

## Nahum

### Inductive Bible Study for Youth

#### Verse-by-verse inductive Bible study:

Although in many lessons the writer or teacher decides on a lesson aim (the main teaching he wants the students to get) and application (how he wants the students to apply the Scripture to life), in inductive Bible study we study the Bible verse by verse, asking God what He wants to say to us and how He wants us to apply it to our lives. So, in inductive Bible study, the teacher is not telling the students what the Scripture says. Rather, s/he is guiding discussion so that the students themselves can see what it says under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The questions are suggestions. You may add others as God guides you.

For best results, because we carefully examine the meaning of many words, all members of the class should use the New King James version of the Bible.

#### Nahum 1:1

- To what people is the book of Nahum addressed?
- Do you recall any other prophet who addressed the people of Nineveh? (The prophet Jonah, about 100 years earlier than Nahum)
- At the time Jonah wrote, what did God call on the people of Nineveh to do? (See Jonah 1:2)
- What was the response to the people of Nineveh at that time? (See Jonah 3:5-9)
- What did God do for them at that time? (See Jonah 3:10)
- Now Nahum is prophesying to the Ninevites again, 100 years later. Four or five generations have lived and died. Did the repentance of the Ninevites

of Jonah's time stick? Did they turn wholly to God and pass on this faith to their children? A clue is in the second word of the book. What does Nahum call his prophecy? What does this word imply? (Some weighty)

- How did God give Nahum this prophecy?
- From what town did Nahum come? (The town of Elcos was in Galilee, in northwestern Israel.)
- Galilee was called "Galilee of the Gentiles". This is because King Solomon gave it as a gift to Hiram for helping supply him with wood for building the temple in Jerusalem. For that reason, the original inhabitants were not dispelled, but were permitted to continue to live there, and intermarried with the Jews. Some of the Jews looked down on the region for that reason. Yet God called the prophet Nahum from that place. What does this teach you about God and His dealings with us?

1:2

- On whom does Nahum immediately center his prophecy?
- Why do you think this is appropriate?
- What aspect of God's character does he center on?
- Why do you think he centers on God's wrath at this particular time?
- What two words does Nahum use to describe the recipients of God's wrath?

- What two different verb tenses (times, like past, present, or future) are used in this verse? How is this significant?
- What word shows the basic character of God? (Jealous)
- How is God's righteous jealousy different from our sinful jealousy?
- What word shows God's emotion toward the ungodly?
- How does God's righteous anger differ from our sinful anger?
- What two words are used to describe God's action against the ungodly? (Averages and take vengeance. The two words are related. Averages is the verb form and vengeance is the noun form.)
- For whom is God's wrath reserved? What does that mean to us who love God?

### Nahum 1:3

- What three attributes or qualities of God are mentioned in the first two lines?
- How different are these qualities? How did they fit together?
- This verse says that God is slow to anger, and we have already seen that He is furious with the Ninevites. What does this imply?
- Remember again: The ministry of what other prophet demonstrated that God is slow to anger?

- In what aspects of what we commonly call nature does God have His way?
- If the clouds are high to us, yet under God's "feet", to speak in a figurative manner, what does this imply?
- What is the main emphasis or teaching of this verse?

1:4

- Verses 4 through 6 stand together as a single thought. Read them together and try to tell what main point the prophet Nahum is trying to make.
- In verse 4, what is God described as doing?
- Is the prophet predicting God will do this someday, or is he saying that God has power to do this whenever He wants?
- Have you seen the sea? Think how much water is in a sea. You can't even see across to the other side of a sea, and a sea is very, very deep. Is there any way in human terms we could make a sea dry? Yet this is such a simple thing to God that it only demands what?
- Bashan refers to a fertile land that was part of Israel. Carmel refers to a series of connected hills in Israel that were very beautiful. Lebanon also refers to an exceptionally beautiful mountain range, this one in Syria. Why do you think the author chose these three places? What do they have in common?
- Despite their beauty, what could happen to them in God's power?
- What were the Ninevites to understand by this? What did they have in common with the seas, all the rivers of the world, and these beautiful

places?

1:5

- What other parts of God’s creation obey Him with fear?
- Who trembles at His presence?
- What do you think this has to do with the Ninevites?
- What does it have to do with you?

