

God Delivers His People

Key Verse: *“The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.”*

—*Nahum 1:7*

Selected Scripture:
Nahum 1:1-15

THE BOOK OF NAHUM IS prophetic. Its author had received a heavenly vision declaring judgment against Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire, which had threatened to attack Judah. Well before this time, Nineveh had repented from its sinful ways, as recorded in the prophecy of

Jonah: “Let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?”—Jonah 3:8,9

In today’s lesson, however, Nineveh evidently had resumed its wicked conduct and was ripe for judgment. (Nah. 1:1,2) God’s attributes of wisdom, justice, love and power will not allow unrighteousness to continue forever. Thus, in due course this present evil social order will be removed and replaced by a peaceful and holy government on a global scale.—vss. 3-6

This prophecy foretold the destruction of Nineveh as well as the deliverance of Judah, and should have brought comfort to the Jews as God’s covenanted

people. (vss. 9-15; Amos 3:1,2) Our Key Verse underscores the fact that those who trust and obey the Heavenly Father will be comforted and strengthened during perilous times. This principle continues to hold true today.

One of the principles that may help us to appreciate God's dealings with the nation of Israel recorded in the Old Testament is emphasized by Paul as follows: "These things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come."—I Cor. 10:11, *Revised Version*

Part of Israel's failure to please God was their disobedience to divine instructions and emulating idolatrous practices of heathen nations such as described in the judgment of Nineveh. For consecrated followers of Christ, we are reminded of a New Testament admonition: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." (I John 5:21) Spiritual idolatry would be the supplanting of God in our worship by giving some person or object a higher position of reverence or affection in our lives ahead of the Heavenly Father. Examples of this might include the desire to accumulate wealth, seeking fame, material possessions, self-indulgence and pleasure seeking, or even idolizing a faithful servant of the Heavenly Father.

As New Creatures in Christ, let us ever remember to put the true reverence for God first in our lives and fulfill our vows of consecration to him. When the Jews had their kingdom overturned and went into captivity, they experienced a great loss and greatly mourned because of their unfaithful conduct.—Ps. 137:1

May we learn from Israel's disobedience and exemplify the spirit and faithfulness of the Early Church, which enjoyed God's peace and favor. "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, were multiplied."—Acts 9:31 ■