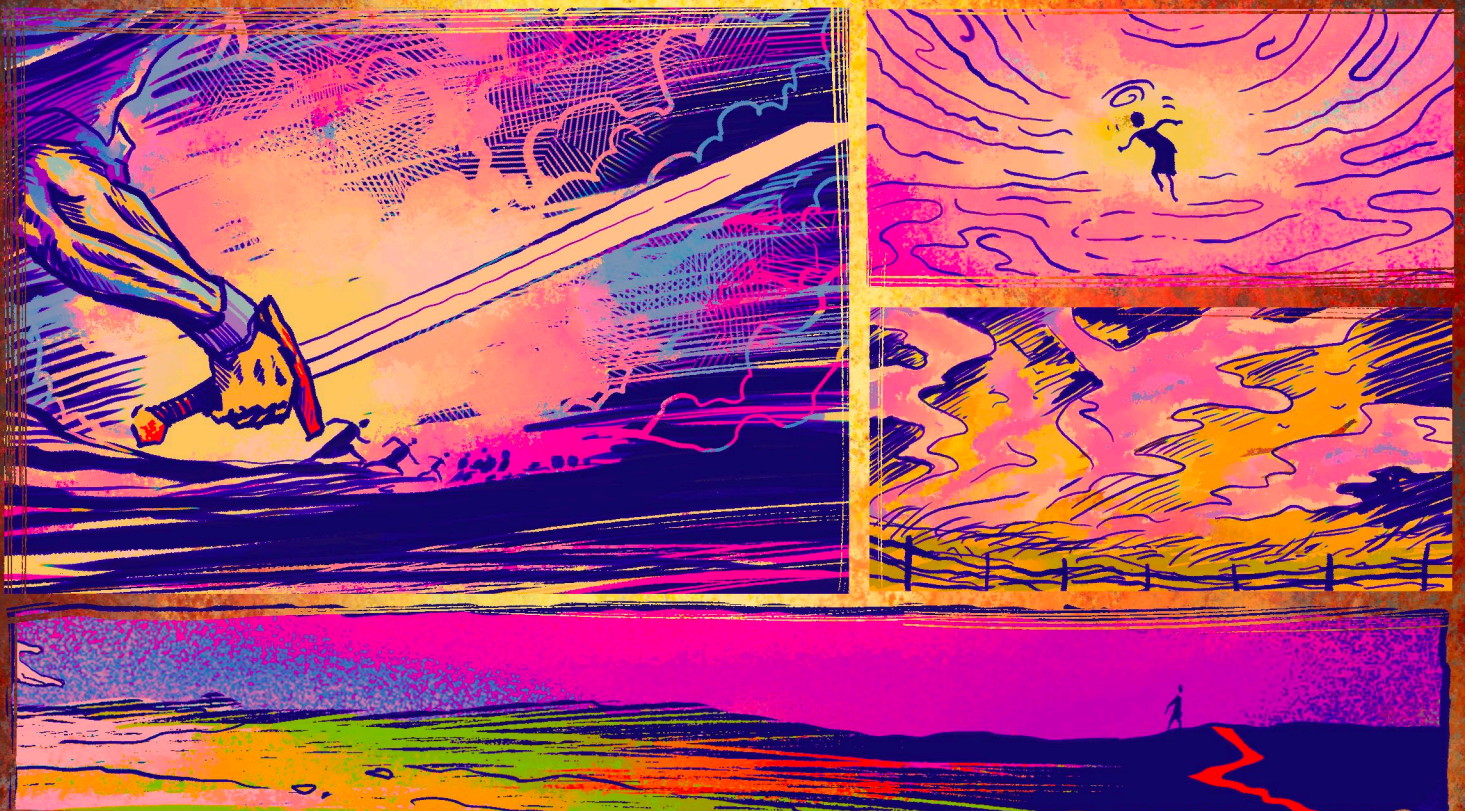


Through the Bible

NAHUM

Zac Poonen



Illustrations by Vinay Kuruvilla

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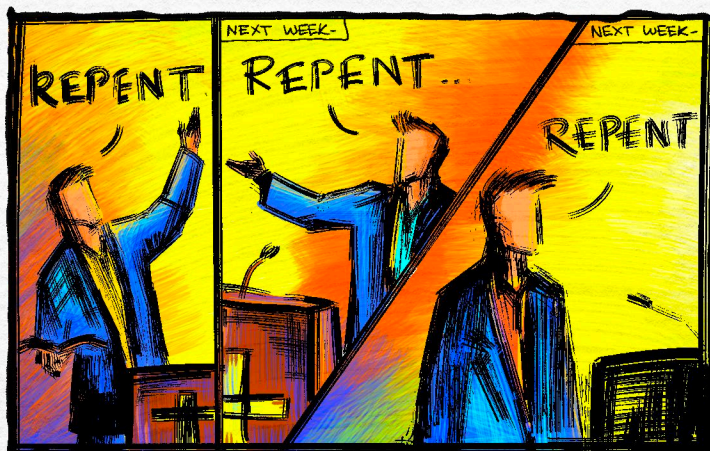
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

