

## Nahum — Who Is In Charge?

**January 5, 2025**

Good morning. Welcome to 2025. I hope everyone had a great time celebrating the birth of Jesus and welcoming in the New Year. I want to begin with a question.

Are you living under the illusion that you have things under control? It is easy to think we know how the future will unfold, but if we are honest, we have very little under control in life. Remember COVID? Who planned for a virus? We were told it would take a few weeks to flatten the curve. That turned into house arrest. Who saw that one coming? In the last few years, I had friends who died of an unexpected heart attack and another in a fatal traffic accident. We may think we have things under control, but we don't.

World leaders think they have things under control. They control the economy. They make the laws. They can declare war or make peace, yet as we will find out this morning, even world superpowers don't have life under control.

Who is in charge of life if we are not? It is God. God is large and in charge. He alone determines the way history will unfold and the way our lives will unfold. God directs the hearts of leaders. They may think they are in charge, but he is in charge of them.

I don't know where you find yourself this morning. Maybe you came in the door happy as a clam living under the illusion that you have things under control and life is pretty good. You have a retirement plan, a pension, and a good job, and you are successful. You feel pretty good about yourself.

Maybe you came in the door this morning, and you know your life isn't under control. Your child is sick, and the doctors are searching for answers. The bills are more than you have in the bank. You don't even know where your next meal will come from. You are calling out to God for help.

This morning, we are in the book of Nahum. It is a book that reminds us no matter how powerful we are or how powerful our nation may be, we don't have our lives and our future under control, but God does. Since God has everything under control, and he promises that he will bring justice against sin, we know God will carry that out. We also know since God promises to give mercy and grace to all who call upon him, he will provide those things. Nothing can thwart his plans because he has everything under control, even if it doesn't feel like it.

As a church, we are in a series on the Minor Prophets. These are the last twelve books of the Old Testament. We are looking at one minor prophet a week, no matter the length of the book. Today, we are looking at the book of Nahum. It has three chapters, which is only 47 verses. I don't think most of us have recently heard a sermon on Nahum. This book will be new to us, and it is a lot of fun.

It is a book with one major theme. It is God declaring the downfall of Nineveh. That may not mean much to you, but at the time Nahum wrote, the Assyrian Empire was the most powerful empire in the world. Its capital city was Nineveh. Shortly after God declared the end of the Assyrian Empire, which was the most powerful empire in the world, they were wiped from the stage of history. Nineveh was so completely destroyed that less than 200 years after its

destruction, it went from being one of the largest and most advanced cities on the planet to being buried in sand and lost for the next 2,400 years. It was only rediscovered by an archaeological expedition in the mid-1800s. When God says you are done, you are done. It doesn't matter if you are one of the largest cities on the planet. When God says a nation and a city are done, he can literally wipe them off the planet. Nahum is a bold declaration that the most powerful empire on the planet and its king were not in charge. God is.

## Background

To understand the significance of Nahum, we need the backstory on the Assyrians and Ninevah, their capital city. Almost 3,000 years ago, the Assyrians began to flex their muscle. From the tenth to the seventh century BC, they were a military power that dominated the ancient Near East. At the height of their power, the Assyrians laid claim to an empire that stretched from Egypt in the west to the border of India in the east. It stretched from Russia in the north and deep into Arabia in the south. They were the superpower of the day that controlled everything and everyone.



At the heart of the empire lay the city of Ninevah, their capital. It was surrounded by massive walls. There was an inner and an outer wall. The inner wall was the larger of the two, ranging between 50 to 100 feet thick of solid brick. Some accounts estimate the inner wall also ranged between 50 to 100 feet





tall. The city was surrounded by a moat that was 150 feet wide and 60 feet deep. The Tigris and other small rivers surrounded the city and filled the moat. On the walls of the city were 1,200 defensive towers. The

length of the walls that encircled the city was seven and a half miles. There were 18 entrance gates to the city, and the walls on the sides of the gates were over 100 feet thick of solid brick. The city was built with enough supplies of food and water to withstand a siege that would last 20 years.

