

Session 1 The Forerunner Message in Nahum 1

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Outline of Nahum 1

1:1	Introduction to the book of Nahum
1:2-3a	The Lord's great goodness: expressed in His jealous love
1:3b-5	The Lord's great power: expressed in His end-time judgments
1:6-7	Who can stand before the Lord's fierce judgments?
1:8-14	Judgment against Assyria: a type of the Antichrist
1:15	The glorious deliverance of Israel

- B.** Nahum 1 is a very important passage in providing understanding of God's judgments. Nahum highlighted the Lord's personality and power, giving insight into why and how He will judge His enemies before the eyes of all the nations. In the end time, His judgments will be released across the earth in the greatest intensity of all history. That period is described as *the great day of His wrath* in which He will pour out His wrath full strength—"completing" God's wrath (Rev. 14:10; 15:1).

¹⁷***For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand? (Rev. 6:17)***

¹⁰***...the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength... (Rev. 14:10)***

¹***Then I saw...the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete. (Rev. 15:1)***

1. The judgment of God is the most hated, offensive, and controversial truth in human history. Many will be offended at God, accusing Him of being cruel in His end-time judgments. The Church will eventually become unified in their agreement with His judgments (Rev. 19:2).

¹***...I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia!...²For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot..." (Rev. 19:1-2)***

2. God's end-time judgments will be released to remove everything that hinders love. They do not contradict His goodness but express it as He destroys the Antichrist's empire (Rev. 19).
3. God's wrath targets the Antichrist's empire—it will not come upon believers (1 Thes. 5:9).

⁹***For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation... (1 Thes. 5:9)***

- C.** Jesus, John the Baptist, Paul, Peter, James, John, and others preached on the wrath to come. The Lord's end-time messengers will also proclaim the biblical truths about God's judgment.

³⁶***...and he who does not believe...the wrath of God abides on him. (Jn. 3:36)***

²²***For the Father...has committed all judgment to the Son...²⁶The Father has...has granted the Son...²⁷authority to execute judgment...³⁰My [Jesus] judgment is righteous... (Jn. 5:22-30)***

²³***For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. (Lk. 21:23)***

¹⁵***...it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom...in the day of judgment than for that city! (Mt. 10:15)***

- D. Notice five activities in Nahum 1 that will find their ultimate fulfillment in the end times. Some say that these prophecies are only “poetic expressions” since most of them did not occur in Nineveh.
1. In 1:4, he prophesied that *all the rivers* would dry up.
 2. In 1:5, he described earthquakes and *all who dwell* in the earth being impacted by them.
 3. In 1:6, he asked *who can stand and endure* the Lord’s anger? This question was presented by the prophets in context to the end times (Joel 2:11; Nah. 1:6; Mal. 3:2; Rev. 6:17).
 4. In 1:12-13, the Lord promised to afflict Israel *no more* and to break off the yoke of their oppressors *forever*. This only occurs fully after the Antichrist is destroyed by Jesus.
 5. In 1:15, “the wicked counselor” shall *never again* pass through the land of Israel. There have been many wicked leaders who have passed through the land of Israel since the Assyrians. In ancient history, this was partially fulfilled by the Assyrian king, Sennacherib.
- E. The judgment described in Nahum 1 was partially fulfilled when Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, was defeated by the Babylonians and Medes in 612 BC. This prophecy is only fulfilled completely after Jesus defeats the Antichrist, and then *wicked ones will no longer pass through Israel* (1:15).

