

THE
DISCIPLESHIP
PLACE

**The Books of Nahum,
Habakkuk, Zephaniah,
and Haggai**

CHURCH OF  THE NAZARENE

CLT Bible Study

THE BOOKS OF NAHUM, HABAKKUK, ZEPHANIAH, AND HAGGAI

Dr. Daryll Stanton, editor
Nataliia Skyba, contributing editor
First printing 2025



Continuing Lay Training
17001 Prairie Star Parkway
Lenexa, Kansas 66220 USA

NOTICE TO CLT PARTICIPANTS AND EDUCATORS

This is a contract. By using these materials you accept all the terms and conditions of this Agreement. This Agreement covers all Leader's Guides, Student Guides, and instructional resources included in the Continuing Lay Training (CLT) website.

Upon your acceptance of this Agreement, Continuing Lay Training grants to you a nonexclusive license to use these curricular materials provided that you agree to the following:

1. USE OF THE MODULES.

- You may distribute educational materials in electronic form to students or other educational providers.
- You may make and distribute electronic or paper copies to students for the purpose of instruction, as long as each copy contains this Agreement and the same copyright and other proprietary notices pertaining to the Module. If you download the educational materials from the Internet or similar online source, you must include the CLT notice for the Module with any online distribution and on any media you distribute that includes the educational content.
- You may translate, adapt, and/or modify the examples and instructional resources for the purpose of making the instruction culturally relevant to your students. However, you must agree that you will not sell these modified materials without express, written permission from CLT.

2. COPYRIGHT.

The material is owned by CLT and is protected by United States Copyright Law and International Treaty provisions. Except as stated above, this Agreement does not grant you any intellectual property rights in the Module.

3. RESTRICTIONS.

- You may not sell copies of these educational materials in any form except to recover the minimum reproduction cost of electronic media or photocopy expense.
- You may not modify the wording or original intent of the educational material for commercial use.

THANK YOU

Continuing Lay Training would like to thank Clergy Development for granting permission to modify and adapt their course of study materials for our educational purposes. Their willingness to partner with us is sincerely appreciated.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

Welcome to the Continuing Lay Ministries series of Bible studies. You are engaged in a study venture that will be both helpful and enjoyable. Here are a few suggestions that will make this Bible study the most beneficial to you.

1. Since this is a Bible study, have your Bible near you at all times. This study outline is only designed to help you read the Bible.
2. The Bible version used for this study is the New International Version (NIV). The editor primarily used the language of the NIV to prepare the lessons. You may use other versions of the Bible if you choose. While the language may be different, the meaning will be the same.
3. Before you begin each section, read the entire Scripture passage. This is very important. The study outline will help you understand the particular Bible verses, but it does not tell what they say.
4. **IMPORTANT:** Note that scriptures from the Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Haggai may not have the book's name in sections dealing with them individually. In sections referring specifically to the Book of Nahum, if the Bible reference is (1:4-6), you will find these verses (4-6) in the first chapter of Nahum. Whereas, other books of the Bible will include the name in the reference, for example, Psalm 53:1 and John 17:1.
5. Go through the study outline carefully. Take time to look up all the Scripture verses in the outline.
6. You may want to mark your study Bible as you go. Marking your Bible will help the words become more and more your own. It will be well if you have colored pencils at hand to mark the Bible as you go along. A simple system is to mark promises in blue and warnings in red. However you do it, mark your Bible, and it will become more and more your very own.
7. Finally, read the Bible passage again to better understand its meaning. Perhaps you may benefit from listening to the reading of the Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Haggai.
8. The editor has also included how to pronounce some of the more difficult proper names and other important words. The first time the word is introduced, the pronunciation will follow the word. At the end of each chapter, you will find a list of the words in the order in which they were introduced. Additionally, at the end of the document, all words and pronunciations will be listed alphabetically. For pronunciation of additional terms and their definitions, please refer to A Dictionary of the Bible & Christian Doctrine in Everyday English (Eby et al, 2004).

If a family or a few friends decide to take this study together, here are two suggestions:

1. Have one person read the Bible passage and another read the Continuing Lay Training outline.
2. Then discuss the Scripture and outline. Ask questions of each other to help clarify the meaning of the Scripture.

