THE BOOK OF NAHUM

The King Who Is Our Stronghold

Nahum, Unfiltered

For teens who think they've heard it all

BILL McLEOD

Papa Bill Books

THE OLD TESTAMENT FOR TEENS

The King Who Is Our Stronghold: The Book of Nahum, Unfiltered

Part of The Old Testament for Teens series.

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In the author's own text, pronouns referring to God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are capitalized for reverence. Scripture quotations follow the WEB Protestant Edition exactly, including its capitalization.

AI Disclosure. This book was written by Bill McLeod with the assistance of artificial intelligence tools for drafting, research, and editing. All content was reviewed and approved by the author, who takes full responsibility for it. Readers are encouraged to open the Scriptures and study them for themselves.

A WORD TO THE READER

Before You Start

Remember Jonah? The prophet who ran away because he knew God would forgive Nineveh? God did forgive them. The whole city repented, from the king down to the cows. It looked like a happy ending.

Nahum is the sequel. About a hundred years later, Nineveh had gone right back to its old ways, and worse. Assyria had become the most feared empire on earth. It crushed nations, tortured prisoners, and bragged about it. It destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel and nearly took Jerusalem. For the smaller nations of the world, Assyria was the ultimate bully, and nobody could stop it.

Then God sent Nahum, whose name means comfort, with a message: the bully's time is up. Nahum is a hard book, full of war and judgment. But it's also a book of comfort for anyone who has ever been crushed by someone stronger. It says that God is slow to anger, but He is never indifferent to evil. And it says that for people who run to Him, He is a stronghold in the day of trouble.

Let's go.

How This Book Works

This book walks through Nahum in three chapters, one for each chapter of the Bible book: slow to anger, never indifferent (Nahum 1), the fall of the unstoppable city (Nahum 2), and why bullies collapse (Nahum 3).

Before chapter 1, a section called Setting the Scene explains how Nahum connects to Jonah, when it was written, and why Nineveh was so feared. Read it first.

Each chapter ends with a Key Verse quoted word for word from the World English Bible (WEB), Protestant Edition, a public-domain modern translation used for every Scripture quotation in this book (Scripture is quoted exactly as the WEB prints it; in the rest of the book, pronouns for God are capitalized out of reverence); Real Talk questions to think through alone or talk over with someone you trust; and a Try This challenge.

On questions where sincere Christians disagree, such as how to understand the harsh war imagery in books like Nahum, I'll try to be fair and leave the decision to you, your family, and your church. This book quotes Nahum in places and explains it mostly in my own words, so keep a Bible open next to it. Don't take my word for it. Take His.

FOR THE ADULTS

A Note for Parents and Youth Leaders

Thank you for putting this book in a teenager's hands. It's the thirty-fourth book in The Old Testament for Teens, a companion to the New Testament for Teens series, written for readers who can smell a sermon coming a mile away. I've tried to write honestly, directly, and with real respect for what these readers can handle.

Nahum, whose name means comfort, is in many ways the sequel to Jonah. A century or more after Nineveh repented, Assyria had returned to brutal violence. This book explains the date of Nahum, between the fall of Thebes in 663 BC (mentioned in Nahum 3:8) and the fall of Nineveh in 612 BC, the partial alphabet poem in chapter 1, its echo of Exodus 34:6-7, and the historical fall of Nineveh. It also notes that Jonah and Nahum are the only two books in the Old Testament that end with a question.

Nahum contains intense war imagery. This book handles it honestly but without graphic detail, presenting it as God's justice against a brutal empire, not as permission for personal revenge. Real Talk boxes address God's patience and justice, trusting God in trouble, good news, pride and power, and how bullies fall. A brief safety box encourages any teen facing bullying or abuse to talk with a trusted adult and lists Childhelp (1-800-422-4453), 988, and 911.

The closing section, Where This Points, shows Jesus as the true good news announced on the mountains (Nahum 1:15, Romans

10:15), our stronghold (Nahum 1:7), and the One who breaks the yoke of evil forever through the cross and His return. Wherever Scripture is quoted directly, the wording is from the World English Bible (WEB), Protestant Edition, a public-domain translation.

My prayer is that every reader will find comfort in a God who sees injustice, and will run to Him as their stronghold.

