

BGM BIBLE COLLEGE

THE BOOK OF NAHUM

1. The Title of the Book

This book is also called *the Book of Vengeance*, forasmuch as the LORD was about to bring judgment upon Nineveh, because they oppressed the people of God. The LORD sent two prophets unto the Assyrian nation, and there lieth an interval of an hundred and fifty years between them. By Jonah the LORD sent a message of mercy, and they repented at his preaching; and in that event the men of Nineveh learned that the LORD is slow to anger. But by Nahum the LORD sent a message of judgment, because they continued not in repentance, but returned again unto their former ways. Thus the men of Nineveh learned this second time that the LORD is great in power, and that He will by no means clear the guilty.

2. The Occasion of the Book

For two centuries the Assyrians had grievously oppressed the people of Israel and Judah. Their kings were cruel and merciless, and in the chronicles of the earth there was no nation more terrible than the Assyrians. Though their enmity sprang from the days of Jonah, yet after four generations they turned again with fierceness unto their evil ways. Thus may we say that the Assyrians had tasted of the goodness of God, yet they preserved not humility before Him; wherefore judgment from the LORD was appointed unto them?

For “the LORD is jealous, and the LORD revenged; yea, the LORD revenged, and is furious: the LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries, and reserved wrath for His enemies. The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked. His way is in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet” (**Nahum 1:2–3**). Therefore behold the goodness and severity of God: severity upon them which fell; but toward thee goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off (**Romans 11:22**).

The Book of Nahum is an admonition unto all nations. Let them beware who put the patience, longsuffering, and silence of the LORD to the test. For though God pardoned those who repent, yet He pardoned not those who continue in their sins. The very nature of God—His holiness, His justice, and His power—demanded judgment.

In respect of time, Nahum was contemporary with the prophet Zephaniah, and he prophesied, as many suppose, in the days of Manasseh king of Judah. Manasseh was the darkest king in the history of Judah. The message of judgment upon Assyria was therefore a great consolation unto Judah.

3. The Author of the Book

The author of this book is the prophet Nahum. Concerning Nahum but little is known. His name (a shortened form of Nehemiah) signified “comfort” or “consolation.” He is also called

“the Elkoshite,” and many scholars believe Elkosh to have been a town lying betwixt Jerusalem and Gaza.

4. The Message of the Book

The message of the book appeared in three parts:

- (a) **Chapter 1** – *The proclamation of judgment upon Nineveh.*
- (b) **Chapter 2** – *The description of the judgment upon Nineveh.*
- (c) **Chapter 3** – *The worthiness of Nineveh to receive judgment.*

5. The Unique Features of the Book

The Fulfilment of Prophecy:

The Babylonians and many other nations attempted to seize Nineveh, yet for two years they prevailed not, for the city was compassed about with strong walls. But afterward the River Tigris (the Gerges River) brake down the wall on one side; and through that breach the nations ascended and overthrew it.

THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK

1. The Title of the Book

This book is also called *the Book of Faith*, because therein is found the renowned verse concerning faith, which is also cited in the New Testament: “Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith” (**Habakkuk 2:4**). “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith” (**Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38**).

2. The Occasion of the Book

Habakkuk prophesied in those last years when Judah was about to be taken captive by the Babylonians. Judah had continually rejected the prophets and their message, and walked in idolatry. The LORD had no other way left to correct them. Therefore through Habakkuk He declared that the Babylonians should be His instrument to chastise them. This was hard for the prophet to accept, that God should use a heathen nation to punish His own people.

In Habakkuk’s prophetic burden there appeared a struggle within his soul: first, that God seemed silent concerning the sins of His own people; second, that God would use an idolatrous nation to bring judgment. Yet in the end Habakkuk perceived that the wisdom of God is higher than man’s, and that His judgments are righteous altogether, and are to be accepted by faith.

3. The Author of the Book

The writer is the prophet Habakkuk. Concerning him also little is known. His name signified “embracing” or “he who embraced.” Many suppose that he was of the Levites, joined with the singers and musicians of the Temple (**Habakkuk 3:1, 17–19**). The structure of the book resembled the psalms. God called Habakkuk to the prophetic office. In respect of time he was contemporary with Nahum, Zephaniah, and Jeremiah.