Continuing Lay Training

17701 Prairie Star Parkway

Lenexa, Kansas 66220

888-243-2767

913-577-2811

THE BOOKS OF NAHUM, HABAKKUK, ZEPHANIAH, AND HAGGAI

OUTLINE



Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOKS OF NAHUM, HABAKKUK, ZEPHANIAH, AND HAGGAI

Section 1.1 Introduction to Zechariah

- A. The Prophet
- B. The Message
- C. The Book

Section 1.2 Introduction to Malachi

- A. The Prophet
- B. His Times
- C. His Complaint

Section 1.3 Introduction to Zephaniah

- A. The Prophet
- B. The Times
- C. The Message

Section 1.4 Introduction to Haggai

- A. The Restoration
- B. The Prophet
- C. The Message

Chapter 2. THE BOOK OF NAHUM

Section 2.1 Superscription (1:1)

Section 2.2 The Government of God (1:2-6)

Section 2.3 The Application of God's Government (1:7-15; 2:2)

Section 2.4 The Fall of Nineveh (2:1, 3-13)

- A. Insults of the Besieged (2:1)
- B. Description of the Invader (2:3)
- C. The Attack by the Enemy (2:4-8)
- D. The Plunder of the City (2:9-13)

Section 2.5 God's Moral Government (3:1-19)

Chapter 3. THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK

Section 3.1 Superscription (1:1)

Section 3.2 The Prophet's Problem (1:2-4)

Section 3.3 God's Answer (1:5-11)

Section 3.4 The Prophet's Second Problem (1:12-17)

Section 3.5 The Prophet's Watchtower (2:1-6)

Section 3.6 The Prophet's Watchtower (2:6-20)

- A. The Merciless Capitalist (2:6-8)
- B. The Wealthy Villain (2:9-11)
- C. The Deceitful Ruler (2:12-14)
- D. The Drunken Exploiter (2:15-17)
- E. The Stupid Idolater (2:18-20)

Section 3.7 The Prophet's Watchtower (3:1-19)

- A. The Prayer (3:2)
- B. God's Work (3:3-16)
- C. A Declaration of Faith (3:17-19)

Chapter 4. THE BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH

Section 4.1 Superscription (1:1)

Section 4.2 The Threat of World Judgment (1:2-18)

- A. The Scope of Judgment (1:2-3)
- B. Judgment upon Judah (1:4-13)
- C. The Day of the Lord (1:14-18)

Section 4.3 Judgment on the Nations (2:1 - 3:7)

- A. A Call to Repent (2:1-3)
- B. Examples of Judgment (2:4-15)
- C. Judgment upon Jerusalem (3:1-7)

Section 4.4 A Word to the Faithful (3:8-13)

Section 4.5 Conclusion (3:14-20)

- A. Hymn of Gladness (3:14-15)
- B. Assurance of Faith (3:16-18)
- C. Promises of Restoration (3:19-20)

THE BOOKS OF NAHUM, HABAKKUK, ZEPHANIAH, AND HAGGAI

OUTLINE



Chapter 5. THE BOOK OF HAGGAI

Section 5.1 The Call to Action (1:1-15)

- A. Superscription (1:1)
- B. The Cause of Delay (1:2)
- C. Attack upon Delay (1:3-6)
- D. Challenge to Act (1:7-11)
- E. Response to the Challenge (1:12-15)

Section 5.2 The Call to Courage (2:1-9)

- A. The Occasion (2:1-5)
- B. The Sermon (2:6-9)

Section 5.3 The Call to Patience (2:10-19)

Section 5.4 The Call to Faith (2:20-23)

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOKS OF NAHUM, HABAKKUK, ZEPHANIAH, AND HAGGAI

NOTES

Section 1.1 INTRODUCTION TO NAHUM

A. THE PROPHET

The only facts known about Nahum [NAY-um] are those which can be inferred from his prophecy, and these are few. His name is nearly identical in meaning to Nehemiah, and implies “full of comfort” or “full of grace”. He is designated “the Elkoshite” (1:1), but the location of Elkosh is unknown. There are many theories of his origin, the most likely of which is that he came from Mesopotamia [meh-suh-puh-TAY-mee-uh] and was a descendant of Israelite captives.

The meaning of his name, referred to above, appears to some to be in contrast to his message. But, when it is remembered that great discomfort was caused by Nineveh to God’s people, one can sense the feeling of relief, or “comfort,” caused by the prediction of Nineveh’s downfall.

B. THE MESSAGE

Nahum centers his message of doom upon the capital city of the Assyrian empire and proclaims its collapse. Nineveh had been the dread of the nations, causing death and destruction to all who stood in the path of conquest. Now there is to be an end to the oppression. All the world looks on with rejoicing at the prospect of Nineveh’s downfall, a feeling which Nahum expresses at the conclusion of his prophecy: “Everyone who hears the news about you claps his hands at your fall” (3:19).

There are three clues as to the date of Nahum’s prophecy. The first is a reference to the fall of “No Amon” (3:8-10), which is the Egyptian city of Thebes. This city was conquered by the Assyrians in 663 B.C. This is referred to as a past event. Therefore, Nahum wrote later than 663 B.C. The second clue is the date of the fall of Nineveh. Earlier scholars were uncertain when this occurred, but archeology has uncovered clay tablets that firmly establish the date as 612 B.C. This great city, whose walls were sufficiently wide to allow three chariots to drive on the top side by side, fell to a coalition of Medes and Babylonians. This information tells us that Nahum preached prior to 612 B.C.

