

Day 25: Nahum 3

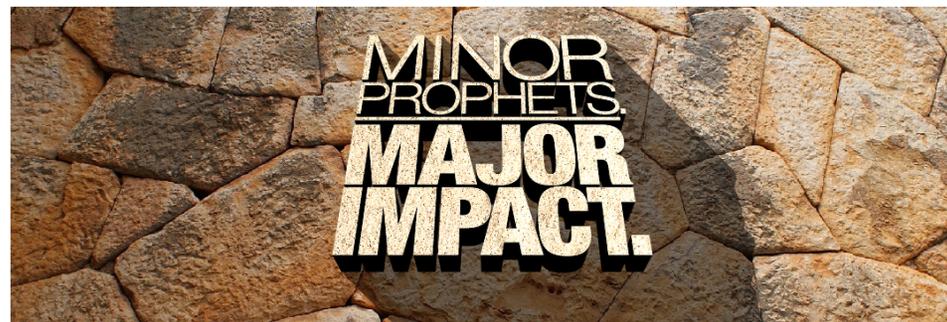
“There is no remedy for your injury; your wound is grievous. All who hear the news about you clap their hands over you. Who has not suffered from your continual cruelty?” Nahum 3:19 (CEB)

The book of Nahum is definitely not PG, and the third chapter is no exception. The language is violent and graphic in a gendered way that is rightly jarring to our ears. Why then is it Scripture? Where is the divine message here?

As verse 19 reminds us, this is a prophecy about God’s wrath against the oppressive Assyrian Empire. Nahum is delivering a message of comfort to God’s people who have been suffering under the violence and injustice of the Assyrians. For oppressed people in any era, this text can carry the same comforting message that God will not allow injustice to go unanswered.

However, I and many others don’t have an oppressive Assyria looming over us. For us, we can look back the preceding verses of Nahum 3, especially verses 16-18 for a humbling reminder that we cannot secure our comfortable, prosperous lives against the wrath of God if we set ourselves up in opposition to God and live off the suffering of others, like Assyria.

Tanner Carlson



AMOS, OBADIAH, NAHUM

Day 21: Amos 9

“Though they dig into Sheol, from there shall my hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, from there I will bring them down.” Amos 9:2 ESV

This passage is part of Amos’s vision of God’s inescapable wrath against a specific community; however, when I read it a second time, I thought about how I have experienced being unable to escape from God lately. Over the course of the past nine months, I’ve repeatedly come into contact with people that have real material needs and yet felt unprepared to provide impactful help. Coming up short when God has called has stretched my sense of what it means to be equipped for ministry.

Are we ready in all places at all times to respond to God’s prophetic call? Or will we find ourselves digging into Sheol or climbing to the heavens, only to see that God is inescapable in the end?

To try reading this text differently, go outside and read in a public place. Who do you see? Who do you have the opportunity to meet? Then, remember Amos’s solidarity with the poor and dispossessed and think about how you can be prepared to respond when God calls.

Tanner Carlson

Day 22: Obadiah

Whenever I read Scripture, I try to ask, “Does this apply to me?” Sometimes yes, sometimes no, often times I wish it didn’t. Obadiah recounts God’s judgement against Edom for taking advantage of the conquest of Jerusalem. Verse 11 states: “On that day when you stood aloof, when aliens carried off his goods, when foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, you were as one of them.”

How does the verse above apply to me? With so much news at our disposal, it’s easy to get overwhelmed. Sometimes we simply have to walk away from it, ignore it, even. The problems are simply too great, and complaining about the horrors on social media, while it may make us feel good about ourselves for a time, it doesn’t help those who are hurting.

I can’t help but wonder if by thinking all these problems are so insurmountable, we end up acting like Edom — standing aloof while the innocent are destroyed. So what are we to do? We can’t solve the world’s problems. Nor did God ask us to. He does, however, expect us to go where we can, when we can, to help those in need. That means keeping our eyes open and allowing God to lead us to those we can help.

What breaks your heart? Is it seeing those who have no shelter, no food, suffering from addiction, languishing in prison? Or is it your next door neighbor who suffered a stroke and can no longer mow the lawn?

While as individuals we can’t fix the entire world, if enough of us shine our little points of light where we can, perhaps together we can illuminate enough of the world to make a larger difference than we could ever accomplish alone.

Andra Marquardt

Day 23: Nahum 1

There are many parts of the Bible that can be difficult to understand. We read in Nahum that God is a jealous God. Why is God identified as jealous? Isn’t that one of the things God identifies in the Ten Commandments as something we’re not supposed to be? I had a hard time understanding this, until I had kids. We think of being jealous as coveting what others have. We’re jealous of our neighbors who seem to always have better stuff. We’re jealous of anyone over 6 feet tall. Well, maybe that’s just me.

If you think like a parent, though, can we really be jealous of our kids? Sometimes my oldest daughter thinks of something before I do. When that happens, I’m not wishing that I thought of it sooner. I’m proud of the fact that she is learning and thinking quickly. I’ll watch my other daughter give someone she just met a big hug. Again, the first thought that comes to mind is that of a proud parent, not of someone who thinks, “Why can’t I be like that?” I don’t believe we can be jealous of our kids if we’re talking about the coveting type of jealousy. There is, however, a type of jealousy I’ve experienced as a parent and I believe it’s the type of jealousy that describes God. Instead of being jealous OF my kids, I have experienced being jealous FOR my kids. I always want what is best for them. If they mess up, I will do what I can to teach them. As our heavenly Father, God also wants what is best for us. When we mess up, He will also do what He can to teach us. That’s the jealous God throughout Nahum and the Bible that I’ve come to understand.

Jeremy Skoglund

Day 24: Nahum 2

Nahum is not the first time Nineveh’s wicked ways and destruction were the primary focus of an Old Testament prophet. A few books prior to Nahum, and over a hundred years prior to Nahum’s account, we see Nineveh’s repentance and God’s mercy through Jonah. Nineveh could testify that “the Lord is slow to anger, and his power is great,” as well as that “the Lord is good, a strong refuge when trouble comes. He is close to those who trust in him” (Nahum 1:3a, 7 NLT).

Even with the short-lived repentance, Nineveh could have experienced God’s compassion and grace again. Nevertheless, they rejected God and the vivid description of Nineveh’s demise in chapter 2 demonstrates how the Lord “never lets the guilty go unpunished” (Nahum 1:3b).

The harsh reality of Nahum 2 reminds me that when I choose to live for myself, all I have is myself. When I choose to trust in my thoughts, in my plans, in my ways, they are all that I have. Who or what holds your trust? Spend time today in prayer and reflection over the truth of this Old Testament text and realign your heart and mind with God’s.

Pray: Lord, I am so thankful for your patience, compassion and lovingkindness. Renew my heart and mind today in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Amanda Rue