

Small Group Guide: The Book of Nahum



Overview

This guide is designed to help your group dig deeper into the themes of the book of Nahum, its connection to Jonah, and what these two prophetic books reveal together about the character of God, the consequences of turning away from him, and the overarching story that points to Christ.

Key Takeaways

- 1. God is both patient and just.** Nahum describes a God who is slow to anger but who will not acquit the wicked. His patience is not passivity. His justice is not cruelty. Both exist fully and simultaneously in his character.
- 2. Repentance is not a one-time cultural event.** Nineveh repented under Jonah's preaching. Within 100 to 150 years, two to three generations, that same city had returned fully to idolatry and wickedness. Genuine faith must be passed on and maintained, not assumed.

3. God is a stronghold for those who trust him. Even in a book filled with judgment and destruction, Nahum 1:7 reminds us that God is good and is a refuge for those who trust in him. Judgment and refuge exist side by side in the same God.

4. The patterns of Scripture point consistently to Christ. The parallel between Jonah and Nahum, the connection between Assyrian cruelty and the roots of crucifixion, and the city of Capernaum as a potential link between Nahum and Jesus all point to a God who is weaving a single, unified story across all of history.

5. Pride and accumulated power offer no protection from God. Assyria had impenetrable walls, superior military technology, fertile land, and vast wealth. None of it protected them when God turned against them. What we trust in apart from God will ultimately fail.

Discussion Questions

Opening

- What is one thing from this sermon that stood out to you, surprised you, or stayed with you through the week?

Getting Into the Text

1. Nahum 1:2-3 describes God as jealous, slow to anger, furious, and great in power all at once. How do you personally tend to think about God? Do you lean more toward seeing him as patient and merciful, or as holy and just? What does it mean that he is fully both?
2. The pastor used the example of being jealous for his daughters' innocence to explain what it means that God is jealous. How does that illustration shape the way you understand God's jealousy? Does it change how you think about sin and why God takes it seriously?
3. Nineveh repented under Jonah and experienced God's mercy. Within a few generations, that repentance was gone and judgment came. What does that tell us about the nature of spiritual health in a community, a family, or a culture? What does it take to sustain genuine faith across generations?
4. The sermon pointed out that God predicted Nineveh's destruction by flood in Nahum 1:8, and that historically the Tigris River flooding in 612 BC is exactly what allowed Nineveh's walls to be breached. What does that fulfilled prophecy tell you

about the reliability of Scripture? How does it affect your confidence in the parts of Scripture that are still being fulfilled?

5. Nahum 1:7 sits in the middle of descriptions of God's wrath and says that the Lord is good and is a stronghold in the day of trouble for those who trust in him. Why do you think that verse is placed where it is? What does it mean for us practically that God can be both a consuming judge and a personal refuge?
6. The pastor drew a connection between Jonah as a parallel to Jesus, Nahum's possible connection to Capernaum where Jesus ministered, and the Assyrian invention of impalement as the root of crucifixion. How does seeing those threads woven together affect the way you read the Old Testament? Does it increase your confidence that the Bible is one unified story?
7. Assyria was known for its military strength, advanced technology, wealth, and what seemed like an impregnable city. The sermon says all of that became empty and desolate when God turned against them. What are the things in your own life, your community, or our culture that people tend to trust in instead of God? What does Nahum say about where that leads?

Personal Reflection

8. The sermon noted that America is only 250 years old and that church membership has already fallen below 50 percent for the first time in our history. How does the story of Nineveh speak to that reality? What responsibility do you feel personally in response to that trend?
9. For those who trust in God, he is a stronghold. For those who do not repent, he will not acquit the wicked. Where do you find yourself today in that tension? Is there an area of your life where you need to move from self-reliance toward trusting God as your refuge?

Practical Applications

This week, choose one of the following to put into practice:

- **Study the connection between Jonah and Nahum.** Read both books in one sitting. As you read, look for the ways the two stories mirror and contrast each other. Write down what you observe about God's character across both books.
- **Examine what you are trusting in.** Assyria trusted in walls, chariots, fertile land, and military strength. Make a short, honest list of the things you tend to rely on for

security, significance, or protection. Bring that list to God in prayer and ask him to show you where your trust is misplaced.

- **Have a conversation about spiritual legacy.** Nineveh's repentance did not survive two to three generations. Talk with someone in your family or a close friend about what it looks like to intentionally pass genuine faith to the next generation. What is one concrete step you could take toward that?
- **Memorize Nahum 1:7.** Spend the week committing this verse to memory. Reflect on what it means to you personally that God is a stronghold in the day of trouble for those who trust in him.

Closing Prayer Points

- Pray for a genuine, lasting faith in your own life and in your family that does not fade across generations.
- Pray for humility to trust God rather than your own strength, resources, or plans.
- Pray for those in your group and in your community who have not yet turned to God in repentance.
- Thank God that the same justice that demands punishment for sin was satisfied through the cross, making him both just and the one who justifies those who trust in him.

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Based on the Book of Nahum and Its Surrounding Themes



Day 1: The God Who Is Unlike Any Other

Reading: Nahum 1:1-7; Isaiah 40:18 (a rhetorical question about what can be compared to God, emphasizing his incomparable nature)

Devotional: The opening of Nahum confronts us with a God who defies easy categorization. He is simultaneously slow to anger and fierce in justice, patient and powerful, wrathful and good. We are tempted to flatten God into something manageable, something we can predict and contain. But Nahum will not allow that. The same God who is a stronghold for those who trust him is the God before whom mountains quake and hills melt. This is not a contradiction. It is the fullness of who he is. The question posed throughout this passage is rhetorical: who can stand before his indignation? No one. And yet, for those who trust him, he is not a threat. He is a refuge. Do not shrink God down to fit your comfort. Let the full weight of who he is draw you to deeper trust and deeper awe.