A third clue, Nahum’s silence about the sins of his own people, enables us to pinpoint more precisely the time between 663 B.C. and 612 B.C. The most probable explanation for this silence is that Nahum lived during the time of good King Josiah’s reformation, when the worship of Yahweh had at least outward popularity. This reform began seriously in 621 B.C. with the discovery of the Book of the Law in the ruins of the Temple. Josiah continued to promote reform until his death in 609 B.C.



NOTES

The second clue is the date of the fall of Nineveh. Earlier scholars were uncertain when this occurred, but archeology has uncovered clay tablets that firmly establish the date as 612 B.C. This great city, whose walls were sufficiently wide to allow three chariots to drive on the top side by side, fell to a coalition of Medes and Babylonians. This information tells us that Nahum preached prior to 612 B.C.

A third clue, Nahum's silence about the sins of his own people, enables us to pinpoint more precisely the time between 663 B.C. and 612 B.C. The most probable explanation for this silence is that Nahum lived during the time of good King Josiah's reformation, when the worship of Yahweh had at least outward popularity. This reform began seriously in 621 B.C. with the discovery of the Book of the Law in the ruins of the Temple. Josiah continued to promote reform until his death in 609 B.C. This further narrows the field and gives us a basis for saying that Nahum preached on the very threshold of the event he was predicting, that is, between 616 and 613 B.C. This means that he was the contemporary of Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk [huh-BAK-uk].

The key verse of the book is 1:3, which sums up the theological basis for Nahum's denunciation: "The Lord is slow to anger and great in power; the Lord will not leave guilty unpunished." Thus, we may say that Nahum is a prophet of the wrath of God as it is poured out upon an extremely wicked people, the Assyrians.

C. THE BOOK

The Book of Nahum is one of literature's finest examples of Hebrew poetry. His style is unsurpassed. His word pictures are superb. His rhetorical skill is praiseworthy. In the description of the attack, destruction, and plundering of the city, he exhibits a vivid imagination and a great poetic expression. Quite often, the abiding message of the book has been overlooked. It is a clear expression of two fundamental prophetic insights:

- (1) God is Lord of history, and
- (2) The universe is so morally structured that those who violate this moral structure are broken by it. (See Beacon Bible Commentary, vol. 5, "The Book of Nahum" by H. Ray Dunning for further introductory information.)

Section 1.2 INTRODUCTION TO HABAKKUK

A. THE PROPHET

Habakkuk is surrounded by many traditions but very few facts. His name is mentioned only once in the Bible and has several possible meanings. It probably means "to clasp or embrace". Martin Luther thought of him as embracing his people like one embraces a weeping child to comfort the child. There is strong evidence that he was a member of the Temple choir, thus being a Levite. Since he is one of the few in the Bible called a prophet (nabi), he was perhaps a professional prophet.



NOTES

But Habakkuk reverses the prophetic tradition. A prophet usually speaks to people for God, but Habakkuk speaks to God for people. Called “a great skeptic,” the prophet openly voices his doubts and boldly complains to God concerning God’s activity in the world. Perhaps the words of Tennyson have particular relevance to this man: “There lives more faith in honest doubt, Believe me, than in half the creeds.” - “In Memoriam”

B. HIS TIMES

Since the prophet complains about his times, we are especially interested in when he lived. This is not easy to pinpoint, but the book is traditionally dated around 600 B.C., not long before the Babylonian captivity of Judah in 586 B.C. This makes Habakkuk a contemporary of Jeremiah, and the events that shaped his life are the same as those that precipitated the messages of the weeping prophet. He would know something about the reformation of King Josiah and would be a witness to the rising power of the Chaldeans. He also would know something about the wickedness of the people as a result of the influence of wicked King Manasseh. All of these elements are a part of the background of his message or complaint.

C. HIS COMPLAINT

Habakkuk is concerned with two things:

- (1) Why God allows wickedness to prevail, and
- (2) Why God should use a wicked nation to punish one which is less wicked.

These are problems of “theodicy” [thee-AHD-uh-see] - the ways of God with people. The key verse is 2:1 - “I will stand upon my watch, and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what he will say to me, and what answer I am to give to this complaint.” God’s final answer to his questionings is found in 2:4 - “But the righteous will live by his faith.”

In days when God’s finger is difficult to trace in history, and when wickedness prevails, the message of Habakkuk comes to us with terrifying relevance. Perhaps we, too, shall find a message of strength here. (See *Beacon Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, “The Book of Habakkuk” by H. Ray Dunning for further introductory information.)

