

## **The Book of Nahum**

### *Chapter 3*

#### **Key Terms:**

**Learn by Heart (SC and/or Scripture Passage):**

**Main Objectives for this Lesson:**

**Key Questions & Answers:**

**Catechesis Summary:**

**Small Catechism Connection:**

### **Lesson**

#### *Devotion*

- Congregation at Prayer

#### *Review*

#### *Na. 3:1*

- “Woe”
  - Interjection expressing warning.
  - Prophets frequently begin pronouncements of judgment with this term.
  - Examples:
    - Zechariah 11:17; “Woe to my worthless shepherd, who deserts the flock! May the sword strike his arm and his right eye! Let his arm be wholly withered, his right eye utterly blinded!”
    - Hosea 7:13; “Woe to them, for they have strayed from me! Destruction to them, for they have rebelled against me! I would redeem them, but they speak lies against me.”
  - Jesus:
    - In Matthew 23, Jesus speaks seven woes to the scribes and Pharisees.
    - These “woes” function as a negative counterpart of the Beatitudes (or blessings) Jesus promises throughout the Gospel of Matthew.
- “Blood City”
  - Further emphasizes Nineveh’s cruelty and bloodshed.
  - This city stands in contrast to another city - Heavenly Jerusalem
- “all full of lies”
  - Deceit, deception, false.
  - Can’t help but think of the father of lies – Satan.
  - This description of Nineveh stands in contrast to Him who is the truth – Jesus Christ.
- “Plunder”
  - Luther states, “Violence holds control over you. There is no limit to your pillage. One plots against the goods of another, when and how he can...”
  - Recall the scene in 2:9:
    - Plunder the silver, plunder the gold! There is no end of the treasure or of the wealth of all precious things.”

- The treasure they built up will be taken away.
- “prey”
  - Denotes tearing to pieces like wild animals.
  - Recalls Nahum 2:13 & 14

#### *Na. 3:2-3*

- Can you hear and see the battle in these verses?
  - Cracking whip
  - wheels rumbling
  - horsing galloping
  - bounding chariots
  - horsemen charging
  - flashing sword
  - glittering spear
- Similar to what we saw in chapter 2, the imagery of this battle is vivid.
  - Things continue to get worse for the Ninevites.
  - The intensity is building.
- Luther:
  - With all these, like a painter on canvas, he depicts and sets before their eyes the hostile army of the Chaldeans as they oppose the Assyrians and the misery of the Assyrians, just as he also did earlier in chapter 2.”

#### *Na. 3:3*

- How are the dead bodies described?
  - Host (Multitude or abundance).
  - heaps
  - without end.
- These gruesome details dramatize the fierceness of God’s wrath against the evil that fill Nineveh.

#### *Na. 3:4-19*

- Through the final verses, we have three taunts:
  - The Sorceress-prostitute taunt (3:4-7)
  - The comparison with Thebes taunt (3:8-11)
  - Final taunts (3:12-19).

#### *Na. 3:4*

- “countless whorings of the prostitute”
  - Nineveh is now being referred to as a prostitute who has committed a multitude of whoredoms.
  - Sexual infidelity (Prostitute or whore) is often seen throughout Scripture as spiritual infidelity.
  - This sexual reference indicates there an intimate connection, a one flesh union, married to a lie.
- How is this prostitute described?
  - Graceful – She’s well favored and beautiful. Not ugly and worn out.

- Nineveh’s power, world-wide commerce, invincible military, her riches are attractive.
    - All wooed this beautiful mistress of the world, sought her favor.
  - Deadly Charms – Betrays
    - She uses this to charm her victims.
    - Making them obedient slaves.
    - Only to cast them off and crush them underfoot.
    - Despite of her loveliness, she is a vile cruel prostitute.
    - Her one aim is to satisfy her passion, her lust.
    - This intimate connection is a way is destruction.
- How would this compare Ephesians 5?
  - Christ and His bride the church is sacrificial love.
  - Nineveh, as a prostitute is satisfying her own needs.
  - Those who fall into this intimate trap of deception and lies will be destroyed as will the prostitute Nineveh.

Na. 3:5-6

- “Vengeance is mine”
  - The God this prostitute despised and blasphemed will be punished.
  - The word vengeance calls to mind chapter 1 where God takes vengeance on his enemies.
- What is meant by “I will lift up your skirt over your face?”
  - God will punish Nineveh by revealing to the world her true character.
  - This public act will lead Nineveh to shame and disgrace.
  - Everyone will see her stripped of all her beauty.
  - The world will see her for the whore that she is.
- “I will throw filth...”
  - Throwing detestable, unclean objects is evidences of God’s total contempt for Nineveh.
  - Such object would be found on foul city streets.
  - This goes to show how much God hates sin!

Na. 3:7

- “All who look at you will shrink...”
  - Nineveh’s former lovers and friends will stand afar off from her.
  - They will not stop to mourn with her or comfort her.
  - She is forsaken both by God and man.
- Again, compare this to Ephesians 5
  - Marriage is sacrificial.
  - The blood of Christ makes the church spotless and holy.
  - Christ nourishes and cherishes the church.
  - This is the intimacy that God desires. But when running after sin is not only seen as idolatry but adultery.
  - God doesn’t want to share.