It was 1.5 times larger than Babylon. It was two times larger than Rome.



The city was beautiful. It had hanging gardens, parks, a zoo, bridges, and canals. The palace was lavish and was known as the palace without rivals in the world. Where did the vast wealth in the city come from? Part of it came from trade, but most came from conquest. The Assyrians conquered nations, took their wealth, and then deported their people. The Assyrians were notorious for their brutality and torture. Archaeological records show them impaling men and dismembering bodies. As part of their torture, they would cut off the lips, nose, ears, fingers, and toes of their captives, leaving them helpless and hideous. They would deport captives to a different land. These were death marches, where many of the captives died of starvation along the way. The Assyrians had a terrible reputation. Everyone hated them and

feared them. If they conquered a land, they demanded heavy taxes from the people, leaving everyone in poverty.

God used them to conquer and deport the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BC.

While everybody hated them, God had compassion for them.

### **Jonah — 100 Years Before Nahum**

About a hundred years before Nahum, God sent the prophet Jonah to Ninevah. He called them to repentance. Knowing this background helps make better sense of some of the things in the book of Jonah and why Jonah didn't want the Assyrians to have an opportunity for repentance.

“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.” Jonah 1:2 (ESV)

Yes, they are definitely evil!

...Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. Jonah 3:3 (ESV)

Knowing the size of the city and the walls of the city helps us understand why it was an exceedingly great city. If you know the story of Jonah, Jonah preached repentance to the city. The king and the people repented. Spiritual revival broke out. God decides not to destroy the city. Jonah was angry at God for showing compassion on the city and forgiving them when they repented.

...should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left,...?” Jonah 4:11 (ESV)

120,000 may be the population of the city, but it is more likely a number describing the number of children in the city. That is a lot of people. The good

news of Jonah is that a revival broke out in Nineveh. People repented. They turned to the Lord. God had compassion.

The bad news is that revival didn't last long. A few decades later, the king of Nineveh and the people of Nineveh went back to their old ways and worshipped their old gods. Archeological records tell us they were a city deeply involved in witchcraft and the occult, which probably explains their demonic brutality toward every nation they captured.

### Hezekiah — 50 Years Before Nahum

Fifty years after Jonah, they set out to conquer the southern kingdom of Judah, just as they had conquered and deported the northern kingdom of Israel. Jerusalem, which was on a 2,500-foot-high mountain, watched as the Assyrians captured the cities of the plains. They conquered almost 50 cities in the plains of Judah with sheer brutality. They approached Jerusalem to take the city and put a knife in the heart of the Jewish people. Here is where it gets interesting. God sends a strong message to the Assyrians, teaching them that no matter how powerful they think they are, they are not in charge. We can read what happened in Isaiah.

In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. Isaiah 36:1 (ESV)

This is what we talked about a moment ago.

Then the Rabshakeh stood and called out in a loud voice in the language of Judah: "...Do not let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD by saying, "The LORD will surely deliver us. This city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." Isaiah 36:13–15 (ESV)

The Assyrian commander calls to the people inside Jerusalem, saying, "Do not trust your God. Your God can not deliver you." That sounds like a

challenge to the true God of the universe, the one who almost destroyed them 50 years before in the time of Jonah.

“...’Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you by promising that Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.... Have the gods of the nations delivered them, the nations that my fathers destroyed?... Isaiah 37:10–13 (ESV)

Hezekiah, the king, goes into the temple and prays. He was freaked out. The Assyrians were terrible. It is true. They had conquered everything and everyone. They had already destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel and the cities of the plain in Judah. All that was left was Jerusalem, the capital city. Here is Hezekiah’s prayer of desperation.

“So now, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone are the LORD.” Isaiah 37:20 (ESV)

God, he thinks his gods are in charge of the world. There is only one God in charge of the world. That is you. Save this city and show him he is not in charge.

“Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria: He shall not come into this city or shoot an arrow there or come before it with a shield or cast up a siege mound against it. By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come into this city, declares the LORD. For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David.” And the angel of the LORD went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies... Isaiah 37:33–37 (ESV)

How is that for letting the Assyrians know they are not in charge? God protected his people, and he did it in such a way that the Assyrians should realize they were not in charge. They were messing with the God who was in charge. The Assyrian gods were not in charge. The God of Israel was in charge. He fights for them.

While the Assyrian commander and what was left of his army withdrew and did not touch Jerusalem, they didn't learn their lesson. They didn't repent. They kept up their brutality, their wickedness, their corruption, and their ignoring of God. God came along 50 years after this and said, "I have had enough of the Assyrians." I am done being patient with them. I am done calling them to repentance. They may be the largest most powerful nation on earth, but I am going to wipe them from the face of the planet. I can do this because I am in charge.

How completely did God wipe them from the planet? God brought the combined armies of the Babylonians, the Medes, and the Scythians against them. When they conquered the city in 612 BC, they burned it to ashes. Then, in less than 200 years after its destruction, God blew so much sand over the city that what was left of the city disappeared. When Xenophon, the Greek conqueror, walked over the city, he couldn't find it. It was only rediscovered in 1846 when Austin, Henry Laird uncovered it in an archaeological expedition. Folks, Nineveh is mentioned in Genesis 10. It was around a long time, from the beginning of time, but when God decided he was done with the Assyrians and their great city, God literally made the city disappear for the next 2,400 years. God can do that because he is large and in charge.

What makes it interesting is when the prophet Nahum wrote about God declaring the end of the city of Nineveh, the Assyrian Empire was at the peak of its power and worldwide domination. The idea that only a few years later,



Nineveh and the Assyrians would be gone seems preposterous, which is what makes the Book of Nahum so glorious.

## Introduction

An oracle concerning Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum of Elkosh.  
Nahum 1:1 (ESV)

We begin by learning this book is an oracle.

**Oracle** — This means a message of divine judgment. It is about God's divine judgment on Ninevah.

**Vision** — This book is about a vision God gave Nahum about this city's destruction. This makes the book different. It is similar to the book of Revelation. It is Nahum recording the visions God gave him about the city's destruction.

Nahum writes in short sentences with very picturesque language. Most of the book is Hebrew poetry, which, at first, can make it difficult to understand. Once we understand the verses in Hebrew, describe the visual snapshots Nahum sees, like the pictures on our phone's camera roll, which helps it make sense.

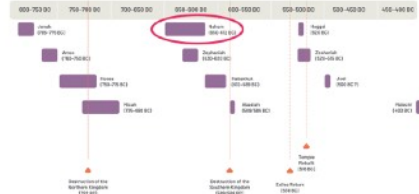
**Nahum** — We don't know much about him. His name means comforter. His vision was not a comfort to the Assyrians, but it was a comfort to God's people who were constantly threatened and oppressed by the Assyrians.

**Elkosh** — We don't know the location of Elkosh, but there is some speculation about its location. In the New Testament, have you heard of the village of Capernaum, where Jesus did many of his miracles? Capernaum means the village of Nahum, so that is probably the location of Elkosh.

## When was it written?

We don't have an exact date, but we have an approximate one. Nineveh was destroyed in 612 BC. In the book of Nahum, it mentions how the Assyrians had already destroyed Thebes in

Egypt. That happened in 663 BC when the Assyrians were at the peak of their power. Nahum wrote sometime in the 50-year window of time between the destruction of Thebes in Egypt and the end of the Assyrian Empire.



How is the book divided? It is divided into four parts.

- 1:2-10 — The Justice and Kindness of God
- 1:11-15 — God will rescue Judah but destroy Assyria
- 2:1-13 — How will God destroy Nineveh?
- 3:1-19 — Why will God destroy Nineveh?

