



5

God Judges Nations

Key Theme

- God used men to record His words.

Key Passages

- Nahum 1:1–5, 1:14, 2:13; Jonah 1:1–2, 3:5, 3:10

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify the source of the message of Nahum.
- Connect the books of Jonah and Nahum.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

Students will fill in the missing letters from the memory verse. Then, they will say the verse to each other and/or the teacher.



Activity 1: God Judges Nations Class Sort

Students will add cards to the board during the lesson.



Studying God's Word

The Lord's wrath burned against the wicked Assyrians. But before He destroyed them, He sent His prophet Nahum to the capital, Nineveh, to warn them of God's judgment. The people would not repent like they had when Jonah came 100 years earlier. So God used another nation to destroy Nineveh and the Assyrians.



Activity 2: Three in a Row Review Game

Students will answer review questions about the lesson and try to be the first to get three in a row.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO



COME ON IN

- Print the Memory Verse Review Sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.



GOD JUDGES NATIONS CLASS SORT

- Print and cut the 12 Class Sort Cards from the Resource DVD-ROM. Students will put them on the board during the lesson. Be sure each student has at least one card. Make duplicates if necessary.
- Print one Lesson Board Work Outline for your use from the Resource DVD-ROM.



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.



THREE IN A ROW REVIEW GAME

- Print one Three in a Row Review Sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM.
- Draw a large 9 square grid pattern on the board.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Memory Verse Poster
- Memory Verse Review Sheet for each student
- Pencils

- Lesson Board Work Outline
- Class Sort Cards—each student should have at least one
- Poster putty or tape

- Student Take Home Sheets

- Three in a Row Review Sheet



Memory Verse

Isaiah 42:8 I am the Lord, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to carved images.

► **Pace your lesson!** Use the clocks to mark the time you want to finish each section. This will help you stay on track and finish on time. You may need to shorten or drop sections as necessary.





Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the lesson key passages along with this background.

God works throughout history to accomplish His plans. Nineveh arose as the capital of the powerful nation Assyria. Assyria was a growing power in the region and had taken control of a major portion of the Middle East. God was aware that Nineveh was a wicked city and that evil was pervasive throughout the empire. In His kindness to the heathen nation, God sent Jonah to proclaim a message of judgment against Nineveh and the Assyrians (Jonah 1:2). Jonah's message was received by the people of Nineveh. Even the king responded in repentance (Jonah 3:6–9). God saw that they had turned from their evil ways, and in His mercy, He spared the city (Jonah 3:10).

Their affection for God and His laws did not last long, however. Within 100 years, Nineveh had returned to idolatry. The king at that time was seeking to magnify his own name over God's.

Enter Nahum—at a time in history when Assyria, at the height of its power, was hated and feared by all nations. God used Nahum to deliver a prophecy of doom concerning Assyria: “The Lord has given a command concerning you: ‘Your name shall be perpetuated no longer. Out of the house of your gods I will cut off the carved image and the molded image. I will dig your grave, for you are vile’” (Nahum 1:14). God hated the cruelty, sin, and idolatry of the Assyrian nation and was about to smash it.

So now God's judgment was coming on Assyria because of their wickedness and sinfulness. But wait a minute! God was going to judge Assyria for her cruelty and sin, and yet they carried out His will, His judgment on the Israelite nation when they conquered the Northern Kingdom. It had been God's plan that Assyria overthrow Israel and deport them. It doesn't appear just that God would then turn around and judge the Assyrian nation who carried out His will against Israel.

But God can do no wrong. His plans are perfect, and whatever He does is fair and just and righteous. Although we often don't understand what He does in the Bible and throughout history, we must never accuse God of doing wrong. As Abraham said to God before He judged Sodom, “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (Genesis 18:25).

The Israelites willingly rejected God and turned to worshipping false gods—their judgment was just. The Assyrians willingly attacked another nation and took it

captive, fulfilling their own evil desires for power. Each side sinned, and God used this sin to accomplish His plans without sinning Himself. We could say that God uses sin sinlessly. Just as God warned Israel to return to Him but judged them by sending Assyria to conquer them when they refused to repent, He then used Nahum to warn Nineveh of coming judgment. They chose not to repent, so God judged them by sending another nation, the Babylonians, to satisfy His judgment on them.