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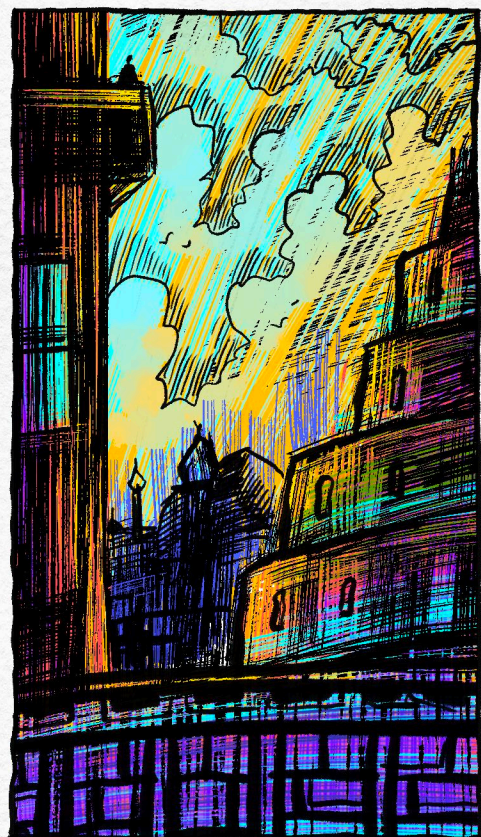
NAHUM



MOST CHRISTIANS *NEVER* READ THESE "MINOR" *PROPHETS* BECAUSE THEY FEEL THEY WILL NOT GET *ANYTHING* OUT OF THEM. BUT *ALL* SCRIPTURE IS *INSPIRED* BY GOD. EVERY PART OF SCRIPTURE IS NOT OF EQUAL VALUE. THE NEW TESTAMENT IS CERTAINLY FAR MORE *IMPORTANT* THAN THE OLD TESTAMENT -- BUT THERE IS SOMETHING OF *VALUE* IN EVERY *OLD* TESTAMENT BOOK. THESE *PROPHETS* REPEATED CERTAIN THINGS FOR THE SAKE OF *EMPHASIS*.



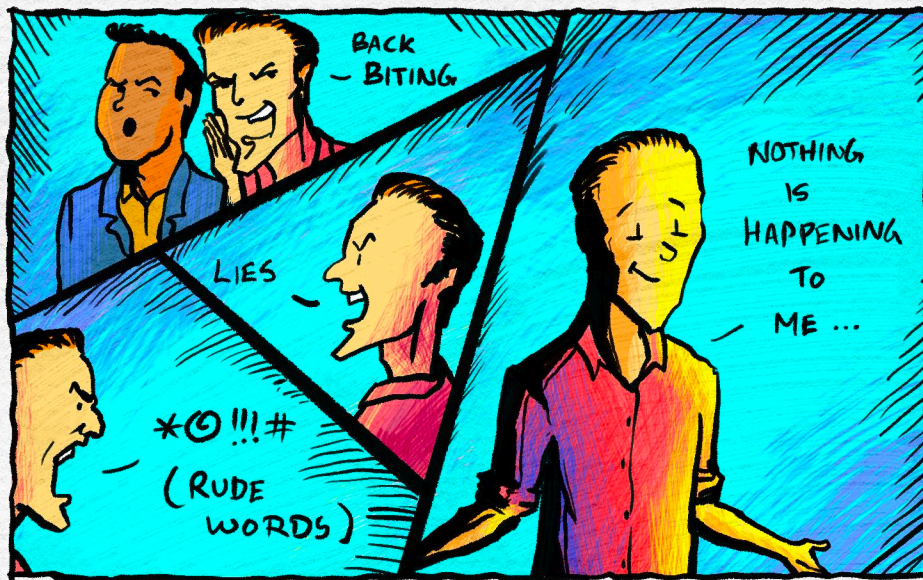
GOD MAY SPEAK ON TEN DIFFERENT SUBJECTS, BUT REPEAT TWO OR THREE OF THOSE -- BECAUSE THOSE TWO OR THREE ARE OF SPECIAL *IMPORTANCE*. MOST PREACHERS, HOWEVER, ARE *RELUCTANT* TO *REPEAT* THEIR MESSAGES LEST THEY *LOSE* THEIR *REPUTATION* FOR PREACHING A NEW MESSAGE EACH TIME. THAT IS WHY *MOST* OF *TODAY'S* PREACHERS CAN NEVER BE *PROPHETS*! THE *OLD* TESTAMENT *PROPHETS*, HOWEVER, DID *NOT* SEEK THEIR OWN REPUTATION.



