

Your Shepherds are Asleep

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[0 : 00] Nahum chapter 3, this is the word of the Lord. They stumble over the bodies.

And all for the countless whorings of the prostitute, graceful and of deadly charms, who betrays the nations with her whorings and peoples with her charms.

Behold, I am against you, declares the Lord of hosts, and will lift up your skirts over your face and will make nations look on your nakedness and kingdoms at your shame.

I will throw filth at you and treat you with contempt and make you a spectacle. And all who look at you will shrink from you and say, Wasted is Nineveh. Who will grieve for her?

Where shall I seek comforters for you? Are you better than Thebes that sat by the Nile with water all around her, her ramparts a sea and water her wall?

[1 : 29] 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. All your fortresses are like fig trees with ripe figs.

If shaken, they fall into the mouths of the eater. Behold, your troops are women in your midst. The gates of your land are wide open to your enemies.

Fire has devoured your bars. Draw water for your siege. Strengthen your forts. Go into the clay. Tread the mortar. Take hold of the brick mold.

[2 : 28] There the fire will devour you. The sword will cut you off. It will devour you like the locusts. Multiply yourself like the locusts. Multiply like the grasshopper.

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 and no one knows where they are. Your shepherds are asleep.

O king of Assyria, your nobles slumber. Your people are scattered on the mountains with no one 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?

[3 : 27] May God teach us from his word. Let's go. In Exodus 33, Moses makes an incredibly bold request of the Lord.

Please show me your glory. And the Lord says that he will. And then in Exodus 33, he tells Moses how he will show him his glory.

He will put him into the cleft of a rock. And he will cause his glory to pass before Moses, but he will conceal himself from Moses in a way.

So that Moses only sees his back and not his face. It's this incredible, fascinating, strange, perhaps wondrous plan described in Exodus 33.

Then the next day, the plan is executed. Moses rises in the morning. He goes up on the mountain. But then there is a shift in the focus.

[4 : 32] And it becomes less about God showing his glory for the eye to see. And it becomes more about God proclaiming his glory for the ear to hear.

It's God telling us who he is. It's God telling us what he's like in Exodus 34. So you want to see God's glory?

Listen to his word. The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and

transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation.

Well, this is the fourth and the final part in our short sermon series through the book of Nahum. And what has Nahum done for us?

He too has shown us God's glory. The Lord, who was merciful and gracious to even a pagan nation, a people, the people of the city of Nineveh.

[5 : 51] He was slow to anger. He was abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. He sent Jonah to preach to this people, and they repented. They turned from their sin to him.

He forgave their iniquity, their transgression, their sin in that generation. And in so doing, God showed his great glory. Now, a few generations later, Nineveh has turned away from the Lord once more.

The people of this great city have returned to their pagan, idolatrous ways. They have forsaken God. And now God is going to show his great glory yet again.

The God who showed his glory in his mercy and grace. The God who showed his glory in his slowness to anger, his steadfast love and faithfulness. This God is now going to show his glory by not clearing the guilty.

Just as he says in Nahum 1.3, The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, and the Lord will by no means clear the guilty. The book of Nahum is short.

[7 : 06] The book of Nahum is easy to overlook. Sometimes hard to find in our Bibles. The book of Nahum is about an ancient city that now lies in ruin. But more than anything, the book of Nahum shows us the glory of God.

We want to see his glory tonight. So as we come to the last chapter of this glorious book, here's how we're going to organize our text.

Nahum presents us in this text with three falsehoods, three lies that we must not believe. Three lies that we must fight hard against.

Lies that the world and the flesh and the devil love to promote. Lies that sometimes sound oh so very persuasive. So Nahum is going to help us.

He's going to help us fight against those lies with the glorious truth of his word, of God's word. So let's consider the first falsehood together, the first lie, and that is this.

[8 : 11] God is a bully. God is a bully. Read again with me. Nahum chapter 3, beginning in verse 1.

He says, whorings and peoples with her charms. 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. And all who look at you will shrink from you and say, wasted is Nineveh. Who will grieve for her? Where shall I seek comforters for you? What we see here in Nahum chapter 3 is really just a continuation of Nahum chapter 2. If you've been with us in this sermon series, you might have noticed and thought, this sounds really similar. Nahum is saying a lot of the same things that he said in chapter 2. More judgment, more destruction. Nineveh is going to be destroyed. It's going to be wiped out. Now why is that going to happen? And we've seen, well on the human level, what our eyes would see without the inspired word of God is that a stronger, mightier coalition of nations is rising up and expanding, conquering lands, taking them as their own. We see this throughout human history.