### **Nahum 1:2-10 — God is just, but he is also kind.**

The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD is avenging and wrathful; the LORD takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies. Nahum 1:2 (ESV)

For years, it looked like God ignored the Assyrian brutality. It looked like he ignored evil. God told Nahum, and he tells us that this is not the case. God has wrath. He will take vengeance on his enemies. Nobody gets away with sin, especially the kind of demonic brutality the Assyrians committed.

It says he keeps his wrath for his enemies. In other words, when people sin, most of the time, God doesn't strike them instantly. He is patient with them. He gives them time to repent. It is a good thing God is patient. Aren't you glad God is patient with us? Aren't you glad God gives us time to repent? God is far

more patient with people than we are. But notice what he does with his wrath while he is patient. He stores it up until, at the appointed time, if repentance hasn't taken place, he unleashes his wrath against sin.

The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and the LORD will by no means clear the guilty.... Nahum 1:3a (ESV)

God is slow to anger, but he does not forget sin. He doesn't let the guilty get away with evil.

The question becomes, how does God deal with sin? How does he carry out his wrath? One of the ways is through creation. He controls the planet. He controls the weather. When he carries out his wrath, one of the ways he does that is through the forces of nature. That will become extremely important in a few minutes.

His way is in whirlwind and storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. He rebukes the sea and makes it dry; he dries up all the rivers; Bashan and Carmel wither; the bloom of Lebanon withers. Nahum 1:3b-4 (ESV)

God carries out his wrath through storms and tornadoes. He can even rebuke the sea and make it dry. This is a reminder of God's people crossing the Red Sea on dry ground in Exodus 14 and God's people crossing the Jordan River on dry ground in Joshua 3. In the New Testament, when there was a storm on the Sea of Galilee, and Jesus was asleep in the bow of the boat, Jesus calmed the storm with only his words, and the Bible says the sea went from raging and foaming to instantly flat, dead calm.

The mountains quake before him; the hills melt; the earth heaves before him, the world and all who dwell in it. Who can stand before his indignation? Who can endure the heat of his anger? His wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken into pieces by him. Nahum 1:5-6 (ESV)

God causes earthquakes. Nahum asks the question, “Who can stand before God?” Nobody! Nobody can beat the Assyrians, but the Assyrians are no match for God.

While God is committed to the destruction of his enemies, look at God’s character toward those who trust in him.

The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him. Nahum 1:7 (ESV)

It is much better to be part of the people of God who trust God in times of trouble than to be part of the demonic, brutal Assyrians who are causing all the trouble, especially when God’s patience runs out.

But with an overflowing flood he will make a complete end of the adversaries, and will pursue his enemies into darkness. Nahum 1:8 (ESV)

Remember that God is in control of the weather, and he uses it to carry out his wrath. Here is where it gets fun. How was Nineveh destroyed? I already told you God brought the combined forces of the Babylonians, Medes, and Scythians against the city, but how could they conquer the city with the massive walls, a city built to withstand a 20-year siege?

During the siege, there was massive rainfall and unexpected flooding like never before. The moat around the city walls filled up. Trying to save the city, the Assyrians let the water around the city into the city to drain the moat. It didn’t work. The water against the walls crumbled a 2-mile-long section of wall. It fell over, allowing the invaders to enter into the city.

An ancient Greek historian, Diodorus Siculus, writes about the end of the city,

'In the third year [of the siege] a series of heavy rains swelled the [Tigris], flooded part of the city, and overthrew the wall to a length [of about two miles].' - Diodorus Siculus

Nahum continues.

What do you plot against the LORD? He will make a complete end; trouble will not rise up a second time. Nahum 1:9 (ESV)

This is accurate. Nineveh and Assyria are so destroyed that they go from existing for thousands of years to being lost. It was a complete end, just as God said it would be.

### **Nahum 1:11-15 — God will deliver Judah and destroy Nineveh.**

In the next verses, Nahum alternates back and forth between God's care for Judah and his people and his anger and destruction of the Ninevites.

