

Readings

Scripture

¹Woe to the bloody city, all full of lies and plunder—no end to the prey! ²The crack of the whip, and rumble of the wheel, galloping horse and bounding chariot! ³Horsemen charging, flashing sword and glittering spear, hosts of slain, heaps of corpses, dead bodies without end—they stumble over the bodies! ⁴And all for the countless whorings of the prostitute, graceful and of deadly charms, who betrays nations with her whorings, and peoples with her charms.

⁵Behold, 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. ⁶I will throw filth at you and treat you with contempt and make you a spectacle. ⁷And 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?

⁸Are you better than Thebes that sat by the Nile, with water around her, her rampart a sea, and water her wall? ⁹Cush was her strength; Egypt too, and that without limit; Put and the Libyans were her helpers.

¹⁰Yet 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. ¹¹You also will be drunken; you will go into hiding; you will seek a refuge from the enemy. ¹²All your fortresses are like fig trees with first-ripe figs—if shaken they fall into the mouth of the eater. ¹³Behold, your troops are women in your midst. The gates of your land are wide open to your enemies; fire has devoured your bars.

¹⁴Draw water for the siege; strengthen your forts; go into the clay; tread the mortar; take hold of the brick mold! ¹⁵There 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! ¹⁶You increased your merchants more than the stars of the heavens. The locust spreads its wings and flies away.

¹⁷Your 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.

¹⁸Your shepherds are asleep, O king of Assyria; your nobles slumber. Your people are scattered on the mountains with none to gather them. ¹⁹There 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 3:1-19 (*English Standard Version*)

Reflection

And now I will break his yoke from off you and will burst your bonds apart.”

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.”

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 1:13-15 (*English Standard Version*)

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 (*English Standard Version*)

Sermon Outline

The Witch is Down
Nahum 3:1-19

The Grace of Judgment
Brad Anderson

Who will grieve for their enemy? (Nahum 3:7)

When what she has done is her fault... (Nahum 3:1-7)

When what she has done is worse by comparison... (Nahum 3:8-13)

When what she has done is eclipsed by the applause at her downfall...
(Nahum 3:14-19)

Reflection Questions

 (*taken in part from the Serendipity Study Bible for Groups*)

- Recall an embarrassing moment of your childhood. What happened that brought on such a red face?
- What best describes your parents' discipline of you as a child: (a) "I'm warning you"? (b) "Boys will be boys"? (c) "Face the music"? (d) Other: _____?
- Recall a severe childhood (or adult) punishment you received that was the result of your deliberate disobedience. How did it make you feel? Did it change your life in any way?
- How does God discipline Nineveh? How do you view God's harshness? Why was such severity necessary?
- In what ways has Nineveh "played the harlot" in relation to God (Nahum 3:4)? In what ways is she "ripe" for judgment? Why would the metaphorical punishment of verses 5 and 6 be especially appropriate to her?
- In what specific people and things does Nineveh put her trust? What images does Nahum use to describe these "trustworthy" sources? Which do you think is most striking? What is the end of each?
- What great sin of Nineveh is graphically addressed in verses 16-17? How does the image of the locust fit the actions of the Ninevites?
- "Nahum" means comfort. For whom is the comfort of Nahum's message? Why does God send the comfort of Nahum's message? Why does God send comfort to one group and wrath to another?
- Nineveh's first great sin (1:13-15) and second great sin (3:16-17) are combined in 3:1. What parallels can you observe today?
- What promises of God's comfort (in Nahum) means the most to you now?
- Read Jonah 4. What question ends the chapter? Read Nahum 3. What question ends the chapter? How do these two scenes reveal the heart of God and his sovereign purposes? For a third scene, read Numbers 14.