The Jewish-Roman historian Flavius Josephus (37-100 A.D.) indicates Nahum lived during the reign of Jotham, the eleventh king of Judah (750-735 B.C.- 2 Kings 15):
 - Jotham was an evil king - ***“...And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah had done; Save [except] that the high places [places of idol worship] were not removed: the people sacrificed and burnt incense still on the high places. And the Lord smote [struck] the king, so that he was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several [isolated] house. And Jotham the king's son was over the house, judging the people of the land.”*** (2 Kings 15:3-5 KJV)
- Other scholars believed Nahum lived:
 - During the reign of Ahaz (732-716 B.C. - 2 Kings 16)
 - Who was an evil king ***“Twenty years old was Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord his God, like David his father. But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to***

pass through the fire, [he offered his own son as a burnt offering to the false god molech] according to the abominations [apostate sin] of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel. And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree. (2 Kings 16:2-4 KJV)

- Or, Hezekiah (circa 687 B.C.- 2 Kings 18):
 - Who was a good king ***“And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father did. He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen {bronze} serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan. He trusted in the Lord God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. For he clave to the Lord, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses. And the Lord was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went forth: and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not.” (2 Kings 18:4-7 KJV)***
- Or, Manasseh (695-642 B.C.- 2 Kings 2):
 - Who was a bad king - ***“And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel. For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal [a false god], and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.” (2 King 21:2-3 KJV)***
- For another point of reference, we know from historical records that Nineveh was destroyed in 612 B.C., when the River Tigris flooded the city and damaged its defensive walls. This allowed the Babylonians under the command of king Nabopolassar to attack and destroy the city. This campaign may have been alluded to in Nahum 1:8, ***“But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies.” (Nahum 1:8 KJV)***
- Also, in his proclamation to Nineveh, Nahum mentions the city of ***“...No...” [No Amon]*** (Nahum 3:8), also known today as Thebes, located near the modern city of Luxor Egypt. The city was overrun by the Assyrians around 663 B.C.

All of this taken together indicates Nahum probably ministered in the seventh century B.C.; between 663 B.C. when No Amon was destroyed and 612 B.C. when Nineveh

was destroyed. If correct, this would place Nahum's prophecy somewhere in the same period of time as Jeremiah, Zephaniah and Habakkuk.

Geography and Culture:



Nineveh and Assyria

The magnificent fortress of Nineveh was located near the modern city of Mosul in northeastern Iraq. During Nahum's lifetime it was the capital of the vast Assyrian Empire, with an estimated population of about 120,000 people (Jonah 4:11). For a period of about fifty years it was believed to be the largest city in the ancient world. The city itself was enclosed within a massive stone and clay-brick fortress with seven and a half miles of imposing walls over 100 feet high and surrounded by a moat that was 150 feet wide and 60 feet deep. The first-century Greek historian Diodorus Siculus said the defensive walls had over 1,500 towers up to 200 feet tall. Its name "Nineveh" in English derives from the Babylonian name "Ninuwa", translated in Hebrew as "Nineweh" and successively into Greek as "Ninua" and Latin as "Nineve". In any case, the meaning of

the original name has been lost to time. Some speculate it was related to a mythical fish goddess, or may mean *“The Place of Fish”*. Possibly due to its location on the Tigris River.

Today the vast archaeological remains of Nineveh are located in two large mounds or *“Tells”*, with long sections of ruined walls still visible. The city was located on a sweeping plain at the confluence of the Tigris and Khosr rivers. This access to navigable waterways gave Nineveh a prime commercial advantage as a major trading center, as did its location on a series of ancient roads and trade routes that stretched from the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean. This gave Nineveh the multinational advantage of both east and west products, services and knowledge.

Nineveh was once the seat of power for the vast Assyrian Empire. From 2025 B.C. to 612 B.C. the Assyrians were one of the most prominent cultures in Mesopotamia. The region in West Asia traditionally called the *“Fertile Crescent”*. An area that today includes portions of modern Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Syria, Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. This area is also referred to as the *“Cradle of Civilization”* because it was in this region God placed the Garden of Eden.”

- ***“And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates..”*** (Genesis 2:8-14 KJV)

The Assyrian Empire was one of the most powerful in the ancient world, and was governed over the centuries by a series of major kings and a number of lesser rulers. All of her rulers had a penchant for violence and war. Since Assyria stretched from the Indian Ocean on the east, to the Mediterranean Sea on the west, its broad landscape encompassed dozens of smaller nation-states and cultures. Each adding their own layer of influence to the broader Assyrian society. This mix of cultures allowed the Assyrians to contribute significantly to advancements in technology, written language, literature, art, architecture, mathematics, science and astronomy. They even documented the 24 hour day, the 60 minute hour and were one of the first cultures to develop chronological

indices for documenting each calendar year. In fact, detailed Assyrian records of annual events and natural phenomena, such as solar and lunar eclipses, have been instrumental in helping modern historians determine the year when specific ancient events occurred. This was possible because the Assyrians perfected one of the earliest forms of written language originally developed by their predecessors, the Sumerians. Called "*Cuneiform Script*", it consisted of a series of wedge-shaped characters impressed into soft clay tablets with a stylus and then dried. This enabled them to be prolific writers, documenting everything from grocery lists to important legal documents and scientific observations. In fact, writing was so common in Assyria that archeologists estimate they have excavated over two million surviving cuneiform tablets, of which, less than ten percent have been deciphered. It was through this extensive documentation that Assyria, and in particular Nineveh, played a key role as a significant source of knowledge in the ancient world. Much of which we still benefit from today.

One reason they were able to gather this level of knowledge and technology was the fact Assyria included such a wide range of races, cultures and people-groups within its ever expanding borders. Each of these cultures contributed to the overall well-being of the empire, but at the same time, their forced inclusion was detrimental to their own culture. That's because the Assyrians were a war-like people who expanded their empire by constant military conquest. Starting at their hub in present-day Iraq they marched their massive armies east to the Indian Ocean occupying what is now Iran. Then they marched north and west all the way to modern Turkey and as far south as Egypt. Along the way they overran thousands of villages and cities, and killed or enslaved literally hundreds-of-thousands of people. These captives were often forcibly deported from their own homeland to provide slave labor to other areas of the empire. This in turn had a huge impact on those cultures to the point some never recovered. This massive territorial expansion was possible because Assyria had one of the first truly modern armies in the world with advancements in weaponry and tactics. This enabled them to efficiently move massive armies of well-equipped soldiers and supplies long distances in order to attack fortified cities hundreds of miles from home. Their ground troops, archers, chariot forces and massive siege engines allowed them to conquer even the most impenetrable cities. Their military exploits also made them one of the leading forces in the transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age as they developed new processes to manufacture more efficient weapons. But sadly, they were also known to be extremely bloodthirsty warriors who slaughtered both soldiers and civilians with little or no mercy. Their treatment of captives included grossly inhumane methods of torture and mutilation; which they exacted equally on men, women and children. Because of

this, their advancing armies spread shock and chaos across the entire Middle East as they sought to expand their empire's boundaries.

But the mighty empire would eventually fall. Internal strife began to undermine weaker rulers as neighboring nations built their own powerful armies. They were defeated by the growing Babylonian Empire in 612 B.C. in an event called *"The Battle of Nineveh."* A campaign that laid siege to the city for three months following a ten year effort by king Nabopolassar to whittle down the Assyrian dominance of the region. The Babylonian king had been successful in recruiting armies from other nations to join his own forces. This became the multinational force that eventually brought the Assyrians to their knees.

But as we will see, prior to their fall the Assyrians played a key role in God's plan to punish His disobedient nation of Israel.

Nineveh and Assyria in the Bible:

The city of Nineveh and the broader Assyrian Empire are the focus of two entire books of the Bible; Jonah and Nahum. But Assyria played a broader role in the Biblical narrative as we see here with two examples. One from Genesis in the Old Testament and one from Matthew in the New Testament:

- ***And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, And Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city."*** (Genesis 10:8-12 KJV)
- ***"But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgement with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here."*** (Matthew 12:39-41 KJV)

These verses give us an idea of the broad discussion about Nineveh and Assyria in the Bible, but probably the most important story for our study is the siege of Israel and Judah between 724 to 701 B.C..

Here's a quick overview:

The Assyrian Empire included lands along the east coast of the Mediterranean Sea from Turkey in the north down to Egypt in the south. This encompassed the Hebrew land of Israel. A nation consisting of twelve confederated territories divided between tribes who descended from the twelve sons of Jacob, and through him back to Abraham. Normally, Israel functioned as a single nation but for a time were divided into two sections: "Israel" in the north and "Judah" in the south. Judah was generally the target-of-choice of conquering empires because it was home to Jerusalem. The ancient capital city and seat of the Hebrew religion. In fact, in its long history Jerusalem was besieged by opposing armies over fifty times until it was finally destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D.. But it was the Hebrew religion then, just as it is today, that made the people of Israel so different from the rest of the world. Unlike nearly all other ancient cultures who were polytheistic and worshiped many gods, the Hebrew people were monotheistic, which meant they worshiped only one God. Their belief in one God became the basis of the modern Judeo-Christian faith that even today separates Jews and Christians from most other belief systems.

But Israel was different in another way. Of all the nations and people-groups throughout the world Israel had been selected by God as His chosen people. They are His **"...peculiar [special] treasure..."** (Psalm 135:4), and important to God as a, **"...holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.** (Deuteronomy 7:6). Israel was selected for a specific reason. To be God's messengers to carry His redemptive plan of forgiveness to the entire world. Just as God had declared through the prophet Isaiah, **"...I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house."** (Isaiah 42:6-7). They were to be a light to the Gentile nations by delivering God's plan for redemption to everyone. Just as God had promised Abraham generations before, **"...And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."** (Genesis 12:2-3) The **"...great nation..."** God is referring to here is Israel and the blessing they would bring to **"...all families of the earth..."** would be the message of sacrificial forgiveness shared by Israel to the

non-Jewish world. But Israel failed in their task to carry the message, so God Himself, as Jesus, came as a Jew to be the Spotless Lamb of God who would fulfill God's promise.

