

Nahum and Habakkuk

“The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble;
he knows those who take refuge in him.” Nahum 1:7

Nahum – Introduction

Use a bible dictionary, background commentary, or study bible to help uncover the following information before you begin the study.

When:

Who:

Author:

Audience:

Subject:

Why:

Nahum 1-3 English Standard Version (ESV)

¹ An oracle concerning Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum of Elkosh.

² 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.

³ The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and the LORD will by no means clear the guilty.

His way is in whirlwind and storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.

⁴ He rebukes the sea and makes it dry; he dries up all the rivers; Bashan and Carmel wither; the

bloom of Lebanon withers.

⁵ The mountains quake before him; the hills melt; the earth heaves before him, the world and all

who dwell in it.

⁶ Who can stand before his indignation? Who can endure the heat of his anger?

His wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken into pieces by him.

⁷ The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble;

he knows those who take refuge in him.

⁸ But with an overflowing flood he will make a complete end of the adversaries,

and will pursue his enemies into darkness.

⁹ What do you plot against the LORD?

He will make a complete end; trouble will not rise up a second time.

¹⁰ For they are like entangled thorns, like drunkards as they drink;

they are consumed like stubble fully dried.

¹¹ From you came one who plotted evil against the LORD, a worthless counselor.

¹² Thus says the LORD, “Though they are at full strength and many, they will be cut down and

pass away. Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no more.

¹³ And now I will break his yoke from off you and will burst your bonds apart.”

¹⁴ The LORD has given commandment about you:

“No more shall your name be perpetuated; from the house of your gods I will cut off

the carved image and the metal image. I will make your grave, for you are vile.”

¹⁵ [b] Behold, upon the mountains, the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace!

Keep your feasts, O Judah; fulfill your vows, for never again shall the worthless pass through you; he is utterly cut off.

Chapter 2

The scatterer has come up against you. Man the ramparts; watch the road; dress for battle; collect all your strength.

² For the LORD is restoring the majesty of Jacob as the majesty of Israel, for plunderers have plundered them and ruined their branches.

³ The shield of his mighty men is red; his soldiers are clothed in scarlet.

The chariots come with flashing metal on the day he musters them; the cypress spears are brandished.

⁴ The chariots race madly through the streets; they rush to and fro through the squares; they gleam like torches; they dart like lightning.

⁵ He remembers his officers; they stumble as they go, they hasten to the wall; the siege tower is

set up.

⁶ The river gates are opened; the palace melts away;

⁷ its mistress is stripped; she is carried off, her slave girls lamenting, moaning like doves

and beating their breasts.

⁸ Nineveh is like a pool whose waters run away. "Halt! Halt!" they cry, but none turns back.

⁹ Plunder the silver, plunder the gold!

There is no end of the treasure or of the wealth of all precious things.

¹⁰ Desolate! Desolation and ruin! Hearts melt and knees tremble; anguish is in all loins; all faces
grow pale!

¹¹ Where is the lions' den, the feeding place of the young lions, where the lion and lioness went,
where his cubs were, with none to disturb?

¹² The lion tore enough for his cubs and strangled prey for his lionesses;

he filled his caves with prey and his dens with torn flesh.

¹³ Behold, I am against you, declares the LORD of hosts, and 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 no longer be heard.

Chapter 3

Woe to the bloody city, all full of lies and plunder—no end to the prey!

² The crack of the whip, and rumble of the wheel, galloping horse and bounding chariot!

³ Horsemen charging, flashing sword and glittering spear, hosts of slain, heaps of corpses, dead bodies without end— they stumble over the bodies!

⁴ And all for the countless whorings of the prostitute, graceful and of deadly charms, who betrays nations with her whorings, and peoples with her charms.

⁵ Behold, I am against you, declares the LORD of hosts, and will lift up your skirts over your face; and I will make nations look at your nakedness and kingdoms at your shame.

⁶ I will throw filth at you and treat you with contempt and make you a spectacle.

⁷ And all who look at you will shrink from you and say, “Wasted is Nineveh; who will grieve for her?” Where shall I seek comforters for you?

⁸ Are you better than Thebes that sat by the Nile, with water around her, her rampart a sea, and water her wall?

⁹ Cush was her strength; Egypt too, and that without limit; Put and the Libyans were her helpers.

¹⁰ Yet she became an exile; she went into captivity; her infants were dashed in pieces at the head of every street; for her honored men lots were cast, and all her great men were bound in chains.

¹¹ You also will be drunken; you will go into hiding; you will seek a refuge from the enemy.

¹² All your fortresses are like fig trees with first-ripe figs—if shaken they fall
into the mouth of the eater.

