

Nahum 2:1-10

The prophesy of Nahum contains four answers to four vital questions:

#1 question: Why does God act in judgment? According to Nahum, there is both a God-ward reason and a man-ward reason. *In 1:11 we have the sin against God: pride.* This was the fundamental sin of the Assyrians against God. We see it clearly in Sennacherib's invasion of Jerusalem (cf. Isa. 36). **Pride**, expressed in rebellion against God's sovereign control over His creation, was one of Nineveh's greatest sins. *The other sin, for which God judges, is man-ward: cruelty.* We see this in 3:1-4. The Assyrians were notorious for their oppression and cruelty toward their fellow men. These were the two great sins of Assyria—God-ward and man-ward—and they are the primary reason God gets angry and acts in judgment. *It is illuminating for us in our own struggle against sin, that these two sins, pride and cruelty (lack of love for others) almost always go together, as they did in Assyria.*

Where there is pride against God, there is usually cruelty toward other people. Jesus taught that the two greatest commandments were to love God wholeheartedly and to love our neighbors as ourselves (Matt. 22:37-39). When people do this, they are neither proud nor cruel. So, *why does God act in judgment? He judges to punish pride and to protect people.* - See James 4:6

#2 question: When does God judge? What is the timing by which God judges? Again, we can look at the answer to this question from two viewpoints: God's and man's. God judges after He exercises long patience. Almost a hundred years earlier, God had sent Jonah with a message of repentance to Nineveh. The people had repented, and God had relented. *But then the their children and grandchildren repented of their parents' repentance!*

By now they had returned to their former pride and cruelty. After long waiting, God was done with them and was about to avenge the wrong done against Him and others. From the human viewpoint, God judges when sin has become exceedingly sinful! He waits for people to repent, but if they do not, He steps in to judge (3:18-19; cf. Gen. 15:16; 1 Cor. 11:31; 2 Pet. 3:9).

#3 question: How does God act in vengeance? The answer reveals God's method. He used natural, providential and supernatural forces to destroy Nineveh. The Babylonians invaded the city through a breach in the wall that the flooding Tigris River opened up. He led human soldiers to control the locks and gates on the Tigris to store up waters. God supernaturally controlled weather conditions so that an historic rainfall came. When the Babylonians opened the gates, the massive deluge caused the massive city walls to give

way. (2:6) He then led human soldiers to storm through that opening and take the city.

#4 question: How is God's anger necessary to His love? Nahum teaches us that to believe in God's love is to be sure of His wrath. If God is never angry, He does not really love. His anger grows out of His love. Can you look at sin, pride, oppression, and cruelty and not be moved? Then you do not love. Do you not care that Christians are being persecuted for their faith and are being killed daily in over 50 countries in the world? Do you not care that pride is keeping people from acknowledging their need for God here in Mendocino County? Do you not care that women are being abused and children aborted or neglected by fathers who are so selfish that they think only of their own pleasures? If not, you are incapable of love.

Therefore, if God cannot burn with hatred toward sin, then He is a God incapable of true love. ***To believe in His love for the good and the innocent, is to be sure of His wrath for evil, pride and cruelty!***

Henry Ward Beecher, the famous preacher said, "A person who doesn't know how to be angry doesn't know how to be good." Thomas Fuller wrote, "Anger is one of the sinews of the soul. He who lacks it has a maimed mind."

A corollary to this revelation is another truth about God that Nahum reveals: *God's love always interprets His wrath.* Whenever we observe some instance of God's vengeance, we must remember that it springs from His love. We cannot always make the connection, and we may not be able to explain the connection to ourselves and others, but there is a connection. ***God's vengeance proves the depth of His love.***

The book of Nahum has this wonderful chiastic structure:

