

Nahum 3:1-7

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Date: 30 June 2013

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[0 : 00] Good morning. Did you have a good week last week? I think I better get started a little light because that scripture was pretty heavy, wasn't it?

Glad that you're here. Glad that you joined us for service. Let's look to the Lord that he might bless our time together. Father, thank you for your goodness to us. We're honored to be in your presence.

We're honored to be among the people of God and pray that our hearts would continue to be open. Thank you for the blessing of worship and song and music. Lord, that sort of helps our hearts to rise and to settle.

Pray for our time in the word this morning. May the words of my mouth, meditations of my heart be acceptable in your sight, oh Lord, my strength and my redeemer. Amen.

If you've been tracking with us in these series on this summer, particularly this series in Nahum, you may have had questions as to why it was that Nineveh and Assyria were actually ripe for the judgment of God.

[1 : 19] Well, if that has been your question, you'll find out today exactly what the charges were, what the divine indictment was.

The charges against a haughty and very rebellious nation. Here, chapter 3, verses 1 through 7, they come to light before us.

The structure, if you look at the text, it's quite simple, isn't it? The outline that emerges from it, verses 1 through 4, the sins of the city.

Verses 5 through 7, the shaming of the city. The sins of the city, then the shaming of the city.

Why God's wrath on a rebellious people? It was the sins. The sins of the city were the catalyst for divine wrath, if you will.

[2 : 22] Look at the way the text begins. Woe. And you say, woe, when we hear that word woe. First word in the text.

It actually is an attention-grabbing kind of word. And it introduces the fact that something is not right.

Other renderings of the woe, of the word woe, include ah. We find that in Isaiah chapter 1 and verse 4. And I love Isaiah, the way that the book begins.

But this is what it says. Ah, sinful nation. He's speaking to his people, God's people. A people laden with iniquity.

Offspring of evildoers. Children who deal corruptly. Huh? The woe, the ah. And then we're introduced into exactly why or what's going on.

[3 : 29] Other renderings of the word woe include a loss. A ha. Or oh. But here, in our text, the word woe expresses divine dismay.

Divine angst, if you will. Huh? And what we see that follows, it gives us the reason for the dismay.

And such is the case that we see here. After the word woe, we get introduced to the rap sheet of a wayward city, if you will.

That's what's given. Did you notice the title for the city? It's called bloody city. Eugene Peterson in *The Message* renders it a murder city.

Cities are strange. And sometimes we do give them labels, do we not? It's based on actual or desired things associated with them.

[4 : 39] Or sometimes it's an explanation of their names. For instance, the city of Philadelphia is the city of what? And the city of Los Angeles is what?

City of angels. Huh? Detroit is what? The motor city. The motor city. I want to see who's going to get this one. Pittsburgh is? Or the iron city.

Jerusalem is? The holy city. Las Vegas is? Sin city. Chicago is?

Chicago is? And it's not because of the cool breeze that goes on the lake, off the lake. It's rather because of the hot wind of the politicians that are here.

The political atmosphere. And Joss has highlighted something this morning. Chicago is beginning to be known as also a murder city.

[5 : 43] City of blood. As I look at the paper from last Sunday's paper where, at least the *Sun-Times*, where there was a funeral procession for an 11-year-old child, victim of violence.

This week, murder happened in a place that we normally don't think that it happens. In the loop. Huh? Bank of America building.

Well, shooting and then a suicide. Huh? But then, in Humboldt Park, there was the murder of both a father and a son within a week apart.

Perhaps the label fits, unfortunately. Huh? Nineveh was a city of blood. The name fit. The first of the sins of the city was violence.

Huh? That's what we gather from there. Nineveh was a city of violence. Huh? We've already noted before her appetite for over-the-top kind of violence and cruelty.

[6 : 51] Predatory kind of ways. And through those predatory kind of ways, they advance the national interest through bloodshed and slaughter and inhumane treatment of other peoples.

So, thus, the lion metaphor that we saw on last week was very appropriate for Nineveh. For those who preyed on others. Huh? Violence.

Murder city. Oh, but did you notice the second sin of the city? All full of lies. Deception. Huh?