Nations rise up, and as they do, others fall. So the Medes, the Babylonians, they are on the rise. And that means that the Assyrians will be brought down. That's what's happening on the human level. It's very concrete. It's described for us in clear ways. Dead bodies strewn through the streets. Shame and nakedness. The people of this nation, this city here, completely disgraced and humiliated, covered in filth, treated with contempt, made to be this spectacle for the watching world to see. And no one's going to shed a tear for this city and its people. No one to grieve for her. No one to comfort her. So all of that we see from the human level, from the earthly perspective. You can read history books about the fall of Nineveh. But Nahum provides us with a different, unique perspective. The inspired word of God pulls back the curtain and helps us to see very clearly what is going on from the heavenly perspective. This is not just the destruction of a city and also a nation at the hands of human enemies.

This is coming destruction at the very hand of God. We saw this already in chapter 2. We see it in chapter 3. What does God say? I am against you. And for God to be against you is a terrifying thought.

Because it means that His righteous anger, His wrath, is not just directed at your physical body, but towards your never-dying soul. God has power and authority that no human being, no great nation can match. Jesus said in Luke 12, I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, like the Medes and the Babylonians, and after that have nothing more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear. Fear Him who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear Him, Jesus said. The Medes and the Babylonians were against Nineveh. They were very capable of inflicting great harm, of killing the body. Nahum 3.3 says, hosts of slain, heaps of corpses, dead bodies without end. So many that the enemy army is stumbling over those bodies in the streets. [12:45] That is an enemy to be feared, but not to be feared as much as God. Only God can cast into hell. And this God was against Nineveh, as He is against all who sinfully rebel against Him. His wrath is on full display here. Do you have people in your life who embarrass you in public? Maybe they make you a little squeamish. They're brash with other people, or they say things that are a little socially awkward, and you're embarrassed of them. You feel like you need to apologize for them. You feel like you need to rough out their smooth edges, or that you need to smooth out their rough edges. Do you have people in your life that you treat that way? What about God? Do you treat God that way? Do you feel like you need to apologize for Him? Do you feel like you need to make excuses for what He says, to explain away what He says? Are you a little bit embarrassed of Him? Perhaps in a text like this, Nahum chapter 3.

The book of Nahum is not all sunshine and roses. The book of Nahum has hard things to say. There is hard truth to swallow. And we might be tempted to think, God is a little bit overblown in His response to Nineveh.

God is over the top in how He's treating them. Critics of the Bible will go to passages like Nahum 3, really the whole book of Nahum, and they will say, see, look at how cruel God is. He is shaming people. It's a terrible thing to shame people. And He's saying that He's pulling their skirts over their faces. He's showing their nakedness. That's dehumanizing. He's pelting them with filth, He says, throwing garbage at them. A more wooden, clunky translation of that would be, He's throwing objects of abhorrence, detestable things. Critics will read all of that, and they will say, that's what a bully does. A bully does those kinds of things. That's not what a good, loving, kind God does. If there's a God, the critic says, He can't be anything like Nahum chapter 3. We hear those things, and we might be tempted to agree on some level. We might be tempted to think, God does sound a little bit like a bully here. So what do we do with that? Nahum is helping us to see what those in their unbelief refuse to see, the depth of man's sin. Nineveh is a clear example to us. How did chapter 3 open up? Woe to the bloody city. This is not woe to the city who is experiencing bloodshed, though they are. This is woe to the city who has shed blood. Woe to the city who has blood on their hands. And what else does He say? All full of lies and plunder. We've seen this already, that Nineveh would ransack nations, bring their goods, their own people back to their nation. No end to the prey. You could translate that never without victims. Nineveh is not innocent. In fact, the book of Nahum ends with this condemning question. Look at the end of chapter 3. For upon whom has not come your unceasing evil? Not, oh, you messed up once or twice here. You made a few mistakes, Nineveh, and now I'm destroying you. No, upon whom has not come your unceasing evil? How could we not be crying out for the justice of God, for the wrath of God to be poured out on such unrepentant, unceasing wickedness? God is not the bully here. Nineveh is the bully. God is dealing out the just consequences.

