

## **Nahum - When Lord**

By Lonny R. Bower, 2 September, 2009

### **Nahum 1:6...**

The book of Nahum should not be studied apart from Jonah. Certainly we should all be familiar with Jonah. However, just in case we missed something let me quickly reflect on his life and call and again draw a parallel between Jonah and many in the church today. The Lord told Jonah to go to Nineveh and cry out against it, for their wickedness has reached the throne of God. I don't know what world you may be living in, but I believe that the wickedness of our society has reached the throne room of God! We need preachers who will stand and cry out against the wickedness in our society, preachers who will walk our streets, enter our work-centers and our homes! We need preachers who will stand in the pulpit and not proclaim "everything's going to be alright", but instead cry out against the wickedness of God's own people! However, ours is a society in and outside the church that will not tolerate the hellfire and brimstone preachers! They don't want the word of the Lord to cry out against them because the word of the Lord requires obedience, but they would rather go their own way! This was Jonah; he did not want to go to Nineveh, because he did not want to give them the opportunity to repent, but would have rather seen them experience God's wrath! He had no compassion for this lost gentile city! If we fail to cry out against the wickedness in our world the wicked will not repent and if they don't repent they will with most certainty face the wrath of a righteous God! It causes me to ask the question "When Lord?" When will your people see the dire need to cry out against the wickedness of this generation? They are surrounded by wickedness on every side, yet have learned to live in silence! Like Jonah, they have had a first hand encounter with your mercy, compassion and grace, their wickedness has been expunged from your record book and they have been delivered from your pending wrath, experienced your great mercy and grace, but are ashamed to admit it to a lost and dying world! Listen church, I'm just getting started, the redeemed child of God has nothing to be ashamed of – (Romans 1:16) it is the wicked that ought to be ashamed! Are we ashamed of the transformation that God has wrought in our life? Are we ashamed of the work He accomplished so that we could be counted among the righteous? Without His transforming power we'd surely still be counted among the wicked, but praise be to God His word lifted me out of the pit, He brought me up from the deep and I am not ashamed to stand and cry out against the wicked, nor am I so cold and hateful not to cry out against them! Let me tell you tonight that the compassionate ones are the hellfire and brimstone preachers – they are driven by godly compassion and love that the silent ones know nothing of!

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Perhaps the wicked will heed the warnings of the word, repent and turn to God; maybe just maybe I'll witness a Jonah revival and see a whole city turn to Jesus! It is not the institution called the church that transforms; it's not the preaching of the preacher, it's not the even the prayers of the saints! These are merely instruments used by God to interrupt traffic on the highway to hell! You need to know tonight that God has strategically placed you right where you're at, and your purpose is to be a road block for someone headed to hell! The coming of the Lord is at hand and following close behind Him is His righteous wrath that the wicked have been storing up against themselves! How many revivals have we missed because we have refused to cry out against the wicked? How many souls have we missed because we have not shared our testimony? How many times do we see the salvation of the wicked and aren't moved to joy? Perhaps, if we learned to rejoice over the one, then the Lord would provide the thousands! The Lord did not choose to give us the rest of the story of Jonah, we're not even certain that he ever came to embrace the salvation of the people of Nineveh. However, the Lord did choose to give us the rest of the story of Nineveh.

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### **Introduction:**

We are living in exciting times, the word is being preached in every nation and as a result more people are accepting Jesus as their Lord and savior than ever before! We are in what I believe is the final world revival before the return of our Lord. However, we are also living in dire times though countless souls are turning to the Lord many are also falling away. Nineveh, heard the word, repented and was spared God's wrath, but their revival as a nation was short lived. They returned to their old ways and fell away from the Lord and now must face his wrath. Let me remind you that there is nothing in the word of God that is not relevant to us today. His word is written to us, about us and for us. We must be careful that we do not become so comfortable hearing His word that we fail to heed/do His word. Many in the church are sitting under what I believe is some of the most anointed preaching ever, yet they remain unchanged! Many claim to be Spirit filled but lack the convicting evidence – no power to witness! The church cannot waiver any longer but has to be about the Father's business. It's not about personalities, places or programs; it's about obedience, sacrifice and compassion. Will the church today obey the command of the Lord to Go? Will the church today sacrifice her desires for the Lord's desire? Will the church today have genuine compassion for the lost? Will you? If you don't the church won't. Friends, God's wrath is real and it is about to be poured out upon the wicked. If we have any compassion at all we will stop at nothing to reach them! There are too many preachers that aren't preaching, too many teachers not teaching and too many redeemed not sharing their story – how God saved them! If we remain silent, where is the hope for the lost?

