

# The Book of Nahum

from the book

Minor Prophets: Major Messages

by Rev. George McCurdy

# Contents

How to Use This Study Guide.....	4
Introduction.....	5
Some background information.....	5
Who was Nahum?.....	6
Nahum’s acrostic composition in Chapter One.....	8
Chapter One.....	9
Nahum 1:1-2.....	9
Nahum 1:3-6.....	12
Nahum 1:7.....	17
Nahum 1:8-11.....	19
Nahum 1:12-14.....	24
Chapter Two.....	31
Nahum 1:15 and Nahum 2:1-3.....	31
Nahum 2: 4-7.....	39
Nahum 2:8-11.....	46
Nahum 2:12-14.....	51
Chapter Three.....	55
Nahum 3:1-4.....	55
Nahum 3:5.....	60
Nahum 3:6-7.....	62
Nahum 3:8-10.....	64
Nahum 3:11-12.....	68

Nahum 3:13-17.....	70
Nahum 3:18.....	73
Epilogue: A Summary of the Three Chapters of Nahum.....	78
Chapter One.....	78
Chapter Two.....	78
Chapter Three.....	78

## How to Use This Study Guide

1. A slow unhurried reading of Nahum is essential. Reading the chapter before looking at the notes, while working with the notes, and after finishing with the notes will give each researcher a powerful sense of the series of meanings within each chapter. It is important to be comfortable with all the names and places in the prophecy and to understand the announcements the prophet makes on behalf of the Lord. When possible, historical information will be included in the notes to increase reading comprehension and enhance application.
2. Our study of each chapter of Nahum will begin with quotes from a work of the Writings called Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms. This work includes a verse-by-verse overview of all three chapters of Nahum that provide general information about the internal sense. Our research will help move us from the generals to the particulars of the internal sense.
3. Another important reference tool is Searle's General Index to Swedenborg's Scripture Quotations. This reference is used to find passages in the Writings where a verse(s) from the Word is either explained specifically or used to illustrate a doctrinal point that we can use in our study. There is also another use of this work. As we study, each researcher will be led by the Lord's Providence in myriad ways, according to specific needs or states. Knowing how to use this book will help each of us to explore relevant topics and look up related passages to increase our knowledge of the three-fold Word.
4. You will soon discover that not every verse, word, name, etc. is directly quoted in the Writings. But there are often other references to the same name, place, or thing in the explanation of a different verse of the Word. The hope is that reflection on these other doctrinal explanations will help us see possible applications to our study of Nahum. We will need to use "derived doctrine" often. Please don't run away from this maligned term. If we use it properly and admit openly that it is derived doctrine, we bring no harm to the internal sense.
5. Keep some kind of notebook handy during your study times. Write out insights, questions, and any summaries you find helpful in organizing your thoughts about each chapter. The goal of this study guide is not to give a detailed summary of the internal sense but to start each researcher's quest for deeper insight.
6. At the end of each chapter in the study guide, you will find a study review. The review includes a summary of each section to help you reinforce and build on your understanding of several of the key points.
7. Begin each study unit with a devotional prayer asking the Lord to guide and direct your thoughts. Certainly beginning in this sphere has the power to inspire and open our minds with a higher spiritual priority that will keep us in the company of the Lord's angels. As the Writings teach, we must seek to love truth for truth's sake. Such an approach will free each reader from

preconceived ideas that might limit his or her ability to "see" the intent and message of the Lord's Word.

## Introduction

Listen to a few rave reviews the book of Nahum has received:

Rev. Ormond Odhner, in his notes on Pre-Advent Churches, says that Nahum's "work is unmitigated gloating over the fierce wrath that Jehovah has brought upon His enemies.... But for all of that, it is a piece of exceptionally beautiful poetry, written in a quick and rapid meter, and at times throwing up one piece of sensual imagery after another in such quick succession that the prophet did not even bother to finish his sentences..."

*The Interpreter's Bible Dictionary* says, "Nahum's poetic genius ranks with the highest in the Hebrew Bible. He sketches scenes of warfare with the vivid sense of the picturesque or horrible details.... Nahum is different from the other literary prophets of the Old Testament..."

In *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Micah, Zephaniah and Nahum*, by J.M.P. Smith, we read, "Though the rhythm and metre of Nahum are not smooth and regular as is the case with some Hebrew prophets, yet in some respects the poetry of Nahum is unsurpassed in the Old Testament. His excellence is not in sublimity of thought, depth of feeling, purity of motive, or insight into truth and life. It is rather in his descriptive powers. He has an unexcelled capacity to bring a situation vividly before the mind's eye.... Accurate and detailed observation assists in giving his pictures verisimilitude."

Have these reviews piqued your interest to read and study this book of the Lord's Word? One can hope that this fascinating study will be helpful with life issues and with our battle against Hell and its arrogance and false sense of invincibility.

### **SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Most scholars agree that the Book of Nahum is the seventh book of the collection of the "Twelve Prophets." When was it written? The estimated date of authorship is placed between 663 BC and 612 BC. How did the researchers come up with this time span? Nahum mentions the fall of Thebes in chapter 3, verse 8, and this event is believed to have occurred in 663 BC. The fall of Nineveh occurred when the combined forces of the Medes, Babylonians, and Scythians besieged the city and destroyed it in 612 BC. The *Oxford Annotated Bible* narrows the range of dates to between 626 and 612 BC. Most scholars lean toward 612 BC as possibly the correct date.

## WHO WAS NAHUM?

Very little is known about Nahum. We know that his name means "compassion" or "comfort." Nahum states his name and identifies himself as an "Elkoshite." Is "Elkosh" a city, town, or family name? I found a wonderful summary on the Internet of how this question has been answered within theological circles. A Dr. Greg Herrick (no identification of his work or background) summarized the four major theoretical answers one might consider:

"The term 'Elkoshite' probably indicates that Nahum was from a town called Elkosh, though nothing for certain is known about it. This fact, however, has done very little to stop speculation as to where it was. Four competing theories have emerged. *First*, some scholars have argued, on the basis of the etymology of 'Capernaum,' that that was the city from which Nahum came (*Caper-naum*). Thus the city was named after its most celebrated citizen. *Second*, eastern medieval tradition has identified a site opposite the ruins of Nineveh on the Tigris River-for both the birthplace and tomb of Nahum-though the evidence for this position is quite weak. *Third*, Jerome (ca 347-419) suggests that Elkosh was El Kause and is to be identified with Elkesi in Galilee. *Finally*, there are still others who argue for a town in Judah called Elceseï-a town half way between Jerusalem and Gaza. This final interpretation has some merit for it seems that although the book of Nahum is directed against the Assyrians, it was written for the Jews in the south, in Judah.... Further archaeological studies may confirm its location, but for now the information is too slight to be dogmatic."

As interesting and speculative as all these theories might be, we need to resist the urge to adopt one. Instead, we are urged by the Writings to hold fast to the doctrines that remind us it is the internal sense that must lead and reveal the true meaning of each thing represented in prophecy. As hard as historians seek to find the place of Elkosh, we must work as hard, if not harder, to find the inner (timeless) meaning of Nahum. Let's consider these helpful teachings as a model to strive for in our study efforts:

- "Every king, whosoever he was, whether in Judah or in Israel, or even Egypt, and in other places, might represent the Lord." (*Arcana Coelestia* 1361, 1409)
- "The Divine influx assumes the form of representatives in the superior heavens, and descends thence to the inferior." (*Arcana Coelestia* 2179, 3213, 9577)
- "Representations are more beautiful and perfect in proportion, as they have a more interior birth and existence in the heavens." (*Arcana Coelestia* 3475)

As we read the words of Nahum and consider the meter, the poetry, the vivid descriptions of war, we must resolutely consider the historical facts as the means by which the inner beauty of the "more perfect" representations of heaven is transmitted to the angels and to us.

## Historical Facts as a Foundation for the Spiritual Sense

Nahum's prophecy tells the story of the defeat and destruction of the great and powerful city of Nineveh. This city was also the centerpiece of the Book of Jonah. The Lord called Jonah to "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me." Jonah's hatred for Nineveh caused him to run away from his appointed mission. His efforts to run from the Lord's call might have been based on some first-hand experience with Nineveh's injustice. But he finally went and preached the words of the Lord: "Yet in forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" Nineveh's king decreed that all its people should fast and turn from their ways, and they were spared because they did as they were told. Jonah was sad about their repentance. He sat on the hillside waiting to witness Nineveh's complete destruction. It didn't happen.

Nahum's story takes place some 100 to 140 years after the repentance of Nineveh. The destruction Jonah had hoped to see Nahum not only saw but reported. Indeed, he did so with glee and gratitude for the Lord's humbling of the tyrant nation. Why was there such widespread hatred for this great city?

Nineveh was for hundreds of years the dread of western Asia. It was strongly fortified, and its position as a great commercial center increased its wealth. Nineveh also enriched itself through numerous military conquests. It enjoyed a continuous succession of great, but harsh, rulers. Tiglath-Pileser III, Sargon, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, and Assurbanipal are a few of the names that brought fear to the hearts and minds of the neighboring nations.

With each conquest, the armies of Nineveh carried off prisoners and plundered cities, towns, and villages shamelessly. They became masters in the art of war and of humiliating those they conquered. They were merciless, ferocious, and heartless. With this power came the feeling of invincibility. However, Nineveh was hated by all the surrounding nations, and several of them began to plan secretly for Nineveh's demise. They watched and waited for signs of vulnerability. Any differences they had among themselves meant little for the time being; they were united in their common hatred of Nineveh and their common goal to defeat this hated Assyrian power.

We learn in the introduction to the Book of Nahum in the *Oxford Annotated Bible* that "The fervent reaction to the overthrow of Assyria, expressed by the peoples long subjected to its yoke, is nowhere more clearly seen than in the book of Nahum. The core of the book is a superb, vivid poem extolling Nineveh's destruction, which Nahum felt to be inevitable. The prophet spells out the reason...in unequivocal terms: it is the Lord's judgment upon an unscrupulous, defiant nation."

## **NAHUM'S ACROSTIC COMPOSITION IN CHAPTER ONE**

Verses 2 to 11 of Chapter One are written in an incomplete "acrostic psalm" form. What does that mean? Acrostic writing is found in some of the Psalms. It is a composition, *Webster's Dictionary* says, that occurs "usually in verse, in which one or more sets of letters, when taken in order, form words." Nahum uses another form of acrostic, in which each separate line begins with a Hebrew letter, and the letters used are in Hebrew alphabetical order.

Nahum starts using this format in Chapter One, uses 11 letters, and then stops. If anyone owns a copy of *The Jerusalem Bible*, turn to the Book of Nahum and you will find the acrostic format wonderfully illustrated.

Now let us turn to the verse-by-verse exposition of the Book of Nahum.

# Chapter One

## **NAHUM 1:1-2**

*"The burden against Nineveh. The book of vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.*

*God is jealous, and the Lord avenges and is furious. The Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries, And He reserves wrath for His enemies..."*

### **Passages From the Writings**

#### ***Prophets and Psalms (P&P)***

- "Concerning the last judgment upon those who are in evils, vers. 1, 2..."

### **Derived Doctrine**

#### *Oracle*

- The word "burden" is not used in the *Revised Standard Version* of the Bible. In its place is the word "oracle": "An oracle concerning Nineveh."
- The word "oracle" has these meanings:
  - The medium by which a god reveals hidden knowledge or makes known the divine purpose.
  - A place of communication from God such as the Holy of Holies of the Jewish temple.
  - A thing or person supposed to give divine or authoritative decisions.
  - An authoritative or wise expression; a wise answer.

#### *Burden*

- "Burden," on the other hand, represents "infestations by falsities and the consequent combats..." (Arcana Coelestia [AC] 7109)
- So which word (oracle or burden) do you think is more in keeping with the intent of the spiritual sense? Let's hold judgment on this question for just a little longer.
- "The burden against 'Nineveh'...signifies falsities from the fallacies of the senses in the obscurity of an unenlightened understanding, and from ignorance..." (AC 1188 [2]) "And by 'Nineveh' is signified external worship in which there are falsities." (AC 1188 [3])

## *Anger and Zeal*

- "...‘to be kindled with anger’ signifies to be indignant. Real spiritual indignation derives nothing from the anger of the natural...but from the interior essence of zeal; which zeal does indeed appear in the outward form like anger, but in internal form is not anger...but is a certain sadness that is attended with a prayerful wish that it be not so; and in a form still more interior it is merely a certain obscure feeling that breaks in on the celestial delight on account of something not good and true in another." (AC 3909)

## *Vengeance, Revenge, Avenge*

- The words "vengeance," "revenge," and "avenge" are treated similarly in New Church reference books. Therefore, the following explanations would probably apply to any of the three words.
- "Vengeance signifies the truths by which the Lord fought with the hells." (*Apocalypse Explained [AE] 395[13]*)
- "Vengeance signifies the Last Judgment and the condemnation of those who, by falsities and evils, have laid waste all the truths of the church." (AE 850)

## *"He reserves wrath for His enemies..."*

- God is never angry or wrathful with human beings. "...it appears to man, when he is punished and tormented...as if it were from God, therefore, in the Word, anger and wrath, yea evil, is attributed to God." (*Apocalypse Revealed [AR] 658*) The truth is that God is not angry with people, but people are angry with God. It is that anger toward God that punishes and torments the evil.

## **Putting It All Together**

1. The key to these opening verses seems best summarized with some of the derived doctrine cited above. Consider again these key words: zeal, sadness, prayerful wish, celestial sorrow, and burden. Think of the Lord's zeal, sadness, prayerful wish that it be not so, and celestial sorrow that Nineveh was not following what is good and true.
2. The "burden of Nineveh" was its wayward, sinful choices. The people of Nineveh had no interest in repentance. In fact, they systematically excused their cruel and self-centered ways. Nineveh became expert in clearing the conscience of any moral and spiritual obligation to the neighbor. Specious reasoning became the normal way of thinking and motivation for action. In more modern terms, we would call the Nineveh state "users" or, even more critically, "leeches." The people of Nineveh considered other people as superfluous in relation to themselves.

In the end, their "religion" brought them into such unenlightened obscurity that the Lord had to expose, and defeat, such a foreboding darkness and ignorance. His zeal, His sadness, His prayer, and His sorrow had to intercede.

## **Read and Review**

Read Nahum 1:1-2.

Read the selection from *P&P*.

## **Questions to Stimulate Reflection**

1. The Writings make an important point about the foundations of correct thinking. Whatever is first in a person's thoughts or beliefs is like the first link of a chain from which all other "links" hang. What kind of beginning link have we been given in this study of Nahum? Have you seen the shift from history to correspondences?
2. A person's view of God is like the first link in a chain. If that link is weak, or wrong, or false, all other doctrine that follows becomes vulnerable. Are there ways we can discipline ourselves to periodically check first links? What applications might this teaching have to parenting?
3. Nineveh represents falsity, spiritual ignorance, a darkened understanding, and specious reasoning used in excuses. Can you identify these characteristics in the world around you? How do you identify and respond to them?
4. What affectional response do you have to the quote about the Lord's zeal, sadness, prayer, and sorrow for those in the Nineveh state?
5. Why is it that those who hate the Lord project on Him, anger, wrath, and vengeance?
6. Have you thought any more about the choice between the words "oracle" and "burden" as part of unfolding the spiritual sense? Is one more appropriate than the other? Do you see both contributing to the inner meaning?
7. Reread question 4 and remember your response. Consider that the Lord is Infinite in all that He is and does. Can we comprehend what His Infinite Zeal, Infinite Sorrow, and Infinite Prayer are like?
8. Is it fair to characterize Nineveh as a culture of "users" or "leeches"? What's wrong with being a "user" as it is meant in this context?

## **NAHUM 1:3-6**

*"The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked.*

*The Lord has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet. He rebukes the sea and makes it dry, and dries up all the rivers. Bashan and Carmel wither, and the flower of Lebanon wilts.*

*The mountains quake before Him, the hills melt, and the earth heaves at His presence, Yes, the world and all who dwell in it.*

*Who can stand before His indignation? And who can endure the fierceness of His anger? And the rocks are thrown down by Him."*

### **Passages From the Writings**

#### ***P&P***

- "...that by the Divine presence all things are revealed, and that those who are of the perverted church will not endure, vers. 3-6..."

#### ***AC 2162 [15]***

- "In Nahum: (i.3)...where the 'dust of the feet' signifies the natural and corporeal things of man, whence come the 'clouds.'"

#### ***AC 9406 [5]***

- "In Nahum: ... (i. 3)...where also 'the clouds' denote the Word in the sense of the letter, which also is 'the storm and tempest in which is the way of Jehovah."

#### ***AR 343***

- "...a nearer and stronger Divine influx through the heavens disperses the truths with the evil, therefore 'wind' signifies the dispersion of the truth with them; and thence their conjunction with hell, and destruction; as may be seen from these passages..." Nahum 1:3 is cited among the passages.