NAHUM LIVED 100 YEARS AFTER JONAH. HE WAS SPEAKING AT A TIME WHEN *ASSYRIA* WAS THE MOST *POWERFUL* NATION ON EARTH. FOR A *PROPHET* TO SAY THEN THAT *GOD* WAS GOING TO *DESTROY* THE MOST *POWERFUL* NATION ON THE *EARTH* WAS AS *RIDICULOUS* AS SOMEONE PROCLAIMING *TODAY* THAT THE *USA* WOULD BE DESTROYED AND *REDUCED* TO *NOTHING*! *NOBODY* WOULD BELIEVE THAT. AND *NOBODY* BELIEVED NAHUM THEN. BUT AS WE LOOK BACK OVER *HISTORY* *TODAY*, WE SEE THAT WHAT THE *PROPHETS* *PREDICTED* HAPPENED *EXACTLY*.



EVERY WORD OF THEIRS WAS FULFILLED EXACTLY *CONCERNING* THE GREAT WORLD EMPIRES OF *ASSYRIA*, *EGYPT*, *BABYLON* AND *TYRE*. THE EMPIRES OF *ASSYRIA* AND *BABYLON* *DISAPPEARED*. *GOD* SAID THAT *TYRE* WOULD BE *REDUCED* TO *RUBBLE* -- AND IT WAS. BUT HE NEVER SAID THAT ABOUT *EGYPT*. SO *EGYPT* EXISTS EVEN *TODAY*. WHEN *GOD* SAYS SOMETHING THROUGH HIS *PROPHETS*, IT HAPPENS *EXACTLY* LIKE THAT.



GOD HAS WARNED US THAT EVERYONE WILL HAVE TO GIVE AN **ACCOUNT** OF THEIR LIVES TO **HIM** ONE DAY (ROMANS 14:12). AND IN THAT DAY, EVERYONE WILL **REAP** EXACTLY WHAT THEY **SOWED** (GALATIANS 6:7). JESUS SAID, "EVERY **CARELESS** WORD THAT PEOPLE SPEAK, THEY SHALL GIVE AN **ACCOUNT** FOR IT IN THE DAY OF **JUDGEMENT**" (MATTHEW 12:36). YOU MAY BE WATCHING PORNOGRAPHY IN SECRET, SPEAKING RUDE WORDS, TELLING LIES AND BACKBITING AGAINST OTHERS AND THEN SAYING TO YOURSELF, "**NOTHING** HAS HAPPENED TO ME", AND THEREFORE **CONTINUE** IN SIN. THAT WAS **EXACTLY** WHAT **ASSYRIA** ALSO SAID: "YES. NAHUM IS SAYING ALL THIS ABOUT US. BUT **NOTHING** IS HAPPENING TO US." BUT **JUDGEMENT** DID **COME** A LITTLE LATER.



THE OTHER THING WE SEE HERE IS THIS: WHEN GOD SENT **JONAH** TO NINEVEH **EARLIER**, WE COULD ASK **WHY** GOD SENT JONAH TO NINEVEH WHEN HE KNEW THAT THIS NATION WAS GOING TO BECOME **EVIL** AND BE DESTROYED AFTER ANOTHER HUNDRED YEARS. GOD DEALT WITH NINEVEH IN JONAH'S DAY **AS IT WAS THEN**. IN JONAH'S TIME, GOD SAW MANY PEOPLE IN THAT CITY WHO HAD A **DESIRE** TO **REPENT**. BUT GOD DID **NOT** SEND **NAHUM** TO NINEVEH, BECAUSE HE SAW THAT THE **NEW** GENERATION THERE HAD **NO** **INTEREST** IN **REPENTANCE**.



