

Intro: Look at these pictures. Some of you can remember this day. Most of us simply know these as images of a moment from the past of our parents or grandparents, of which we’ve read in books. The Axis powers had surrendered to the Allies after years of devastating war. Why the joy? The war was over. The enemy was defeated and our nations could finally breathe out and rest. The tide of fascism had been stemmed and the atrocities and violence of WWII would end. It was proper to rejoice, wasn’t it? It was right. This joy and celebration was not about death, but about peace. Finally, peace, because the enemy’s violence was halted.

## 1. Nahum 1:15 – Joy Bookend #1 – The LORD is for His People to Save Them

- a. The announcement of peace to the people of God comes upon the mountains!
  - i. When God eliminates His people’s enemies, there is peace in the land and they are free to worship Him without fear
  - ii. They rejoice at the salvation of the LORD and at His glorious power and His fight for them (Isa 52:1-7)
- b. They can celebrate their joy in the LORD in peace now!
  - i. The LORD is restoring the majesty of Israel out of the Enemy’s plunder (2:2)
    1. The LORD loves His people, and He is their Defender and their Savior
    2. He promised them a Kingdom with a Savior-King, and we know that He kept His promise to them
  - ii. The majesty of worshippers worshipping the Majestic One
    1. Not because of their strength, notice, but because of His power and will using the strength of another nation (Babylon)
    2. This, of course, raised questions like Habakkuk has, which we will deal with later
- c. The destruction of Israel’s enemy brought comfort and joy to Israel
  - i. The powerful enemy made powerless (Col 2:15)

## 2. Nahum 2: The LORD is Against His Enemies

- a. Call to arms for Nineveh, for the Scatterer has come against you.
  - i. The shield of the LORD’s mighty men is splattered in blood, their clothes scarlet
  - ii. Brandishing cypress spears and the glistening chariots of fiery steel
- b. The LORD remembers his majestic ones
  - i. They stumble toward the wall, hastening the siege covering
  - ii. The slaughter is so great that they trip over the falling men as they lay siege to the wall
    1. Excavations have shown a violent end to Nineveh
    2. Gates were narrowed to six feet, and over 12 bodies of soldiers have been found in this gateway, buried under ash and debris with arrowheads, spears, pikes and a dagger among them
- c. The flood gates are opened and the palace melts away
  - i. King Sennacherib had a built “a palace with no rivals” in Nineveh, over 350,000sqft, 80 rooms, and a large armory
  - ii. Like a pool emptying by a trickle, the people of Nineveh are being taken away until the city is empty
    1. It is also true that a huge section of the ancient wall of Nineveh is gone, swept away as if by flood
    2. The theory is that after Babylon took Nineveh, they dammed up the Khosr river, destroying all the canals that the Assyrians had built, and flooded the entire city to wash everything away
- d. It’s treasure being taken away until there is nothing left

- i. Interestingly, in the excavations of Nineveh there has be very little silver or gold found, which is uncommon for such a large and prosperous city.
- ii. Nineveh built its treasure through theft and plundering other peoples, thus it would be done to them
- e. Nineveh was the lion hunter who devoured and found safety in his cave (Nineveh), but now the LORD was the Hunter and these young lions would be slain
  - i. Their princes and strong men would become prey for the LORD and those mighty men that He assigned to destroy them (Babylon)

### 3. Nahum 3: Evils Enumerated

- a. Woe pronounced upon Nineveh for four primary evils:
  - i. violence - "bloody city"
    - 1. -v10 and infants dashed
    - 2. -quote from Ashurnasipal boasting of his 18-year reign:
      - a. "Great number of them in the land of Kirhi I slew...260 of them I cut down with the sword. I cut off their heads, and I formed them into pillars...Bubo, son of Buba, I flayed in the city of Arbela and spread his skin upon the city wall. I flayed all the chief men who had revolted, and I covered the pillar with their skins; some I walled up within the pillar, some I impaled upon the pillar on stakes, and other s I bound to stakes round about the pillar; many within the border of my own land I flayed, and I spread their skins upon the walls; and I cut off the limbs of the officers, of the royal officers who had rebelled. Ahiababa I took to Nineveh, I flayed him, I spread his skin upon the wall of Nineveh...600 of their [Hulai] warriors I put to the sword; 3000 captives I burned with fire; I did not leave a single one among them alive to serve as a hostage...Their corpses I formed into pillars; their young men and maids I burned in the fire...I but off their hands and their fingers, and from others I cut off their noses, their ears, and their fingers, of many I put out the eyes. I made one pillar of the living and another of heads and I bound heads upon trees throughout the city."
    - 3. -to call Nineveh a "bloody city" is a huge understatement!
  - ii. deception - "full of lies"
    - 1. 2 Kings 18 (v31) - "come out and each one of you will have his own vine and his own fig tree
  - iii. theft - "full of plunder"
    - 1. Nineveh gained its wealth by plunder, not by production
  - iv. manipulation/power by sorcery - "mistress of sorceries who enslaved people by her sorceries"
    - 1. see 2 Chron. 33 and Manasseh
- b. The Fall of Nineveh proclaimed
  - i. There will be war in your streets
  - ii. Are you better than Thebes?
    - 1. Thebes was located across from the Valley of the Kings, a great city of prominence and great importance in Egypt
    - 2. It was protected by the Nile which surrounded it and by great allies who aligned themselves with it (just like Assyria was surrounded by the Tigris and the Khosr rivers and also had great allies)
    - 3. Assyria knew its power because Assyria destroyed Thebes in its glory
  - iii. Fire and flood will destroy your city
  - iv. Your nobles and strong men will be scattered and flee never to be seen again

