NINEVAH IS LAID WASTE

Nahum 3:1-19
Ninevah Is Laid Waste

Commentary

by

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Text:

Nahum 3:1-19,

1. Woe to the city guilty of bloodshed! She is full of lies; she is filled with plunder; she has hoarded her spoil!

2. The chariot drivers will crack their whips; the chariot wheels will shake the ground; the chariot horses will gallop; the war chariots will bolt forward!

3. The charioteers will charge ahead; their swords will flash and their spears will glimmer! There will be many people slain; there will be piles of the dead, and countless casualties—so many that people will stumble over the corpses.

4. “Because you have acted like a wanton prostitute – a seductive mistress who practices sorcery, who enslaves nations by her harlotry, and entices people by her sorcery –

5. I am against you,” declares the LORD who commands armies. “I will strip off your clothes! I will show your nakedness to the nations and your shame to the kingdoms;
6. I will pelt you with filth; I will treat you with contempt; I will make you a public spectacle.

7. Everyone who sees you will turn away from you in disgust; they will say, ‘Nineveh has been devastated! Who will lament for her?’ There will be no one to comfort you!”

8. You are no more secure than Thebes— she was located on the banks of the Nile; the waters surrounded her, her rampart was the sea, the water was her wall.

9. Cush and Egypt had limitless strength; put and the Libyans were among her allies.

10. Yet she went into captivity as an exile; even her infants were smashed to pieces at the head of every street. They cast lots for her nobility; all her dignitaries were bound with chains.

11. You too will act like drunkards; you will go into hiding; you too will seek refuge from the enemy. The Assyrian Defenses Will Fail

12. All your fortifications will be like fig trees with first-ripe fruit: If they are shaken, their figs will fall into the mouth of the eater!

13. Your warriors will be like women in your midst; the gates of our land will be wide open to your enemies; fire will consume the bars of your gates.

14. Draw yourselves water for a siege! Strengthen your fortifications! Trample the mud and tread the clay! Make mud bricks to strengthen your walls!
15. There the fire will consume you; the sword will cut you down; it will devour you like the young locust would. Multiply yourself like the young locust; multiply yourself like the flying locust!

16. Increase your merchants more than the stars of heaven! They are like the young locust which sheds its skin and flies away.

17. Your courtiers are like locusts, your officials are like a swarm of locusts! They encamp in the walls on a cold day, yet when the sun rises, they fly away; and no one knows where they are.

18. Your shepherds are sleeping, O king of Assyria! Your officers are slumbering! Your people are scattered like sheep on the mountains and there is no one to regather them!

19. Your destruction is like an incurable wound; your demise is like a fatal injury! All who hear what has happened to you will clap their hands for joy, for no one ever escaped your endless cruelty! (NET)

Introduction:

I. Nahum said Nineveh would face horrible punishment because:

   A. They killed people; they were a bloody city.

   B. There were guilty of telling lies, and . . .

   C. They robbed people and took things that were not theirs.

      1. Nahum 3:1, Woe to the city guilty of bloodshed! She is full of lies; she is filled with plunder; she has hoarded her spoil! (NET)
II. The attack would be marked with cracking whips, churning wheels, galloping horses, noisy chariots and the army attacking with flashing swords and spears.

A. So many soldiers would be killed in Nineveh they would stumble over piles of dead bodies.

1. *Nahum 3:2-3*, the chariot drivers will crack their whips; the chariot wheels will shake the ground; the chariot horses will gallop; the war chariots will bolt forward! The charioteers will charge ahead; their swords will flash and their spears will glimmer! There will be many people slain; there will be piles of the dead and countless casualties—so many that people will stumble over the corpses. (NET)

B. Nineveh was condemned for the evil practices of spiritual whoredom and witchcraft.

III. God was against Nineveh.

A. People would see how evil they were.

1. They would face a scornful end.

B. God, in the brief book of Nahum, gave a vivid description of the overthrow of Nineveh.

1. He said that “*But with an overwhelming flood he will make a complete end of Nineveh; he will drive his enemies into darkness.*” (Nahum 1:8) (NET)
2. “Surely they will be totally consumed like entangled thorn bushes, like the drink of drunkards, like very dry stubble.” (Nahum 1:10) (NET)

3. They would have no protection because “Your warriors will be like women in your midst; the gates of your land will be wide open to your enemies; fire will consume the bars of your gates.” (Nahum 3:13) (NET)

4. Nineveh would never recover because “Your destruction is like an incurable wound; your demise is like a fatal injury! All who hear what has happened to you will clap their hands for joy, for no one ever escaped your endless cruelty!” (Nahum 3:19) (NET)

5. The city would be taken with ease, like shaking ripe figs into the mouth of the eater.

   a. Nahum 3:12, all your fortifications will be like fig trees with first-ripe fruit: If they are shaken, their figs will fall into the mouth of the eater! (NET)

C. Nineveh would have many solders, but it would avail nothing.

1. Nineveh was fatally wounded.

   a. There was no hope for the Ninevites.

