



Nahum

Get Started

About a week ago or so one of the families in our church told me about a questionnaire that their high school student had been given to answer by one of their teachers. It seemed invasive and, at least in some parts, inappropriate.

I won't go into the particular questions. I will say several of them were of a rather intimate sexual nature.

I selected and copied a chunk of it, then searched for that section online. I found that it is a questionnaire that was developed to allow video gamers to create new fantasy characters for their role playing adventures.

It wasn't only age inappropriate; it was totally inapplicable to a high school student in that it was never intended as an inventory of adolescent beliefs and behaviors.

It was, in a word, stupid. Was it also sinister?

Ah, there we go; crazy Christians, seeing the devil in everything. Trying to shelter our kids.

To which I say: You bet! At least to the sheltering.

We're gonna talk a little about kids tonight in the Book of Nahum. You might even call it a children's story.

God had sent Jonah to Nineveh to announce its destruction. As a result of Jonah's preaching, the population of the entire city turned to the Lord in genuine repentance and faith. God spared the city.

As Jonah sat, complaining to God about having spared the city, 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. God had compassion upon the children.

Nahum picks up the story of those children and their descendants. His book was written about one hundred and fifty years *after* the great revival. The parents were saved, but by the third generation after the revival, their descendants were as wicked as ever. Nahum announced the total and complete destruction of Nineveh.

If you are saved, you want your children and their children after them to be saved. It's not automatic; your children are free moral agents who must choose for themselves to receive or reject Jesus Christ. Still, you *can* and *should* exert a powerful influence in their decision to receive or reject Jesus as you rehearse your own relationship with the Lord to them.

Get Studying

In chapter one Nahum suggests an illustration to help parents get a handle on sharing Jesus with their kids.

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

God was to be understood as “a stronghold.” Nahum drew this from a historical incident.

Nahum 1:9 What do you conspire against the LORD? He will make an utter end *of it*. Affliction will not rise up a second time.

Nahum 1:10 For while tangled *like* thorns, and while drunken *like* drunkards, they shall be devoured like stubble fully dried.

Nahum 1:11 From you comes forth *one* who plots evil against the LORD, a wicked counselor.

The one who “conspire[d] against the Lord” and who “comes forth... plots evil... [the] wicked counselor” was the Assyrian empire, of which Nineveh was the capitol city. The words used here would remind the Jews of the story of the Assyrian siege against Jerusalem, recorded in Second Kings chapters eighteen and nineteen. After the Assyrians had destroyed forty-two outlying cities, they encamped against Jerusalem. King Hezekiah of Judah sought the Lord and the angel of the Lord slew one hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrian soldiers as they slept. The army withdrew. They would not “rise up a second time.”

Nahum was a witness to that siege and to the miraculous deliverance God wrought. He wrote shortly after that event.

The picture I get is the Assyrian army encamped around Jerusalem, about to destroy it. The Jews were safe inside because Jerusalem was God’s stronghold.

The picture **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.

There is a certain warfare mentality you must adopt in your walk with The Lord. You're at war with the world whether you want to be or not.

Questionable questionnaires are an example. It may seem harmless enough; or you may not think too much harm is done in a teacher handing out such a thing. But as I think back on my own growing-up, I now wish more things I experienced had been filtered for me - so I wouldn't have them in my mind, as it were.

God's salvation is your stronghold. You have His presence and the privileges of a personal relationship with Him. These turn your enemies away and fill you with joy. 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.

Your kids need to know that the world is their enemy, and that salvation is their stronghold. And they need to understand that salvation is a stronghold of the *protection* and peace of a personal relationship with God – not the *prison* of a rules-and-regulations religion.

Chapter two is a vivid, graphic account of the final days of Nineveh.

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 verse two for a moment:

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.

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.

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.*

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 -

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.

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.

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*.

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.

Nineveh was in every sense typical of the world in which believers find themselves – wealthy, powerful, splendid... But filled with violence, whoredom, and sorcery.

Get Spiritual

So: Are we too conspiratorial? Too weird when it comes to sheltering our kids?

Karl Marx wrote, “The education of all children, from the moment that they can get along without a mother’s care, shall be in state institutions at state expense.”

His student Vladimir Lenin concurred, “Give me four years to teach the children and the seed I have sown will never be uprooted.”

Josef Stalin understood, too, and said, “Education is a weapon, whose effect depends on who holds it in his hands and at whom it is aimed.”