

# Nahum

The Woe of Nineveh ([Nahum 3](#))

Note: today's lesson is rated R.

[Galatians](#) and my dad.

**Galatians 6:7: Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.**

**In chapter 3 Nahum gives the cause for and justifies God's destruction of the city of Nineveh. Nineveh's destruction is an example of the fact that ". . . whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7). This is also true of a nation. You will find that in many ways God deals with individuals and nations in a very similar manner. (*Thru the Bible, McGee, 828*)**

In weeks one, two, and three of this series, we looked at how to pronounce [Nahum](#), where [Nahum](#) is in the Bible, the historical, political, and geographical contexts, as well as a word-by-word look at the original Hebrew language of [Nahum 1-2](#) order to draw out applications and personalizations.

In today's lesson, we'll read [Nahum 1-3](#) and start the process of explaining the words in the text of [Nahum 3](#) and looking for applications and personalizations.

## Read: The Woe of Nineveh (Nahum 3)

Before we read today's text, I want you to be listening for a few things. Listen for who takes responsibility for the judgment. Listen for any hope for the Assyrians. And listen for Nahum's tone.

**1 The burden against Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.**

### God's Wrath on His Enemies

**2 God is jealous, and the LORD avenges;**

**The LORD avenges and is furious.**

**The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries,**

**And He reserves *wrath* for His enemies;**

**3 The LORD is slow to anger and great in power,**

**And will not at all acquit the wicked.**

**The LORD has His way**

**In the whirlwind and in the storm,**

**And the clouds are the dust of His feet.**

**4 He rebukes the sea and makes it dry,  
And dries up all the rivers.  
Bashan and Carmel wither,  
And the flower of Lebanon wilts.**

**5 The mountains quake before Him,  
The hills melt,  
And the earth heaves at His presence,  
Yes, the world and all who dwell in it.**

**6 Who can stand before His indignation?  
And who can endure the fierceness of His anger?  
His fury is poured out like fire,  
And the rocks are thrown down by Him.**

**7 The LORD is good,  
A stronghold in the day of trouble;  
And He knows those who trust in Him.**

**8 But with an overflowing flood  
He will make an utter end of its place,  
And darkness will pursue His enemies.**

**9 What do you conspire against the LORD?  
He will make an utter end of it.  
Affliction will not rise up a second time.**

**10 For while tangled like thorns,  
And while drunken like drunkards,  
They shall be devoured like stubble fully dried.**

**11 From you comes forth one  
Who plots evil against the LORD,  
A wicked counselor.**

**12 Thus says the LORD:**

**"Though they are safe, and likewise many,  
Yet in this manner they will be cut down  
When he passes through.**

**Though I have afflicted you,  
I will afflict you no more;**

**13 For now I will break off his yoke from you,  
And burst your bonds apart."**

**14 The LORD has given a command concerning you:  
"Your name shall be perpetuated no longer.**

**Out of the house of your gods  
I will cut off the carved image and the molded image.  
I will dig your grave,  
For you are vile.”**

**15 Behold, on the mountains  
The feet of him who brings good tidings,  
Who proclaims peace!  
O Judah, keep your appointed feasts,  
Perform your vows.  
For the wicked one shall no more pass through you;  
He is utterly cut off.**

### **The Destruction of Nineveh**

**1 He who scatters has come up before your face.  
Man the fort!  
Watch the road!  
Strengthen your flanks!  
Fortify your power mightily.**

**2 For the LORD will restore the excellence of Jacob  
Like the excellence of Israel,  
For the emptiers have emptied them out  
And ruined their vine branches.**

**3 The shields of his mighty men are made red,  
The valiant men are in scarlet.  
The chariots come with flaming torches  
In the day of his preparation,  
And the spears are brandished.**

**4 The chariots rage in the streets,  
They jostle one another in the broad roads;  
They seem like torches,  
They run like lightning.**

**5 He remembers his nobles;  
They stumble in their walk;  
They make haste to her walls,  
And the defense is prepared.**

**6 The gates of the rivers are opened,  
And the palace is dissolved.**

**7 It is decreed:**

**She shall be led away captive,  
She shall be brought up;  
And her maidservants shall lead her as with the voice of doves,  
Beating their breasts.**

**8 Though Nineveh of old was like a pool of water,  
Now they flee away.  
"Halt! Halt!" they cry;  
But no one turns back.**

**9 Take spoil of silver!  
Take spoil of gold!  
There is no end of treasure,  
Or wealth of every desirable prize.**

**10 She is empty, desolate, and waste!  
The heart melts, and the knees shake;  
Much pain is in every side,  
And all their faces are drained of color.**

**11 Where is the dwelling of the lions,  
And the feeding place of the young lions,  
Where the lion walked, the lioness and lion's cub,  
And no one made them afraid?**

**12 The lion tore in pieces enough for his cubs,  
Killed for his lionesses,  
Filled his caves with prey,  
And his dens with flesh.**

**13 "Behold, I am against you," says the LORD of hosts, "I will burn your chariots  
in smoke, and the sword shall devour your young lions; I will cut off your prey  
from the earth, and the voice of your messengers shall be heard no more."**