II. THE ANTICHRIST AS “THE ASSYRIAN”

- A. Isaiah and Micah prophesied about “the Assyrian” attacking Jerusalem—on several occasions the ultimate fulfillment of their prophetic words include both the king of Assyria attacking Jerusalem in ancient history and the Antichrist attacking Jerusalem in the end times (Isa. 10:24; 52:4; Mic. 5:5).
- B. Micah and Isaiah referred to the great end-time enemy of Israel as “the Assyrian” because in their generation the king of Assyria was the mightiest world leader up to that time in history who afflicted Jerusalem and many nations. Thus, he was closest thing in their day to the Antichrist who will be the most evil and powerful enemy of Israel and who also will afflict many Gentile nations.
- C. Micah referred to the Antichrist as “the Assyrian” who will enter Israel in context to the time when the greatness of Jesus is celebrated across the earth as the One who brings world peace (Mic. 5:5).
⁴...He [Jesus] shall be great to the ends of the earth; ⁵and this One [Jesus] shall be peace. When the Assyrian comes into our land, and...treads in our palaces, then we will raise against him... (Mic. 5:4-5)
- D. Isaiah highlighted one Assyrian king to which he referred as “the Assyrian” who would strike Zion or Jerusalem with a rod similar to how the rod struck Egypt. (Isa. 10:24).
²⁰...in that day the remnant of Israel...will never again depend on [Gentiles]...but will depend on the LORD...²¹The remnant will return...to the Mighty God. ²²...a remnant of them will return; the destruction decreed shall overflow with [resulting in] righteousness...²⁴“O My people, who dwell in Zion, do not be afraid of the Assyrian [Antichrist]. He shall strike you with a rod...in the manner of Egypt. ²⁵...the indignation will cease, as will My anger in their destruction.” ²⁶And the LORD of hosts will stir up a scourge for him [the Antichrist] like the slaughter of Midian. (Isa. 10:20-26)

III. INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF NAHUM (NAH. 1:1)

- A. The book of Nahum is a prophecy against Nineveh—the capital of the Assyrian empire. Nineveh was a very large city on the east side of the Tigris river just opposite the modern city of Mosul.

¹*The burden against Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite. (Nah. 1:1)*

- B. Nahum’s ministry probably occurred around 660 BC, after the Assyrians conquered Thebes (called *No Amon*) in 663 BC (see 3:8)—yet before 654 BC when Thebes rose to power again.
- C. Jonah prophesied to Nineveh about 100 years before Nahum, so possibly around 760 BC. Jonah probably ministered in Nineveh during the period when Assyria was very weak (780-745 BC).

IV. THE LORD’S GREAT GOODNESS: EXPRESSED IN HIS JEALOUS LOVE (NAH. 1:2-3A)

- A. Nahum described God’s personality (1:2-3a), emphasizing *His jealousy* and *vengeance*. Jealousy refers to His emotions; vengeance speaks of His actions that flow from His jealous love. These two complimentary truths are essential to understanding God’s judgments.

²*God is jealous, and the LORD avenges; the LORD avenges and is furious. The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves wrath for His enemies; ³the LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked... (Nah. 1:2-3)*

1. *Jealous*: This describes *how Jesus feels*: He is jealous for His glory, people, and purposes.
 2. *Avenges*: This describes *how Jesus acts*: He reserves His wrath and is slow to release it with great power, yet He will not acquit the guilty who refuse to embrace His leadership.
- B. *God is jealous*: Jesus is jealous or zealous for His *Father’s glory*, the *good of His people*, and *their relationship* of loyal love with Him. He zealously protects His people and His relationship to them.
1. God’s jealousy is different from human jealousy. He has passionate feelings for His people.
 2. God’s jealousy moves Him both to *redeem* His people and *destroy* His enemies (Ex. 20:5; 34:6-14; Deut. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; Isa 59:17; Ezek. 5:13; 38:18-19).
- C. *The Lord avenges*: God is committed to taking vengeance on His adversaries. Nahum highlighted four principles of God’s judgment that provide a framework for understanding the love of God. Without the Lord’s vengeance, there is no justice and no good future for the human race.
- D. *Principle #1 Reserves wrath*: The Lord “stores up” wrath for His enemies instead of forgetting it. The Lord holds people who refuse His grace responsible for every act that they do (Rom. 2:5-9). He shall repay evil on *the day of vengeance* or *the day of wrath* (Isa. 61:1-2; 63:4; Rom. 2:5).
- ⁵*Because of your...unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God... (Rom. 2:5)*

¹*“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me...²to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God...” (Isa. 61:1-2)*

⁴*“For the day of vengeance is in My heart...⁵and My own fury, it sustained Me.” (Isa. 63:4-5)*

- E. **Principle #2 Slow to anger:** The Lord is very patient in expressing His vengeance on His enemies (Ex. 34:6; Num 14:18; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; 147:5; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2). He delays judgments to give people ample opportunity to repent (2 Pet. 3:9; Rev. 2:21).

⁹The Lord is...longsuffering [patient in judgment] toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. (2 Pet. 3:9)

1. Many mistake the Lord's patience for passive disengagement instead of seeing it as an expression of compassion that gives even the most wicked time to repent (Rev. 2:21).

