

Message #3**Nahum 1:6-15**

We begin this with a quote from George Washington concerning the celebration of Thanksgiving. He made this statement in 1789: “Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits and humbly to implore His protection and favor and whereas both houses of Congress have by their joint committed requested me to recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God...”

There was a time in this country when the leaders of the nation realized the importance of this nation being in a right relationship with God. There was a time when people realized if we have the blessings of God we will prosper, but if we don’t we are doomed.

That is the message Nahum wanted to communicate to God’s people:

GOD’S PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD WILL TRACK DOWN AND DESTROY ENEMIES, BUT AT THE SAME TIME HE WILL PROTECT AND PROSPER HIS PEOPLE WHO ARE HIS ALLIES.

Now this is a hard hitting book aimed straight at Nineveh, which was the capital of Assyria. This was the place of the power. This was the capital city where the leaders of the nation lived. The problem is, they were not really interested in God or His word. They lived their lives with no fear of God or no concern for God’s word, so God says you need to know truth.

There are seven main revelatory facts that God’s people and God’s enemies need to know:

REVELATORY FACT #1 – God is God of anger and wrath. 1:6

Understand this point; there is a terrifying side to the Living God. Even the writer of Hebrews in the New Testament said, “It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the Living God” (Heb. 10:31).

If God gets angry to the level of pouring out His wrath, that individual, city or nation will cease to exist on this earth.

Verse 6 could not be any clearer on this point. Nahum asks two questions, which are both based on what he said in the opening verses. God is a majestically sovereign God, who controls everything. These are rhetorical questions and the answer is if God gets angry, you have no chance of survival.

Question #1 - Who can stand before His indignation?

The word indignation (za am) is a word that means to be so angry and enraged against someone that God is at a level where He curses something (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 250).

So Nahum's question is when someone has angered God to this level to the point where He is so enraged and angry to the point of cursing them with His sovereign curses, who can stand up against that? The answer is no one.

Question #2 - Who can endure the burning of His anger?

The words "burning anger" (heron) is a word that refers to burn to the level of an enraged flaming anger that is at a level of destruction (*Ibid.*, p. 232).

So when one has angered God to the level where He is enraged to a curse and destruction level, who can stand against Him?

The answer is no one. When God pours out His wrath like fire and starts shattering rocks and mountains, no little man can do anything about it.

Man cannot stand up and fight God. Man cannot square off against the burning anger of God and win.

When God decides to target some thing or someone with His anger, no one has a chance of stopping it.

People need to know this about God. It is possible as a nation, a state, a city, a church or an individual to so anger God that He is enraged to the point that He says I am done putting up with you and I am done fooling around with you and I am going to pour out My judgment.

REVELATORY FACT #2 – God is a God who is good. **1:7**

One commentator said God's enemies will be destroyed, but God's people will always be safe. Now just as God is a God of anger and wrath, He is also a God who is good. He is good to those who take refuge in Him. He is good to a specific group.

What this passage says is that God knows who takes refuge in Him and He knows who doesn't. When God is pouring out His judgments and out of anger pouring out His wrath on people, He will be a strong protector of those who love Him and His word and take refuge in Him.

This fact becomes the basis for wanting to have a right relationship with God. God is good to His people. God will protect His people. God loves it when His people take refuge in Him in times of trouble.

Now Nahum is very specific to state God “knows” those who take refuge in Him. That word “know” (*yada*) means to know something by personally perceiving something (*Ibid.*, p. 333).

What this means is that God actually sees and perceives and knows by monitoring over time whether or not a person turns to Him, trusts Him and finds their refuge in Him. There will be times in our lives when we will discover that God is our only refuge and we need Him. When we come to that realization, we are safe because what we will discover is this:

God is our personal God.

God is our provisional God.

God is our protective God.

God is our powerful God.

God is our permanent God.

No one will ever regret having God as a refuge.

The important thing to see is that God is actually aware of and acquainted with those who are dedicated to Him and His word. He will specifically protect those and shelter those when He is in the process of pouring out His angry vengeance on those who are His targets.

One of the great Biblical illustrations of this is Rahab. Jericho was about to be totally destroyed by God but one woman decided to turn to the LORD and she and her family were spared.

REVELATORY FACT #3 – God is a God who destroys enemies. 1:8

God wants to make it very clear that the same God who is protecting His people is also tracking His enemies. When God makes a decision to destroy enemies, it is complete and final.

God is a God of grace, but He is also a God of justice. Just as His goodness shelters His people who take refuge in Him, so His burning anger sends a flood of destructive judgment against His enemies.

By using the word “flood” we know he has a sweeping judgment in mind because that is what God did with the flood in the days of Noah. From what we learn in this verse, one does not want to be classified by God as His enemy.

There are four observations we make from this verse:

First, there are those whom God classifies as “His enemies” (*ayeb*). This is a strong word because God is saying there are people who are My enemies. They hate Me and they hate My word. They are hostile to Me and My word. They are My enemies (*Ibid.*, p. 36).

