

NAHUM ONE, SEVEN

Intro: This prophecy is a sequel to the prophecy of Jonah. Both of them have to do with Nineveh, the capital of Assyria.

They were written about 100 years apart, Jonah being the earlier of the two. Nahum must have written just shortly before the downfall of Nineveh and Assyria in 612 B.C.

We know nothing at all of Nahum except for the fact that he was "the Elkoshite." Even the location of Elkosh is uncertain, but there seems to be general agreement that it was in northern Galilee. We can only infer from the contents of this prophecy that he must have moved from Galilee to Judah where he wrote this prophecy.

How different it is from Jonah's prophecy--which is really not a prophecy in the same sense as the other prophets. But in Jonah's day God was just as insistent upon blessing Nineveh as He is insistent upon judging Nineveh in Nahum's day.

As the prophecy of Jonah was to open the hearts of the people of Israel to God's love for the Gentiles, so the prophecy of Nahum was to comfort the hearts of the people of Judah that God had not forsaken His purpose for them.

On the one hand you have the fact that Assyria had been able to capture Israel, the northern kingdom. How could ~~hope for~~ Judah hope for any better fate?

But, on the other hand, you have "the Lord." You are never in a position to judge any circumstances correctly unless you see both the circumstances and the Lord in the light of His purposes and His promises. It could have spared Judah trouble, BUT UNFORTUNATELY JUDAH DID NOT HEED THE WARNING--PROVING THAT THE HEART OF THE GENTILE AND THE HEART OF THE JEW ARE JUST ALIKE WITH RESPECT TO THE THINGS OF GOD!

But let us see what the Lord tried to tell the people of Judah about Himself, both for their encouragement and as a warning.

I. THE CONTEXT (Nahum 1:1-7).

Note that Nahum speaks of "God" in v. 2, and then always after that in the prophecy he speaks of the "Lord." "God" has to do with all nations including Israel, but "the Lord" is a name which belongs peculiarly to the people of God in the OT.

There is really nothing new in this section. It had either been stated before, or could be seen in Israel's history.

Nahum seems intent on reminding Judah of these great truths. His frequent use of the name, Jehovah, "the Lord," is a reminder that every truth about God is an unchanging truth. HE NEVER CHANGES!

II. THE TEXT (Nahum 1:7).

As you can see, there are three statements in this verse:

- 1) "The Lord is good,
- 2) "A stronghold in the day of trouble,
- 3) "And he knoweth those who trust in him."

All three are unchanging truths. There is never a time when God becomes this; He is never anything else. This may not be all that He is, but we want to see tonight the truth that is revealed in this verse--one of the best-known and best-loved verses in the Minor Prophets!

A. "The Lord is good."

All through the OT we have statements to the effect that God is good, and what He does is good. We are thinking in this verse of that which man considers good.

The main idea in this word is the Lord is pleasing to man, the Lord satisfies, He brings joy and the result of all that He does is blessing. IT SPEAKS OF MAN'S WHOLE-HEARTED APPROVAL OF ALL THAT GOD IS AND OF ALL THAT GOD DOES!

Let us cite some examples:

- 1) Joseph (Gen. 50:20).
- 2) Joshua (Joshua 21:45).
- 3) David (1 Chron. 16:34).
- 4) Jeremiah, as he prophesied the return of the Jews (Jer. 33:11).
- 5) The people when they returned from exile and had laid the foundation of the Temple (Ezra 3:11).

The testimony of God's people throughout the OT is that He is good. One of David's most familiar statements is, "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him." Cf. Psa. 34:8.

THE PEOPLE OF GOD NEED TO REMEMBER THIS; THE WORLD NEEDS TO KNOW THAT IT IS TRUE.

Cf. Phil. 1:6; Rom. 8:28.

B. "A stronghold in the day of trouble."

This word, "stronghold," is translated "strength" 24x in

the OT; 3x, "fortress"; plus other words are used.

Cf. "fortress" in Jer. 16:19--After God has preserved His people and brought them back to the land. (Read through v. 21.)

Translated, "strength," we find it in the following passages:

- 1) Ps. 27:1.
- 2) 2 Sam. 22:33 (read from v. 31)--as v. 1 of that chapter indicates, "in the day that the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul."
- 2) Isa. 25:4--anticipating the fulfillment of God's purposes with His people.

THE ASSYRIANS WERE OUT TO DESTROY JUDAH, TO NULLIFY THE PURPOSES AND THE PROMISES OF GOD. THE FACT THAT JEHOVAH WAS THEIR STRENGTH, THEIR STRONGHOLD, MEANT THAT GOD WOULD KEEP THEM IN SPITE OF WHAT "THE DAY OF TROUBLE" MIGHT BRING TO THEM.

The greatest fulfillment of this promise will be in the time of the Great Tribulation. But it applies to every lesser day. It is always true.

Thus far we have, the goodness of God and the power of God. Now . . .

C. "And he knoweth them that trust in him."

The Lord's knowledge of His people is what Pusey calls, "an individual, ever-present, knowledge." His records never get behind. "He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out, and when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them" (John 10:3b, 4a).

In Psa. 1:6, "For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous."

Paul says to Timothy, "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, "The Lord knoweth them that are His" (2 Tim. 2:19a).

But there is ~~is~~ more than just knowledge in this OT expression.

The basic idea in the word is that of seeing, BUT IT ALSO CONTAINS THE IDEA OF CARING FOR, GUIDING, SEEING AFTER (Ges., p. 380).

Cf. what God says about Abraham in Gen. 18:17-19.

David said in Psa. 144:3, "Lord, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him? Or the son of man, that thou makest account of him?"

In Amos 3:2 the Lord says concerning Israel, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth."

Again, David said, "I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy; for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities, and has t not shut me up into the hand of the enemy" (Psa. 31:7, 8a).

But it also means possession. "I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are mine" (Psa. 50:11).

Concl: What more can we ask?

We have the assurance that the Lord satisfies.

We have the assurance that nothing can set aside His purposes.

We have the confidence that:

- 1) He knows us.
- 2) We belong to him.
- 3) He provides for us.

AND, ON TOP OF ALL OF THIS, WE KNOW THAT THESE CAN NEVER CHANGE BECAUSE HIS NAME IS JEHOVAH.

We say, "But what a tragedy that Israel did not have ears to hear!" It was a tragedy. But, has it ever occurred to us that we might be doing the same thing?

These are days when we need to be spending much time with the Lord, much time in the Word, praying that the Lord will teach us to trust Him and to live for Him so that we may be enjoying all of the blessings which He so graciously has prepared for us.