¹³ Behold, your troops are women in your midst. The gates of your land are wide open to your enemies; fire has devoured your bars.

¹⁴ Draw water for the siege; strengthen your forts; go into the clay; tread the mortar; take hold of the brick mold!

¹⁵ There will the fire devour you; the sword will cut you off. It will devour you like the locust.

Multiply yourselves like the locust; multiply like the grasshopper!

¹⁶ You increased your merchants more than the stars of the heavens.

The locust spreads its wings and flies away.

¹⁷ Your princes are like grasshoppers, your scribes like clouds of locusts settling on the fences

in a day of cold— when the sun rises, they fly away; no one knows where they are.

¹⁸ Your shepherds are asleep, O king of Assyria; your nobles slumber.

Your people are scattered on the mountains with none to gather them.

¹⁹ There is no easing your hurt; your wound is grievous. All who hear the news about you

clap their hands over you. For upon whom has not come your unceasing evil?

Nahum – Week 1

Read the entire book of Nahum in whatever version of the Bible that is easiest for you to understand.

To set the stage for Nahum, let's review what happened 120 years before in Nineveh in the book of Jonah.

What do we learn about Nineveh in Jonah 1:2?

What is Nineveh's response to Jonah's prophecy of judgment in Jonah 3:5-10?

What do we learn about the Lord's character in Jonah 4:1-2? Why do these aspects of God bother Jonah?

What does Jonah 4:11 teach us about God's compassion?

What is your overall response to the revelation of God's character from the story of Jonah?

Remember that Nahum's prophecy occurs over a century after Jonah. Considering that Nineveh's repentance at the time of Jonah did not last, what does this length of time reveal about God's patience?

On your Scripture printout, read Nahum 1:1-8. Underline every description of the Lord. Jot down the characteristics you find on the following chart. Use a dictionary to look up the definitions of any unfamiliar terms.

“Negative” Characteristics	“Positive” Characteristics

Which of these attributes bring you comfort? Which bring you discomfort or confusion? Are there any you would rather ignore?

Why is it so important to learn about/believe/embrace every part of God’s character as revealed in His word?

Read 1:4-5. What is the main response these images invoke in the reader?

Contrast verses 7 and 8. What is the main difference between the two groups of people described?

Use a dictionary to look up the word “refuge.” Write the definition here.

Read Psalm 46. What similarities do you see in this passage and Nahum? Is the main impression you get from this Psalm one of comfort or fear?

Wrapping it up...

What have you learned about God through our study this week?

In light of what you have learned, is there anything you need to confess or repent of?

What encouraging truths have you learned through the Scripture this week?

Nahum – Week 2

Read the entire book of Nahum in whatever version of the Bible that is easiest for you to understand.

Before we dive into the next part of Nahum, let's go back to the story of what happened between King Hezekiah and the King of Assyria (Nineveh) in 2 Kings 18-19.

18:1-7 – Describe what kind of king Hezekiah was, and what characterized his reign.

18:9-12 – What happened to the kingdom of Israel during Hezekiah's reign over Judah? Why?

18:13-16 – What changed in Judah's relationship with Assyria?

18:19-35 – The king of Assyria sends messengers to strike fear in the Judeans. What tactics do they use? What is their overall tone/attitude? What is their attitude toward God?

18:36-19:7 – Describe the response of the people and of King Hezekiah. What encouragement does the prophet Isaiah give?

19:8-13 – What word would you use to describe the king of Assyria based on his words in these verses?

19:14-19 – What is Hezekiah's immediate response to the threat? What is the focus of his prayer?

19:20-34 – Summarize Isaiah's prophecy against the king of Assyria.

19:35-37 – How was the prophecy fulfilled?

Now let's turn back to Nahum. Read Nahum 1:9-15. On your Scripture printout, label every pronoun of "you" or "they/them" with an N if it is referring to Ninevah or a J if it is referring to Judah. Underline all the prophecies directed toward Ninevah. Circle the promises directed toward Judah.

Describe the overall theme of the prophecies toward Nineveh.

Describe the overall theme of the prophecies toward Judah.

What might the people of Judah thought/felt when they heard these prophecies/promises?

Do you ever have a hard time believing God's promises? Can you think of an example in your life when you have struggled to maintain hope in the face of waiting for His promises to be fulfilled?

Why might God wait so long to fulfill His promises?

What can help you in seasons of waiting?

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Nahum – Week 3

Read the entire book of Nahum in whatever version of the Bible that is easiest for you to understand.

On your Scripture printout, re-read chapters 2-3 of Nahum. What are some themes that you see in these 2 chapters?