Grace and peace,

Bill McLeod

Papa Bill Books

BEFORE YOU OPEN THE BOOK

Setting the Scene

The Sequel to Jonah

In the book of Jonah, the people of Nineveh repented after hearing a five-word sermon, and God spared their city. But repentance doesn't automatically pass to the next generation. Within a century or so, Nineveh returned to cruelty and pride. The Assyrian kings of this era, like Sennacherib and Ashurbanipal, filled their palaces with carvings of their brutal victories. Jonah shows God's mercy toward Nineveh. Nahum shows that God's patience has limits. Both books are about the same God, who is slow to anger but who will not ignore evil forever.

A Prophet Named Comfort

We know very little about Nahum. His name means comfort. The book calls him Nahum the Elkoshite, meaning he was from a town called Elkosh, but no one knows for sure where it was. Some ancient traditions place it in Galilee. Some connect it with Capernaum, whose name means village of Nahum. Another tradition places it near Mosul in Iraq, close to the ruins of Nineveh. Others suggest a town in Judah. What matters most is his message: comfort for God's people, and judgment on their oppressor.

When Was It Written?

Nahum can be dated fairly precisely. In Nahum 3:8, he mentions the fall of No-Amon, the Egyptian city of Thebes, which the Assyrians conquered in 663 BC. So Nahum wrote after that. And he predicts

the fall of Nineveh, which happened in 612 BC. So most scholars date Nahum between 663 and 612 BC, probably during the long reign of King Manasseh or the early reign of King Josiah of Judah. At the time, Assyria still seemed unstoppable.

The Superpower

Assyria was the first great empire of the ancient Middle East. Its armies were highly organized, with chariots, cavalry, siege engines, and battering rams. Its kings deported entire populations to break their spirit. They destroyed Samaria and carried away the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BC, and they forced Judah to pay heavy tribute for decades. Nineveh, the capital, was enormous, with massive walls, palaces, gardens, and a library. To everyone around it, Nineveh looked permanent.

Two Books, Two Questions

Jonah and Nahum are the only two books in the Old Testament that end with a question. Jonah ends with God asking, “Shouldn’t I be concerned for Nineveh, that great city?” Nahum ends with a question to the king of Assyria: “for who hasn’t felt your endless cruelty?” Together, the two questions show both sides of God’s character. He is concerned for sinners and offers mercy. And He is concerned for the victims of sin and brings justice.

The Map

Chapter 1 (Nahum 1): Slow to anger, never indifferent.

Chapter 2 (Nahum 2): The fall of the unstoppable city.

Chapter 3 (Nahum 3): Why bullies collapse.

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CHAPTER 1

Slow to Anger, Never Indifferent

Nahum 1

Nahum opens with a title. "A revelation about Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite." The word translated revelation can also mean burden. This message was heavy. It was a burden Nahum had to carry and deliver.

Then, before he says a word about Nineveh, Nahum talks about God. "The LORD is a jealous God and avenges. The LORD avenges and is full of wrath. The LORD takes vengeance on his adversaries, and he maintains wrath against his enemies."

That's a lot of strong words in one verse: jealous, avenges, wrath, vengeance. They can make us uncomfortable. But they need to be understood correctly.

> BACKGROUND CHECK **A Jealous God?**
>
> When people are jealous, it's usually a selfish feeling, like envy over someone else's stuff. But when the Bible says God is jealous, it means something different. It describes His passionate, protective love for His people, like a husband or wife who refuses to share their spouse with someone else, or a parent who fiercely protects a child. God's jealousy isn't insecurity. It's love that refuses to be indifferent when His people are harmed or led away.

BACKGROUND CHECK **Vengeance and Wrath**

God's vengeance is not like human revenge. Human revenge is often out of control, personal, and unfair. God's vengeance is justice: perfectly fair, never excessive, and aimed at real evil. His wrath isn't a temper tantrum. It's His settled opposition to everything that destroys what He loves. A God who never got angry at cruelty, abuse, or murder wouldn't be loving. He'd be indifferent. Nahum shows a God who cares too much to look away.

Then comes a crucial balance. "The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will by no means leave the guilty unpunished."

This is an echo of one of the most important passages in the Old Testament. When God revealed His glory to Moses in Exodus 34, He described Himself as merciful, gracious, and slow to anger, abundant in loving kindness, forgiving sin, but one "who will by no means clear the guilty."

