

NAHUM 1

INTRODUCTION...

- **THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD**
 - o We finished **Micah** - the 33rd book of the Old Testament - 10th of 16 prophetic books in the OT...
 - o We will start **Nahum** - the 7th of what is known as the 12 Minor Prophets
- **1ST - WHO WAS NAHUM...**
 - o Nahum (*comfort*) the Elkoshite - is only mentioned here in the first verse of his own book...
 - o Elkosh is most likely a city in Judah that later came to be known as Elcesi...
 - o Which makes Nahum a prophet from the Southern Kingdom...
 - o The city of Capernaum - 'village of Nahum' - might have been named after the prophet!
- **2ND - THEME OF THE BOOK...**
 - o Nahum is written as a judgment against the city of Nineveh - **Nahum 1:1**
 - Nineveh (*Mosul in Iraq*) was the capitol of the then superpower - Assyrian Empire...
 - The Assyrians were a polytheistic pagan people - with over 2400 gods in their pantheon...
 - They were also particularly cruel - they used fear and intimidation to keep others subjugated!
 - o Nahum is a continuation of the story that began in Jonah...
 - God sent Jonah to Nineveh to preach repentance to the Assyrian people - and they listened...
 - But 100 years later during the time of Nahum - the Assyrians had returned to their evil ways...
 - Nahum is a reminder - while God is more than willing to pour out His Grace on the humble...
 - True repentance is not just for a moment - it is permanent change of direction...
 - And for those who go back to their old ways - judgment is certain!
- **3RD - WHEN WAS THE BOOK WRITTEN...**
 - o The Northern Kingdom of Israel fell to Assyria in 722 B.C.
 - Shortly thereafter Assyria marched right up to the gates of Jerusalem - **II Chronicles 32:1**
 - God intervened and wiped out the Assyrian army - one angel - **II Chronicles 32:21-23**
 - Yet Assyria was still a major power well into the days of Manasseh - **II Chronicles 33:11**
 - **Nahum 3:8** - mentions the fall of Thebes (*Egypt*) - which occurred in 663...
 - And the prophesied - **Nahum 3:11** - destruction of Nineveh happened in 612 BC...
 - o Narrowing down A 50-year window...
 - While the destruction of Thebes is mentioned - its reconstruction 654 BC is not...
 - This leads scholars to date the prophecy of Nahum between the years of 663 and 654 BC.
 - During the reign of wicked King Manasseh - when Sennacherib ruled in Assyria!
- **4TH - THE OUTLINE OF NAHUM...**
 - o The book of Nahum is broken up into 3 sections - each contained in one of 3 chapters...
 - o Chapter 1 - The certainty of the judgment of the Lord
 - o Chapter 2 - The description of the judgment of the Lord
 - o Chapter 3 - The reason for the judgment of the Lord

THE CERTAINTY OF JUDGMENT... (2 THINGS)

- **1ST - THE DESCRIPTION OF THE LORD... VS. 1-8**
 - o Nahum begins with 5 powerful descriptions of God...
 - The Assyrians were openly hostile towards Judah - the people of God...
 - And Nahum wanted to educate them on the God they chose to make their enemy!

- o 1st – God is jealous – *El Qanna...* vs. 2
 - Assyria was the biggest kid on the block – a true super power...
 - It would be easy for Judah to look and think they had the answers to life...
 - But God was not willing to let the people of Assyria pollute Israel with their pagan ideas...
 - God was jealous for His people – and He did not want to see them run after false gods!
 - **Exodus 34:14** – “Do not worship other gods: for the LORD, whose name *is* Jealous, *is* a jealous God...”
 - **Deuteronomy 4:24** – “For the LORD your God *is* a consuming fire, *even* a jealous God.”
 - When we think of God – jealousy is not the first word that usually comes to mind...
 - But God is VERY jealous – He is jealous of our love / He is jealous of our time...
 - And He will not allow anything to distracting us from living for Him...
 - God does not just want part of our lives - He wants us to be completely sold out to Him!
 - **Hebrews 12:29** - “For our God *is* a consuming fire.”
- o 2nd – The LORD avenges / He is the Lord of fury – *baal chemah...* vs. 2
 - The Assyrian empire had conquered and scattered the Northern Kingdom...
 - They had tormented Judah and mocked God from the days of Hezekiah...
 - The blood of the saints was on their hands – and God fully intended to repay them...
 - And it was not going to be gentle – He would unleash His full fury on them!
 - And the vengeance and fury of God is MOST DEFINITELY something to fear...
 - Because God could not only destroy them – He could cast them into HELL - **Luke 12:5**
 - There are only two kinds of people when it comes to God...
 - Sinner who have received the free gift of salvation in Jesus - sinner who have not...
 - For those who reject Jesus - all that waits them is certain and terrifying judgment...
 - **Hebrews 10:30-31** - “‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord... It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”
 - No doubt Judah wanted to be the one to bring vengeance and fury on Assyria...
 - But people do not have the best ‘judgment’ when it comes to punishing ‘sinners’...
 - Likely as not we will be ‘overly harsh’ with our ‘treatment’ of them...
 - Even if they apologize - we want to hold onto our hurt - we want ‘justice’!
 - Yet we are called to forgive - no matter what anyone has done to us - **Luke 17:1-10**
 - God commands us to love our enemies – hopefully drawing them to Jesus!
 - He will be the one to judge – He alone can fairly judge the actions of men!
 - **Romans 12:19** - “Never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God...”
- o 3rd – The LORD is slow to anger... vs. 3
 - This was the hard part for Judah to accept – why had God not already punished Assyria...
 - Jonah would end up in the belly of a whale because of this very issue...
 - And it is not just the Assyrians God is patient with – even during the Tribulation...
 - The martyred saints will cry out ‘how long until you avenge’ – **Revelation 6:10**
 - But God is patient with sinners – in the hope that they repent of their sin!
 - God is patient with us - because he wants us to repent - admit to our sin!
 - **Romans 2:4** - “Knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance...”
 - BUT - He will not acquit the wicked – He will not let sin go unpunished!
 - When we look at the evil world around us – it can be very upsetting...
 - We see people living immoral lives – rejecting the truth of God...
 - And the worst part is they seem to be getting away with it...
 - They are not suffering – they may even prosper – and it seems unfair!