2. When other’s heard the news of Nineveh’s downfall they would cheer because of the constant cruelty and all the ways Nineveh had caused pain for others.
Nineveh’s Terrible Ungodliness

Nahum 3:1-7,

1. Woe to the city guilty of bloodshed! She is full of lies; she is filled with plunder; she has hoarded her spoil!

2. The chariot drivers will crack their whips; the chariot wheels will shake the ground; the chariot horses will gallop; the war chariots will bolt forward!

3. The charioteers will charge ahead; their swords will flash and their spears will glimmer! There will be many people slain; there will be piles of the dead, and countless casualties—so many that people will stumble over the corpses.

4. “Because you have acted like a wanton prostitute—a seductive mistress who practices sorcery, who enslaves nations by her harlotry, and entices peoples by her sorcery—

5. I am against you,” declares the LORD who commands armies. “I will strip off your clothes! I will show your nakedness to the nations and your shame to the kingdoms;

6. I will pelt you with filth; I will treat you with contempt; I will make you a public spectacle.

7. Everyone who sees you will turn away from you in disgust; they will say, ‘Nineveh has been devastated! Who will lament for her?’ There will be no one to comfort you!” (NET)

I. Nineveh was the capital of crime and evil.

A. It was a city of murder and treachery.
1. It was doomed because of its wickedness.

2. Its practice of preying upon the helpless and weak never ceased.

   a. This was a bloody city that showed no mercy.

II. God described the “woe” that would come upon this wicked city.

   A. There would be a strong and decisive military attack against Ninevah.

      1. It would involve cracking whips, churning wheels; galloping horses and roaring chariots.

      2. The soldiers would attach with swords and spears flashing.

      3. The battle would be so decisive that the soldiers would stumble over piles of the dead bodies of their fellow soldiers.

III. God set forth the reasons this awful fate had befallen Nineveh.

   A. They had practiced whoredom.

      1. The word is used here in the spiritual sense to describe the abominable evils of idolatry.

      2. They would use witchcraft to defraud nations out of their possessions.

   B. The All-Powerful God was against Nineveh.

      1. She would be exposed to the gaze of the world.
a. The world would easily be able to observe her corruption.

b. Nineveh would become a gazing stock.

c. Her true, vile spiritual condition would be known by all.

2. God had said, “Destruction, devastation, and desolation! Their hearts faint, their knees tremble, each stomach churns, each face turns pale!” (Nahum 2:10) (NET)

a. Those that see what happened to Nineveh would shout with joy.

b. There would be none willing to mourn or to give her comfort.

**Nineveh Compared to Others**

Nahum 3:8-11,

8. You are no more secure than Thebes—she was located on the banks of the Nile; the waters surrounded her, her rampart was the sea, the water was her wall.

9. Cush and Egypt had limitless strength; put and the Libyans were among her allies.

10. Yet she went into captivity as an exile; even her infants were smashed to pieces at the head of every street. They cast lots for her nobility; all her dignitaries were bound with chains.
11. You too will act like drunkards; you will go into hiding; you too will seek refuge from the enemy. The Assyrian Defenses Will Fail (NET)

I. “You are no more secure than Thebes—(NET)

A. “No” is another name for Thebes.

1. Thebes was a notable city in Egypt.

   a. The Nile River was its wall of defense.

   b. If No could be overthrown then Nineveh should not feel so confident in resisting its invaders.

2. No or Thebes had many resources.

   a. Yet they were overcome by Assyria.

   b. Now it is Nineveh’s turn to face similar destruction.

3. No’s large population did not save her from destruction.

   a. She trusted the mighty power of Ethiopia and Egypt; the nations of Put and Libya were her allies.

   b. No did not lack support, but she still was overthrown.

   c. No or Thebes was a great city; yet, she was humiliated and carried away.

      i. She was captured and taken to a foreign country.
ii. Her people were murdered on the street corners.

iii. The members of her royal family were sold at auction.

iv. Her great men or the high court officials were bound in chains.

B. Just as surely as the city of No was overthrown, so now it is Nineveh’s turn to face destruction and ruin.

1. Nineveh would get drunk and try to hide from her enemy.

2. She would seek help, but it would do no good.

3. All of these efforts would be in vain.

**Nineveh’s Strong Holds Are Weak**

Nahum 3:12-15,

12. All your fortifications will be like fig trees with first-ripe fruit: If they are shaken, their figs will fall into the mouth of the eater!

13. Your warriors will be like women in your midst; the gates of your land will be wide open to your enemies; fire will consume the bars of your gates.