4. The Message of the Book

Habakkuk prophesied that judgment shall come upon Judah, and he declared also the judgment that shall come upon Babylon.

(a) **Chapter 1 – The Burden of Habakkuk:**

His burden was twofold: how God could remain silent at Judah's sins, and how God could use an idolatrous nation to punish His people.

(b) **Chapter 2 – The Answer:**

Without a heart of faith the purposes of God cannot be understood. God shall also judge the Babylonians in due season.

(c) **Chapter 3 – The Prayer of Habakkuk:**

Habakkuk prayed for revival, and by faith acknowledged that God restored His people in times past, and shall do so again.

5. The Unique Features of the Book

(a) The revelation of faith: *the just shall live by his faith.*

(b) The communion betwixt God and His prophet: one third of the book is dialogue.

(c) The book beginneth with lamentation and ended with a song.

THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK

2. The Occasion of the Book

Habakkuk prophesied in the last days before Judah was carried away into Babylonian captivity. For long had Judah continually rejected the words of the prophets and walked in idolatry. There remained no other way for God to correct them. Therefore did the LORD make Habakkuk to declare that He would punish His people by the hand of the Chaldeans?

The prophet found it hard to comprehend that God would employ a heathen nation to execute judgment upon His own people. In the burden of his prophecy there appeared a struggle within his soul. Yet at length Habakkuk perceived that the wisdom of God is higher than the understanding of men, and that it is meet to accept by faith that God is ever righteous, and His judgments are beyond question.

3. The Author of the Book

The author of this book is the prophet Habakkuk. Concerning him little is recorded. His name signifies “embracing” or “he who embraced.” He was perhaps of the Levites and connected with the singers and musicians of the Temple (**Habakkuk 1:1; 3:17–18; 1:19**). The structure of the book is like unto the Psalms. God called Habakkuk to the prophetic office. In respect of time, he was contemporary with Nahum, Zephaniah, and Jeremiah.

4. The Message of the Book

Habakkuk prophesied that judgment shall come upon Judah, and also upon Babylon.

(a) Chapter 1 – The Burden of Habakkuk:

The burden of Habakkuk was twofold: first, how God could be silent concerning the sins of His people, and not execute judgment upon them; and second, how God could punish His people by the hand of an idolatrous nation.

(b) Chapter 2 – The Answer:

Without a heart of faith the purposes of God cannot be discerned. Nevertheless, the LORD shall punish the Chaldeans also in due season.

(c) Chapter 3 – The Prayer of Habakkuk:

Habakkuk prayed for restoration, and by faith acknowledged that in times past the LORD hath restored His people.

5. The Unique Features of the Book

- (a) The revelation of faith: Habakkuk declared that the just shall live by faith.
- (b) The communion between God and Habakkuk: one third of the book is dialogue, wherein Habakkuk seeketh understanding.
- (c) The book beginneth in lamentation and ended in a song of praise.

THE BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH

1. The Title of the Book

For the matter contained therein, this book is called the Book of Wrath, or the Book of Judgment. In this brief book the term “the day of the LORD” is found seven times. Like the other prophets of Judah, the central theme of Zephaniah’s prophecy is that the day of the LORD shall come, and God shall execute judgment. This day of wrath cometh upon Judah. The expression “the day of the LORD” is not limited unto the time of Zephaniah, but also pointed forward unto the second coming of Christ.

2. The Occasion of the Book

The people of Judah were a nation set apart according to the law of God, and consecrated unto Him. They were distinguished from other nations, yet by reason of their sins they had departed from the LORD. God continually sent His prophets, but they heeded not His words. Zephaniah prophesied in the days of Manasseh and Amon, declaring the coming judgment (Zephaniah 1:14). He also prophesied in the days of Josiah.

THE BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH

3. The Author of the Book

The author of this book is the prophet Zephaniah. Concerning him little is known. His name signifies “The LORD hath hidden.” This is significant, for the book declared that in the Day of Judgment God shall be a hiding place. Zephaniah was of the royal lineage; King Hezekiah was among his ancestors. According to scholars, Zephaniah was a man of humility who hearkened unto the call of God.