#### ***AE 36 [3&4]***

- "Who cannot see that these things are not to be understood according to the sense of the letter, that is, that Jehovah sits upon a cloud, that He rides upon the clouds, and that He makes the clouds His chariot? He who thinks spiritually may know that Jehovah is present in His Divine truth, for this

proceeds from Him, consequently that this is what is meant by 'clouds there'..." Nahum 1:3 is cited.

***AE 69 [3]***

- "In Nahum: ... (i.3) 'Cloud' is the external of the Word, or the Word in respect to the letter. Because 'cloud' is the external of the Word, it is also the external of the church and of worship; for the church and worship are from the Word. 'Clouds' are called 'dust of the feet,' because those things that are in the sense of the letter of the Word, which is natural, appear scattered."

***AE 419 [22]***

- "It has been said...that in the spiritual world, as in the natural world, strong winds and tempests spring up; but the tempests in the spiritual world spring from the influx of the Divine into the parts below, where those are in evils and falsities; as that influx descends from the heavens towards the lands that lie below, it becomes more dense and appears like clouds, and with the evil, dense and dark according to the quantity and quality of the evil. These clouds are appearances of falsity from evil, arising from the spheres of their life; for round about every spirit and angel there is a sphere of life. When from the Lord as a sun the Divine is sent forth powerfully and flows into these dense and dark clouds, a tempest arises which is perceived by spirits there in like manner as tempests on earth....It has at different times been granted me to perceive these tempests and also the east wind by which the evil were dispersed and cast into the hells, when the Last Judgment was in progress. From this it can be seen what 'tempests,' 'storms,' and 'violent winds' signify..." We find Nahum 1:3 cited among the many other passages from the Word.

***AE 594 [8]***

- "In Nahum: ...(i.3) Truth in ultimates, which is the truth of the sense of the letter of the Word, is called 'clouds, the dust of the feet of Jehovah,' because it is the natural and lowest truth, into which Divine truth in heaven, which is spiritual, closes, and upon which it subsists. Divine truth in ultimates, because it is but little understood unless there is enlightenment from heaven, is a subject of discussion and controversy, and this meant by 'storm and tempest in which Jehovah hath His way,' spiritual 'storm and tempest' meaning discussion concerning the genuine sense, which nevertheless, with those who desire truth the Lord enlightens by means of influx."

## Derived Doctrine

*"Slow to anger and great in power..."*

- In Genesis 34:14, the Lord said, "I will proceed slowly..." *AC 4381* explains that this means the conjunction of good and truth is a gradual process. It is a "successive state of preparation." From infancy to adulthood, there is a movement from generals to particulars, from the simple to the complex. So it is also with judgment. The work (zeal) of the Lord will be slow, thorough, and powerful. Falsity will be "emptied out" so that no connection or thread of connection will remain. Nothing escapes His detection.

*"[The Lord] will not acquit the wicked..."*

- To "acquit" means to excuse, clear, absolve, discharge, release, whitewash, pardon, or forgive. It is an "...error of the age.... [to believe] that sins are remitted...by the sacrament of the Supper, although they have not removed them from themselves by repentance. They also are in [error] who believe that they are saved by faith alone; also by papal dispensations.... To every one the Lord remits sins. He does not accuse and impute. And yet He can take them away only in accordance with the laws of His Divine providence..." (*Divine Providence [DP] 280*)

*The Rebuke of Jehovah*

- "The rebuke of Jehovah..." means "...the ruin of the church, which takes place when there is no knowledge of truth and good, that is, no living knowledge, because there is no perception; 'to dry up the sea' signifies to deprive the natural man of true knowledges, and thus of natural life from the spiritual...." (*AE 513 [3]*)

*The Sea*

- A sea "signifies a collection of spiritual and natural knowledges in the memory." (*AC 28 and 991*)
- "...the 'sea,' [signifies] knowledges...because these are of the understanding of the Word from God...." (*AC 2761 [2]*)

*Drying up Rivers and Pools*

- To "dry up rivers and pools" signifies "to annihilate all the understanding and perception of truth, 'rivers' signifying intelligence which is of truth...." (*AE 405 [47]*)

*"Bashan and Carmel wither..."*

- Bashan signifies the church in its externals, or in the natural man." (AE 163 [8]) Carmel "means fruitful fields, and signifies the spiritual church and its good." (AC 1971 [4])
- Wither "signifies to dry up, or lack good and truth." (AE 419) Withering "signifies the failing of truth and good in the natural." (AE 403 [21])

*"The flower of Lebanon wilts..."*

- Flowers "signify memory knowledges of truth, for they are growths which precede and seem to produce fruit and seed, as knowledge of truth produce with man the things which are of wisdom." (AC 9553)
- Lebanon "signifies the spiritual church, or spiritual good and truth." (AC 9406 [2])

*"The hills melt...."*

- Hills "signify worship of the Lord from love, and worship from charity, which is love to the neighbor..." (AC 795 [4])
- Melting "signifies that their capacity for receiving heavenly good vanished with their increasing strong desire for external satisfactions." (AC 8487)  
Melting "signifies that their ability to receive the goods and truths of heaven and the church was in vain." (AE 721 [24])

*Heave*

- "...the earth heaves at His presence..." What does the word "heave" mean?
  - The *King James Version* (KJV) reads "the earth is burned at His presence."
  - The *New King James Version* (NKJV) has a footnote saying "heaves" means to "burn before Him."
  - The *Revised Standard Version* (RSV) has "the earth is laid waste before Him."
  - *The Jerusalem Bible* has "the earth collapses before Him."

## **Putting It All Together**

1. With so much given to us in direct and derived teachings, it will be a challenge to keep this summary brief. But here goes my attempt to do so. I am trusting that you will try to make a summary of your own. Let's begin with the summary as given us in P&P. "By Divine presence all things are revealed..." Picture in your mind the Lord revealing the true intent of the corrupted church. His Presence will reveal the true intent of the church. With it comes the Divine statement that He will not allow the falsities of the church

to endure any longer. Its unsound and falsely constructed mental system is about to crumble under the weight of its selfish ends.

2. What brought the corrupted church of Nineveh into this state? Two major things are mentioned. The church was natural and corporeal. Love of the world and love of selfish pleasures were the things they worshiped most. Consequently, their spiritual eyes were "clouded," and they were confused and doubtful about the holiness of the Word. Controversy swirled around them. Their debates were not helpful in settling spiritual matters, and they did not connect religion to their lives. Religion was dedicated to loving charity and performing uses to the Lord and neighbor, and such actions were not in keeping with their choices. Most likely, the debates about doctrine were intended to show the cleverness and agility of their human prudence. What's the "bottom line"? Their choices helped them achieve an unhealthy conjunction with hell and separated them from heaven.
3. The "Lord's Presence" reviewed every "Nineveh" decision thoroughly, one by one. The corruption of the church could not continue. Sin and evil had to be emptied out. No longer could anyone or any philosophy rationalize or justify its position. Words would no longer hide the real intentions. As a consequence, the Lord would dry up the "seas" and "rivers." The shallow memory knowledges of their false understanding would be exhausted. The Word is quite descriptive of the action the Lord would take. The people of Nineveh were to be "dried up." Their external "flowers" and "fruit" would be taken away.
4. This portion of the Word ends with varied images: Hills melting; the earth (the mind) burning in His presence; the mind "laid to waste"; and the mind "collapsing before Him." No matter which of these events you picture, it is an image that is easy to hold on to. Nahum was prophesying that the hard ground of the mind was going to experience a Divine upheaval. If new beginnings were to occur in the mind (ground), there had to be upheavals, a turning of the soil so that new seeds of truth could begin to replace the dull and unproductive "old crop." Nineveh, the representation of obscurity, an unenlightened understanding, superficial worship, and love of self and the world, was about to have its "burden" broken up by the "presence of the Lord." This is a prophecy of the Last Judgment that was to make way for the Crown of all Churches, the descent of the Holy City New Jerusalem. Let's question again the divine purpose of the Lord's presence. Was it a visit or presence of anger? Was it motivated by vengeance? Was it really caused by His terrible wrath? The answer depends on whose side we consider. From the perspective of heaven, it was a necessary and loving presence that would enable the restoration of order. From the perspective of hell, where the spirits hates His presence and wishes to obliterate His Holy Name, it was a horrible visitation. To hear that they would be "dried up" and lose the power of worldly and corporeal delights made it seem like a wrathful, avenging presence.

## Read and Review

Read Nahum 1:3-6.

Read the selection from *P&P*.

## Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. What points would you like to add to the summary given above?
2. Are there current events that seem to fit into the summary? Remember, we don't want to lock this study in time and space history. 612 BC was a long time ago. Life experiences of today must flow into our applications, with the help of the Lord's Presence.
3. Nahum may have been the writer of this book, but do you think he had any idea of the far reaching eternal values of the correspondences contained in these verses? Talk about the timelessness of the Word.
4. Looking back in your life, what upheavals would you list or identify as "life saving" and helpful? Perhaps you didn't think of them as helpful at the time, but when you look back and reflect on them, you may see they were of great significance and a necessary part of your spiritual growth.
5. Is the Divine visitation to Nineveh something that happens repeatedly throughout the generations? Is it a process that occurs in us over and over again during our regeneration?

## NAHUM 1:7

*"The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him."*

## Passages From the Writings

### *P&P*

- "...that the Lord protects those who trust in Him, vers. 7..."

## Derived Doctrine

*"The Lord is good..."*

- When we read passages such as this one, many avenues of application must come to mind. The Lord is the End, Cause, and Effect of all things. End represents Love or Good. Cause represents Wisdom or Truth, and Effects represent Uses. There is a correct way and a wrong way to approach the Lord. Thinking from **END** to **CAUSE** to **EFFECT** is the orderly progression. Put another way, thinking must progress from **LOVE** to **WISDOM** to **USE**. Thinking from Effect to Cause to End is the wrong way, and it leads to all falsity. *Divine Love and Wisdom (DLW) 187* warns that "to see on the basis of effects alone is to do so on the basis of fallacious appearances, from which spring errors, one after another, which can be so multiplied by inductive reasonings that at last egregious falsities are called truths."
- "The Lord is good...." This reminds us to begin with the FIRST or END. All that which is not connected to the First cannot have true or eternal existence. So those who want to have His protection must see, feel and believe that the Lord is good. His love endures forever and ever and is our starting point.

*"A stronghold..."*

- The *A Dictionary of Bible Imagery* by Alice Sechrist suggests looking up "fortress" and "citadel" when checking the meaning of "stronghold." A "fortress signifies the defense which divine good gives by divine truth." (*AE 316 [10]*) "Citadels signify defense against falsities and evils from the literal sense of the Word." (*AE 727 [4]*)

*"Trust in Him..."*

- All trust and confidence "...draws its being (esse) from the end or goal of life, and so it is truly found only in what is good." (*AC 4683*)

*"In the day of trouble..."*

- Day represents "states of man's regeneration." (*AC 6*) Trouble signifies "labor in temptations." (*AC 8670*) Regeneration only occurs when we face spiritual temptation, so what may seem like a day of trouble may really be an opportunity from the Lord to start a "new day."

## Putting It All Together

1. Having a stronghold, a fortress, a citadel that can protect us from the wiles of hell depends on what is First with us. Love is diligent and protective. The Lord's watchfulness sees the approach of the enemy. He provides the Divine

- Protection for the legion of disorders in hell's bag of wily tricks. The Lord's protection is ever alert. He will keep us safe even when hell quotes or calls to mind things from the literal sense of the Word that seem hurtful and wrong.
2. Isn't it wonderful that we can say: The Lord is Omniscient, Omnipotent, and Omnipresent. Nothing is greater or more loving than the Lord! His way is the safe way. The Lord protects those who trust in Him. "So may it ever be" cries out the soul within all of us.

## **Read and Review**

Read Nahum 1:7.

Read the selection from *P&P*.

## **Questions to Stimulate Reflection**

1. Is the importance of End, Cause, and Effect clear in your mind? Can you see why thinking from effects leads to all falsity?
2. Try to pick an example of a time or instance where you used right thinking. Then try thinking of an instance where you used wrong thinking. How were they different? Do you see the importance of right thinking?
3. Trust in the Lord. That is hard at times. We are so into the "as-of-self" mode of living that it is sometimes hard for us to let go and have confidence in the Lord. Have you found a way to rely more on the Lord than on your as-of-self? How did you find it?
4. "In the day of trouble..." This refers to a time of temptation, a time when we feel alone and quite vulnerable. We feel startled, perturbed, hurt, troubled, and betrayed. Our life is in turmoil, and we feel like quitting. Doesn't it seem important to have a prayer for such days? The Lord's Prayer? The Twenty Third Psalm? Saying in our mind "The Lord protects those who trust Him"? How does prayer help us in temptation? How does it help when we feel alone?
5. Do you remember an old hymn called "What a friend we have in Jesus..."? Some of the words in that song might not be doctrinally correct, but the idea of having the Lord as our Divine Friend is comforting and powerful. I sing this song to myself. How about you?

## **NAHUM 1:8-11**

*"But with an overflowing flood He will make an utter end of its place, and darkness will pursue His enemies. What do you conspire against the Lord? He will make an utter*

*end of it. Affliction will not arise up a second time. For while tangled like thorns, and while drunken like drunkards, they shall be devoured like stubble fully dried. From you comes forth one who plots evil against the Lord, a wicked counselor."*

## **Passages From the Writings**

### ***P&P***

- "...but that those who are in falsities will perish, vers. 8-11...."

### ***Coronis 34 [2]***

- "In an overrunning inundation He shall make a consummation of the place thereof, and thick darkness shall pursue His enemies (Nah, i.8)..."
- "By 'the inundation' which shall consummate, is signified the falsification of truth, and by 'thick darkness,' truths themselves in the night..."

### ***Coronis 58 [5]***

- "The state of the consummation of the Israelitish Church is described in both the historical and the prophetic parts of the Word....The passages in which the vastation, desolation, and consummation of this church, are further mentioned, shall only be named..." Nahum 1:8-9 is cited.

## **Derived Doctrine**

*"...overflowing flood...."*

- The *New English Bible* (NEB) translation of *Daniel 11:40* speaks of a "sweeping over like a flood..." which "signifies to immerse in falsities and evils." (*AE 355 [20]*)
- *Revelation 12:15* says, "And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a river after the woman, that he might cause her to be swallowed up by the river...." This passage describes the efforts of hell to inundate the church with falsities, "which, if confirmed, appear outwardly like truths, but within they conceal falsities in abundance." (*AR 563*)

*To "pursue His enemies..."*

- "To 'pursue the enemies' is here to expel the evils and falsities which were with the goods and truths, and that caused them to merely appear to be goods and truths, and thus to liberate and purify them." (*AC 1710*)

## Utter

- The word "utter" means complete or total. The Lord promises that He will bring an end, a complete and total end, to the "overflowing flood" of falsity His adversaries sought to implement under the protection, and stealth, of darkness. The Lord will pursue such things to liberate and purify the church.

## "What do you conspire against the Lord?"

- In addition to the word "conspire," we need to consider "plot" and "machinations." There is a quote in the *Arcana* that gives the signification of "conspiring." It seems to go to the heart of our study. "...the signification of 'conspiring,' as being to will from a depraved mind, since whatever men will from a depraved mind, they conspire to accomplish..." (AC 4724)

## "Afflictions shall not arise the second time..."

- We will need to keep this passage under some prayerful consideration for enlightenment. There are at least two ways we might apply this teaching. *First*, could the following number from the *Arcana* give us a starting point? "...the consummation of the age, or last times of the church, are treated of; 'affliction' denotes temptations, *both external and internal*, the external being persecutions from the world, and the internal being persecutions from the devil." (AC 1846) Remember, we are considering the wording "second time." Could the first affliction represent the "worldly affliction" of the external as it relates to the church? Could the second time represent the effort of hell (the devil) to inflict temptation on the internals of the Lord? *Second*, is this reference reminding us that hell had its first chance when the Lord assumed the human and defeated their "first" efforts to afflict Him? That attempt failed. The Lord defeated every effort of hell. He Glorified His Human as planned for the salvation of mankind.
- Does it mean that hell had one chance and will never get a second chance? When the Lord brings about the Last Judgment, He will "utterly" end the "devil's" efforts to conspire, or plot, against His internal. Thus, this prophetic statement announces to the faithful that the persecution of hell will be over.

## "Tangled like thorns..."

- The word tangled is not given a representation in the Writings. Roget's Thesaurus offers words like web, trap, snare, mesh, mixture, disorder, or difficulty as synonyms for tangled. The RSV uses the word "entangled." With these suggested words let's consider how they might fit in with thorns.
- The Writings teach that thorns represent "...the concupiscences of evil..." (AC 3310 [2]) "The falsities of concupiscences... [which are] confirmatory of the things of the world and its pleasures..." (AC 9144 [9])

- The point of the phrase "tangled like thorns" seems to be to expose the vast network of confirmations of falsity that evil uses, as a trap and a snare, to justify their pleasures. To the natural mind, the prickly thorns present a hurtful maze. To the Divine mind, they are discernible and therefore easily rendered harmless.

