

The following Scripture passages are offered to aid beginning fellowships. The readings and commentary for this week are more in line with what has become usual; for the following will most likely be familiar observations. The concept behind this Sabbath's selection is *typology in Nahum*.

## **Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of August 30, 2008**

The person conducting the Sabbath service should open services with two or three hymns, or psalms, followed by an opening prayer acknowledging that two or three (or more) are gathered together in Christ Jesus' name, and inviting the Lord to be with them.

*The person conducting the service should read or assign to be read Nahum, chapters 1 through 3.*

**Commentary:** It has been said by scholars that Nahum is the poet laureate of the prophets, and the equal of Isaiah—the book of Nahum is almost all poetry.

Nahum's name translates as “comfort,” or “compassion,” or “consolation,” and within the biblical canon, the destruction of Nineveh and ancient Assyria certainly should bring to natural Israel a measure of comfort, especially in the decade of 650–660 BCE, the likely timeframe for when the book was written. But remember, the focus of poetry is always the poetry, or the artifice—the words themselves. The focus of poetry is never what the words mimetically represent. With this now combined to the repetition of thought such as seen in 1:2,

a-p) The Lord [YHWH] is a jealous and avenging God;

a-s) the Lord [YHWH] is avenging and wrathful;

b-p) the Lord [YHWH] takes vengeance on his adversaries

b-s) and keeps wrath for his enemies.

in which two thought-couplets are presented [a-p/s & b-p/s], with the “a-p” line representing the natural or physical presentation of the thought that God avenges in the couplet that occupies the “natural” position in the expanded couplet “a/b.” The “a-s” line represents the spiritual presentation of the same thought about avenging in the natural couplet, whereas in the “b” couplet that occupies the spiritual position in the expanded couplet, vengeance is directed toward adversaries and in the spiritual position of the second couplet, YHWH's presence is assumed but not stated, and wrath is reserved for enemies.

- The missing presentation of YHWH in the “b-s” line has significance, for during Christ’s millennial reign, the presence of the Lord will be assumed without being stated.
- The Lord enacted His vengeance on the natural nations interacting with Israel. He was a jealous and avenging God, the “a-p” line.
- Because of Israel’s lawlessness and idolatry, the Lord enacted His wrath on Israel, the “a-s” line.
- Because of spiritually circumcised Israel’s lawlessness, the Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries (Luke 19:27) when He returns, the “b-p” line.
- When Satan is released from the bottomless pit for a short while after the 1000 years, and he gathers Gog and Magog and surrounds the camp of the saints, the Lord will execute His wrath on His enemies, the “b-s” line with the missing Tetragrammaton YHWH.

For the sake of pedagogical redundancy, the focus of a poem is not what the words forming the poem mimetically represent, but the poem itself; therefore, a missing word in a pattern has significance. A portion of the poem that is acrostic has significance. Chiasmic structure has significance. The selection of words has significance—and that significance is the first to be lost as words lose meaning or change meaning the longer they are in use, with only a few exceptions. A word’s meaning is not an attribute of the word, but is an assignment made by a reading community. Thus, unless a person is of Nahum’s reading community, the meanings Nahum assigned to his words are not fully recoverable, a lengthy way of saying that words mean not what the author intended but what the reader intends; so unless a reader also hears the voice of Yah before or Christ Jesus now, the reader will not assign the same meanings to Nahum’s words as Nahum assigned.

Because meaning must be assigned to words and the story of Babel is evidence that no hard link exists between a “word” and its meaning, the structure of a poem is the most reliable means for recovering the imbedded message in the poem. But before proceeding, a couple of observations need to be made: Assyria does not prophetically represent the modern nation of Germany, as has been taught for far too long within the Churches of God. Rather, as Egypt serves as a prophetic representation for “sin,” Assyria serves as a prophetic representation of “death”—and as the Ptolemaic Pharaoh serves as a type of the spiritual King of the South in Daniel’s long vision, the Seleucid Syrian-Greek emperor, ruling over Assyria, serves as a type of the spiritual King of the North. The four-headed leopard of Daniel chapter 7 represents Sin, and the cross-shaped fourth beast of Daniel 7 represents death, and is called Death when seen as the fourth horseman of the Apocalypse. The leopard as Sin is the third horseman, the spiritual King of the South, and the cross as Death is the King of the North. Whereas Sin and Death are linked in the Apostle Paul’s law of sin and death (Rom 8:2), they separate when the seven endtime years of tribulation begin, for spiritual Israel will be liberated from indwelling sin and death at a second Passover when God begins to gather Israel from the North Country and the outer most parts of the earth (Jer 16:14–15; 23:7–8), this gathering taking seven years.