### **The Woe of Nineveh**

**1 Woe to the bloody city!  
It is all full of lies and robbery.  
Its victim never departs.**

**2 The noise of a whip  
And the noise of rattling wheels,  
Of galloping horses,  
Of clattering chariots!**

**3 Horsemen charge with bright sword and glittering spear.  
There is a multitude of slain,**

**A great number of bodies,  
Countless corpses—**

**They stumble over the corpses—**

**4 Because of the multitude of harlotries of the seductive harlot,  
The mistress of sorceries,  
Who sells nations through her harlotries,  
And families through her sorceries.**

**5 “Behold, I *am* against you,” says the LORD of hosts;  
“I will lift your skirts over your face,  
I will show the nations your nakedness,  
And the kingdoms your shame.**

**6 I will cast abominable filth upon you,  
Make you vile,  
And make you a spectacle.**

**7 It shall come to pass *that* all who look upon you  
Will flee from you, and say,  
‘Nineveh **is laid waste!**  
Who will bemoan her?’  
Where **shall I seek comforters** for you?”**

**8 Are you better than No Amon  
*That was* situated by the River,  
That had the waters around her,  
Whose rampart *was* the sea,  
Whose wall *was* the sea?**

**9 Ethiopia and Egypt *were* her strength,  
And *it was* boundless;  
Put and Lubim were your helpers.**

**10 Yet she *was* carried away,  
She went into captivity;  
Her young children also were **dashed to pieces**  
At the head of every street;  
They cast lots for her honorable men,  
And all her great men **were bound** in chains.**

**11 You also will be drunk;  
You will be hidden;  
**You also will seek** refuge from the enemy.**

**12 All your strongholds *are* fig trees with ripened figs:  
If they are shaken,**

**They fall into the mouth of the eater.**

**13 Surely, your people in your midst *are* women!**

**The gates of your land are wide open for your enemies;**

**Fire shall devour the bars of your *gates*.**

**14 Draw your water for the siege!**

**Fortify your strongholds!**

**Go into the clay and tread the mortar!**

**Make strong the brick kiln!**

**15 There the fire will devour you,**

**The sword will cut you off;**

**It will eat you up like a locust.**

**Make yourself many—like the locust!**

**Make yourself many—like the *swarming* locusts!**

**16 You have multiplied your merchants more than the stars of heaven.**

**The locust plunders and flies away.**

**17 Your commanders *are* like *swarming* locusts,**

**And your generals like great grasshoppers,**

**Which camp in the hedges on a cold day;**

**When the sun rises **they flee away**,**

**And the place where they *are* is not known.**

**18 Your shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria;**

**Your nobles rest *in the dust*.**

**Your people are scattered on the mountains,**

**And **no one gathers** them.**

**19 Your injury *has* no healing,**

**Your wound is severe.**

**All who hear news of you**

**Will clap *their* hands over you,**

**For upon whom has not your wickedness passed continually?**

## **Explain: The Woe of Nineveh (Nahum 3)**

Bible study is asking and answering questions about the text. Let's ask some.

### **Are there any literary/structural observations?**

**Nahum** is **poetry**. In **Nahum 3**, the focus continues to be on **Nineveh**'s downfall.

### Are there any repeated words?

You/your/yourself (41), I (5), locust (5), great (3), harlot/harlotries (3), no (3), cast (2), corpses (2), devour (2), enemies/enemy (2), fig/figs (2), fire (2), flee (2), gates (2), many (2), men (2), multitude (2), nations (2), noise (2), pass/passed (2), people (2), sea (2), seek (2), sorceries (2), strongholds (2), swarming (2), sword (2), water/waters (2)

Today's text is intensely confrontational. And the conflict is stemming from a righteous God who is personally taking responsibility for this judgement. We serve a God who does not shy away from any aspect of His holiness.

The following page is a much further deep dive into Hebrew verbs than we did last week.

## Basics of Hebrew Verbs

A Hebrew verb has a person, a number, a gender, a voice, an aspect, a stem, and a conjugation.

1. **Person:** the relationship between the verb and the speaker (first, second, third)
2. **Number:** whether one or more than one subject is referenced (singular, plural)
3. **Gender:** the sex of the referent (masculine, feminine, common)
4. **Voice:** the relationship of the action of the verb to the subject (active, passive, reflexive)
5. **Aspect/mode:** the kind of action expressed by a verb (simple, intensive, causal)
6. **Stems** (variants are in parenthesis): an offshoot of the root indicating the properties of voice and aspect
  - **Qal** (qal): simple action, active voice
  - **Nifal** (niphil): simple (normal) action, passive voice
  - **Piel** (polel, poel, pilpel, palel, pealal, pilel): intensive (strong) action, active voice
  - **Pual** (polal, poal, polpal, pulal, poalal): intensive (strong) action, passive voice
  - **Hifil** (hiphil, tiphel): causal (caused to) action, active voice
  - **Hofal** (hophal, hothpael): causal (caused to) action passive voice
  - **Hitpael** (hithpolel, hithpapel, nithpael, hishtafel, nitpalel, hothpael, hithpael, hithpoel): intensive (strong) action, reflexive (performed on self) voice
7. **Conjugation.** Each stem can be conjugated in one of the following eight ways.
  - **Perfect:** simple, completed action
  - **Imperfect:** incomplete or progressive action
  - **Cohortative:** 1st person command
  - **Imperative:** 2<sup>nd</sup> person command
  - **Jussive:** 3<sup>rd</sup> person command
  - **Infinitive construct:** a verbal noun
  - **Infinitive absolute:** a grammatical intensifier
  - **Participle:** verbal adjective