BACKGROUND CHECK **Jonah, Nahum, and Exodus 34**

Both Jonah and Nahum quote God's self-description from Exodus 34:6-7, but they emphasize different halves. Jonah quotes the first part, complaining that God is "a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger." Nahum quotes the second part, that God "will by no means leave the guilty unpunished." Put the two books side by side, and you get the whole picture. God really is slow to anger. He gave Nineveh more than a century. But slow to anger doesn't mean never angry. God's patience is meant to lead people to repentance, not to give them permission to keep doing evil.

REAL TALK **Patient, Not Passive**

Have you ever wondered why God doesn't stop evil right now? Why bullies, abusers, and cruel people seem to get away with things? Peter wrote that God is patient because He doesn't want anyone to perish, but wants everyone to come to repentance. God's patience is a gift, a chance for people to turn around. But patience is not the same as being passive. God sees every wrong.

He keeps track. And one day, He will set everything right. If you've been hurt, that means your pain is not invisible to God.

Then Nahum describes God's power like a storm. "The LORD has his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet." The clouds are just the dust kicked up as God walks. He rebukes the sea and dries up rivers. The mountains quake. The hills melt. The whole earth trembles at His presence.

Then Nahum asks, "Who can stand before his indignation? Who can endure the fierceness of his anger?" The answer is no one. Not even mighty Nineveh.

BACKGROUND CHECK **An Alphabet Poem**

In Hebrew, the first part of Nahum 1, roughly verses 2-8, is a partial acrostic. That means many of the lines begin with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet in order, from the first letter, aleph, to about halfway through. Scholars debate how complete the pattern is and why it stops partway. Some think Nahum adapted an older hymn. Others think the broken pattern is intentional. Either way, the poem shows careful artistry. It's like saying God's power covers everything from A to Z, even though Nahum only gets halfway before turning to Nineveh.

Then, in the middle of the storm, comes the most beautiful verse in the book. "The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knows those who take refuge in him."

The same God who shakes mountains is a safe place for people who run to Him. The storm that terrifies His enemies is the very thing that protects His people.

BACKGROUND CHECK **A Stronghold**

A stronghold was a fortress, a protected place where people could run when enemies attacked. In the ancient world, villages often had a fortified tower or a walled city nearby where people could take refuge in times of war. Nahum

says God Himself is that kind of place. Proverbs says, "The LORD's name is a strong tower: the righteous run to him, and are safe." The psalmist says, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

Notice the last part of verse 7. "He knows those who take refuge in him." God doesn't just protect a faceless crowd. He knows you personally. He knows your name, your fears, and your situation.

REAL TALK **Your Day of Trouble**

Everyone has days of trouble. Maybe it's a fight with your parents, a friendship falling apart, a diagnosis, a breakup, anxiety that won't go away, or a situation at school that feels hopeless. Nahum 1:7 says God is good, and He is a stronghold in those days, not just the easy ones. Running to God can look like praying honestly, reading a psalm, talking with a Christian friend or trusted adult, or simply saying, God, I need You right now. He knows you, and He won't turn you away.

Then Nahum turns to Nineveh. God would make "a full end" of it with an overflowing flood. "What do you plot against the LORD?" Their plans would fail. Affliction would not rise a second time.

And then God speaks to Judah, His people who had suffered under Assyria for decades. "Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no more. Now I will break his yoke from off you, and will burst your bonds apart."

BACKGROUND CHECK **The Yoke of Assyria**

A yoke is a wooden beam placed across the necks of oxen so they can pull a plow or cart. In the Bible, it often stands for slavery or oppression. For decades, Judah had been forced to pay heavy tribute to Assyria, sending gold, silver, and goods to Nineveh. Assyrian records list King Manasseh of Judah among the kings who paid tribute. For Judah, the promise that God would break Assyria's yoke was the best news imaginable.

Then comes a burst of joy. “Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace! Keep your feasts, Judah! Perform your vows, for the wicked one will no more pass through you. He is utterly cut off.”

Picture a messenger running across the mountains toward Jerusalem. The people watch from the city walls, wondering what news he’s bringing. As he gets closer, they hear him shouting: Peace! The enemy is defeated! You can celebrate again!

> **REAL TALK** **Good News on the Mountains**
>
> Isaiah uses almost the same words: “How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news.” Paul later quoted it to describe people who share the good news about Jesus. That means you can be a messenger of good news too. Every time you tell a friend about Jesus, encourage someone who is struggling, or remind someone that God loves them, you’re like that runner on the mountains. Your feet might not seem beautiful to you, but to God, they are.

KEY VERSE

The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knows those who take refuge in him.

