

Big Idea: The Old Testament book of Nahum highlights God’s sovereignty over history by predicting the fall of Nineveh. Empires rise and fall under God’s just judgment rather than by chance. God even uses wicked nations to judge others. Nahum’s “woe” against the bloody city of Nineveh reveals that God’s judgment is deserved, purposeful, and comfort for the oppressed. This is good news to the original audience, Judah, but the bad news is that they aren’t exempt from the same judgement, as is evident by the next prophet, Habakkuk. All of this points to the gospel: since God governs history with perfect justice and mercy, the only proper response is to “live by faith” (Hab. 2:4) in the righteousness God gives through Christ.

The Text, Nahum 3:1-7

¹ Woe to the bloody city,
all full of lies and plunder—
no end to the prey!

² The crack of the whip, and rumble of the wheel,
galloping horse and bounding chariot!

³ Horsemen charging,
flashing sword and glittering spear,
hosts of slain,
heaps of corpses,
dead bodies without end—
they stumble over the bodies!

⁴ And all for the countless whorings of the prostitute,
graceful and of deadly charms,
who betrays nations with her whorings,
and peoples with her charms.

⁵ Behold, I am against you,
declares the Lord of hosts,
and will lift up your skirts over your face;
and I will make nations look at your nakedness
and kingdoms at your shame.

⁶ I will throw filth at you
and treat you with contempt
and make you a spectacle.

⁷ And all who look at you will shrink from you and say,
“Wasted is Nineveh; who will grieve for her?”
Where shall I seek comforters for you?

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. How is the book of Nahum (literally “comfort”) a message of comfort? What are the themes of Nahum?
2. Consider the timeline of history. How does believing that God is sovereign over nations change the way you respond to current world events or political anxiety?
3. It was easy for Judah to rejoice in Nineveh’s judgment. Where might we be tempted to assume that God’s judgment applies to others but not to ourselves? Are there compromises in your life that you have minimized because judgment seems distant?
4. What does it practically look like for you this week to “live by faith” rather than by self-reliance?