4. The Message of the Book

The prophecy of Zephaniah contained three principal points:

- (a) That God shall bring judgment upon Judah and the surrounding nations.
- (b) That the faithful shall find a hiding place in the day of the LORD.
- (c) That God shall bring salvation and restoration unto His people.

5. The Unique Features of the Book

This book declared the zeal of God, who will not suffer the devotion of His people to be shared with another (Zephaniah 1:18; 3:8).

THE BOOK OF HAGGAI

1. The Title of the Book

This book is called the Book of the Rebuilding of the Temple, for Haggai prophesied when the work of restoring the Temple was undertaken. Haggai is the second smallest book of the Old Testament. The prophetic ministry of Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the people to labour in the work of restoration.

2. The Occasion of the Book

King Cyrus of Persia commanded the Jews to return unto their land and restore the Temple. Haggai returned with Zerubbabel from Babylon and began his prophetic service at the early days of the rebuilding. The people faced opposition, and for fifteen or sixteen years the work of the Temple was halted, the people being absorbed in their own affairs. Their hearts grew faint and they despaired. God sent Haggai and Zechariah to stir up the people to leave their personal work and to give precedence unto the house of the LORD, that they might complete the Temple amidst opposition.

3. The Author of the Book

The author is the prophet Haggai. Concerning him little is recorded. His name signifies “my delight” or “festive.” Haggai was likely born in captivity and had not seen the Temple in its former glory. He ministered only three months and twenty-four days, yet he was hearkened unto by the people of his day.

4. The Message of the Book

Haggai’s book showed clearly that God must have the first place. When men put God behind and prioritize their own work, they prosper not.

5. The Unique Features of the Book

The book contained a singular prophecy concerning the Messiah: “I will shake all nations, and the desirable things of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts, and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts” ([Haggai 2:7–9](#)).

THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH

1. The Title of the Book

This book is called the Book of the Visions of Zechariah. Eight visions are recounted, all relating unto the Messiah.

2. The Occasion of the Book

The background of this book is the same as Haggai. The work of rebuilding Jerusalem had ceased for fifteen years. God sent Haggai and Zechariah to encourage the people to labour once more in the restoration of the city of God.

3. The Author of the Book

The author is the prophet Zechariah. In biblical times, this was a common name, and about twenty-nine persons are recorded with this name. Little is known of the prophet Zechariah. His name signifies “The LORD remembered,” meaning that God remembered His people and shall restore them. He was of the priestly line of the Levites, born in Babylon, and returned with Zerubbabel to Jerusalem. Zechariah ministered among the people for about forty years.

4. The Message of the Book

As with Haggai, the chief message is to encourage the people to labour in the work of restoration, but Zechariah’s book also emphasize the coming of the Messiah, which was the true hope of the people.

5. The Unique Features of the Book

The distinguishing feature of Zechariah is the eight visions which foretell the coming of the Messiah and the ultimate restoration of God’s people.

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

1. The Title of the Book

This book is called the Book of the Messenger of the LORD. Malachi is the last of the writing prophets, speaking after a silent period of four hundred years. This silence was broken by the voice of John the Baptist in the wilderness.

2. The Occasion of the Book

After Haggai and Zechariah, Malachi ministered among the restored households of Judah for seventy years. At this time Nehemiah was governor. The Temple and the city of Jerusalem were restored, and the people were walking in the worship of God and in the observance of moral law.

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

3. The Author of the Book

The author of this book is the prophet Malachi. Concerning him, little is known beyond that which is written in the book itself. The name Malachi signifies “My messenger.”

4. The Message of the Book

The message of Malachi is directed unto those who had turned away from the Temple and whose hearts were far from God. Their deeds were corrupt, and they had forgotten the captivity, returning again unto sin. Their worship was formal and without sincerity. The priests knew how true worship of God should be offered, yet they gave Him not the due portion. Malachi’s book called the people to turn back unto God, and exhorted the priests to serve faithfully. Moreover, Malachi declared the hope of the coming Messiah.

5. The Unique Features of the Book

- (a) The book contained a question concerning sin and the answer thereto.
- (b) It revealed the prophecy concerning tithes and offerings.
- (c) It speaketh of the restoration of the families of God.