*"... and drunken like drunkards..."*

- *AR 721* seems to summarize this quote well. "Drunk signifies [to be] infatuated or insane in regard to spiritual things." *AC 1072* reminds us that "they are called drunkards in the Word who believe nothing but what they comprehend, and in this spirit inquire into the mysteries of faith, in consequence of which they must needs fall into many errors."

*"They shall be devoured like stubble fully dried...."*

- Two references in the *Arcana* offer us help with this portion of the prophecy. "Stubble, being the grain bearing stalk, denotes scientific truth." (*AC 7131*) "To be consumed as stubble denotes full vastation." (*AC 8285*)
- Note: "Scientific truth" is a term the Writings use to denote truth that appears in the light of the world and is used to confirm one's beliefs or human prudence. Scientifics are not good or bad until one sees the end they serve. In this passage, it is clear that scientific truths were misused. "Dry stubble" implies a lifeless and useless love that was extinguished and deprived of its "liquid" wholesomeness. It was not deprived by the Lord but by its own evil.

*"From you comes forth one who plots evil against the Lord, a wicked counselor."*

- With the word "counselor," we might find it useful to think of the words "advisor" and "guide" when using derived doctrine.
- To work toward the internal sense, we need to understand who the "you" is that comes forth to plot evil. Would we be safe to assume that "you" is a reference to a disorderly proprium? Some New Church translators have used the word "own" for proprium. What is "one's own" certainly connotes something that comes forth from everyone's "as-of-self" wish. A proprium that wants to follow its own way will resist the Lord's efforts to lift it to a higher "Proprium" that is from the Lord. It makes sense that the unregenerate proprium would plot and consider all kinds of insubordinate villainies in order to get its "own" way.

## **Putting It All Together**

1. The message to the faithful is positive and direct. The free reign of hell to flood and (inundate) overwhelm the minds of sincere people will be ended.

The rebel within the proprium will not be able to plot and take counsel against the Lord.

2. The Lord spoke directly to the offenders: The tangle of thorns will no longer trap and hurt our efforts to make progress with regeneration. The noisy, feisty spiritual drunkards will lose their fascination and stagger with an intoxicated mentality regarding the meaning of the Lord's Word. The Light of the Lord will expose the squalor and neglect in the shelter and hiding place of darkness. The tasteless and dry stubble will be taken away, and although there is no mention of what will replace it, we can be sure that it will be something that will nourish the soul. We have the promise of such care in these words: "You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing." (Psalm 145:16)

### **Read and Review**

Read Nahum 1:8-11.

Read the selection from *P&P*.

### **Questions to Stimulate Reflection**

1. The next time evil brags about its beauty, flexibility, and strength (or whatever foolishness it rants about), how might remembering these verses help you to put hell to flight? Can you think of specific situations in which these verses would be helpful?
2. Have you ever noticed the various ways drunkenness manifests itself with people? Some sit in the corner, weeping and whining about "poor me." Some are silly or giddy drunks. Everything strikes them funny. Some become obnoxiously loud and talkative. They are annoying and intrusive. The worst drunks are those who want to fight anyone they meet, who act as if they could conquer any and all. What are the differences between drunken people and people who are sober?
3. Hell's inebriated states are similar to these drunken states, aren't they? The hells intend to disarm us. They love to intimidate. They fill our minds with pouting references to how unfair things are. They love to brag about how much stronger they are than the Lord. They laugh off any serious topic and make light of eternal values. How do we cope with these "spiritual drunks"?
4. The proprium is a difficult foe to unseat or discipline. Have you had a recent battle with yours? Is it possible to put off our proprium so as to take on the Lord's Proprium? How?

5. Life has a great number of tangled thorns. Pruning thorns is not a simple task. A few years ago, my yard was filled with them. In the process of getting rid of them, I "got" as good as I "gave." I cut them; they cut and scratched my hands. They clung to my pants (front, back, and on the sides). If I didn't pull them off my clothes the right way, they snagged tighter. It took years of thorn cutting to rid my lot of their pervasive dominance. Does my experience with tangled thorns match an experience you had? How does this add to our lesson? What about that crown of tangled thorns they put on the Lord's head? Doesn't that "crown of thorns" seem powerfully representative of what the Lord came to fight and overcome?
  
6. Imagine a town where almost all of the people are insane. Insert a couple of sane people. What would the insane think of the sane? How would the sane ones face the town's "norms"? In a sense, this proposed scenario is like hell. Hell's madness tells us we are the weak and crazy ones. It says we fixate on sin and repentance, trying too hard to regenerate. Can we hear their mocking voices? "Lighten up! You are making yourself weak, sickly, uptight, and unhealthy." Then they present themselves as hale and hearty fellows who are able to adjust and change easily to life situations. What do you hear the angels saying in response to them?

## **NAHUM 1:12-14**

*"Thus says the Lord: Though they are safe, and likewise many, yet in this manner they will be cut down when he passes through. Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no more; for now I will break off his yoke from you, and burst your bonds apart.*

*The Lord has given a command concerning you: Your name shall be perpetuated no longer. Out of the house of your gods I will cut off the carved image and molded image. I will dig a grave, for you are vile."*

## **Passages From the Writings**

### ***P&P***

- "...but that those who are not of the above church, and are in falsities from ignorance, will be accepted, and their falsities removed, vers. 12-14."

## **Derived Doctrine**

*"Thus says the Lord..."*

- When we read in the Word that "Jehovah said" or the "Lord speaks," these "simple words" take on a huge and important meaning when the doctrines

are opened. *AC 2619* illustrates this fact with detailed information. We are taught that what really is being said is that the Lord perceives all things from His Divine Celestial (Divine Good) through His Divine Spiritual (Divine Wisdom). So when He speaks or says anything, it comes from His Celestial Love, a love that goes beyond the comprehension of celestial angels. When He speaks from His Wisdom, from a Divine Spiritual Understanding, He unfolds all paradoxes, all motives, all mysteries that humans and angels have caused or wrestled with for ages and ages. His Love and Wisdom are balanced and in perfect harmony. There are no gray areas. There is no "unfairness" in His judgment. He shows no "favorites." His pronouncements carry no misstatements or mistakes. There are no misrepresentations. Everything is clear as day to Him. Darkness can hide nothing from His eyes. Darkness is like the light of day to Him. Hidden motives are laid bare. Knowing this, the words "Thus says the Lord...." will capture our attention and obedience in a deeper way.

- Someone might remark, "Why doesn't the Lord say such things plainly? Why are things hidden in the spiritual sense? Why use terms like "Divine Celestial through the Divine Spiritual?" It may not be the perfect answer for these questions, but I tend to reflect on the teachings that say the Lord wants to protect us and our freedom and rationality. Only those willing to search for the truth of the spiritual sense will find answers. "Influx is directly proportional to efflux." (*AC 5828 [3]*) Only those willing to search for deeper truths will find and appreciate His answers, and will treasure and keep the inner meaning. The next time you read the words "Jehovah said" or "The Lord speaks," perhaps you will find yourself picturing a fuller meaning and application to life. Indeed, they are simple words but what powerful and rich truths lie in them, waiting to be found.

*"...though they are safe, and likewise many..."*

- So reads the *New King James Version* (NKJV). "Though they be strong and many..." is the way the *Revised Standard Version* (RSV) reads. Would you have imagined "safe and strong" as having the same root meaning? Both translations kept the "many" wording. Let's say it again: Safe... many, and strong... many. Do they mean the same thing?
- The entry for "safe" in *Pott's Concordance* refers the reader to "protect." Then "trust" is suggested, and "confidence" finally emerges as a word that seems to tie all three together. In *AC 2982*, we read: "...the very faith itself which saves is confidence; but this confidence is quite impossible except in the good of life. Without the good of life there is no reception, and where there is no reception there is no confidence, except at times a certain apparent confidence, in suffering conditions of mind or body, when the cupidities of the love of self and the world are at rest. But with those who are in evil of life, when this crises passes or the condition is changed, such fallacious confidence altogether vanishes; for a confidence is found even with the

wicked. But whoever desires to know the quality of his confidence, let him examine in himself the affections and ends, as well as the practices of his life."

- Strong, in *AE 504 [26]*, "...signifies what is hatched out from self-intelligence; he who trusts in himself and his own intelligence is often called 'strong' in the Word, for he regards himself and his work that he brings forth as strong..." So "strong and many" implies the belief that might (numbers) makes right. People who justify their deeds and thoughts by pointing out that a majority of other people support them have no standing with the Lord, especially if their ideas were hatched out of self-intelligence.

*"...yet in this manner they will be cut down..."*

- Let's look at how "cut" is used in the Word.
  - Cut or cutting is used in the spiritual sense to illustrate the shallowness of earning merit. The examples given in the Writings deal with cutters (mowers) of grass and hewers of wood. These "hewers" worked for praise. Another example given is the Lord's command not to put "hewn stones" in the construction of altars dedicated to worship Him. They were forbidden to chisel or shape the stones so as to not offer anything in worship that was artificially made or fashioned by their hands.
  - To cut off signifies "that divine truth shall be taken from...people, but shall live again in a new church." (*AE 315 [23]*) To cut off means "to protect and thus to remove..." (*AC 9316*)
  - To cut asunder represents the dissipation of falsity. (*AC 8184*)
  - To cut down represents "... that doctrinal things are to be utterly rejected." (*AC 10644*)
- It becomes clear that the Lord was telling those outside of the church that He was going to cut off, cut down, cut asunder, remove, dissipate, and reject all things within their religion that lacked connection with Him and the Word.

*"...when he passes through."*

- When it is said that the Lord passes through, it means that He will know and perceive the quality of good and that He will lead and teach them. See *AC 3992*.

*"Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no more..."*

- To use derived doctrine, we need to keep our mind focused on the summary from *P&P*. Those who are not of the Nineveh church, those who were not in it but are in falsities from ignorance, will be accepted and their falsity will be removed. Therefore, our theme draws us to look for, and anticipate, Divine help and hope.

- AC 1947 [6] seems to come close to shedding light on this passage. "...'affliction' denotes the mastering and subjugation of the evils and falsities that rise up from the external man into the rational.... 'afflictions' also denote temptation..."

*"...for now I will break off his yoke from you..."*

- AE 365 [27] teaches "...'the bonds of the yoke' [mean] the delights of evil from the love of self and the world, which keep them bound, and 'those who make them to serve' [mean] falsities, since these make them to serve those evils." The words "his yoke" seem to refer to the one who does the bonding. Note well that it could be easy to blame "his" as if it meant hell or the devil. But in reality, are we not the ones who bind ourselves when we choose to accept evils as sins?
- The Lord promises to burst the yoke apart. Here the spiritual sense seems clear and direct. The Lord promises to rip, rend, break, or burst apart the power or strength of evil and falsity. He offers a chance to make a new start, an opportunity to gain freedom from the servitude of ignorance. The ability to be a "self-starter" by understanding and applying New Church truths is the promise one must look forward to as this portion of our text is read.

*"The Lord has given a command concerning you..."*

- We have a passage in the Writings that seems to help us with this portion of the prophecy. In AC 783, we read "As God commanded...signifies that he had been prepared to receive...with the Lord, to 'command' is to prepare and do."

*"...your name shall be perpetuated no longer..."*

- The spiritual meaning of the word "name" signifies the essence or quality of a person's affections. AC 143-145 explain how the people of the Most Ancient Church knew the essences of others by their names. AC 1308 teaches that "name" may also signify something about those who seek a reputation for power. AC 145 explains what the Word means by "...they shall be called by a new name..." as signifying to become of another character. And lastly, let's consider this teaching in AE 724 [34] that explains the words of *Isaiah 14:22* "Cut off...the name and remnant..." as signifying that all truths, or falsities, from first to last will perish and will be swept away.

*"Out of the house of your gods, I will cut off the carved image and molded image..."*

- Could there be a spiritual reason the Lord used "out of the house..." instead of "out of the home...?" The word "house" seems impersonal. "Home" has a warmer and more affectional meaning. *Webster's Dictionary* says a home is "the abiding place of the affections."

- Let's see if there is some correspondential validity to this question. A house signifies accumulated memory knowledges. (AC 1488) In AC 3036, 3736, and 5253, a house represents that which is of the memory knowledges, with their seeming attractiveness. On the other hand, a home signifies the truths and goods by which people live. (AC 4651) The home or a habitation signifies the perpetual presence of the Lord. See AE 630 [9] or TCR 74 [3]. A house holds things that are of the memory. A home holds things that are of the affections in one's heart and life.

### *Images*

- Carved and molded images; graven or molten images; idols and figures signify the falsity of a person's selfhood (proprium) and its evil. See AC 215.

*"I will dig a grave, for you are vile."*

- That which is vile in the eyes of the Lord signifies everything of the church — its doctrines and goods, and truths — being profaned. (AE 827 [5]) Graves can signify spiritual death (AE 659 [7]), damnation by falsities (AC 8165), or hell, for those who are spiritually dead (AE 659 [9]). Whereas, digging has means to search for truths or to look for a way to open truths from good. (AE 918 [4])

### **Putting It All Together**

We had only one reference from the Writings to work with for these three verses. P&P provided us with the summary that told us the Lord will remove the falsities from those "outside" of the Nineveh church. Acceptance for those outside the church of Nineveh is mentioned in the summary. Rejection is directed to the harmful things learned from ignorance and unenlightenment. So as we look over the derived doctrine notes, the quote from P&P must direct our attempt to draw things to a summary.

1. The Lord will open to each person what is true and false. With clarity He will "speak"; He will "say"; He will separate out things that were taught incorrectly. Historical faith will be put aside. No longer will tradition, human prudence, or "hatched" ideas from self-intelligence persuade or determine what people value as standards. The Lord will "cut down" the empty and vain concepts of the proud and pompous doctrine makers.
2. Falsity always hurts the soul. What might have seemed like a "victimless" falsity will be shown for what is: an affliction, a yoke, a burden that needs to be broken by the Lord. From "first to last will be swept away." He will be our emancipator. When He does this, our name, our quality, will be freshened up. He will give each person a "new name."

3. From our "houses," memory knowledges will be cleared of the "idols" made by our hands or mind molds. What seemed attractive as a thought will be shown for what it really is — vile and worthy of being put in the grave. The Lord's digging within the mind and heart will bring the goods and truth necessary to bury falsity and profanation. The falsity of our proprium will be changed by the Lord. Our "homes" will house the affections of our hearts and will assist us in the application of doctrine to life.

## **Read and Review**

Read Nahum 1:12-14.

Read the selection from *P&P*.

## **Questions to Stimulate Reflection**

1. How do you feel about the large amount of derived doctrine we needed to help us understand these verses?
2. What is one essential point you drew from the summary of the internal sense of these three verses? Why do you think it is essential?
3. Can you contrast the views of those within the Nineveh church with the view of those outside of it? We must see this because the Lord said He would accept and help those outside of the church.
4. Were those inside the Nineveh church hopelessly lost in their spiritual insanity? Why or why not?
5. What do you think of the distinction we noted between "house" and "home"?
6. Do you believe there is such a thing as a "victimless" act? Some imagine that an act is quite harmless if consenting people are involved and no one gets "hurt." "What's the harm?" they ask. What kind of response would you offer to this philosophy? Can you think of real-life examples to support your response?
7. Can you give any examples that would illustrate the meaning of carved and molded images?
8. Review the teaching about putting vile things into their graves. Habits are not always seen as vile. If "the Lord speaks" of one of our pet habits as vile, do we try to defend its existence and importance or do we bury it as soon as possible?



## Chapter Two

### **NAHUM 1:15 AND NAHUM 2:1-3**

*"Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good tidings, Who proclaims peace! O Judah, keep your appointed feasts, perform your vows. For the wicked one shall no more pass through you; He is utterly cut off.*

*"He who scatters has come up before your face. Man the fort! Watch the road! Strengthen your flanks! Fortify your power mightily. For the Lord will restore the excellence of Jacob like in the excellence of Israel, for the emptiers have emptied them out and ruined their vine branches. 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."*

### **Passages From the Writings**

Please note that *P&P* treats Nahum 1:15 as the first verse of Chapter 2 because the verse and chapter were arranged this way in the "English Bible" used for that edition. We will follow this format since the summary statement in *P&P* includes Nahum 1:15 in its teachings about the Lord's advent and His protection of the church.

#### ***P&P***

- "Concerning the Lord's advent, and concerning a new church from Him, and the protection of that church by Him, vers. 1-4..."

#### ***AC 7093 [5]***

- "That there was to be gladness in the feasts, and thus that 'to hold a feast' is to worship from a glad mind, is plain...in Nahum i. 15."

#### ***Doctrine of Sacred Scriptures 51 [8]***

- "He who reads the Word without doctrine does not see the consistency of what is said in the Prophets about the Jewish nation and Jerusalem – that the church with that nation, and its seat in that city, will remain to eternity; as in the following passages...In these passages the Lord's advent is treated of, and that this [establishment of the Jews] will come to pass." Nahum 1:15 is cited among many other passages.