Second, God says I will overtake them with an overflowing flood. God says I will sweep My enemies away like a flood and with a flood. God literally did use a flood to destroy the walls of Nineveh.

James Montgomery Boice writes: “According to secular accounts, during the final siege of Nineveh by a rebel army of Persians, Medes, Arabians and Babylonians, unusually heavy rains cause the rivers to flood and undermine the city’s walls, which then collapsed over a length of twenty-one furlongs (2.6 miles), the flood waters destroyed walls making it easy for enemies to take and destroy Nineveh” (*The Minor Prophets*, p. 62). God literally did what is predicted here.

Third, God says I will completely make an end of them. Literally I will remove them from where they are and bring them to a complete end.

When God has destroyed certain cities, He permits them to be rebuilt. For example, Jerusalem was destroyed and rebuilt. He never permitted Nineveh to be rebuilt. In fact, the ruins were not even discovered for hundreds of years.

Fourth, God says I will pursue them into darkness.

By virtue of the fact that God says I will pursue them into darkness means God will track them down and destroy them even if it takes all night. He is not chasing them to put them into Heaven. But He is pursuing them to put them into the dark pits of Hell.

Now an enemy of God may be a nation, state or individual. History has shown that when God targets any one of them, that is exactly what happens.

He targeted Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, and He swept them away.

He targeted Nineveh and swept it away.

He targeted Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Alexander the Great, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero and swept them away.

He targeted Hitler and swept him away.

He targeted Saddam Hussein, Osama Bin Laden and swept them away.

REVELATORY FACT #4 – God is a God who cannot be defeated. **1:9-12a**

No one can ever or will ever beat God! There are some key things we learn here about what is going on behind the scenes and what God will do:

Observation #1 - Whatever many devise against the LORD will fail. **1:9-10**

The “you” here is second person plural, indicating many different people. Enemies of God do devise things against God. That word “devise” is important. There are people who literally think out things and invent things and compose things that are against God (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 311). This is real planning. These are things contrary to Him and His word.

The Piel stem of the Hebrew verb means this is intensive and eager action. These people are intense and eager to do things contrary to God and His word. What God says here is what He will do:

(Action #1) - God will make a complete end of it. **1:9b**

(Action #2) - God will not give a second chance. **1:9c**

One judgment of God will be enough. It will be so severe that a second one will not be necessary.

(Action #3) - The enemies of God will be tangled. **1:10a**

Most do not realize this. God is the One who sets people free. It is the enemies of God who tangle them up in one mess after another.

(Action #4) - The enemies of God will walk in a stupor. **1:10b**

Drunken excess is part of those who are enemies of God and who have lifestyles that are enemies of God. God says, I will use their addictions and stupors to bring them down.

(Action #5) - The enemies of God will be consumed. **1:10c**

It is more than just interesting that archeological discoveries made concerning Nineveh discovered that there was much charred wood, charcoal and ashes, some of which were 2 inches thick. God literally did consume this city and caused it to be burned down never to be rebuilt.

(Action #6) - The enemies of God will wither. **1:10d**

Enemies of God will never flourish. They will deteriorate. They will become less and less and eventually will wither away.

Observation #2 - Whatever one plots against the LORD will fail. **1:11-12a**

The pronoun “you” here is singular, indicating the individual. It is the same word but notice the emphasis here is on the one doing it. One who has plotted evil. There are individuals who plot evil and counsel people in wicked ways.

They appear to have full strength and power. God says I will cut them off and they will pass away. God says it doesn't matter who they are or how many they are, they are no match for Me.

REVELATORY FACT #5 – God is a God who will save His faithful people. **1:12b-13**

This is a tremendous text for the people who love God and His word:

- 1) God promises that He will afflict them no longer. **1:12b**
- 2) God promises that He will take the heavy yoke of enemies away. **1:13a**
- 3) God promises that He will remove shackles that hindered them. **1:13b**

REVELATORY FACT #6 – God is a God who will eliminate and annihilate His contemptible enemies. **1:14**

- 1) God has commanded what He will do to His enemies. **1:14a**
- 2) God will remove the memory of the name of enemies. **1:14b**

When God promises to cut off the name, He is not only saying I am cutting off the memory, but also the progeny. There will be no more in existence from this enemy.

- 3) God will cut off and cut down all idols. **1:14c**
- 4) God will prepare their grave. **1:14d**

God states the reason is because they are “contemptible” in His sight. God says in My view these people are vile.

REVELATORY FACT #7 – God is a God who will forever restore His people. **1:15**

Now here God takes us into the Future to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and what He will do for Israel.

- 1) One will come on the mountains and bring good news. **1:15a**
- 2) One will come on the mountains and bring peace. **1:15b**
- 3) One will come on the mountains who will restore worship for national Israel. **1:15c**
- 4) One will come on the mountains who will completely remove evil forever. **1:15d**

Sometimes in life we will face big enemies. They have prominence and they have power. The thing we need to keep in mind is this—God will deliver faithful people and He will take down and take out our enemies and persecutors.

What God wants is that His people turn to Him as their refuge.

That point is very clear from this text in Nahum.