But the Assyrian rulers didn't care about any of that. They simply saw Israel as another source of land, natural resources and slaves to be exploited. So as they did with all conquered nations, Assyria expected Israel to pay exorbitant taxes or fall prey to the Assyrian army's wrath. This worked for a while, but eventually Israel refused to pay which infuriated the king of Assyria. This led to an attack on the northern kingdom of Israel from around 725 B.C., when, **"...the king of Assyria went throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria [northern kingdom of Israel] and besieged it for three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes."** (2 Kings 17:5-6 KJV). The king of Assyria mentioned here was Shalmaneser V, the son of Tiglath-Pileser, who reigned from 727-722 B.C.. Shalmaneser died during the siege of Israel and was replaced by Sargon-II who continued the siege until it was complete. Ultimately, the northern kingdom of Israel was overrun, its cities and villages destroyed and tens-of-thousands of Israelites were forcibly deported in exile to other areas of the Assyrian empire.

But this could have been avoided because God had previously warned Israel what would happen if they did not turn from their wicked ways and follow Him, **"...O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets."** (Isaiah 10:5-6 KJV). In other words, God warned Israel He would use the Assyrian army to punish them for their sin. But why? Simply because they had once again fallen into idolatry, **"...For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, And walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made. And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the Lord their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city. And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree: And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the heathen whom the Lord carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the Lord to anger: For they served idols, whereof the Lord had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing..."** (2 Kings 17:7-12 KJV). Over the centuries Israel went through many cycles of obedience and disobedience, and at times

fell into extreme idolatry. So God continually sent His prophets to remind Israel it was He who brought them out of slavery in Egypt and had given them a Promised Land of their own. His only demand was they worship Him alone and adhere faithfully to His commands. But over and over Israel fell into idolatry and pagan worship and turned their back on God. So the Lord warned them over and over of His impending wrath if they did not repent, **"...the Lord testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets."** (2 Kings 17:13 KJV)

But they often failed to listen because their leadership was self-righteous and corrupt. For example, Hoshea, the king of the northern kingdom at that time, **"...did evil in the eyes of the Lord..."** (2 Kings 17:2 KJV). He also agreed to support the king of Assyria as, **"...Shalmaneser's vassal [subordinate], and paid him tribute..."** (2 Kings 17:3). But Shalmaneser uncovered a plot by Hoshea to form an alliance with king Osorkon of Egypt against Assyria. So both Osorkon and Hosea were defeated and the northern kingdom was conquered. Assyrian records indicate Sargon-II took 27,290 Israelites into captivity and transported them north to the Tigris-Euphrates region of the empire. This was a clear fulfillment of God's warning in Deuteronomy 28,

- **"...The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth..."** (verse 25)
- **"...The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young:..."** (verse 49-50)
- **"...And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone."**(verse 64)
- **"...And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind:..."** (verse 65)

So in tragic defeat and because of their disobedience, **"...Israel was carried away from their own land to Assyria, as it is to this day."** (2 Kings 17:23b KJV). Even more disturbing is the fact Assyria replaced the deported Israelites with exiles taken from other lands, **"And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the**

cities thereof." (2 Kings 17:24 KJV). This meant a portion of the Promised Land would be inhabited by foreigners, who would intermarry with the remaining Israelites and produce a new group of people, the Samaritans, who became enemies of Israel for centuries.

Once the northern kingdom of Israel was in exile, Assyria turned their attention to the southern kingdom of Judah. The Assyrian king Sargon-II had been replaced by king Sennacherib, who ruled from 705-681B.C.. He laid siege against Jerusalem because the king of Judah had withheld tribute. But here things would be a little different. The kingdom of Judah was ruled by Hezekiah. A king faithful to the Lord, "**Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign. Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Abi, the daughter of Zachariah. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father did.**" (2 Kings 18:1-3 KJV). He was a king who was obedient to God. So much so, "**...He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen [brass] serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan. He trusted in the Lord God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. For he clave to the Lord, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses.**" (2 Kings 18:4-6 KJV) Hezekiah destroyed all of the idols and high places associated with Israel's apostasy. As a result, "**...the Lord was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went forth: and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not.**" (2 Kings 18:7 KJV)

Learning from the failures of the northern kingdom, Hezekiah initially sought to appease the Assyrian king rather than risk the destruction of Jerusalem. To do this he offered Sennacherib a payment equivalent to about eleven tons of silver and gold if he would retreat with his army. This was an exorbitant amount and required Hezekiah to strip the temple of its treasures, "**And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have offended; return from me: that which thou putttest on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house. At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the Lord, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.**" (2 Kings 18:14-16 KJV). But Sennacherib wasn't satisfied and wanted even more, so he sent his commanders with a large army to threaten Hezekiah. He even sent messengers to the

people of Israel demanding they abandon Hezekiah so their lives would be spared. But the people refused to surrender and the outcome of Hezekiah's obedience was proclaimed by the prophet Isaiah,

- ***"And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land."*** (2 Kings 19:6-7 KJV).
- ***"Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank [siege ramp] against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord. For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. Then the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia: and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead."*** (Isaiah 37:33-38 KJV)

Hezekiah had been obedient to God, so the Lord would not allow Jerusalem to be taken. Instead, 185,000 Assyrian soldiers were killed, ***"And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: [185,000] and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh."*** (2 Kings 19:35-36 KJV) So God destroyed the army of Assyria and their defeated leader retreated back to the city of Nineveh. Interestingly, in 1830 archeologists working in the ruins of Nineveh recovered an inscribed stele (a stone monument with inscriptions carved on it) written about 690 B.C.. Called *"Sennacherib's Prism"*, the inscription documents the battle in Jerusalem and confirms the siege but fails to mention the destruction of the army. Instead, it simply says they retreated after receiving the tribute. — So, there was liberal media even then.

But Nineveh and Assyria would eventually be destroyed. ***"And he will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness. And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations: both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; their***

voice shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be in the thresholds; for he shall uncover the cedar work." (Zephaniah 2:13-14 KJV).

This was the message that would now be carried to Nineveh by Nahum.

Religion:

As with nearly all ancient cultures, except Israel, the Assyrians were polytheistic idol worshipers who recognized over 2,000 nationalist and localized gods. In their mythology there were primary gods like the goddess ishtar, but they also believed in many regional gods that inhabited specific areas or cities. These are often seen in their art and architecture as statues of horses or other large animals with the bearded face of a man. They also believed in a wide range of spirits and demons they felt controlled everyday life. Each village and city had temples dedicated to their gods and a large city might have as many as 30 to 40 temples. Offerings of different types were made and temple priests performed exorcisms to cast out demons believed to cause sickness, bad weather, bad smells, crop failures and similar conditions. Their human leaders also took-on a god-like persona and attributed their success in leadership or battle to powers received from the gods.

Main Characters:

- Nahum
 - A prophet of the God of Israel who proclaimed God's judgement on Nineveh in the seventh century B.C.
- King Hoshea
 - Isralite king of the northern empire of Israel who reigned from 732-721 B.C. He was not faithful to the Lord and was defeated by the Assyrians.
- King Hezekiah
 - Isralite king of the southern empire of Judah who reigned from 715-686 B.C. He was faithful to the Lord.
- Shalmaneser V
 - King of Assyria, reigned from 727-722 B.C. The son of Tiglath-Pileser (reigned 745-727 B.C), he died during the siege of Israel and was replaced by Sargon-II
- Sargon-II
 - King of Assyria, reigned from 722-705 B.C.
- Sennacherib
 - King of Assyria, reigned from 705-681 B.C.
- Sinsharushkin
 - King of Assyria from 627-612 B.C.

- Succeeded his brother Assuretililani, who reigned from 631-627 B.C.
- Sinsharushkin was killed during the siege of Nineveh
- Nabopolassar
 - The first king of the Babylonian Empire who reigned from 626-605 B.C. He is credited with destroying the Assyrian Empire.
- Nebuchadnezzar
 - The second king of Babylon and son of Nabopolassar. He reigned from 605-562 B.C. and is credited with building the magnificent city of Babylon with its famous hanging gardens. He is considered one of the most powerful rulers of the ancient world. A ruthless leader who God used to bring punishment on the apostate people of Israel. By 587 B.C. Israel had again fallen into idolatry under the evil king Jehoiachin (2 Kings 24:9) so God used Nebuchadnezzar to lay siege to the city of Jerusalem. As Assyria had done earlier in the northern kingdom of Israel so Nebuchadnezzar did to the people of Judah. He destroyed the city and the temple of Solomon and carried the people into exile, ***“And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the Lord, as the Lord had said. And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land.”*** (2 Kings 24:13-14) - Such a sad commentary for a people who had once been spared for their obedience to God (see Jonah 3:5-10)

Basic Storyline:

Nineveh was the magnificent capital city of the powerful Assyrian Empire. God initially sent His prophet Jonah to warn the city to repent of their sin or be destroyed. They repented and God spared them (see Jonah 3:5-10). Yet over time they fell into idolatry and became one of the most bloodthirsty empires on earth. But God's patience had run thin and if His commands were not followed there would be consequences. So He sent Nahum to declare His wrath.

Future View

Assyria was one of the most powerful empires in the ancient world and yet, in their sin, they fell to the wrath of God. But looking forward we see an interesting connection to our modern world and specifically to prophecies in the Book of Revelation. As we go through our study of Nahum we will explore some of these connections to give us even

more understanding of God's grace and His justified wrath. From this we will also gain insight into the falling society we see today.