- **Psalm 73:16-17** – “I tried to understand why the wicked prosper. But what a difficult task it is! Then I went into your sanctuary... and thought about the destiny of the wicked.”
- Many assume they are ‘ok’ because God does not immediately punish them...
- They make mistake of interpreting God’s ‘patience’ for God’s ‘acceptance’...
- Just because God has not judged yet – does not mean God will not judge - **Numbers 32:23**
- o 4th – The LORD has great power... vs. 3-6
 - Nahum gives 4 descriptions of the power of God over the natural world...
 - The LORD has His way with the whirlwind and the storm – think hurricane / typhoon...
 - The US has been hit by an unprecedented 2 category 4 hurricanes this summer...
 - That has not happened since they began keeping records over 150 years ago!
 - Whether it is hurricanes and floods / or droughts and famine...
 - It is appropriate we call them ‘natural disasters’ – and ‘Act of God’...
 - Because God uses natural disasters to get our attention – teach us a lesson!
 - The LORD stands on the clouds – they are the dust of his feet...
 - The idea being God is looking down and watching - and he sees everything!
 - A lot of people think God is limited to certain geography...
 - When you pass a church you need to make the sign of the cross – God is watching...
 - But if you are in a bar / or a dark room – no one can see what you are doing...
 - But the truth is God is everywhere – and He sees everything...
 - Every action / every word / every thought is open and seen by the Lord...
 - And for every action/word/thought – apart from Jesus - we will one day be judged!
 - **Hebrews 4:13** - “Nothing in all creation can hide from him. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes. The God to whom we must explain all that we have done.”
 - The LORD rebukes the sea and the rivers dry up...
 - The rich pastures of Carmel and Bashan wither – the flower of Lebanon wilts...
 - Assyria thought that it was a great nation because of all THEY had accomplished...
 - But how great would they be in a drought – no food – it was the Lord who made them!
 - We can work 7 days a week - 20 hours a day - and still not have food to eat...
 - We can try as hard as we want - but unless the Lord is the one blessing us...
 - All of our work is in vain - we will not see much fruit come from our labor!
 - The mountain quake / the hills melt / the earth heaves in the presence of the Lord...
 - The most powerful and violent forces on earth - Volcanoes and earthquakes...
 - Mount St. Helens released 24 megatons of TNT = 1,600 times Hiroshima bombs
 - A devastating 9.0 earthquake has the power of 99 million tons of TNT!
 - Forces that to this day we have little to no power to stand up to!
 - In the same way who stand before the power of the Lord – who can endure his fury!
 - I have met people who think they will be able to ‘negotiate’ with God on judgment day...
 - Argue they were a good person – therefore the Lord should let them into heaven...
 - Bit it will be like arguing with a nuclear bomb – no one will be able to stand!
- o 5th – The LORD is either: A strong tower / OR the LORD is an overflowing flood... vs. 7-8
 - In all His POWER – the Lord is good – a strong tower to those who trust in Him!
 - A number of years ago I was at a crossroads...
 - I was in Bible College – but I was really struggling to find a purpose...
 - I felt like God could not use me – and had become very discouraged...
 - I went out with some other classmates to Joshua tree national forest...
 - When we arrived we climbed a tall mountain – and it was VERY windy at the top...
 - That night a 7.0 earthquake woke us all up – the ground heaved under our feet!