Nahum 1:7 (WEB)

REAL TALK

1. Why is it important that God is both slow to anger and will not leave the guilty unpunished?
2. How is God's jealousy different from human jealousy?
3. What does it mean to you that God knows those who take refuge in Him?
4. What is your day of trouble right now? How could you run to God in it?

TRY THIS *Memorize Nahum 1:7 this week. Every time you feel stressed or worried, say it out loud or in your head, and then tell God what's bothering you.*

CHAPTER 2

The Fall of the Unstoppable City

Nahum 2

Chapter 2 reads like a movie trailer for the fall of Nineveh. It's fast, loud, and full of action.

"He who dashes in pieces has come up against you." An attacker is coming. Then Nahum mocks Nineveh's defenders with a series of urgent commands. "Keep the fortress! Watch the way! Strengthen your waist! Fortify your power mightily!" It's as if he's saying, Go ahead, do everything you can. It won't be enough.

In verse 2, Nahum explains why this is happening. "For the LORD restores the excellency of Jacob as the excellency of Israel." The fall of Nineveh was about more than politics. It was about God restoring His people.

> **BACKGROUND CHECK** **The Fall of Nineveh**
>
> In 612 BC, a coalition of Babylonians, led by King Nabopolassar, and Medes, led by King Cyaxares, attacked Nineveh. Ancient Babylonian records called the Babylonian Chronicles describe the siege, which lasted about three months, and say the city was plundered and turned into a ruin. Assyria's last king fled west and tried to hold on, but within a few years the Assyrian Empire was gone. The city that had terrorized the world for centuries fell in a single summer.

Then the camera zooms in on the attacking army. “The shield of his mighty men is made red. The valiant men are in scarlet. The chariots flash with steel in the day of his preparation.” Red shields and scarlet uniforms. Flashing chariots. Spears waving.

“The chariots rage in the streets. They rush back and forth in the wide ways. Their appearance is like torches. They run like the lightnings.”

You can almost hear the noise. The chariots race through the city like lightning, and the defenders stumble trying to reach the walls.

> **REAL TALK** **When the Bully Gets Scared**
>
> For centuries, Assyria had been the one charging into cities with chariots and terrifying people. Now the tables were turned. The bully was the one running scared. That’s a pattern in history and in life. People who rule by fear often end up afraid themselves. They can’t trust anyone, because they’ve hurt so many people. If you’ve ever been bullied, it might help to know that bullies are often much more insecure than they look. That doesn’t excuse what they do. But it does mean their power isn’t as permanent as it seems.

Then comes a short but dramatic verse. “The gates of the rivers are opened, and the palace is dissolved.”

> **BACKGROUND CHECK** **The Floodgates**
>
> Nineveh sat on the Tigris River, and a smaller river called the Khosr ran right through the city. The Assyrians had built dams, canals, and sluice gates to control the water. Ancient Greek historians later reported that a flood helped bring down part of Nineveh’s walls during the siege. Scholars debate the details. Some think the attackers opened or broke the dams to flood the city. Others think heavy rains caused the rivers to overflow. Either way, Nahum had predicted an overflowing flood in chapter 1, and the gates of the rivers in chapter 2. The water that protected Nineveh became part of its downfall.

Archaeologists excavating one of Nineveh's gates, called the Halzi Gate, found the remains of people who apparently died defending it during the final attack. The city's walls show signs of a desperate attempt to narrow the gate opening, as if the defenders were trying to hold off an overwhelming army.

Then Nahum describes the scene inside. Nineveh was "like a pool of water," and the people were draining out of it, running away. Officers shouted, "Stop! Stop!" but no one looked back.

Then the looting began. "Take the plunder of silver. Take the plunder of gold, for there is no end of treasure, an abundance of every precious thing." All the treasure Assyria had stolen from other nations was now being carried away.

> **REAL TALK** **What Goes Around**
>
> Assyria had built its wealth by plundering other nations. Now its treasure was being plundered. The Bible often shows this kind of reversal. Paul wrote, "Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap." If you build your life on taking from others, it will eventually be taken from you. But the opposite is also true. If you build your life on giving, kindness, and generosity, those things will last. Jesus said to store up treasures in heaven, where thieves can't break in and steal.

Then comes one of the most striking images in Nahum. "Where is the den of the lions, and the feeding place of the young lions, where the lion and the lioness walked with the lion's cubs, and no one made them afraid?"