14. Draw yourselves water for a siege! Strengthen your fortifications! Trample the mud and tread the clay! Make mud bricks to strengthen your walls!
15. There the fire will consume you; the sword will cut you down; it will devour you like the young locust would. Multiply yourself like the young locust; multiply yourself like the flying locust! (NET)

I. The invading army would take Nineveh with the greatest of ease.

   A. God said, “Your fortresses are fig trees with ripe figs. Merely shake the trees, and fruit will fall into every open mouth.” (NET)

      1. The fortified places in the city would fall easily into the hands of the invading army.

      2. Their army would be no stronger than if it were a group of women with no training for battle.

      3. As a result their army would be weak and the gates of the land would be thrown wide open to the enemies.

      4. The fire of the enemy would devour the bars or fasteners on the gates.

II. God told Nineveh that she will need all the preparation she could make for the battle.

   A. Nineveh would be under attack.

      1. They were to draw extra water, fortify their strong holds and start making bricks!

      2. In spite of all the preparation that was made for battle, the fire would devour them and the sword would cut them off.
3. The people of Nineveh would make themselves as numerous as a swarm of locusts, yet they would be destroyed.

Nineveh’s Leaders Are Weak

Nahum 3:16-19,

16. Increase your merchants more than the stars of heaven! They are like the young locust which sheds its skin and flies away.

17. Your courtiers are like locusts, your officials are like a swarm of locusts! They encamp in the walls on a cold day, yet when the sun rises, they fly away; and no one knows where they are.

18. Your shepherds are sleeping, O king of Assyria! Your officers are slumbering! Your people are scattered like sheep on the mountains and there is no one to regather them!

19. Your destruction is like an incurable wound; your demise is like a fatal injury! All who hear what has happened to you will clap their hands for joy, for no one ever escaped your endless cruelty! (NET)

I. These verses describe the utter defeat of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria.

A. There was no possibility that the nation might be either spared or restored.

1. Destruction was certain!

2. Nineveh was strong from the standpoint of business and political interests.
3. More merchants were in Ninevah than there are stars in the sky.

4. The invading army would be like locusts that eat everything and then fly away.

5. In Nahum 3:17, Nahum said Ninevah’s army officers would flee rather than fight. “Your courtiers are like locusts, your officials are like a swarm of locusts! They encamp in the walls on a cold day, yet when the sun rises, they fly away; and no one knows where they are.” (NET)

II. The subject of the last verses of Nahum remains the same, the utter destruction of Nineveh.

A. There is no possibility of restoration.

1. It is too late for Assyria.

2. Her officials and leaders sleep the eternal sleep.

3. The people will be scattered in the mountains as sheep without a shepherd.

4. Nineveh, the Assyrian capital, a most powerful city, would suffer a wound that would never heal.

5. Nineveh would be punished for her inhumane treatment of Israel.

B. The Assyrian empire never recovered from the defeat.

1. Nineveh would hurt for a little while and then fall.
2. They were reaping what they had sown.

3. Nineveh fell in 612 B.C.

4. Assyria collapsed in 608.

5. The entire world at that time had suffered under the yoke of Assyria.

6. Now the world rejoices that Assyria is destroyed!

**Conclusion:**

I. Let us learn that those who serve God are blessed and those who rebel face certain and severe punishment.

   A. Is it your desire to honor God?

   B. If so, it is time to become a Christian now!
Questions  

Nahum 3:1-19

1. List Ninevah’s sins as mentioned in Nahum 3. ____________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

2. Of what did Ninevah’s harlotry, sorceries, prostitution consist? ____
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

3. “____________ ___________ ______________ ____________”
   Declares the ___________ ____________. Why did God hate Ninevah?
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

4. What, according to Nahum 3:5-6, would God do to Ninevah? ______
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
5. Describe the reaction of people who observed Ninevah’s decline and fall. __________________________________________________________

6. Ninevah was compared to ____________ (also known as __________). Exactly where was this city located? ___________________________________________________________________________________

7. Geographically locate Cush and Put. ___________________________________________________________________________________

8. In what ways were No and Ninevah comparable? ___________________________________________________________________________________

9. In what way could it be said that Ninevah’s fortresses were like fig trees? ___________________________________________________________________________________
10. Ninevah’s troops were ____________. The gates were ___________ and _____________ had consumed their ________________. What does this literally mean? ____________________________

11. Exactly what is meant by: (1) draw water for the siege? __________
    (2) work the clay? ____________________________
    (3) tread the mortor? ____________________________

12. What fire would devour Ninevah? What sword would cut Ninevah down? ____________________________

13. Explain what is being said by references to grasshoppers and locusts.
14. “O ________ of ________, your __________ ________; your _______ ______ _______ to _____________. Your __________ are ________ on the ________ ____________ with no one to ________ them. _________ can ______________your ________; your ___________ _____________ is ______________.”

15. What was the reaction of everyone who heard of Ninevah’s fall? What accounted for this reaction? ____________________________

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