# The Sequel

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. Well, open your Bible with me, if you would, to the book of Nahum in the Old Testament.

Jonah, Micah, Nahum. We're going to look a little bit at Jonah as well and a little bit at the book of Nahum. As you know, we have in our Old Testament major prophets and minor prophets.
That is not a word about their importance or significance, just about their general length of the work that they have been given by the Holy Spirit.
And so our major and minor prophets are books that we need to be familiar with. All of these books of prophecy in your Old Testament, just make note here to kind of give you a bit of an idea historically where we are.
All the books, major and minor prophets are after the year 931, that year BC. That year is significant because that's the year that the kingdom splits.
[1:12] So before that, you have one united kingdom with kings Saul, David, and Solomon. After Solomon's death, the kingdom divides into two, Israel to the north, Judah to the south.

After 931 is when all of our major and minor prophets are written. The end of our Old Testament roughly is around 400 BC.
So if you're reading a major prophet or a minor prophet, you can know that you are reading about events between about 900 to 400 BC.
In that 500 year range. Most of your prophets are written regarding a southern kingdom, at least primarily the southern kingdom of Judah.
There are two prophets who are speaking to the northern kingdom of Israel. And then there are three prophets who are speaking about foreign nations, neither Israel nor Judah primarily.
[2:15] And those three minor prophets are Obadiah, which we just studied in the month of July about the fall of the Edomites, the descendants of Esau.

Jonah, that's a word about Nineveh. And then Nahum, which is a sequel to the book of Jonah.
About 100 years after Jonah comes the book of Nahum. And throughout the next number of weeks this fall semester, we're going to be looking through these chapters of Nahum.
But what I want to tonight is give you an overview of the book by looking backwards at what comes before, what's happening as we start the book, and then a brief overview of what is to come.
And so I've got three points I want you to make note of that will help you, I think, to have a good grasp on the details leading up to what we're going to study this semester.
[3:26] I hope you'll be here as much as you can on Sunday evenings at 5 o'clock because this is going to be a good chance for you to learn about a book of the Bible you may have not heard preached before.

There's a lot of Old Testament history. There's a good deal of world history. As always, there's a good deal of theology and application for us. And I really think these next number of weeks is a chance for us to learn something very, very significant.
And anytime you can feel like you've really understood a book of the Bible that maybe previously was confusing to you, really opens it up for us.
Three things I want to show you tonight briefly. Number one, there's an unhappy preacher that drives a nation's repentance. An unhappy preacher that drives a nation's repentance.
We're stepping back just a bit. The unhappy preacher is Jonah. Most of us are a little more familiar with Jonah than we are with the book of Nahum. So let's back up a little bit.
[4:43] For an extended time, the Assyrians are the dominant power in this part of the world. They are strong. They are forceful.

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They are cruel. The Assyrians dominated between about 900 B.C. until their destruction in 612 B.C. So about three centuries, the Assyrians dominated. If you wonder why are the Assyrians so important to the story, here's why. The capital of the Assyrian Empire is Nineveh.
Now this is important for us to understand what's going on in the book of Jonah. Nineveh is the capital. Nineveh is a strong city. It's a commercial center.
It's highly fortified. Nineveh is a strong city. And the Nineveh is a strong city. Nineveh is a strong city. And the Nineveh, as the capital of the Assyrian Empire, were synonymous with all of the pagan practices of the Assyrian Empire.
[5:46] And it's really graphic. And I'll spare you some of the worst parts of it. But to understand why Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh, let me at least give you a flavor of what he was facing.

The Nineveh were known to conquer people and then drag them through the streets. They were known to burn people alive in front of their relatives.
They were known to impale their captives. As one historian put it, on the battlefield, Assyrian troops would pile up their defeated enemies, their severed heads, and mutilate their captives as they would cut off their noses, lips, ears, hands, and feet.
These were a wicked, vile, gruesome, torturous people. And the word of the Lord comes to a man named Jonah and says, I want you to go to Nineveh and preach.
If you ever wondered why did Jonah run the opposite way, because he did not want revival to break out in Nineveh. This is the headquarters of the Assyrian Empire.
[7:12] A people who would go into a town and not necessarily destroy it as much as just overtake it. Taking their kings and rulers and leaders, sticking a hook through their lip and jaw and dragging them through the streets.