Jot down what you read in the following verses related to...

- Nineveh's evil

2:11-12

3:1-4

3:19

- God's opposition to Nineveh

2:13

3:5-6

- The coming destruction of Nineveh

2:4-13

3:5-19

- The rightness of God's judgment on Nineveh and His vindication of Israel

2:2

2:12-13

3:19

Let's consider the concept of God's justice for a moment. In your own words, write down your understanding of "justice" and how it relates to God's character.

Was God just in His wrath against Nineveh? Why or why not?

Jot down insights about God's justice and His mercy from the following Scriptures:

Genesis 3:8-21

Exodus 34:6-7

Psalms 36:5-6

God's Justice	God's Mercy

Why do some people (maybe even yourself) have a hard time reconciling God's just wrath and His mercy?

Read Romans 3:23-26. How do God's perfect justice and mercy come together in Christ?

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Habakkuk – Introduction

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Habakkuk 1-3 English Standard Version (ESV)

1 The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet saw.

2 O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you "Violence!" and you will not save?

3 Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise.

4 So the law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted.

5 "Look among the nations, and see; wonder and be astounded. For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told.

6 For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, who march through the breadth of the earth, to seize dwellings not their own.

7 They are dreaded and fearsome; their justice and dignity go forth from themselves.

8 Their horses are swifter than leopards, more fierce than the evening wolves; their horsemen press proudly on. Their horsemen come from afar; they fly like an eagle swift to devour.

9 They all come for violence, all their faces forward. They gather captives like sand.

10 At kings they scoff, and at rulers they laugh. They laugh at every fortress, for they pile up earth and take it.

11 Then they sweep by like the wind and go on, guilty men, whose own might is their god!"

12 Are you not from everlasting, O LORD my God, my Holy One? We shall not die. O LORD, you have ordained them as a judgment, and you, O Rock, have established them for reproof.

13 You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong, why do you idly look at traitors and remain silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he?

14 You make mankind like the fish of the sea, like crawling things that have no ruler.

15 He brings all of them up with a hook; he drags them out with his net; he gathers them in his dragnet; so he rejoices and is glad.

16 Therefore he sacrifices to his net and makes offerings to his dragnet; for by them he lives in luxury, and his food is rich.

17 Is he then to keep on emptying his net and mercilessly killing nations forever?

Chapter 2

1 I will take my stand at my watchpost and station myself on the tower, and look out to see what he will say to me, and what I will answer concerning my complaint.

2 And the LORD answered me: "Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it.

3 For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end--it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay.

4 "Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.

5 "Moreover, wine is a traitor, an arrogant man who is never at rest. His greed is as wide as Sheol; like death he has never enough. He gathers for himself all nations and collects as his own all peoples."

6 Shall not all these take up their taunt against him, with scoffing and riddles for him, and say, "Woe to him who heaps up what is not his own-- for how long?-- and loads himself with pledges!"

7 Will not your debtors suddenly arise, and those awake who will make you tremble? Then you will be spoil for them.

8 Because you have plundered many nations, all the remnant of the peoples shall plunder you, for the blood of man and violence to the earth, to cities and all who dwell in them.

9 "Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house, to set his nest on high, to be safe from the reach of harm!

10 You have devised shame for your house by cutting off many peoples; you have forfeited your life.

11 For the stone will cry out from the wall, and the beam from the woodwork respond.

12 "Woe to him who builds a town with blood and founds a city on iniquity!

13 Behold, is it not from the LORD of hosts that peoples labor merely for fire, and nations weary themselves for nothing?

14 For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

15 "Woe to him who makes his neighbors drink-- you pour out your wrath and make them drunk, in order to gaze at their nakedness!

16 You will have your fill of shame instead of glory. Drink, yourself, and show your uncircumcision! The cup in the LORD's right hand will come around to you, and utter shame will come upon your glory!

17 The violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you, as will the destruction of the beasts that terrified them, for the blood of man and violence to the earth, to cities and all who dwell in them.

18 "What profit is an idol when its maker has shaped it, a metal image, a teacher of lies? For its maker trusts in his own creation when he makes speechless idols!

19 Woe to him who says to a wooden thing, Awake; to a silent stone, Arise! Can this teach? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in it.

20 But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him."

Chapter 3

1 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth.

2 O LORD, I have heard the report of you, and your work, O LORD, do I fear. In the midst of the years revive it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy.

3 God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. His splendor covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. Selah

4 His brightness was like the light; rays flashed from his hand; and there he veiled his power.

5 Before him went pestilence, and plague followed at his heels.

6 He stood and measured the earth; he looked and shook the nations; then the eternal mountains were scattered; the everlasting hills sank low. His were the everlasting ways.