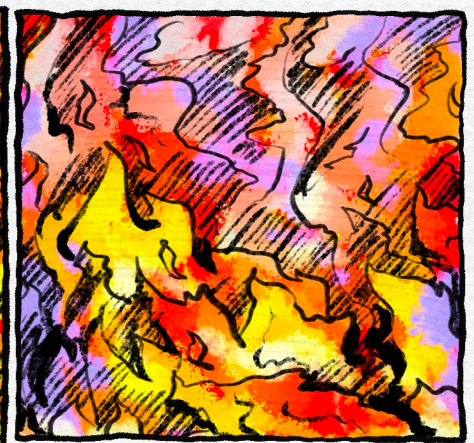
WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM THE EXAMPLE OF **JONAH** AND **NAHUM** IS THIS, THAT IF YOU LISTEN TO GOD, YOU WON'T **WASTE** YOUR TIME GOING TO PLACES WHERE **GOD** DOES **NOT** WANT YOU TO GO. YOU WILL THEN GO ONLY WHERE SOMETHING **USEFUL** CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED FOR GOD. THAT'S WHY THESE PROPHETS LIVED BEFORE GOD'S FACE AND WAITED FOR HIM TO TELL THEM WHAT TO DO. THEY DIDN'T **RUSH** AROUND LIKE MANY CHRISTIAN WORKERS DO **TODAY**, PREACHING **HERE** AND **THERE**. THEY TOOK TIME TO **WAIT** ON **GOD**.



THE MESSAGE OF NAHUM WAS A MESSAGE OF GOD'S **ANGER**. IN CHAPTER 1, VERSES 2 AND 6, WE SEE SEVEN WORDS -- **JEALOUS**, **AVENGING**, **WRATHFUL**, **VENGEANCE**, **INDIGNATION**, **ANGER**, **BURNING**, **RAGE**. THESE WORDS EXPRESS GOD'S **INTENSE** ANGER AND **BLAZING FURY** NOT JUST AGAINST **SIN**, BUT ALSO AGAINST THE PEOPLE WHO **CONTINUE** IN SIN. "THE LORD IS SLOW TO GET ANGRY, BUT WHEN HE **DOES** GET ANGRY, YOU **CAN'T** STOP HIM" (1:3). GOD IS **LONG-SUFFERING** AND VERY **PATIENT**. BUT **FINALLY** HE WILL **JUDGE**.



GOD'S **ANGER** AND **JUDGEMENT** ARE MAINLY DIRECTED AGAINST THOSE WHO **EXPLOIT** OTHERS. HE WILL BRING **JUSTICE** TO ALL WHO HAVE BEEN **CHEATED** ON EARTH. GOD'S **BLAZING FURY** AGAINST ASSYRIA WAS BECAUSE THEY **HURT** OTHER PEOPLE. IN THE SAME WAY, ONE DAY GOD WILL JUDGE EVERY SINGLE HUMAN BEING THAT EVER LIVED, IF HE **HURT ANYONE** IN ANY WAY BY HIS **WORDS** OR HIS **ACTIONS**.



THERE WAS A **DIFFERENCE** BETWEEN **ADAM'S SIN** AND **CAIN'S SIN**. ADAM HURT **HIMSELF**, BUT DID NOT HURT ANYBODY ELSE. SO HE WAS **NOT** CURSED. ONLY THE GROUND WAS CURSED (GENESIS 3:17). BUT **CAIN'S SIN** HURT **ANOTHER PERSON** -- ABEL. SO HE **HIMSELF** WAS **CURSED BY GOD** (GENESIS 4:11). WHEN WE DO SOMETHING THAT **HURTS ANOTHER PERSON** IN SOME WAY IT IS A **SERIOUS SIN**.

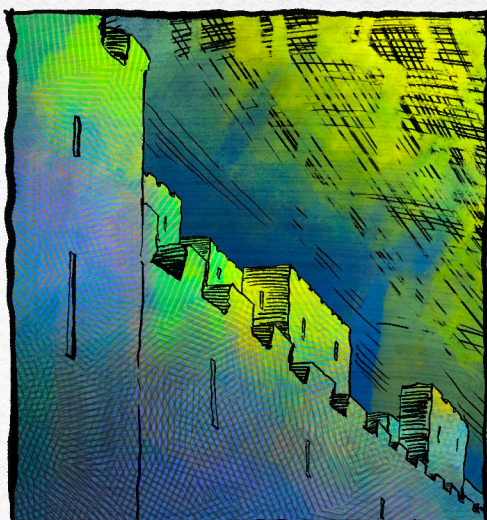
THERE ARE MANY WHO IMAGINE THAT GOD WILL FINALLY **SAVE** EVERYBODY AND THAT EVEN THOSE WHO GO TO **HELL** WILL FINALLY GO TO **HEAVEN!!!** BUT I BELIEVE GOD'S WORD. IF WE CANNOT **BELIEVE** IN A GOD FULL OF **ANGER**, THEN WE DO NOT BELIEVE IN A GOD FULL OF **LOVE** EITHER. **LOVE DEMANDS ANGER AND PUNISHMENT**