### **AR 336**

- "That by 'mountains' and 'hills' are signified heaven and the church, where there exists love to the Lord and love to the neighbor, and thus where the Lord is, is evident from the following passages..." Nahum 1:15 is cited.

### **AR 350**

- "...that by 'the tribe of Judah' is signified celestial love, which is love to the Lord; but because they were such as to the Word, and as to the Lord, therefore by 'the tribe of Judah' is also signified the opposite love, which is the love of self, properly the love of dominion from the love of self, which love is called diabolical love. That by 'Judah' and his tribe is signified the celestial kingdom and its love, which is love to the Lord, is evident from these passages..." Nahum 1:15 is cited.

### **AR 478**

- "In the Word of the Old Testament, which is called prophetic in the spiritual sense, and also where this sense shines forth...the Lord alone is treated of... His advent in the fullness of time...when there is no longer any good of charity and truth of faith in the church (this) state is called the consummation, devastation, desolation, and decision...which constitute the Last Judgment executed by Him; and afterwards of the creation of a new heaven, and the establishment of a new church...That 'to declare good tidings' (evangelize) signifies the Lord's coming, and His kingdom...is manifest from these passages..." Nahum 1:15 is cited.

### **AE 405 [8]**

- "In Nahum:- it is said 'behold upon the mountains the feet of him that publisheth peace,' ... to 'publish peace, signifies to preach the Lord's coming, for 'peace' in the highest sense signifies the Lord, and in the internal sense every good and truth that is from the Lord...and 'O Zion, that proclaimeth good tidings,' means the church that is in the good of love to the Lord...the church that is thence in truths of doctrine from the Word."

### **AE 433 [11]**

- "In Nahum:- ...His coming is meant by 'Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that proclaimeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!' 'to celebrate feasts' and to 'render vows' signify to rejoice in His coming and then to worship Him; 'Belial shall never more pass through Judah, he is utterly cut off,' signifies that evil shall be no more with them because they are in the Lord."

This could not be said of the Jewish nation, but may be said of those who are in love to the Lord; which makes clear that such are meant by 'Judah'."

### ***AE 612***

- AE 612 quotes Nahum 1:15 in conjunction with Isaiah 52: 7-8 but gives no significations. The topic covered though is "proclaiming the good news.

### ***Scripture Confirmations, pp. 48 and 62***

- The literal sense of Nahum 1:15 occurs twice in Scripture Confirmations on pages 48 & 62.

### ***AC 3021 [8]***

- "Concerning what was seen by Nebuchadnezzar we read in Daniel: 'The head of the statue was good gold; its breast and its arms were silver; its belly and thighs were brass; the feet were part iron and part clay...' ...From all these things it may be seen what is signified by the 'thighs' and the 'loins,' namely, in the chief place conjugal love, and from this all genuine love, as is evident from the passages quoted, and likewise from others..." Nahum 2:1 is cited among other references.

### ***AC 3300 [5]***

- "In Nahum..."The shield of the mighty men (of Belial) is made red, the valiant men are made crimson, in the fire of torches are the chariots in the day (ii.3) ...'red' in like manner ...signifies the evil which is of the love of self; and this because the cupidities of the love of self are compared to fire and are called 'fire'...and in like manner they are compared to blood and are called 'blood'..."

### ***AR 436***

- "By 'breastplates' are signified defenses, because they protect the breast; here, defenses of falsities, which are effected by arguments from fallacies, by which a false principle is defended. For from a false principle nothing but falsities can flow. If truths are advanced, they are only viewed outwardly or superficially, thus sensually, and are consequently falsified, and with such persons, become fallacies...'breastplates...of iron,' signifies that their arguments seemed to them so strong that they could not be refuted; for 'iron' from hardness, signifies what is strong." Nahum 2:3 is cited among several other references.

### **AR 305**

- "...the reason why 'red' (rufus) is predicated of good destroyed, is, because by red (rufus) an infernal red is meant, which is from infernal fire, which is the love of evil; the red which is an infernal red is hideous and abominable, there being nothing alive therein..." Nahum 2:3-4 is cited as an example of red signifying the evil of love.

### **AE 364 [7]**

- "As 'red' signifies the quality of a thing in relation to good, so in a contrary sense it signifies the quality of a thing in relation to evil, which is the opposite to good, consequently good destroyed. In this sense 'red' is mentioned in the following passages..." Nahum 2:3-4 is cited.

### **AC 7093 [5]**

- "That there was to be gladness in the feasts, and thus that 'to hold a feast' is to worship from a glad mind, is plain ...in Nahum i. 15."

### **Doctrine of Sacred Scriptures 51 [8]**

- "He who reads the Word without doctrine does not see the consistency of what is said in the Prophets about the Jewish nation and Jerusalem – that the church with that nation, and its seat in that city, will remain to eternity; as in the following passages; ... In these passages the Lord's advent is treated of, and that this [establishment of the Jews] will come to pass." Nahum 1:15 is cited among many other passages.

### **Derived Doctrine**

*"Upon the mountains the feet..."*

- The feet of the Lord, in the above quotes, were not covered directly. We need the assistance of derived doctrine. We are taught that the feet represent the lowest part of the natural mind, the corporeal life of the senses. (AC 5328) But this is not the case with the feet of the Lord. His feet represent the Divine power in ultimates brought down to the human race in His Divine Human. (AC 3761) In one reference, the Lord's right foot was seen on the sea and the left was seen on the land. AE 600 teaches that this signifies His watchful care of the external and internal church. One last reference might help us see the signification of the Lord's feet. In AR 468, we are taught that the Lord's Divine Natural, the lowest of divine order, as to love, wants to sustain all things and publish good tidings.

*"The wicked one shall no more pass through you..."*

- We are not told who the wicked one is. We can surmise that hell, the devil, and Satan would fit that designation. But doing so might allow us to "scapegoat" these representations. Instead, let's look at the qualities of wickedness:
  - Wickedness has no will (love) for good. (AC 584)
  - Wickedness wants to extend knowledges for external uses only. (AC 1600)
  - Wickedness infests a person with malice and malignity. (AC 7590)
  - Wickedness involves a recession from good to evil. (AE 710 [17])

*"Shall not pass..."*

- To pass signifies to flow in. Evil, the wicked one, shall not pass through. See AC 3992 for a fuller explanation of the positive and negative representations of passing. In essence, this is a Divine promise to end the wicked one's walking through our lives.

*"...utterly cut off..."*

- The word "utterly" carries with it the meaning of totally, completely, entirely. Again, this is a promise that the wicked one will be vanquished.

*"He who scatters has come up before your face..."*

- Who is the one who scatters and comes up before our face? It would appear that the best way to answer this is to first look at the meaning of "face." Here are some of the representations of our faces:
  - The face corresponds to the mind. (AC 4791 and 4805)
  - The face corresponds to affections. (AE 280)
  - The face when predicated of the Lord signifies mercy, peace, and good. (AC 222, 223 and 2434)
  - The face represents spiritual and celestial things existing interiorly within us. (AC 5571)
- "Scattering" has some very interesting representations:
  - To vanish (and not to be received or acknowledged). (AC 1309)
  - To spread falsities from evil. (AE 67)
  - To scatter falsities from infernal enjoyment mingled with truths. (AC 10464)
  - The dissemination of falsities by those who are not in truths. (TCR 137)

*"Man the fort..."*

- The word "man" means defend, protect, guard, shield, preserve or shelter. What things must we protect? Let's look for clues in the meaning of "fort":
  - A fortress signifies the defense that divine good gives by divine truth. (AE 316 [10])
  - A fortress signifies defense against falsities and evils from the literal sense of the Word. (AE 727 [4])
  - Forts are confirmations from the Word. (AE 388)

*"Watch the road..."*

- Let's look at the meaning of "watch" or "watchfulness":
  - Watchfulness signifies the study of life according to the precepts of faith. (AC 4638 [10])
  - Watch (wake up) signifies to know truths and to live by them. "But he who is not in truths, but only in worship, is like one who sleeps and dreams..." (AR 158)
- What representations are there in the word "road"? Since the word "road" is not specifically used in the Writings, we must find some help by using the words "highway" or "pathway":
  - A highway signifies the affection for truth that leads to a life of good will. See AE 219.
  - A highway signifies disposing into order. (AC 842)
  - A path signifies precepts of life. (AE 734)

*"Strengthen your flanks..."*

- The flank means the side wing of an army. It also means to "pass around." A flank also means the location between the ribs and the hip. It is noteworthy to recall where the Lord was wounded while on the cross. They pierced or stabbed His side. That act signified an attempt to completely extinguish all the truth and good of the Word. (DLW 16 [6])
- We might pay heed to the possible meaning that we should learn and know (strengthen) our understanding of the spiritual sense of the Word to avoid being "blind sided" with the misuse of the literal sense of the Word. If Hell sought to do this with the Lord, why not with us too?

*"Fortify your power mightily..."*

- The word "fortify" means to uphold, sustain, barricade, get evidence, facts, premises, data, corroboration, ratification, confirmation. How are we to fortify ourselves? Mightily and with power. One can hear a Divine call to doctrinal study that has some life and vitality to it.

*"...the Lord will restore the excellence of Jacob like the excellence of Israel..."*

- Please note the following things: the Divine Natural of the Lord and the Internal Natural, or the Celestial Spiritual of the Natural. Jacob's restoration to excellence represents understanding what is meant by the Lord's Divine Natural coming through to the church. This understanding is followed by the restoration and excellence of the church from this knowledge of the deeper Internal Natural of the Divine Human. For help with the Jacob representation, go to AC 4603, 4641 and 4569. For help with Israel's representation, go to AC 4570 and AE 768 [15].

*"Emptiers have emptied them out..."*

- Does this mean "emptiers" have emptied out Jacob and Israel? If so, who are the "emptiers"? It would appear that anything that contributes to the separation of good and truth is an emptier. (AC 3095) We also know that when truth is not present, good cannot be present. (AC 4744) AE 697 [3] reminds us that a church is laid to waste when its doctrinal truths are desolated as to faith.

*"...ruined their vine branches."*

- To lay waste a vineyard means the loss of the good and truth of the church through various lusts. (AC 9139) A restored vineyard signifies restitution from the unimpaired truths of the church. (AC 9142) Branches signify the power of truth from good. A branch is like the arms of a man. (AC 9555 and 9558)

*Belial*

- Please note in AC 3300 [5] where the Writings quote *Nahum 2:3*, the quote says, "The shield of the mighty men (of Belial)..." The NKJV and the RSV do not use this term in the text. However, footnotes mention that the word "wicked" was later transliterated from the word "Belial."
- In *Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, we read this explanation of the word "Belial": "This should not be regarded as a proper name. It is generally associated with the words 'man,' 'son,' 'daughter,' or 'children.' Hence 'son' or 'man' of Belial simply means 'a worthless person.'"

*"...the chariots come with flaming torches..."*

- Chariots (used in the negative sense) represent doctrine of evil and falsity, and outward knowledges confirming them. (AC 5321 [10]) In the positive sense, chariots signify doctrines that teach the way of salvation. (AE 355 [4])

- Torches signify, in the negative sense, the consuming of desire and separation of those who are in the church from the Lord. AC 1861 [2].

*"And the spears are brandished."*

- Spears in a positive sense represent truths that have been adapted to spiritual warfare. (AR 299) Spears signify truths of use in spiritual warfare, which with regeneration become preparatory to the reception of truths from good. (AC 1664 [3] and 5895)
- Brandishing means to shake or wave, usually menacingly. Does this definition change the meaning or application of "spear" and bring it into a negative spiritual meaning or act?

## Read and Review

Read Nahum 1:15 and Nahum 2:1-3.

Read the selection from *P&P*.

## Putting It All Together

1. As always, let's begin our overall summary with a look at *P&P*. This portion of our study is concerned with the Lord's advent. It is about the new church that is to come from Him. It is about the protection of that church by Him.
2. We are given a view of the things that will be overcome. We see the nature of their resistance. For instance, how powerful an illustration is given regarding those who had breastplates of iron. They were so proud of their false principles. They thought they were invincible. Their love was turned from a life-giving red to a dead, hideous, and abominable color. "Lifeless" and "useless" are words that come to mind. Our text gives us a picture of them "strutting" proudly, feeling immune to Divine accountability. They shall be "utterly cut off." Belial, "the worthless person," will end in a scattered and useless array, their chariots flashing with flames.  
But in spite of all the negative things that opposed the Lord, listen to the stirring words of restoration promised in Nahum and Isaiah 52:7: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation..."
3. How about these challenges that are given to the new church? "Man the fort." "Watch the road." "Strengthen your flanks." "Fortify your power mightily." Such words are so necessary for a church to grow and remain vibrant. If we don't do these things, we will be blind sided. The enemy will get up in our face and endeavor to shake our mind, our affections, and our practical usage of the Word in life situations.

4. The Lord makes a statement here that has powerful ramifications. Evil, the wicked one, the scatterer, will not endure. His Divine Human will come and be among all the people of His New Church. This is a theme of joy. It is a message of good news. It is a theme we need to keep before the church as we labor in the vineyard and let the Lord protect the branches or extension of the church.

### **Questions to Stimulate Reflection**

1. To digest the passages and derived doctrine gathered in this section will require a slow reading and reflection on the facts. Isn't it wonderful that we have so much to draw from out of the Writings? Would you have imagined there was this much to be found regarding the book of Nahum? How much more than we expect might we find in the Writings about other works in the Word?
2. Which of the Lord's rallying cries do you respond to most? Do you favor one or all? What about the series of commands that must be present in their order? Do you think they were given in this order for a purpose? What might it be?
3. Are there any portions of this text that you feel were left out? If so, could you work out your own research notes for them? How would you go about getting or using resources if you lack them at home? Do you know where to borrow or buy them?
4. The brandishing of spears...Does that remind you of any situations where you have seen truth misused? Are half-truths ever used to intimidate an opponent? Can doctrinal quotes be used as weapons instead of pointing the way to salvation? Have you ever misused a doctrinal "spear"?
5. Can you identify anything in the daily news or your work experience that seems equivalent to the chariots and flaming torches we discussed earlier? Our next unit continues with the correspondences of chariots raging in the streets. If you elected to not follow this question this time, it will come about again. Isn't it interesting how the Word brings issues back for us to consider again and again? Why would the Lord do that?

### **NAHUM 2: 4-7**

*"The chariots rage in the streets, they jostle one another in the broad roads; they seem like torches, they run like lightning. He remembers his nobles; they stumble in their walk; they make haste to her walls, and the defense is prepared. The gates of the rivers are opened, and the palace is dissolved. 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."*

## **Passages From the Writings**

### ***P&P***

- "...that at the day of judgment those who have destroyed the church will perish, and will be cast into hell with a violent commotion, vers. 4-7."

### ***AC 2336 [6]***

- "In Nahum... (ii.4) the 'chariots' denote the doctrine of truth, which is said to 'rave in the streets,' when falsity is in the place of truth."

### ***AR 501***

- "'By streets,' in the Word, almost the same is signified as by 'ways,' because streets are ways in a city; but still by 'streets' are signified the truths or falsities of doctrine, because 'a city' signifies doctrine...and by 'ways' are signified the truths or falsities of the church...That 'streets' signify truths or falsities...see the following passages..." Nahum 2:4 is cited.

### ***AE 652 [5]***

- "In Nahum (ii. 4)... 'chariots' signify the doctrinals of truth, and 'streets' and 'open places' what is in accord with each one's affection and perception, as above, it is said 'the chariots raged in the streets, they ran to and fro in the open places,' 'to rage' signifying to call falsities truths, and 'to run to and fro' signifying to wander off."

## **Derived Doctrine**

*"Jostle one another in the broad roads..."*

- The word "jostle" means to push, bump, elbow, or collide with. In *AC 9081*, we read that to push in the good sense means to destroy falsity by the power of truth, or it can signify the opposite sense of destroying truths with falsity.
- Look just above at the quote from *AE 652 [5]*. Note that instead of using the words 'broad road,' the Writings use "open places." The RSV says they rushed "to and fro through the square." Once again, we need to let the internal sense lead the way as we choose which word to use. Once we understand the spiritual meaning, each translated word can be examined to see which helps to communicate the larger truth.

*"...they seem like torches and run like lightning..."*

- We discussed torches in the previous verses, but let's review the meaning again. In the negative sense, a torch represents the "burning of cupidities," the desires of selfhood out of control. What is sad is that they pictured themselves as fast as lightning. They perceived themselves alive and vital. We would probably call these people "fast movers" today. *AR 396* shares with us this description of lightning. It is likened to a person who lives by faith alone with no influx; they reason and have ready-made answers that favor or give justification to their arguments.