Flexing their muscles to show that they'll stop at nothing to get what they want. One of the Assyrian kings of the time of Nahum was known to say he took joy in not only killing people and burning them, but doing it to the rulers and to the subjects alike.
Meaning, it made no difference to him whether he grabbed a king or a civilian. He was happy to do any act of torture to them he would desire.
What Jonah did was wrong, but do you understand a little bit more of why he didn't want to go to Nineveh? It's never the right thing to disobey God, and it's never the right thing to withhold the truth of who God is to people, but you can't at least understand why he wouldn't have been excited.
Not only, who wants to go to a city known to inflict torture on people? Jonah's not in the right, but I understand where he's coming from.
[8:49] This is a wicked pagan empire, and this is the capital of that empire. This is the headquarters, the seat of wickedness.

And the Lord has called him to go and to deliver a message. Yet, 40 days, Nineveh overthrown. Not only is he having to go to people that he would not like, he's having to go to a dangerous place, and what's the message he's given?
When God's going to judge you. Well, Nineveh has enough, Jonah has enough sense to think how Nineveh just might respond.
I don't ever think we should overlook someone's sin, or make someone's sin mild, as if it's no big deal, but the next time you tell the story of Jonah, at least do try to understand just how terrible of a task he was given to do.
Even in the book of Jonah, his attitude is often poor, his argument with God is often shallow, and you see a heart that is so conflicted. There's a lot about Jonah that needs corrected.
[10:00] But safe to say, no one in this room would have volunteered to say, please pick me to go to Nineveh, and tell them the judgment of God is about to fall. He was an unhappy preacher.

But, as we know from the book of Jonah, this unhappy preacher drives a nation's repentance, a city's repentance. About a hundred years before the book of Nahum, God uses Jonah to go and to preach to Nineveh.
He's an unhappy preacher because he doesn't care for the people he's been called to go and preach to. But that's not the biggest reason why Jonah doesn't want to go.
He doesn't like them, that's true. That's not the biggest reason he's unhappy. He's going to a dangerous people, it's true, but that's not the biggest reason he's unhappy.
Jonah, he tells us why he's so unhappy. Jonah chapter 3, this is after he has been swallowed by the fish and thrown back up on the land.

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[11:23] in Jonah 3, verse 6, the word reached the king of Nineveh and he arose from his throne and removed his robe and covered himself with sackcloth and he sat in ashes.

the nation and in the book of Jonah we see God's grace poured out on Jonah, a rebellious preacher and God's grace poured out on Nineveh, a rebellious people.
The book of Jonah is flooded with grace. Jonah was thrown overboard and in an act of grace, God appointed a fish to swallow him.
It didn't feel like grace, but it kept him alive. He was thrown out onto dry land and what had to have been an image beyond my comprehension to even picture it, and yet it was a grace.
And in Jonah 3, verse 1, it says, the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time. Here's a second chance.
[12:34] Here's a fresh start to do what he was supposed to do. This is all about grace. The grace of God has reached the heart of Jonah, giving him a second chance.

But it's not just the rebellious preacher that experiences the grace of God. It's the people in Nineveh that experience the grace of God as they repent and the Lord relents.
An unhappy preacher, Jonah, drives a people's repentance. Jonah preaches destruction and judgment and warning to come, and as a result of his preaching, the people respond.
From the king on down. Jonah 3, verse 7, By decree of the king and his nobles, let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything.
Let them not feed or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands.
[13:48] Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger so that we may not perish. When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

He did not do it. An unhappy preacher drives a people's repentance.
It's really remarkable. Humanly speaking, I can't think of anything more unlikely than the people of Nineveh responding to the preaching of Jonah and the warnings he would give and repenting in sackcloth so much so that the Lord relented of the disaster.
But the reason why Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh is chapter 4, verses 1 and 2. But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry.
And he prayed to the Lord and said, O Lord, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? This is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish.
[15:17] He's about to tell you exactly why he was an unhappy preacher. It's not first about how awful Nineveh is. It's not first about the threat that could be his.