1. all you have left to fight in your city is the women for your men are slain
- c. How do we look at this kind of evil?
  - i. It exists and comes from a heart of pride and self-reliance
    1. Our hearts tend toward pride and self-reliance, too
    2. The sinful desires that result in such evil atrocities also dwelt in our hearts (we were enemies of God and engaged in evil deeds, Colossians 1:21)
  - ii. God HAS MADE JESUS SIN in order to give us lie
    1. 2 Corinthians 5:21 – we become the righteousness of God in Christ because He was made this evil for us, and God’s hatred for this evil was poured out on Him
    2. This means that the Father was AGAINST the Son at the Cross! He was made an enemy that you and I would be made sons and daughters! Oh, the glory of the gospel!

#### 4. Nahum 3:19 – Joy Bookend #2 – Applause at Evil’s Defeat

- a. for your evil is felt everywhere
  - i. When the Axis were defeated in WWII there was dancing in the streets. Why?
    1. Because people were killed? NO!
    2. Because the enemy was defeated and the threat of that evil was ended?
    3. Because we finally got to rest from our labors and our sons got to come home
  - ii. There is proper celebration when evil is stopped
    1. Those who had felt Nineveh’s atrocities applauded the truth that she could do no more harm
    2. Thus it will be on that final day when Jesus throws down His enemy and all that oppose Him in fervent defiance
    3. Can you imagine the joy in your heart when your sinful desires are no longer fighting against the Spirit?! JOY!!
- b. This is what we see Revelation 18-19
  - i. Three Woes Upon the Earth (Babylon the Great, Man Against God) (Rev 18)
    1. Woe Amongst the Politically Powerful (18:10)
    2. Woe Among the Business Merchants (18:16-17)
    3. Woe Among the Traders/Ship Captains (18:19)
  - ii. Even the Angels Announce the Grief that All Beauty Ceases (18:22-23)
    1. No music, No craftsmen, No production, No light, No joy
  - iii. Four Hallelujah’s in Heaven (Rev 19)
    1. Salvation, glory, and power are God’s! (v1)
    2. The Enemy is smoked! (v3)
    3. Those with authority humbly worship God (v4)
    4. The LORD Reigns (v6) and the marriage of the Lamb and His Bride has arrived!
- c. When the Enemy of Christ and His Church are Thrown Down, there is Joy in Heaven
  - i. When we are safe, secure from all threat, there will be great rejoicing!
    1. We must remember at all times that our salvation is not due to our righteousness, but to His mercy and grace
    2. The point is that the LORD loves, protects, and is victorious by His strength and holy power
  - ii. We remember that we were enemies of God and His people, but solely by His grace He has made us His children through Christ
    1. We must not fall for the lie that we are better than our enemy, resting instead in the gospel’s proclamation that we are saved by grace

2. There is hope for anyone to be moved by God from enemy to child by faith, so we preach with hope, forgive with abandon, and love and pray for our enemies
- iii. God is honored and His justice and worth is revealed
  1. When this is our goal, we take seriously the command that we NOT take vengeance, but leave it to Him
  2. When our desire is for His glory, we take seriously the value that it is the end of evil, not the end of man, that is the desire, for "I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live" (Ezek 33:11)
  3. When He is our goal, not vengeance, it is His honor that brings us great joy and the ending of dishonor that brings our praises and shouts of amen

Conclusion:

It may be today that you have not yet truly trusted in Christ. Like Nineveh with Jonah, the day of salvation is today. Turn from trusting in your own power, your own wisdom, your own strength, and come to cling to Jesus. He alone can save. He alone can rescue. He alone can transfer you from enemy of God to child of God. Today.

And O Christian, remember, that we were enemies of God, with minds hostile toward Him and engaged in evil deeds against His glory and His kingdom and against the Creation which He made. We were haters of men and arrogant in our hearts, making ourselves out to be equal with God, living only for our own pleasures. As such, we made ourselves enemies of God in our sin, not unlike the Assyrians.

BUT, God, according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a faith in Jesus Christ:

*Titus 3:3-7 For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. <sup>4</sup> But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup> he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup> whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup> so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

What mighty grace is this that would lay my sins upon His Son and lay His righteousness upon me?! What mighty love is this that would pursue me to the Enemy's camp and break this hostage free from the tyranny of sin and the empty glory and deception of self-trust in order to bring me into the Kingdom of His Beloved Son?! Oh, how He has loved us so!

Do not fear, O Christian, when the Enemy wins around you, when suffering and strife come to bear upon you, for God sees and knows. He is your Defender and Shield, your Refuge to whom you can run. He will end evil within you and evil without. You will rest from your labors and sit secure by His power. It is promised and He who promised is faithful. The day is coming when you will be free from the presence of sin, for the King who secured your place at the table with His very blood, bearing our deserved vengeance, is returning to take you home and you will see Him and be made like Him.

The Lord is good. His love endures forever. The Lord reigns with power and salvation comes upon the mountains from Him, announcing the good news that establishes peace between God and man. The Lord is good. His love endures forever. Take comfort in His goodness and His great love for you, for no hair falls off of your head apart from His will, and He will bring you home, safe and secure from all alarm. It is true.