Section 1.3 INTRODUCTION TO ZEPHANIAH

A. THE PROPHET

Our biographical information about Zephaniah is restricted to the first verse of his prophecy. His name, borne by three other biblical characters, means “Yahweh hides.” His genealogy is given, and we learn that he is a descendant of Hezekiah (Hizkiah), one of the good kings of Judah. This makes him, like Isaiah in the eighth century, a member of the royal family and thus close to court life. However, he does not seem to have had the influence among the royalty that marked Isaiah’s career.


NOTES

He preached during the reign of Josiah (1:1). Since his message is one of denunciation, it is fair to infer that he preached during the early part of Josiah's rule, before the king's reforms, which began in 621 B.C. Consequently, we place his work between 638 B.C. and 621 B.C. He was a contemporary of Jeremiah but probably preached before the latter prophet came into prominence in Jerusalem.

B. THE TIMES

Politically, the world was in turmoil during Zephaniah's time. The great Assyrian empire had revealed its feet of clay and was tottering. During this period, Egypt had strengthened hands and entrenched herself in the territory east of Palestine at the famous fortress of Carchemish [KAR-kem-esh]. The rising Babylonian power later drove her from this foothold in 605 B.C. when it established itself as a world power.

However, another threat to world security was the Scythian [SITH-ee-an] hordes from the north. They were fierce, bloodthirsty barbarians who cut a swath of destruction through Asia to the very doors of Egypt, where they were brought off by the Egyptian ruler. These cavalymen, sweeping like a plague across the plains, brought great fear to Zephaniah's countrymen, although they were not attacked in their mountainous area. Their threat was terrible, but brief, as they soon returned to their homeland.

Internally, the nation was in spiritual darkness. The reign of Manasseh had introduced many evil practices, including human sacrifice, and religion had been greatly corrupted. Assyrian cult practices had crept into the observances of the Israelites. Manasseh was followed by his son, Amon, who reigned for two years while the situation remained unchanged. Then came Josiah, but the influence of Manasseh remained for a time. Zephaniah would be crying out against the continuation of the spiritual stain from Manasseh's evil influence.

C. THE MESSAGE

Zephaniah is called the prophet of "the day of the Lord". His chief theme is the announcement that it is near at hand. Under the influence of Amos, in the eighth century, the day of the Lord was reinterpreted for the people as a day of ethical sifting and moral import, a day when the righteous would be rewarded and the wicked punished. But, Amos and his successors had seen the day as a natural, if chaotic, day, following which history goes on. Zephaniah tended to see it as an eschatological [eh-skuh-tuh-LAA-juh-kul] (end of time) occurrence which would bring an end to history.

It is very probable that Zephaniah thought of the advance of the Scythians as being the foregloom of this great day and perhaps as actually being the bearer of its judgment. Thus, his prophecy takes on urgency and power with this dark cloud on the immediate horizon. (See *Beacon Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, "The Book of Zephaniah" by H. Ray Dunning for further introductory information.)

NOTES

Section 1.4 INTRODUCTION TO HAGGAI

Haggai is known as a postexilic [POST-eks-il-ik] prophet because his work was done following the Babylonian captivity of the Israelites. The city of Jerusalem had fallen to Babylon in 586 B.C., and the people had been deported to various parts of the empire. A few people were left, among them Jeremiah, but they soon revolted and fled to Egypt over Jeremiah's protest. Thus, for the seventy years of the captivity, the city had lain in virtual desolation and ruin. This captivity had left a permanent mark upon Israel and probably is second only to the Exodus in order of importance and significance in Old Testament history.

A. THE RESTORATION

The great Babylonian empire had fallen to the Medes and Persians, who took the capital city during Belshazzar's drunken feast (see Daniel 5). The ruler of the newly established Persian empire was Cyrus the Great, who was a kindhearted man with entirely different views about the treatment of prisoners than those practiced by the Babylonians. Consequently, with his ascendancy to the throne, he declared the freedom of the Israelites to return to their homeland. After seventy years, many of them had become prosperous in business enterprises and otherwise rooted in Babylon. Therefore, they declined the opportunity to tackle the difficult road of restoration. However, some 50,000 did respond, and under the leadership of Zerubbabel [zuh-RUH-buh-bul], the civil governor, and Joshua, a high priest, undertook the long journey back to the homeland with the end in view of reestablishing the Temple, the city, and the worship.

When they returned, they found the going rough and faced considerable opposition from the neighboring Samaritans [suh-MAIR-uh-tunz]. Through political conniving, a decree was issued halting the building of the Temple. However, after some seventeen years, Darius Hystaspes came to the throne of Persia. There was some political uncertainty in the establishment of his throne, and this provided the occasion for the Jews to take up the task again. Furthermore, the decree that had stopped the work was reviewed and reversed. It was Haggai, along with his younger contemporary, Zechariah, who spearheaded this revival of the reconstruction.