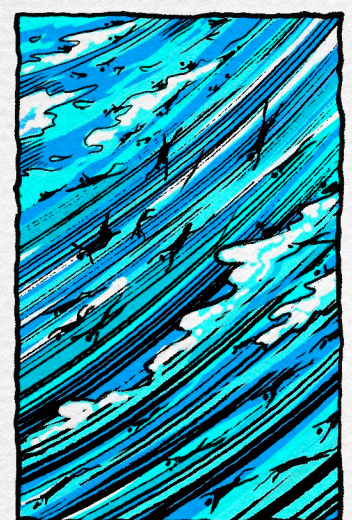
SUPPOSE YOU HAVE TWO CHILDREN WHOM YOU **LOVE EQUALLY**, AND ONE DAY YOU SEE THE **OLDER BOY HITTING** HIS YOUNGER BROTHER WITH A STONE AND MAKING HIM BLEED.

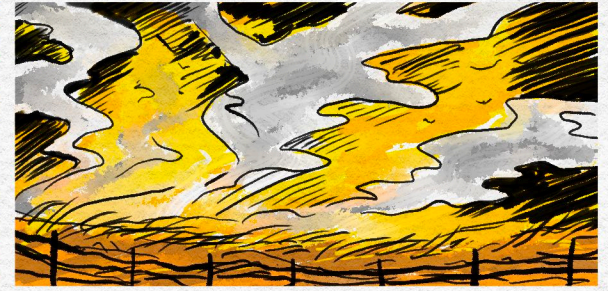
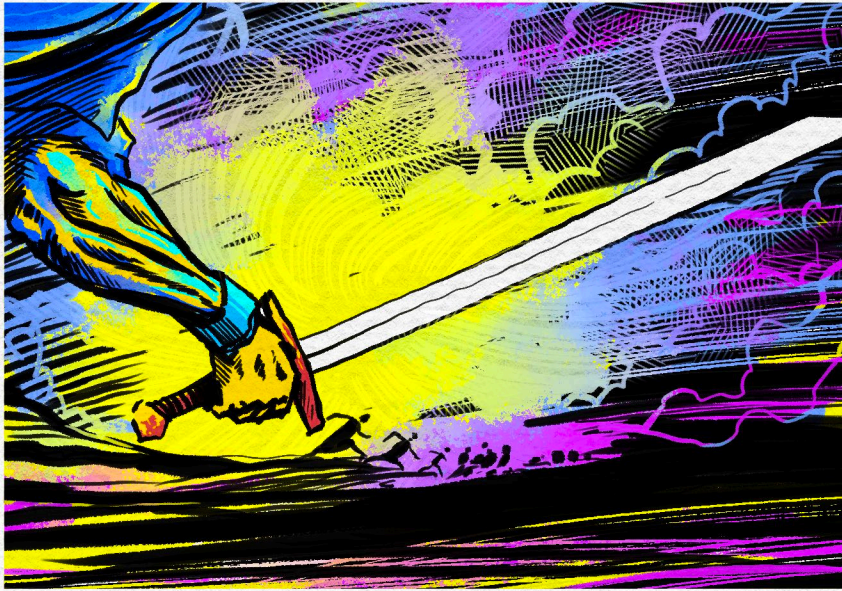
THAT POOR YOUNGER BOY IS **UNABLE** TO DEFEND HIMSELF AGAINST SOMEONE STRONGER THAN HIM. WHAT WILL YOU DO AS A FATHER? WILL YOU JUST **STAND AND WATCH** THAT? YOU **LOVE** BOTH YOUR BOYS. AND BECAUSE YOU LOVE, YOU WILL BE **ANGRY**. IF YOU **DON'T** LOVE YOUR CHILD, YOU WILL **IGNORE** WHAT IS BEING DONE AND **WON'T** BE **ANGRY**. BUT LOVE WILL BRING **ANGER** AGAINST **EVIL**, FOR LOVE DEMANDS **JUSTICE**. YOU WILL **PUNISH** THE OLDER BOY FOR **HURTING** HIS WEAKER BROTHER. THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT **GOD** DID WITH **ASSYRIA** TOO. AND THAT IS WHAT HE WILL ONE DAY DO TO **ALL PEOPLE** WHO **HURT OTHERS** IN ANY WAY.

IF WE WANT TO BE GOD'S **SERVANTS**, LET US BE **CAREFUL** WITH YOUR WORDS -- ESPECIALLY WORDS THAT WE SPEAK ABOUT THOSE WHOM WE **DON'T LIKE**, OR WITH WHOM WE **DON'T AGREE**.