Reflection: In what ways have you reduced God to something more manageable or predictable? How does the full picture of his character, both his justice and his goodness, change the way you approach him today?

Practical Application: Spend time today meditating on one attribute of God that makes you uncomfortable. Ask him to help you hold that attribute alongside his goodness, and journal what you discover.

Day 2: The Danger of Drifting

Reading: Nahum 1:8-14; Judges 2:10-12 (describing how a generation arose that did not know the Lord and turned to other gods)

Devotional: One of the most sobering realities in the book of Nahum is the timeline. Only 100 to 150 years earlier, the city of Nineveh had genuinely repented. They had turned toward the living God. And yet, within two to three generations, that repentance had evaporated entirely. The children or grandchildren of those who wept before God were now so deeply entrenched in wickedness and idolatry that God declared their destruction without offering another call to repentance. Spiritual drift does not happen all at once. It happens quietly, gradually, across generations, when the stories of what God has done are no longer told, no longer believed, no longer lived. The warning here is not abstract. It is deeply personal. What are you passing on? What are the people around you inheriting from your faith?

Reflection: How intentional are you about preserving and communicating the things God has done in your life to the next generation? What habits or patterns in your life might be quietly contributing to spiritual drift?

Practical Application: Identify one person in your life who is younger in age or younger in faith. This week, tell them a specific story of something God has done in your life. Do not let the testimony go untold.

Day 3: Jonah, Nahum, and the Shadow of Christ

Reading: Jonah 1:17; Matthew 12:39-40 (Jesus referencing the sign of Jonah, connecting his death and resurrection to Jonah's three days in the fish); Nahum 1:15

Devotional: The connection between Jonah and Nahum is not merely historical. It is theological and deeply prophetic. Jonah, a Jewish prophet, gave his life for Gentiles on a boat, descended into what he called Sheol in the depths of the sea, and was raised up after three days to bring a message that led to the repentance and salvation of an entire Gentile city. Jesus himself identified this pattern as a sign pointing directly to his own death and resurrection. Nahum, whose name means comfort, may have come from the very city

where much of Jesus' ministry was later performed. The threads running through these two small books are woven together with the larger story of a God who pursues the lost, who dies and rises, and whose message reaches beyond every border and boundary. You are living inside a story that is far larger than your own life.

Reflection: How does seeing the shadow of Christ in the Old Testament deepen your confidence in the trustworthiness of Scripture? What does it mean to you personally that God was planning your redemption long before you were born?

Practical Application: Read through Jonah 2 slowly today, noting the language of death, the grave, and rescue. Pray through that passage as a prayer of thanksgiving for your own rescue in Christ.

Day 4: Pride, Power, and the Shaking of the Fig Tree

Reading: Nahum 2:1-13; Nahum 3:12; Proverbs 16:18 (a well-known verse about pride preceding destruction)

Devotional: Nahum's description of Nineveh is a portrait of a civilization at the height of its power. Their walls were impenetrable. Their army was the finest in the known world. Their chariots were technologically superior. Their treasury was full. And yet Nahum uses a striking image to describe all of it: a fig tree with ripened fruit. The moment it is shaken, everything falls. The wealth, the strength, the pride, all of it hits the ground in an instant. God does not need a superior army to bring down the greatest empire on earth. He needs only a flood, a crack in a wall, a river that rises. What are you trusting in that feels solid but is actually a fig tree waiting to be shaken? God is not against strength or blessing. He is against the pride that forgets where strength and blessing come from.

Reflection: Where in your life are you most tempted to trust in your own resources, abilities, or security rather than in God? What would it look like to hold those things with an open hand?

Practical Application: Make a list of three things you tend to rely on for security. For each one, write a short prayer surrendering it to God and acknowledging him as your true stronghold, as Nahum 1:7 describes.

Day 5: Justice, Joy, and the God Who Makes All Things Right

Reading: Nahum 3:18-19; Revelation 19:1-3 (the heavenly multitude rejoicing at the fall of Babylon, a city representing corrupt world power); Romans 12:19 (the instruction to leave vengeance to God, who declares that he will repay)

Devotional: The final verse of Nahum is striking. All who hear the news of Nineveh's fall will clap their hands. There will be rejoicing at the destruction of this empire. That can feel uncomfortable to modern readers who have been taught that celebrating anyone's downfall is wrong. But this is not petty revenge. This is the relief of the oppressed when oppression finally ends. The Assyrian Empire was built on cruelty. They invented the very torture methods that would eventually evolve into crucifixion, the instrument of Christ's death. And yet that instrument of wickedness became the means of the world's salvation. God does not merely punish evil. He redeems it. He takes the worst that human cruelty can devise and turns it into the doorway of grace. Justice will come. But in Christ, justice and mercy met on a cross, and the story did not end in destruction. It ended in resurrection. That is the God you serve.

Reflection: Is there an area of your life where you are waiting for God to make something right? How does the resurrection of Christ give you confidence that God's justice is not the end of the story?

Practical Application: Write down one situation in your life or in the world where injustice feels overwhelming. Surrender it to God in prayer, citing Romans 12:19, and ask him to help you trust his timing and his justice rather than carrying the weight of it yourself.