Thus says the LORD, "Though they are at full strength and many, they will be cut down and pass away..." Nahum 1:12a (ESV)

When Nahum wrote, the Assyrians controlled everything. They had just conquered Thebes in Egypt, a city almost as large as Nineveh. They took control of the Egyptian empire. God said he would cut the nation off when it was at full strength. That is a clear statement about who is in charge: God, not the Assyrians.

Now God speaks to Judah, his people.

...Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no more. And now I will break his yoke from off you and will burst your bonds apart." Nahum 1:12b–13 (ESV)

God promised his people that he would save them from the Assyrians. He was done letting the Assyrians dominate them. Then Nahum went back to talking about the Ninevites.

The LORD has given commandment about you: “No more shall your name be perpetuated; from the house of your gods I will cut off the carved image and the metal image. I will make your grave, for you are vile.” Nahum 1:14 (ESV)

Does anybody get the idea that God is angry? God is digging a grave for the empire. He is disgusted with them. Many opportunities for repentance, but they wouldn't listen. Instead of repentance, over time, they became more depraved. Then Nahum went back to talking about Judah.

Behold, upon the mountains, the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace! Keep your feasts, O Judah; fulfill your vows, for never again shall the worthless pass through you; he is utterly cut off. Nahum 1:15 (ESV)

There is going to be someone coming to give you the good news you couldn't imagine. The Assyrians are gone from the face of the earth, utterly and completely gone.

### **Ninevah's destruction will be complete.**

Almost like a news reporter on the front lines of battle, Nahum gives us the visions he sees of Nineveh's destruction.

The scatterer has come up against you. Man the ramparts; watch the road; dress for battle; collect all your strength. Nahum 2:1 (ESV)

Get ready for battle. The Babylonians, the Medes, and the Scythians have come against you. God challenges them to do their best to defend their impregnable city. Fighting against God will be useless.

The shield of his mighty men is red; his soldiers are clothed in scarlet. The chariots come with flashing metal on the day he musters them; the cypress spears are brandished. Nahum 2:3 (ESV)

It is unclear if this is a reference to the attackers or the defenders of the city. I think it is a reference to the Assyrian soldiers preparing for battle.

The chariots race madly through the streets; they rush to and fro through the squares; they gleam like torches; they dart like lightning. Nahum 2:4 (ESV)

The chariots are racing through the streets getting important officers and people to key places for the battle to defend the city.

**He remembers his officers; they stumble as they go, they hasten to the wall; the siege tower is set up. Nahum 2:5 (ESV)**

Another way of translating this is the King of Nineveh summoned his best troops to the walls, but in the rush to defend the city, there was chaos. They stumble. They fall. By the time they got their act together, the Seige Tower was erected outside the city walls. Who made the best Assyrian troops stumble and fall into confusion at this critical moment? God.

**The river gates are opened; the palace melts away; Nahum 2:6 (ESV)**

Remember the unprecedented flooding God brought about? They opened the river gates to let the water into the city to keep it away from the walls, which didn't work. The water that flooded the city melted the royal palace of the city, the palace known to be without rival was washed away in the flood.

**Nineveh is like a pool whose waters run away. "Halt! Halt!" they cry, but none turns back. Nahum 2:8 (ESV)**

When a two-mile section of the wall collapsed, it looked like the water that flooded the city ran out of the city like a draining pool. As the water and the people rushed out, the Babylonians and other nations rushed in

**Plunder the silver, plunder the gold! There is no end of the treasure or of the wealth of all precious things. Desolate! Desolation and ruin!... Nahum 2:9–10a (ESV)**

Remember, they were filthy rich. Most of their wealth was taken from the nations they conquered. Gold was everywhere. More than enough for everyone. The wealth they took from others was now taken from them.

...Hearts melt and knees tremble; anguish is in all loins; all faces grow pale!  
Nahum 2:10b (ESV)

Those who were left were terrified. After all the torture and brutality they had done to other people, would not be done to them.