For example, in Revelation chapter 16 the Biblical narrative focuses again on the geographic region between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers that was Assyria, the homeland of Nineveh. But looking forward we see the same area playing a key role in preparation for the Battle of Armageddon when God will use the Mesopotamian corridor to bring the antichrist's armies to their place of destruction,

- ***"And the sixth angel poured out his vial [Bowl judgement] upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs [demons] come out of the mouth of the dragon [satan], and out of the mouth of the beast [antichrist], and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."***
(Revelation 16:12-14 KJV)
- ***"And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."*** (Revelation 16:16 KJV)

Here we also see a prophetic connection between the Assyrian Empire and the future empire of the antichrist. Historically, Assyria was one of the six ancient empires used to punish Israel in times of national apostasy. These included Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. In each case Israel was in a state of disobedience and God - as He had promised He would do - used these empires to punish them (refer to Isaiah 10:5-6 KJV). But the Bible also speaks of a future seventh and final eighth empires that will come against Israel during the Tribulation. This will be the empire of the antichrist:

- ***"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea [population], having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns [authority], and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.."*** (Revelation 13:1 KJV)
 - This verse describes the antichrist being selected by satan from the world's population, ***"...the sea..."***. His ***"...seven heads..."*** represent the seven kingdoms who have sought to destroy Israel. One of which would have been Assyria. The ***"...ten horns..."*** and ***"...ten crowns..."*** represent his power and authority during the Tribulation Period.
- ***"And here is the mind which hath wisdom [which means it's not an easy answer]. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even"***

he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour [short period of time] with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." (Revelation 17:9-14 KJV)

- This passage helps us better understand the historical view of the first six empires and the future seventh and eighth empires that will emerge with the antichrist.
- Let's break this down to better understand it:
 - The **"...seven heads..."** and **"...seven mountains..."** describe the satanic empire of the future antichrist. Described here as **"...the woman..."**. In Revelation 17:5 "she" is called, **"...Mystery Babylon The Great, The Mother of Harlots and Abominations of The Earth..."** and represents both the religion and the infrastructure of the antichrist.
 - The **"...seven kings..."** - are another description of the seven empires who have sought to destroy Israel in the past. Why? Because they are God's chosen people and the earthly source of the Messiah.
 - **"...five are fallen..."** - These are the past historic empires - Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Meda-Persia and Greece. All of these empires had been destroyed by the time John wrote Revelation in the first century A.D..
 - **"...one is..."** - This was the Roman Empire that was still in power when John wrote Revelation.
 - **"...the other is not yet come..."** This is the future empire of the antichrist, the **"...beast..."**.
 - Reference to the **"...seven..."** and **"...eighth..."** describes the future empire of the antichrist, who will come on the scene as a worldwide ruler (the **seven**) and then appear to fake his own death and resurrection so he appears to be like the Messiah (see Revelation 6:2 and 13:3) . He will then declare himself to be god (the **eighth** empire) (see Revelation 13:14-15).
 - The **"...ten horns..."** and **"...ten kings..."** represent the antichrist's global authority and military power during the Tribulation.

- I find it an interesting connection that the Assyrian Empire was a predecessor of the future empire of the antichrist. But, just like the first six sinful empires the antichrist will be defeated and utterly destroyed when, ***"And I saw the beast [antichrist], and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse [Jesus], and against his army. And the beast [antichrist] was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."*** (Revelation 19:19-20)

Thank You Jesus

Nahum,
Chapter 1

Verses 1-8

Quick Recap:

The city of Nineveh was the capital of the ancient Assyrian empire. Once spared by God after they heeded the warning of Jonah, Nineveh eventually fell back into idolatry and was destroyed. The chronicle of Nahum is the fulfillment of God's promise to destroy Assyria if they did not turn back to Him. Although it is an ancient narrative, God's warning to Nineveh is the same warning He has given the world today through the Book of Revelation. So, our study will draw many parallels between these two books. In both cases, God is seen as patient with His creation, which is why He sent Jonah. But as we have also seen through the six ancient empires who came against Israel, God will punish or destroy those who are disobedient after a long season of offering grace. We see this again in the Book of Revelation when the apostle John describes the characterization of mankind during the future Tribulation period - the seventh and eighth satanic empires who seek to destroy Israel. By that time man will have become so disobedient to God they will follow the antichrist and blaspheme God's name even though they know He is the source of their punishment, ***"...and they gnawed their tongues for pain, And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds."*** (Revelation 16:10b-11 KJV).

The Bible describes Tribulation man in three categories - the ***"...kings..."***, the ***"...merchants..."*** and the ***"...shipmasters..."*** (or "sea captains" NKJV) (see Revelation chapter 18). Through these groups we see how mankind will eventually worship only themselves and their own pleasures but will refuse to turn to the Lord for redemption. What we see happening in the world today is a pointer to that future time. As we watch, our politicians, lawmakers and citizens openly embrace sin like never before; even seeking legislation unheard of in the past. We also see "Christians" who have lost their love for Jesus and replaced it with prosperity and sacrament based "gospels". But this moral and spiritual decline is inevitable and fits clearly into the Lord's prophetic timetable. All pointing to a future time after the Rapture when the Tribulation period will begin, the antichrist will emerge, and nearly the whole world will blindly follow him (Revelation 13:8-12). Given that fact, what we see happening today in society is the result of Satan masterfully leading a lost mankind down the slippery slope of sin in order to prepare them to accept the antichrist as soon as he comes on the scene. But we shouldn't worry about that. Whatever is happening today is part of God's plan because He's already told us how it will end. In the meantime, our task is to go to all the world to

preach the gospel and to do as the angel told John in Revelation 10:11, “**...Thou must prophesy** [proclaim] **again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings...**”. In other words, we must share the gospel of Jesus for as long as we can.

The prophetic destruction of Nineveh also paints a picture of a society much like our own. Assyria was a large nation-state who was the financial and military superpower of their day. God had shown them grace when they repented of their sin, but when they fell back into idolatry God laid waste to them as a nation and a people.

The message to Nineveh is the same message God has given the world today.

Now, let's look at the message beginning in verse 1...

"1. The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite. 2. God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth; the Lord revengeth, and is furious; the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies. 3. The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. 4. He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth. 5. The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. 6. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him. 7. The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him. 8. But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies."

"1. The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite."

Nahum's proclamation is called a “**...burden...**” because of the dire weight of his prophetic message. Unlike Jonah who brought the hope of redemption, Nahum brought the heavy message of destruction upon an entire empire and its people. As a “**...vision...**” or future view, given to him by God, Nahum was proclaiming what would happen in Nineveh's very near future.

“2. God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth [avenges]; the Lord revengeth, and is furious; the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.

In the New Testament Jesus is seen as a Groom to His bride - the church (John 14:2-4 / Revelation 19:7-9). The symbology of a wedding and a bride in the Bible are meant to illustrate the great love Jesus has for His followers. We see this in Ephesians 5:22-32 where Paul provides a detailed discussion about the Godly relationship between a human husband and his wife, but in verse 32 Paul clarifies his real reason for using that particular example of love, ***“...This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church...”***. Through the example of a human groom and bride, Paul is actually illustrating the love of Jesus, the Groom, for His bride, the church. Likewise, the Old Testament speaks of Israel as the wife of God, ***“For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.”*** (Isaiah 54:5 KJV). Again, this terminology is symbolic and intended to reflect the love of God for His chosen nation Israel. In both cases, it illustrates that just like a faithful husband the Lord will love His bride, provide for her, protect her, forgive her...and in the case of Jesus, even die in her place. This view of our relationship with the Lord also helps us better understand the term ***“...jealous...”*** in verse 2. Typically we think of jealousy in the sense of a violent human emotion often displayed by sin. But in Biblical terms the word describes God’s passionate and protective love for His nation and His people. In this case, it may point to His anger over the defeat and exile of Israel by Assyria. A punishment necessary because Israel had fallen into great apostate sin and had turned their back on their All-Holy and loving Husband. But, the word also reminds us that unrepentant sin must be punished by God with righteous judgement. Why? Because God is holy and expects His creation to honor Him with absolute obedience, ***“And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.”*** (Leviticus 20:26). God further emphasizes His holiness, and the respect He expects from us in His first and second Commandments, ***“Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image [idol], or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.”*** (Exodus 20:3-6). God clarifies this again in Exodus 34:14 where He emphasizes that His love is defined as a holy jealousy, ***“For thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God...”***. The word used here for ***“...jealous...”***, *“qanna”*, is the same root word used in Nahum 1:2, and simply means

“demanding exclusive service”. Again, this is not the same as jealousy in the sense of a sinful human emotion, but it reflects the intense love God has for His people and His uncompromising expectation for us to revere His holy name. Given this and many other warnings like it in the Bible, we can understand why God becomes angry when man turns his back on Him by rejecting His offer of grace, and instead seeks after idols. When that happens God is justified in taking ***“...vengeance on his adversaries, and reserveth wrath for his enemies...”***. Although God declares His vengeance is justified, ***“To me belongeth vengeance and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.”*** (Deuteronomy 32:35 KJV), God is never hasty in His wrath, but exercises grace over grace,

- We see God’s grace in the flood, when after showing great patience He eventually destroyed the sinful world but saved the obedient Noah and his family. - ***“And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.”*** (Genesis 6:12-13 KJV).
- We see His grace at Sodom and Gomorrah, when the Lord told Abraham He would not destroy these cities of sin if He could find just ten righteous people in them. So He spared Abraham’s nephew Lot and his daughters but destroyed the rest. - ***“And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure [suppose] ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten’s sake.”*** (Genesis 18:32 KJV).
- We see His grace through Jesus when He entered Jerusalem and said He would have spared Israel from His wrath had they simply recognized Him as their Messiah - ***“And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! [had they recognized Jesus as the Messiah] but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies [the Romans in 70 A.D.] shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. [His first coming]”*** (Luke 19:41-44 KJV)
- And we see God’s grace in the future, when He will even show grace over grace to Tribulation man until the very end - ***“And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues*** [“plagues” means God’s judgment of the antichrist’s empire].” (Revelation 18:4 KJV)

Likewise, in the case of Nineveh and fallen Israel God gave both societies adequate warnings - over and over for hundreds of years - before He fulfilled the wrath He told them would eventually happen if they do not turn back to Him. But we must remember, even though God's judgements are tragic for those being punished, they are warranted and justified. Why? Because God is God, and He is all holy, and there is no option but to honor Him who created us, sustains us and gave His life to redeem us. But when we reject all He has done for us, God's wrath is holy and justified. Just as the angel reminded John during his view of future Tribulation judgement which will come upon the whole earth, ***"And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art,[who was] and wast, [who is] and shalt be [who is to come], because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgements."*** (Revelation 16:5-7)

3. "The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet." 4. He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth [three regions known for their beauty and bounty]. 5. The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. 6. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him."