B. THE PROPHET

Little is known about Haggai personally. His name is mentioned in Ezra 5:1 and 6:14 and means "The Festival" (festival). There is general agreement that he was an old man at the time of his preaching. This is based on 2:3, which indicates that he still remembered Solomon's Temple, which had been destroyed nearly seventy years before.

NOTES**C. THE MESSAGE**

Haggai's prophecy is made up of four sermons that he preached. These sermons are carefully dated in the book and were all delivered within a brief period of four months. Each one was a step in the process of encouraging Zerubbabel and the people to complete the Temple. Following the initial sermon, the work repeatedly lagged or faced difficulty. Each time Haggai responded with a stirring challenge to meet the need. The four messages form the natural outline of the book. (See *Beacon Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, "The Book of Haggai" by H. Ray Dunning for further introductory information.)

Nahum [NAY-um]
Mesopotamia [meh-suh-puh-TAY-mee-uh]
Habakkuk [huh-BAK-uk]
Carchemish [KAR-kem-esh]
Scythian [SITH-ee-an]
eschatological [eh-skuh-tuh-LAA-juh-kl]
postexilic [POST-eks-il-ik]
Zerubbabel [zuh-RUH-buh-bul]
Samaritans [suh-MAIR-uh-tunz]

CHAPTER 2. THE BOOK OF NAHUM



NOTES

Section 2.1 SUPERScription (1:1)

The superscription or title of the book is uniquely divided into two parts. The first part gives the objective of the message and the second indicates its source. It is suggested that part two was added by an editor in order to catalogue the book among the Temple scrolls.

The word translated as “oracle” (1:1) literally means “lifting up the voice”. The oracle was proclaimed about Nineveh not to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, although the prophet often seems to address the people directly. Judah was at this time in subjection to this great empire, which had destroyed the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C.

Section 2.2 THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD (1:2-6)

God’s government is based on his nature, and consequently, the prophet begins by declaring the character of Yahweh. First, his holiness is seen in opposition to sin and evil. God’s “jealousy” (1:2), his “anger” (1:3), and his “vengeance” (1:2) are not the expression of petty emotions but the majestic response of a holy Deity to all that opposes his will. The New Testament also proclaims the judgment of God toward evil and unrighteousness (Romans 2:3-5).

As we have noted, 1:3 may be called the key verse of the book. In commenting upon the first part of this verse in Daily Meditations, George Bowen says:

It would be a fearful impeachment of the power of God if the sinner, abiding in transgression, should after all come off victorious. Transgression is the assumption of power greater than that of God. Weak and contemptible is that legislator whose laws may be broken with impunity. Better a thousand times that he should make no laws at all. The sinner now, for a while, cajoles himself with the idea that he is greater than God; that he can contemn the commandments of God. But, God is as great in power as he is in longsuffering; and the imagined victory of man only prepares the way for the sublime victory of God. (Philadelphia, 1865, p.172.)


NOTES

Nahum then turns (1:3-6) to a description of God's power as seen in the convulsions of nature. It is natural in the face of violent eruptions of natural powers to feel one's helplessness, and how much more is this the case when brought face-to-face with the Mighty One who controls nature!

God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform. He plants his footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm. (William Cowper)

There is no doubt a deeper reference in 1:4 than to just the ordinary processes of nature. It seems to refer to the rolling back of the Red Sea and the parting of the river Jordan, thus calling attention to God's saving acts in history.

Section 2.3 THE APPLICATION OF GOD'S GOVERNMENT (1:7-15; 2:2)

God does not deal with people indiscriminately. After having spoken of the nature of God which underlies his government, the prophet proceeds to show its varying application. To those who are faithful, God is declared to be "good" and a "stronghold in the day of trouble". In contrast to the walls of Nineveh, which will be unable to withstand the assault, God is a Wall of protection around his people (see Zechariah 2:5).

The wicked (Nineveh in particular), by way of contrast, will be destroyed as with an "overrunning flood" (1:8). This appears to be a clear reference to the manner in which the city of Nineveh was to be overthrown (see below). The phrase "darkness shall pursue his enemies" is even more strikingly rendered as "he ... will pursue his foes into darkness".

With this, Nahum abruptly turns (1:9) to address the Ninevites directly. In the succeeding verses (1:9-15), the prophet surges back and forth in fiery eloquence, speaking now to Nineveh and then to Judah. Some have, therefore, concluded that these verses are a poem recited to the accompaniment of dramatic action to make the meaning clear to the listeners.

The prophet challenges Assyria's smugness and in an agricultural metaphor compares them to thorns, difficult to clear from the land, hard to burn while wet, but destined to burn as the leftover stalks of grain after harvest before the fire of God's judgment (1:10). In fact, they shall be so utterly destroyed that "trouble will not come a second time" (1:9); it will not need to.