Where is the lions' den, the feeding place of the young lions, where the lion and lioness went, where his cubs were, with none to disturb? The lion tore enough for his cubs and strangled prey for his lionesses; he filled his caves with prey and his dens with torn flesh. Behold, I am against you, declares the Lord of hosts, and I will burn your chariots in smoke, and the sword shall devour your young lions. I will cut off your prey from the earth,... Nahum 2:11–13 (ESV)

What is all this stuff about lions and the lion's den? A little history will help.

The Assyrian kings pictured themselves as lions.

Numerous archaeological finds have the head of the king on a lion's body. The lion is the king of the jungle. Assyrians pictured themselves as lions, the kings of the world. Lions who brought their prey back to Nineveh. God said he was against them. The sword would devour his young lions. Not only will the king die, but God will wipe out his children and family line. Did this happen?



When the Babylonians went over the collapsed city walls, the King of Assyria brought his entire family and children into a house and set it on fire, burning himself and his family line to ashes. The king's brother survived for a few years; then, he was wiped out. The family line of the Assyrian kings was completely wiped out, just as God said it would be.



## Nineveh's destruction was the result of her sin.

Woe to the bloody city, all full of lies and plunder— no end to the prey! Nahum 3:1 (ESV)

They were a city of blood. Founded on violence and cruelty. Their history was stained with murder and torture. One drawing on the palace walls depicted the king celebrating his victory over the Elamites. In the banquet hall was a fruit tree. Hanging in the tree was the head of the defeated king, whom he forced to commit suicide. Lies, fraud, and trickery were common practices in business and politics. If you could be tricky in a business deal, that was accepted. It was a kingdom of unashamed liars.

And all for the countless whorings of the prostitute, graceful and of deadly charms, who betrays nations with her whorings, and peoples with her charms. Nahum 3:4 (ESV)

God describes the city as a prostitute. They flatter. They deceive. They seduce, then they destroy, leaving shame, regret, and guilt with everyone.

Next, the destruction in the city was pictured.

The crack of the whip, and rumble of the wheel, galloping horse and bounding chariot! Horsemen charging, flashing sword and glittering spear, hosts of slain, heaps of corpses, dead bodies without end— they stumble over the bodies! Nahum 3:2–3 (ESV)

There was mass slaughter in the city. You can't even go down the street because of all the dead bodies.

Behold, I am against you, declares the LORD of hosts, and will lift up your skirts over your face; and I will make nations look at your nakedness and kingdoms at your shame. I will throw filth at you and treat you with contempt and make you a spectacle. Nahum 3:5-6 (ESV)

Look at the title used for God. He is called the Lord of hosts. That is the Lord of heaven's armies. God was against them. He would destroy them. He

would expose them. He shamed them. He made a spectacle of them. He threw filth on them, that is, excrement.

What did the Assyrians do with the people of the cities they captured? They marched them naked through the streets and did everything they could to fill them with shame, which I assume included throwing excrement on them. What they did to other people, God would do to them.

And he will stretch out his hand against the north and destroy Assyria, and he will make Nineveh a desolation, a dry waste like the desert. Zephaniah 2:13 (ESV)

This is exactly what God did to this city. He turned it into a desert that was covered with sand. If you want to know where it is today, it is called Mosul, Iraq.

Are you better than Thebes that sat by the Nile, with water around her, her rampart a sea, and water her wall? Cush was her strength; Egypt too, and that without limit; Put and the Libyans were her helpers. Yet she became an exile; she went into captivity; her infants were dashed in pieces at the head of every street; for her honored men lots were cast, and all her great men were bound in chains. You also will be drunken; you will go into hiding; you will seek a refuge from the enemy. Nahum 3:8–11 (ESV)

Shortly before Nahum wrote this, the Assyrians conquered Thebes in Egypt. Like Nineveh, Thebes was wealthy and densely populated. Water that was a mile long and a thousand feet wide surrounded the city to act as a moat. Thebes was also defended by multiple military alliances, yet the Assyrians conquered her. In typical Assyrian brutality, they smashed the children to pieces on rocks and divided up the great men by lot. If a city as great and protected as Thebes couldn't protect itself from the Assyrians, there was nothing Nineveh could do to protect itself from God.