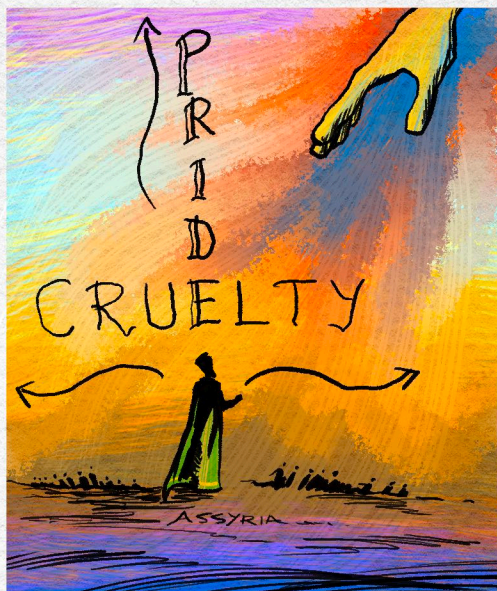


IN 1:7--10, WE SEE GOD'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS HIS **FRIENDS** AND HIS **ENEMIES**. FIRST WE SEE HIS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THOSE WHO RESPOND TO HIS WORD IN **HUMBLE REPENTANCE**. HE IS **GOOD** TO THEM. WHEN TROUBLE COMES HE IS A **STRONG REFUGE**. THE LORD KNOWS EVERYONE WHO **TRUSTS** IN HIM. HE DOESN'T FORGET EVEN ONE PERSON. YOU MAY BE **WEAK, POOR AND HOPELESS**, BUT GOD KNOWS YOU **PERSONALLY**, IF YOU ARE ONE OF THOSE WHO **TRUST** IN HIM. THEN IN THE NEXT FEW VERSES WE SEE GOD'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS HIS **ENEMIES**. "HE **SWEEPS AWAY** HIS ENEMIES LIKE IN AN **OVERFLOWING FLOOD**" (1:8). WHEN A FLOOD COMES, IT JUST WIPES OUT EVERYBODY IN A **MOMENT**.





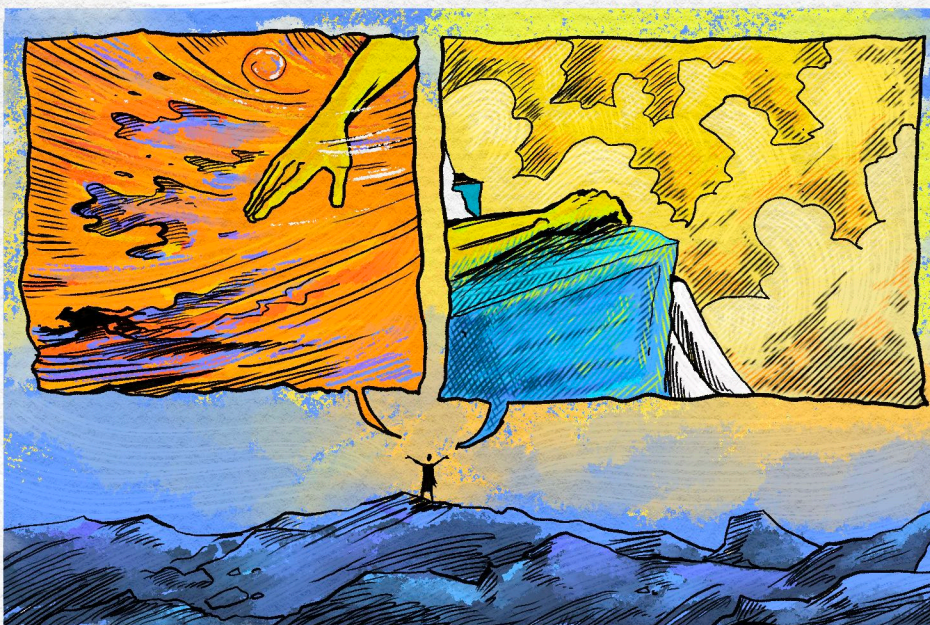
THAT'S HOW **JUDGEMENT** IS GOING TO COME UPON GOD'S **ENEMIES**. "HE **PURSUES** HIS FOES INTO THE **DARKNESS** OF THE NIGHT." THE PROPHET USES THESE EXPRESSIONS TO SHOW HOW GOD PURSUES THOSE WHO DON'T TAKE HIS **WORD** SERIOUSLY, IN ORDER TO **DESTROY** THEM. "WHY ARE YOU SCHEMING AGAINST THE LORD? HE WILL **DESTROY** YOU WITH ONE BLOW. HE DOESN'T NEED TO STRIKE YOU A SECOND TIME. WHEN GOD STRIKES HIS ENEMIES THEY WILL **STAGGER** LIKE DRUNKARDS AND BE **BURNT** UP LIKE DRY STRAW IN A FIELD. WHO IS THIS KING OF YOURS WHO **DARES** TO PLOT **EVIL** AGAINST THE LORD?" (1:9, 10).



