

# Nahum

## Chapters Two & Three

### Introduction

I suggested to you last week that we approach Nahum as a children's story.

God had sent Jonah to the city of Nineveh to announce its imminent destruction. As a result of Jonah's preaching, the entire adult population of the city turned to the Lord in genuine repentance and faith. God spared the city. As Jonah sat, complaining to God about having spared Israel's enemies, God said to him,

Jonah 4:11 "...should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left..."

The one hundred and twenty thousand persons mentioned were the children in Nineveh. They were too young to be held accountable.

***But they would not remain too young!***

Nahum picks up the story of those children and their descendants. His book was written about one hundred and fifty years after Jonah's preaching. By the third generation after the revival, the people of Nineveh were as wicked as ever. The revival was genuine; the parents were saved. But their children and their children's children did not receive the Lord. Nahum announced the total and complete destruction of the city and, with it, the Assyrian Empire of which it was the capital.

Anyone reading about the destruction of Nineveh ought to be struck hard by these sobering facts about the failure of the children to receive the Lord. Nahum is a wake-up call to believing parents in every generation.

In chapter one Nahum suggested an illustration to help parents get a handle on sharing Jesus with their kids. He said that God was to be understood as "a stronghold" (1:7). He drew this from a historical incident. The Bible records an invasion of Judah by the Assyrian

army. They destroyed some forty-two outlying cities and towns, then camped around Jerusalem and laid siege against the Jews who were gathered inside the city walls. Facing certain destruction, King Hezekiah went humbly before the Lord. The Lord responded by sending a single angel into the camp of the Assyrians to kill 185,000 of the soldiers. The invading enemy army withdrew and never rose up against Judah again.

The illustration **you** can draw from history is this: Just as Jerusalem proved to be a stronghold against Assyria, so your salvation is a spiritual stronghold against the world.

Scripture identifies the world around you as “this present evil world” (Galatians 1:4). You are warned to avoid being corrupted by the world around you (Second Peter 1:4). The apostle John said,

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

1 John 2:16 For all that *is* in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world.

1 John 2:17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Your salvation is your stronghold against this present evil world. You want your children to understand the safety and satisfaction of the stronghold as opposed to the subtle strategies of a world seeking to corrupt them.

How do you communicate these truths? As Nahum foretells the fall of Nineveh in chapters two and three, he gives you two simple concepts: Teach your kids to be *prophetic* about the world, and teach your kids to be *practical* about the world. To be more specific, #1 Teach Your Kids To Look Beyond A World That Is Fallen And Going To Fall and, #2 Teach Your Kids To Look Beneath A World That Is Fallen And Going To Fall.

#1 Teach Your Kids To Look Beyond  
A World That Is Fallen And Going To Fall  
(Chapter Two)

Nahum is a book of prophecy. He wrote before the fall of Nineveh, but he wrote of its certain doom and destruction. Chapter two is a vivid, graphic account of the final days of Nineveh.

Let me give you the actual history before we see the prophecy. In 612 BC the Medes and Babylonians allied to attack Nineveh. The Khoser River flowed through the city, so the invaders damned it up. Historians also recount unusually heavy rainfall during this siege. The damned water was released so that it destroyed part of the wall around Nineveh. The Medes and Babylonians entered the city and took control – plundering, pillaging, looting, burning, killing.

The guards on the formidable but fallen walls of Nineveh see the combined armies of their enemies advancing against them:

Nahum 2:1 He who scatters has come up before your face. Man the fort! Watch the road! Strengthen *your* flanks! Fortify *your* power mightily.

Skip to verses three and four:

Nahum 2:3 The shields of his mighty men *are* made red, the valiant men *are* in scarlet. The chariots *come* with flaming torches in the day of his preparation, and the spears are brandished.  
Nahum 2:4 The chariots rage in the streets, they jostle one another in the broad roads; they seem like torches, they run like lightning.

Already their shields were red with blood. Their chariots looked like flames of fire as they dashed here and there in the streets. The soldiers found it easy to slaughter the defenseless citizens of Nineveh.

Nahum 2:5 He remembers his nobles; they stumble in their walk; they make haste to her walls, and the defense is prepared.

Nahum 2:6 The gates of the rivers are opened, and the palace is dissolved.

Nahum 2:7 It is decreed: she shall be led away captive, she shall be brought up; and her maidservants shall lead *her* as with the voice of doves, beating their breasts.

Nahum 2:8 Though Nineveh of old *was* like a pool of water, now they flee away. "Halt! Halt!" *they cry*; but no one turns back.

Nahum 2:9 Take spoil of silver! Take spoil of gold! *There is* no end of treasure, or wealth of every desirable prize.