7 I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction; the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble.

8 Was your wrath against the rivers, O LORD? Was your anger against the rivers, or your indignation against the sea, when you rode on your horses, on your chariot of salvation?

9 You stripped the sheath from your bow, calling for many arrows. Selah You split the earth with rivers.

10 The mountains saw you and writhed; the raging waters swept on; the deep gave forth its voice; it lifted its hands on high.

11 The sun and moon stood still in their place at the light of your arrows as they sped, at the flash of your glittering spear.

12 You marched through the earth in fury; you threshed the nations in anger.

13 You went out for the salvation of your people, for the salvation of your anointed. You crushed the head of the house of the wicked, laying him bare from thigh to neck. Selah

14 You pierced with his own arrows the heads of his warriors, who came like a whirlwind to scatter me, rejoicing as if to devour the poor in secret.

15 You trampled the sea with your horses, the surging of mighty waters.

16 I hear, and my body trembles; my lips quiver at the sound; rottenness enters into my bones; my legs tremble beneath me. Yet I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us.

17 Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls,

18 yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.

19 GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places.

To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments.

Habakkuk – Week 1

Read the entire book of Habakkuk in whatever version of the Bible that is easiest for you to understand.

On your Scripture printout, read Habakkuk 1:1-11. In the margin, write “H” where Habakkuk begins talking and write “G” where the dialogue shifts and God begins speaking.

In verses 2-4, circle any question words that you see, and underline each of Habakkuk’s complaints/observations/assumptions.

What is the overall tone of these verses? Describe Habakkuk’s emotions.

Summarize the source of Habakkuk’s grief and frustration.

Which of Habakkuk’s complaints seem valid? Are there any that seem inaccurate?

How did Habakkuk’s observations affect his understanding of God?

Should circumstances dictate how we view God, or should our understanding of God dictate how we view circumstances? Can you think of an example from your own life when you have taken either of these routes?

Go back to verse 2 and circle the word “LORD”. The word used here is the Hebrew word “Yahweh,” which is God’s personal name used only by His people. Knowing that, what is the relational context in which Habakkuk brings his questions to God?

Do you find it difficult to bring your questions to God? Why or why not?

Read Psalm 62:8 and jot down any insights about how God’s people are invited to approach Him.

Read God’s response to Habakkuk in verses 5-11.

Paraphrase (write in your own words) what God says to Habakkuk in verse 5.

What is the difference between the way things *seem* to Habakkuk and the way things actually *are*, according to God’s reply?

Why might Habakkuk “not believe” what God was up to (v5)?

According to verse 6, what plan did God already have in motion to deal with the violence, iniquity, and injustice that Habakkuk sees all around him?

Do you think this was the answer Habakkuk was looking for or expecting?

Can you think of a time in your own life when God's answer to your questions or prayers was completely unexpected and perhaps hard to take in?

Underline the descriptions of the Chaldeans (Babylonians) found in verses 6-11. What kind of people were they?

Does it make sense that God would use an evil and godless nation to fulfill His purposes?

Can you think of other examples from Scripture when God has used godless leaders or nations as a part of His plan?

What does this reveal to us about God?

Wrapping it up...

What have you learned about God through our study this week?

In light of what you have learned, is there anything you need to confess or repent of?

What encouraging truths have you learned through the Scripture this week?

Habakkuk – Week 2

Read the entire book of Habakkuk in whatever version of the Bible that is easiest for you to understand.

On your Scripture printout, read Habakkuk 1:12-2:2. In the margin, write “H” where Habakkuk begins talking and write “G” where the dialogue shifts and God begins speaking.

Summarize Habakkuk’s prayer in 1:12-2:1. What seems to be the main problem he is wrestling at this point?

In verse 12, how does Habakkuk address or describe God? Underline each description and circle every occurrence the word “my”. How can each of these terms or descriptions bring hope in a turbulent time?

In verse 13, what is the apparent conflict between what Habakkuk knows to be true about God and what seems to be true based on what he can understand of the circumstances?

Does it surprise you that Habakkuk can go back and forth between believing in God’s goodness and questioning it? Can you relate? Is it appropriate for him to verbalize these conflicting feelings? Why or why not?

In verses 14-15, Habakkuk draws an analogy for how God’s revelation of judgement feels. What impression do you get when you read the description of fish being brought up with a hook or net?

What impression do you get from the description of the one who is catching the fish in verses 15-17?

In 2:1, Habakkuk ends his prayer. What is the impression you get from his words in this verse?

