

God Judges Nations



Key Passages

- Nahum 1:1–2, 2:13

Lesson Focus

- God is just. He must punish sin!

Lesson Overview



Come On In

Students will color the Prophet of God Coloring Sheet and/or play with play dough.



Circle Time

Prayer—Using the Flip Chart Prayer Page, discuss prayer and give each child the opportunity to pray after determining what type of prayer you will offer today.

God's Word—Students will hear how God sent the prophet Nahum to the people in Nineveh because they were wicked and did not obey God.

Song—Students will sing songs to help remind them of the truths discussed today. Lyrics to the songs are found on the Flip Chart Song Page and the Song Sheet at the back of this Teacher Guide.



Activity 1: Destroy the Idols!

Students will search the classroom for the idol worshipper pictures. When all the pictures are found, they will destroy them by tearing them up into pieces and throwing them in the trash. We should worship God alone!



Activity 2: Nahum Puppet

Students will color and assemble a puppet of Nahum.



Memory Verse Review and Activity

Students will review the memory verse using Memory Verse Flashcards.



Applying God's Word/Snack

Students will review the lesson while enjoying the snack for the day.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



FOR THE TEACHER

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

- ☐ Student Take Home Sheets



COME ON IN

- ☐ Print one Prophet of God Coloring Sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.
- ☐ Provide play dough if appropriate.

- ☐ Prophet of God Coloring Sheet for each student
- ☐ Crayons
- ☐ Play dough
- ☐ Cookie cutters



CIRCLE TIME

- ☐ Practice the songs on the Song Sheet at the back of this Teacher Guide.

- ☐ Lesson Flip Chart
- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Stuffed animal for prayer time



DESTROY THE IDOLS!

- ☐ Print and cut the Idol Worshipper Pictures from the Resource DVD-ROM—enough for at least one per student.

- ☐ Idol Worshipper Pictures
- ☐ Trash can



NAHUM PUPPET

- ☐ Print and trim one Nahum Fold-Over Puppet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student and one for yourself to complete and use as an example.

- ☐ Nahum Fold-Over Puppet for each student
- ☐ Completed Nahum Fold-Over Puppet
- ☐ Crayons
- ☐ Tape
- ☐ Craft sticks (optional)



MEMORY VERSE REVIEW AND ACTIVITY

- ☐ Print and cut two sets of Memory Verse Flashcards from the Resource DVD-ROM for your use during the lesson.

- ☐ Two sets of Memory Verse Flashcards
- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page



APPLYING GOD'S WORD/SNACK

- ☐ Prepare and bring snacks.

- ☐ Lesson Flip Chart for Review
- ☐ Snacks



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 668–648 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.

➤ As you teach, refer often to the Lesson Flip Chart Page to keep the children engaged. When reading the lesson Scriptures, stand up, be enthusiastic, look at the children, and emphasize the answers to the questions you will be asking. This will help to keep the children interested.



COME ON IN

As children arrive . . .

- They will color a picture of God's prophet.
- If there is time, they can play with play dough.

During this time you should be at the door welcoming the children as they come in and directing them to sit down at the tables and begin the activity. Have an aid/helper ready to engage the children with the activity.



REVIEW

Using the Flip Chart, quickly review the previous lessons 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 Flip Chart Pages. Remind the children of each lesson's focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



Circle Time

In an orderly manner, have the children assemble in a circle away from the tables—either on the floor or in their chairs. Bring your stuffed animal, Bible, Flip Chart, and any other props you brought or prepared for this lesson.

PRAYER

This prayer time is designed to get children to begin to understand some simple concepts about prayer and to get them to understand that they can pray. Use a special stuffed animal—prayer bear—or appropriate object to pass around the circle as each child gets his/her turn to pray. Only the child with the stuffed animal is allowed to pray or speak during this time. Using the same stuffed animal or other object all year will add continuity and structure to this time.

We start our Bible study with prayer. Let's pray. Turn to the Flip Chart Prayer Page. Briefly review the different types of prayer presented there. Then determine which type you want the children to pray today.

- I love you prayers—Adoration
- I'm sorry prayers—Confession
- Thank you prayers—Thanksgiving
- Please prayers—Supplication

Today Confession is suggested. You might proceed this way:

Today let's say prayers of confession—and tell God we are sorry for disobeying Him.