Nahum 2:10 She is empty, desolate, and waste! The heart melts, and the knees shake; much pain *is* in every side, and all their faces are drained of color.

History bears out Nahum's prophecy. The river was damned, then released, to make a breach in the walls. Many attempted to flee; most were killed or captured. The city was looted.

As you read the closing verses of chapter two bear in mind that the symbol of Assyria was the ferocious lion:

Nahum 2:11 Where *is* the dwelling of the lions, and the feeding place of the young lions, where the lion walked, the lioness *and* lion's cub, and no one made *them* afraid?

Nahum 2:12 The lion tore in pieces enough for his cubs, killed for his lionesses, filled his caves with prey, and his dens with flesh.

Nahum 2:13 "Behold, I *am* against you," says the LORD of hosts, "I will burn your chariots in smoke, and the sword shall devour your young lions; I will cut off your prey from the earth, and the voice of your messengers shall be heard no more."

The Medes and the Babylonians were the instrument of Nineveh's destruction, but God was the author of it. Note the phrase "the voice of your messenger shall be heard no more." This is a reference to the story I told you about earlier, when the Assyrian army had camped against Jerusalem. They sent a "messenger," a man named Rabshakeh, to blaspheme God and call upon the Jews to surrender or die. Nahum wrote shortly after God had turned away the Assyrian army, but before the destruction of Nineveh. He wrote at the height of Assyria's power. It was a prophecy.

Now we can look at verse two:

Nahum 2:2 For the LORD will restore the excellence of Jacob like the excellence of Israel, for the emptiers have emptied them out and ruined their vine branches.

The Jews had split into two separate kingdoms: Israel was the Northern kingdom and Judah was the Southern kingdom. The Assyrians had completely overrun and destroyed the Northern kingdom of Israel. They had "emptied them out and ruined their vine branches." The Southern kingdom was spared. God had been their stronghold against their enemy. Nahum uses this to look far beyond to the end of human history and prophesy that in the end times God will restore Israel and Judah as one nation under God. He looks forward to the future Millennial Kingdom after Jesus Christ has returned to this earth.

Think of it this way: Nahum wrote *after* the Assyrian army had been turned away from Jerusalem, but *before* Assyria had been defeated. The Assyrians were still a significant enemy. In a sense, even though they had temporarily been checked, the Jews were still surrounded by them. Nahum tells his people to look beyond the present circumstances and see Nineveh's fall. As long as they remained in

the Lord's spiritual stronghold, they had nothing to fear from their enemy.

The world around us, this "present evil world," is fallen and it is going to fall. Instead of the Book of Nahum, we have the whole Bible. We have many passages that describe the world as fallen and going to fall. As long as we remain in the Lord's spiritual stronghold, we have nothing to fear from the world.

Your kids must be taught to look beyond what they see in the world. They must be taught that the world in its splendor is really fallen... And that it is going to fall... And that a glorious future kingdom on earth and in heaven is in store for them.

## #2 Teach Your Kids To Look Beneath A World That Is Fallen And Going To Fall (Chapter Three)

By "beneath" I mean below the surface; I mean analyze. Teach your kids to analyze the world – to think carefully and critically, and most importantly, **biblically** about the world around them.

In chapter three Nahum gives you the reasons Nineveh was fallen. He lists some of her sins. Beneath her splendid and powerful and affluent exterior were three things that undermined her: *Violence*, *harlotry*, and *sorcery*.

### Violence:

Nahum 3:1 Woe to the bloody city! It is all full of lies *and* robbery. *Its* victim never departs.

There is so much gross stuff I could list regarding the violence of the "bloody" Assyrian empire. Here is a short description of what they did to their "victims":

"... [They cut] off hands and feet, ears and noses, gouging out eyes, lopping off heads, and then binding them to vines or heaping them up before city gates... captives could be impaled or flayed alive through a process in which their skin was completely removed" (cited in the Bible Knowledge Commentary, page 1502).

For their violence, they themselves would be violently overrun:

Nahum 3:2 The noise of a whip and the noise of rattling wheels, of galloping horses, of clattering chariots!

Nahum 3:3 Horsemen charge with bright sword and glittering spear. *There is* a multitude of slain, a great number of bodies, countless corpses - they stumble over the corpses -

There is a lot we could say about violence in our own culture. There is the ongoing debate about the effects of seeing violence upon children. Let me resolve that: *Of course it affects them!*

Nahum described a culture that commits violent, heinous acts. Are we a culture that commits violent, heinous acts? Yes, we are. The description of Assyria's violence against her victims would pale in comparison to the violence of abortion against its innocent victims. I won't go any further except to point out that God brought violence against those who practiced violence. The violent became the victims.

Your kids need to be taught the sanctity of human life. They need to be taught to look beneath a world not only allows but even encourage such abominable horrors.