- The next day as I watched the sunset – it noted it looked like the mountain was on fire!
- Afterwards I climbed up on a rock and asked God – what did He want from me...
- And a small voice in my heart told me He had a plan for me life – **I Kings 19:11-12**
- It was shortly after that I got involved at Bible Fellowship – and became a pastor!
- God wants to speak to us – He wants to be our Strong Tower in times of trouble...
- But God rarely speak in through the powerful storms – great earthquakes – or fire...
- What does God sound like - a silent whisper – a voice of gentile guidance...
- For those wait and listen – hear the whisper of the Lord - who trust in Him!

- But to those who do not trust / faith - He will be an overflowing flood...
 - This may refer to the manner in which Nineveh was conquered by Babylon – 612 B.C.
 - The *Euphrates* overflowed its banks – flooded a part of the city collapsing part of the wall...
 - After which the desponding king burnt himself - and his palace - with his treasures!
 - Because what good are the riches of this world – when the Day of Judgment comes!
 - Life is a gift - with only one purpose - it gives us the opportunity to make a choice...
 - Where will we go when our time here on earth is up - where will we spend eternity!
 - Sadly many choose to 'enjoy' the couple years of riches this life offers to us...
 - Rather than invest in the eternity of riches God has prepared for us in heaven...
 - But what good will all the money in the world do – when the day of Judgment comes!
 - **Matthew 16:26** - "What profit is it if a man gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?"

▪ 2ND – THE DESCRIPTION OF ASSYRIA... vs. 9-15

- o 1st – The Assyrians thought - they could conspire against the Lord ... vs. 9-11
 - They were trying to come up with a scheme – to defeat God...
 - No doubt they had a complete philosophy that justified their sin / wicked culture...
 - But the Lord retorted – He would destroy them – and it would only take one blow!
 - Even though they were united / intertwined like thorns in their ideas...
 - Their defense would be as effective as a drunk / their nation consumed like straw in a field!
 - Because from them came one who plotted evil against the lord – a wicked counselor!
 - People are still trying to conspire against God...
 - The common convention today is – if you want to be wise then go to college...
 - Yet more often than not today – universities are full of wicked counselors!
 - They are no longer teach the Bible / or about the consequences of sin...
 - Instead the students are told there is no right or wrong - it is all relative...
 - There is no sin - as long as you think it is ok - it is good!
 - **Judges 21:25** - "Everyone did what was right in his own eyes."
 - Do not mistake knowledge for wisdom – universities might give LOTS of knowledge...
 - But the knowledge of men – is wicked counsel – and blinds us to our need for Jesus...
 - That is not wisdom – that is foolishness – because it keeps us from God!
 - Today the smartest - most educated men in the world – indoctrinate 'Evolution'...
 - There are only two possibilities for the origin of life – design or accident...
 - Because they choose to deny the creator – they instead believe life is all an accident...
 - I wear a watch on my wrist so I can tell the time – it is relatively simple device...
 - But suppose I tried to convince you it was the result of an accident...
 - I threw a some gears up in the air – and they fell down as a working watch – foolish!
 - How much more foolish to think we are an accident – deny the God who created us!
 - **Psalms 14:1** – "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'"
- o 2nd – The Assyrians thought – the were safe because they were many... vs. 12-14
 - They were trusting in overwhelming military might to give them victory...

- But the Lord would pass through – and they would be mowed (*cut*) down!
- God allowed them to be powerful to punish Judah – but it He would not use them again!
- The Lord would break the yoke of bondage the Assyrians had on the Jews...
- They would have no one to pass on their name (*when was the last time you met an Assyrian*)
- God would destroy their idols – IN their temples – there would be no one to help them...
- God prepared a grave for them – because they were cursed (*vile*)!
- People still think they are safe because of numbers...
 - The mentality is that if everyone is doing something – then it must be OK...
 - They even pass laws to make sin 'legal' – making themselves feel better...
 - But righteousness is not a democracy – we do not get to vote to decide what truth is!
 - **Matthew 7:13** - "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it."
- o 3rd – The good news for Judah... vs. 15
 - Behold on the mountains – the feet of him who brings good tidings – proclaims peace...
 - Nahum had been sent to bring good news to Judah – Assyria was doomed...
 - Israel would be free again to follow the Lord – keep the feast days / fulfill their vows!
 - The verse is very similar to words of the prophet Isaiah quoted by Paul – **Romans 10:15**
 - When he asks how can someone believe in Jesus – unless they hear about Him...
 - How can someone hear about Jesus – unless someone goes and tells them...
 - How can someone tell them – unless they are willing to step out and go...
 - Each one of the steps is (*Indicative*) – except 'go' which is (*Subjunctive*)
 - Meaning if there are those who are willing to go – people will believe and be saved!
 - Blessed are the feet who bring the message of salvation – quoting from **Isaiah 52:7**
 - We know LOTS of people who do not believe in Jesus – what are we doing about it
 - We are called to 'go' – like Nahum – and share the Gospel / the Good News...
 - It is easy to say people need Jesus – but blessed are the feet to who go and tell them!