*"He remembers his nobles..."*

- We must begin this derived doctrinal search with a question. Who is the "he"? Is it the Lord? Is the "he" representative of something within the Nineveh Church? Is the "he" representative of the understanding within the church? If the text had used "she," we would have had our attention called to the affectional things of the church.
- Ultimately, everything represents the Lord, but in this case, I think we should focus on the "he" as being descriptive of the church and the understanding it had formed. Remember, the previous verse portrayed the understanding of the church and its chariots jostling one another as they darted to and fro destroying truths with falsities. They perceived themselves as bright, articulate, and ever so quick with their ability to use the rational mind. So in this verse, it would appear that the Lord was giving them, and us, a view of what "he" was really like. *AE 574* says that a "noble" signifies false principals. According to *AC 5430 and 8885*, to remember signifies foresight as to what was to occur, or as to what is perpetual in the thought. Keeping this in mind, let's look at the description of how "he" and his nobles acted in their moment of Divine remembrance and His assessment of Nineveh's spiritual motives.

*"They [the nobles or officers] stumble in their walk..."*

- In *Isaiah 8:15*, we read, "Many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken." *AC 9163* explains the meaning of this passage and gives us this insight: "...'to stumble' denotes to be induced to commit evil, and thus to fall from truths into falsities; 'to fall and be broken' denotes to be dispersed..."
- Please note the words "the nobles or officers" in brackets in above. The RSV uses "officers" instead of "nobles." So let's look at the correspondence of "officer." Officers represent "those who infest, instill evils and falsities and compel servitude." (*AC 7111*)
- Consider next, the positive meaning of walking:
  - Walking represents living according to the doctrines or truth of faith. (*AC 519*)
  - Walking represents meditating on doctrine. (*AR 137*)

- Walking represents to live by the enlightenment of the Lord. (AR 75)
- AE 687 explains the internal sense of *Psalm 1* and the words WALK, STAND and SIT.
- The nobles stumbled in their walk. Therefore, we see from these quotes the possibility that they were not living according to doctrine or meditating on doctrine. Therefore, the Lord could not enlighten them. They walked in the way of the ungodly and the path of sinners.

*"They make haste to her walls..."*

- Notice the use of the word "her." Can we assume that the church and its affections are about to be examined and exposed by the Lord? Let's refrain from answering this question until we look at some quotes from the Writings. In AC 5284, we find this regarding "haste": "In the internal sense, 'to hasten' or 'haste' does not mean quickly, but certainly, and also fully, thus in every event; for haste implies time, and in the spiritual world there is no time, but instead of time state; thus haste in time has reference there to such a condition of state...that there are many things acting together toward the result, and thus insuring a certain and full event."
- Walls, we are taught in AR 898, signify "the Word in the sense of the letter from which is the doctrine of the New Church...by its 'wall' (nothing else is meant) but the Word in the sense of the letter, from which the doctrine is; for that sense protects the spiritual sense, which lies hidden within, as the wall does a city and its inhabitants...the sense of the letter is the basis, the containant, and the support of its spiritual sense..."

*"The defense is prepared..."*

- Can't we see plainly what is being taught here? The nobles or officers, stumbling in their walk, were shown by the Lord that they are not living according to His Word. Their meditation focused on self-worship and not spiritual worship. They "jostled" one another with false arguments. In an attempt to prove the worth of their "doctrines," they turned, or returned, to the walls of the literal sense to find support for their suppositions. They believed the "walls" would vindicate or justify their position. "**The defense is prepared...**" But will the closing summation of their defense hold up when the true state, the full events, are presented by the Lord?

*"The gates of the rivers are opened..."*

- Gates have the following representations:
  - The passage of knowledges into the rational mind. (AC 2943)
  - The gates of a city signify doctrine which serves as an entrance into the church. (AC 2943)

- Gates signify introductory knowledges of what is good and true from the literal sense. (AR 899, 901, 904)
- There are with every person two gates. One leads to hell and one leads to heaven. (AC 2851)
- And lastly, we need to recall the two gates of Baptism and Holy Supper.
- Rivers signify truths that are in abundance to serve the rational, consequently the understanding, for the purpose of doctrine and life. (AR 683) Rivers, or floods, signify temptations. (AR 409) Rivers signify trials, difficulties, and falsity. (AR 790)
- To "open" signifies to communicate and to conjoin. (AE 537)

*"...and the palace is dissolved..."*

- The NKJV uses the word "dissolved," and the RSV uses the word "dismay." A thesaurus offers these synonyms for the word dissolve: destroy, liquefy, break up, end, melt, vanish, evaporate, fade, and disintegrate. Whereas dismay carries these synonyms: consternation, terror, or discouragement. Which word is more suited for the internal sense? I checked the word "melt" in the concordance. Here are three passages to consider:
  - Melt signifies "that those who had formerly been of the church vanished because they adulterated goods and falsified truths." (AC 8317)
  - Melt "signifies that their capacity for receiving heavenly good vanished with their increasing strong desire for external satisfactions." (AC 8487)
  - Melting "signifies that their ability to receive the goods and truths of heaven and the church was in vain." (AE 721 [24])
- A "palace," in the positive sense, represents something quite beautiful, dignified, and regal. In the opposite sense, a palace is ugly, self-serving, and a hovel. Let's look first at the positive. A "palace signifies the understanding in which truths are in a beautiful form... from (the) affection for truth." (AE 724)"Palace signifies the whole church as to its truths from good." (AE 410)
- Using the derived doctrinal quotes, can we come to any conclusions regarding the meaning of their palaces dissolving or melting? Their understanding was in complete disarray. Their understanding was dismal. They were "melting" or "vanishing" as a church. When the gates of the rivers opened, their prepared defense could not stand nor support their life of religion. Their "palace" was exposed as a façade. Its pretentiousness dissolved or melted away.

*"It is decreed: she shall be led away captive..."*

- A decree is an order (edict) from a king or powerful ruler. The announcement must be heard and carried out by all who are subject to the king or governor. The uses of the Lord decreed that He would come and face every disorder of

the hells. It was decreed that He would reorder the heavens and the hells. There is a quote in *AC 10248* worth considering regarding a decree or ordinance, which means or "signifies an eternal law of order."

- The words "she shall be led away captive" carry sadness in them. If "she" had listened to the decree of the Lord, the affections ("she") would have been led and illuminated by truths. (*AE 386 [27]*) "She" would have been led "to confirm goods and truths of faith..." (*AC 8098*) Ignoring the Lord leads her to captivity. Captivity signifies a mind in darkness about what is good and true. (*AC 7950*) Captivity signifies evils that possess. (*AE 175 [12]*) Lastly, those who capture others and bar them from truth and good will themselves become captive to falsities. (*AE 811 [27]*)

*"She shall be brought up..."*

- In our language, when someone is stopped in their tracks, we say they were "brought up short." The implication is that they were exposed, stopped in their tracks, and prevented from doing anything else that would hurt or interfere with the freedom of others. It appears that this meaning comes close to what is being taught here.

*"And her maidservants shall lead her as with the voice of doves..."*

- Let's look at the various meanings of maidservants. Maidservants signify in general the pleasures of external knowledges, which serve the internal man. (*AC 1486*) A slave girl signifies the affection of knowledges in the external man serving intellectual truth. (*AC 1895*)

*"With the voice..."*

- What a fascinating series of possibilities we get with this correspondence. Voice signifies dictate, the doctrine of faith, and also the conscience. (*AC 219*) Voice signifies violence inflicted upon charity. A voice may signify anything that accuses. (*AC 374*) Voice is applied to any incident of noise, tumult, or disturbance, and also to anything especially happy and signifies announcement of the Lord's Advent. (*AC 220 and 375*)

*"...the voice of doves..."*

- Doves signify the truths and goods of faith with one who is to be regenerated. (*AC 870*) Doves signify that whatever good a person does of themselves returns to them, because it relates to their selfhood. (*AC 876*) Doves represent affections for ideas, and for thinking from ideas; doves represent affections for the heavenly ideas that agree with innocent love to the Lord and conjugal love. (*AE 282 and AC 10132*)

*"They beat their breasts."*

- To beat signifies injuries inflicted by falsities. (AC 7146) To beat signifies disposal of truths in their order and series. (AC 10303 [2]) Beating signifies grief due to the loss of good and truth. (AC 6432 [6]) Striking signifies alienated knowledge seeking to destroy the truth of the church. (AC 6758)
- Note: When we look for the meaning of breasts, we need to also consider the words "bosom" and "paps." "Paps and breasts signify love, and in the eminent sense the divine love." (AR 46) The bosom or breast signifies spiritual love, which is love in act. (AE 821)

### **Putting It All Together**

1. Where do we begin with our summation? The Word calls our attention to the following series of correspondences:
  - Chariots are seen raging in the broad streets.
  - Chariots are pushing, shoving, jostling one another. Intimidation reigns among them.
  - Flashing torches are seen and people running as fast as lightning.
  - The nobles stumble in their walk.
  - With a sense of urgency and need for protection, they run to the walls and prepare their defense.
  - Rivers open up and overflow and dissolve their palaces.
  - A decree is heard that she, the church, will be carried away captive.
  - She will be brought up and held accountable for her errors.
  - Maidservants (external knowledges) try to lead her on but to no avail.
  - With futility and hopelessness, they beat their breasts because the pain of reality exposes the falsity or emptiness of their life.
2. With this series of correspondences, the Word shares with us a picture of what happens to a church, or individual, when they allow themselves to be carried away with pride in external knowledge. They fall in love with their own voice. They put their ideas ahead of the Lord's Word. Instead of sharing the good news of the Lord, they force their own priorities on others. In the end, they do violence to truth. A self-serving church tries to point to truths (walls) of the Word that seem to justify their position, but the Lord quickly exposes the fallacy of their thinking and ways. The palaces melt, dissolve, crumble as the Lord's truth exposes what "IS" from what "is not." Those things that had ministered as maidservants, with voices that sounded like doves, can no longer help them.
3. The closing line of the text sums up the results of a life separated from the Lord. They will beat their chest to illustrate the emptiness and frustration of self-love. If they had served the Lord, they could have beaten their breasts to signify a love of divine things and a love of the Lord in act. Instead, they beat their breast to illustrate the empty hollowness of self-love.

## Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Chariots raging in the streets represent the turning of truth into falsity. Do any current events fit into this passage? As you reflect on this, think of doctrine as the chariots raging.
2. Pushing, shoving, and jostling sounds like the work of bullies. The Writings often illustrate the sensual person as such a bully. Sensual people like to tell spiritual people that they have hang-ups. They make a false observation that spiritual people are sickly and preoccupied with sin and evil, whereas they see themselves as alive, flexible, and ever so adaptable. They like to intimidate and ridicule the spiritual person. Have you experienced the bullying tactics of hell?
3. The text tells us about those who go to the wall to defend themselves. The wall in this case is the literal sense. Have you ever experienced someone using the literal sense as a defense to excuse some evil? Why is this dangerous?
4. The beating of one's breast expresses a positive and negative meaning. Can you give examples from life of each type of "beating"?
5. What kind of feelings did you have while reading this section? Is the theme repetitive? Were you wondering what this has to do with your life? Were you able to put the message in the context of today's issues? If you aren't sure how to answer these questions, try again. Make sure you don't pass on to the next section without some effort to make this one personal.

## NAHUM 2:8-11

*"Though Nineveh of old was like a pool of water, now they flee away. 'Halt! Halt!' they cry; but no one turns back. Take spoil of silver! Take spoil of gold! There is no end of treasure, or wealth of every desirable prize. She 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. Where is the dwelling of the lion's, and the feeding place of the young lions, where the lion walked, the lioness and lion's cub, and no one made them afraid."*

## Passages From the Writings

### *P&P*

- "...that all things of the church will be taken away from them, vers. 8-11..."

### *AR 241*

- "That a lion signifies truth in its power...may be evident from the power of the lion above every animal of the earth; as also from the lions in the spiritual world, that they are representative images of the power of the Divine truth;

and also from the Word, where they signify the Divine truth in its power... It is hence that Jehovah or the Lord is compared to a lion, and is also called a lion; as in the following passages..." Nahum 2:11 is cited as one of the many examples in the Word.

#### ***AE 278 [4]***

- "In Nahum 2:11...'lions' signify those who are in power through Divine truth; 'their abode' signifies where there are such in the church; their 'feeding place' signifies the knowledges of truth and good; their 'walking and none making them afraid' signifies their state of security from evils and falsities."

#### **Derived Doctrine**

*"Though Nineveh of old was like a pool of water..."*

- The "Nineveh of old" is an interesting and important place to being our derived doctrine section. In *Doctrine of Sacred Scriptures 102*, we have this quote: "The ancients with whom the [Ancient Word] is still in use in heaven were in part from the land of Canaan and from the kingdoms on its borders; as from Syria, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Chaldea, Assyria, Egypt, and from Zidon, Tyre, and **Nineveh**; the inhabitants of all of these kingdoms were in representative worship and hence in the knowledge of correspondences." (*emphasis added*)

*"...like a pool of water..."*

- As we might expect, there is a positive and negative meaning for the phrase "pool of water." *AC 7324* illustrates this for us. In the spiritual sense of the Word, a pool signifies "intelligence from the knowledge of good and truth." Pools of water in the opposite sense signify evils from falsities. It appears reasonable to assume that we will be shown that the root or cause of Nineveh's destruction resulted from their loss of the "pool of water." We need to feel a degree of sadness for what is about to happen to Nineveh. They had the representative wonders of the Ancient Word and gradually but purposely falsified the correspondences or holy truths of the Ancient Word. Why would they choose to do such a foolish thing? What would cause them to turn their back to the Lord's Word?

*"Now they flee away..."*

- The *RSV* has this verse translated as follows: "Nineveh is like a pool whose waters run away." Our mind would do well to focus on the meaning of the water running away. The Ninevites were not running away to find relief from unpleasant circumstances, nor were they trying to elude the pursuit of an

enemy. They were fleeing so they could escape, or be "away" from, the Lord's presence. They lost the water of truth they had drunk many years earlier from the Ancient Word.

*"Halt! Halt! They cry; but no one turns back."*

- Please note the two "halts." In the positive sense, two represents conjunction. Again in the positive sense, two represents the conjunction of the will and understanding. In another sense, the conjunction desired by the Lord is that of our external life reflecting our internal life. Nineveh, representing a church unraveling and in a state of disjunction, was losing sight of the truth. The water, or pool of water, was running off. They were "losing it." So the voice of the Lord cried out "Halt! Halt!" to get their attention. The will and the understanding must pay attention and return to their uses if spiritual things are to survive.
- "But no one turns back." They had ears to hear, but they did not hear. The desire of their heart wanted to be free from the inner voice of the Lord, so they refused to heed the call for repentance. They chose to not turn back.

*"Take spoil of silver! Take spoil of gold!"*

- The *RSV* translation offers this wording: "Plunder the silver, plunder the gold!" We need to ask who is to take or plunder the silver and gold? Why is the order given to take the silver first and the gold lastly? It appears that the Lord is the one taking the silver and gold, but in reality, falsity is the plunderer. The Lord never wishes to take or withhold what is good for us. The Word reminds us that it is our "Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom." (*Luke 12:32*) Hell wants to plunder or spoil that offer.
- As to our second question, silver represents truth and gold represents love. *TCR 67* teaches us that: "love and wisdom without use are only fleeting things...separate from use the two (love and wisdom) are like birds flying over a great ocean, that at length, wearied with flying, fall down and are drowned." So it is when love has no truth to conjoin itself to and when there is no use to serve, they lose their conjugal union and the plundering of silver and gold is sure to take place.

*"There is no end of treasure, or wealth of every desirable prize."*

- *AC 10406* and *AE 840* teach us that treasure signifies the knowledges of truth and good. So in effect, the Lord reminded them what they gave up when they turned their back on the Ancient Word. They had within their reach every precious teaching, every desirable prize their soul could have wanted. Wealth, in the spiritual sense, "consists in matters of knowledge," and wealth consists in "what is known." (*AC 4508*)

*"She is empty, desolate, and waste!"*

- "She" represents the will and the church.
- "Empty" signifies where there is nothing true, because there is nothing of good with it. See AC 4744.
- "Desolate" signifies being without visible truth. See AC 6141.
- "Waste" signifies evils and falsities spoiling or destroying the good and truth of the church. See AE 374 [5].

*"The heart melts, and the knees shake..."*

- The heart signifies the affection of a person's will. See AE 622 [5].
- "Melting" signifies the diminishing of one's capacity to receive heavenly good as a strong desire grows to find external satisfaction. See AC 8487.
- Shaking or trembling is predicated of a church when falsities are believed and are called truths. See AE 400 [7].
- "Knees" in a positive sense represent the conjunction of the truth of faith with the good of love. In the negative sense, they represent the disunion, the disturbance of the mind of the church because of its evils. See AE 677 [7].

*"Much pain is in every side, and all their faces are drained of color."*

- "Sore," or pain, signifies the extreme desolation one feels from the lack of spiritual things. See AC 5576. It also represents people feeling that the Lord's power seems extreme against them when He exposes their states of self-love and the evils and falsities they imbued. See AC 4993.
- "Pain in (on) every side" seems to be a necessary part of this section of correspondences. The Lord is everywhere. His judgment on the falsity of a church is complete. He sees every side and facet of the desolation.
- The face represents the spiritual and celestial things existing within a person. The Lord sees spiritual faces and not what is shown to others externally. See AC 5571.
- All faces are drained; all faces grow pale! Paleness signifies the absence and deprivation of spiritual life. See AR 320. AE 381 [3 and 4] is an excellent reference on the meaning of turning pale.

