**Nahum 1:6-11 Who can stand before His indignation? And who can endure the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, And the rocks are thrown down by Him.**

**7The Lord *is* good, A stronghold in the day of trouble; And He knows those who trust in Him. 8But with an overflowing flood He will make an utter end of its place, And darkness will pursue His enemies. 9What do you conspire against the Lord? He will make an utter end *of it.* Affliction will not rise up a second time. 10For while tangled *like* thorns, And while drunken *like* drunkards, They shall be devoured like stubble fully dried. 11From you comes forth *one* Who plots evil against the Lord, A wicked counselor.**

 Many weeks ago, before the ice storms, funerals, and business meetings, we talked about verses 1-5 of Nahum. Tonight we’re going to pick up in verse 6. Before we do, let’s be reminded that Nahum likely prophesied between 663 BC and 612 BC, about 50 years. Nahum mentions the recent fall of No-amon, better known as Thebes, which took place in 663 BC, and he talks about the coming fall of Nineveh, which takes place in 612 BC.

 Remember with me that into this God sent Nahum. His name means “Comfort” or “Comforter”. Nahum was an Elkoshite, He prophesied during the reign of King Manasseh, a very evil king and it was a very dark time for Judah – a time filled with idolatry and immorality, not unlike our country today. Judah had turned its back on God. I’m sure that true believers were afraid, disheartened, and disgusted at what they saw. Not unlike our country today. Evil seemed to win every battle and good seemed to be losing the war. Not unlike our country today.

 Nahum has been called the sequel to Jonah. 175 or so years earlier Jonah visited Nineveh. God relented in Jonah’s time. We’re about to learn that God does not relent forever. Nineveh has risen to be the capital of the Assyrian empire, and God is about to judge this oppressor of His people. Nahum confirms that God’s justice is always right and always sure. His timing is perfect. He is slow to anger… but slow to anger does not mean no to anger. Slow to wrath does not mean no to wrath.

 Tonight, we continue with the utterance or prophecy against Nineveh. Verse 6 says - *Who can stand before His indignation? And who can endure the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, And the rocks are thrown down by Him.* We know from verse 2 that God is a jealous God. He is a God that is indignant, like a husband that caught his wife cheating. He avenges and is furious. Now, we have the question asked – who can stand before His indignation, His wrath ? No one. Who can endure His anger? No one. His fury is poured out like fire, rocks (literally boulders and sharp rocks) are thrown down by God. This calls to mind Sodom and Gomorrah – fire and brimstone raining down on the cities. These questions prick our conscience because we know that, without Jesus, we cannot stand and we cannot endure… but in Jesus, we are forgiven and extended undeserved Grace and unmerited favor.

 The first part of verse 7 says - *The Lord is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble.* This is not unlike Psalm 46:1 *God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.* Nahum reminds us that God is fierce, jealous, and indignant, but now he stops and reminds believers that God is also good, a stronghold. So many times, people want to make God one sided, a paper doll cut out, one dimensional. God is more than we can ever imagine, more than our minds can grasp!

 The second part says *And He knows those who trust in Him.* Nahum is calling to mind the Psalms and the reassurances that God gives believers that He is with them and will not forsake them. Psalm 1:6 says - *For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish.* Psalm 37:18 says *The Lord knows the days of the upright, And their inheritance shall be forever.* In Hebrews 6:10, we know that God is not unjust – He doesn’t forget our work. God knows those who trust Him… and He knows those who don’t. This gives believers comfort in difficult times.

 Verse 8 says *But with an overflowing flood He will make an utter end of its place, And darkness will pursue His enemies.* Nahum returns to the prophecy and continues to make the case that God is a just God. Those who believe, trust, follow, honor He helps, but Nineveh has done none of those things. It’s interesting that Nineveh was overrun only after the river flooded and broke down a large section of the wall protecting the city. This gave the enemy the break they needed after besieging the city for 3 years with no success. When the river became the enemy, Nineveh fell. Darkness will pursue His enemies – darkness has the idea of misery or calamity – this will pursue the enemies of God.

 Verse 9 *What do you conspire against the Lord? He will make an utter end of it. Affliction will not rise up a second time.*Nahum changes gears now. He is clearly addressing the Assyrians now. He’s declared the power of God, His anger towards the enemy and His love for His followers. Nahum now asks – what do you conspire, work up in your imagination, are silly enough to believe you can get away with a plan against God? The Assyrians have started to believe themselves God. In fact, their king will declare himself a god. The one true God will make an utter end to both the plans and the place – this emphasizes verse 8. The end is complete, utter. Trouble will not rise a second time. God leaves no hot spots behind.

 Verse 10 *For while tangled like thorns, And while drunken like drunkards, They shall be devoured like stubble fully dried.*This verse refers to dried bundles of thorns and straw stubble that are commonly used as fuel for the fire and as kindling. Both are very flammable and burn up very fast. ***And while drunken like drunkards –*** The Babylonian empire fell while the king was holding a drunken feast. The Syrian king Benhadad was overrun while holding a drunken feast. The Assyrians may well have suffered the same. It is well documents that the king in Assyria knew he was about to be overrun and made a pile of his worldly goods and burned them and the palace rather than to have them taken.

 Verse 11 *From you comes forth one Who plots evil against the Lord, A wicked counselor.*This verse probably refers to Sennacherib and Rabshakeh. Remember the story of Sennacherib sending an army against Hezekiah in 2 Kings 18:19 *Then the Rabshakeh said to them, “Say now to Hezekiah, ‘Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: “What confidence is this in which you trust?* Verses 29-30 says *Thus says the king: ‘Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he shall not be able to deliver you from his hand; nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, “The Lord will surely deliver us; this city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.”* Rabshakeh was Sennacherib’s wicked counselor, Sennacherib was plotting against the Lord. Of course, we know the end of the story… Isaiah told Hezekiah not to fear, but pray. Hezekiah prayed. God relented and later sent an angel that killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. Psalm 51:16-17 says *For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; you do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart - These, O God, You will not despise.* God will hear a contrite heart, a repentant soul.

 In the book of Jonah, we saw Nineveh be given a great reprieve. God relented, but the people forgot the blessing. People have short memories. When crisis passes, so often too does our repentance, our thankfulness, our faithfulness, and our reverence for God. It happened in Nineveh. It’s happened throughout time. It’s happening now. God will not be mocked, as a man sows, so shall he reap. God will not be mocked, as a nation sows, so shall that nation reap. We will see God’s pronounced judgment next week on Nineveh. This serves as a great lesson that we must be repenting now… God will not despise our broken and contrite hearts, but we must be crying out now.