Under the leadership of Nabopolassar, the Babylonians rose and conquered the Assyrians about 100 years after they had overthrown Israel. This occurred only about 25 years after Nahum's writing and prophecy of this very judgment.

In most cases throughout the Bible, the judgment delivered by God came at the hand of other people. He delivered the message through people and brought the judgment through people. We are aware, of course, of notable exceptions where God sent fire from heaven (Genesis 19:24) or flooded the entire earth (Genesis 7:17), but God typically acted through people.

Again, let's remember that God can do no wrong. Although we may not always understand how and why God does certain things, He is always faithful to His own character. He cannot sin, and He always conducts His plans on the earth in a just way—in a manner that brings glory to Himself (Romans 11:36). God is in control, and we can absolutely rest in knowing that the God of all the earth does what is right—His own righteous, unchanging character demands that.

HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

Placing Nahum in the history of Israel is a bit more difficult than most of the other prophets. For example, Amos opened his book with a detailed list of the kings in Israel and Judah reigning at the time of his prophecy. But Nahum didn't give us that historical context. We can, however, be certain of some things. Because Nahum spoke of Assyria and Nineveh in their glory, his prophecy must have been written at a time when Assyria was prospering. Up until the end of the reign of Ashurbanipal, who ruled Assyria from 668–626 BC, Assyria prospered. We also know that Nineveh was overthrown by Nabopolassar in 626 BC, which was the judgment Nahum prophesied about.

The other interesting tidbit in the text is that Nahum calls himself an Elkoshite, indicating where he might

be from (Nahum 1:1). There are several different possibilities for this location. One is Al Qosh in Iraq, so it is possible that Nahum or his parents were among those exiled from Israel in 721 and resettled in the north of the Assyrian territories. With all of this in mind, Nahum likely delivered his prophecy against Nineveh around 650 BC at the height of Assyria's power. God used a nation that He prospered to bring judgment upon Israel. And eventually, that nation would be overthrown by the Babylonians who would capture Jerusalem, taking the remainder of God's people captive.

Remember, only about 150 years passed from the time of Jonah—when the entire city of Nineveh repented—to Nahum and his prophecy. And the fall of Nineveh came only about 25 years after the prophetic proclamation from God through Nahum.

What a reminder of how quickly an entire nation can rebel against God. Or a family! Or a person! Because God is jealous for His own name, He will not leave unbelief and rebellion unpunished. Only in Christ does anyone have hope of being forgiven of rebellion against God. God shows His kindness in sending a call to repentance in the face of judgment

(Romans 2:4). Also, Jesus has shown us the kindness of God by placing Himself in our place—trading our sins for His perfection. What a glorious truth to proclaim to others and to cherish in our own hearts.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Lord, you are the Creator of the universe. You alone deserve my worship and praise. You warned your people and called them to repentance before you brought destruction. You showed them your kindness. In the same way, you are kind to give us your Word to show us the way to be saved from your wrath through Jesus. O, how I love Him and the truth of your Word! I want to take your warnings and your Word and the gospel to my family and friends and beyond, as Nahum did. Help me to impart these important truths to my class this week.

➤ Because of the age and ability of 1st and 2nd graders to read and comprehend, we encourage you to read the Scriptures to the students. However, if you have strong readers, by all means have them participate by reading God's Word.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will complete the Memory Verse Review Sheet by filling in the blanks.
- They will say the verse to each other and/or to you.

This time at the beginning of class should be used to review the memory verse. We have provided an activity sheet on the Resource DVD-ROM for you to use. You may have other ideas and ways to encourage your students to memorize the verse.



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme Posters provided with each lesson, quickly review the previous lesson(s) with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you display the Lesson Theme Posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



God Judges Nations Class Sort

MATERIALS

- Lesson Board Work Outline
- Class Sort Cards
- Poster putty or tape

INSTRUCTIONS

Print and cut Class Sort Cards. You may need to make duplicates. Each student should have at least one card to put on the board during the lesson.

Pass the cards out at the beginning of class. Read the cards to the students as you pass them out, making sure the students know what their cards say. As you teach the class, the students will add their cards to the board in the appropriate place.