[17:18] He is giving the just reward for Nineveh's wickedness. And so we may be told God is the bad guy. We may be told God is the big bully. And yet that could not be farther from the truth.

The problem isn't with God. The problem is not with His treatment of us. The problem is with us, with the sinful heart of man. The lie we must fight against believing is that people are basically good. How could God treat basically good people in this way? How could God treat the innocent in this way? The answer is He doesn't. God does not treat the good as He's treated Nineveh. God does not treat innocent people as He has treated Nineveh. But no one, not one, is innocent in themselves. No one, not one, is good in themselves. So even if we're reading this and we're thinking, well, I haven't committed the same atrocities as Nineveh. Even if we are not as bad or as sinful as we possibly could be, we all have rebel hearts. Jesus had no problem pointing this out in the Sermon on the Mount.

He said, you have heard that it was said to those of old, you shall not murder, and whoever murders will be liable to judgment. But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable

to the council. And whoever says, you fool, will be liable to the hell of fire.

You haven't murdered like the Ninevites. Okay. Have you been angry with someone? Kids, have you called someone a name like Jesus was called friend of sinners?

No part of us untouched by sin. There's no part of us that hasn't been polluted. Our natures are corrupt. The scriptures teach that we are all physically born in Adam. And so we all, like Adam, have committed high treason against the King of Heaven. All have hardened hearts and take their stand against Him.

[19 : 43] So truly the question isn't, how could God treat any who are innocent so harshly? The question is, how could God treat any who are guilty with His mercy? If all are guilty before Him, why does He show mercy to any? And of course the answer is only found in Jesus Christ, God's mercy shown to rebel sinners like us, because His wrath was poured out violently upon His Son.

God does not bully innocent people. He shows mercy to guilty rebels who turn to Christ. So that's the first falsehood that we must not believe. God is no bully. He's a just, righteous judge who will not let evil go unchecked. Here's the second falsehood that Nahum addresses.

What happened to someone else won't happen to me. That's a lie we may be tempted to believe, and Nahum helps us to address that beginning in verse 8.

Are you better than Thebes that sat by the Nile with water around her, her rampart to 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. All your fortresses are like fig trees with first ripe figs. If shaken, they fall into the mouth of the eater. Behold, your troops are women in your midst. The gates of your land are wide open to your enemies. Fire has devoured your bars. We're probably familiar with the phrase of the saying, he thinks he's Superman, or she thinks that she's invincible. We often say that when talking to someone younger than us. We're trying to warn them of danger. Maybe it's something that you're speaking from experience on. You've suffered the consequences associated with that danger, and yet you maybe didn't heed the warnings that you once received. And so you want to help this young person to avoid the same mistakes that you made. But they don't listen to you. They brush you off, and they go and they make that very mistake that you did. And now maybe you're thinking, yeah, I didn't listen to the advice of another, of those who warned me. And so you see the example.

[22 : 40] Do you see what happens if you do this? And that younger person says, no, I'll be more careful. That younger person says, no, I'll be okay. I'll be fine. I'm smarter than that. Of course, that happened to them, but it won't happen to me. That's the thinking of Nineveh. The people of this city think that they are invincible. What happened to Thebes surely won't happen to us. And Nineveh, knew the fate of Thebes better than any other nation, because Thebes fell to Assyria. They were the very nation that led Thebes into captivity. So Nahum here is giving Nineveh an example that's very close to home. Nineveh, you know what happened to Thebes. You were there. You were responsible for her fall. Remember how mighty of a city Thebes was? How unconquerable it seemed? Don't think yourself any more secure, any better fortified. The reality is the fortresses of your city are like ripened figs on the tree. Give that tree a little shake and the figs will fall. Give your fortress a little shake and the doors. The gates will burst wide open. You think yourself so strong and mighty. But when the invaders arrive, you will be no better off than Thebes. Your mighty army will lose all of its strength. That's what Nahum means when he says your troops are women in your midst. That's not Nahum being sexist. That's not Nahum demeaning women here. In other places in Scripture, the strength of the godly woman is held up and esteemed. Like in Proverbs 31. The Proverbs 31 woman, verse 17 reads, she dresses herself with strength. You could translate that more literally to say she girds her loins.