The Lord is amazingly patient. Even when mankind is extremely sinful and disobedient. So patient in fact, that God Himself, as Jesus, came to earth as the Spotless Lamb to die for the sins of all mankind. And since that monumental event He has patiently waited over two thousand years in order to give mankind every opportunity to accept His offer of grace. That's why the time period we live in, from the Ascension until the Rapture, is called "...*The Age of Grace...*". That's also why Peter reminds us that God is "...*slow to anger...*" because He is so graciously patient, ***"... The Lord is not slack [slow] concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward [towards us], not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."*** (2 Peter 3:9 KJV). The Lord's "...*anger...*" is not a hasty human emotion. God's "...*anger...*" is divine, righteous and justified. It is also controlled and calculated, and always preceded by warning after warning, as He waits for man to change his ways. Just as He was patient with Nineveh and Israel, ***"...The Lord is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, longsuffering..."*** (Numbers 14:18 KJV). That's because God is willing to wait patiently as He draws

people to Him. In the past He warned Israel over and over for centuries to be faithful, yet even to this day they remain largely disobedient because they still refuse to accept Jesus as the Messiah. God was even patient with Nineveh, sending Jonah to plead His case for redemption. And for a time they were obedient and received His grace, but in time they fell away and received His wrath. But only after being warned and given an opportunity to repent.

So Nahum reminds Nineveh of the power of God's authority over His entire creation. As the apostles said of Jesus during a violent storm, ***"But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!"*** (Matthew 8:27). In the same way we are also reminded in Psalm 148 where we are given a beautiful view of God's supreme authority over all creation:

- ***"Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens: praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created. He hath also established them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass. Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps: Fire, and hail; snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling his word: Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars: Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl: Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth: Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children: Let them praise the name of the Lord: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven. He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the Lord."*** (Psalm 148:1-14)

But unlike Psalm 148, which expresses the majestic power of God over all created things, Nahum's proclamation clarifies the fact God will sometimes use His creation as a weapon of destruction against evil because He, ***"...will not at all acquit the wicked..."*** but will instead use His power as a ***"...whirlwind and in the storm..."***, as He, ***"...rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers..."*** and as, ***"...mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence..."***. This warning should have shocked the inhabitants of Nineveh at the thought of God's coming wrath. But it didn't, and they remained in sin and as a result were ultimately destroyed. But modern man and future Tribulation man have also been given the same warning. The Book of Revelation describes twenty-one end-times judgements that will come upon the whole world to destroy all unrepentant mankind, satan, the antichrist and the false prophet. (see Revelation chapters 6-19) And then

when the armies of satan come against Jesus at the end of the Millennial Kingdom they will be totally destroyed by the power of God, ***“And they [satan’s army] went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city [Jerusalem]: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.”*** (Revelation 20:9 KJV). And just as Nahum asked Nineveh, ***“...Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger?...”***, Jesus will ask Tribulation man, ***“For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”*** (Revelation 6:17 KJV) . But sadly, the oracle recorded by John in Revelation was written to the world over two-thousand years ago, and yet it goes largely unnoticed today – even by most Christians – and falls on the deaf ears of the lost. But it is a warning of what is to come for those who fail to accept God's holiness and His offer of grace.

7. The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.”

As Nahum expresses final sentencing on Nineveh he reminds them once again of God’s mercy and grace they had rejected. Just as king David expressed so faithfully, ***“The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.”*** (Psalm 18:2-3 KJV). Because he knew, ***“In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me.”*** (Psalm 86:7 KJV). Likewise, Jesus expressed the same sentiment towards us, His faithful believers, when He said, ***“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”*** (John 10:27-28 KJV). These verses clarify the same thing Nahum told Nineveh:

- ***“...The Lord is good...”***
- ***“...a strong hold in the day of trouble...”***
- ***“...and he knoweth them that trust in him...”***

Just like every lost person who will one day stand in judgement before God, Nineveh was given the same opportunity to ***“...knoweth...”*** and ***“...trust...”*** the Lord to redeem them.

But they didn't. So, Nahum’s proclamation became a final and poignant reminder of the forgiveness the Lord had offered to Nineveh, even in their sinful state, if they had simply turned to Him. Just as He offers every person today and just as He will offer Tribulation man living in the final empire of the antichrist, ***“...Come out of her, my people,***

that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." (Revelation 18:4b-5). But like Nineveh, most of mankind today and in the future will forfeit God's offered grace and be utterly destroyed.

8. But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies."

Historically it is believed Nineveh was destroyed in 612 B.C. when the Khoser River overflowed its banks and damaged a portion of their defensive wall. This allowed the Babylonian army (a large multinational force) to enter the fortress through the breach and destroy the city. This cataclysmic phenomena may be what Nahum is talking about when he said, ***"...an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place..."***. But even if the flood had not happen, what Nahum describes is the overwhelming power of God's wrath that totally destroyed Nineveh and ushered their society into oblivion.

Nahum,
Chapter 1

Verses 9-15

Quick Recap:

Nahum's proclamation against Nineveh is described as a **"...burden..."** (Nahum 1:1 KJV). It was a heavy message from God that final judgement was coming. Over a hundred years earlier God sent the prophet Jonah to Nineveh to share the gospel message of redemption. As a result, Nineveh believed and the nation was spared (Jonah 3:5-10 KJV). But over time they fell back into idolatry and were eventually destroyed.

And yet, the warning given to Nineveh is no different than the warning given to all mankind. As the apostle Paul reminds us, **"...for the wages of sin is death..."** (Romans 6:23 KJV). That alone should be enough warning to get everyone's attention, but sadly it's not. Millions will leave this life without Christ and suffer the penalty of an eternity in hell. Likewise, cultures like Nineveh, who throughout time have continuously rebelled against our all holy God will also be destroyed. Even Adam and Eve were warned about the consequences of disobeying God, **"...but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."** (Genesis 2:17 KJV). The warning to Nineveh is the same warning given to mankind throughout history and is the same warning given to mankind in the future Tribulation described in the Book of Revelation, **"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgement is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."** (Revelation 14:6-7 KJV). Eventually God will bring judgement on all who reject His offer of grace, and that includes both individuals and empires. But God also gives mankind every opportunity to repent. Including Nineveh to whom Jonah was sent as a warning.

Now, let's continue with Nahum's proclamation as God speaks directly to Nineveh, her leaders and then to Judah.

9. What do ye imagine against the Lord? he will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time. 10. For while they be folden together as thorns, and while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry.”

So God speaks directly to Nineveh and her leaders to let them know He is already aware of their schemes. As Proverbs 21:30 tells us, **“...There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord...”**. In other words, it's futile to conspire against God because He already knows all things including the outcome. In fact, the Psalmist provides another warning to leaders who think they can conspire against God, and clearly explains what the resulting consequences will be,

- **“The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.”**
(Psalm 2:2-5 KJV)

Plotting against the Lord never has a good outcome. God already knows whatever plans or schemes man might have, so in time He will bring them to **“...an utter end...”**. Here God reminds Assyria of the time He disrupted their attempt to capture Judah and the faithful Hezekiah, **“And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: [185,000] and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.”** (2 Kings 19:35-36 KJV). But this time they will not escape, and they will not be allowed to **“...rise up the second time...”** against Israel. Instead, they will stumble around like **“...drunkards...”**, entangled and confused like twisted **“...thorns...”**, and they will not get a second chance but will be **“...devoured as stubble...”**. Like dry weeds in a prairie fire with no way to escape and nowhere to run. In other words, no matter how much they plan or how powerful their army might be, they are doomed to complete destruction.

11. There is one come out of thee, that imagineth evil against the Lord, a wicked counselor.

Then God speaks specifically about their king, the **“...wicked counselor...”**, an evil leader (see Nahum 3:18). Here He uses the word **“yaats”** to describe his actions in an accusative sense. God is calling out the king of Assyria for what he is – evil. He is also described using the word **“Beliyyaal”** which can mean **“a worthless one, a counselor of ruin”**. And that is exactly what he is about to become.

12. Thus saith the Lord; Though they be quiet, and likewise many, yet thus shall they be cut down, when he shall pass through. Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more. 13. For now will I break his yoke from off thee, and will burst thy bonds in sunder.

Then God speaks to Judah with a promise, “**...Thus saith...**”. Although God had used Assyria to punish His disobedient people, He will not allow them to do it again. He “**...will afflict thee no more...**”, because God will “**...break his yoke...**”, which means He will break Assyria’s hold on them, and “**...burst thy bonds...**”, like bursting the shackles of a prisoner. After this, Assyria will no longer be a threat to Israel.

14. And the Lord hath given a commandment concerning thee, that no more of thy name be sown: out of the house of thy gods will I cut off the graven image and the molten image: I will make thy grave; for thou art vile.”

God now speaks again to Nineveh's king, and declares His message as a “**...commandment...**”: A holy edict from God.

- The king's name will no longer be “**...sown...**” or passed down to his descendants. The power of his family dynasty has come to an end.
- Assyrian kings often attributed their power and military victory as coming from their gods. But now God promises that whatever imagined power the king thought he had will be cut off and their idols and altars destroyed. The Assyrian people will now learn first hand what God meant when He commanded, “**...Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me...**”. (Exodus 20:2-5 KJV). And here again, God provides a warning before the wrath.
- And the king will die, because he is “**...vile...**” and evil.

This description of the Assyrian king's destruction reminds me of the promised destruction of Satan at the end of his evil earthly reign, “**And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.**” (Revelation 20:10 KJV). And just as the king of Assyria before him, Satan has been warned, “**...because he knoweth that he hath but a short time...**” remaining before God's wrath takes him down (Revelation 12:12b KJV). Thank You Jesus.

15. Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off."

Then God speaks again to His obedient Judah and this time brings them words of joy! He announces **"...good tidings..."**; the good news that Assyria, their enemy, is about to be destroyed. This is an event proclaiming **"...peace..."** to His troubled nation. God's comment **"...upon the mountains..."** speaks to His word being broadcast for all to hear. It reminds us of Isaiah 52 and the prophet's reference to **"...the feet of him who bringeth good tidings..."**,

- **"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth [proclaims] salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem."** (Isaiah 52:7-9 KJV).

Here Isaiah speaks of the joy of Israel's deliverance from bondage of idolatry and disobedience. As their **"...watchmen..."** on the walls announce the coming peace. Generations later the apostle Paul would reference the same scripture to proclaim the gospel of Jesus that delivers us from sin and disobedience to become redeemed children of God,

- **"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"** (Romans 10:14-15 KJV)

All three messengers - Isaiah, Nahum and Paul - share the same message of joy. The **"...good tidings..."** of **"...peace..."** that comes through our redemption as we are released from the bonds and shackles of sin. Then just like Israel, we, **"...Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice..."** as our **"...beautiful..."** feet go to all the world to share the good news about the **"...gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"**.