The prayers you begin with should be specific to your needs. This will model to the children that you believe God does care about all the details of your life, and you pray to Him about these things. Your example will increase their confidence in praying to God.

I'll start. Dear God, I am guilty because of my sins. I am sorry for . . . (insert personal prayer).

➤ Prior to making your transition to Circle Time, we suggest you take time for restroom breaks and hand washing.

➤ Preschoolers need to move. This is a good opportunity to get them to move. Make an orderly transition to the Circle Time. You can have carpet squares if you want to sit on the floor, or help them to move their chairs into the circle.

Pass the stuffed animal around the circle giving all the children an opportunity to say a prayer of confession.

Very good! Now let's put our stuffed animal away, and we'll get into God's Word.

GOD'S WORD

These first five questions will be repeated each week. The repetition of these questions will help to solidify these simple but foundational truths in the children's minds at a young age.

- ? Who made you? *God.*
- ? What else did God make? *All things.*
- ? Why did God make you and all things? *For His own glory.*
- ? Can you see God? *No, I cannot see God, but He can always see me.*
- ? Where is God? *God is everywhere.*

The following activity should be repeated at the beginning of each lesson to encourage anticipation and enthusiasm for looking into the Word of God. Use a sticky note to mark today's passage before you begin.

➤ Before Bible Pass Around, place a sticky note in your Bible to mark the first passage to be read.

Bible Pass Around

We are going to start out today by looking into God's Word, the Bible. *Hold up Bible.* God's Word is true, and we can trust what it says. But where should we look? One of you will help me with that. We're going to play Bible Pass Around. Whoever ends up with the Bible must hold it very carefully until it is time to look in it. When it is time to read, you can bring it to me, and we'll open it to see what we are going to talk about! Here's what we're going to do. I want everyone to count with me up to the number *choose a number.* You may also choose to practice the alphabet, recite the books of the Bible, sing one of the lesson songs, or recite the memory verse as you do this activity. **We'll start right here.** Hand the Bible to the first student. As we say each number (or word) you must carefully pass the Bible to the person beside you—remember, we don't want to drop it or tear it. Then when we get to the last number (or word), whoever has the Bible will hold on to it until we are ready to start our lesson. Are you ready? **Let's begin.** *When finished with Bible Pass Around you may want to have the student with the Bible stand next to you until it is time to open it.*

➤ When the Bible Pass Around Activity is completed, continue with the lesson.

So far we have talked about two prophets of God. Their names were Amos and Hosea. *Refer to the Lessons 2 and 3 Flip Chart Pages.* Remember Amos? Amos was a shepherd. God used Amos to warn the Israelites that He was about to punish them for their sins. And God used Hosea to show the people how much God loved them. Hosea forgave his wife, Gomer, and took her back, and God will forgive His people if they are sorry for their sins and turn back to Him.

Today we are going to talk about another prophet of God! This prophet's name was Nahum! *Refer to Lesson Flip Chart.* Can you say that with me? *Nahum. Repeat the name a couple of times.* God used Nahum to warn people in a different nation. The people were sinning against God. They were mean and cruel. We are going to read from the book of Nahum today and see that God also judged other nations for their sins.

Let's open God's Word and find out what Nahum told the other nation. *Make this a special time as the student brings the Bible, and he/she opens it to where the sticky note is.* Here it is in my Bible. Nahum has a book of the Bible named after him, just like Amos and Hosea did! These men were important prophets of God. *Show the students where the three books of the Bible are. Open to Amos, Hosea, and Nahum. Let them look at it. Carry it around your circle.* I'm going to read from Nahum—Nahum 1:1. Listen carefully! *Read Nahum 1:1.*

? Where did God send Nahum? *Nineveh.*

Refer to Flip Chart. Yes, God sent Nahum to Nineveh, a large city in Assyria.

? *Refer to Quarter 2, Lesson 10 Flip Chart.* Do you remember when we talked about the prophet Jonah, who was swallowed by the big fish? *Allow for answers. Yes.*

? Jonah also went to Nineveh and told them God would judge them. Do you remember what the people of Nineveh did when they heard God's message from Jonah? *Allow discussion.*

Those people turned to God, and God did not punish them. But now, about 100 years later, the people of Nineveh had become wicked again, so God sent another prophet—Nahum—to tell them to turn back to Him.