He tells you exactly why he was so unhappy. This is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish. Here it is. For I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster.
Jonah didn't want to go to Nineveh. Not because he thought the people would ignore him, but he feared they would respond.
Even before Jonah goes, he says to God in his prayer, this would be just like you to show grace to them. This would be just like the character of my God to show compassion to such a wicked people.
An unhappy preacher drives a people's repentance. He preached, they repented, the Lord relented.
[16:47] Here's a second thing I want you to see. That is that an ungodly people demonstrate a nation's rebellion.

An ungodly people demonstrate a nation's rebellion. Chapter 3 of the book of Jonah, the people of Nineveh, it's a city, the capital here of Assyria, they repent, the Lord relents.
And the picture in Jonah is with the people, the city of Nineveh, responding. Fast forward about a hundred years later, Jonah's gone, the preacher is now Nahum, and we find Nineveh once again steeped in sin and rebellion.
The way we know the revival in Jonah's day did not last is because of the book of Nahum. When you get to the book of Nahum, we're about a hundred years after Jonah, and it begins chapter 1, verse 1, an oracle concerning Nineveh.
Now, a hundred years ago, what we saw from Nineveh was the king on down through all the people repenting in humility.
[18:30] A hundred years ago, what we saw was the Lord using the unhappy prophets' preaching of coming destruction as an act of grace and mercy and compassion, and as they repent, the Lord

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relents.

When you come to Nahum a hundred years later, Nineveh is back to their old ways. Whatever the revival was, it did not last.
It's worth noting that in Jonah's day when he goes to preach to Nineveh, it was a time of unrest historically.
While they were still the dominating power Assyria was, there was some unrest. There was a little upheaval. Assyria in Nahum's day is as strong as it's ever been.
It may just be one of the reasons why Nineveh responded with repentance in Jonah is because the nation was a bit uneasy with unrest.
[19:41] By the time you get a hundred years later to Nahum's day, their strength, their power, their might is the best it's ever been and now they have no heart to repent.

It may be in your life too that when things are too calm, you tend to be a bit too self-sufficient.
Maybe the trials that come to you in your life are a way to remind you of your need for God.
Maybe the uneasiness and unrest that you experience in your heart from time to time are actually veiled mercies of God to get you to rely on Him and not your own strength.
In Jonah, it was an unhappy preacher that drove their repentance. When you come to Nahum, it's an ungodly people that demonstrate their rebellion.
They repented in Jonah's day but soon they would once again rebel. And then thirdly, as we look through the book of Nahum, we see an unknown prophet who declares a people's ruin.
[20:53] An unknown prophet who declares a people's ruin. We don't know much at all about Nahum.

Don't know much about his life, his background. What we do know are just the words recorded in this prophecy that the Holy Spirit inspired to him. We know that the book is written after the fall of Thebes.
That was 663 B.C. and before the fall of Nineveh 612 B.C. So we can get pretty close to knowing when he writes Nahum 1 verse 1.
This is an oracle concerning Nineveh. We know who Nineveh is. It's the book of the vision of Nahum. We know nothing else other than it tells us this is Nahum of Elkosh. That's our hint.
What do we know about Elkosh? Nothing. Glad I could help you with that. Ironically, the name Nahum means comforter.
[21:59] I'll tell you from the beginning the book of Nahum is all about the judgment that's coming for Nineveh. And yet his name means comforter.

His prophecy is about judgment and destruction. But just to say his name is to invoke comfort.
Now I do want you to feel a bit here when Nahum is speaking about the coming fall of Nineveh. Assyria has never been stronger. How foolish it would have sounded to the world to hear an unknown preacher talk about the fall of Nineveh when they've got everything.
It would have seemed completely irrational to preach about the destruction of Nineveh.
[23:04] They're the capital. They're fortified. And they're the capital of the reigning power. But like Noah of old who preached of a coming flood before the world had seen a rainstorm Noah preached God's word anyway.

And to those who listened and would not believe it was utter foolishness. What do you build in Noah? A boat.
What are you going to do with the boat? Be shielded from the flood? You better repent. You better respond. You better believe. You better take shelter.
Shelter from what? From the flood. What's a flood? How foolish that would have sounded. They'd never seen it before.
But in the face of what the world would call utter foolishness Noah was a preacher of righteousness. And in the face of a wicked strong powerful empire like Nineveh and Assyria Nahum preached the word of God though the world would call it foolishness.
[24:28] foolishness. When you get to your New Testament we preach Christ and him crucified foolishness to the world.