1:6

- What question does verse 6 ask? What is the answer?
- How is God’s fury or anger described?
- By “rocks” the prophet probably means the great rocks or boulders of the mountains to which he has just referred. Mountains are considered immovable in human terms. We normally build roads around them or over them. Yet what will or can do to the rocks of the mountains?

1:7

- As we consider God’s anger over sin and His power to execute His judgment, what other aspect of God’s character should we also keep in mind?
- What is God to those who trust in Him?

- Trouble comes to everyone, but how do God's people face it differently from the ungodly?

- Is it hard for God to figure out who is trusting Him and who is not? Why or why not?
- Why is the judgment of God no terror to God's people?
- How does it make you feel to realize that God knows you are trusting in Him (or not, of course)?

1:8

- What does the possessive pronoun "its" (its place) refer to from previous verses? That is, what will come to an utter end?
- What will pursue the enemies of God?
- How fast and how decisively will this happen?
- Why do you think the prophet Nahum is telling the Ninevites this?

1:9

- What phrase is repeated in this verse that was also used in verse 8?
- This time, what will God make an utter end of?
- What will happen to the affliction they are imposing on Israel?

1:10

- What will happen to their forces that are attacking Israel?

- Picture in your mind stubble (dried grass) that is fully dried and then set on fire. How does it burn? How does this image apply to the Ninevites?
- Why do you think Nahum uses the descriptions “tangled thorns” and “drunken drunkards” to describe the actions or condition of the Ninevites?

### 1:11

- What problem person did they have in their midst? What was this person doing?
- Since this person was plotting such evil things, what does this say about this person’s position and authority in Nineveh?
- Remember that Nineveh was not just a big city. It was the capital city of the mighty Assyrian Empire. It was a city not just of great influence but of real authority over all in the empire. Who was this person likely to be?
- The Ninevites and the Assyrians saw the plots as being against Israel, but whom were they really against?
- This leader is described as being a wicked what? How does a counselor work?
- Usually we think of a counselor as one who gives advice, presumably good advice. Yet the counsel of this counselor is wicked and God describes the counselor himself as being wicked. Do you know of any wicked counselors where you live? Why and how do they give wicked counsel?

### 1:12



- The pronouns in this verse may be hard to follow unless we read the whole context. The “you” is the Assyrian king whom God is addressing. The “they” refers to the armies of Assyria which he sent against Israel. Historically, we know the king to be Sennacherib, who sent the armies of Assyria to destroy Jerusalem in 586 B.C. How were the armies of Sennacherib feeling after their attack on Jerusalem?
- Why were these feelings not a true picture of their position?
- What does Nahum say will happen to them?

### 1:13

- What does God say He will break off of him?  
DON'T QUITE UNDERSTAND THIS VERSE. IS GOD SPEAKING TO SENNACHERIB?

### 1:14

- If it is hard to understand whom God is addressing and what He is saying in verse 13, in verse 14 it is clear that God is addressing the king. Historically, we know that Sennacherib was murdered by his own two sons while he was worshiping his idol Nisroch in his shrine. How is this historical event predicted in this verse?
- A king's name is very important to him. Usually he wants to pass on the monarchy to his son. What does God say will happen to the king's name and thus, the monarchy?
- What does this mean, in light of the fact that Sennacherib is a part of history and thus, we do remember him?

- What would God do to the idols of Sennacherib?
- When someone is killed in an idol shrine, do people normally want to continue to worship there? Why not?
- What word did God use to describe the king's overall character?
- What kinds of things does the word "vile" bring to your mind?

1:15

- In contrast to the Assyrian king, what other messenger is pictured here?
- What is the message of this messenger?
- What is Judah (the southern part of Israel) commanded to do in light of all these predictions?
- What assurance are they given concerning the wicked king of Assyria?

Looking back

- What are the most important themes of chapter one?
- What have you learned that was new to you?
- In what ways has God challenged you for your own life?

Nahum 2:1

- What does the prophet Nahum say is about to happen to the Ninevites?
- Why does Nahum call on the Assyrians to fortify themselves? Will these fortifications be effective?
- If Nahum were talking with the Ninevites face-to-face, what tone of voice would he be using here? Why?