Summarized and adapted from [Hebrew4Christians.com](http://Hebrew4Christians.com), [blb.org](http://blb.org), Strong's Concordance, and [lib.haifa.ac.il](http://lib.haifa.ac.il).

## What do the words mean?

**1 Woe** [ah, alas, ho, O, woe] **to the bloody** [bloody(-y, -guiltiness), (-thirsty)] **city** [city, court, town]!

**It is all full** [fill(-ed, -ed with), full(-ly), multitude, as is worth; same word used in **1:10**] **of lies** [leanness, lies, lying] **and robbery** [crossway, robbery].

**Its victim** [leaf, meat, prey, spoil; same word used in **2:12, 13**] **never departs** [hiphil; imperfect; cease, depart, go back, remove, take away]. **[This time was a period when “prey did not cease” in Assyria. This last phrase in the sequence echoes the metaphorical taunt at the end of the previous chapter: “I will cut off your prey from the land.” Assyria, the ruthless lion, was constantly hunting for weaker prey. This taunt reverses the image of Assyria and predicts the time when God will intervene and when the lion of Assyria will starve for lack of prey. (*The Minor Prophets, McComiskey, 812*)]**

**2 The noise** [aloud, bleating, crackling, cry (out), fame, lightness, lowing, noise, hold peace, (pro-) claim, proclamation, sing, sound, spark, thunder(-ing), voice, yell; same word used in **2:7, 13**] **of a whip** [scourge, whip]

**And the noise** [aloud, bleating, crackling, cry (out), fame, lightness, lowing, noise, hold peace, (pro-) claim, proclamation, sing, sound, spark, thunder(-ing), voice, yell; same word used in **2:7, 13** and earlier in **3:2**] **of rattling** [commotion, confused noise, earthquake, fierceness, quaking, rattling, rushing, shaking] **wheels** [wheel], **Of galloping** [qal; active participle; pause] **horses** [crane, horse (-back, -hoof)], **Of clattering** [piel; participle; dance, jump, leap, skip] **chariots** [chariot]! **[When the word of God comes with such preciseness of detail in describing the destruction of the enemies of God’s people, then the Holy Spirit can use that description to rekindle the faith of the most discouraged of his people. When Satan and his emissaries succeed over and over again in promoting deceit, untruth, and lies, when they are successful in discrediting the righteous, when they repeatedly wield the sword of power and popular support to devastate the godly, then even the strongest in faith begin to weaken and to doubt that God ever will vindicate the cause of truth and righteousness. But doubting saints need only to turn their enlivened imaginations to the descriptions of Nahum and apply them to their own struggles with Satan’s forces. With *crack of whip* and *rumble of wheel*, with *steed rearing* and *chariot lurching*, the God-appointed avenger shall soon and suddenly appear. The contemporary enemy of truth and righteousness shall not stand any more than did ancient Nineveh. Take heart! Lift up your downcast eyes! For even today your redemption draws near. (*Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah, Robertson, 106*)]**

**3 Horsemen** [horseman] **charge** [hiphil; participle] **with bright** [blade, bright,

flame, glittering] **sword** [axe, dagger, knife, mattock, sword, tool; same word used in **2:12**] **and glittering** [(fire-) brand, (burning) lamp, lightning, torch; same word used in **2:4**] **spear** [javelin, spear].

**There is a multitude** [abundance(-antly), all, excellent, great(-ly, -ness, number), huge, be increased, long, many, more in number, most, much, multitude, plenty(-ifully)] **of slain** [kill, profane, slain (man), (deadly) wounded],

**A great** [grievousness, heavy, great number] **number of bodies** [carcass, corpse, dead body],

**Countless** [border, brim, brink, edge, end, (in-) finite, frontier, outmost coast, quarter, shore, (out-) side, ut(-ter-) most (part); same word used in **2:9**] **corpses** [(dead) body, carcass, corpse]—

**They stumble** [niphah; imperfect; bereave (from the margin), cast down, be decayed, (cause to) fail, (cause, make to) fall (down, -ing), feeble, be (the) ruin(-ed, of), (be) overthrown, (cause to) stumble, be weak; same word used in **2:5**] **over the corpses** [(dead) body, carcass, corpse; same word used earlier in **3:3**]—