You remember that? From Nahum chapter 2, God said to Nineveh, man the ramparts, watch the road, gird your loins, or dress for battle, collect all your strength. So God was telling the men of Nineveh to gird up their loins, to prepare their strength for battle. The Proverbs 31 woman has an undeniable strength about her. She too girds her loins, but not for battle. She girds her loins, she prepares her strength for conducting the affairs of her household, for doing business with the merchants, for giving to the poor, for working hard day and night, for buying a field.

She is mighty in her domain. She has strength for all sorts of things, but not strength intended for war. Women aren't weaklings, but men are endowed by God with a greater measure of physical strength that then should be courageously exerted in defense of women. Here in battle, Nahum says, that strength of their men will wither. Their courage will melt. A physical weakness will overtake them. Nineveh, in all of its pride, thought that it was Superman. It was as though the people of the city said, what happened to Thebes won't happen to us. Their fate won't be ours. And so Nineveh was going to learn the truth of Proverbs 16, 18. Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.

If you are outside of Christ tonight, do you see that Nineveh is the example to you that Thebes was to Nineveh?

Do you think that somehow you will be immune from God's judgment? Do you think that you will escape punishment for your sin? Don't make the same mistake that Nineveh made. Don't think yourself somehow special or exempt, how naturally pride rises to the surface of our hearts and how deceived we can be in our pride. We can give ourselves all kinds of false comfort and false assurance. We can think things like, I think God will accept me into heaven. I think I'll be okay on that final day.

[27 : 10] Don't fool yourself. Don't think yourself Superman. If you aren't in Christ, God won't accept you into heaven. You won't be okay on that final day. You will be judged for your sins just as Nineveh was.

Let this city serve as an example to you. Nahum 3.11 says that Nineveh would seek a refuge from the enemy. And it's clearly implied that no refuge was found. The only refuge for rebel sinners is the Savior, Jesus Christ. Flee to Christ. Find him to be a safe shelter for your soul.

The only safe shelter from the wrath that is coming against all ungodliness. So don't think that what happened to those sinners like Nineveh won't happen to you.

And remember, this happened at just the time that God determined. You have no way of knowing the time that God has set for you to face judgment. And there is a set time. There is a specific day and time determined. God's word in Hebrews 9 says that it's appointed for man to die once and after that comes judgment. Flee to Christ and find him to be a refuge while he still offers salvation to you.

Well, let's look at the third falsehood now that Nahum addresses. Human powers can save me. Human powers can save me. And let's begin reading in verse 14.

[28 : 55] Draw water for the siege. Strengthen your forts. Go into the clay. Tread the mortar. Take hold of the brick mold. There will the fire devour you. The sword will cut you off. It will devour you like the locust. Multiply yourselves like the locust. Multiply like the grasshopper. 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. 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.

Here we see this truth that is taught all over the Bible. There is no salvation in man. Psalm 146 beginning in verse 3. Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man in whom there is no salvation. When his breath departs, he returns to the earth. On that very day, his plans perish.

The same truth taught here in Nahum 3. We can break it down into three ways. First, by looking at the structures built by human powers. And then by looking at the armies assembled by human powers, and then looking at the human powers themselves. So verse 14 draws our attention to those structures.

Don't put your trust in what man can build. Nineveh was an imposing city, well fortified. We've already seen in other parts of Nahum that the people of Judah likely were tempted to think this city can't be taken. This empire won't fall. It's too strong. Just as people in the days of the Titanic thought the Titanic is unsinkable. The people of Nineveh themselves would have put trust into the work of their hands and said, our city can't be taken. So God says, you can strengthen your defenses, verse 14. You can get the clay, you can get the mortar, you can repair the brickwork, but there is no such thing as an impenetrable fortress. And especially when it is the Lord who comes to lay siege, using the Medes and those Babylonians as the instrument in his hand, bringing fire and sword to destroy the land and to do it with the force of, or do it in a way that's similar to the

swarming locusts that devour a field of crops. Nahum loves this imagery associated with locusts. Kids, do you know what locusts are? They're just a little insect, a flying creature, similar to a grasshopper, just a flying bug. But when lots of locusts come together, we call that a swarm, they can do some serious damage. If I had a locust in my hand right now, it wouldn't do much. It would be just kind of sitting there. But if we had a whole swarm of locusts, those locusts could do some serious damage.