### **Background:**

Nahum was a contemporary of Jeremiah, Zephaniah and Habakkuk. His ministry falls sometime after 663BC as he refers to the fall of Thebes (3:8-10) as a past event (Thebes fell in 663BC), and sometime before 612BC which was the fall of Nineveh. Nahum means comfort, isn't it comforting to know that "*vengeance is mine, I will repay says the Lord*" (Rom 12:19)? His message certainly had to bring comfort to a nation that was subject to the imminent invasion of such a ruthless people. Judah watched the Assyrians march against their brothers (the Northern kingdom Israel) around 720-722BC destroying most and taking into captivity any survivors. In 701BC Assyria threatened to do the same to Judah, but Judah would witness the mighty hand of God as the angel of the Lord destroyed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night (Is 37:35-37)! Now (Nahum's time), Judah was experiencing national revival under her last righteous king – Josiah. As we study Nahum, one thing is for certain, the unrighteous will face the wrath of a righteous God.

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### I. God is Jealous, God is Good – Nahum 1:1-15

When we are rebuked by God it is for a purpose, we just need to recognize that purpose (**Psalm 141:5**). God's jealousy over us is beyond our understanding; we all have experienced jealousy to some extent, but for the most part we will never know the depth of the Lord's jealousy for us. Furthermore, unlike ours, His jealousy is righteous because He has invested so much in us He has every right to be Jealous. He created us to worship him and when we sold ourselves to sin He bought us back with His own blood – His own Son. Those who know Him and turn away from Him would be better off in the end if they never new Him to begin with. Because they knew Him, but refused to worship Him they will feel the wrath of his jealousy.

<sup>1</sup>*Since God made everything and owns everything, He is envious of no one, but since He is the only true God, He is jealous over His glory, His name, and the worship and honor that are due to Him alone. In the second commandment, God prohibited the worship of idols and backed up the prohibition with this reason: "for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God" (Ex. 20:5).*

➤ **Think about it:**

What have you hung onto in your life that God is Jealous of? Have you ignored his rebuke? How much longer will He wait?


➤ **Further Study – Deuteronomy 6:15; Joshua 24:19,20; 2 Peter 2:20-22**

### II. God is a Righteous Judge – Nahum 2:1-15

Because God is righteous He will not bring judgment without first providing opportunity to repent and avoid His wrath. It is important for one to recognize God's wrath. Many times the trials and tribulations in ones life are a measured portion of God's wrath brought about by ones own disobedience. It is God trying to bring us back to the center of His will (**Hebrews 12:5, 6**).

<sup>2</sup>*"There was a prophecy received from their forefathers, that Nineveh should not be taken till the river first became an enemy to the city. It happened in the third year of the siege, that the Euphrates being swollen with continued rains, overflowed part of the city, and threw down twenty stadia of the wall. The king then imagining that the oracle was accomplished, and that the river was now manifestly become an enemy to the city, casting aside all hope of safety, and lest he should fall into the hands of the enemy, built a large funeral pyre in the palace, and having collected all his gold and silver and royal vestments, together with his concubines and eunuchs, placed himself with them in a little apartment built in the pyre; burnt them, himself, and the palace together. When the death of the king (Sardanapalus) was announced by certain deserters, the enemy entered in by the breach*

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*which the waters had made, and took the city.” Thus the prophecy of Nahum was literally fulfilled:” the gates of the river were opened, and the palace dissolved,” i.e., burnt.*

➤ **Think about it:**

A little over a 100 years (a generation maybe two) earlier Jonah simply walked through the city and proclaimed “in forty days Nineveh will be overthrown” the citizens of the city heeded the warning, repented and turned to God. Now Nahum gives graphic details of how God will destroy them and no one seems to listen. What is God saying to you – are you listening?

Do you want to hear from God? Are your trials and tribulations God sent?


➤ **Further Study – Titus 2:11, 12; Romans 1:18-23**

### III. God’s Judgment Brings Finality – Nahum 3:1-19

There seems to be a misconception among many Christians today about the judgment of God. Rest assure we will all be judged (Hebrews 9:27, 2 Corinthians 5:10, 11). Knowing the terror of God’s judgment ought to spur us on to reach the lost so that like us they to can avoid the great white throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-15 – judgment of the unrighteous). We are surrounded by lost souls that unless they repent will face the fullness of God’s wrath and the finality of His judgment. Are we living among them in silence offering no help? Have we run from the call of God to “Go”? The church today cannot continue to sit back and expect the lost to come in – they won’t! We must instead go to them warning them of the wrath to come, demonstrating the love of God to them. Only then will we see the revival (awakening) we say we’re praying for.

<sup>3</sup>*The city was destroyed so completely by the flood and the enemies that when Alexander the Great fought the battle of Arbela nearby in 331 BC, he did not know there had been a city there. Nineveh was never rebuilt, and this confirms Nahum's prediction in 1:9 that “distress will not rise up twice.” It wasn't until 1850 that Nineveh was discovered by archaeologists. It is interesting to read liberal commentaries from before 1850 because they had problems with believing the books of Jonah and Nahum because there was no record of Nineveh.*

➤ **Think about it:**

How have you responded to the command to go?


➤ **Further Study – Romans 10:14, 15**