**4 Because of the multitude** [abundance(-antly), all, excellent, great(-ly, -ness, number), huge, be increased, long, many, more in number, most, much, multitude, plenty(-ifully); same word used in **3:3**] **of harlotries** [whoredom] **of the seductive** [(two Hebrew are translated in this one English word) (first word); beautiful, best, better, bountiful, cheerful, at ease, (be in) favor, fine, glad, good (deed, -lier, -liest, -ly, -ness, -s), graciously, joyful, kindly, kindness, likes (best), loving, merry, pleasant, pleases, pleasure, precious, prosperity, ready, sweet, wealth, welfare, (be) well(-favored); same word used in **1:7**; (second word): favor, grace(-ious), pleasant, precious, (well-) favored] **harlot** [qal; active participle; (cause to) commit fornication, (be an, play the) harlot, (cause to be, play the) whore, (commit, fall to) whoredom, (cause to) go a-whoring, whorish],

**The mistress** [that hath, mistress] **of sorceries** [sorcery, witchcraft],

**Who sells** [qal; active participle; sell (away, -er, self)] **nations** [Gentile, heathen, nation, people] **through her harlotries** [whoredom],

**And families** [family, kind(-red)] **through her sorceries** [sorcery, witchcraft].

[Recent archaeology has uncovered literally thousands of tablets from Nineveh attesting to their intense concentration on sorcery. (*Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah*, Robertson, 104) It was customary in the ancient Near East to think of cities as women. There is a similar phenomenon in modern English, for ships are often regarded as feminine. From the Israelite perspective, the most wicked types of females were prostitutes and sorceresses. These women sought money and domination beyond acceptable social and religious norms. Nineveh also sought wealth and domination by

**illegitimate means: it bartered in human lives. (*The Minor Prophets, McComiskey, 815*)**

**5 “Behold, I am against you,” says** [qal; passive participle; (hath) said, saith; same word used in **2:13**] **the LORD** [*yehovah*] **of hosts** [appointed time, company, host, service, soldiers, waiting upon, war(-fare)]; same word used in **2:13**;

**“I will lift** [piel; perfect; advertise, appear, bewray, bring, (carry, lead, go) captive (into captivity), depart, disclose, discover, exile, be gone, open, publish, remove, reveal, shew, tell, uncover; same word used in **2:7**] **your skirts** [hem, skirt, train]

**over your face** [countenance, face, person, presence, sight (+ many more definitions); same word used in **1:5, 6; 2:1, 10**],

**I will show** [hiphil; perfect; advise self, appear, approve, behold, consider, discern, (make to) enjoy, have experience, gaze, take heed, lo, look (on, one another, one on another, one upon another, out, up, upon), mark, meet, perceive, present, provide, regard, (have) respect, (fore-, cause to, let) see(-r, -m, one another), shew (self), (e-) spy, stare, view, visions] **the nations** [Gentile, heathen, nation, people; same word used in **3:4**] **your nakedness** [nakedness, proportion],

**And the kingdoms** [kingdom, king's, reign, royal] **your shame** [confusion, dishonor, ignominy, reproach, shame]. **[In the ancient Near East, a harlot could be punished by exposure. Nineveh's crimes against humanity were also to be exposed. God will cause the proud city of Nineveh to suffer shame as it is treated as a common spectacle. (*The Minor Prophets, McComiskey, 816*) But God will expose the harlot for what she really is. Her game is up. Before the public eye, but also before her own face so that she cannot hide from the disgrace of it all, her lewd conduct shall be exposed. (*Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah, Robertson, 109*)]**

**6 I will cast** [hiphil; perfect; adventure, cast (away, down, forth, off, out), hurl, pluck, throw] **abominable filth** [abominable filth (idol, -ation), detestable (thing)] **upon you,**

**Make you vile** [piel; perfect; disgrace, dishonor, lightly esteem, fade (away, -ing), fall (down, -ling, off), do foolishly, come to naught, make vile, wither],

**And make** [qal; perfect] **you a spectacle** [gazingstock, look to, (that) see(-th)]; **No corner for the slightest semblance of self-dignity will remain. (*Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah, Robertson, 107*)]**.

**7 It shall come to pass that all who look** [qal; active participle; advise self, appear, approve, behold, consider, discern, (make to) enjoy, have experience, gaze, take heed, lo, look (on, one another, one on another, one upon another, out, up, upon), mark, meet, perceive, present, provide, regard, (have) respect, (fore-, cause to, let) see(-r, -m, one another), shew (self), (e-) spy, stare, view, visions; same word used in **3:5**] **upon you**

**Will flee** [qal; imperfect; chase (away), depart, flee (away), (re-) move, thrust away, wander (abroad, -er, -ing)] **from you, and say** [qal; perfect],

**'Nineveh** [the capital of Assyria; same word used in **1:1; 2:8**] **is laid waste** [pual; perfect; dead, destroy(-er), oppress, robber, spoil(-er), (lay) waste]!