> **BACKGROUND CHECK** **The Lions' Den**
>
> Lions were a favorite symbol of Assyrian kings. They staged royal lion hunts and had them carved on their palace walls. Some of the most famous carvings, now in the British Museum, show King Ashurbanipal killing lions from his chariot. Assyrian kings also compared themselves to lions in their

inscriptions. Nahum uses that image against them. Nineveh was like a lions' den, where the lion brought home prey from other nations to feed its cubs. But now the den would be empty. The hunters would be hunted.

The lion had torn prey to pieces for its cubs and filled its den with the kill. It had been a predator, feeding on other nations. And no one had made them afraid.

Then God speaks directly. "Behold, I am against you," says the LORD of Armies. He would burn Nineveh's chariots, cut off its prey, and silence its messengers. For centuries, Assyrian messengers had gone out demanding tribute and threatening nations. Now their voices would never be heard again.

REAL TALK **Nobody Is Unstoppable**

Nineveh seemed unstoppable. Its walls were massive, its army was feared, and its treasure was endless. Then it fell in a single summer. Today, people and institutions can seem unstoppable too: powerful companies, popular kids, famous celebrities, or people who seem to get away with everything. But no human power lasts forever. Only God's kingdom does. That's a warning if you're tempted to build your life on power. And it's a comfort if you're on the receiving end of someone else's power.

KEY VERSE

"Behold, I am against you," says the LORD of Armies, "and I will burn her chariots in the smoke, and the sword will devour your young lions; and I will cut off your prey from the earth, and the voice of your messengers will no longer be heard."

Nahum 2:13 (WEB)

REAL TALK

1. Why do you think Nahum described Nineveh's fall like an action scene?
2. What does the image of the empty lions' den teach about power?
3. What does Nahum 2:2 say about why Nineveh fell?
4. What things in our world seem unstoppable today? How does Nahum change the way you see them?

TRY THIS *Look up pictures of the Assyrian lion hunt carvings or the ruins of Nineveh online. As you look, thank God that no power on earth is greater than Him.*

CHAPTER 3

Why Bullies Collapse

Nahum 3

Chapter 3 begins with a cry of grief and judgment. “Woe to the bloody city! It is all full of lies and robbery—no end to the prey.”

Nineveh is called the bloody city, or the city of blood. It was built on violence. It was full of lies, broken treaties, and robbery. And its hunger for more prey never ended.

> **BACKGROUND CHECK** **Assyria’s Cruelty**
>
> Assyria’s own records show why Nahum called Nineveh a bloody city. Assyrian kings bragged in their inscriptions about the cruelty they inflicted on conquered peoples, and their palace walls were carved with scenes of prisoners being tortured and cities being burned. They used terror deliberately, to frighten other nations into surrendering. When Nahum describes Nineveh’s judgment in harsh terms, he’s describing a city facing the same kind of violence it had inflicted on others for centuries.

Then Nahum describes the battle again, in short, rapid images. The crack of the whip. The rattle of wheels. Galloping horses. Bounding chariots. Charging horsemen. Flashing swords. Glittering spears. And then, the terrible result: countless dead.

This is hard to read. Nahum doesn’t sugarcoat war. He shows its horror honestly.

REAL TALK **Reading Hard Passages**

Some parts of the Bible are difficult to read, especially passages about war and judgment. It's okay to feel uncomfortable. That discomfort shows that you care about human life, which is exactly how God made you. Nahum isn't celebrating violence for its own sake. He's showing that a city that lived by violence would face violence, and that God's justice against evil is real. Christians understand passages like this as God's judgment on a brutal empire at a specific time in history. They are never permission for anyone to take revenge or harm others today. Paul wrote, "Don't seek revenge yourselves, beloved, but give place to God's wrath."

Nahum also compares Nineveh to a seductive prostitute and a witch who sold nations through her charms. Assyria lured nations into alliances and then enslaved them. It used trickery, flattery, and manipulation as well as force. God says He would expose Nineveh's shame before the nations. People who saw it would turn away and say, "Nineveh is laid waste! Who will mourn for her?"

Think about that question. When the most powerful city in the world fell, no one would grieve. It had hurt so many people that no one was sad to see it go.

REAL TALK **Who Will Mourn?**

How would people feel if you suddenly left your school, your team, or your friend group? Would they miss you, or be relieved? That's a tough question, but it's worth thinking about. People who use, manipulate, and hurt others might seem powerful for a while, but they leave behind a trail of broken relationships. People who are kind, honest, and generous leave behind love. Jesus said the greatest among us are those who serve. Live in a way that would make people miss you.