Then the Lord tells Judah the most wonderful news, **"...O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows..."**. In other words, with the risk of an Assyrian invasion now in the past Israel was free to obediently observe the Levitical feasts and offerings commanded by God. They could do this because Assyria, **"...the wicked shall no**

more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off...". In the same way Paul reminds us of a similar promise made to us, God's children, **"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."** (Romans 8:1 KJV). God destroyed Assyria so they were no longer a threat to Israel. Just as Christ destroyed our sin on the cross and therefore there is no longer a threat of condemnation for believers.

Thank You Jesus.

So, do we see a future connection to all this? We sure do. In Revelation. During the future Tribulation period God will extend grace over grace as He systematically destroys His sin-ridden creation. And yet, in the midst of cataclysmic judgement actions God will continue to offer redemption through:

- 144,000 Jewish evangelists who will share the gospel throughout the world. As representatives from all twelve tribes these Jewish believers will finally fulfill God's promise to bless the world through Israel (see Genesis 12:3 & Isaiah 49:6), because **"...These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb."** (Revelation 14:4 KJV - see also Revelation chapters 7&14)
- Two Witnesses who will share the gospel in Jerusalem and warn the world of impending doom. A message heard by everyone. (Revelation chapter 11)
- Three Proclaiming Angels **"...having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people [the world's population]..."** (Revelation 14:6 KJV). The first will share the gospel with the whole world, while the other two proclaim the coming destruction for those who reject God's grace.
- And Jesus, who warns the world that His judgement is near, **"...Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."** (Revelation 16:15-16 KJV)
- And even at the bitter-end before God's final destruction of the antichrist's empire He calls out a plea of grace for anyone who will listen, **"...And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."** (Revelation 18:4 KJV)

The point of all this is to illustrate the fact God's wrath is always preceded by God's grace. Whether Adam and Eve, Israel, Assyria, mankind today or Tribulation man in the future, God would rather redeem than destroy. So man's destruction becomes their own choice and is always the result of accepting or denying God's grace. But just as the

Lord has done since that fateful day in the garden, He promises a new life with Him for those who accept and are faithful, ***“And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.”***

(Revelation 21:3-6 KJV)

Nahum,
Chapter 2

Verses 1-13

Quick Recap:

The magnificent city of Nineveh, which represents the entire Assyrian Empire, was pure evil. Generations before the Lord sent the prophet Jonah to share His message of redemption with the city, and for a time the people of Nineveh believed. But they eventually turned away from God, to the point they became known as one of the most hedonistic, bloodthirsty and demonic societies in history. So God sent Nahum with a new message. Not to plead as Jonah had for their reconciliation, but to pronounce God's total and final destruction of the entire empire.

But the warning to Nineveh is no different than the warning to us. In the garden God offered Adam and Eve an eternity with Him if they would simply be faithful and comply with His expectations. But, if they failed, God promised they would die (Genesis 2:17). Yet, even after they failed God offered them an opportunity to be redeemed and have their sins forgiven if they would just accept His offer of grace. And that's the same story we see throughout the Bible. God offers eternal rewards for those who will accept His offer of redemption, but at the same time, He promises consequences for those who reject Him. Whether it is Israel, Assyria or the broader span of all mankind, God offers blessings and curses, but it is our decision which one will apply to us (see Deuteronomy 28).

Now, let's see the curse upon Nineveh.

“1. He that dasheth in pieces is come up before thy face: keep the munition, watch the way, make thy loins strong, fortify thy power mightily. 2. For the Lord hath turned away the excellency of Jacob, as the excellency of Israel: for the emptiers have emptied them out, and marred their vine branches. 3. The shield of his mighty men is made red, the valiant men are in scarlet: the chariots shall be with flaming torches in the day of his preparation, and the fir trees shall be terribly shaken. 4. The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings. 5. He shall recount his worthies: they shall stumble in their walk; they shall make haste to the wall thereof, and the defense shall be prepared. 6. The gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved. 7.

And Huzzab shall be led away captive, she shall be brought up, and her maids shall lead her as with the voice of doves, tabering upon their breasts. 8. But Nineveh is of old like a pool of water: yet they shall flee away. Stand, stand, shall they cry; but none shall look back. 9. Take ye the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold: for there is none end of the store and glory out of all the pleasant furniture. 10. She is empty, and void, and waste: and the heart melteth, and the knees smite together, and much pain is in all loins, and the faces of them all gather blackness. 11. Where is the dwelling of the lions, and the feedingplace of the young lions, where the lion, even the old lion, walked, and the lion's whelp, and none made them afraid? 12. The lion did tear in pieces enough for his whelps, and strangled for his lionesses, and filled his holes with prey, and his dens with ravin. 13. Behold, I am against thee, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will burn her chariots in the smoke, and the sword shall devour thy young lions: and I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard."

"1. He that dasheth in pieces is come up before thy face: keep the munition, watch the way, make thy loins strong, fortify thy power mightily."

Assyria was known for its bloody military exploits, particularly their practice of disrupting conquered cultures by forcefully deporting them to other areas of the empire. This often weakened those cultures and its people to the point some never recovered. That's what happened to the northern tribes of Israel who were defeated by Assyria and exiled to other areas hundreds of miles away (see 2 Kings 17:23b KJV). This practice may be what Nahum was referring to when he said ***"...He that dasheth in pieces..."***. Here the root word for ***"...dasheth..."***, ***"...puwts..."*** (pronounced ***"...puts..."***) means to ***"displace or scatter"***. That's a good description of what the king of Assyria did as he sought to exile captives across the empire.

Then Nahum describes what would soon happen when the king comes face to face with the reality of an imminent attack. Inside Nineveh preparation for the coming battle would be made to, ***"...keep the munition, watch the way, make thy loins strong, fortify thy power mightily..."*** Or, as translated in the New King James Version, ***"...Man the fort! Watch the road! Strengthen your flanks! Fortify your power mightily."*** (Nahum 2:1 NKJV). Undoubtedly, as they saw the massive Babylonian army approaching from a distance the Assyrian forces inside their nearly impenetrable fortress -- or so they thought -- would have taken action to prepare. Weapons would be brought to the ramparts, gates would be shut and dogged firmly from within, and anyone outside the city would quickly run to seek refuge inside. But it was all for nothing

because once God had determined to destroy the city, no amount of preparation would be adequate to stave off their destruction.

Looking to the future we see two similar events at the end of Revelation:

- The first is found in Revelation chapter 18 where John describes the extent to which the antichrist's empire will be destroyed,
 - ***"21. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon [the antichrist's Tribulation empire] be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. 22. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; 23. and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. 24. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."*** (Revelation 18:21-24 KJV).
 - Earlier in Nahum 1:8 we are told that God, speaking of Nineveh, said He ***".. will make an utter end of the place..."***. Here the root word for ***"...utter..."*** ***"...kalah..."***, means ***"complete destruction, consumption and annihilation"***. We get a sense of what that means in Revelation chapter 18 when we're told there will be no more music, no industry, no family structure, no light and no love. In other words, no life. That's what God meant by the ***"...utter end..."*** of Nineveh.
- The second future example comes from Revelation chapter 20,
 - ***"7. And when the thousand years [Millennial Kingdom] are expired, satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8. And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, [a generic term for a leader and his army] to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them."*** (Revelation 20:7-9 KJV)
 - Here, after our Lord's one-thousand year Millennial Kingdom, satan will be allowed to form a massive army of those who reject God's grace. It will be a world-wide army, ***"...the number of whom is as the sand of the***

sea... and satan will **“...gather them together for battle...”** against Jerusalem. Undoubtedly they will make preparations for war, just as Nineveh did, but it will all be for naught, because just like He did with Nineveh, God will destroy the army and satan without mercy.

2. For the Lord hath turned away the excellency of Jacob, as the excellency of Israel: for the emptiers have emptied them out, and marred their vine branches.”

Now the Lord turns from Assyria to speak again to Israel. Here the NKJV and the original root language will help us better understand this verse. The phrase, **“...the Lord hath turned away the excellency of Jacob, as the excellency of Israel...”** is simplified in the NKJV to **“...the Lord will restore the excellence of Jacob Like the excellence of Israel...”** (Nahum 2:1 NKJV). A key word used here in the KJV for **“...turned away...”** is **“shub”** which translates to **“restore”** or **“turned back”**. In other words, the destruction of Assyria would be great news for Israel because it would allow Israel to **“...restore...”** their nation to its prior glory. Generations earlier the region of northern Israel had been conquered and exiled by Assyria who **“...emptied them out...”** and destroyed their commerce, agriculture and lifestyle; represented by their **“...vine branches...”**. In contrast, the southern Kingdom of Judah had been protected by God and were not defeated. At least, not at that point in history. But both regions suffered years of threat and abuse under the Assyrians. Now, for a time, that would change when the Assyrians were destroyed.

The **“...excellency of Jacob...”** reminds us of Genesis 32, when the Lord changed Jacob's name to Israel and blessed him, **“And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.”** (Genesis 32:28 KJV). Through this blessing Jacob became the father of twelve sons, who would become the progenitors of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. He is the namesake of the only nation ever chosen by God to be His people, carry His message, chronicle His word, and bear His Son. (See Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 49:6, Luke 2:32, John 3:16, Romans 9:4-5). This is the **“...excellency of Jacob...”**.

But first, Assyria must be destroyed.

3. The shield of his mighty men is made red, the valiant men are in scarlet: the chariots shall be with flaming torches in the day of his preparation, and the fir trees shall be terribly shaken. 4. The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings.”

Nahum now describes what the Assyrian watchmen will see as they look to the horizon at a great army headed their way. — In 612 B.C. the Babylonian king Nabopolassar gathered a multinational, heavily armored force to march against the city of Nineveh. This massive army would probably have included tens-of-thousands of soldiers whose advancement would have been visible for miles as the dust from their marching feet rose high in the air. This must have been an unnerving sight for the Assyrians as they waited for the battle to begin. The Assyrian defenders were highly trained men who were accustomed to battle and had themselves brought chaos and death across the entire Middle East. They knew fullwell what was about to happen as the battle progressed and the enemy's shields would be **"...made red..."** with Assyrian blood. They also knew the power of the Babylonian chariotiers as they wheeled their mounted soldiers and archers to **"...rage in the streets,** as they, **"...like torches..."** would **"...run like the lightnings..."**; fast and destructive, destroying everything in their path.

5. He shall recount his worthies: they shall stumble in their walk; they shall make haste to the wall thereof, and the defense shall be prepared. 6. The gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved."