...Behold, your troops are women in your midst. The gates of your land are wide open to your enemies; fire has devoured your bars. Nahum 3:12-13 (ESV)

Your 1,200 defense towers on the city walls will not protect your troops; like a tree of ripe fruit, they would drop their troops when shaken. Instead of courageous troops, they would become cowardly troops on the day of battle. Instead of the gates being protection for them, God would make sure they were wide open. The wood bars that lock the city gates would be burned with fire.

You increased your merchants more than the stars of the heavens. The locust spreads its wings and flies away. Your princes are like grasshoppers, your scribes like clouds of locusts settling on the fences in a day of cold— when the sun rises, they fly away; no one knows where they are. Nahum 3:16-17 (ESV)

All the city's merchants, Walmart, Costco, and McDonald's, would instantly leave the city after the attack and fly away. There would be nothing to buy in a city, even though it was once world-famous for its commerce. The princes and the scribes, who were the thinkers and leaders of the city, would also all leave. Nobody will know where they went. There will be no national loyalty. No patriotism. Everyone was there just to enrich themselves, and when that opportunity was gone, everyone would leave.

Lastly, Nahum speaks directly to how God would deal with the king of Assyria.

Your shepherds are asleep. O king of Assyria: your nobles slumber. Your people are scattered on the mountains with none to gather them. There is no easing your hurt; your wound is grievous. All who hear the news about you clap their hands over you. For upon whom has not come your unceasing evil? Nahum 3:18-19 (ESV)

As for the king, all the people who worked for him would be rendered inept. In the crisis of the siege, they would fail to provide leadership. It would be as if they were asleep. Nobody would know what to do. The people would be like sheep without shepherds. The wound to the king of Assyria will be grievous. It

will be fatal. As you already know, it was such a helpless situation that the king took himself and all of his family, then committed suicide by burning everyone to death in part of the palace.

What a legacy he left behind. Everyone who heard of his death would celebrate because he had done nothing but unceasing evil with his life.

That is crazy.

### **Lessons from Nahum**

1. God is large and in charge. No matter how powerful evil people or nations become in this world, God is fully capable of destroying them, even erasing them from history for 2,400 years.
2. God is patient with sin, but he will eventually judge sin. God's patience with sin should not be misunderstood as a weakness against sin. Judgment may come in this life. If not now, for sure, in the next life. This means our greatest problem in life right now is not a troubled marriage, wayward kids, aging parents, financial struggles, failing health, or culture wars. The main problem we have on the planet is God and his just anger against our sins.
3. God saves the people who trust in Him. God disciplined his people with the Assyrians, but he also saved them from the Assyrians. God is still in the business of rescuing those who trust in him. Now, he saves us eternally through Jesus.
4. Prophecy, which proves true in history, is a reminder that the Bible is trustworthy. Who would have believed that God could take the mightiest nation on earth and almost overnight put them out of existence?

As I close, Nahum wants you to know there is a God who is large and in charge of this world. He is patient with sin, but he also promises to eventually judge sin. When God judges sin, there is no avoiding Him. It doesn't matter who you are.

The good news is that just as God promises to bring justice against sins, he also promises to be gracious and merciful to all who call out to him, asking him to save them from their sins. We see this, especially through Jesus, who died on the cross to take upon himself our sins and to suffer his Father's wrath against sin for us.

This morning, I urge you to confess your sins to Jesus. Admit your sin. Own your sins. Ask Jesus to forgive your sin. Then give your life to Jesus. Follow Jesus with all of your heart. Walk with Jesus by reading his word and living to please him with your life.



Dr. Kurt Trucksess is ordained in the Evangelical Free Church of America. He enjoys reading, writing, and time with his family. Feel free to contact him at [www.Christ2RCulture.com](http://www.Christ2RCulture.com) ([www.c2rc.com](http://www.c2rc.com))

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