## 2:2

- What will God about do for Israel?
- Israel was the name God gave their ancestor Jacob after he came to know God personally, as well as the name of the nation of his descendants. Why do you think God mentions both names in this verse?
- It may not be immediately clear what people is being described in the latter part of this verse through the rest of the chapter. Verses 8 and 13 show us. Look ahead and find out. What people is being described?
- What word does God use to describe those who will execute judgment against Nineveh?
- What will happen to their crops (their vineyards)?

## 2:3


- What color is used to describe his shields and his mighty men? Why? What image does this bring to your mind?
- What do they bring with flaming torches?

- Look ahead to verse 13. What will God do to their chariots?

2:4

- How are the chariots of Nineveh described?
- What is a chariot? How was it used? Can you draw a picture of one?  
(Chariots were wheeled vehicles drawn by animals that were very often used for purposes of war. They conveyed soldiers quickly and offered some limited protection.)



-  Picture of a chariot
- What is probably happening here?
- Why do you think God would cause Nahum to mention Nineveh's chariots?

2:5

- What group of people is mentioned in verse 5?
- How are they described?
- What is being prepared?

2:6

- What is dissolved?
- How?

- The gates of the city of Nineveh were built on the Tigris-Euphrates rivers. Once the gates on those rivers were opened, the city was completely vulnerable. How does this knowledge help your understanding of the verse?
- The word palace designates both the house of the king and the shrine of his god Nisroch. What will happen to them?

2:7

- What judgment has been decreed by God upon Nineveh?
- What are her maidservants doing? Why?
- When do we normally cry and beat our breasts? What kind of a picture is God giving of the end of Nineveh?

2:8

- With what does Nahum compare Nineveh even from old times?
- The picture is of a spring-fed lake, which constantly replenishes itself with water. Many Bible scholars think this refers to the fact that Nineveh was a populous nation, always replenishing itself with people. Even in Jonah's time, a hundred years earlier, God said there were how many small children in the city? (See Jonah 4:11.)
- What is happening to that great population in this verse?
- Why do you think they are so anxious to flee the city?

2:9

- What are the invading soldiers saying to one another?
- What are spoils? (Goods of the enemy seized in war and taken by the victor)
- What kind of spoils are the invading armies taking? How much?

2:10

- What pronoun does the prophet use to speak of the defeated city of Nineveh?
- What three other words are used to describe her? This is her condition after what has happened?
- How are the people of the city described? How are they feeling?

2:11-12

- What animal do these verse use to describe Nineveh?
- What do we think of when we think of a lion? (A fierce predator)
- This lion did more than just kill to provide for his own family. How are his caves (dwelling places) described?
- Why do you think God chose the image of a lion to describe Nineveh? (Because of Assyria's fierce aggression and cruelty toward other countries, Israel in particular)

- Why does the prophet ask “Where is the dwelling of the lions?” What is he saying about the Ninevites?

2:13

- In this verse the Lord no longer delivers his message in figures of speech. What is God’s plain and clear message to Nineveh?
- Nineveh apparently prided itself in its chariots, but what does God say will happen to them?
- What will happen to their young?
- What will be heard no more?
- God has clearly come to the end of His patience with Nineveh. Are there sins growing secretly in your life that could bring you to destruction as they continue to grow?

Looking back:

- What is the main thought you take away from chapter 2?
- What significance has chapter 2 had for your own life?
- What common themes or thoughts do you see so far in both chapter 1 and chapter 2?

Nahum 3:1

- What does God call Nineveh?

- What does “woe” mean? Would you want God to say “woe” to you? Why not?
- What does the term “bloody city” imply about the activities of the Ninevites?
- What other crimes was the city full of?
- What does it mean that “its victim never departs”?

3:2

- What is being described in verse 2? (Look ahead to verse 3 if you need to do so.)
- What do you think is happening?

3:3

- What disaster is described in verse 3?
- How many are killed?

3:4

- What is Nineveh (and thus the kingdom of Assyria, of which Nineveh was the head) called?
- What is a harlot? (A prostitute—one who sells herself for money)
- What does the word “seductive” imply?



- She is also a mistress of what?
- What is sorcery?
- What two groups of people does she sell through her harlotry and sorcery?
- The use of these two words implies that Nineveh enforced her will upon other groups of people through deceit and through occult means or witchcraft. How prevalent are these sins in your nation? In your community? In your church? In your family? In your own life?

