

NAHUM: DOOM OF NINEVEH
THE DISCIPLINE OF GOD

Friday, July 24

Reading: Nahum 1:12-13

Nahum 1:12 *Although I have afflicted you, Judah, I will afflict you no more. 13 Now I will break their yoke from your neck and tear your shackles away."*

In the middle of God's judgment on Nineveh, He turns to speak to His own people. The kingdom of Judah had been under Assyrian control in some form or another for almost a century. They had been forced to send tribute and provide building supplies for the Assyrian Empire and when they tried to revolt, they were severely punished. In the days of Hezekiah (701 BC), while God saved Jerusalem from the Assyrian army, the cities and countryside had been ravished by Sennacherib's army. Hezekiah's son, King Manasseh, had been taken as a prisoner by Assyria for his rebellion. Assyria had truly been a "yoke" on God's people.

A yoke was a harness to control an animal and make it go where you want it to go. Though Assyria had controlled Judah, God now promised that He would "break their yoke from your neck and tear your shackles away." God had used Assyria to afflict His people. Now He would "afflict you no more."

God uses many things to discipline His people. Accepting God's discipline is part of being His people. It is the Lord's method to bring back those who have strayed and teach us how to be godly. The psalmist put it this way:

Do good to Your servant according to Your word, LORD. Teach me knowledge and good judgment, for I trust Your commands. Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey Your word. You are good, and what You do is good; teach me Your decrees...It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn Your decrees. (Psalm 119:65-68, 71)

The book of Hebrews reminds us that God's discipline proves that we are His children. He loves us too much to allow us to continue to live in sin.

[Our human parents] disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in His holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. (Hebrews 12:10-11)

The PATH of discipline is never pleasant. It is painful to be corrected. The PURPOSE of God's correction is to make us holy and righteous. But notice that this is not automatic. The author says that righteousness and peace are obtained by "those who have been trained by it." This word trained is the Greek word *gumnázō*. We get our word gym from this word. We must exercise - work at - applying the lessons God teaches us through discipline. It is a PROCESS of learning and growing.

If only the people of Judah had learned the lesson God wanted to teach them through the yoke of the Assyrians, they could have avoided decades of suffering and exile. But sadly, they continued in their sinful ways and continued to rebel against God.

How about you? What have you learned from God's discipline in your life?

How can you share these lessons with other so they can share in God's holiness and produce a harvest of righteousness and peace?