Any biblical teacher or pundit who identifies modern Germany as the biblical endtime nation of Assyria is false!! without exception. The person can be sincerely false, or deceptively false, but either way the person teaches error that will cost disciples their physical lives and possibly their spiritual lives. The person who teaches that Germany is Assyria will have his or her name removed from the Book of Life for being a false prophet, in an extension of what Jesus said about many being called but few being chosen.

Thus, if a person does not hear the words of Jesus in a manner analogous to Nahum hearing the words of Yah, the person needs to confine what he or she says about Nahum to its surface meaning expressed in the language of empire, conquest, vengeance, and divine wrath; for Jesus as the only Teacher of Righteousness has not called the person to read back to Him, Jesus, what Yah inspired Nahum to write. And that is how endtime prophets function: they read back to Jesus, with all of Israel able to hear, what the Logos inspired the prophets of old to inscribe in Scripture—and as small children have to learn how to read, so too do those who serve Christ, with occasional reading errors made, errors that have to be corrected before the person reading can proceed to more difficult texts. (This process is evident in translation where a text is translated from one language into another then translated back to see how well the person doing the translating understands the second language.)

Scholars have found a chiasmic structure in the Book of Nahum: A (1:2–15), B (2:1–10), C (2:11–12), D (2:13), E (3:1–4), D2 (3:5–7), C2 (3:8–13), B2 (3:14–17), A2 (3:18–19). This structure would be visually represented as:

A — (a jealous and avenging God taunting Assyria/Nineveh)

B — (a call to battle, to alarm)

C — (taunting)

D — (the pronouncement of judgment)

E — (woe to Nineveh, to Death by the whoring of the prostitute)

D2 — (the pronouncement of judgment for whoring)

C2 — (taunting)

B2 — (a call to arms, to alarm)

A2 — (taunting, referencing shepherds, those who should be tending the sheep)

The “A” sections are taunting of Assyria and its king; the “B” sections are alarms, the “C”

sections taunt, “D” sections announce judgment. The “E” section is a woe. So the poem begins and ends with taunting that point to a “woe,” causing the poem to structurally appear as an arrowhead aimed to strike the heart of Death, bringing death to the cross, with the invisible portion of the cross not being a nation in this world but a demon within the Adversary’s reigning hierarchy (remember the “cross” was written as an “x” into the 4th-Century CE, so a “>” is half of an “X” or half of a cross).

Is this too reading too much into the poem? Should the reader stick to the surface meaning? Not if the reader wants to read back to Christ what was inspired to be written.

The Prophet Daniel’s visions were sealed and kept secret until the time of the end by having their shadow seem to fulfill the prophecy central to the visions. Jesus told His disciples that Daniel’s abomination that desolates (Dan 11:31) was not an entity of history [i.e., was not Antiochus Epiphanes IV] but an endtime or end of the age entity (Matt 24:15). Matthew records that the reader needed understanding, as in spiritual understanding, to comprehend what Jesus was then telling His disciples—and an equal degree of understanding is required to read Nahum’s poetry. For even within the chiasmic structure of Nahum, the movement from physical to spiritual that is found within Hebraic thought-couplets is present.

Will God taunt a nation? Is taunting an activity worthy of God? Certainly pronouncing judgment or declaring a woe is an action that could be expected of God, but what about jealousy, or vengeance? What about those new age believers who openly declare that they will not worship a God who is jealous? How should a disciple answer a skeptic when asked about God taunting a nation?

The prophet Isaiah records,

For the Lord will have compassion on Jacob and will again choose Israel, and will set them in their own land, and sojourners will join them and will attach themselves to the house of Jacob. And the peoples will take them and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will possess them in the Lord’s land as male and female slaves. They will take captive those who were their captors, and rule over those who oppressed them.

When the Lord has given you rest from your pain and turmoil and the hard service with which you were made to serve, you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon:

How the oppressor has ceased,

the insolent fury ceased! (14:1–4)

If the Lord will direct the people of Israel to taunt the Adversary, the spiritual king of Babylon, when he is bound in the bottomless pit—this occurs when Jesus reigns as the Christ over Israel for a 1000 years—then, yes, the Lord will taunt those demons who

rebelled against the Most High just as He will execute His vengeance upon them. The Lord doesn't taunt men, made from the dust of this earth, made from His breath spun into apparent solidity, made as living tin soldiers to demonstrate that rule by consensus doesn't work, made to die. To do so could be likened to a person taunting a rock: such taunting would be meaningless. But when the Adversary dragged down a third of the stars [angels] of heaven with his claims for the superiority of "democracy" and rule by consensus, plenty of mocking of the Most High occurred by these demons. And as Nahum records, the Lord [YHWH] is a jealous God, unwilling to see any angel condemned to destruction for believing the Adversary's lies but willing to take vengeance on His enemies—and His enemies are not men who are unable to cross dimensions and enter into the heavenly realm, men who cannot escape the universe that is passing away. His enemies are those rebelling demons who would, if they could, drag into darkness the remaining two-thirds of their kind.