Then Nahum gives a history lesson. "Are you better than No-Amon, who was situated among the rivers, who had the waters around her, whose rampart was the sea, and her wall was of the sea?"

BACKGROUND CHECK **No-Amon (Thebes)**

No-Amon was the Egyptian city of Thebes, the great southern capital of Egypt, near modern Luxor. Its name means city of Amon, after the Egyptian god Amon. Thebes was famous for its huge temples, which still stand today at Karnak and Luxor. It sat on the Nile River, protected by water and by powerful allies, including Cush, Put, and Libya. But in 663 BC, the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal conquered and looted it. Nahum's point is sharp: Assyria had destroyed a city that seemed just as secure as Nineveh. What made Nineveh think it would be any different?

Thebes had boundless strength and many helpers. Yet it was carried away into captivity. Nahum describes the terrible things that happened there, things the Assyrians had done themselves. Now the same fate was coming to Nineveh.

Then Nahum describes how quickly Nineveh would fall. "All your fortresses will be like fig trees with the first-ripe figs. If they are shaken, they fall into the mouth of the eater." Early figs fall off the tree with just a little shake. Nineveh's strongholds would collapse just as easily.

Nahum even mocks the city's defense preparations. Draw water for the siege! Strengthen your walls! Make more bricks! But fire would devour them anyway.

REAL TALK **Building on the Wrong Foundation**

Nineveh tried to make itself safe with stronger walls and more bricks. But its real problem wasn't weak walls. It was a life built on cruelty. You can't fix a heart problem with a wall problem. Sometimes we try to protect ourselves with popularity, money, or a tough exterior, while ignoring what's going on inside. Jesus told a story about a wise man who built his house on the rock and a foolish man who built on sand. When the storm came, only the house on the rock stood. Build your life on Jesus.

Then Nahum compares Assyria's merchants, guards, and officials to locusts. They multiplied like grasshoppers, swarming over the land and stripping it bare. But locusts have a strange habit. On cold days, they settle on walls and fences. When the sun comes out and warms them, they fly away, and no one knows where they went. Assyria's leaders would vanish just like that.

"Your shepherds slumber, king of Assyria. Your nobles lie down. Your people are scattered on the mountains, and there is no one to gather them." The king's leaders would be dead or useless. His people would be scattered like sheep with no shepherd.

> **BACKGROUND CHECK** **Safety: If Someone Is Bullying or Hurting You**
>
> Nahum shows that God sees when the strong crush the weak, and He takes it seriously. If you're being bullied, threatened, or hurt by someone, whether at school, online, or at home, it is not your fault, and you don't have to handle it alone. God cares, and He has put people in your life who can help. Talk to a trusted adult, like a parent, teacher, school counselor, coach, or pastor. Save screenshots of messages and report online bullying. If someone at home or another adult is hurting you, call or text Childhelp at 1-800-422-4453. If you're thinking about hurting yourself, call or text 988. If you're in immediate danger, call 911.

And then comes the final verse, a question. "There is no healing your wound, for your injury is fatal. All who hear the report of you clap their hands over you, for who hasn't felt your endless cruelty?"

Assyria's wound was fatal. When the nations heard the news, they clapped their hands. Why? Because every one of them had felt Assyria's endless cruelty. Nobody had escaped it.

> **BACKGROUND CHECK** **A City That Disappeared**
>
> Nineveh was so completely destroyed that it faded from memory. About two hundred years later, a Greek soldier and writer named Xenophon marched

past its ruins and didn't even recognize it as Nineveh. For centuries, its location was buried under mounds of earth. Not until the 1800s did archaeologists dig up its palaces, carvings, and Ashurbanipal's library of clay tablets. The city that thought it would rule forever had been lost to history.

REAL TALK **Why Bullies Collapse**

Nahum shows us why bullies collapse. Cruelty isolates people. It creates enemies instead of friends. It depends on fear, and fear never builds lasting loyalty. And most importantly, God is not indifferent to cruelty. He may be slow to anger, but He sees every wrong. That's a warning for anyone tempted to use power to hurt others. And it's a comfort for anyone who has been hurt. The bully's power is temporary. God's goodness is forever.