3:5

- What is the horrific truth of Nineveh's situation as far as God is concerned?
- When God is against us, can any human strength help us? Why not?
- In what graphic way does God describe His revealing of Nineveh's shame? With what does He compare it?
- Who will see Nineveh's nakedness and shame?

3:6

- In what other very graphic way does God describe what He will do to Nineveh in judgment?
- Why was it appropriate that their vileness become a spectacle for the nations to look at in horror?

3:7

- When others look at Nineveh, what will they say?
- In the past, they may have fled from the Ninevites in fear. Why will they flee in the future?
- What will they observe then about that great city?
- Who do you think will mourn for the fall of Nineveh?
- Think about being a person so bad that when you died, no one would mourn for you. Why were the Ninevites deserving of this?

3:8

- The fall of Nineveh is compared with what other ancient city? (No Amon was another name for Thebes, the ancient capital of southern Egypt, where the god Amon was worshiped. It was a large city filled with grandeur. The Assyrians (of whom Nineveh was the capital) captured it and it was eventually destroyed by fire.)
- What was ironic about No Amon being burnt? (She was surrounded by water, but even so, they were unable to stop the fire.)

3:9

- Who were No Amon's allies?
- Were they able to prevent the destruction of the city?
- Why do you think God is leading the prophet to tell this to the Ninevites?

## 3:10

- Even though No-Amon was great and strong, surrounded by water, having many allies, and having the temple of a god they considered powerful, what terrible things happened to her?
- How was she disgraced?
- What happened to ensure that she would not continue strong in the future?
- What does it mean to cast lots?
- For what or whom will they cast lots?
- How will they be treating these honourable men, and why is that such a disgrace?
- This phrase also goes back to the destruction of Amon-No. When that great city was captured by the Assyrians, there were so many wise men that the captors had not known what to do with them all, and so had cast dice for them as if they were a cheap prize in a game. The prophet is bringing to the minds of the Ninevites a history they know very well. How do you think they might have felt when he did so?

## 3:11

- What do you think it means that the people of Nineveh will be drunk? Compare Jeremiah 25:17 & 27.
- What will the Ninevites seek from the enemy?

## 3:12

- The Ninevites trusted that their strongholds would protect them. With what does God compare their strongholds?
- What is the prophet saying about all the things in which Nineveh is trusting for protection?
- What does it imply that the figs fall into the mouth of the eater?

## 3:13

- Why does he compare all the Ninevites to women?
- The Ninevites pride themselves in their gates, but what does Nahum say about those gates?
- What will happen to the bars of their gates?

## 3:14-15

- To get a better sense of the meaning of these verses, read them together. In verse 14, what does Nahum call on them to do?
- Is he offering them advice about how to escape the coming trouble, or is he mocking them, telling them to go ahead and try everything, but nothing will help?
- What do you think is the significance of the word “there” in verse 15?
- In the last part of verse 15, Nahum mocks their trust in what?

## 3:16-17

- What had the Ninevites greatly multiplied? What is a merchant?
- With what insect did the prophet compare them? Why do you think this comparison was effective?
- Business or trade is not sinful in itself, so what was wrong with the merchants of Nineveh?
- What other group of Ninevites are like locusts or grasshoppers? Why?
- Think about these verses in terms of the plunder of war. What are they saying?

3:18

- In this verse the prophet looks forward in time and describes the end of proud Nineveh, trusting in her own strength. Which groups of people are described? What has happened to them?

3:19

- One hundred years earlier, their wickedness was great, but Jonah gave a message of repentance and healing. How is the message of Nahum different from that of Jonah?
- Why was Nahum's message so different? What was different about the condition of the Ninevites in the time of Nahum as compared to the time of Jonah?
- We don't normally clap our hands when someone has a great calamity, yet Nahum says that everyone who hears about the fall of Nineveh will do so. Why?

- Nahum ends his prophecy with this question, “Upon whom has not your wickedness passed continually?” What does this question imply about their relations with other countries?

#### Looking Back:

- What do you think is the overall theme or message of the book of Nahum?
- You do not live in Assyria, so what significance do the prophecies against Nineveh have for you?
- Have you ever repented of a sin and then fallen back into the same old lifestyle? What does the book of Nahum say to you about this?