[32 : 33] And that's the way that we're to imagine this invading army. Like a swarm of locusts coming into the land and leaving this path of destruction behind them. So the city and its structures are going to be razed to the ground. And we see there's no salvation in the structures built by human powers. And then next we see that there's no salvation in the armies assembled by human powers.

And Nahum returns to the imagery of the locust. So they are known, these little insects are known for bringing destruction, we just saw. They're also known for multiplying quickly. Scientists say that they can multiply 20 times over in a span of three months. So if you had a family of five, I know from experience, then that would mean that by the end of July, that family of five would become a family of 100. Our family is working through the logistics of adding one member of our family this coming fall. I can't imagine adding 94. And so through Nahum, God says with sarcasm in his voice, multiply yourselves like locusts, or multiply yourselves like rabbits, we might think.

Muster as many troops as you can. Increase your army 20 times over. It won't matter. They'll fall by the sword. They'll be devoured by the fire. Or they'll flee. We saw that in Nahum 2 verse 7. When their commanders were crying out, halt, halt, but none turns back. So God is just adding layer upon layer here to the truth that human powers can't save. The buildings they construct will crumble, the troops that they muster will be defeated, and now we see the human powers themselves will perish.

What does Nahum do? He returns to the image of the locust one more time. But not to describe the destruction of the city, and not to describe the army as it's routed, but to describe those human powers themselves. Beginning in verse 16. There we see this description of the merchants of the city.

[34 : 49] Those who had been responsible for the economic success. They had grown the economy, and had seen the business sector swelling. But just as quickly as it grew, when those Medes and Babylonians were advancing upon the city, those merchants fled. And what did they flee like?

They fled like the locust. They got out of town and they took all of their goods with them. The swarm that had descended upon the city, now it takes flight and it's gone.

But the merchants aren't the only powerful people in the city described as locusts. So too are these princes and scribes in verse 17. They are leading men in the city, these prominent individuals.

They are like locusts that settle on the fence on a cold day. That's what insects do. When it's cold out, they become inactive, they become docile. But as soon as it warms up, perhaps with the rising of the sun, they come back to life and they fly away. So too did those government officials. As they saw that advancing army marching towards the city, they sprang to life and they took flight along with the merchants.

Then in verse 18, for the first time, we realize that God is speaking directly to the king of Assyria.

[36 : 14] And he's saying, he's drawing his attention to the fact that chaos and ruin, complete collapse of the empire are coming. And he says, your shepherds are asleep. He says that your nobles slumber. Not literally they're taking a nap. More so meaning they're dead. They are sleeping the sleep of death.

All of your government officials, all of the leading men of your city, they've either fled or they've been killed. Your people are without leaders. They've been scattered on the mountains.

No hope of return. No hope of victory. Your defeat is certain. Your structures built by human powers your armies assembled by human powers. The human powers themselves. None of them can save you.

Put not your trust in princes and a son of man in whom there is no salvation. So we're tempted, even in our day, to believe the lie that human powers can save us.

It's an election year. Every election year, we have to fight the thought that this candidate or this measure will bring about some kind of salvation. This person is the answer to the ills of our society. It is good for us to vote for those people or those measures that most align with God's word. But we

can't forget where our salvation is ultimately found. Our sovereign God sits on his throne and we rest all of our hope in him. So we can be thankful for those that God puts in places of power who represent him well. We can be thankful for measures or amendments that reflect the truth of his word.

[38 : 11] We should oppose evil. We should advocate for good. And we can do that in our country. That's a blessing and a privilege from God. But our hope is ultimately in no man. Our hope is ultimately in no measure.

Even godly politicians will eventually leave office. Even good Supreme Court rulings can be overthrown. Human powers can't save us. Our salvation is only in the Lord. So the people of Nineveh looked for salvation in all the wrong places. And they stubbornly rebelled against the only one who actually can save.

Because of their rebellion, they were destroyed. Then word spread about this. Remember Nahum 1.7? Behold, upon the mountains, the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace. That idea now repeated here in chapter 3, verse 19. All who hear the news about you clap their hands over you.

They rejoice at the downfall of you, Nineveh, because they've suffered under your sinful, wicked wrath. And now, the righteous judge is going to swiftly pour out his holy wrath on you, Nineveh.