What 3 things does Habakkuk say that he will **do**?

What does he expect to **see**?

God's response in 2:2-20, though filled with dark images, is a proclamation of hope. It is a declaration of "woes" against the Babylonians from the God who sees, and a reminder of eternal truths from God to His people. Let's look at the woes first.

Use a dictionary to find out what the word "woe" means. Record the definition here.

Why would this word be used in declaring judgment against Babylon?

Complete the following chart, recording first the declaration of sin and then the consequence/punishment/judgment.

Woe to him who...	Consequence(s)
2:6	
2:9	
2:12	
2:15	
2:19	

What do we learn about God from these declarations?

It's easy for us to see the evil in others, but do any of these woes hit home for you? What heart issues lie behind each of the woe declarations?

Let's turn now to the encouragement declarations. List the hopeful truth found in each of the following verses.

2:3

2:4

2:14

2:20

Which of these is the most encouraging to you personally?

Habakkuk 2:4 in particular is a very important verse in Scripture. It is quoted 3 times in the New Testament (Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, and Hebrews 10:38), each revealing a different aspect of what it means. Read the cross references and use those, along with the context of the verse in the book of Habakkuk, to write in your own words what it means for the righteous to live by faith.

Wrapping it up...

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Habakkuk – Week 3

Read the entire book of Habakkuk in whatever version of the Bible that is easiest for you to understand.

Contrast Habakkuk 1:1 with 3:1...

1:1 – The _____ that Habakkuk the prophet _____

3:1 – A _____ of Habakkuk the prophet

(*Note: Shigionoth is most likely either a type of instrument or a type of psalm)

What are some of the things that Habakkuk “saw” throughout the first 2 chapters?

Look at 3:2. What has Habakkuk “heard”?

So he has seen and he has heard, and now what is his response (v2)?

Compare this to the way Job responded to God’s awesome revelation of Himself in the midst of his own suffering and doubt in Job 42:5-6. What similarities do you see?

What 3 things does Habakkuk ask God to do in the second half of 3:2? Why do you think he specifically requested each one?

In 3:3-15, Habakkuk spends some time recounting God’s mighty work on behalf of His people in the past. Read through these verses and see if any of the language used reminds you of stories of God’s faithfulness in the history of Israel. Jot down on your Scripture printout where the imagery is familiar. If you need a starting point to remember some of the stories, try Exodus 19:16-20, Exodus 7:14-12:30, Exodus 15:1-21, or Joshua 10:12-13.

What is the overall impression of the LORD do you get from these verses?

Why do you think Habakkuk spends so much time verbalizing how the Lord has shown His great power and faithfulness in the past?

Read Psalm 42:5-6 and jot down any insights on recalling God's faithfulness during hard times.

How can you put a plan in place to remember God's past faithfulness, both in redemptive history and in your own life?

Go ahead and list some examples from your own life where God has shown Himself to be powerful and faithful.

Read Habakkuk 3:16. What is the prophet's primary emotion when he thinks about God's coming judgment on His people?

But, remembering the promises God has revealed throughout this book as well as the faithfulness and power demonstrated in history, what does Habakkuk resolve to do (v16)?

Look at Habakkuk's development throughout the book.

1:2 – "O LORD, _____ shall I _____ for help, and You will _____? Or _____ to You, 'Violence!' and You will _____?"

2:1 – I will _____ at my watchpost and _____ myself on the tower, and _____ to see what He will say to me, and what I will _____ concerning my _____.

3:16 – Yet I will _____ for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us.

How would you describe Habakkuk's growth over time?

Read 3:17-18 and write out Habakkuk's prayer in your own words. Go ahead and substitute relevant examples from your own life/experience for some of the agricultural examples in Habakkuk's.

How can Habakkuk "rejoice in the Lord" in the midst of such circumstances? How can we?

What declaration does Habakkuk make about God in verse 19? God, the Lord, is my _____.

Knowing what lay ahead for him and his people, why was it such a comfort to know that his strength was founded in the Lord?

What are some faulty places that we may try to find our strength, but which will ultimately fail us?

Habakkuk closes his prayer with another analogy, but so much different from the one in 2:14-17. The former was from a place of feeling helpless and hopeless, but what example does the prophet turn to now in contrast?

What do you think Habakkuk means by using this imagery of a deer?

The book closes with an instruction to the choirmaster. Knowing that at least the last chapter, if not the whole book, is written as a song, how does this demonstrate the relevancy of Habakkuk's journey to all of God's people from long ago till now?

Reflect on the meaning of Habakkuk's name: "one who wrestles or clings." How has Habakkuk lived up to his name? How can we follow in his example?

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