The people in Nineveh did not worship God at all! God is just and must punish people for their sins. God sent Nahum to tell the people that He would punish them!

God was not happy with the people of Nineveh. Listen to what God had to say to them through His prophet Nahum. *Read Nahum 1:2 with enthusiasm.*

That was a lot of big words. Let me tell you what it means! God was angry with the people of Nineveh. The Bible says He was furious! He considered them His enemies!

? Why was God so angry with these people? Can you tell me? *They did not worship God at all!*

The people in the city of Nineveh were wicked. They did not love the Lord God. They sinned against God. And God was going to punish them! God is just, isn't He? He must punish sin! And He did!

This is what the Lord said through His prophet Nahum to the people of Nineveh. Listen very carefully. I'm going to ask some questions after I read this. *Read Nahum 2:13 emphasizing "I am against you" and "I will burn your chariots."*

Nahum 1:1

➤ Re-read the verses or the portion of the verse(s) that answer the questions you are asking of the text. The children should hear God's Word and know that they can answer questions from it. It is not too hard for them!

Nahum 1:2

➤ Re-read the verse as you ask the question so students can hear the answer from the Bible.

Nahum 2:13

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

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

The Lord was against the people in Nineveh! He was going to get rid of them. They were sinning against God, and God must judge sin! The Bible says that the city was full of lies and robbery! It was not good. God would punish them!

We know that God is patient and slow to anger. But God will judge nations that sin against Him. God had to judge Nineveh. And He will judge any nation that turns its back on Him.

Because God is the same today, He still must punish all sin! Even ours! The Bible also tells us that God loves us very much. And that is why He sent Jesus to die on the Cross. Jesus took the punishment of every sinner who would turn to God. We must be very sorry for our sins and love Jesus with all our hearts! Jesus is the only way anyone can be safe from God's punishment!

SONG

► Turn to the Flip Chart Song Page and Flip Chart Memory Verse Page during this part of the lesson.

Because God is just, He must punish sin—all sin! He sent Nahum to tell the wicked people of Nineveh that they would be judged. And He will also judge us for our sins. But God made a way for us to be forgiven. That way is Jesus Christ. We are going to sing the song "Because He Is Just" to remind us of what we heard today. *Sing "Because He Is Just."*

The people in Nineveh did not worship God. They built idols and worshipped other things. They turned away from God. That is why God had to judge them. We know that the God of the Bible is the only one we should worship. God is pleased when we worship Him alone. Let's sing the song, "God Wants Me to Worship Him." *Sing "God Wants Me To Worship Him."*

Turn to the Memory Verse Page. And finally, our memory verse reminds us that God alone is the Lord. We have to hide this verse in our hearts and remember it! Let's sing it now! *Sing "Isaiah 42:8" while marching around the room.*



1 Destroy the Idols!

MATERIALS

- ☐ Idol Worshipper Pictures
- ☐ Trash can

INSTRUCTIONS

Before class begins, hide the Idol Worshipper Pictures around the room. You can tape them to chairs, tables, etc. The children will search for the pictures then meet in the Circle Time area to destroy them. You may want some extra copies for students who don't find one.

There are pictures of idols hidden around the room. The people we talked about worshipped idols like these. They were statues. This did not please God. We are going to find the idols I have hidden in the room and then we'll destroy them. When I say "go," everyone search for one idol. When you have found one idol, come back to the circle and we will destroy them together!

Continue after children are finished. OK. We know that God wants us to worship Him alone! We aren't supposed to worship anything else! We are going to rip the idols up and throw them in the trash can! We should only worship God! Destroy pictures and throw them away.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

The people in Nineveh did not worship God alone. They worshipped different gods. They worshipped idols. God had to punish the people because they did not worship Him alone. They were sinning against God! God is just. He must punish sin. God wants us to worship Him alone! The God we read about in the Bible is the only true God!