Nineveh was a city of deceit. Full of lies is what it says. That deception would likely include violation of treaties and other tactics of deceit.

Whatever it took to get their way. Huh? Isn't that why people resort to lies? In order to get their own way?

[7 : 56] Huh? From the littlest ones among us to the grown-up liars. We want our way.

Whether it is in your marriage relationship or perhaps in your professional relationship. Some of us are not beyond lying to get our way.

Making and breaking of oaths and promises. Self-serving deceit. The art of the day. That was the way that Nineveh operated.

Huh? Violence. Deception. Oh, but look at the next sin of the city. Full of lies and plunders.

No end to the prey. Greed. Recognize that one? Sin of the city. Ruthlessly.

- [8 : 55] Self-indulgent. No boundaries. No stopping point. Without self-control, if you will. Insatiable appetites that promote self-interest. And ripping other people off.
- Greed. Oh. When are we satisfied? When do we say enough is enough?
- How much more do we need? Huh? Find the comments of Elizabeth Aktermire quite piercing.
- Regarding this particular, these things. Here we see political, military, and economic power in all its devious corruption. Nineveh is a bloody city because it is full of lies.
- Because its government practices duplicity within and without for its own selfish interest. Here is the nation that proclaims, and listen to this, we want peace while it prepares for war.
- [10 : 08] That seals a treaty of friendship with a lesser power while secretly plotting the latter's downfall. That denies all responsibility for an international incident which it has covertly brought about.
- And yes, here too is the government that protects its image in the eyes of its own citizens whose officials baldly lie about what they are really doing.
- Whose representatives project an image of caring and concern to hide their own greed and corruption. Whose official proclamations conceal the truth and can no longer be believed.
- Whose outward image is one of seeming, seeming, seeminglessness in the interest of prosperous enterprise. And behind whose mask of etiquette are duplicity and neglect and scorn for the weak and the average.
- While a reflection of this nation, while we see this as a reflection of this nation of antiquity. It is very close to us as individuals and as a society today.
- [11 : 24] Is the sin of Nineveh of yesterday our sin today? Violence. What about violence at all levels of society?
- In the home? On the streets? Violence. And even amongst law enforcement kind of people. What about deception?
- We don't hesitate to deceive and to connive and to make and break promises. We cause people to momentarily hope.
- Only to have those hopes broken. Hopes dashed by broken promises. In the home and in the public square. We should be ashamed of our duplicity.
- That we see both on the national and international stages. As well as personally. With those of us who are citizens in the city of God.
- [12 : 26] Succumb to patterns of the city of man. Huh? Augustine. Fifth century church father. Wrote in his classic work.
- The city of God. And I quote. Two sorts of loves have made two sorts of cities. The earthly love of self. Even to contempt of God.
- The heavenly love of God. Even to the contempt of self. The one glorieth in itself. The other in the Lord. End of quote.
- Ah, Jeremiah. With very fitting words in Jeremiah chapter 9 says. But let him who boasts boast in this. That he understands and knows me.
- That I'm the Lord who practices steadfast love. Justice. And righteousness in the earth. Look at verses 2 and 3. How graphic.
- [13 : 23] The crack of the whip. The rumble of the wheel. Galloping horse. And bounding chariots. Horsemen charging. Flashing sword. And glittering spear.

Host of slain. Heaps of corpses. Dead bodies without end. They stumble over the dead bodies. What we have here can be taken in several ways.

Some would see this as more scattering of the Assyrians themselves. By outside forces. While this is possible. I think that it's more consistent.

Contextually. To see this as a depiction of the Assyrian war machine itself. This is how they roll. Huh?

They go about plundering other people. This seems to be a rather natural conclusion. Given the flow of the text and what we see in verse 1. Huh? Listen.

[14 : 19] Crack of the whip. The rumble of the chariot wheels. The galloping of the horses. Sword and spear. Bodies.

Bodies piled up. The Assyrians insensitively stumbling over the bodies. Huh? Of the slain. This is what their violence.

And deception. And greed. Compelled them to do. Oh. Think about that. Underneath. Our actions.

We find a heart that's corrupt. That compels us to do. The Nineveh thing. If you will. Huh? Ah. But look at verse 4. Because there.