After students add their cards to the board, have them repeat the point and review what is already posted.

I have some cards to pass out before we get started. As we study the Bible today, we will be putting all of these cards on the board. I want you to pay close attention so you know when it is your turn to put your card on the board!

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

As we study today and add our cards to the board, we will learn more about what God is like and how He dealt with the wicked nation of Assyria.



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

Refer to Lesson 4 Lesson Theme Poster. God used the nation of Assyria to destroy the northern kingdom of Israel because the people would not turn back to God. Now God was going to punish and judge the nation of Assyria.

► Use the History of Israel Poster included with your teacher kit to show your class where the biblical accounts you study chronologically fit into this timeline.

The Assyrians carried out God’s will when they conquered Israel, but they did not love the Lord. They did not worship Him alone. And God cannot stand sin of any kind. The Assyrians were a mean, evil, and wicked people.

Refer to Quarter 2, Lesson 10 Lesson Theme Poster (Jonah). The city of Nineveh was the capital of Assyria. That city may sound familiar to you because it is where God sent the prophet Jonah about 100 years earlier after his three-day “vacation” in the belly of a great fish. We are going to hear something different about Nineveh. I’m going to read from the book of Nahum. Here it is! *Open your Bible to Nahum 1. Show the students. Help them find the book in their Bibles.*

Nahum was one of the prophets God used to speak His Word and warn the people of His judgment. Nahum was called to tell the people about the judgment that was coming and to write the very words of God. *Refer to the Roles of the Prophets Poster.*

Nahum 1:1–2

We’ll read Nahum 1:1–2 to get started. *Read Nahum 1:1–2 emphasizing the answers to the questions below.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? Who was Nahum’s prophecy about? This is an oracle concerning whom?
Nahum 1:1. Nineveh.

That’s right. God sent Nahum to speak to Nineveh. But Nahum also told us some things about God.

- ? As we read the Bible we are going to answer the question “What is God like?” That is Card #1. Who has that card? Come and put it up on the board. *Have the student put Card #1 on the board.*

Nahum 1:2 tells us a few things about God. Take a look at your cards so you can figure out what they are. *Re-read 1:2 emphasizing the answers.*

- ? The Lord is a jealous and avenging God! Wow! That doesn’t sound very good, does it? What does it mean that God is jealous? *Allow discussion.*

When we say God is jealous, it means He alone is to be worshipped. He wants all of our praise and glory. And He deserves it because He is the Creator of all things—in heaven above, on the earth, and even in all the seas!

- ? Who has Card #2? It says that God is jealous. Bring it up here and put it under Card #1. This tells us something about what God is like. Can someone read this for us? *Assign a reader. Have the student put Card #2 on the board.*

- ? This verse also says the Lord is an avenging God. What does avenge mean?
Allow discussion.

Avenge means that God must punish those who do wrong or sin against Him.

? Now who has Card #3? Can you bring it up here? Can someone read it for us? It goes right under Card #2. Assign a reader. Have the student put Card #3 on the board.

God is jealous and wants all the praise to go to Him alone—because He is God! And He avenges or punishes those who don't obey Him. But this next verse tells us something else about God. Read Nahum 1:3 emphasizing "slow to anger."

? What did this say about God? He is slow to anger.

? Good! Who has Card #4? You can bring it up and put it under Card #3. Have the student put Card #4 on the board.

God is slow to anger. He is patient. He warns us and warns us. So even though He is jealous, and He must punish sin, He is slow to anger.

Now I'm going to read Nahum 1:4–5. Listen carefully. It tells us some things that God is in control of! There are seven things this verse mentions. And all of these are things in God's control! Read Nahum 1:4–5. Emphasize "sea, rivers, flower, mountains, hills, earth, all who dwell in it."

? Did you hear that? Who can tell me one thing? Re-read the verse. Help the students determine the seven things this verse mentions.

This verse tells us about just a little of God's amazing power. Who can tell me what the attribute is that describes God as all-powerful? Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. Omnipotent.

? Who has Card #5? It says God is omnipotent—all powerful. Bring that up here and put it under Card #4. Have the student put Card #5 on the board.

