

THRU THE BIBLE SYNTHESIS
"Part XXII: Nahum - God's Consolation For The Wronged Party"

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) The Dear Abby column ran a letter several years ago in which a married woman spilled her feelings all over the paper about a matter she was facing at home. It read: "Dear Abby: My husband of 15 years suddenly has decided that marriage is a 'trap,' and he wants out. He wants his own apartment so he can come and go as he pleases. (Not divorced, mind you; he just wants to be free to do as he pleases.)

A wise friend suggested a cheaper way. Give him the spare bedroom and let him do as he pleases. The idea appealed to my husband, and that is what he is doing now.

This friend told me to let my husband have his flings and have a ball, and in time he will get tired of it and come back to me. In the meantime, I should be pleasant and uncomplaining and be a good mother to our two teenagers.

My problem: How can I endure the pain of seeing him come and go as he pleases? Can you give me a few pointers on how to put up with this when my heart is aching? Signed, Lonely" **Question: How can justice ever be meted out to the many married people all over the world who have to put up with such abuse as a way of life?!**

(2) One night several years ago in Petaluma, California as Polly Klaas had her friends from school over to her house for a slumber party, a man broke into her private bedroom, kidnapped her at knifepoint in front of her friends, took her out and violently assaulted and killed her. Now Polly Klass' alleged murderer is standing trial, and his **lawyer** is making a big case for the change of venue, concerned about his client getting a **fair trial!** **Question: How can justice ever be meted out to even the score in our nation as the criminal's rights are almost more elevated than his victim's?!**

(3) Not long ago, a mother who had been abused as a little girl by her stepfather strapped her two boys into their car seats, put the car in gear and let it drive into a lake where it sank, slowly drowning her two, trapped little boys -- allegedly for the sake of **pleasing a lover!** **Question: How can justice ever be meted out for all involved?!**

With all of the wrongs people face in this very unfair world, where is justice, where is vengeance? HOW and WHY?!

(We turn to the "Need" section of the sermon . . .)

Need: "When one has been terribly wronged by another, what should the victimized party DO about it, and WHY?!"

- I. **Though failing God and thus being punished, God's people were wrongfully abused by the Assyrians who were His discipline tool:**
 - A. God originally created the world and set man up as His deputy, but sin deposed him, so Satan became ruler on the earth, Gn. 1-5; 2 Cor. 4:4.
 - B. The Lord renewed history through the Noahic flood, Gn. 6:1-9:7.
 - C. Yet, Noah's descendant, Nimrod, began an apostasy opposing God's rule on the earth, Gn. 10:8-10; 11:1-9; Rev. 12:1-3.
 - D. God thus chose Abraham to start a nation to check this sin, Gn. 12:1-3
 - E. Yet, after many challenges en route, that nation, Israel failed to curb Nimrod's error worldwide, itself going into apostasy and judgment :
 1. Due to Solomon's sins, God divided his kingdom, giving most of the tribes (Northern Kingdom, Israel) to his servant, Jeroboam and leaving the Southern Kingdom, Judah to David's line, 1 K. 11:1 -13.
 2. Yet, Jeroboam started an idol worship to keep people from turning to Solomon's side. That led later kings to sin, so God sent Jeroboam's nation into Assyrian captivity, 1 K. 12:25-2 K. 17:41!
 - F. **However, the cruel Ninevites of Assyria went OVERBOARD in cruelty and extent as the tool of God's judgment:**
 1. The Assyrians performed terrible cruelties upon their enemies in war, and God hated these acts, B.K.C., O.T., p. 1994; Nah. 3:8-10.
 2. Also, the Assyrians attacked **Judah's** cities though Judah was **not** ripe for divine **judgment**, and that was threatening, Ibid., p. 1496.
 3. This abuse by Nineveh of Assyria was completely inexcusable:
 - a. When God told Jonah to evangelize Nineveh 100 years before, He had a time getting him to go as Jonah knew the atrocities these people would inflict on Israel in later days, Ibid., p. 1461f.
 - b. Yet, Jonah finally went there, and Nineveh repented, Jo. 3:1-10.
 - c. Nevertheless, that generation's repentance failed to take root in succeeding generations, and these Assyrians went on a rampage with vile cruelty against Israel and some cities in Judah, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, Intro. to the Book of Jonah, p. 1292.
 - d. Thus, when the Assyrians whom God had evangelized through uneager Jonah so **badly** abused His people and other nations, they created a grave **injustice** needing God's attention, 1:1-3!
- II. **The book of Nahum is the CORRECT resolution to this injustice:**

