

# **NAHUM - A STUDY GUIDE**

## **THE CENTRAL QUESTION:**

### **What does this book/story say to us about God?**

This question may be broken down further as follows:

- a. Why did God do it/allow it?
- b. Why did He record it for our study?

1. What would be missing from your picture of God if Nahum were left out of the Bible? Does it seem to you that these few books are especially full of violence? Could it be that the Jews who put them in the canon cherished these books as promises that God would wipe out their enemies?
2. Does God sometimes punish His children by just allowing them to reap the consequences of their own behavior, while at other times He has to actually bring on the punishment?
3. When children go astray from their Christian roots, is it their fault, or their parents' fault, or both? (Proverbs 22:6; John 9:1-3) Would it be fair to say of a human parent who had come to his wit's end in trying to deal with his child, when he allows that child to reap the consequences that he is showing his wrath? Would wrath be the best word to use? How do you describe God's so-called "emotional reaction" to sin? (Nahum 1:1-6,8-10) Should we call that "divine displeasure?" Is it "wrath?" Why would the Bible call it "wrath?" Can you think of a better word? How do you think God should react to sin? How should He portray Himself as reacting to sin? Is it possible that God sometimes uses this type of language to startle us or to wake us up to realize the seriousness of what is going on? Does God always do as He did in Nahum and almost immediately describe His love and His fairness? (Nahum 1:7)
4. Is it not likely that if Nahum had spoken in kind, gentle words to the people of Nineveh who were so cruel, that they would have despised the Hebrew prophet and the Hebrew God? Considering the story of Jonah, which took place about 150 years earlier, is it possible that the Ninevites now thought, "We don't have to take this God too seriously. After all, He didn't do anything the last time He threatened us?" Can you think of other places in the Bible where people take advantage of God's kindness? (See Romans 2:4)
5. Is it possible that God cared enough about the Assyrians that He hoped that His captive children might bear a witness to them? Is God just working on, century after century, to win a few people from each generation—a few Canaanites, a few Jews, a few Egyptians, a few Assyrians, a few Babylonians, a few Romans, a few Europeans, a few Americans—and after He's won enough, then He'll say the work is done?
6. **How can God inspire serious reverence and respect without causing fear?** If people come to understand how loving and kind God really is and how He feels about them, how is He supposed to maintain reverence?
7. How often do we feel that everything that happens is a result of something that we are doing? If suddenly we realized that a great revival was taking place in the world, would we stop to ask if maybe God had finally had to give up on us and do something for His own name's sake or would we immediately assume that the revival was a result of our own efforts?
8. Is it true that the closer God's children come to the point where He can no longer help them, the louder He raises His voice, the more seriously He speaks? (See Revelation 14:6-12) Can you imagine Jesus speaking in the words of these books? Or was it the Father? Or the Holy Spirit?
9. If the children of Israel had done what God wanted them to do in the first place, would there ever have been the need of messages and messengers like Jonah and Nahum? What did the angels learn from Jonah and Nahum?
10. What is Nahum 2:4 referring to?

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