²¹And I gave her [Jezebel] time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.

²²Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. (Rev. 2:21-22)

2. The Lord was slow in judging Nineveh. He sent Jonah to them possibly about 760 BC, offering them mercy leading to their repentance. This occurred about 100 years earlier than Nahum's message of judgment (660 BC; 3:8)—Nineveh was not fully judged until 612 BC.

- F. **Principle #3 He will not acquit the wicked** (Ex. 20:7; 34:7): The Lord promised to act openly on a global stage to rescue Israel in the end times. He will surely remove evil and punish oppressors. We should not conclude that He will never judge the guilty just because He is *slow* to anger (Ecc. 8:11).

¹¹Because the sentence [of God's judgment] against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. (Ecc. 8:11)

1. God *restrains* Himself by holding His peace—delaying His judgments (Isa. 42:14).

¹³The LORD shall go forth like a mighty man; He shall stir up His zeal like a man of war... He shall prevail against His enemies. ¹⁴"I have held My peace a long time; I have been still and restrained Myself..." ¹⁵I will lay waste the mountains and hills [earthquakes], and dry up all their vegetation [drought]; I will make the rivers coastlands [earthquakes]..." (Isa. 42:13-15)

2. He will *fully* release His judgments against evil in the end times (Rev. 14:10).

- G. **Principle #4 Great in power:** The Lord will manifest His great power on a global level in releasing the fullness of His end-time judgments. Micah highlighted five categories of judgment that He will openly display in the end time—in context to storms, clouds, sea, rivers, and earthquakes (1:3b-5).

1. The Lord will again do the miracles that He did in Egypt (Mic. 7:15)—He sent ten plagues against Egypt and split the Red Sea, drowning Pharaoh's army in it. The miracles in the book of Acts and the book of Exodus will be multiplied on a global level. The judgments against the Antichrist's empire (Rev. 8; 16) will be similar to the ten plagues released on Egypt. The "Moses story" will unfold in the end time on a global level under Jesus the "greater Moses."

¹⁵"As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them wonders."

¹⁶The nations shall see and...¹⁷they shall be afraid of the LORD our God. (Mic. 7:15-16)

2. The two witnesses will do miracles similar to those done by Moses (Rev. 11:3-6). Jesus spoke of His disciples doing greater works than He did (Jn. 14:12). Great signs will occur in the sky and on the earth in the end times (Acts 2:17-21).

V. THE LORD'S GREAT POWER: EXPRESSED IN HIS END-TIME JUDGMENTS (NAH. 1:3B-5)

- A. Nahum described the Lord's great power that will be openly manifested in 1:3-8. Some only see poetic expressions in this passage without any historical fulfillment. The Lord has "His way" as He uses weather to serve His plans. Micah highlighted five "categories" of judgment that God will openly display in the end time—in context to storms, clouds, sea, rivers, and earthquakes (1:3b-5).
³...LORD is slow to anger and great in power...The LORD has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet. ⁴He rebukes the sea and makes it dry, and dries up all the rivers... ⁵The mountains quake before Him, the hills melt, and the earth heaves at His presence, yes, the world and all who dwell in it. (Nah. 1:3-5)
- B. **Category #1 Storms:** The Lord's use of storms may include various types—hurricanes, tornados, dust storms, hail storms, ice storms (freezing rain), snow storms (blizzards), and more.
²²And I will bring him [the Antichrist] to judgment with pestilence...I will rain down on him, on his troops...flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. (Ezek. 38:22)
- C. **Category #2 Clouds:** Jesus has authority over the clouds—they are under His feet (1:3). Scripture portrays the Lord as the Divine Warrior King who rides on the clouds to battle against His enemies (Mt. 24:30; 26:64; cf. Ps. 68:4; Dan. 7:13; Mk. 13:26; Lk. 21:27; 1 Thes. 4:17; Rev. 1:7; 14:14-16).
- D. **Category #3 Makes the sea dry:** The Lord will rebuke the sea and makes it dry in the end times (1:4; cf. Isa. 11:15; Zech. 10:11) as He rebuked and parted the Red Sea to destroy Pharaoh's army (Ex. 14:21; 15:1; Ps. 106:9). He manifested His power in miracles related to water in parting the Red Sea, drying up the Jordan River (Josh. 3), and Jesus calming the Sea of Galilee. He will show His power when He dries up the Suez Canal and the Euphrates (Isa. 11:15; Zech. 10:11; Rev. 6:12).
1. The Lord will strike the sea of Egypt to help the remnant to return to Israel (Isa. 11:15-16).
¹⁵The LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt [Red Sea]; with His mighty wind He will shake His fist over the River [Euphrates in Assyria], and strike it in the seven streams, and make men [remnant of Israel] cross over dry-shod. (Isa. 11:15)
 2. **Tongue of the Sea of Egypt:** This speaks of the bay of the Red Sea—the Gulf of Suez. The Red Sea is divided into two gulfs, or bays, sometimes referred to the *tongues* of the Red Sea.
- E. **Category #4 Dries up all the rivers:** The Lord will cause many rivers to dry up to bankrupt the resources of the Antichrist's empire. The Lord will use various expressions of His great power including releasing a 3½ year drought in the Middle East (Rev. 11:6), sending scorching heat on some rivers (Rev. 8:7; 16:9), turning some rivers into blood and poisoning others (Rev. 8:8-11; 11:6; 16:3-4), and by striking the Euphrates to dry it up (Isa. 11:15; Zech. 10:11; Rev. 6:12).
- F. **Category #5 Earthquakes:** The Lord will make the mountains quake, the hills melt, and the earth heave in such a way that all who dwell in the world will witness it (1:5; Rev. 16:20).
¹⁸...there was...such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth... ²⁰Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. (Rev. 16:18-20)