### Harlotry:

Nahum 3:4 Because of the multitude of harlotries of the seductive harlot, the mistress of sorceries, who sells nations through her harlotries, and families through her sorceries.

I like the KJV better: "Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the well-favored harlot..." What used to be pornography is now considered normal. It is still pornography, still "whoredoms," but it is "well-favored" because mainline celebrities are involved. I don't need to examine the whoredoms of our culture. I only point out that when they exist in a culture, God must act in judgment against them. Look at verses five and six:

Nahum 3:5 "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.

Nahum 3:6 "I will cast abominable filth upon you, make you vile, and make you a spectacle."

Images that are now commonplace in our society are still shameful and filthy. Your kids need to be taught modesty and they need to be protected as much as possible from filth and vulgarity.

### Sorcery:

Look again at verse four:

Nahum 3:4 Because of the multitude of harlotries of the seductive harlot, the mistress of sorceries, who sells nations through her harlotries, and families through her sorceries.

“Sorcery” can be translated *witchcraft, enchantments, or evil magic*. It is from a root word meaning *to whisper a spell*. There is an awful lot of entertainment today that features occult images and witchcraft. I’m just going to tell you that God hates it and that it is not harmless fun. Be very, very careful what you allow to influence your kids. If there is **any** question about something involving or promoting sorcery or witchcraft, then don’t let your kids get into it.

Nahum closed out his book by looking back at an incident in Assyria’s past history and looking forward to an incident in her future history.

He looked back at the Assyrian conquest of the city of Thebes, called No Amon by the Jews:

Nahum 3:8 Are you better than No Amon *that was* situated by the River, that had the waters around her, whose rampart *was* the sea, whose wall *was* the sea?

Nahum 3:9 Ethiopia and Egypt *were* her strength, and *it was* boundless; Put and Lubim were your helpers.

Nahum 3:10 Yet she *was* carried away, she went into captivity; her young children also were dashed to pieces at the head of every street; they cast lots for her honorable men, and all her great men were bound in chains.

Nahum 3:11 You also will be drunk; you will be hidden; you also will seek refuge from the enemy.

Thebes had been the capital city of Upper Egypt. It seemed secure in both its situation by certain rivers which gave it natural protection and by its allies. The Assyrians had overthrown it.

Nahum then looked forward: What the Assyrians had done to Thebes would in turn be done to them.

Nahum 3:12 All your strongholds *are* fig trees with ripened figs: if they are shaken, they fall into the mouth of the eater.

Nahum 3:13 Surely, your people in your midst *are* women! The gates of your land are wide open for your enemies; fire shall devour the bars of your *gates*.

Nahum 3:14 Draw your water for the siege! Fortify your strongholds! Go into the clay and tread the mortar! Make strong the brick kiln!

Nahum 3:15 There the fire will devour you, the sword will cut you off; it will eat you up like a locust. Make yourself many - like the locust! Make yourself many - like the *swarming* locusts!

Nahum 3:16 You have multiplied your merchants more than the stars of heaven. The locust plunders and flies away.

Nahum 3:17 Your commanders *are* like *swarming* locusts, and your generals like great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges on a cold day; when the sun rises they flee away, and the place where they *are* is not known.

Nahum 3:18 Your shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria; your nobles rest *in the dust*. Your people are scattered on the mountains, and no one gathers them.

Nineveh was a great city. It had existed for centuries. It was in every sense typical of the world in which believers find themselves – wealthy, powerful, splendid... But filled with violence, whoredom, and sorcery.

You must look beneath the exterior of the world. You must teach your kids to look beneath it. It is fallen; and it is going to fall.

## Conclusion

Nahum doesn't anticipate or attempt to answer every question you might have about how to communicate with your kids. He doesn't tell you whether or not your kids should see *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone!* He does something better: He gives you the illustration of the stronghold to help guide and direct your conscience.

Nahum 1:7 The LORD *is* good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him.

Think of yourself and especially your kids being shut-up in the stronghold, under constant siege from the surrounding world. You survive and even thrive during a siege if you have the proper resources and provisions. In your case, you have God's presence and the privileges of a personal relationship with Him. You have His great and precious promises.

Still, you look out upon the world through windows in the wall. The world has resources and provisions as well. They can seem very enticing. You are tempted to ignore your spiritual resources, open a door in your stronghold, and go out and join the world in some of its fleshly provisions.

Your kids are even *more* attracted by the world than you are. It seems harmless and fun to them to experience its violence, its whoredoms, and its sorceries. But **you** know that the stronghold is far, far better for them.

Share with them that God's salvation is their stronghold in this sinful world... Show them that serving God is their satisfaction in this sinful



world... Teach them to look beyond and beneath the world that is fallen and going to fall.