God is omnipotent. He controls the seas, rivers, flowers, mountains—He has power over everything!

Discover the Truth

Refer to the Cards posted. Before Nahum gave God's message of warning, he told the people some things about who God is! God is a jealous God. He must punish sin. He is slow to anger, but will eventually judge! And God is all-powerful. God delivered His message to Nahum, and Nahum had to bring the news of what this great God was about to do to the people of Assyria and Nineveh. It was a message from the great, Creator God—the omnipotent One. It was a message against Nineveh—a message of judgment.



READ THE WORD

Nahum set the stage about who God is. Now he had to bring the message of warning! This great and powerful God was about to destroy the people of Assyria and the city of Nineveh.

Nahum 1:3

Nahum 1:4–5

OMNIPOTENT
(Refer to Attributes Poster)

➤ Call on individual students to read the cards on the board as a review or refer to the cards as you recap.

? Who has Card #6? Bring the card and put it next to Card #1. Can someone read it for us? *What was God's message to Assyria? Have the student put Card #6 on the board.*

So. Let's find out what God's message was. I'm going to read a bit more. This is a hard verse. Let me see you listening really well! *Read Nahum 1:14.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

? The Lord spoke through Nahum. We will use the cards to explain what this verse means! Who has Card #7? Can you read it? *The Assyrians would be forgotten.*

Good. Put that under Card #6. These people would be forgotten because of their sin against God. *Have the student put Card #7 on the board.*

? And who has Card #8? What does that say? *God would destroy the idols.*

That's right. The Assyrians had many idols. They did not worship God alone. And God was going to destroy those idols. Put Card #8 under Card #7. *Have the student put Card #8 on the board.*

God was going to destroy the people because of their sinfulness. They would be forgotten and their idols would be destroyed!

That wasn't all of God's warnings. There were many more. I want to read one more. See if you can understand what it says. *Read Nahum 2:13 again trying to emphasize the answers to the questions below.*

? Who was against the people of Nineveh and Assyria? *The Lord of hosts.*

? What was the Lord going to burn? *Their chariots.*

? Someone has that on a card. Who has Card #9? What does it say? *God would burn their chariots. Put Card #9 up on the board. Have the student put Card #9 on the board.*

? And once again, God told them what would become of them. Listen as I re-read this. *Re-read Nahum 2:13b. Would they be remembered? No. They would be heard of no more.*

? They would be forgotten. They would not be heard of. Who has Card #10? What does it say? *They would be heard no more. Put that last card in place. Have the student put Card #10 on the board.*

The mighty Assyrians and the city of Nineveh would be heard no more. The Lord would silence them.

Discover the Truth

Refer to the cards on the board. Nahum brought a message of doom to Nineveh. The Lord of hosts had spoken. Though He is slow to anger, God will finally

judge sin. God is jealous when He doesn't get the praise He deserves. He will not stand for carved images, wooden statues, false gods, or any idol. The people of Nineveh did not give God the glory, so their city would be destroyed.



READ THE WORD

? So, who did we say God had already sent to Nineveh? Do you remember? It was about 100 years before Nahum went. It had to do with a big fish, the sea, and someone being swallowed by the fish! *Refer to Quarter 2, Lesson 5 Lesson Theme Poster. God sent Jonah to Nineveh!*

Well, Nahum did not have good news for Nineveh. Jonah didn't either. But when Jonah went to Nineveh, the people did something. Listen to this and tell me if you can figure out what the people did when Jonah went to Nineveh 100 years before Nahum. This is in the book of Jonah. *Read Jonah 1:1–2. Re-read the verse to encourage the students to answer the questions below.*

Jonah 1:1–2

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? Who did the Word of the Lord come to? *Jonah 1:1. Jonah.*
- ? What kind of city was Nineveh? *Jonah 1:2. A great city.*
- ? It was a great city. But how were the people there? *Jonah 1:2. Wicked.*

That's right. God sent Jonah to Nineveh. The city was great—the people were wicked. And their wickedness was against God. Now turn to Jonah 3:5. This happened after Jonah warned the people that God would judge if they continued being wicked. *Read Jonah 3:5.*