Assyria's army and their leaders would fall. Here the word **"...worthies.."** is translated from the root word **"addiraw"**, which means **"nobles or chieftains"**. These are the leaders of the Assyrian army. In preparation for the coming battle their king **"...He..."** would have given them orders to, **"...keep the munition, watch the way, make thy loins strong, fortify thy power mightily..."** (Nahum 2:1 KJV) as **"...the defense shall be prepared..."**. Instead, they would clumsily **"...stumble in their walk..."** as they ran to the walls and ramparts to prepare their city to repel the attackers. This description gives a sense they were somehow caught off-guard and their efforts would be hasty and insufficient. But no matter how good their preparation might be, it would have been fruitless because God had already declared He would **"...make an utter end of the place..."**. (Nahum 1:8 KJV). The Babylonian army was simply the tool God used to bring about His judgement. But it was not only the military force who wielded God's destructive power. Nahum had already reminded us that God controls the forces of nature, **"...the Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet."** **He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers..."** (Nahum 1:3b-4a KJV). This verse may represent an event that is hotly debated by modern historians. The first century B.C. Greek historian Dioborus Siculus believed the Babylonians dammed-up the Khoser River, a tributary of the Tigris, upstream of the city. Once they had contained a sufficient volume of water they released the dam and the force of the deluge was strong enough to breach the mighty fortress walls and make a way for the Babylonian army to enter the city. Modern

historians debate the accuracy of this event because they contend there would not have been sufficient water in the dry season to create such a flood. But...historians forget that God **“...rebuketh the sea...”** (Nahum 1:4a KJV) and could easily make a flood out of a ditch if He wanted to. So for the purpose of our study the idea of whether or not the Babylonians dammed-up the river is secondary, because we know from scripture, **“...The gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved...”**.

We see a similar event in Joshua chapter 3. At that time Joshua and the people of Israel were preparing to cross the Jordan River carrying the Ark of the Covenant into the Promised Land. They reached the river which would be difficult to cross, but God, who **“...rebuketh the sea...”** (Nahum 1:4a KJV) caused the water to be dammed-up so the Israelites could pass over on dry ground. **“And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above [tributaries]; and they shall stand upon an heap [a large volume]”** (Joshua 3:13 KJV). The Lord stopped the waters about fifteen miles upstream of the crossing point so **“...the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those [rivers] that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho.”** (Joshua 3:16 KJV). But even this example pales in comparison to the time God redirected the waters of the entire Red Sea so the people of Israel could escape the pursuing army of Egypt, **“And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.”** (Exodus 14:21-22). The point is, these examples show God is the sovereign power over all creation, and just as He did with the Red Sea and the Jordan, He can certainly use His creation as He sees fit to bring about His intended purpose to flood Nineveh.

7. And Huzzab shall be led away captive, she shall be brought up, and her maids shall lead her as with the voice of doves, tabering upon their breasts.”

Scholars debate the meaning of the Hebrew word **“...Huzzab...”**. The NKJV translates it as **“...she...”**. Possibly representing the Assyrian goddess ishtar who was **“...led away captive...”** and **“...brought up...”**, which may indicate the idol was taken away by the Babylonian army to destroy the city's source of religion and to show the superiority of their own gods. This is similar to the Philistines who captured the Ark of the Covenant from Israel and took it into their own land to show their superiority - which of course failed (1 Samuel chapters 4 and 5). If the ishtar view is correct then the term

“...her maids...” may refer to women who were keepers of the idol, or possibly temple prostitutes, which were common in ancient pagan worship practices. They may have been taken with her as they lamented sadly, beat their **“...breasts...”** and cried out in grief. Other commentators believe the word represents Nineveh who is seen as the **“...queen...”** or **“...mistress...”** of the Assyrian empire. She would be defeated and her surviving people taken captive and marched away as slaves of Babylon. Still other commentators translate the term to mean **“The Zab Country...”** as a description of the tract of land east of the Tigris River and near the River Zab. — But whatever the interpretation, the verse indicates the destruction of the city and the capture or execution of her people.

8. But Nineveh is of old like a pool of water: yet they shall flee away. Stand, stand, shall they cry; but none shall look back.

Nineveh was full of people and wealth, like a **“...pool of water...”**, but in her defeat she would be drained as her people were either killed, captured or **“...flee away...”**. They will **“...stand...”** and **“...cry...”** but **“...none will look back...”** as they escape their city being destroyed. Here we’re reminded of a similar event that will take place during the future destruction of the antichrist’s empire in Revelation chapter 18, **“And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! [the antichrist’s Tribulation empire] for in one hour is thy judgement come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more...”** (Revelation 18:9-11 KJV). Chapter 18 describes the final rebellious population of the earth in three ways, **“...kings, merchants and shipmasters...”**. These represent the population of the world who, much like the people of Nineveh, will forfeit an eternity with the Lord by blaspheming His name even in their torment (see Revelation 16:10). Also similar to Nineveh they will be **“...standing afar...”** as they lament the destruction of their city, their wealth and their lives.

But aren't we already seeing that today? As mankind drifts deeper into sin, even legalizing practices unheard of in times past, they are focused only on themselves and their own wellbeing. That’s the slippery slope the enemy is dragging humanity down as he prepares the mind of man to accept the antichrist during the Tribulation. The future time when **“...All who dwell on the earth will worship him...”** (Revelation 16:10 KJV). This is the basis for **“progressive”** ideologies, liberal politicians and social unrest. But it is also the catalyst for the dramatic rise of the **“health and wealth”** focused **“Prosperity Gospel”** movement where modern day pulpit charlatans spread the apostate lie that righteousness is seen in who you are and what you're worth. That means the warning

given to Nineveh is the same warning God is giving mankind today and in the future. A warning of total destruction that comes from rejecting His offer of grace and redemption. But sadly, for the most part, mankind is still ignoring his offer, just as Nineveh did. And tragically the consequences will be the same.

9. Take ye the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold: for there is none end of the store and glory out of all the pleasant furniture. 10. She is empty, and void, and waste: and the heart melteth, and the knees smite together, and much pain is in all loins, and the faces of them all gather blackness."

Throughout history conquering armies took whatever they wanted from the lands and people they defeated - things like natural resources, personal wealth, art and human beings were taken for others to enjoy. These are "*spoils of war*". We saw a modern day example of this as Nazi Germany gathered together Jews by the millions and then took their houses and personal belongings and auctioned them off in the streets. Then their military raided museums, churches and private collections all across occupied Europe and hoarded away billions of dollars worth of art and artifacts in salt mines and their own collections. Why? Because they planned to use them for their own pleasure after the war had been won. We even see a future view of this in the "*Ezekiel War*" when the satan inspired armies of Gog and Magog [a leader and his army] come against Jerusalem. They will come to, ***"To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land. Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, [ancient middle eastern cultures] with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?"*** (Ezekiel 38:12-13 KJV). So too Babylon did the same thing and took the wealth, ***"...the spoil..."***, of Nineveh as their own. To the point she was, ***"...empty, and void, and waste..."*** and her defeated people's, ***"...heart melteth, and the knees smite together, and much pain is in all loins..."***. The NKJV expresses this a little more clearly, ***"...The heart melts; and the knees shake; Much pain is in every side, And all their faces are drained of color..."*** (Nahum 2:10b NKJV). Not only was the city destroyed, but the very heart of her people was totally obliterated with her. Just as those in the future, ***"...shall weep and mourn over her..."*** as the wages of their sin destroys them along with the antichrist's empire (Revelation 18:11 KJV).

11. Where is the dwelling of the lions, and the feedingplace of the young lions, where the lion, even the old lion, walked, and the lion's whelp, and none made them afraid? 12. The lion did tear in pieces enough for his whelps, and strangled for his lionesses, and filled his holes with prey, and his dens with ravin. 13.

Behold, I am against thee, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will burn her chariots in the smoke, and the sword shall devour thy young lions: and I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard.

Now Nahum asks a series of rhetorical questions and does so in a familiar way. Earlier we cited a passage from Ezekiel chapter 38 describing the future “*Ezekiel War*”. There we saw reference to, “***...all the young lions...***”. Now in Nahum we see similar language with “***...lions...***” mentioned several times. Both passages use the same root word “*Kephir*” to describe the “***...young lions...***”. A term used in the masculine sense to describe a “warrior” or an “enemy”. But here Nahum is poking at the Assyrian soldiers who for generations brought death and destruction across much of the Middle East as they advanced their armies all the way to Egypt. Nahum now asks the destroyed city and its demoralized people, “***11. Where is the dwelling of the lions, and the feedingplace of the young lions, where the lion, even the old lion, walked, and the lion's whelp, and none made them afraid?***” In other words, “*Where are your houses now? The places where you eat, where the old people walk and the young people raise children. Were none of you afraid this would happen?*” (paraphrase). He reminds them of their past sins, when they would, “***...tear in pieces...***” the nations they conquered whom they “***...strangled...***” as they “***...filled his holes [“Chor” - “caves”] with prey, and his dens with ravin [“Terephah” - “torn flesh”] of their captives.*** But now Assyria would suffer an even greater wrath as God brings on them the same fate they brought on other cultures for generations. Their homes and their lives would be utterly destroyed as Babylon wrought havoc on their land, their cities and their people.

And then the Lord tells them how personal this is when He says, “***...I am against thee...***”. The time had come when God would bring His vengeance on Assyria for their unrepentant sin. Earlier in the Bible God clarified how His wrath would be employed, “***To me belongeth vengeance and recompence [repayment];*** and He warned what would happen to His enemies, “***...their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.***” (Deuteronomy 32:35 KJV). Vengeance belongs to the Lord, and “***...in due time...***” He will invoke His holy wrath on those who plot against Him and refuse His offer of redemption. Their mighty army will be destroyed as He will “***...burn her chariots in the smoke, and the sword shall devour thy young lions...***”, and “***...the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard.***” Her soldiers would no longer fight and her leaders would never again proclaim victory. Instead, Israel could now announce her own victory as “***...the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!...***” will be heard throughout the land (Nahum 1:15 KJV).