We see yet another sin of the city. Huh? And with it another image. A metaphor. If you will. Add to the violence.

[15 : 16] And the deceit. And the greed. Seduction. That's what we see here. Is it not? For all the countless whorings of the prostitute.

Graceful. And of deadly charms. Who betrays nations with their whorings. And peoples with their charms. Huh? The picture is one likened to a prostitute.

Charming. Huh? Alluring. So that. The prostitute gets what she wants from her victims.

Huh? Check her out. She looks good. She smells good. She feels good. The words of her mouth are smooth.

Dripping. Like the drippings of a honeycomb. Huh? She's attractive. But she's deadly. It's the state version. If you will. Of the seductress of Proverbs chapter 7.

[16 : 20] And in a card with that particular passage. You'll see it there. In chapter 7 in Proverbs. She's wildly. And loud. And lustful. And irresistible.

Her victims are many. Her slain are among the throng. And her house. Is the way to shield. Going down to the chambers of death.

Huh? That's the way Proverbs 7 describes. An individual prostitute. But a nation. A state kind of. Prostitute.

Similarly works. With those kinds of wiles. Indeed. Assyria had lured and attracted. The less powerful and vulnerable. Of her day. Seduced them into alliances.

To betray them. And to put them in bondage. As a matter of fact. If you would look at. Second Kings chapter 18. Verse 23. We hear this is where. The king Sennacherib.

[17 : 20] Sent. His emissaries. To Hezekiah. Come now. Listen to this rap. That he's laying down. Come now. Make a wager. With my master.

King of Assyria. And I'll give you. Two thousand horses. That is. If you can put riders. On them. Huh? Smooth. Charming.

Alluring. But deadly. Huh? Her charms are countless. Huh? But the path. Or to the ways. Of death. The thought.

It seems to be that. Of having. Social and political. And economic. Alliances. Supposedly. For the good. Of the people pursued. But ultimate. Those kinds of agreements.

Are one-sided. And in favor. Of the cunning. Oppressive. Assyrians. Huh? The bottom line. Sins.

[18 : 14] Of the city. Violence. Huh? And greed. And deceit. And seduction.

The banner over the. Verses one through four. Could well be. Exploitation. Because that is exactly. What they did. Through violence. And deception. And greed.

And seduction. And such are the sins. Of the cities. And nations. Of this world. Some in the past. Like Nineveh. And Babylon. And Rome. And some in the present.

Who grasp. Even today. For power. And for dominance. Ah. But look at the transition. As we go. From the sins. Of the city.

To the shaming. Or another word. Would be. Or the humiliation. Of the city. In verses five through seven. Huh? Look at that. Behold. I am against you.

[19 : 11] Once again. The dreaded words. That we've already heard. In chapter two. Verse thirteen. They ring out. With clarity. I am against you. I'm against you. Why?

What are the charges? Violence. And deception. And greed. And seduction. Huh? In the. In the verses. That we saw. On last week. We saw the taming.

Of a lion. The verses. That we see. On this week. We see the shaming. Of a lady. If you will. Here. The city. Would be exposed.

For what she was. Sensible. And sensitive. People. Really can be. Very repulsed. By the images. Of what we see here. In verses.

Five through seven. Huh? It's not pretty. And it can easily. Be easily. Be taken the wrong way. And twisted. But here. What we actually have.

[20 : 04] And we don't want to miss this. Because the judgment. Given. It matches. The deed. Huh? And though the images. The language is strong. And the images are difficult.

We don't want to miss this. The essence is this. Seductive. Exploitation. Would be matched. By shameful. Exposure. Huh? Seductive.

Exploitation. Verses. One through four. Will be matched. By shameful. Exposure. Verses. Five. Through seven. International. International. Exploitation.

Would be matched. By international. Exposure. That's what we see. That's what's going on. In the text. Huh? I will. Lift your skirts.

Above. Your. Face. And I will make nations. And look at your nakedness. And kingdoms. At your shame.

[20 : 57] Nineveh. You voluntarily. Lifted your skirts. In seduction. But now. You're going to be revealed. In ways. That show.

