

STORM WARNINGS!**#7 – NAHUM: THE AWESOMENESS OF GOD****NAHUM 1:2-8**

Nahum: Prophet of Judah (663 B.C. – 612 B.C.), prophesying the fall of Assyrian Nineveh. At this time, Judah was a vassal of Assyria. Under evil King Manasseh of Judah, Judah was oppressed by Assyria and being influenced by Assyrian pagan practices.

²The Lord is a jealous and avenging God; the Lord takes vengeance and is filled with wrath. The Lord takes vengeance on His foes and maintains His wrath against His enemies. ³The Lord is slow to anger and great in power; the Lord will not leave the guilty unpunished. His way is in the whirlwind and the storm, and clouds are the dust of His feet. ⁴He rebukes the sea and dries it up; He makes all the rivers run dry. Bashan and Carmel wither and the blossoms of Lebanon fade. ⁵The mountains quake before Him and the hills melt away. The earth trembles at His presence, the world and all who live in it. ⁶Who can withstand His indignation? Who can endure His fierce anger? His wrath is poured out like fire; the rocks are shattered before Him. ⁷The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in Him, ⁸but with an overwhelming flood He will make an end of Nineveh; He will pursue His foes into darkness.

Nahum 1:2-8

I. God is Awesome in His Sovereign Power

Awesome – Inspiring a mixed feeling of reverence, fear, and wonder inspired by someone (or something) of greatness, superiority, and grandeur.

- **Our God is a _____ and avenging God** – Powerful stuff! Our God is a jealous God – He requires exclusive loyalty. This is emphasized in the Ten Commandments by being the first commandment: “You shall have no other gods before Me” (Ex. 20:3). This is an essential characteristic of God. If He wasn’t jealous, He would then be just a god – not THE One and Only God. Our God is avenging. Because God is good, He must judge and administer justice – vengeance, overwhelming harsh justice when necessary. We like to emphasize the “soft side” of God, but there is also an essential “hard side” we should remember, appreciate, and worship.
- **God can be filled with and maintain His _____** – Another “hard” characteristic of God, wrath is extreme anger at sin and injustice. Righteous anger is a good emotion when motivated to right a wrong. God’s wrath is a necessary part of His judgment and vengeance. God maintains His wrath – He seriously holds on to it until the proper time to release it. Though God forgives, it is never cheap and frivolous. It is only given through true repentance.
- **God is slow to _____ and great in power** – Though God is a judge of wrath and vengeance, He is slow to anger. He gives the sinner plenty of warning and time to repent before He judges. Nahum prophesied of Nineveh’s judgment around 663 B.C., but it was another 50 years before Nineveh’s fall. Why? He is slow to anger. This is a “soft side” characteristic of God’s great power.
- **God’s way of vengeance is the whirlwind and the _____** – Like violent storms, God’s vengeance is unstoppable and overwhelming. The destruction is widespread.

Often you can see the storm approaching. As God's people, we need to be spiritual weather forecasters, warning our nation of the approaching storms of God.

II. God is Awesome in His Comforting Providence

- ***The Lord is _____*** – God's goodness consists of the righteousness of His character which leads to rightness of His actions. Everything that God does is "good", even when we don't know and understand at the time because of our human limitations. When we are confused and angry, we can proclaim God is good in faith. God's goodness is the starting point of His justice. For Nahum, this would lead to Nineveh's (Assyria's capital) destruction because of their pagan wickedness and oppression of Judah.
- ***He is a refuge in times of _____*** – God is shelter and protection from danger and difficulty. God being our Refuge is mentioned 41 times in Psalms alone.
- ***He cares for those who _____ Him*** – God cares and offers refuge for those who trust Him (i.e. those who have true faith in Him). This requires that we trust and follow His will and ways over ours. Too often we depend on our own power and ways; or depend on someone else for our refuge, rather than God. Too often, the kings and people would depend on themselves or others for refuge (allowing themselves to be a vassal state for Assyria, for example). Today, we need to avoid making the same mistake as Christians or as a nation.

III. God is Awesome in His Overwhelming Punishment

- ***God will make an end of _____*** – The capital city of Nineveh was the headquarters, the brains, and inspiration for the Assyrian Empire. Assyria was one of the most evil and oppressive of all empires – violent, corrupt, oppressive, and thoroughly pagan in its religion, morality, and culture. Ironically, some 100 years before, Nineveh had been spared from God's judgment when prophesied by Jonah because of their repentance, but they returned to their evil ways. This time would be final judgment. God will give remedial judgment and second chances; however, there comes a time when His patience ends and He declares final judgment and punishment.
- ***God will pursue His Nineveh enemies into _____*** – God's judgment is so overwhelming that you can't run or hide from God. He will find you and chase you into darkness. Darkness is the lack of light – no prosperity, happiness, blessing, or hope. It is also the lack of God (Jesus is described as the Light of the world).. Darkness is also symbolic of hell (Mat. 22:13). In His judgment, God (the Light) abandons those He judges; evil will reign; and the experience will be like hell on earth.
- ***God continues to punish "Ninevehs" _____*** – God continues to judge modern day Ninevehs – those nations and peoples who are violent, anti-God, and oppress His people. Jesus talked about judgment for those cities that rejected Him and His disciples (Luke 10:8-16; Mat. 11:20-24). Our nation today is in danger of becoming a modern day Nineveh. Will we stand up to modern day Ninevehs?

Answers: I. Jealous; wrath; anger; storm. II. Good; trouble; trust. III. Nineveh; darkness; today.