Jonah 3:5

- ? What did the people do after Jonah spoke to them? *They believed.*

Yes! They believed Jonah, and they believed in God! After they believed in God, the people did something else. Let's read a little further down in Jonah 3:10. *Read Jonah 3:10.*

Jonah 3:10

- ? What did the people turn from? *Their evil ways.*
- ? And what did God do? *He did not bring disaster to them.*

Discover the Truth

When Jonah came to Nineveh, the people turned back to God. God saved them from being destroyed then. But just 100 years later, the nation was wicked again. They had turned away from God. They were sinning against God again. So God had to send Nahum. But this time the people did not turn back to God. And God sent an army to destroy Nineveh and the

Assyrians. God said that the Assyrians would be forgotten and would be heard of no more. And that is just what happened to them. Because they would not worship Him alone!



Three in a Row Review Game

MATERIALS

- Three in a Row Review Sheet

INSTRUCTIONS

This game is similar to Connect Four®. Draw a large, 9 square (3 by 3) grid pattern on the board. Divide the class into two teams. Assign the teams the names “Nahum” and “Jonah.” Team Nahum will use the letter N and Team Jonah will use the letter J to mark the squares for every correct answer. Ask the first student on one team a review question. If he answers correctly, that team can mark a square on the grid. If not, Team 2 can answer. Continue to play until a team gets three in a row. Play the game again, repeating questions or adding your own questions if time allows.

Today we'll be playing a three in a row review game. You'll be answering questions. For each correct answer, you can mark a square for your team. I hope you were

paying attention during today's lesson, so you'll know all of the answers!

We'll switch back and forth between teams until one team gets three in a row! Everyone ready? Let's play! *Play the game.*

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

? Whose message did Jonah and Nahum bring to Nineveh? *The Lord's.*

Yes, they both brought the message to repent and turn back to the Lord or face judgment from the Lord. When Jonah preached, the people listened and understood their sinfulness. Their hearts changed. But when Nahum came 100 years later, God's message was met with hard hearts. The people didn't listen, and God destroyed them, just as He said He would.



Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

We know who God is and how He has worked through history because of the message of the prophets. God sent His prophets to record His words.

God sent two of His prophets to Nineveh—first Jonah and then Nahum. They had the same message, and delivered their messages 100 years apart.

First came Jonah. He told the wicked people of Nineveh to repent of their sins and turn back to God, or they would be destroyed. Everyone,

including the king, repented and believed in the one true God. So God did not destroy them.

One hundred years later, the people of Nineveh had forgotten all about God and Jonah. They were doing evil things again. God sent another warning through His prophet Nahum. Nahum reminded the people of Nineveh that God is holy and that God demands all praise and honor. He warned them that they would be destroyed unless they repented and worshipped God alone. This time the people and the king did not listen—they would not turn from their sin. And God sent another nation to destroy Assyria, including Nineveh.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

It seems like 100 years is a long time. But it really isn't. In just 100 years the people of Nineveh had all forgotten about God. We can learn a lot from this. First, if we aren't careful, we can forget about God, too! It's easy to do when we care more about the things in our lives like school, sports, friends, plays, vacations, hobbies, games, TV, and we forget all about God. God wants us to love only Him and to love Him with all our hearts, all our minds, and all our souls.

Another thing we can learn is that just like God sent His Word to Nineveh through His prophets, He gives us His Word—the Bible. In it, we read about the kindness and the love He showed by sending Jesus Christ to be our Savior from sin. But we also read His warning in the Bible, don't we? Just like Nahum warned the people of Nineveh that they must repent and worship the one true God alone, God warns us. In His Word, He tells us that we are sinners, like the people of Nineveh. We also deserve God's punishment. But God made a way through His Son, Jesus, to be forgiven of our sins. Jesus took our place. He was killed on the Cross so that everyone who would turn to Him in faith would be forgiven and would not face God's eternal punishment.



➤ Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the children to practice the memory verse this week.



MEMORY VERSE

Isaiah 42:8 I am the Lord, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to carved images.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

- Praise God that He is kind and loving and holy.
- Thank God because He shows us in His Word how to be saved from His judgment.
- Ask God to keep us from distractions that might cause us to forget about Him.