Nahum,
Chapter 3

Verses 1-19

Quick Recap:

Nineveh would now be under attack. A massive multinational force led by the Babylonians would bring siege against the heavily fortified city. The Assyrian defenders made preparations for the battle but their efforts were in vain because God had already declared He ***“...will make an utter end of the place...”*** (Nahum 1:8 KJV). So the time had come when both the city and the empire would be destroyed and Nahum described what was about to happen. The Khoser River was dammed upstream of the city, and when the waters were released it opened a breach in the wall the attacking forces could use to enter the fortifications. Scholars debate whether this event was accomplished by the Babylonians or was simply an act of God, but either way we are assured by scripture, ***“...The gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved...”*** (Nahum 2:5 KJV). As the army attacked their shields would be ***“...made red...”*** with Assyrian blood, and their war chariots would scream through the city like, ***“...flaming torches...”*** as they killed or captured Assyria’s soldiers, their ***“...young lions...”***, and its civilian population (Nahum 2:3 & 11 KJV). As a result, there would be ***“spoils of war...”***, ***“...spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold: for there is none end of the store and glory out of all the pleasant furniture...”***. The city would be stripped of its wealth as it had done to so many others until, ***“...She is empty, and void, and waste: and the heart melteth...”*** (from Nahum 2:9-10 KJV).

To this point Nahum's narrative was a precursor of what was about to happen. Now in chapter 3 we will see their end and the reasons why.

1. “Woe to the bloody city! it is all full of lies and robbery; the prey departeth not; 2. The noise of a whip, and the noise of the rattling of the wheels, and of the prancing horses, and of the jumping chariots. 3. The horseman lifteth up both the bright sword and the

glittering spear: and there is a multitude of slain, and a great number of carcasses; and there is none end of their corpses; they stumble upon their corpses: 4. Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the wellfavoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts. 5. Behold, I am against thee, saith the Lord of hosts; and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame. 6. And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazingstock. 7. And it shall come to pass, that all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste: who will bemoan her? whence shall I seek comforters for thee? 8. Art thou better than populous No, that was situate among the rivers, that had the waters round about it, whose rampart was the sea, and her wall was from the sea? 9. Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite; Put and Lubim were thy helpers. 10. Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity: her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets: and they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains. 11. Thou also shalt be drunken: thou shalt be hid, thou also shalt seek strength because of the enemy. 12. All thy strong holds shall be like fig trees with the firstripe figs: if they be shaken, they shall even fall into the mouth of the eater. 13. Behold, thy people in the midst of thee are women: the gates of thy land shall be set wide open unto thine enemies: the fire shall devour thy bars. 14. Draw thee waters for the siege, fortify thy strong holds: go into clay, and tread the mortar, make strong the brickkiln. 15. There shall the fire devour thee; the sword shall cut thee off, it shall eat thee up like the cankerworm: make thyself many as the cankerworm, make thyself many as the locusts. 16. Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of heaven: the cankerworm spoileth, and fleeth away. 17. Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges in the cold day, but when the sun ariseth they flee away, and their place is not known where they are. 18. Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria: thy nobles shall dwell in the dust: thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth them. 19. There is no healing of thy bruise; thy wound is grievous: all that hear the bruit of thee shall clap the hands over thee: for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?

Lets conclude the prophecy of Nahum and explore the reasons God destroyed them.

"1. "Woe to the bloody city! it is all full of lies and robbery; the prey departeth not; 2. "The noise of a whip, and the noise of the rattling of the wheels, and of the prancing horses, and of the jumping chariots. 3. The horseman lifteth up both the bright sword and the glittering spear: and there is a multitude of slain, and a great number of carcasses; and there is none end of their corpses; they stumble upon their corpses:"

The word “...**woe**...” is used throughout the Old and New Testament as a warning of coming wrath. Translated from the Hebrew word “*hoy*”, it can have a number of meanings depending on how it’s used in a sentence. Generally it’s intended to grab your attention like “*alas!*”, or to express “...*dissatisfaction and pain*...”. In this case the word is used to announce the destruction of Nineveh because they were a “...**the bloody city**...” who brought death and destruction wherever they went. We see three very similar “...**Woe**...” warnings in Revelation chapter 8 when God’s angelic messengers warn the antichrist’s empire of their coming destruction, “...**And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!**” (Revelation 8:13 KJV). This passage describes three “*Proclaiming Angels*” who will be sent by God to warn the entire earth to turn to Jesus before He releases the final Trumpet and Bowl judgements. Since Revelation is in the New Testament and written in Greek it uses the word “*ouai*” for “...**woe**...”, which is equivalent to the Hebrew “*hoy*” and expresses the same general meaning, “*alas!*” or “*an explanation of grief*”. It’s also the same word Jesus used to warn His sinful listeners of the consequences of not having child-like faith, “...**Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!**” (Matthew 18:7 KJV). In Nahum’s case the “...**woe**...” announces the coming calamity on Nineveh, a city known for its, “...**lies and robbery**... and its... “...**prey**...” [victims]”. But Assyria was best known for its widespread bloodshed, as their soldiers swept across Mesopotamia and west into the Middle East and Egypt. As their armies approached there would be the, “...**noise of a whip**...”, the “...**rattling of the wheels**...”, “...**of the prancing horses**...” and “...**jumping chariots**...” with “...**horseman**...” “...**bright sword**...” and “...**glittering spear**...”. The outcome of their exploits were, “...**a multitude of slain**...”. So many were the number killed by Assyria that Nahum describes them as being, “...**a great number of carcasses; and there is none end** [uncountable] **of their corpses**...”. So many were killed they would “...**stumble upon their corpses**...” (Nahum 2:2-5 KJV). But in addition to the corpses of their enemies, Assyria would now be defeated and covered with their own dead.

4. “Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the wellfavoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts.”

But the evils of their military destruction and forced exile were not the only sins of Assyria. Her religions were demonic and idolatrous. Multiple gods and goddesses were worshiped, particularly ishtar, the goddess of love, sexuality and war, whose followers often used immoral practices in their worship. This brought a demonic presence to

nearly every aspect of their lives and put them in direct conflict with God's commandment, ***"...Thou shalt have none other gods before me. Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments."*** (Deuteronomy 5:7-10 KJV). These commandments were initially given to Israel to guide them as a nation, but they are not exclusively for Israel. In fact, the Lord's *"Ten Commandments"* given through Israel, and recorded in God's word, are a guidepost and benefit to all mankind, and across the centuries they have become the cornerstone of effective government and judicial systems. Whether governing a nation or governing our own lives these commandments apply to all – even the Assyrians. It's also important to note that Assyrians were made in God's image just like Jews (Genesis 1:27 & 10:11). The only difference is God chose Israel as a nation to be His messengers to the world. Just like Jonah to Nineveh, or Jesus to all mankind. But mankind is inherently sinful, as illustrated by the disobedient cycles of Israel, and will quickly turn away from God to worship false deities and their idols. But this infuriates God because ***"...thy God am a jealous God..."*** and He would not tolerate any of His creation worshiping anyone but Him. That's why Nahum used terminology like ***"...whoredoms..."***, ***"...harlot..."*** and ***"...mistress of witchcrafts..."*** to describe Assyria's gods and her people's idolatry. These same words are used throughout the Bible to compare idolatry to immorality and shameful prostitution.

For example:

- ***"Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice..."*** (Exodus 34:15 KJV)
- ***"Moreover he made high places [where idols were placed] in the mountains of Judah and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication [idolatry], and compelled Judah thereto."*** (2 Chronicles 21:11 KJV)
- ***"And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring. This shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations."*** (Leviticus 17:7 KJV)
- And looking again into the future we see the empire of the antichrist when the *"false prophet"* will focus the whole world's attention on idolatry ***"...and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he [the false prophet] had power to do in the sight of the beast [antichrist]; saying to***

them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image [idol] to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

(Revelation 13:14-15 KJV). In fact, the idolatry of mankind during the Tribulation will result in a demonic religion so vile the Lord describes it in a very revealing way,, ***“And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, [Bowl judgements] and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgement of the great whore [demonic religion] that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast [antichrist], full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.”*** (Revelation 17:1-6 KJV).

And here we see another of their sins. Not only their idolatry, but their inclination to shed the blood of God's people, the, ***“...blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus...”***. Just as the antichrist will do with future believers, and just as Assyria had done with Israel, the agents of satan are relentless in their pursuit to destroy God's people. But that destruction is not limited to killing them. Just as foreign influence did in ancient Israel and just as corrupt influences still do today, Assyria spread their evil cult throughout their captured territories so that the ***“...nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts.”***, were exposed to their vile religion. But frankly, this is no different than what we see happening today as our own society seeks to influence both children and adults with their progressive ideologies. Social media, education curriculum and even the intent of some in our government is to change the attitudes of the population to liberal toleration, which effectively draws them away from God. To the point their progressive focus eventually becomes their idol. They might deny that, but the Bible shows over and over how influencing sinful ideologies is an age-old tactic of satan.

But God knows this is going to happen which is why He gives us a series of woes as a warning,

“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. (Isaiah 5:20-24 KJV)

But God's wrath on idolatry is always the same - it will be destroyed. Why? The passage below from Deuteronomy chapter 7 tells us, ***“...For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods...”***

- ***“When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land [Promised Land] whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; and when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire.”*** (Deuteronomy 7:1-5 KJV).

When it comes to idolatry, the Lord does not play games. Throughout history and into the future God will give every person and every nation the opportunity to turn to Him. But when they fail to accept His call and turn from their evil ways the consequences are severe and eternal. We see this is Nahum's next warning:

5. “Behold, I am against thee, saith the Lord of hosts; and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame. 6. And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazingstock. 7. “And it shall come to pass, that all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste: who will bemoan her? whence shall I seek comforters for thee?”

For clarification let's read the same passage in the NKJV,

- ***"5. Behold, I am against you," says the Lord of hosts; I will lift your skirts over your face, I will show the nations your nakedness, And the kingdoms your shame. "6. I will cast abominable filth upon you, Make you vile, And make you a spectacle.***
- ***"7. It shall come to pass that all who look upon you Will flee from you, and say, 'Nineveh is laid waste! Who will bemoan her?' Where shall I seek comforters for you?"***

Because of her sin and rejection of God's offered redemption, God casts judgement on Nineveh and Assyria. The phrase ***"...lift your skirts [their robe] over your face..."*** means God will expose their evil deeds and their resulting destruction to the world. It is a sign to ***"...show the nations your nakedness [sin], And the kingdoms your shame..."***. The once great empire of Assyria, a nation of wealth, power and global presence, was exposed for what they were and brought to their knees. She became a ***"...gazingstock..."*** [***"...a spectacle..."*** NKJV] before the world. A nation of ***"...filth..."*** and ***"...vile..."***. A nation everyone ***"...shall flee from..."***, but no one will mourn her passing. Particularly Israel, who for the first time in generations will be free from her oppressive weight and threats.