The reference in 1:11 may be to Sennacherib, a fierce king of Assyria, who had led the expedition against the northern capital of Samaria, but more probably to the demonic power behind the wickedness of the nation.

Nahum turns to give a word of consolation to Judah (1:12); then redirects his words to Assyria (1:14), where total annihilation is predicted. Once more (1:15 and 2:2), he addresses a comforting word to Judah, borrowing a beautiful passage from Isaiah to picture messengers coming with the "good tidings" that the destroyer of nations is defeated.

NOTES

The result of this defeat, Nahum thinks, will be the beginning of a Golden Age, as is expressed in 2:2: "The LORD will restore the splendor of Jacob, like the splendor of Israel, though destroyers have laid them waste and have ruined their vines."

Section 2.4 THE FALL OF NINEVEH (2:1, 3-13)

These verses are the most dramatic in the book as they picture in vivid detail - before it happens - the destruction of the city. Mr. C. J. Gadd of the British Museum discovered a record known as "The Babylonian Tablet," which gives the conqueror's version of the conquest of Assyria. Unfortunately, the account of the fall of Nineveh itself is confined to two mutilated lines. But this discovery does not disprove Nahum's prophecy. Rather, Mr. Gadd suggests that there is nothing improbable about the accuracy of the prophet's description.

We have three "pre-invasion impressions" from Nahum. They begin in 2:5, 3:2, and 3:12. There is no reason to try to reconstruct a chronological account of the events. Rather, the prophet sees the process of judgment in vivid but isolated pictures.

A. INSULTS OF THE BESIEGED (2:1)

"An attacker advances" is probably the general of the Medes, Cyaraxes [SAI-aks-uh-rees], who had alone attacked Nineveh earlier but failed. This time, he joined forces with the Babylonians, and together they besieged the city for three months. Moffatt's excellent translation catches the tension of the hour: "A shatterer has come up against you! Man your ramparts, stand to attention, summon up your strength!"

B. DESCRIPTION OF THE INVADER (2:3)

Nahum sees the soldiers with painted bodies, shields covered with skins dyed red, advancing in chariots covered with metal that reflects the sun like "flaming torches." While difficult to translate and interpret, their "spears of pine are waved."

C. THE ATTACK BY THE ENEMY (2:4-8)

The defeat of Nineveh has been the object of study by military authorities, and their expert opinion coincides with Nahum's account. To understand this account, we must have a general idea of the terrain surrounding the city. The city was roughly rectangular in shape, with the Tigris River flowing parallel to, and outside of, the west wall. A smaller, cleaner river - the Khoser [KOHS] - flowed from the east across the city proper, being channeled under both east and west walls and intersecting the Tigris outside the west wall. This river provided the water supply and was controlled by a large dam to the east of the city. At the northeast corner of the city were some hills which rose to the height of the walls, which were surrounded on all but the west side with moats.



NOTES

Directly to the east was an open plain that contained the suburbs of the city. This was the first object of attack by the Medes and the lesser fortresses there fell into their hands like “first ripe fruit” (see 3:12). The fighting in the suburbs is described in 2:4. The enemy then attacked the city proper from the hills at the northeast corner where they would be on a level with the walls. This also gave them command of the northern moats.

Nahum then describes the assault upon the wall (2:5). The suburbs having been taken, the best military units (“picked troops”) are called up to hear the battering rams, the weight of which causes them to “stumble on their way”. The “protective shield” refers to a mantel, which was a wooden framework covered with skins to shield the warriors as they operated the battering rams.

Assyrian soldiers had been considered the most effective in the use of siege weapons, but now they are placed in the position of defending themselves against their own devices.

The actual fall of the city is described with great precision and reflects the unusual way in which the walls were breached. 2:6 sums up this remarkable procedure in a few words. Apparently, the attackers had captured and closed the gates of the dam that controlled the Khoser River, and then at the right time, the gates were opened, allowing a wall of water to bare down upon the gates and the mud walls. They would be dissolved, and the continuing flood of waters would push its way into the palace, which stood on the banks of the river inside the walls, and dissolve it also. Verse 7 seems to refer to the goddess of the Ninevites and the prostitute maidens of her temple. In spite of the cries to “stand, stand” (2:8), the soldiers flee in confusion.

D. THE PLUNDER OF THE CITY (2:9-13)

The treasure houses of Nineveh were overflowing with stolen merchandise. It is now stripped bare.

Plunder the silver! Plunder the gold! There is no end to the plunder treasures all untold!

The city is pictured as the lair of a lion, which was filled with the prey, but is now cleaned out. There shall be no more plunder (2:9), for God has cut the lion off forever.