Na. 3:8-11

- Through the get to the second taunt:
  - The comparison with Thebes taunt (3:8-11)

Na. 3:8

- Thebes was the capital of Egypt. (Roughly 330 miles south of present day Cairo).
- As the verse indicates it sat along the Nile.
- This mighty river and its canals surrounded the city and fortified it as well.
- It was fell to the Assyrians in c 663 BC.

Na. 3:9

- With Thebes as the capital, she had helpers/partner nations:
  - west was the region of Libya
  - South was the region of Cush
- “Her strength...”, “Her helpers...”
  - Thebes was powerful and well protected.

Na. 3:10

- Yet, Thebes was:
  - Destroyed
  - Inhabitants deported,
  - her babes cruelly killed
  - her honorable men sold into slavery by lot
- All by the Assyrian Empire.

Na. 3:11

- Do you notice a repetition in this verse?
  - “You will”
  - Yahweh now turns this around to defeat the enemy by its own devices.
  - The Lord could destroy them in any way he wants (raining sulfur and fire on them).
  - Yet, He chooses to repay Nineveh in the same manner.
  - The Lord will do to Nineveh, what she did to others.
  - “As you, Assyria, did this to Thebes, so now it will happen to you and your capital of Nineveh.”

Na. 3:12

- “First ripe figs”
  - First ripe figs are a delicacy for those who haven’t had fresh fruit sin the fall.
- “Shaken”
  - Nineveh’s fortification is ripe for the taking and will be easily overcome.

Na. 3:13

- What characteristics should a soldier have?
  - Strong, courageous...
  - God is saying Nineveh’s soldiers are like woman.
  - You can’t say something like this in our culture today without being shamed.

- Nahum is saying Nineveh's soldiers lack strength, courage, confidence to fight.
- The situation is most desperate.

Na. 3:14

- The Lord gives Nineveh a warning for a siege.
- All their fortification were to be replaced and strengthened by making more bricks.

Na. 3:15

- Yet, while they are busy preparing for the siege:
  - Fire will cut them off.
  - The sword will consume them.
- God taunts them to reproduce, to make more people like a locust and a grasshopper.
  - Yet, irony is that this is the same way God will destroy/devour Nineveh.

Na. 3:16

- Nineveh was the commercial center of the ancient world.
- Businesses flourished.
- Yet, this will come to an end.
- All the roads and plazas will be deserted.

Na. 3:17

- "Princes...Scribes"
  - Not only will merchants disappear.
  - Her high officials will disappear.

Na. 3:18

- The reason he compares them to grasshoppers and locusts that fly away is:
  - The princes, nobility who should be at the front of the ranks
  - are hiding in terror.
  - They dare not step into the open.
- The people have fled to the mountains.
  - There's no shepherd to gather them.
- Contrast:
  - Jesus as a shepherd.
  - Jesus as a good shepherd gathers – salvation.
  - Jesus as the one who will judge.

Na. 3:19

- "Your wound is grievous"
  - This is a mortal wound.
  - There's no healing.
  - It's all over for Nineveh.
- "All who hear..."
  - There is no nation that was not harassed and oppressed by Nineveh.
  - Now, as the Lord will destroy them, all the nations will rejoice.
- "Unceasing evil"

- Nineveh has this continual, unending evil.
- That which is against the LORD.
- “For upon whom has not comes your unceasing evil?”
  - The book ends on a question – a rhetorical question.
    - The answer is none.
    - All have suffered on account of Nineveh.
  - The only other book in the Bible to do this – Jonah!
    - They’re both minor prophets.
    - They’re both roughly the same length.
    - They’re both against the fate of Nineveh.
    - The difference:
      - The question in Jonah, “Should I not have pity...?”
        - Jonah ends with God’s mercy!
      - The question in Nahum, “For upon whom has not comes your unceasing evil?”
        - Nahum ends with God’s righteous judgment against sin.
    - While different, both Jonah and Nahum deal with the character of God.
      - Jonah – “God is slow in anger and abounding in steadfast love”
      - Nahum – “God will by no means clear the guilty.”
      - We hear very little about God’s mercy in this book.
      - Yet, Nahum has an important voice in the choir.
      - He helps us understand an important aspect of who God is.
      - Nahum bears witness to the fact God will punish sin.

### *Final Thoughts*

- Society has this idea that God is a big teddy bear.
  - that God will support ever one of our decisions.
  - that sin isn’t a big deal to Him.
- God:
  - His judgment is serious
  - He takes sin very seriously.
  - He takes evil and rebellion very seriously.
  - He takes unrepentance very seriously.
  - God will have the final say.
  - “He is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, but He will by no means clear the guilty.”
- Nineveh
  - Will eventually be destroyed.
  - In 612 BC, Nineveh fell to the combined armies of the Babylonians and the Medes. Her proud temples, palaces, and engineering wonders crumbled and were soon forgotten.
  - They are a picture of what will happen to God’s enemies, those who continue in unrepentant sin.
- For Us:
  - We must repent of our sins.
  - Our sin is deserving of temporal and eternal death.

- We repent and cling in faith to God's mercy which is only found in the person and work of Christ.
- Christ is the propitiation for our sins. His blood, his atoning sacrifice on the cross appeases God's wrath.
- Through Christ there is forgiveness, life, and salvation.
- God clears the guilty only through the blood of Christ.

*Closing Devotion*