VI. WHO CAN STAND BEFORE THE LORD'S FIERCE JUDGMENTS? (NAH. 1:6-7)

- A. This question of who can stand and walk faithfully in the midst of His judgments is often asked in end-time passages (1:6; cf. Joel 2:11; Mal. 3:2; Rev. 6:17).

⁶Who can stand before His indignation? And who can endure the fierceness of His anger?...

⁷The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knows those who trust in Him... (Nah. 1:6-7)

¹⁷For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it? (Rev. 6:17)

- B. In 1:7, Nahum answered the question, “Who can stand?” (1:6). Because God is so good, He will be their stronghold in troublesome times, enabling any who will trust His leadership and relate to Him on His terms to stand strong spiritually. These three truths—He is good, He is a stronghold, and He knows His people—provide a framework to understand His end-time judgments.

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

- C. **The Lord is good:** The Lord will care for His people because He is good, gracious, and generous, even in context to the manifestation of His terrifying and fierce end-time judgments.
- D. **Stronghold:** The Lord is a stronghold in the day of trouble (1:7). Those who seek shelter in relationship with Jesus will experience His goodness. He is like a fortified city to run to in times of danger. He will protect His people from the enemy and from His end-time judgments (Ps. 91).
- E. **He knows those trust Him:** He is very aware of those who trust Him and His leadership. This relational “knowing” of the Lord is understood in the biblical sense of loving them (2 Tim. 2:19).

VII. JUDGMENT AGAINST ASSYRIA: A TYPE OF THE ANTICHRIST (NAH. 1:8-15)

- A. God’s judgment of ancient Assyria (1:8-11) is a prophetic picture of His judgment of the Antichrist. The wicked must not misinterpret His goodness, thinking it replaces His zeal to avenge His people. The Lord will make a complete end of “its place,” referring to the city of Nineveh.

⁸But with an overflowing flood He will make an utter end of its place, and darkness will pursue His enemies. (Nah. 1:8)

- B. God will overpower all attempts of the nations to resist His plans as He redeems Israel (1:9-15). How was Jerusalem to respond to their deliverance from their great enemy? They were to celebrate by returning to God’s house to keep His feasts which tell the story of their redemption. He wants them to perform their vows that they promised to God during the time they were in captivity.

⁹What do you conspire against the LORD? He will make an utter end of it. Affliction will not rise up a second time...¹¹From you [Nineveh] comes forth one who plots evil against the LORD, a wicked counselor. ¹²...Though I have afflicted you [Israel], I will afflict you no more; ¹³for now I will break off his yoke from you...¹⁵Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good tidings, who proclaims peace! O Judah, keep your appointed feasts, perform your vows. For the wicked one shall no more pass through you; he is utterly cut off. (Nah. 1:9-15)