*"Where is the dwelling of the lions..." " ...the feeding place of the young lions..." " ... where the lions walked..." " ...the lioness and lion's cub..." " ...and no one made them afraid?"*

[Note: First, review the portions of this verse explained in the **Passages From the Writings**. Next, let's look at some of the correspondences not explained so we can allow the Lord to infill and enlarge our understanding through the use of derived doctrine.]

- "Dwelling" represents the presence of love, the presence of the internal things of worship and to live spiritually. (*AC 1102 and AC 1293*) The dwelling of lions in the positive sense represents living the life of good and truth with power. (*AC 6367 and 6369*)
- "Feeding place" represents sustaining or providing for the increase of the church. See *AR 547*.
- To walk with the Lion (the Lord) is to teach and live according to the doctrine of faith. *AC 519* has much more to share about walking.
- A cub or whelp signifies the beginning of the reception of truth in the form of affirmation and acknowledgment. (*AC 3923 [3]*) A whelp signifies innocence with power. (*AC 6367*)
- No one made them afraid? The church or individual who walks with the Lord, the church or individual who lives the life of good and truth with power — do they have anyone to fear? Being in the stream of Providence gives a security that is wonderful and comforting.

Is this what is being said here? I suspect that we need to look at the opposite meaning of the above. The church of Nineveh imagined their power and success was due to their physical might. After all, they had the strongest army and the shrewdest leaders in the world. They were the nation others feared most. No one made them afraid. Not even the Lord?

The Word often uses "contrasts" to teach us truth. The contrasts in this section have been made clear. To Nineveh, the Lord is saying this is what could have been yours. Look at what you chose. For us, these contrasts can help us choose wisely while we dwell, feed, have cubs, and walk with the "Lion of heaven."

### **Putting It All Together**

1. I feel as though our summary has been made easier for us through the efforts we just made "surfing" through our derived doctrine sources. The Nineveh of old, our remains, are full of spiritual potential. The innocence of our remains is wonderfully guarded and protected by the Lord. He alone knows where they are stored, and He adds to them throughout our life. We need to be vigilant and cooperate with the Lord in matters of our spiritual growth. It is prudent to check periodically to see if our efforts are to follow the Lord. Do we choose to dwell with Him? Will we feed on His truth? Will we walk the path that leads to heaven? Are the spiritual births (whelps) in our life in the form of affirmation and acknowledgment of the Lord's truth and providence?
2. Nineveh chose to turn and lose the water of life. Nineveh chose to ignore the calls to halt. They allowed the silver and gold of their church to be plundered. With these choices, their faces lost the glow of happiness. Their faces were cast over with a look of pale death. Their capacity to receive heavenly benefits diminished, and they were empty of the infinite and eternal things the Lord wanted to share with them.

3. As often happens when the Lord works on the separation of evil and falsity, the "soreness" caused by the Lord's light is used by hell to claim He is unfair. They launch one last effort to fix blame on the Lord and divert responsibility from themselves. "My pain and soreness," they claim, "is a result of the Lord's severe, stern, and over-used Divine power." For those who want and seek the light of heaven, is there any pain? Is there any reason to fear the light? In the place of pain and pale faces, there is heartiness and newness that is healthy. When we invite the Lord in to sit and sup with us, He will come in. He will offer us a cup of His living water. Do we recall His words: "but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." (John 4:14)

### Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Why do you think Nineveh chose to turn from the Ancient Word? Was it due to boredom? Did they take the Word for granted and place a lower value on it? Did the neglect come about slowly or rapidly?
2. This section has some very picturesque ways to describe the fall of Nineveh. Think of the pool of water leaving Nineveh, the words "Halt! Halt!," the people choosing not to turn back, the pale face. Which of these do you find easy to recall when thinking about or summarizing the quote from P&P "all things of the church will be taken away from them..."?
3. What are some contrasts the Lord shows us in this section between positive and negative things? We need to see the errors of Nineveh, but we also need to see the great message to the church that remains in the order of the Lord. Too many readers of the Word focus on the negative and fail to see or focus on the positive. Can you do both when you read? When you seek to apply what you read to life? How?

### NAHUM 2:12-14

*"The lion tore in pieces enough for his cubs, killed for his lionesses, filled his caves with prey, and his dens with flesh. '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.'"*

### Passages From the Writings

#### *P&P*

- "...they will no longer destroy the church and its holy things, vers. 12-14."

### **AC 6367 [8]**

- "...in Nahum 2:11-13 ...a 'lion' denotes the power possessed by the evil of the love of self when it destroys and lays waste...."

### **AE 494**

- "...'smoke' in the contrary sense signifies falsity from evil...because the fire that makes such smoke signifies evil of love." Nahum 2:13 is cited.

### **AE 539 [7]**

- "In Nahum 2:13 [this verse]...treats of the devastation of the church; and 'to burn a chariot in the smoke' signifies to pervert all truths of doctrine into falsities, 'smoke' meaning falsity, and 'chariot' doctrine; and 'the sword shall devour the young lions' signifies that falsities will destroy the chief truths of the church, 'young lions' meaning the chief and protecting truths of the church, and 'sword' meaning falsity destroying truth."

## **Derived Doctrine**

*"The lion tore in pieces enough for his cubs..."*

- Let's consider this teaching in AC 5828 regarding the meaning of "being torn in pieces," as being to perish by evils and falsities. "That 'to be torn in pieces' has this signification, is because in the spiritual world there is no other tearing in pieces than that of good by evils and falsities."
- Cubs in the positive sense represent the reception of truth, in the opposite sense they signify the successive profanation of truth through the allurements of falsities. See AC 6367.  
A lion's representation can be both positive and negative. Its usage is determined by what it does in the text. This lion tears, it fills its cave with prey and flesh. We then need to turn to the representation of the lion that has the power of self-love when it destroys and lays to waste the affections of the church and individual.
- A cave is a dark abode representing direful falsity from evil. See AE 655 [8].
- A den represents a place where those who are in self-love seek and desire to profane the church and worship. (AE 325 [10]) Remember what the Lord said to those who defiled the temple: "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'" (Matthew 21:13)
- "Prey" signifies the vulnerability of truth without good. See AC 4844.
- "Dens of flesh..." Flesh has many interesting representations. Here is but one. Flesh signifies man's evil will, which is his proprium (own) from birth. See AE 1082 [7].

*"Behold, I am against you, says the Lord of hosts..."*

- Those who seek to do violence against the Lord, imagining they are strong enough to win, will eventually face the Lord's divine power, be brought under His yoke, and will enter (dive) into hell. See *AC 8626*. The announcement "I am against you" signals the turning and defeat of His adversaries.
- "The Lord of hosts" signifies the Lord marshaling all good and truths (love, faith, knowledges, angels, the church in its complex) to join in on the fight against falsities and evils. See *AE 453 [6]*.
- Burning chariots in smoke and the sword devouring young lions are covered above in **Passages From the Writings** section.
- "The voice of messengers shall be heard no more." Do we not see what this means all on its own? Evil's loud boasting and twisted messages will come to an end. The Lord promises He will expose their empty and worthless system of falsity.

### **Putting It All Together**

1. Just hearing the announcement from the Lord that "they will no longer destroy the church and its holy things" offers comfort to anyone who cares deeply for the church. As in a movie or play, there is a sense of joy when good wins out over evil. I can remember once being in a movie theatre where the audience clapped and cheered for the hero or heroine when they were rescued.
2. Hell has been doing its best to tear the things of the church into little pieces. Hiding in their caves or dens, the evil spirits were highlighting the church's game of self-love. With propriums puffed up, the Ninevites felt so smug and powerful. Hell claps its hands when we make mistakes. When any of us show a flaw, they point to it as a failure for regeneration. Just hearing the Lord say, "I am against you...the voice of your messengers shall be heard no more," means so much. The chariots of hell will go up in smoke. Their sword of false doctrine will lose its cutting edge. It makes me want to cheer. There is good news in this prophecy. We need to seize its power and feel the protection of the Lord rushing in for the rescue.

### **Questions to Stimulate Reflection**

1. Do you agree that this section of our study is a message of hope? Why or why not?
2. How well did the derived doctrine section help us learn some of the correspondences in this section? This question is asked often to show that using derived doctrine is not only fun but essential. We want each reader to gain confidence. No harm comes to the Word when we use derived doctrine to study and be helped by the Lord.

3. How strong do you think the voice of hell's messengers is today? Are they stronger than in days of your youth? Were things better in the past, or they better now? What has or hasn't changed?
4. Share with the group one question that occurred to you as you read this section.

## Chapter Three

### **NAHUM 3:1-4**

*"Woe to the bloody city! It is all full of lies and robbery. Its victim never departs. The noise of a whip and the noise of rattling wheels, of galloping horses, of clattering chariots! Horsemen charge with bright sword and glittering spear. There is a multitude of slain, a great number of bodies, countless corpses- they stumble over the corpses- because of the multitude of harlotries of the seductive harlot, the mistress of sorceries who sells nations through her harlotries, and families through her sorceries."*

### **Passages From the Writings**

#### ***P&P***

- "Concerning those who have falsified and adulterated the Word, that they will perish in hell, vers. 1-4."

#### ***AC 8908 [4]***

- "All with whom there reigns the love of self or the love of the world, that is, who have as their end eminence, or honors, or wealth, or gain, do not hesitate to say and persuade others that what is just is unjust...thus to act the part of witnesses of a lie...'lies' denote the falsities of faith." Many passages are offered to support this teaching. Nahum 3:1 is among the citations.

#### ***AR 924***

- "A lie signifies falsity of doctrine, because a spiritual lie is nothing else: hence by doing a lie is signified to live according to falsities of doctrine... [this] may be evident from the following passages..." Nahum 3:1 is cited.

#### ***TCR 322***

- "A lie signifies falsity and false speaking..." Nahum 3:1 is cited.

#### ***AR 298***

- "...the falsification of the truth of the Word...is a horse...it is from appearances in the spiritual world that a horse signifies the understanding of truth from the Word..." Nahum 3:1 is cited as an example.

### **AR 437**

- "...a chariot signifies doctrines...horses signify the understanding of the Word; and many horses full understanding..." Nahum 3:1-3 is cited along with many other references.

### **AC 6978**

- "That 'blood' signifies the falsification of truth and its profanation, is especially evident in Nahum 3:1-4...that by the 'city of bloods' is signified the doctrine of falsity, thus by 'blood,' falsified and profaned truth, is plain from all the words of its description in the internal sense, and not only in these verses...but also in those which follow...in the whole chapter; for by 'city' is doctrine; its being 'all full of lying and rapine' denotes being full of falsity, and of evil from falsity; 'the voice of a whip and the voice of the sound of a wheel' denotes the defense of falsity by fallacies; 'a neighing horse and a jumping chariot,' denotes from a perverted intellectual and the like doctrine; 'the horseman mounting, the shining of a sword, the flashing of a spear,' denotes combat against truth; 'the multitude of pierced' denotes innumerable falsities thence, and those who are in falsities; 'a heap of carcass, and no end of body' denotes innumerable evils thence, and those who are in evils; 'the whoredoms of a harlot' denote the falsifications themselves, and in like manner 'witchcrafts.'"

### **AE 355 [23]**

- Nahum 3:1-4 "...treats of the violence offered to Divine truth, and its destruction by the falsities of evil; for this is signified by 'the city of bloods,' respecting which what follows is said...'the whole is filled with lying and rapine,' 'lie' meaning falsity, and 'rapine' violence offered by falsity; and as 'wars' signify spiritual combats, which are the combats of truth against falsity and of falsity against truth, all things pertaining to war, as 'whip,' 'horse,' 'chariot,' 'sword,' and 'spear' signify various things pertaining to spiritual warfare; but what each of these in particular signifies need not be explained here, only what 'horse,' 'horseman,' and 'chariot' signify. 'The voice of the rattling wheel' signifies reasonings from falsities and evils; 'the horse neighing and the chariots leaping' signifies the lust of destroying truths, 'horse' meaning the intellect perverted and 'chariot' the doctrine of falsity, which destroy; 'to neigh' and 'to leap' meaning to be moved to destroy by lust and delight, and 'horseman making to ascend' meaning assault. It is therefore said, 'a multitude of the slain, and a heap of carcasses'; those are called 'slain' who perish from falsities, and 'carcasses' who perish from evils; therefore it is also said, 'because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the harlot, selling the nations by her whoredoms, and families by her sorceries'; 'whoredoms' signify the falsifications of truth, 'harlot' heresy, 'to sell nations' signifies to become estranged from goods, and 'to sell families by sorcery' to become

estranged from truths, 'nations' meaning goods, 'families' truths therefrom, and 'sorceries' the falsities of evil which estrange."

***AR 134***

- "...by committing whoredom is signified to adulterate and falsify the Word....because there is a marriage of good and truth in each thing of the Word, and this marriage is broken when good is separated and taken away from truth....Since the Jewish church was of such a character, the Jewish nation was therefore called by the Lord an adulterous generation." Nahum 3: 1, 3, 4 are cited among other references.

***TCR 314***

- "There are many...passages where adulteries and whoredoms mean adulterations and falsifications of the Word...." Nahum 3: 4 is cited as one of them.

***AE 141 [14]***

- "It is manifest that in these passages by 'whoredoms' are meant the falsifications of truth." Nahum 3:1, 3-4 is cited as an example.

***AC 7297 [2]***

- "By 'sorcerers,' and 'enchantments,' when mentioned in the Word, is signified the art of presenting falsities so that they appear as truths, and of presenting truths so that they appear as falsities, which is especially done by means of fallacies.... 'the city of bloods' denotes the falsification of truth; 'whoredoms,' the falsified good and truth; 'sorceries,' the arts of presenting falsities as truths, and truths as falsities." Nahum 3:1, 4 is cited.

***AC 8904 [10]***

- "From these passages it is very manifest that 'to commit adultery'...denote to explain and pervert the truths of the Word from one's own heart, that is, from one's own, in such a manner as the loves of self and of the world persuade one to do; consequently it is to speak lies...falsities..." Nahum 3:1, 4 is cited.

***AR 213***

- "...he who does not procure to himself from the Lord the good of love and the truth of wisdom...he must appear in the opposite love, which in itself is profane. This is signified by uncovering the nakedness, and manifesting the shame of it...." Nahum 3:1, 4, 5 are cited.

### ***AE 240 [8]***

- "'The city of bloods' signifies the doctrine of falsity which offers violence to the good of charity." Nahum 3:1, 4-5 is cited.

### ***AC 6971 [3]***

- "With regard to the signification of a 'voice,' as being what is announced from the Word, be it known that a 'voice' is often spoken of, and is also joined to such things as have no relation to a voice, as here it is ( with a whip and wheel)..." Nahum 3:2 is cited.

### ***Doctrine of Life 79***

- "By whoredoms are meant adulterations and falsifications of the Word." Nahum 3:4 is one of many passages cited.

### ***AC 9188 [5]***

- In Nahum 3:4...'whoredoms' denote perversions of truth; and 'sorceries,' the falsities thence derived."

### ***AE 840 [10 & 11]***

- "'To trade,' signifies acquisition and possession of truths...in the contrary sense...they signify the acceptance and appropriation of falsities.... Moreover, 'to sell' and 'to be sold' signify to set aside truths and to be set aside by them, and to accept falsities in their place, and to be captivated by them." Nahum 3:4 is cited.

### **Derived Doctrine**

1. Note that NKJV uses this wording in verse 1: "Its victim never departs." The RSV has this wording: "...no end to the plunder!" This latter translation helps us to see that the bloody city suffers endless plundering. Evil lays waste to the truths and goods of the church continuously.
2. Note that NKJV has "the noise of rattling wheels..." The Writings translate this passage as "the voice of the wheels." Rattling means "rapid succession of sharp, noisy sounds." Wheels signify the doctrine of natural truth. See AC 2686. Can we put these two ideas together? Natural truth must have been going a mile a minute trying to drown the voice of the spiritual sense. Some debaters talk loud and over their opponent. Could this be what is being said about the enemy?
3. Similar things can be said about "clattering chariots." "Clattering" means a continuous or confused noise. Doctrine, if not carefully and slowly thought

out, can be like a continuous or confused noise to the church. Arguing about the number of angels on the head of a pin might generate much heat but not much light.

## Putting It All Together

*P&P* states that this section is about those who falsify and adulterate the Word. How did they go about doing this?

- They used noise, confusion, fast talking, natural facts tainted with falsity.
- Half-truths were made to look reasonable, logical, and invincible.
- They wanted to set aside truth and offer falsity in its place.
- To accomplish this, they had to have continuous attacks — noisy voices to shout down the truth — plundering the church of its good and truth. How long did they wage this attack? Its victim never departed; there was no end to the plunder!
- How costly! The Word says a multitude was slain. So many were slain that people stumbled over the corpses. The mention of sorcery refers to their process of estrangement. Make a person unhappy with spiritual things, and they will estrange themselves from the Lord.
- Those who loved evil and falsity had bright swords and glittering spears. This represents the lust, thrill, and excitement they felt while plundering the things of the Lord.
- They loved their adulteries and selling off the things that had eternal good and truth. These treasures were traded, sold into bondage and servitude. All the people cared for was dominion and power to do and accomplish what they pleased.

## Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. After including some twenty direct teachings about this section, I began to wonder how many of these passages would be read slowly. So many of them seem repetitious, and yet there are two references that cover a major portion of the meaning of these verses. I worried that readers might give up on the direct teachings and jump to the summary section? What did you do? If you jumped over the passages from the Writings, would you be willing to try reading all of them?
2. Were you able to identify with the meaning of "rattling wheels" and "clattering chariots"? Many conversations we have with people who are anti-religious seem to go nowhere. They are so busy denying and finding exceptions to the Word that they don't hear. Preposterous measures are taken to justify or prove what they want as an end. What's your experience? Do we try to deal with them, or do we flee from them so we are not "victims" who never leave? How do you decide?

3. Have you ever experienced some one who burned (lusted) to destroy someone? Each piece of news about their enemy could be turned into something negative. Whatever that person said or did became "grist for the mill." How did you respond to this situation? Why?
4. Did you marvel at how well these verses were covered in so many separate passages from the Writings? At one point during my research, I had twenty different volumes on my desk. Talk to each other about differences in your study of sections that rely mostly on direct teachings compared with sections that rely more heavily on derived doctrine.
5. Let's ask a question about repetition. Is repetition a friend of learning or a detriment? Certainly with children repetition is a necessary experience. Why do you think there are repetitive passages or teachings in the Word and Writings? How or why does this repetition happen?

### **NAHUM 3:5**

*"Behold, I am against you," says the Lord of hosts; "I will lift your skirts over your face, I will show the nations your nakedness, and the kingdoms your shame."*

#### **Passages From the Writings**

##### ***P&P***

- "...all their adulterations will be uncovered...ver. 5"

##### ***AC 5433 [6]***

- "...'nakedness' signifies being without truths...In Nahum 3:5...were 'showing the nations the nakedness' denotes to show ugliness; for all ugliness is from want of truths, and all beauty is from truths."

##### ***AC 9917 [5]***

- "In Nahum...3:5 'to uncover the skirts upon the faces' denotes to remove external things so that internal ones may appear; for in various ways the external things of the natural man hide the internal things, which are hypocrisies, deceits, lies, hatreds, revenges, adulteries, and other like things; and therefore when the external things are taken away, the internal ones appear in their uncleanness and filthiness."

##### ***AC 9960 [11]***

- "In Nahum 3:5...'uncovering the skirts' denotes to take away the externals so that the interiors appear; 'the nakedness which shall be shown to the nations,

and the shame which shall be shown to the kingdoms,' denote infernal loves, which are the loves of self and of the world, which defile the interiors."

### **Representations in these verses requiring the use of derived doctrine:**

*"Behold, I am against you."*

- "Behold" signifies thought and reflection; acknowledgment and confession of the Lord. See AC 2329, 2770, 3495. So the word "Behold" seems to call us to acknowledge and listen to the Lord. Observe what I am about to do! Learn of Me!
- Once the Lord begins His war against the hells, "they can never rise up." (AC 8626)

*"I will lift your skirts over your face..."*

- Although I could find no teaching to back up what I am about to suggest, I think it might be in line with the internal sense. A skirt covers the body from the waist down to the feet. Within that area reside physiological organs that correspond to conjugal love. Could the Lord's lifting the skirt to expose their ugly nakedness be a Divine investigation of "unclean and filthy things" pretending to be conjugal love? Their gross disfigurement, disconnection from the Lord, prevented such beauty and love from ever happening.

*Nations and Kingdoms*

- "Nations" and "Kingdoms" will be shown nakedness and shame. Is there an important correspondence here for us to see?
- Nations signify those who are in the good of love and charity from the Lord. (AR 667)
- Kingdoms signify the church. (AR 33) "Thy kingdom come" represents that the Lord shall reign. (AR 839 [10]) A kingdom in the Word represents Heaven and the Church. (AE 48)
- The call to the nations and the call to the kingdoms to see Nineveh's errors seem appropriate. Learning from the example of disorder reminds the faithful, by example, specifically what they need to shun as sins against the Lord.

### **Putting It All Together**

1. The teachings within this section seem straightforward. The Lord promises an uncovering of hell's hypocrisies, deceits, lies, hatreds, revenges, adulteries, and other hidden disorders. In other words, the pretentious game is over for those who hate the Lord and His Love and Wisdom.

2. Witnessing the Lord's disclosure of the sham is important. We need to see in the external world things that reflect what is hidden within. As we see cruelty in the world, we have a chance to see that the potential to be cruel is within us. As we learn to fear disorder, the Writings tell us that our fear frightens Hell. They don't like us to feel revolted by their disorder. As we dislike hell and its manifestation, hell loses power within and wants to flee from our presence. Therefore, it makes sense that the Lord would want to show every nation and every kingdom the nakedness and shame of Nineveh. As angels draw near, hell flees.

### Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. Do you sense any anger or heartlessness in this portion of Nahum's prophecy? In its place, there seems to be a calm, a serene spiritual sense, telling us all will be taken care of for those who have feared hell's clever pretenses. What message did you hear?
2. Once the Lord begins His war against hell, "they can never rise up again." Do you feel a question popping up: "When will that happen?" We would like to have a safe feeling and assurance that nothing can hurt or harm us. How often does the Lord war against hell? How can we learn to notice when He does?
3. The work *Conjugal Love* teaches that married couples in heaven have spiritual offspring. Do you recall what is taught about couples in hell? Are they able to have offspring?

### NAHUM 3:6-7

*"I will cast abominable filth upon you, make you vile, and make you a spectacle. It shall come to pass that all who look upon you will flee from you, and say, 'Nineveh is laid to waste! Who will bemoan her?' Where shall I seek comforters for you?"*

### Passages From the Writings

#### *P&P*

- "...their adulterations will be uncovered, and they will perish, vers. 6-7..."

### Derived Doctrine

*"I will cast abominable filth upon you..."*

- We need to remind ourselves that the Lord casts no one into hell; the evil do this to themselves. See *AC 2121* or *9642 [6]*. The same principle is true about casting abominable filth on anyone. Doing such a thing would be unbecoming of a perfect Lord. Anger, wrath, and getting even are not of His nature. The

abominable filth does not come from the Lord. Rather, it becomes apparent when the presence of the Lord's light reveals the true nature of self-love: filth.

*"[I will] make you vile..."*

- The Writings explain what makes for a vile life. It is one who feigns "good for the sake of the evil that is within, in order to obtain some end, to which the seeming good serves as a means." (AE 403 [19])

*"[I will] make you a spectacle..."*

- Can we change this wording to "I will make a public example of you"? The RSV uses the word "gazingstock." Regardless, the nations around Nineveh would see her for what she really was within her soul.

*"It shall come to pass..."*

- "It shall come to pass..." is not in the RSV. That translation goes directly to "And all who look on you..." Since we don't have this portion of the passage in the Writings, we don't know whether to keep "it shall come to pass" or press on. However, there is a passage in Luke where the shepherds said one to another "let us go see this thing which has come to pass." (Luke 2:15) "Come to pass" is used by the Word, but we have no explanation.

*"...all who look upon you will flee from you..."*

- In *Psalm 104:7*, we read: "At Your rebuke they fled; at the voice of Your thunder they hastened away." AE 405 [21] explains that these words mean that the Lord will provide a way to escape and to be rescued. "Falsities are dispersed by truths and evils by goods from heaven." Nineveh's fall will serve as a signal that all nations need to flee from similar mistakes.

*"Nineveh is laid to waste! Who will bemoan her?"*

- Can we recall what a wastefulness Nineveh passed through? She had the Ancient Word. She had a view of the Divine Representatives and gave it away. Nay, she sold it for a mess of pottage? She betrayed that gift for thirty pieces of silver? She sold it into harlotry? Can anyone in the light of the Lord really have pity for her or make excuses?

## **Putting It All Together**

1. This section illustrates our need for derived doctrinal research. Only one reference is cited, and P&P gives only one sentence: "their adulterations will be uncovered, and they will perish." But even with our doctrinal "short fall," I

- think we can see how and why the wasting of Nineveh occurred. She turned away from the greatest gift she had from the Lord and sought her own ends.
2. Obviously, we need to see this. We have been made aware of the power of the Lord's Second Coming. We have the internal sense as revealed by the Lord. We must take and use these gifts wisely and with love. We need to approach the Lord with prayerful hearts and ask His help to keep us safe and within the walls of the Holy City New Jerusalem. May He help us avoid the sins Nineveh committed and resist making excuses for such errors and sins.

### **Questions to Stimulate Reflection**

1. It is sometimes difficult but always important to keep the flow of ideas connected to the internal sense when we have only one direct teaching from the Writings. Derived doctrine can help just so far, and then we have some huge gaps to fill. Taking notes, drawing out concepts can and will help. What ideas, insights, or examples can you share with the group about this section?
2. Have no pity on Nineveh. Make no excuses for her. Do you think there might be someone found who would take up her cause and complain for her? It is amazing how many strange ideas and concepts get support and sympathy for their cause. Any examples come to mind? What makes it easy or difficult to excuse evil? What are some of the arguments used for and against sins like Nineveh's?
3. There have been five churches in the spiritual history of the human race. Each one began with a new vision of truth, and each one but the last one eventually fell. The New Church is to be the crown of all the churches, the one that will not fall. How can we help our church keep from repeating the mistakes of fallen churches? What makes our church any different than the churches that fell before it?

### **NAHUM 3:8-10**

*"Are you better than No Amon that was situated by the river, that had the waters around her, whose rampart was the sea, whose wall was the sea? Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was boundless; Put and Lubim were your helpers. Yet she was carried away, she went into captivity; her young children also were dashed to pieces at the head of every street; they cast lots for her honorable men, and all her great men were bound in chains."*

### **Passages From the Writings**

#### ***P&P***

- "...that knowledges and scientifics will not save, because they will be dissipated, vers. 8-10."

### **AC 1164 [4]**

- "In Nahum 3:9 'Cush and Egypt were her strength, and there was no end; Put and Lubim were thy helpers'...this is said of the church vastated, and here in like manner 'Egypt' denotes memory-knowledges, and 'Cush' knowledges."

### **AC 1166**

- "That by 'Put,' or 'Lybia,' in the Word, are signified the knowledges from the literal sense by which in like manner false principles are confirmed..."

### **AR 337**

- "In the spiritual sense by kings those who are in truths are signified, by the great ones those who are in goods...what the great ones signify, is manifest in...Nahum 3:10...for great is predicated of good..."

### **AE 408 [3]**

- "'Great ones' in the Word signify internal goods which are the goods of the internal or spiritual man, because 'great' and 'greatness' in the Word are predicated of good...'great ones'...signify all the goods and truths that are with man, thus the goods and truths both of the internal or spiritual man and of the external or natural man.... Like things are signified by 'great ones' elsewhere in the Word [namely in...Nahum 3:10...]"

### **AE 6526 [26]**

- "In Nahum 3:10...her infants were dashed in pieces at the head of all the streets, and over her honorable ones they cast a lot, and all her great ones were bound with chains. Here also 'infants' mean the truths that are firstborn and vivified, and 'to be dashed in pieces at the head of all the streets' signifies to be scattered and to perish: 'honorable ones' signify the goods of love; 'to cast a lot over them' signifies dispersion of these; 'great ones' signify the truths of good; and 'to be bound with chains' signifies to be tied by falsities so that truth cannot come forth. This is said of 'the city of bloods' which signifies the doctrine in which truths of the Word are falsified."

## **Derived Doctrine**

*"Are you any better than No Amon..."*

- The name No Amon is the Hebrew name for the Egyptian capital, Thebes. The Assyrians (Nineveh) in 663 BC ruthlessly sacked Thebes. Why are we being told this historical fact? Is there a spiritual lesson to be learned? Consider this

teaching in AC 8223: "When evil spirits wish to inflict evil on good, they are grievously punished, and that the evil which they intended to others returns upon themselves." Are we seeing such a "law" being acted out in this lesson? Nineveh, are you any better than Thebes? What you did to them is now happening to you.

*"That was situated by the river, that had waters around her ..."*

- Biblical scholars footnote this verse to tell us this river is the Nile river in Egypt. They suggest that the waters around her refer to the many finger-like canals that feed off of the Nile. AC 5196 gives us the following representation of the Nile: "The Nile, or river of Egypt, represented the sensuous things subject to the intellectual part, thus the memory knowledges derived of them; for these are the ultimates of the spiritual things of the Lord's kingdom."

*"Whose rampart was the sea, whose wall was the sea?"*

- "Every passage in the Word in which the name of a city occurs (to angels a city) never means a city, but always something doctrinal or else heretical... (angels ideas are celestial and spiritual) the celestial and spiritual...is... described by 'cities,' 'palaces,' 'houses,' 'walls,' 'foundations of walls,' 'ramparts,'...by 'ramparts' doctrinal things only are meant." (AC 402 [2, 3, 4])

*Cush*

- "'Cush' denotes those knowledges from the Word that confirm falsities which are hatched from memory-knowledges.... 'Egypt' denotes memory-knowledges; and 'Cush' the knowledges of the interior things of the Word, which are the boundaries as far as memory-knowledges go." (AC 1164 [3])

*Put, or Libya*

- Note in AC 1166 "Put" and "Lybia" signify the same thing as Cush. They signify knowledges collected from the literal sense of the Word that are applied to confirm false principles.

## **Putting It All Together**

1. I almost wish we had shared this teaching at the beginning of our study: "... the things of the literal sense of the Word are general vessels which receive truths, and because the quality of these vessels does not appear...until they have received truths...they are generals, which first must be learned ... in order that he may receive the particulars and singulars in a fit and proper manner..." (AC 6222 [2])

Our study of Nahum has many, many particulars. Which particular do we align with another particular? What are we to do if they don't seem to fit together? Frustration and disappointment can come in and dash our "children" into pieces. Our "great men" will appear to be bound in chains. Let's begin our summary with the generals. P&P gives us a general. Say these words over a few times so that the verses will begin to come into your mind "in a fit and proper manner." "Knowledges and scientifics will not save." "Knowledges and scientifics will not save."

2. Memory-knowledges about the Word will not uphold or sustain the spiritual life. The memory of the literal sense has "the great ones" present. Egypt and Cush can confirm things from the literal sense, but within them are some "hatched" falsities that memory-knowledges can twist in ways that will confirm anything they want. Hatched ideas. We don't have to go far to discover "hatched" ideas in the world that get confirmed with the greatest of ease.
3. The Nineveh state of mind will ruthlessly attack Egypt, Cush, and Libya and knock down the ramparts (doctrinals) that had been built with the idea that they would be protected by the sea (knowledge) and that the sea would survive any attack.  
But there was and is a missing ingredient in this story. Love of the Lord and His truth. We need a commitment to love truth for truth's sake; we need to love the Lord and the neighbor more than self. Instead, the danger of the ages was and is to take the Word and confirm whatever makes us most comfortable. The process of regeneration sounds hard and painful. Our natural side urges us to find an easier way.
4. Nineveh struck with the intent to destroy the representatives of the literal sense. There was no interest in following truth from generals to particulars so singulars would fit in a proper manner. They wanted to be free to hatch every falsity and evil that would suit their goal. In the end, they fell into the very trap they wished for others. In shame their name and legacy was shown as a bloody city where doctrine and the Word were falsified.

### Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. As you find a general teaching, look at the doctrinal quotes and let the Lord fill them with truth so they can be ordered. Use this study guide to practice receiving general and particular truths. Write down one example of a general truth you have learned and some particular truths that go with it.
2. What "great men" have you seen taken prisoner? Think of two examples from real life. Start by thinking of ideas you might have had in your youth and outgrew. If nothing replaced that idea, the great men got shackled in chains. Can you think of ways this teaching applies to parenting?
3. What were the correspondences of the children being dashed to pieces? The ramparts? The wall? Write down two practical examples of these truths being enacted in real life.

4. Remember that "knowledges and scientifics will not save." What do we need to add to our knowledge? How can we do that? How can we help our children do that? Talk about how we learn and how this teaching may apply to education.

### **NAHUM 3:11-12**

*"You also will be drunk; you will be hidden; you also will seek refuge from the enemy. All your strongholds are fig trees with ripened figs: if they are shaken, they fall into the mouth of the eater."*

### **Passages From the Writings**

#### ***P&P***

- "...inasmuch as they do not protect, that those [of the church] will perish from falsities of evil, vers. 11, 12..."

#### ***AR 721***

- "That to be made drunk with that wine signifies to be insane in spiritual things, may be seen...from other passages in the Word..." Nahum 3:11 is cited.