Nahum writes,

c-p) The Lord [YHWH] is slow to anger and great in power,

c-s) and the Lord [YHWH] will by no means clear the guilty.

d-p) His way is in whirlwind and storm,

d-s) and the clouds are the dust of his feet. (1:3)

In the context of a second expanded thought-couplet, with this second expanded couplet occupying the spiritual position of now a four couplet deep taunting of the Adversary and his angels, a call to judgment (will by no means clear the guilty) is declared. Whirlwinds & storms are moving air, the metaphorical representation of the divine "Breath" of God—and Paul writes that "then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming" (2 Thess 2:8). So within this second expanded couplet disciples reading back to Christ what has been inspired by Yah will expound upon what Paul wrote to the Thessalonians; for the following couplets reveal ever more about what happens in those times when the Lord executes vengeance upon the guilty, with the Holy Spirit functioning as physical whirlwinds and storms. Christ will slay with the breath of His mouth, with His spirit (Rom 8:9), as whirlwinds destroy and slay in this world when the Lord executes His anger.

The imagery Nahum invokes in chapter 1 is powerful, and is presented in a hymn-like manner ... chapter 1 is like a psalm that gives credit to God for bringing about a victory after the fact, only this victory is before the battle is fought and isn't merely over Nineveh, an enemy of Israel that hasn't yet been defeated, but over the Adversary who was defeated when the foundations of the earth were laid; for the Adversary will be cast into time where fire will/has come out from his belly to utterly consume him (Ezek 28:18–19) [will from the perspective of human beings; has from the perspective of God]. The victory is over Death, and this victory was assured when Jesus was crucified from the foundation of the earth. So the psalm is properly a divine warrior hymn like that of Psalm 98 — salvation forms the heart of victory over death.

The question King David asked many times, the question all of Israel has asked is why does the Lord wait so long before executing vengeance? Yes, He is slow to anger, but the people suffer horribly because of this slowness. And here, understanding comes with a price: angels are, as best as can be discerned from Scripture, sons of God created one at a time [“sons” in the sense that they have no parent but God, not “sons” in the sense that they have been adopted by the Most High]. If it is God’s will that no human being be lost even though Jesus Himself said that many are called but few will be chosen (Matt 22:14), then it follows that it is also God’s will that no angel be lost even though a third of the angels are presently imprisoned in outer darkness [the creation] and doomed to execution if the death sentence pronounced against each is not commuted when glorified disciples judge angels. It also follows that it is God’s will that the remaining two-thirds of the angels not follow the Adversary to their destruction when time or space-time passes away. So the suffering of men brought about by disobedience and by humankind being consigned to the prince of this world for the destruction of the flesh forms models of death that angels should not desire democracy and to rule by consensus.

The language of empire is central to the Lord is a jealous and avenging God. It is central to,

i-p) Who can stand before his indignation?

i-s) Who can endure the heat of his anger?

j-p) His wrath is poured out like fire,

j-s) and the rocks are broken into pieces by him. (Nahum 1:6)

for it is the Lord’s indignation and the heat of His anger that brings the governance of men down to being merely puppetry, making men into living tin soldiers, set up to prove a point and a philosophy while proving to their Creator whether they will by faith obey Him. If the Lord were not slow to execute His anger and wrath, He would thwart the purpose for creating a demonstration to show that only His way [“love”] brings life. His quick intervention into the affairs of Israel (or any nation) would prevent man and angel from seeing that the ways of the Adversary inevitably lead to death. Only by consigning a people and a city [Nineveh] to represent death in a way foreshadowed by hardening Pharaoh’s heart (so a human being could serve as a representation of Sin) could the Lord bring into existence a model of what happens to sons of God when these sons practice disobedience; for death overtook lawless Israel as it did all of the lands within the pre-Flood boundaries of Eden.

But the Lord would not leave even the representation of death [i.e., Nineveh] without a warning and a chance to repent; thus, He sent Jonah to Nineveh and the city did repent (Jon 3:6–10).

When Paul writes,

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and

unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. (Rom 1:18–20)

he establishes the basis for typological exegesis and for Nineveh to serve as a representation for Death; for it is men of this Nineveh that will stand up in the day of judgment and condemn Israel, natural and spiritual. It is those who experienced the judgment of the Lord physically that will condemn “Christians” who had knowledge of Christ but not love for Christ—Christ died for them, but they would not die for Him. They would not walk as He walked, would not live as He lived, would not even keep the Sabbath. It is Christians who are without excuse. And Nahum eloquently describes a salvation through the defeat of Death that they will never know.

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The person conducting the Sabbath service should close services with two hymns, or psalms, followed by a prayer asking God’s dismissal.

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