Your. True. Colors. Your rottenness. Is going to be put. On display. Huh? Fame. Would be exchanged.

For shame. Huh? You will be exposed. As the seductress. That you. Really. Are. Huh? You let people see. What you wanted them to see. Now.

Your. Ugliness. Will be shown. For what it is. Game over. Huh? The exploiter. Is exposed.

Huh? Wow. How many times. Has something like that. Happened. In human history. Huh? Where the curtain. Comes back. Or is rolled back.

[21 : 53] And the. Exploiter. Gets exposed. For what they actually are. Think of the axis powers. In World War II. Led by Germany. And Italy. And Japan. Exposed.

For what they were. Think of the oppressive alliances. In post-World War II world. Exposed. For what they were.

Make. Look at this. It continues. I'm going to make the nations. Look at your nakedness. Huh? Wow. What an image.

You're going to be exposed. For what you actually are. Not only that. I'm going to pelt. You. With. Filth. Huh?

Human waste. It's what's. Being. Shown here. Human waste. Because this. Fits. Your. Ugly.

[22 : 51] Filthy. Ways. I'm going to make you. A spectacle. Huh? A spectacle. In a way. That. You may not have counted on. And may not have won it. Huh?

The makeup is now gone. The perfume is gone. Huh? The makeover. Is no more. You're going to be marked for. International.

Humiliation. No pity of the nations. Verse 7. The rejection of former lovers. The paramours. The comf. No comforter. No mourners. None to be found.

Huh? The judgment. The exploiter. Is exposed.

Huh? What a picture. We have here. And one that. We can't apologize for.

[23 : 51] It's God's word. Why is it here? What. What do you and I do. With. This kind of picture. Huh? Well the lesson of the text.

Is really very simple friends. Huh? It's simple. Whether for nations. Or individuals. Sin. Leads to shame. Huh? Isn't that true? Have you found that out?

Huh? Sin. Leads to shame. And you can't get away from that. One way or another.

No one may ever see. The sin. But you feel it in your heart. You feel the shame. You feel. The weight of that. Huh?

Sin leads to disgrace and judgment. For peoples. And for nations. The sin of Nineveh. Led to the eventual. Shaming. Of. Nineveh. Isn't there not a warning.

[24 : 48] For us here? Is there not a warning. For. Our city? Ah. A couple of things. If you. First of all.

To the citizens. Of this world. Only. And you'll understand. What I mean by this. For. For whom. The cities. Of this world. This is your only.

Home. Be warned. Friends. If this is your. Only home. If this. If this world. Is all that there is. For you. The passage.

Reminds us. That sin. Will ultimately. Be judged. By. The Lord. The Lord of hosts. Huh? That God. Rejecting people. And nations. Are right.

For judgment. If. If. If. If. Sin is your friend. Shame. Will be your end. And I plead.

[25 : 42] With you. Home. This morning. She would turn. From sin. In all of its. Various forms. Violence. You may not.

Carry a gun. But you can be. Violent. Deception. Greed. And. Seduction. Turn. From those things.

And other. Various shades. And forms. Turn to the Savior. Huh? If you're a citizen. Of this world. Only. Turn to the Savior. Who. Waits. For you.

With. Forgiveness. Huh? But then. This word. For those of us. Who are dual citizens. Huh? I have a son. That was born. In Germany. He's a dual citizen.

He has. German. Citizens. I was in the army. He's also born. An American. But. Those of us. Who are believers. In this world. We are. Number one. Citizens of. The heavenly city.

[26 : 37] The kingdom of God. But also. We're citizens. Of this world. But there's an exhortation. That's in order. For those of us. Who have dual citizenship. If you will. While.

We are. Citizens. Of this world. We're. First and foremost. Citizens. Of another. City. Huh? But our. Citizenship. Philippians. Chapter 3.

Verse 20. Is in heaven. From. Whence. We await. A savior. Huh? The Lord Jesus Christ. And what's he going to do? He's going to transform.

This body of humiliation. This lowly body. To be like his glorious body. How's he going to do it? He's going to do it. By the power. That he enables him. To subject all things.