Section 2.5 GOD’S MORAL GOVERNMENT (3:1-19)

In chapter 3, the passionate description of the fall of the city gives way to a reasoned explanation of why it was necessary. The cruelty of Assyria surpasses imagination (3:1-4). She is condemned for three things: her plundering, her destructiveness, and her wicked influence. Verse 3 refers to the cruel habit of cutting off the heads of her captives and heaping them up with other bodies before the city gates. Nineveh chronicles her own bloodthirstiness in these words, “I formed a pillar of the living and of heads over against his city gate and 700 men I impaled on stakes ... Their young men and their maidens I burned in the fires.” (Quoted in Walter A. Maier, *The Book of Nahum*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), p. 291.)


NOTES

Nineveh's moral condition is portrayed in the symbol of the harlot (3:4-6). Her unchastity shall be exposed to public gaze (3:5-6; see Ezekiel 16:37-39; Hosea 2:3). The nations rejoice in her disgrace (3:7).

This is the inevitability of God's justice. Nineveh herself had overthrown "populous No Amon," and what grounds had she to expect exemption for her own sins (3:8)? Nahum's reference to Thebes was primarily to proclaim the fragile character of all human empires. Thebes had fallen, not to Assyrian might, but fundamentally to the decree of God.

Finally, Nahum returns to a description of the fall of the city, being entranced with the vision (3:11-19). The defenders of the city were as helpless as women. Their efforts at defense were futile because God had decreed the city's collapse.

The culminating verses of this oracle (3:14-19) comprise a chant of death. The prophet cries out in ridicule, exhorting the defenders to draw water for the siege. The closing of the river gates (see above) would cut off the water supply from the city since the water of the Tigris was undrinkable. He then calls upon them to make bricks to repair the crumbling fortifications. But, in spite of this preparation, they shall fall to the fire and the sword (3:15). The city was actually destroyed by fire, and the king, Sardanapalus by name, fearing to take his chances with the conquerors, burned himself alive in the palace. While the city is being destroyed by flames, the inhabitants are to be slaughtered by the sword.

Like a plague of locusts, the Assyrians will be annihilated (3:17). The destruction is seen to be complete, the silence of death reigns, and the city is desolate.

O king of Assyria, your shepherds slumber; your nobles lie down to rest! Your people are scattered on the mountains, with no one to gather them. Nothing can heal your wound; your injury is fatal (3:18-19).

Cyaraxes [SAI-aks-uh-rees]
Khoser [KOHS]

CHAPTER 3. THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK



NOTES

Section 3.1 SUPERScription (1:1)

Ironically, the preacher has turned skeptic. But, note that he does not preach his doubts, he wrestles them out alone with God. It is possible that what we really have here is an insight into the inner life of a prophet, the hidden struggles prior to proclamation. In a different sort of way, we have the same thing in the case of Hosea, whose marital problems prepared his heart for the message he was to preach. With Habakkuk, it may be the pounding on the anvil of life, a theological foundation for his public preaching.

Section 3.2 THE PROPHET'S PROBLEM (1:2-4)

The prophet is disturbed over the evil ways of his own people. Religion had been at a low level during the dark days of Manasseh's reign. Assyrian religion had become prominent, and sinister practices had been introduced. Doubtless, Habakkuk is reflecting this declension from the faith of Israel. The heartrending cry is, "How long?" and God seems to turn a deaf ear. Why does God not act? Why does he not interfere and cut short this work of wickedness? If he is the Lord of history, why do the wicked prosper? Why does sin go unpunished?

Only those who have faith in a good God have any problem with regard to the government of the world. If one believes in polytheism [PAH-lee-thee-iz-um], or in an indifferent or wicked deity, or in no god at all, one has no problem with the apparent injustices in the world. It is a monotheistic [MAHN-uh-thee-is-tik] faith that must wrestle for its very life in the face of the facts that challenge it.

The words "call for" and "cry out" are used in 1:2. The first implores for how long "must I call for help" or to "cry out" as one does in sudden alarm, without help immediately coming. The prophet is "crying out" over the civil wrongs which abound in the land (1:3); furthermore, the "law" and "judgment" are neglected. This refers to the law of Moses and the established customs of the people. Habakkuk infers that, even where a semblance of justice is maintained, "justice never prevails": "The law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails." The wicked surrounded the righteous, so that justice was perverted.

Section 3.3 GOD'S ANSWER (1:5-11)

In essence, God says to the prophet: "I am working". He then goes on to describe precisely what it is he is doing. It is suggested that the first phrase of 1:5 could be more correctly paraphrased, "Behold, you faithless Judahites." The unbelievable work which God is going to bring to pass may be either the destruction of the Assyrian empire or the deliverance of the Israelites into the hands of a foreign nation. The instrument which God intends to use in this work is the Chaldeans.