Faithful preachers of God's word have never cared if the world thought they were foolish or not. They only cared am I faithfully saying what God has given me to say.
That was true for Noah. That was true for Nahum. In Nahum there's three chapters. Chapter one we see God is a God who will judge the wicked.

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Verse two the Lord is a jealous and avenging God. The Lord is avenging and wrathful. The Lord takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies.
Nahum doesn't really beat around the bush with pleasantries right? He gets right to it. I have an oracle about Nineveh.
[25:32] Nineveh remember God is an avenging wrathful God and he keeps wrath on his enemies. But I told you his name means comfort.

And there's a reason why God picked him to give this message. Because just like the gospel there is bad news and there is good news. The bad news is that God is a God that exacts wrath on his enemies.
Here's the comforting word. Verse seven the Lord is good a stronghold in the day of trouble. He knows those who take refuge in him.
This is the heart of the gospel isn't it? preaching of coming judgment to unbelievers most of who will mock and laugh reject and hate but for those who will seek refuge in the promises of God they will be saved.
That was true in Noah's day. That was true in Nahum's day. And that's true in our day. Chapter two pictures the coming destruction for Nineveh.
[26:53] Look at verse 13 the end of chapter two behold I'm against you declares Lord of hosts and I will burn your chariots and smoke and the sword shall devour your young lions. I will cut off your prey from the earth and the voice of your messenger shall no longer be heard.

When we get to it I'm going to show you both biblically and in history what happens to Nineveh. and I'm going to show you the people that are used to bring this destruction upon Nineveh.
However biblically speaking you don't have to search and wonder how is it that such a strong city is going to fall. Ultimately the reason they fall will not be the human agents I'll tell you about them when we get to them but the ultimate reason of why they fall is verse 13 I am against you declares the Lord and if the Lord is against you it does not matter how strong you think you are.
So the question is is the message of God's judgment bad news or comforting news?
Was the message of Noah and the ark a message of bad news or comforting news? Is the message of the cross a message of bad news or comforting news?
[28:19] Well for those who reject it is the ultimate message of bad news because God is against you. But for those who would believe and repent and flee to him there is no greater comfort than knowing Jesus in grace is the ark of safety for all who run to him.

chapter three describes the fullness of their coming fall. Verse 12 all your fortresses are like fig trees with first ripe figs if shaken they fall into the mouth of the eater behold your troops are women in your midst the gates of your land are wide open to your enemies fire has devoured your bars you get a sense of exactly what's going on.
He says another nation will shake you and you'll fall apart like ripened figs. The warriors you send out will be as though you're sending women to fight against warriors.
You have no shot men who are going on because their truest enemy is God.
Now how is this comforting? well if you are the people of God and you're watching what Nineveh does and you're watching what they're able to get by with your question is will they have the last word?
[30:10] One other piece of history may be helpful here around 750 BC the events of Jonah take place it will be in 722 three decades later that the northern kingdom Israel will be conquered and all my institute guys who conquers them in 722 Assyria they've watched watched what Assyria can do they've heard the stories they have felt the sting and now God gives a message to Nahum and he's going to let the people of Judah know something about Assyria that Assyria does not know about themselves and that is

God's name shall stand Nineveh's never been stronger yet they've never been weaker because their opponent is God himself as one historian put it Judah could possess a confidence that allows calm patient waiting knowing Yahweh's intervention is coming and can I say to you church you have the same blessed hope you too have been promised that the glory of God will have the final word and the world around you may laugh and mock and may seem stronger than ever here's the word of comfort the wicked will not stand in the judgment but the righteous run to the
Lord and they are saved these three chapters are full of helpful application and meaning for us in our day and over the course of the next number of weeks we'll seek to walk through them and

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understand what they meant in Nahum's day and what they mean in our day Lord we are grateful for your word and pray that you would bless our time of study this semester on these Sunday evenings as we seek to learn both about an ancient time but also a present obedience in our hearts in Christ's name Amen and we are going to see you pozwone next time and we have to see you next time pozwone pozwone pozwone pozwone

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