Into himself. Huh? The Lord of. A lot of old. You remember him. Don't you? Nephew of Abraham. He was a righteous man. Who lived among.

[27 : 32] The ungodly. In Sodom. But he was grieved. By the ungodly. Lifestyles. Of those around him. Peter wrote about it. Lot. Greatly distressed.

By the sensual. Conduct. Of the wicked. For as that righteous man. Lived among them. Day after day. He was tormenting. His righteous soul. Over the lawless deeds.

That he saw and heard. The impact. Of the environment. Around him. Upon one. Whom scripture. Calls righteous. He lived in sin city.

But he was not at home. In sin city. Huh? God's people. Those who live. Under the banner. Of salvation. Are to recognize. We don't sing it much anymore.

That this world. Is not my home. And it's not. You belong to Jesus. We're just passing through. To a greater city.

[28 : 28] And a greater existence. That he has prepared for us. But. While living here. You and I do have responsibilities. Among them. We must not simply curse the darkness.

Huh? It would be easy to do that. Talk about. Those people doing. Those things. No. We are part of this. And. According to Jesus. We are to live sight.

Live as salt. And light. In the world. In the midst of darkness. In ways that penetrate the darkness. Now while living here. We must not partake of the sins of the city.

And we must not allow the sins of the city. To overtake us. We must counter laws with truth. Counter violence with peace. Counter greed with generosity.

Counter seduction. With truth. And honesty. Huh? We must live with faith in God. And the power of the gospel. In the midst of the city. You know our.

[29 : 25] Vision statement. Our vision. Is to see what? The city of Chicago. Yeah. Murder city. Windy city. Whatever label. To see it. Transformed by the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Do you believe that? In the midst of the city. I believe it. And so we're not simply those who curse the darkness.

But we are part of God's occupation force. In this world. Occupying till he comes. But not just simply twiddling our thumbs. Comes. We are living and functioning and working in a way.

That counters the darkness of this age. Huh? The Lord has graciously. And wonderfully. Given. Provided a means.

By which. The saints in the city. Can be nourished. Huh? It's a meal. And it's a meal that calls us ultimately to the things that matter.

[30 : 28] It's a meal that helps to center us. It's a meal that helps us to refocus on why we're here and whose we are. It's a meal. It's a simple meal.

But very significant. Because the elements that you see here. Picture the person and the work of Jesus Christ and what he has done for us. His body for you.

His blood for you. It's a gospel meal. It visualizes Jesus' work on behalf of the world. And for you and me.

And if you are a citizen. If you've got dual citizenship. This meal. Is for you. Today. Huh?
And I encourage you.

You may be weary. You may be stumbling. You may be a bit confused on this morning.
Come and be strengthened.

[31 : 24] Come and be nourished. Come and partake. If you need to do business with God. Before
you do that. Do so. Oh but if you're a child of God.

This meal is for you. Huh? If you are not. Child of God. This meal is rather insignificant.

It's not a meal. Primarily for physical nourishment. It's a meal for spiritual nourishment.
Huh? So come. To the table. Saints in the city.

Come. Feast by faith on the bread of life. That gave himself for the life of the world. Come.
This morning.

And commune. With the one. Who is life indeed. And who has given his life for you. Come
humbly. Come prayerfully.

[32 : 23] Come with fresh. And resolve to live for the one. Whose citizenship. Whose citizenship.
Who has made you a citizen. Of heaven. Huh?

That's Jesus. The Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come. It's coming. But those
who are in Christ find themselves sheltered.

Protected from the wrath that awaits this world. We are safe in him. Even Jesus our Lord.
Let me pray. And then I'm going to.

Read the words of institution. Father we thank you this morning. There's sin. There's
shame.

The city. But there is a savior. Lord we've sung it this morning. There. There. Is a
redeemer. We've identified him this morning.

[33 : 24] Jesus. God's own son. Blessed. Precious lamb of God. Messiah. Holy one.

Just to have offered himself. For unjust people like us. Huh? But we're safe in him. So
Lord may. The people of God come this morning.

May they be strengthened to live in the city. In the midst of all that's in it. May you be
glorified. Is our prayer. In Christ's name.

Amen. Amen.