WHAT WERE ASSYRIA'S SINS THAT GOD WAS SO ANGRY WITH THEM? FIRST OF ALL THEIR **PRIDE** TOWARDS GOD, AND SECONDLY THEIR **CRUELTY** TOWARDS OTHERS. IT IS BECAUSE **MOST** BELIEVERS **DON'T** READ THESE PROPHETIC BOOKS SUFFICIENTLY THAT THEY TOO **REMAIN PROUD** TOWARDS GOD AND **HARD** TOWARDS OTHERS.



THERE IS A **DIFFERENCE** BETWEEN GOD'S **CHASTENING** AND HIS **ANGER**. NOTICE HERE -- HE SAYS TO ISRAEL, "O MY PEOPLE, I HAVE PUNISHED YOU **ENOUGH!** NOW I WILL **BREAK** YOUR CHAINS AND RELEASE YOU FROM THE YOKE OF SLAVERY" (1; 12, 13). **BUT** TO THE **ASSYRIAN KING**, HE SAYS, "I WILL **BURY** YOU" (1:14).



THEN THE LORD TOLD ISRAEL, "BEHOLD, ON THE MOUNTAINS THE **FEET** OF HIM WHO BRINGS **GOOD** NEWS, WHO ANNOUNCES **PEACE.... NEVER** AGAIN WILL THE **WICKED** ONE PASS THROUGH YOU; HE HAS BEEN **CUT OFF COMPLETELY**" (1:15). THIS IS A PICTURE OF PROCLAIMING THE **GOOD** NEWS THAT THE **DEVIL** HAS BEEN **DESTROYED**. THIS VERSE IS SIMILAR TO ISAIAH 52:7 WHERE WE READ, "HOW LOVELY ON THE MOUNTAINS ARE THE **FEET** OF HIM WHO BRINGS **GOOD** NEWS, WHO ANNOUNCES **PEACE** AND **SALVATION** AND SAYS TO ZION, '**YOUR GOD REIGNS!**' " THERE THE EMPHASIS WAS ON THE REIGN OF GOD. HERE IN NAHUM IT IS ON THE **DEFEAT** OF **GOD'S ENEMY**.



ASSYRIA IS A PICTURE OF **SATAN** AND HIS KINGDOM, AND THE **GOOD NEWS** WE HAVE TO GO PROCLAIMING TO PEOPLE IS, "DON'T BE AFRAID, O PEOPLE. **SATAN** HAS BEEN **DEFEATED**. HIS KINGDOM HAS BEEN DESTROYED." THERE ARE **MANY** REASONS WHY **JESUS** DIED. HE DIED SO THAT WE MIGHT BE **FORGIVEN** OF ALL OUR **SINS**. HE DIED SO THAT OUR **OLD MAN** WOULD BE **CRUCIFIED** SO THAT WE MIGHT **NOT** SERVE SIN ANY LONGER. HE DIED SO THAT THE **CURSE** OF THE **LAW** MIGHT NEVER BE UPON US. HE ALSO DIED SO THAT **SATAN** MIGHT BE **DEFEATED**.



HERE GOD GAVE THEM **NO OPPORTUNITY** FOR **REPENTANCE**, BECAUSE THEY HAD **RESISTED** HIS CALLS **AGAIN** AND **AGAIN**. GOD HAD **WAITED** LONG ENOUGH. A PERSON CAN **KEEP** ON **SINNING** AND **KEEP** ON **REJECTING** GOD'S CALLS AND **HARDEN** HIS **HEART**. THEN ONE DAY HE **CROSSES** THE **RED LINE** AND THEN HE WILL HAVE **NO MORE** **DESIRE** TO **REPENT** OF HIS **SINS**. THEN THERE IS **NO HOPE** FOR HIM (SEE PROVERBS 29:1). IT IS VERY DANGEROUS, ESPECIALLY FOR A BELIEVER, TO **KEEP** ON **SINNING** AND TO **KEEP** ON **REJECTING** GOD'S **PLEADINGS**.



NAHUM DESCRIBES HOW ASSYRIA WOULD BE **DESTROYED** AND **PLUNDERED** OF ALL ITS **TREASURES** (2:9). THAT PROPHECY WAS FULFILLED WHEN **BABYLON** CAME SOME YEARS LATER AND **DESTROYED** ASSYRIA AND TOOK AWAY THEIR **WEALTH**.