**Who will bemoan** [qal; imperfect; bemoan, flee, get, mourn, make to move, take pity, remove, shake, skip for joy, be sorry, vagabond, way, wandering] **her?'**

**Where** [whence, where] **shall I seek** [piel; imperfect; ask, beg, beseech, desire, enquire, get, make inquisition, procure, (make) request, require, seek (for)]

**comforters** [piel; participle; comfort (self), ease (one's self), repent(-er,-ing, self)]

**for you?"** [The destruction of Sennacherib's army, which, in the morning, were all dead corpses, is perhaps looked upon here as a figure of the like destruction that should afterwards be in Nineveh; for those that will not take warning by judgments at a distance shall have them come nearer. (*Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Henry, 1,548) Those that showed no pity in the day of their power can expect to find no pity in the day of their fall. (*Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Henry, 1,549) Often in Scripture, idolatry is associated with prostitution, and when you consider that the chief deity of Nineveh was Ishtar, goddess of sexual passion, fertility, and war, you can understand why Nahum used this metaphor. Because of their spiritual blindness, the Assyrians were ensnared by this evil goddess and were under the control of lust, greed, and violence. People become like the god that they worship (Psalm 115:8), for what we believe determines how we behave. (*The Wiersbe Bible Commentary*, Wiersbe, 1,466)]

Next week we will finish **Nahum 3** and discuss applications and personalizations.

## Review of last week



1. OurSundaySchool.com
2. Prophecy fulfillment
3. One king standing

**8 Are you better** [hiphil; imperfect; be accepted, amend, use aright, benefit, be (make) better, seem best, make cheerful, be comely, be content, diligent(-ly), dress, earnestly, find favor, give, be glad, do (be, make) good(-ness), be (make) merry, please ( well), shew more (kindness), skillfully, surely, make sweet, thoroughly, tire, trim, very, be (can, deal, entreat, go, have) well (said, seen)] **than No** [the capital of Upper Egypt] **Amon** [a deity of Egypt; multitude, populous; **Qere Readings; In the Hebrew Bible, the scribes did not alter any text they felt had been copied incorrectly. Rather they noted in the margin what they thought the written text should be. The written variation is called a *kethiv* and the marginal note is called the *qere*. Where the translators of the Authorised Version followed the *qere* reading rather than the *kethiv*, we indicate the *kethiv* reading by the number (8675). For example, in Gen. 24:33 "was set" is coded as H7760 (8675) H3455. The translators used the *qere* reading that has Strong's number H7760 but the *kethiv* reading is Strong's number H3455. Both words have the same meaning, "was set". There are 305 verses in the Old Testament with this property.** [Italics added] On Thebes (No Amon) in **3:8: For at least a thousand years, pharaohs of Egypt had ruled their part of the world. . . . Renowned today as the ruins of Luxor and Karnak, the city was identified as the town with one hundred gates. (Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah, Robertson, 113)** Note: the footnote cites the 100 gates comment as coming from Homer's *Iliad*.]

**That was situated** [qal; active participle; (make to) abide(-ing), continue, (cause to, make to) dwell(-ing), ease self, endure, establish, habitation, haunt, (make to) inhabit(-ant), make to keep (house), lurking, (bring again to) place, remain, return, seat, set(-tle), (down-) sit(-down, still, -ting down, -ting (place) -uate), take, tarry; same word used in **1:5**] **by the River** [specifically the Nile, as the one river of Egypt, including its collateral trenches; also the Tigris, as the main river of Assyria; brook, flood, river, stream],

**That had the waters** [piss, wasting, water(-ing, (-course, -flood, -spring)); same word used in **2:8**] **around her** [(place, round) about, circuit, compass, on every side],

**Whose rampart** [army, bulwark, host, rampart, trench, wall] **was the sea** [sea(-shore), south, west (-ern, side, -ward); same word used in **1:4**],

**Whose wall** [wall, walled; same word used in 2:5] **was the sea** [sea(-shore), south, west (-ern, side, -ward); same word used in 1:4 and earlier in 3:8]?

**9 Ethiopia** [Cush (or Ethiopia), the name of a son of Ham, and of his territory; also of an Israelite:—Chush, Cush, Ethiopia] **and Egypt** [Mitsrajim, i.e. Upper and Lower Egypt:—Egypt, Egyptians, Mizraim] **were her strength** [abundance, strength],

**And it was boundless** [(two Hebrew are translated in this one English word) (first word); else, except, fail, (father-) less, be gone, in(-curable), neither, never, no (where), none, nor, (any, thing), not, nothing, to naught, past, un(-searchable), well-nigh, without; (second word): border, brim, brink, edge, end, (in-) finite, frontier, outmost coast, quarter, shore, (out-) side, ut(-ter-) most (part); same word used in 2:9; 3:3];

**Put** [Put, a son of Ham, also the name of his descendants or their region, and of a Persian tribe:—Phut, Put] **and Lubim** [apparently a Libyan or inhabitant of interior Africa (only in plural):—Lubim(-s), Libyans] **were your helpers** [help(-ed, -er)].