- A. Israel's law placed the taking of vengeance in **God's** hands, Dt. 32:35ff
- B. **GOD** thus announced a **consolation** for the **wronged party** -- His people -- by predicting **divine vengeance** for her against Assyria:
 - 1. The name, "Nahum" means "consolation," B.K.C., O.T., p. 1493.
 - 2. Appropriately, Nahum's prophecy was a **comfort** to God's wronged people as it announced **divine vengeance** upon **Nineveh**, Assyria's main city for these Assyrian war crimes, Nahum 1:1-3!
- C. Borrowing from G. Campbell Morgan work, we outline the prophecy's three chapters as follows (Voices of Twelve Hebrew Prophets, p. 72):
 - 1. Chapter One announced God's **verdict of vengeance**:
 - a. The God who made a verdict of vengeance is a God of infinite attributes who was **able** to punish Nineveh, Nah. 1:1-8.
 - b. This God was furious with Nineveh as her abuse crossed **God's** purposes for its **victims**; **He** would thus judge her in fury, 1:9ff.
 - c. Nahum announced the comforting news that **Judah's** affliction would **END** when **God destroyed Nineveh**, 1:12-15!
 - 2. Chapter Two unveiled Nahum's prophetic **vision of vengeance**:
 - a. The attack on Nineveh was described in Nahum 2:1-6.
 - b. Her defeat and plunder with suffering was detailed, Nah. 2:7-13.
 - 3. Chapter Three recorded God's **vindication of vengeance**:
 - a. God would destroy Nineveh for violence & promoting the cruel religion of Ishtar, goddess of sex & war, 3:1-7; *Ibid.*, p. 1502.
 - b. He would destroy Nineveh for ruthlessly massacring infants in Thebes, Nah. 3:8-11. Her defense would be futile, 3:12-19.

III. **Nahum adds to the "thread of redemption" by keeping alive hope of divine, intervening vengeance so as to preserve what remained of Abraham's seed to fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant, Nahum 1:3-8.**

Application: As **EITHER** a wronged party **OR** the wrongdoer, handle the past's injustices by (1) believing on Christ for salvation from sin and enter His "much more care" program, Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8-9; 8:31-32. (2) Instead of ourselves dealing with the past, (a) confess our sins to the Lord (1 Jn. 1:9) and (b) depend upon His Spirit for thought & behavior control (Gal. 5:16-23). (3) As a wrongdoer, apologize and make whatever amends we CAN (Lk. 19:8-9). (4) As a victim, (a) rely on God's interests in what it cost HIM for us as HIS possession to be wronged and let HIM dispense the vengeance needed, Na. 1:9-11; Dt. 32:35ff! (b) Don't forgive until fruits of repentance are seen in the wrongdoer's life, Mtt. 3:7-8. At that point we forgive, Mtt. 18:21-22.

Lesson: The wrongs of this life are **GOD'S** business to **AVENGE** -- not the human victim's right, and God **WILL** even **ALL** scores in the end!

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon's lesson . . .)

WILL administer **divine vengeance**, consider these facts about the city of Nineveh:

Unbelievably fortified so that it was **humanly** impregnable. Its walls were 100 feet high and wide enough to drive three chariots abreast on them. The walls were fortified with 1,500 towers, and encompassed an area 60 miles in circumference, the size of modern London, England! (J. Sidlo w Baxter, Explore The Book, p. 200).

Bricks and **mortar** for emergency defense walls. Olmstead's Hist. of Assyria, p. 637 notes that south of the gate, the moat is still filled with fragments of stone and **mud brick heaped up** when they were **breached**. (b) Nahum 1:10 and 3:11 predicted that in Nineveh's final hours, its people would be **drunk**. Diodorus Siculus (ca. 20 B.C.) wrote that the enemy attacked by night when they learned that the Assyrian king had distributed food and wine in liberal supply to his troops, producing **mass drunkenness**. (c) Nahum 1:8; 2:6,8 predicted that Nineveh would be destroyed by a **flood**. Diodorus wrote that in the third year of the siege that heavy **rains** caused a nearby river to **flood** part of the city and **break** part of the clay **walls** down. Xenophon referred to terrifying **thunder** during the city's capture. (d) Nahum 1:10; 2:13; 3:15 said the city would be destroyed by **fire**. Thompson and Hutchinson, A Century of Exploration at Nineveh, p. 45, 77 reported that a level of **2 inches** of **ash** lay near the Sargon pavement, and the temple was **clearly burned**. (e) Nahum 1:9, 14 predicted that Nineveh's destruction would be **final**. Though many ancient Near Eastern cities were rebuilt after being destroyed, Nineveh was not. In fact, while retreating with his Greek forces in 401 B.C., Xenophon did not even **recognize** its ruins because it had been so badly destroyed! In fact, the site was not **defined** as Nineveh until the **1800s**, 2,500 years after it fell in 612 B.C., Z.P.E.B., v. 4, p. 442! (Bib.Kno.Com., O.T., p. 1495)

Well, if God so completely fulfilled Nahum's predictions about vengeance against the impregnable city of Nineveh, **He REALLY WILL deal out JUSTICE! Trust Him to do that, and rest in His promises to that end!**