TODAY, LIKE ASSYRIA, **PREACHERS** MAKE THEMSELVES **RICH** AT THE **EXPENSE** OF **POOR** PEOPLE. THEIR **JUDGEMENT** WILL BE **WORSE** THAN THE **JUDGEMENT** OF **NINEVEH**, BECAUSE THESE **PREACHERS** HAVE **MORE** **LIGHT** THAN **NINEVEH** HAD. "YOU FILLED YOUR HOMES WITH **PLUNDER**" (2:12). **PREACHER**, IS YOUR HOME FILLED WITH WHAT YOU HAVE TAKEN FROM **POOR** PEOPLE? IF SO, THE **LORD** SAYS TO YOU "I AM YOUR **ENEMY**, AND YOU WILL NEVER AGAIN BE ABLE TO **PLUNDER** THESE **POOR** PEOPLE AGAIN, BECAUSE I WILL **JUDGE** YOU" (2:13)..



JUDGEMENT CAME ON NINEVEH, BECAUSE SHE "ENTICED THE NATIONS WITH HER **BEAUTY** AND TAUGHT THEM TO WORSHIP HER **FALSE GODS**" (3: THERE WAS SOMETHING VERY POWERFUL ABOUT HER **EARTHLY ATTRACTIVENESS**, AS IN THE ATTRACTIONS IN **WESTERN LANDS** TODAY. HE EVEN TRIED TO **TEMPT JESUS** WITH THEM SAYING, "I WILL GIVE YOU **ALL THE GLORY OF THIS WORLD**, IF YOU WILL **BOW DOWN AND WORSHIP ME**." THE ATTRACTIVE THINGS OF EARTH ARE **STILL BEING OFFERED** TO ALL THOSE WHO WILL BOW DOWN TO **SATAN** IN SOME AREA.



THE LORD ASKS NINEVEH, "ARE YOU BETTER THAN (THE CITY OF) **NO-AMON**, WHICH WAS SITUATED BY THE WATERS OF THE **NILE**, WITH **WATER SURROUNDING** HER? **ETHIOPIA** WAS HER MIGHT, AND **EGYPT** TOO; PUT AND LUBIM WERE AMONG HER HELPERS. **YET SHE WENT INTO CAPTIVITY**" (3:8--10). NO-AMON WAS ONE OF THOSE **DIFFICULT CITIES** IN **EGYPT** THAT ASSYRIA COULD **NOT CONQUER** BECAUSE IT WAS **SURROUNDED** BY WATER ON EVERY SIDE, AND **PROTECTED** BY THEIR ALLIES. BUT **FINALLY** ASSYRIA **CONQUERED** NO-AMON TOO. AND NOW THE LORD SAYS TO ASSYRIA, "THE **SAME THING** WILL NOW HAPPEN TO YOU."



PEOPLE **EVERYWHERE** WILL **AGREE** WITH GOD'S **JUDGEMENT** ON HER (3:11--19). ONE DAY **ALL MEN** WILL **STAND** BEFORE GOD FOR THE **FINAL JUDGEMENT**. **WHY** WOULD GOD PULL PEOPLE OUT OF HELL, PUT THEM BACK INTO THEIR BODIES, AND MAKE THEM STAND BEFORE HIM FOR A **FINAL JUDGEMENT** (REVELATION 20:11, 12)? THERE IS A **REASON**. THE WHOLE **WORLD** MUST KNOW **WHY** THESE PEOPLE ARE BEING SENT TO **HELL**. IN THAT DAY, THE WHOLE WORLD WILL **AGREE** WITH **GOD'S JUDGEMENT**.

GOD MAY AT TIMES GIVE US A MINISTRY THAT WAS ORIGINALLY GIVEN TO **SOMEONE ELSE** BUT TAKEN AWAY FROM HIM BECAUSE OF HIS **BACKSLIDING** -- JUST LIKE **DAVID REPLACED KING SAUL**. **BEWARE** OF THINKING THEN IN **PRIDE**, "I AM **BETTER** THAN **HIM**. GOD HAS GIVEN **HIS MINISTRY** TO **ME**." WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT **OTHER PERSON** CAN HAPPEN TO YOU TOO. PAUL, THE GREAT APOSTLE, SAID, "I AM AFRAID THAT AFTER PREACHING TO OTHERS, I **MYSELF** MIGHT BE **DISQUALIFIED**." (1 CORINTHIANS 9:27). BECAUSE PAUL LIVED IN THAT **FEAR** IN **HUMILITY**, HE WAS NEVER DISQUALIFIED.