#### ***AR 335***

- "...a fig tree from correspondence signifies a man's natural good conjoined with his spiritual good ...because the natural man separated from the spiritual man perverts by reasoning the knowledges of good and truth...it follows that this is signified by the fig-tree shaken by a great wind.... A fig tree signifies natural good in man, because every tree signifies something of the church in man..." Nahum 3:12 is cited.

#### ***AE 403 [23]***

- "'In Nahum 3:12...this is said of the 'city of bloods' which signifies doctrine in which truths are falsified and goods adulterated. This is compared to 'fig trees with the first-ripe figs, if they be shaken they fall upon the mouth of the eater,' and this signifies that the goods therein are not goods, however much they may appear to be goods; and that such are not received, or if received are received only in the memory and not the heart. That 'if they be shaken they fall' signifies that they are not goods although they appear to be goods, because they are 'the first-ripe figs'; and their falling 'upon the mouth of the eater' signifies that they are not received even in the memory. That 'the mouth of the eater' signifies nonreception is evident from appearances in the

spiritual world; for those who commit anything to the memory appear to receive it with the mouth; so 'to fall upon the mouth' signifies not to receive even in the memory but only to hear, and also if they do receive, that it is only in the memory and not in the heart. 'Fig trees with their first-ripe figs' may also mean genuine goods, of which the like is true as of those who are in the falsities of evil."

## Derived Doctrine

*"...you will be hidden..."*

- AC 222 shares this meaning of being hidden: "...to 'hide themselves from the face of Jehovah,' means to be afraid of the dictate, as is want to be the case with those who are conscious of (their) evil..." AE 329 [27] says that "hidden" signifies an apparent withdrawal of the divine truth from those who are in falsities and their evils.

*"You also will seek refuge from your enemy..."*

- This has an interesting meaning if we first determine who the enemy is. In the eyes of "the bloody city," the Lord is the enemy. Seeking refuge in the good sense means being in a state of blamelessness and exempt from punishment. (AC 9011) Nineveh, to the end, tried to look blameless and did not want to hear condemnation. Therefore, they sought refuge from the Lord and thought He was their enemy. He wanted to call them to repentance, but they saw no reason or need to repent.

*"...your strongholds are fig trees..."*

- AC 717 [18] teaches that strongholds signify the things of self-intelligence confirmed by the letter of the Word, which can be drawn on like an armory to confirm falsity.

## Putting It All Together

The passages from the Writings and the derived doctrine make our summary quite clear. The hiding, the seeking refuge, the strongholds reveal the intention of the evil people. Even the picture or representation of the shaken tree dropping figs into the mouth of evil is so rich and full of meaning. There is no effort on their part. Life is easy and effortless. Spiritually alert people would go and pick figs. They would be selective. To be under the tree with mouth wide open seems to be not only lazy but indiscriminate and stupefied.

## Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. As always, we need to find ways that these teachings apply in the situations of everyday life. How and why do you see this kind of hiding in real life? What about spiritual laziness? What is self-intelligence? Then ask yourself how you can from this lesson so that you can avoid the failures outlined for us by the Lord.

### **NAHUM 3:13-17**

*"Surely, your people in your midst are women! The gates of your land are wide open for your enemies; Fire shall devour the bars of your gates. Draw your water for the siege! Fortify your strongholds! Go into the clay and tread the mortar! Make strong the brick kiln! There the fire will devour you, the sword will cut you off; It will eat you up like a locust. Make yourself many – like the locust! Make yourself many – like the swarming locusts! You have multiplied your merchants more than the stars of heaven. The locust plunders and flies away. Your commanders are like swarming locusts, and your generals like great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges on a cold day; when the sun rises they flee away, and the place where they are is not known."*

### **Passages From the Writings**

#### **P&P**

- "...howsoever they had confirmed themselves by these knowledges and scientifics, but in vain, vers. 13-17..."

#### **AC 1296**

- "In Nahum 3:14,15...'to tread the clay' denotes falsities; 'to repair the brick-kiln' denotes the derivative worship; 'the fire' is the punishment of cupidities; 'the sword' is the punishment of falsities."

#### **AC 6669 [2]**

- In Nahum 3:14, 15 "...to tread the clay denotes to think from evil what is false."

#### **AC 7519 [9]**

- In Nahum 3:14 15 "...where 'going into the mire' denotes into falsity; 'treading the clay,' evil; 'the brick kiln,' or 'furnace for brick,' denotes the falsities which they invent, and which are injected by the evil...'fire' denotes the cupidity of evil...'the sword' denotes falsity."

**AC 7643 [6]**

- In Nahum 3:15-17...the subject here treated of is the 'city of bloods,' by which is signified the doctrine of falsity; and because falsity and evil are especially multiplied in the extremes of the natural, for therein are the fallacies of the senses that originate from the objects of the world, and of the earth, and also pleasures from various kinds of appetites, therefore the multiplication of evil and falsity is also described by 'the caterpillar and the locust'..."

**AR 424**

- In Nahum 3:15-17 "That falsities in the outmost things, because they consume the truths and goods of the church springing up in man, are signified by the locust which consume the grass in the plains and the herbs in the fields..."

**AE 179 [10]**

- In Nahum 3:14-15 "To draw waters for the siege and to strengthen the fortresses' is to fortify falsities by various means against truths; 'to go into the mire and tread the clay' is to confirm falsities by fictions and fallacies; doctrine thence derived is called 'a brick kiln,' because infernal love is strengthened by falsifications; it is therefore said that 'the fire shall devour, and the sword cut off'; 'fire' is infernal love, and a 'sword' is falsity combating and destroying truth....what is fabricated is a product of man's self-intelligence..."

**AE 540 [8]**

- In Nahum 3:14-15 "the waters for the siege' mean the falsities by which they endeavor to destroy truths; 'to strengthen the fortresses' signifies to fortify falsities by such things as appear to be truths; 'to go into mire and tread the pitch' signifies to make them appear to cling together, 'pitch' meaning falsity from evil conjoining; 'to repair the brick-kiln' signifies to repair the doctrine framed out of falsified truths and fictions, 'bricks' signifying the falsities that are fabricated and do not cohere with truths; 'fire shall devour thee' signifies that they will be destroyed by the evils of their loves; and 'the sword shall cut thee off' signify that they will be destroyed by falsities."

**AE 543 [10]**

- In Nahum 3:15-17 "...the destruction of those who are in a faith and life according to that doctrine is signified by 'the fire shall devour thee; the sword shall cut thee off,' the fire that shall devour' signifying evil destroying good, and 'the sword' falsity destroying truth; and because evil and falsity from the

sensual man are meant it is said, 'the caterpillar shall devour thee; make thyself many as the caterpillar; make thyself many as locust; thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of the heavens.' Multiplication like that of the caterpillar and of the locust is mentioned because falsifications of the Word are made in the greatest abundance by those who are sensual, thus by the sensual man, for the sensual man is signified here by the 'caterpillar and locust'.... The sensual man falsifies the Word more than others, because the outmost sense of the Word...is for the natural and sensual man, while the interior sense is for the spiritual man; consequently when a man is not a spiritual man...he does not see goods and truths in the Word, but adapts its outmost sense to corroborate his falsities and evils. 'Merchants' signify those who falsify and who communicate and who offer for sale."

## Derived Doctrine

*"Surely, your people in your midst are women!"*

- People in the good sense have relation to truth, and in the opposite sense to falsity. (AC 1259)
- Woman in the good sense signifies [the church] the affection of truth, and in the opposite sense a love of false principles. (AR 620)
- "Midst" signifies what is primary, or principal and inmost. See AC 2940; AR 9331; or AE 313.

*"The gates of your land are wide open for your enemies..."*

- Gates signify the passage to the rational mind. See AC 2943.
- Land signifies various things: See AC 2571.
  - The internal man of the church.
  - The region where the church is.
  - The church itself.
  - The Lord's kingdom in heaven and on earth.
  - The doctrine of love and charity, where the faith of the church resides.
- Wide signifies the quality in the truths of doctrine. See AE 629 [17].
- Open is the opposite of closed or hidden.
- Enemies signify evils, falsity, perversion, the hells, self-love...!

*"Fire shall devour the bars of your gates..."*

- Gates signify stability and protection, and bars signify the power belonging to the truth that is from good. (AC 9496 [3])
- Fire in the Word signifies some kind of love in a good or bad sense. (AC 934)

## Putting It All Together

1. The Lord often asks questions or gives the impression He is not aware of the answer. In reality, it is humanity who doesn't know its real state. So the Lord asks a question to get us to think and reflect. Notice how the Lord starts this thinking process. "Surely" there is a woman in your midst. Is there a church within you? Do you have an affection for truth? What is your primary inmost?
2. Then the Lord reveals to them that they are leaving themselves in a vulnerable state. Their gates are wide open. They have loosened their internal restraints so much they have left themselves unprotected. The enemy enters in through the gate meeting no resistance. Let's look at a few of the things the Lord showed them they brought into their midst:
  - Fallacies of their senses.
  - Satisfying their physical pleasures from "various appetites."
  - Living with fictions and fallacies.
  - Walking in mire making bricks.
  - Repairing the brick kiln so that they could more efficiently fabricate and corroborate lies.
  - Multiplying and merchandising the lies of the heart.
  - Imagining they were growing larger than the Lord's truth.

Given the enormity of their self delusion is it any wonder that when the Lord cried out "Halt! Halt!" the Word reports to us that "No one turned around."

## Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. I left out the meanings of some parts of this passage. What was left out? Can you write up their significations? For instance, what is meant by locust and grasshoppers, generals, drawing water for the siege, etc.?
2. The making of bricks reminded me of the children of Israel making bricks for the Egyptians. I also thought of the tower of Babel. They made bricks too. They had slime for mortar. Can these stories be of help to the theme of Nahum?
3. Think about what gives you a sense of security in your life. What constitutes real security? What gives the appearance of security? How can you tell the difference?
4. Look back at the list of correspondences for "land." Talk about what makes up the "land" in your life, your community, your church, etc. What are the gates to this land? Who opens or closes them?

## NAHUM 3:18

*"Your shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria; Your nobles rest in the dust. Your people are scattered on the mountains, and no one gathers them."*

## Passages From the Writings

### *P&P*

- "...neither will reasonings save, ver. 18..."

### Derived Doctrine

*"Your shepherds slumber..."*

- A shepherd is one who leads to good. (*AC 6052*)
- Sleeping or slumbering signifies that one believes that he lives, thinks, speaks, and acts from himself. See *AC 147*.
- To sleep means to live a natural life as distinguished from a spiritual one. See *AC 187 [2]*.

*"O king of Assyria..."*

- A king in the positive sense represents divine truth and divine good that are in the Lord and from Him. (*AE 446 [16]*) In the opposite sense, a king represents dominant evils and falsities that are against the Lord. (*AC 1661-1664*)
- Assyria signifies reasonings from scientific things in the memory knowledges that are sometimes mad reasonings which become the source of falsities. See *AC 120* and *AE 811 [10]*.

*"Your nobles rest in the dust..."*

- Let's look first at the meaning of dust. Dust represents the sensuous life that can only live from what was, or is, physical and material. See *AC 242*.
- Nobles in the positive sense represent those who teach and lead. See *AE 644*.
- Putting these two together, do we not see that those who were teaching and leading were doing so from physical and material ends? They based their facts on things that are full of "dust."

*"Your people are scattered on the mountains..."*

- "Scattered" speaks of disunity, confusion, lack of order. It also represents not receiving or acknowledging the Lord. See *AC 1309*.
- Mountains in the positive sense represent celestial principles of the Lord and also the good of love and charity.
- So we are given a picture of the great loss the people suffered because the nobles, the shepherds, failed to lead in the ways of the Lord.

*"And no one gathers them."*

- What can we learn from this haunting refrain? There is sadness in these words. Shepherds asleep. Nobles not teaching or leading. The people scattered.

### **Putting It All Together**

The literal sense is so clear when we draw doctrine to explain it. How important it is to have wise teachers and shepherds in the church. How wise it is for every person to study the Word to learn the things that are not dust.

### **Questions to Stimulate Reflection**

1. Both lay people and priests need to study the Lord's Word. We need to inspire each other. Can you see how important this mutuality is for the health of the church? Talk about it.
2. What did you learn from this verse about the danger that lurks behind spiritual lethargy?
3. Think of a false principle you have encountered. What was the dust on which it was based?
4. Are we a people scattered upon the mountain of the Lord? Why or why not? How are you or can you be a part of the current state of the New Church?

### **References from the Writings concerning these verses:**

#### ***P&P***

- "...that there is nothing sound, wherefore ruin will overtake them, ver. 19."

#### ***AC 9163 [5]***

- "'There is no scar of thy breach; thy blow is desperate (Nahum iii. 19)'. In these passages a 'breach' signifies injury done to the truths and goods of faith, and thus to the church; 'healing' denotes amending and restoration."

### **Derived Doctrine**

*"Your injury has no healing..."*

- Healing has a wonderful correspondence. The Lord alone heals and preserves us from evils. See *AC 8365*. Healing is a process of reformation. Truth and its derived good take away the hurts of evil and bring about change and restoration. See *AE 283 [9]*.

- The "no healing" of someone's injury tells us that without the Lord's help with reformation, we remain troubled and like an open sore.

*"...your wound is severe."*

- A wound signifies a lack of soundness (wholeness) because faith and charity have become desolate. See *AC 431*.
- A wound signifies that some grievous hurt has been done to the affection flowing out of love. See *AC 9056*.
- A wound signifies an injury that has been done to the mind and spiritual life by falsity. See *AE 444*.

*"All who hear news of you will clap their hands over you."*

- Hearing represents obedience; it represents an acknowledgment and confession that will be made where the church is. See *AC 427*.
- Although we have no teachings telling us what "news" means, we can see that it is the "Good News" that the Lord God Jesus Christ reigns for ever and ever. Hell has had its time. It has inflicted its wounds. But the good news tells us that its reign of terror is over.
- Thus, the clapping of hands is a joyous celebration. Hands represent having a feeling of confidence and power to serve the Lord and the neighbor. See *AC 878*.

*"For upon whom has not your wickedness passed continually?"*

- We can say Amen to this. We know how often hell has inflicted us with its painful ways. Many a time we wanted to be free of its influence but fell under its sway in a moment of weakness.
- Paul once said these words: "That which I know I should do, I do not; and that which I know I should not do, I do."
- When the Lord's New Church is established, such things will pass away.

### **Putting It All Together**

There is a sense of great celebration in this closing verse. The news that hell is not going to get well is not a celebration for those who are lost in Hell. It is not a gloating time. Instead, it is a celebration that hell's reign of terror is finished. Hell's open sores will never heal. All of hell's bragging about its health and vitality is ended. We have been greatly afflicted by hell for generations. But now the Lord declares its end. He will heal and make well all who turn to Him for reformation. With such news, we will indeed want to clap our hands. Confidence and power will be ours though the Lord.

## Questions to Stimulate Reflection

1. What thoughts and feelings surfaced for you while reading this dramatic finish?
2. Did some kind of impatience for this to happen pop into your mind?
3. Did any mocking voice come to say, "It isn't so?"
4. What "open sores" have you seen in the world? How are they to be healed?
5. Healing is a wonderful act of the Lord. A cut or sore forms a scab, and the scab protects the sore while it heals. Eventually, the scab falls off, and within a period of time, the scar is not visible to the naked eye. Isn't that process significant in the spiritual sense as well?

Looking back over the three chapters of Nahum, are you able to summarize the spiritual message? Our summary should be different from those that focus on the man Nahum and the country of Nineveh. The spiritual sense is about the Lord. It is about His Church. It is about our spiritual growth. Focusing on history and nations will leave us detached and uninvolved. Can you summarize the message of Nahum in a spiritual and personal way?

## Epilogue: A Summary of the Three Chapters of Nahum

*The following summaries draw and expand on the outline given in Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms.*

### CHAPTER ONE

The last judgment will come upon those who are in evil. What is within the heart of evil is exposed when Divine presence sheds its light. Nothing shall be hidden nor shall darkness cover it anymore, for the Divine Presence sees everything. Those who are in a perverted church will not endure.

But for the faithful who trust in the Lord, there will be Divine protection. Their falsities from ignorance will be accepted and removed by the Lord.

### CHAPTER TWO

The advent of the Lord will bring about a new church from Him. His advent will not be a mild entrance. His presence will cause a violent commotion. There will be a shaking and upheaval, and the things of evil will be taken away from the evil people. They will lose their power to hurt or destroy the holy things of the Lord's new church.

### CHAPTER THREE

Those who falsified and adulterated the Word will perish in hell. The extent of their adulteration will be uncovered. All of the reasoning they pull from the scientifics and historical precedence will not stand in the presence of the Lord. All of their reasonings will not save them because there is and was no soundness in them. Their shepherds and nobles were asleep and resting in dust. They will be scattered, and there will be no one to gather them.

The righteous in the Lord's sight will clap their hands and rejoice that the church of Nineveh will no longer afflict or hurt them anymore because the Great Healer has brought His Reformation to the church. We have a sure promise from the Lord that is borne out in these words written in the book of Revelation:

*"And He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away... Behold, I make all things new." Revelation 21: 3-5.*