**Nahum 2 Hewho scatters has come up before your face. Man the fort! Watch the road! Strengthen your flanks! Fortify *your* power mightily. 2For the Lord will restore the excellence of Jacob Like the excellence of Israel, For the emptiers have emptied them out And ruined their vine branches. 3The shields of his mighty men *are* made red, The valiant men *are* in scarlet. The chariots *come* with flaming torches In the day of his preparation, And the spears are brandished. 4The chariots rage in the streets, They jostle one another in the broad roads; They seem like torches, They run like lightning. 5He remembers his nobles; they stumble in their walk; They make haste to her walls, And the defense is prepared. 6The gates of the rivers are opened, And the palace is dissolved. 7It is decreed: She shall be led away captive, She shall be brought up; And her maidservants shall lead her as with the voice of doves, Beating their breasts. 8Though Nineveh of old *was* like a pool of water, Now they flee away. “Halt! Halt!” *they cry;* But no one turns back. 9Take spoil of silver! Take spoil of gold! *There is* no end of treasure, Or wealth of every desirable prize. 10She is empty, desolate, and waste! The heart melts, and the knees shake; Much pain *is* in every side, And all their faces are drained of color. 11Where *is* the dwelling of the lions, And the feeding place of the young lions, Where the lion walked, the lioness and lion’s cub, And no one made *them* afraid? 12The lion tore in pieces enough for his cubs, Killed for his lionesses, Filled his caves with prey, And his dens with flesh. 13“Behold, I *am* against you,” says the Lord of hosts, “I will burn your chariots in smoke, and the sword shall devour your young lions; I will cut off your prey from the earth, and the voice of your messengers shall be heard no more.”**

Tonight, we’re in Nahum 2, which describes the destruction of Nineveh that will happen in 612 BC. Remember that Nahum is prophesying in 663 BC. In last weeks message, God pronounced Sennacherib vile and pronounced judgement on Assyria. In the verses before us tonight, Nahum is now describing the judgement.

 Verse 1 says *Hewho scatters has come up before your face. Man the fort! Watch the road! Strengthen your flanks! Fortify your power mightily.*He who scatters refers to the one that God is using to defeat Assyria. In Jeremiah 51:20, we see this same term used for Nebuchadnezzar. This has the idea of a battle axe that God is using to dash something to pieces coming up in front of Nineveh. The city can watch the road, strengthen the flanks, and use all it’s power. God has pronounced judgement and judgement will be carried out. Nothing in man’s power can turn the Will of God.

 Verse 2 *For the Lord will restore the excellence of Jacob Like the excellence of Israel, For the emptiers have emptied them out And ruined their vine branches.*The time of Israel’s punishment is done. God will restore Israel and punish the emptiers (the Assyrians). This is hopeful news for Israel! The Hebrew has the idea of restoring Israel by turning away their arrogance. God uses chastisement to restore us by turning us away from our sin. We cannot be restored when sin and arrogance separate us from God.

 Verses 3-6 talk of the preparation for war by both armies. Verse 3 & 4 *The shields of his mighty men are made red, The valiant men are in scarlet. The chariots come with flaming torches In the day of his preparation, And the spears are brandished. 4The chariots rage in the streets, They jostle one another in the broad roads; They seem like torches, They run like lightning.*Now we get a glimpse of what the battle will look like. The shields made red – the attacking army was known for painting shields red to hide blood and to strike fear. It broke the confidence of the enemy. The Medes wore scarlet to hide blood. Chariots raced about flashing in the light. (Remember the Nahum wrote in a poetic style). Spears are brandished to strike fear as the Babylonians and the Medes prepare to attack. Chariots are driven furiously and there are so many that they jostle and bump one another, even in the open spaces that Nineveh designed into the city – wide open spaces for the people.

 Verse 5 & 6 *He remembers his nobles; they stumble in their walk; They make haste to her walls, And the defense is prepared. 6The gates of the rivers are opened, And the palace is dissolved.*The king of Assyria remembers his nobles – it was considered an honor to be ordered to the wall to defend the city. He is counting his mighty men. Even as they go to the wall, they stumble in terror and hurry. Mistakes are made as they prepare for attack. The gates of the rivers are opened – Nineveh had motes and canals that surrounded the city. When attack came, gates could be opened, and these areas flooded. Of course, we know that in the third year of the siege of Nineveh, that the river breached the walls and flooded the city. The King dissolved in fear and terror and burned the palace.

 Verse 7 & 8 *It is decreed: She shall be led away captive, She shall be brought up; And her maidservants shall lead her as with the voice of doves, Beating their breasts. 8Though Nineveh of old was like a pool of water, Now they flee away. “Halt! Halt!” they cry; But no one turns back.*It is decreed. God has decided and no one will change that decision. Huzzab in Hebrew means “she who stands by the King”. The Queen will be led away captive, or another translation says she is laid bare – stripped of her crown and ornaments. Her maidservants, which may mean the cities that were dependent on Nineveh, will mourn, beating their breasts, crying out over the loss. Though Nineveh is an old city, the citizens will flee. Patriots will cry stop! But people flee the city in terror as the river pours in, the army enters in, and defeat is at hand.

 Verse 9 & 10 *Take spoil of silver! Take spoil of gold! There is no end of treasure, Or wealth of every desirable prize. 10She is empty, desolate, and waste! The heart melts, and the knees shake; Much pain is in every side, And all their faces are drained of color.*The conquering armies are called on to plunder the city of it’s gold, silver, vessels. Nineveh was fabulously wealthy and seemingly contained endless treasure. In the end, the city lies desolate. The use of three words to mean desolate is a Hebrew tool used to intensify what we are to feel here… utter ruin and desolation. And this desolation brings misery – hearts melting, hopelessness, fear, pain – making all pale at the disaster.

 Verse 11 & 12 *Where is the dwelling of the lions, And the feeding place of the young lions, Where the lion walked, the lioness and lion’s cub, And no one made them afraid? 12The lion tore in pieces enough for his cubs, Killed for his lionesses, Filled his caves with prey, And his dens with flesh.*Lions represented Assyria. Sculptures of lions with wings, warriors were represented as lions, the king often had a lions body with a man’s head – adorned the city. No one made Nineveh afraid. It once struck fear and conquered at will, taking what it wanted in abundance.

 Verse 13 *“Behold, I am against you,” says the Lord of hosts, “I will burn your chariots in smoke, and the sword shall devour your young lions; I will cut off your prey from the earth, and the voice of your messengers shall be heard no more.”* God now speaks – Behold, I am against you. The statement about burning chariots has the idea of “I will burn your chariots until there is nothing left but smoke”. The sword will devour your warriors. You will no longer conquer and gather prey. You messengers will no longer carry your commands to the conquered or gather tribute. God is saying – I am putting an utter end to you.

 In Jonah, we saw God relent and spare Nineveh. In Nahum 2, we see the coming utter destruction. God is a merciful God, but we must repent and turn from our ways. He does not relent forever. In our country today, we must remember that God does not relent forever. May He find us calling out to Him more like the people in Jonah’s time than in Nahum’s time. Remember Psalm 34:17-18 *The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears, And delivers them out of all their troubles. 18 The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit.* May God find us broken hearted for our nation and world, of contrite spirit, on our knees calling for Him to deliver us from these wicked times. He may yet relent and bring us revival.