8. "Art thou better than populous No, that was situate among the rivers, that had the waters round about it, whose rampart was the sea, and her wall was from the sea? 9. Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite; Put and Lubim were thy helpers. 10. Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity: her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets: and they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains."

And just in case they doubt Nahum's proclamation, he reminds them of the Egyptian city of ***"...No..."***. The ancient city of *No Amon*, also called *Thebes*, the ancient capital of Upper Egypt. It was a magnificent city about 400 miles south of modern day Cairo. With massive walls containing over 100 gates, and a temple that measured 330 feet long and 170 feet wide. But ***"...No..."*** was also the namesake of the god *"amon"*, one of the primary gods of ancient Egypt and the successor of the sun god *"ra"*, or *"amon ra"*. Like Nineveh, ***"...No..."*** *Amon* was situated on a great river, the Nile, which enabled commerce and wealth. Also like Nineveh, she was a great military power and controlled a vast area from ***"...Ethiopia..."*** in the South to ***"...Put..."*** in North Africa ***"...and Lubim..."*** in Libya.

Ironically, ***"...No..."*** was destroyed by the Assyrians in 663 B.C., then again by the Persians in the 5th century B.C. and finally by the Romans in 30 B.C. And just as they had done to so many other nations Assyria conquered and subjugated the people of ***"...No..."*** and took them away, ***"...into captivity..."*** and spared no one as the population

was either killed or taken as prisoners, **"...her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets: and they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains."** This was a poignant reminder to the overconfident Assyrians that if a city as strong as **"...No..."** Amon could fall then Nineveh would not stand a chance.

11. "Thou also shalt be drunken: thou shalt be hid, thou also shalt seek strength because of the enemy. 12. All thy strong holds shall be like fig trees with the firstripe [first harvest] figs: if they be shaken, they shall even fall into the mouth of the eater."

In fact, Nineveh would drink the blood of God's holy wrath, and **"...shall be drunken..."** through her destruction. We see similar symbolism in,

- Psalm 75:8 KJV, **"...For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; It is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: But the dregs thereof, All the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them."**
- Isaiah 51:17 KJV, **"...Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out."**
- And in Revelation 18:3 KJV, we see the same reference to the destruction of the antichrist's sinful empire, **"...For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies."**

There will be no escape for Assyria. They may try to hide or **"...seek strength..."**, but their city will fall like **".. firstripe figs: if they be shaken..."**, symbolizing fruit that is ripe for the picking. They will **"...fall..."** when **"...shaken..."** and the city will be devoured, **"...into the mouth of the eater..."**.

13. "Behold, thy people in the midst of thee are women: the gates of thy land shall be set wide open unto thine enemies: the fire shall devour thy bars. 14. Draw thee waters for the siege, fortify thy strong holds: go into clay, and tread the mortar, make strong the brickkiln. 15. "There shall the fire devour thee; the sword shall cut thee off, it shall eat thee up like the cankerworm: make thyself many as the cankerworm, make thyself many as the locusts [swarming locusts]. 16. Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of heaven: the cankerworm spoileth, and fleeth away. 17. Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges in the cold day, but when the sun ariseth they flee away, and their place is not known where they are."

The “...**young lions...**” of Nineveh will be weak, and Nahum compares them to women who normally did not fight. Their city will be open to attack, they will be unable to “...**bar...**” the “...**gates...**” or secure their walls [“...**clay...**” and “**morter...**”], because it is too late to use their “...**brickkiln...**” to make new bricks to repair the damage. Even though they would “...**Draw thee waters for the siege...**” in an attempt to quench the fires set by the invading army, it will not work because “...**the fire devour thee...**” as the city is brought under the “...**sword...**”. Here the term “...**cankerworm...**” (KJV) is translated from the Hebrew word “*yeleq*” which means “...**locust...**” (KJV). An insect that throughout history has brought devastation and destruction as their swarms migrate across wide swaths of land and devour everything in sight. Just as the Assyrian army had done, the Babylonian army will now do the same. Interestingly, the Book of Revelation uses a similar analogy to describe the release of demons during the Tribulation, “**And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as scorpions of the earth have power.**” (Revelation 9:3 KJV). Here the Greek word “*akrides*” is used to describe the demons, but it can also be translated as “*locusts*”. Using these terms helps us visualize the overwhelming power of the army, who like locusts are vast in number as they sweep down on Nineveh and devour everything in their path. Just like the Assyrians had done to hundreds of villages and cities, Babylon will now do to them. And when that happens, Nineveh who was rich and had “...**multiplied thy merchants above the stars of heaven...**” into enormous wealth, will be captured and hauled away. But the Assyrian leaders, like “...**crowned...**” “...**locusts, and thy captains...**” are powerless like insects on a cold day. But when the battle starts they will flee and be seen no more.

18. “Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria: thy nobles shall dwell in the dust: thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth them. 19. There is no healing of thy bruise; thy wound is grievous: all that hear the bruit of thee shall clap the hands over thee: for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?”

The term “...**shepherd...**” in this context comes from the word “*raah*”, which has multiple meanings depending on how it’s used. In this case it means a “*leader*” speaking of the Assyrian leaders who “...**slumber...**” in their inability to ward off their attackers. They will die or be scattered across the deserts and “...**mountains...**”, and no one will gather them together again. They will not recover, nor be healed “...**of thy bruise...**” because their destruction will be so complete. And those who hear of their destruction will “...**clap the hands over thee...**” as they celebrate Nineveh’s destruction.

And so Nineveh and the powerful Assyrian Empire was destroyed and would rule no more. All because they had turned their back on God and rejected His offer of redemption.

Conclusion:

So why study the Book of Nahum? I suspect most Christians view it as an ancient text that probably has very little applicability to our modern world. But they are so wrong. The Book of Nahum is timeless and is as relevant today as when it was written over 2,500 years ago. Why is that? Because the story of Nineveh is the story of God's plan of redemption. Although Nahum may appear to be a warning of God's wrath, which it is, it is also a story of God's grace. That's because long before God sent Nahum to Nineveh with a message of destruction He sent Jonah with a message of redemption. Likewise, before giving the apostle John a message of end-times judgment in Revelation God sent Jesus with the ultimate message of salvation. A fact Jesus pointed out to the wicked Pharisees by reminding them of the story of Nahum, the sin of Nineveh and God's redemptive offer. He did this to help them see their own sin, and to recognize His role as the Messiah,

- ***"Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgement with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here."*** (Matthew 12:38-41 KJV).

Here Jesus reminds the self-righteous and arrogant Jewish leadership that Jonah was sent to sinful Nineveh to bring God's message of salvation to the self-righteous and arrogant Assyrian Gentiles. The difference was, at least a generation of Assyrians heeded God's warning. So just like Jonah went to Nineveh, Jesus came to the world with God's offer of grace, redemption and salvation. As life-long students of God's word these "...**scribes**..." and "...**pharisees**..." should have recognized the inference to Jonah as a sign of the coming Messiah. This should have helped them understand the Messiah's role of bringing redemption to the world and recognize that through Jesus someone "...**greater than Jonas is here**...". But they missed the point entirely and failed to recognize Jesus for who He is, and as a result they too were destroyed.

But the story of redemption for Nahum is the same story of God's redemptive plan repeated over and over throughout the Bible, and it follows the same pattern:

- Mankind sins,
- God offers grace and redemption to forgive their sin,
- Mankind has the will to accept or reject God's offer of grace,
- Mankind's acceptance or rejection of grace results in eternal salvation or eternal wrath.

The story is the same whether it was Adam and Eve, Ruth and Oprah, the two thieves on the cross, the Assyrian Empire, our modern world, or Tribulation man. God offers grace to everyone, no matter how sinful they are, but accepting or rejecting His grace is our responsibility. This will be true even at the very end of time when God will call one more time to those following the antichrist and offer “...***Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues....***” (Revelation 18:4 KJV) This will be God's last offer of grace, His final call of redemption, and the last opportunity to receive His forgiveness. Yet, most will reject His offer because like Nineveh their sin will be so egregious, “...***they gnawed their tongues for pain, And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds....***” (Revelation 16:10b-11 KJV) Initially Nineveh accepted Jonah's message and turned to the Lord, but over time, subsequent generations fell away from God and would not seek redemption. As a result, they were eventually destroyed. Just as the Tribulation world will be destroyed in the future - and for the same reason - because they, “...***did not repent of their deeds...***” . That's why the Book of Nahum is still so applicable to us today. It is a narrative of what happened in the past that points to what will happen in the future. But that destruction will not come without God first offering reconciliation and redemption. Just as He did with Nineveh, God has offered His redemptive message to the whole world (John 3:16-17) and for two-thousand years He has waited patiently for mankind to accept His grace and turn to Him (see 2 Peter 3:9).

So as we watch society tragically fall deeper into sin we realize we've heard this story before - through Nahum. Although God has offered His mercy and grace to all who will accept, mankind is now on a slippery slope of sin and apathy that will take them to the point that when the antichrist emerges, “...***All who dwell on the earth will worship him...***” (Revelation 13:8 KJV). Society is not at that point yet, but as we watch the slow fade happen we can see them getting closer to that day.

And that's why the Old Testament story of Nahum is still relevant. Just as Nahum reminded Assyria that God destroyed *No Amon* He reminds us that He destroyed Nineveh. By carrying this forward we see the same repeated warnings throughout the Old and New Testaments, culminating in the Nahum-like narrative of Revelation. When twenty-one horrific judgements will flood the earth with God's wrath, while at the same

time He will offer grace-over-grace to all who will accept. But for the most part man will not repent. And just like Nineveh, all mankind will be destroyed.

But we have a role in this. Like Jonah, it is our mission to share God's redemptive story through the gospel of Christ.. We need to be like Jonah everyday and tell the world about Jesus. We need to give them every opportunity to turn to the Lord and receive His blessed redemption. We must do as we are commanded to do in 2 Corinthians 5:20 (KJV), "**...Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech [plead] you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.**"

That's our task - be Jonah and share the message of Jesus with the modern Nineveh while we still have time.