



Walking Thru The Bible NAHUM HABAKKUK and ZEPHANIAH

NAHUM

Author: Nahum was from Elkosh which possibly was Capernaum ("City of Nahum"). The northern kingdom had already fallen captive to Assyria in 721 BC and Nahum's message (to Judah and Nineveh, the capital of Assyria) is about the coming fall of Nineveh. The book has three chapters and only 47 verses.

Background:

Jonah had preached to Nineveh more than 100 years earlier and they had repented then but they have long since forgotten God and returned to their cruel ways. In Nahum's day the city was at the height of its glory.

Chapter one contains a magnificent description of the character of God (cf. v.2-8) and in chapter two you can almost hear the noise of the battle describing Nineveh's destruction. The Assyrians fell to the Babylonians in 612 BC.

Message:

The message of Nahum centers on *God's vengeance upon the impenitent*. God's mercy and slowness to anger is demonstrated in Jonah's mission to Nineveh. But now in Nahum we see that a nation, city, or individual must reap the consequence of wickedness if it does not repent.

Outline:

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| Ch.1 | 1-8 | The Lord is unsparing in his attitude toward evil. |
| | 9-15 | Nahum prophesied that Nineveh would experience God's wrath in the form of a complete overthrow. |
| Ch.2 | 1-7 | God gave Nahum a prophetic vision of the siege |
| | 8-13 | and the plundering of the proud city. |
| Ch.3 | 1-7 | All of this was to come about as punishment for sin |
| | 8-19 | And God's justice can never be averted. |

Lesson: God is longsuffering to usward not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (cf. Jonah). But in just and wickedness will be punished.

HABAKKUK

Author:

Habakkuk prophesied in Judah just before Nebuchadnezzar's first invasion in 605 BC when Daniel was taken captive. He was commissioned by God to announce the Lord's intention to punish Judah by the coming deportation into Babylon. Three chapters.

Habakkuk's Question:

Habakkuk asks God why sin is being tolerated in Judah (1:1-4); the reply comes that the Lord is raising up Babylon to punish his people (1:5-11).

This leads to the second question of how God could use people so ungodly as the Babylonians as His instrument to punish Judah (1:12-2:1). The answer given is that Babylon will be punished in its turn (2:2-20). The book ends with Habakkuk's prayer of confident faith in the Lord (3:1-19).

This is similar to the question that many righteous have faced through the ages: why does God sometime use the wicked to chastise others. Thus, the book of Habakkuk is a defense of God's goodness and power in view of the existence of evil.

The modern form of the same question: why does the wicked prosper at the expense of God's people?

The theme of the book is that *the person who remains faithful to God and his truth will survive the ordeal about to come*.

Outline of Habakkuk:

I. Habakkuk's Problem

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| A. | 1:1-4 | Problem #1: Why does God allow wicked practices to continue in the land? |
| | 1:5-11 | God's Answer |
| B. | 1:12-2:1 | Problem #2: Why will God use wicked people to punish others? |
| | 2:2-20 | God's Answer |

II. Habakkuk's Praise

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| A. | 3:1-3 | Praise for the Person of God |
| B. | 3:4-7 | Praise for the Power of God |
| C. | 3:8-16 | Praise for the Purpose of God |
| D. | 3:17-19 | Praise because of Faith in God. |

Lesson: God will always be true to Himself in delivering the person who maintains integrity and keeps His divine commandments.

ZEPHANIAH

Author:

Zephaniah lived on the eve of Judah's fall to Babylon and takes up the theme of the Day of the Lord. He prophesied during the reign of King Josiah (640-609 BC).

Background:

In King Josiah's early days idolatry and all kinds of evil were rampant in the land. He became king at age 8 and at age 16 he began to seek the Lord and at 20 he purged the land of idols. While the temple was being repaired the long-forsaken "book of the Law" was found. In response to its teaching King Josiah began an extensive series of religious and social reforms. (cf. 2 Kings 22-23)

Zephaniah evidently prophesied just prior to these great reforms and likely helped to produce them. If the Hezekiah of Zeph. 1:1 is the good king of Judah, then Zephaniah was of royal blood himself and a cousin to King Josiah. (Jeremiah also came onto the scene about the time of these reforms.)

His Message:

Zephaniah speaks to an idolatrous Judah, whose religion and morality were at a terribly low point. He denounces the sins of his fellow countrymen in direct and unsparing language. His strong convictions and fervent zeal are evident in each line of the book.

The theme of the book is that the *Day of the Lord* is at hand for Judah (1:7-18). The immediate event in view was Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of the land in 606 BC.

Outline of Zephaniah:

- 1: 1-3 Zephaniah announces a judgment in the coming Day of the Lord.
- 4-13 In particular it would come on Judah and Jerusalem.
- 14-18 It was a day which was very near.
- 2: 1-3 He pleaded for men to seek deliverance from the Lord
- 4-15 No nation would be able to escape the Day of the Lord.
- 3: 1-8 If the heathen were to be punished, Judah should expect her share of the same.
- 9-10 A remnant would be gathered from among the nations and they would return from captivity and be exalted before the world.
- 11-20 This is a prophetic glimpse of the restoration under Zerubbabel and Ezra

God Is Our Stronghold

Nahum 1:7-8

Introduction:

1. With so many enemies about we wonder if we are on the right side? Is God really with us? Why does the wicked seem to prosper? Does God really care?
2. What Nahum was up against in his day is little different than what we often face today. Nahum:1:1-8

I. GOD'S PROVISIONS 1:7

1. Nahum describes the awesomeness of God in v.7. The Lord is good, we can be safe in His stronghold.
2. A perception of God's provisions-- John Claypool in Tracks of a Fellow Struggler. "Does God make a difference when the bottom drops out?" Isaiah 40:30-31
 - a. The ecstasy "mount up with eagles"
 - b. The energy "run and not be weary"
 - c. The endurance "walk and not grow faint"
3. The contemporaries of Nahum were discouraged by their apparent difficulties. But God provides.

II. GOD'S PUNISHMENT 1:8

1. To Nineveh Nahum declared the awesomeness of God in Punishment. 1:8.
2. God runs the show. He will hold men accountable for their sins and transgressions. "Payday Someday"
3. God is the Creator, the Provider, and the **Judge**. 1:3.

Conclusion:

1. The awfulness of man is no match for the awesomeness of God. Nineveh and every wicked man will be swept up in the unfolding purpose of God.
2. God punishes the wicked, and provides for His own. "Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." (Revelation 19:6b)