**10 Yet she was carried away** [(carried away), captive(-ity), removing],

**She went** [qal; perfect; same word used in 2:10] **into captivity** [captive(-ity), prisoners, that was taken];

**Her young children** [babe, (young) child, infant, little one] **also were dashed to pieces** [pual; imperfect; dash (in pieces)]

**At the head** [band, beginning, captain, chapter, chief(-est place, man, things), company, end, excellent, first, forefront, (be-)head, height, (on) high(-est part, (priest)), principal, ruler, sum, top] **of every street** [abroad, field, forth, highway, more, out(-side, -ward), street, without; same word used in 2:4];

**They cast** [qal; perfect; cast] **lots** [lot] **for her honorable men** [niph'al; participle; abounding with, more grievously afflict, boast, be chargeable, glorify, be (make) glorious (things), glory, (very) great, be grievous, harden, be (make) heavy, be heavier, lay heavily, (bring to, come to, do, get, be had in) honor (self), (be) honorable (man), lade, make self many, nobles, prevail, promote (to honor), be rich, be (go) sore, stop],

**And all her great men** [aloud, elder(-est), exceeding(-ly), far, (man of) great (man, matter, thing, -er, -ness), high, long, loud, mighty, more, much, noble, proud thing; same word used in 1:3] **were bound** [pual; perfect; bind] **in chains** [chain, fetter, firebrand, spark].

**11 You also will be drunk** [qal; imperfect; (be filled with) drink (abundantly), (be, make) drunk(-en), be merry];

**You will be hidden** [niph'al; participle; blind, dissembler, hide (self), secret (thing)];

**You also will seek** [piel; imperfect; ask, beg, beseech, desire, enquire, get, make inquisition, procure, (make) request, require, seek (for); same word used in 3:7]

**refuge** [force, fort(-ress), rock, strength(-en), strong (hold); same word used in **1:7**]  
**from the enemy** [qal; active participle; enemy, foe; same word used in **1:2, 8**].

**12 All your strongholds** [(de-, most) fenced, fortress, (most) strong (hold)] **are fig trees** [fig (tree)] **with ripened figs** [first fruit (-ripe (figuratively)), hasty fruit]:

**If they are shaken** [niph'al; imperfect; continually, fugitive, to (go) up and down, be gone away, (be) move(-able, -d), be promoted, reel, remove, scatter, set, shake, sift, stagger, to and fro, be vagabond, wag, (make) wander (up and down)],

**They fall** [qal; perfect; be accepted, cast (down, self, (lots), out), cease, die, divide (by lot), (let) fail, (cause to, let, make, ready to) fall (away, down, -en, -ing), fell(-ing), fugitive, have (inheritance), inferior, be judged, lay (along), (cause to) lie down, light (down), be lost, lying, overthrow, overwhelm, perish, present(-ed, -ing), (make to) rot, slay, smite out, throw down] **into the mouth** [accord(-ing as, -ing to), after, appointment, assent, collar, command(-ment), edge, end, entry, file, hole, mind, mouth, part, portion, sentence, skirt, sound, speech, talk, tenor, two-edged, wish, word] **of the eater** [qal; active participle; burn up, consume, devour(-er, up), dine, eat(-er, up), feed (with), food, (lay) meat; same word used in **1:10; 2:13**; cf.

**Revelation 6:13**].

**13 Surely, your people** [folk, men, nation, people] **in your midst** [eat (up), inward part, -s, thought), midst, out of, purtenance] **are women** [(adulter) ess, each, every, female, none, one, together, wife, woman]!

**The gates** [city, door, gate, port; same word used in **2:6**] **of your land** [country, earth, field, ground, land, way, wilderness, world; same word used in **1:5; 2:13**] **are wide** [qal; infinitive] **open** [niph'al; perfect; appear, break forth, draw (out), let go free, (en-) grave(-n), loose (self), (be, be set) open(-ing), put off, ungird, unstop, have vent; same word used in **2:6**] **for your enemies** [qal; active participle; enemy, foe; same word used in **1:2, 8; 3:11**];

**Fire** [burning, fiery, fire, flaming, hot; same word used in **1:6; 2:3**] **shall devour** [qal; perfect; burn up, consume, devour(-er, up), dine, eat(-er, up), feed (with), food, (lay) meat; same word used in **1:10; 2:13; 3:12**] **the bars** [bar, fugitive] **of your gates**.

**14 Draw** [qal; imperative; (woman to) draw(-er, water)] **your water** [piss, wasting, water(-ing, (-course, -flood, -spring)); same word used in **2:8; 3:8**] **for the siege** [besieged, bulwark, defense, fenced, fortress, siege, strong (hold), tower]!

**Fortify** [**piel**; imperative; aid, amend, catch, cleave, confirm, be constant, constrain, continue, be of good (take) courage(-ous, -ly), encourage (self), be established, fasten, force, fortify, make hard, harden, help, (lay) hold (fast), lean, maintain, play the man, mend, become (wax) mighty, prevail, be recovered, repair, retain, seize, be (wax) sore, strengthen (self), be stout, be (make, shew, wax) strong(-er), be sure, take (hold), be urgent, behave self valiantly, withstand; same word used in **2:1**] **your**

**strongholds** [(de-, most) fenced, fortress, (most) strong (hold); same word used in **3:12**]!

**Go** [qal; imperative] **into the clay** [clay, dirt, mire] **and tread** [qal; imperative; oppressor, stamp upon, trample (under feet), tread (down, upon)] **the mortar** [clay, heap, homer, mire, motion]!