[39 : 38] Now we've seen this already in Nahum, but it's worth coming back to. As God judges his enemies, at the very same time, he saves his people.

In pouring out his wrath against his enemies, he's showing his goodness towards his people. Now some may ask, how is it that God can be both good and also full of wrath?

How can he be both? But the better question is, how is it that God could be good and not be full of wrath towards wickedness?

His goodness necessitates his righteous wrath upon all who are evil. It is because God is good that he judges the wicked. He is not good if he allows evil to remain, if he gives evil a pass.

His wrath against sin actually arises out of his holy goodness and love. Now remember Nahum 1? Nahum 1 tells us that God is jealous.

[40 : 51] He's protective of what he holds dear. So his name, his reputation, his word, his people. So because he is good and because he is jealous, he won't allow for the wicked to continue forever.

He protects what he holds dear and he protects what is good. So justice will come just at the time that he appoints. And that appointed time for Nineveh came in 612 BC.

Those Medes and Babylonians arrived. They destroyed the capital city of Assyria. What remained of that kingdom quickly crumbled. All who heard the news clapped their hands.

The people of Judah who were receiving this oracle from Nahum. They would have rejoiced. They would have recalled the words of Nahum in chapter 2 where we read, For the Lord is restoring the majesty of Jacob as the majesty of Israel.

For plunderers have plundered them and ruined their branches. And the people of Judah, along with the people of Israel, all of God's people would have easily thought, Now the Lord is fulfilling his promise.

[42 : 06] As he said in Nahum, Nineveh has fallen. Assyria is going to be wiped out. He is going to restore the majesty of his people. They would have thought our hopes are going to be realized.

Only they weren't. Because one enemy oppressor was simply defeated by another enemy oppressor. The Assyrians fell, but the Babylonians arose.

And that baton of oppression was just passed from one nation to another. The people of God had been oppressed by Assyria. Now they are going to be oppressed by Babylon.

So the good news of Assyria's defeat didn't sound so good any longer to the people of Israel. So if we wrapped up our study in Nahum with the defeat of Assyria, we're actually left with a pretty sad ending.

The people of Israel still in captivity. The people of Judah on the verge of defeat themselves at the hands of Babylon. Only 50 years later or so, Nebuchadnezzar, he would come strolling into Jerusalem to destroy it just like Nineveh.

[43 : 25] To scatter its people just like Nineveh. So how then can we finish Nahum and have any hope? Will God save his people?

Will his enemies come to an end? Or will they just keep respawning? Will they just keep multiplying like the locust? This is why we can't read our Old Testament in isolation from the New.

Otherwise, we might as well be sitting in a Jewish synagogue with a rabbi leading the service. We must see how the hopes and the promises of the book of Nahum point forward to and find their fulfillment in Christ.

Our shepherd is nothing like the shepherds of Assyria. Our shepherd has gathered us who were scattered.

Our shepherd does not slumber. Our shepherd is not sleeping the sleep of death. He's defeated death. He ever lives. And he reigns now in heaven.

[44 : 33] He is ready to return on the day that his father has fixed, when he will judge the world in righteousness, bringing full defeat to all of his enemies, bringing full salvation to all of his people.

That is the day of restoration promised in Nahum. And we eagerly await that day when our God will return and we will see his glory with our very eyes.

Not concealed in the cleft of the rock like Moses. Our vision won't be obscured so that we can only see the back of God.

But we will be standing before his throne in robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. Let's pray together.

Heavenly Father, we give you thanks that our Redeemer lives, that your Son who came and bore the wrath deserved for us in our place, did not stay in the grave.

[45 : 39] He rose from the dead and he does ever live now to intercede for us. And he stands at the ready to then one day return, to put his enemies to an end, to defeat sin and death, Satan and his enemies, all of those who stand opposed to you.

Father, we pray even now that we would be a people who go forth with the good news of salvation, that sinners would turn and repent. And at the same time, Father, we plead with you to come and to make all things right.

Bring justice. Bring righteousness. Establish the new heavens and the new earth where we will live with you forever, where we will see your face. Father, make us to be a hope-filled people, a people brimming with joy and gladness because we know that we have a Savior who is coming again, that no man can stop him, that he will come to judge his enemies and save his people.

And it's in his name that we pray. Amen.