Jonah ended with God asking whether He should be concerned for Nineveh. Nahum ends with the nations asking who hasn't felt Nineveh's cruelty. Mercy had been offered. Nineveh had received it once. But the next generations chose cruelty. Both books show the same God: one who longs to forgive, and one who will not let evil win.

KEY VERSE

There is no healing your wound, for your injury is fatal. All who hear the report of you clap their hands over you, for who hasn't felt your endless cruelty?

Nahum 3:19 (WEB)

REAL TALK

1. Why do you think no one would mourn for Nineveh?
2. What point was Nahum making by comparing Nineveh to Thebes?
3. How is God's justice different from personal revenge?
4. How do the endings of Jonah and Nahum fit together?

TRY THIS *Think of someone who has been hurt by a bully or by unfair treatment. This week, do something kind for them, or stand up for them, and pray that God would be their stronghold.*

THE END (AND THE BEGINNING)

Where This Points

Nahum announced good news to people crushed by Assyria: "Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace!" Jewish readers have long found comfort in Nahum's promise that God will not let cruelty win. Christians believe the greatest fulfillment of that good news came in Jesus.

Paul quoted this kind of verse when he wrote about telling people about Jesus: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Good News of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!" Nineveh's fall was good news for Judah, but it didn't end evil forever. Another empire, Babylon, soon took Assyria's place. The deepest bully in the world isn't a nation. It's sin, death, and the devil. Jesus came to defeat them. When He began His ministry, He announced that He had come "to proclaim release to the captives" and "to deliver those who are crushed." At the cross, God dealt with evil fully. The Bible says that Jesus, through His death, would "bring to nothing him who had the power of death, that is, the devil." Nahum promised, "Now I will break his yoke from off you, and will burst your bonds apart." Jesus breaks the yoke of sin and guilt now, and when He returns, He will end all cruelty forever. Until then, He is what Nahum promised: good, "a stronghold in the day of trouble," knowing everyone who takes refuge in Him.

Here's what that means for you, as plainly as I can put it.

1 God made you, and He loves you.

God made you on purpose, and He loves you. He sees every injustice done to you.

> *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only born Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.* **John 3:16 (WEB)**

2 We've all sinned.

Nahum shows how seriously God takes cruelty and pride. The Bible says all of us have sinned.

> *for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God;* **Romans 3:23 (WEB)**

3 Sin has a real cost.

God is holy, so He doesn't shrug off evil. The Bible says its result is death, separation from God forever.

> *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* **Romans 6:23 (WEB)**

4 Jesus is the good news.

Jesus died for our sins and rose again, breaking the yoke of sin and death so we can be free.

> *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness. You were healed by his wounds.* **1 Peter 2:24 (WEB)**

5 You can't earn it. You receive it.

Salvation isn't a reward for being good enough. It's a gift you receive by trusting Jesus.

> *for by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, that no one would boast.*
> **Ephesians 2:8–9 (WEB)**

6 Take refuge in Him.

Turn from running your own life, and trust Jesus as your Savior and King. Then you can know, not just hope, that you have eternal life.

> *that if you will confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*
> **Romans 10:9 (WEB)**

So what do you do with that? Nahum says the LORD knows those who take refuge in Him. You can run to Him today. You don't need perfect words. You can talk to God right now, wherever you are. If it helps, you could pray something like this:

> *God, I've gone my own way. I need You to forgive me and to be my stronghold. I can't fix my sin myself. Thank You that Jesus died for my sins, rose again, and broke the yoke of sin and death. Forgive me, and make me Yours. When I'm in trouble, help me run to You. Help me trust You with justice instead of seeking revenge. I trust Jesus as my Savior, and I want Him to be my King. In Jesus' name, amen.*

If You Just Said Yes

Tell someone. A parent, a youth leader, a pastor, or a Christian friend. Start there.

Read the real thing. Read Nahum 1, then Romans 10:9-15 and Matthew 11:28-30.

Find your people. Get connected to a church where the Bible is taught and Jesus is honored. Ask about being baptized.

Share the good news. Think of one friend who needs to hear about Jesus, and pray for a chance to tell them.

Not Sure Yet?

Not ready? That's honest, and honesty is a good place to start. Nahum raises hard questions about God's justice. Keep asking. Keep reading. Just don't settle for "I already know all that."

Because if Nahum is right, no bully lasts forever, and the LORD is a stronghold for everyone who runs to Him.

The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knows those who take refuge in him.

Nahum 1:7 (WEB)