**Make strong** [hiphil; imperative; aid, amend, catch, cleave, confirm, be constant, constrain, continue, be of good (take) courage(-ous, -ly), encourage (self), be established, fasten, force, fortify, make hard, harden, help, (lay) hold (fast), lean, maintain, play the man, mend, become (wax) mighty, prevail, be recovered, repair, retain, seize, be (wax) sore, strengthen (self), be stout, be (make, shew, wax) strong(-er), be sure, take (hold), be urgent, behave self valiantly, withstand; same word used in **2:1** and earlier in **3:14**] **the brick kiln** [brickkiln]! [**Ancient cities usually had huge cisterns they could fill in order to have a supply of drinking water while they were confined within the city. (The Minor Prophets, McComiskey, 823)**]

**15 There the fire** [burning, fiery, fire, flaming, hot; same word used in **1:6; 2:3; 3:13**] **will devour you** [burn up, consume, devour(-er, up), dine, eat(-er, up), feed (with), food, (lay) meat; same word used in **1:10; 2:13; 3:12, 13**],

**The sword** [axe, dagger, knife, mattock, sword, tool; same word used in **2:12; 3:3**] **will cut you off** [be chewed, be con-(feder-) ate, covenant, cut (down, off), destroy, fail, feller, be freed, hew (down), make a league (covenant), perish; same word used in **1:14, 15; 2:13**];

**It will eat you up** [burn up, consume, devour(-er, up), dine, eat(-er, up), feed (with), food, (lay) meat; same word used in **1:10; 2:13; 3:12, 13** and earlier in **3:15**] **like a locust** [cankerworm, caterpillar].

**Make yourself many** [abounding with, more grievously afflict, boast, be chargeable, glorify, be (make) glorious (things), glory, (very) great, be grievous, harden, be (make) heavy, be heavier, lay heavily, (bring to, come to, do, get, be had in) honor (self), (be) honorable (man), lade, make self many, nobles, prevail, promote (to honor), be rich, be (go) sore, stop; same word used in **3:10**]—**like the locust** [cankerworm, caterpillar; same word used earlier in **3:15**]!

**Make yourself many** [abounding with, more grievously afflict, boast, be chargeable, glorify, be (make) glorious (things), glory, (very) great, be grievous, harden, be (make) heavy, be heavier, lay heavily, (bring to, come to, do, get, be had in) honor (self), (be) honorable (man), lade, make self many, nobles, prevail, promote (to honor), be rich, be (go) sore, stop; same word used in **3:10** and earlier in **3:15**]—**like the swarming locusts** [grasshopper, locust]! [**The repetition of words containing the letters kap and qop results in deliberate consonance, which some scholars have likened to the sound of locusts. (The Minor Prophets, McComiskey, 825)**]

**16 You have multiplied** [hiphil; perfect; (bring in) abundance, archer, be in authority, bring up, enlarge, excel, exceeding(-ly), be full of, (be, make) great(-er, -ly), grow up, heap, increase, be long, (be, give, have, make, use) many (a time), (any, be, give, give the, have) more (in number), (ask, be, be so, gather, over, take, yield) much (greater, more), (make to) multiply, nourish, plenty(-eous), sore, store, thoroughly, very] **your merchants** [qal; active participle; (spice) merchant] **more than the stars** [star(-gazer)] **of heaven** [air, heaven(-s)].

**The locust** [cankerworm, caterpillar; same word used twice in **3:15**] **plunders** [qal; perfect; fall upon, flay, invade, make an invasion, pull off, put off, make a road, run upon, rush, set, spoil, spread selves (abroad), strip (off, self)] **and flies away** [qal; imperfect; brandish, be (wax) faint, flee away, fly (away), shine forth, weary].

**17 Your commanders** [crowned] **are like swarming locusts** [grasshopper, locust; same word used in **3:15**],

**And your generals** [captain] **like great grasshoppers** [grasshopper],

**Which camp** [qal; active participle; abide (in tents), camp, dwell, encamp, grow to an end, lie, pitch (tent), rest in tent] **in the hedges** [(sheep-) cote (fold) hedge, wall] **on a cold day**; [cold]

**When the sun** [east side(-ward), sun (rising), west(-ward), window] **rises** [qal; perfect; arise, rise (up), as soon as it is up] **they flee away** [poal; perfect; chase (away), depart, flee (away), (re-) move, thrust away, wander (abroad, -er, -ing); same word used in **3:7**],

**And the place** [country, place, room, space; same word used in **1:8**] **where** [how, what, whence, where, whether, which (way)] **they are is not known** [niph'al; perfect]. [**Thus God can cut off the spirit of princes, and take away their heart. (Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, Henry, 1,549) It is best to read these verses as an intentional reversal of an idiomatic image for satiric effect, similar to the lion imagery at the end of Nahum 2. (The Minor Prophets, McComiskey, 826)**]