2 Nahum Puppet

MATERIALS

- ☐ Nahum Fold-Over Puppet for each student
- ☐ Completed Nahum Fold-Over Puppet
- ☐ Crayons
- ☐ Tape
- ☐ Craft sticks (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

Have the children color the Nahum Fold-Over Puppet. When they are finished coloring, help them fold the puppet and tape it together. Show them the completed puppet.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

God sent Nahum to the city of Nineveh to tell them God was going to judge them. The people of Nineveh were wicked. They did not love God. They had turned their backs on God. God would destroy the people, and God used Nahum to warn them. God is just. He must punish sin.



Memory Verse Review and Activity

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.

Use the Flip Chart Memory Verse Page. Explain the verse to the children as you go over the verse together. Say the verse and point at each picture several times.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Two sets of Memory Verse Flashcards
- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page

INSTRUCTIONS

Have students sit in the Circle Time area. Show the children the Memory Verse Flashcards. Divide the students in two teams. Hand out the cards to the students in each team.

The students will race to put their cards on the floor in the right order.

Now let's work on memorizing part of God's Word! I want you to take these cards and put them down on the floor in the right order. You can look at the Flip Chart Memory Verse Page right here. Ask the children if anyone wants to try and say it alone.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

The God of the Bible is the only true God. He wants us to worship Him alone. He does not want a false god to receive the praise and honor that only He deserves!



Applying God's Word/Snack

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

After thanking God for your snack, review today's lesson using the Flip Chart and any other props you've used today.

God used men called prophets to speak His Word to the people of Israel and to other nations. Nahum was one of these prophets. He told the Assyrian people in Nineveh that God was going to destroy their idols and dig their graves! You see, the people had sinned by worshipping other gods and not the one true God of the Bible. God is just—He must punish sin!

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

God is the same God today as He was in Nahum's day. And God still must punish ALL sin—even ours. But God also showed how much He loves people. He sent Jesus to earth to die on the Cross. And Jesus said whoever believes in Him and trusts Him will be saved. Jesus took the punishment for everyone who would ever believe in Him. Jesus said that He was the way, the truth, and the life and that NO ONE could ever get to God except by believing in Jesus! There is only one true God! That is the God we read about in the Bible. He wants us to worship Him alone!

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



Group Prayer Time

- Thank God for His perfect Word.
- Thank God for giving us Jesus who takes the punishment for our sins.
- Pray that God will give us hearts to turn from our sins and trust Him!

Do you still have more time? Review the past quarters using the Flip Charts, add another coloring sheet, recite and review the current and past memory verses, sing more songs, bring out play dough. Keep the children occupied with intentional, God-centered activities until their parents come to pick them up.

Song Sheet

BECAUSE HE IS JUST

(To the tune of "London Bridge")

Clap, stomp, whisper, and yell when singing "all our sins."

God must punish all our sins, all our sins, all our sins.

(London Bridge is falling down, falling down, falling down.)

God must punish all our sins, because He is just!

(London Bridge is falling down, my fair lady.)

But God also will forgive, will forgive, will forgive.

(London Bridge is falling down, falling down, falling down.)

But God also will forgive, through Jesus Christ.

(London Bridge is falling down, my fair lady.)

GOD WANTS ME TO WORSHIP HIM!

(To the tune of "This Is the Way We Wash Our Clothes")

Lift up your hands then lower them when singing the words "worship Him."

God wants me to worship Him,

(This is the way we wash our clothes,)

Worship Him,

(Wash our clothes,)

Worship Him.

(Wash our clothes.)

Think of fun ways to sing. Get children in a circle holding hands. They can go in one direction and at each verse quickly reverse direction. Put one or more than one child in the middle of the circle. Go around them then move in and back out! Get them into a straight line. Have them follow you around the room.

God wants me to worship Him,

(This is the way we wash our clothes,)

Worship Him alone!

(Early Monday morning,)

Raise your hands and sway them from side to side when singing the words "praise His name"

God wants me to praise His name,

Praise His name,

Praise His name.

God wants me to praise His name,

Praise His name alone!

ISAIAH 42:8

(To the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell")

Have the children march around the room.

I am the Lord, that is My name;

(The farmer in the dell, the farmer in the dell.)

And My glory I will not give to another,

(Hi-ho the dairy-o, the farmer in the dell.)

Nor My praise to carved images.

(The farmer in the dell, the farmer in the dell.)

Isaiah forty-two-oo-oo, verse eight.

(Hi-ho the dairy-o, the farmer in the dell.)