**18 Your shepherds** [qal; active participle; companion, keep company with, devour, eat up, evil entreat, feed, use as a friend, make friendship with, herdman, keep (sheep) (-er), pastor, shearing house, shepherd, wander, waste] **slumber** [qal; perfect; sleep, slumber], **O king** [king, royal] **of Assyria** [Ashshur, the second son of Shem; also his descendants and the country occupied by them (i.e. Assyria), its region and its empire:—Asshur, Assur, Assyria, Assyrians];

**Your nobles** [excellent, famous, gallant, glorious, goodly, lordly, mighty(-ier one), noble, principal, worthy; same word used in **2:5**] **rest** [qal; imperfect; abide, continue, (cause to, make to) dwell(-er), have habitation, inhabit, lay, place, (cause to) remain, rest, set (up)] **in the dust**.

**Your people** [folk, men, nation, people; same word used in **3:13**] **are scattered**

[niph'al; perfect; grow up, be grown fat, spread selves, be scattered] **on the mountains** [hill (country), mount(-ain); same word used in **1:5, 15**],

**And no one gathers** [piel; participle; assemble (selves), gather (bring) (together, selves together, up), heap, resort, take up; same word used in **2:10**] **them**.

**19 Your injury** [affliction, breach, breaking, broken(-footed, -handed), bruise, crashing, destruction, hurt, interpretation, vexation] **has no healing** [healing],

**Your wound** [beaten, blow, plague, slaughter, smote, stripe, stroke, wound(-ed)] **is severe** [niph'al; participle; beseech, (be) diseased, (put to) grief, be grieved, (be) grievous, infirmity, intreat, lay to, put to pain, make prayer, be (fall, make) sick, sore, be sorry, make suit, woman in travail, be (become) weak, be wounded].

**All who hear** [qal; active participle; call (gather) together, consent, consider, be content, declare, discern, give ear, (cause to, let, make to) hear(-ken, tell), listen, make (a) noise, (be) obedient, obey, perceive, (make a) proclaim(-ation), publish, regard, report, shew (forth), (make a) sound, tell, understand, whosoever (heareth), witness; same word used in **1:15; 2:13**] **news** [bruit, fame, hear(-ing), loud, report, speech, tidings] **of you**

**Will clap** [qal; perfect; blow (a trumpet), cast, clap, fasten, pitch (tent), smite, sound, strike, thrust] **their hands** [branch, foot, hand((-ful), -dle, (-led)), hollow, middle, palm, paw, power, sole, spoon] **over you,**

**For upon whom has not your wickedness** [adversity, affliction, bad, calamity, displeasure(-ure), distress, evil((-favoredness), man, thing), exceedingly, grief(-vous), harm, heavy, hurt(-ful), ill (favored), mark, mischief(-vous), misery, naught(-ty), noisome, not please, sad(-ly), sore, sorrow, trouble, vex, wicked(-ly, -ness, one), worse(-st), wretchedness, wrong; same word used in **1:11**] **passed** [qal; perfect; same word used in **1:8, 12, 15**] **continually** [alway(-s), continual (employment, -ly), daily, (n-)ever(-more), perpetual]? **[Only two books in the Bible conclude with a rhetorical question. . . . It is probably no accident that the other is the Book of Jonah. Jonah, like Nahum, focuses on Nineveh. (The Minor Prophets, McComiskey, 826) Why can there be no lessening of his punishment? Because although the wheels of God's justice may grind slowly, they grind exceedingly fine. (Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah, Robertson, 129)]**

## Apply (What is the point?)

1. The judgment of the wicked and the protection of the righteous will occur. **Let each take his portion from it; let sinners read it and tremble; let saints read it and triumph. (Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, Henry, 1,545)**
2. God is rightly and actively working toward justice. **Now God is going to judge them [Nineveh]. The question arises: Is He right in doing it? Nahum will say that He is not only right in doing it, but that He is also good when He does it. (Thru the Bible, McGee, 814)**
3. God uses individuals and nations for His purposes. **The truthfulness of his prophecy means that in principle each successive world kingdom, its king, its officials, and its citizens must take heed. (Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah, Robertson, 132) Assyria had served God's purpose and is now to be destroyed. (Thru the Bible, McGee, 815)**
4. God and God alone will righteously judge **You can look around today at the many injustices in our world, but God is doing something about them. God is just and righteous. He was a God of love even when He destroyed Nineveh and wiped it clean like a dish. It disappeared off the face of the map and off the face of the earth—and God took full responsibility for it's [sic] judgment. (Thru the Bible, McGee, 834)**

## Personalize (What do we do with that?)

1. Praise God for His faithfulness to His word and to His **people**
2. Praise God for His faithfulness to His **holiness** and universal justice
3. Praise God for His sovereignty and His **application** of redemption
4. Praise God for His **unique** position of righteous judge

## Resources

*Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown (1973)

*Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Henry (1998)

*The Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah*, Robertson (1990)

*The Minor Prophets*, McComiskey (1998)

*The Wiersbe Bible Commentary*, Wiersbe (2007)

*Thru the Bible*, McGee (1982)