NOTES

This is the name of the people who had become the ruling class in Babylon and so may be thought of as synonymous with the Babylonians. Their character is described as “bitter and hasty”. Their haughtiness is indicated by the words, “They are a law to themselves and promote their own honor.” This tells us that they respect no law of right except what accords with their own designs. Might made right in their eyes, and upon their own military supremacy, they erected their standards of justice.

As warriors, they are compared to swift “leopards” as well as “wolves at dusk” - known for their ravaging attacks. Like a “vulture,” they swoop to devour. In warfare, they are swift, destructive, and merciless. They move in devouring conquest like the irresistible east wind (1:9). As a culminating act, they raise their military might to the status of deity. This is the meaning of “whose own strength is their god” (1:11), which can also be translated “and he makes strength his God”.

We have here an implicit philosophy of history that accords with the insights of great prophets like Isaiah. God is the Lord of history, who makes even the wrath of people praise him. He used people who have other aims and who attribute their power to other sources to carry out his purposes in history.

Section 3.4 THE PROPHET'S SECOND PROBLEM (1:12-17)

The answer to Habakkuk's first problem raises another. After surveying the character of the Chaldeans whom God is raising up, and perhaps after seeing the mercilessness of their advance, Habakkuk now wonders why God should choose to use such a wicked nation to punish Judah. Judah, the prophet, now seems to think, is less wicked than her anticipated oppressors. This really questions the holiness of God. How can such an action be reconciled with the holiness of God? It appears that the prophet is audaciously calling God's attention to his own nature. “O LORD, are you not from everlasting?” he asks (1:12), and asserts God's moral holiness (1:13): “Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong.”

But the Chaldeans advance. Adopting the metaphor of capturing fish, Habakkuk sees the victims of the Chaldeans as helpless “fish in the sea”. The fisherman (Chaldea) takes them “with hooks” and catches them in his dragnet. This continues until he is filled, and then he piles the fish on the shore to die. “Is he to keep on emptying his net, destroying nations without mercy?” (1:17)

Section 3.5 THE PROPHET'S WATCHTOWER (2:1-6)

This is the most familiar passage from the Book of Habakkuk. It is also the central passage of the book. After having been assertive enough to almost shake his fist in the face of God, the prophet seems to be somewhat shaken by this outburst and now prepares himself to receive God's rebuke. Surprisingly enough, the rebuke does not come.


NOTES

In 2:1, Habakkuk has a conversation with himself in which he proposes to retire to his “ramparts,” which no doubt refers to his place of prayer. The idea of ramparts gives us the indication that he feels he has built his case (complaint) against God. Now he wants to see how God will answer the charge. At any rate, he prepares to “stand at” his “watch” to see the results. That he expects to be rebuffed is seen in the words “I will look to see what he will say to me.”

God’s response (2:2-6) is in the form of a commission. The prophet is given something to do; he is to proclaim a prophecy. It is to be written out on tablets, such as those used to make public notices, and written plainly so that “a herald may run with it” (2:2).

This vision looks toward the future and anticipates a time (“the end”) when all questions shall be answered. Present problems may not be clarified in the present, but patience holds the answer. The phrase “it will certainly come and will not delay” refers to streams that dry up during hot weather. This mighty stream of prophecy shall not dry up until it empties into God’s great eternal ocean of fulfillment. The word “linger” literally refers to “be behind”. This reminds us that God’s promises will be fulfilled in his time. It will come, if not in Habakkuk’s time, it will surely come in God’s time.

Dr. H. Orton Wiley tells us that this vision has been unfolding from the time that God spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, and will continue to unfold until the voice from heaven declares, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.” (Revelation 21:3). This is “the completion of the redemptive work of Christ in both man and nature, and the beginning of that eternal order which is to be accomplished in a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” (Wiley, *God Has the Answer*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1956), p. 75.)

The high point of the book is 2:4, and it is God’s climactic answer to Habakkuk’s doubt. It sets in contrast the haughty Chaldeans and the humble soul who trusts in God. The one whose soul is not upright shall fall, but the one who trusts will stand, because “the righteous will live by his faith.”

The word translated as “faith” comes from a Hebrew word meaning “to be firm” and has the implication of “steadfastness”. Consequently, the best rendering is “faithfulness” rather than faith. “Faith,” as used especially by the Apostle Paul in the New Testament, does not have an Old Testament equivalent. As it is used here in 2:4, it is an exhortation to “hold steady” and thus is close to our common phrase, “have faith in God.” Rabbi Lehrman sums it up extremely well in these words: “The righteous Israelite, who remains unswervingly loyal to the moral precepts, will endure, although he has to suffer for his principles; whereas the wicked, who enjoy a temporary ascendancy through their violation of right, are in the end overthrown and humbled.” (“Nahum” in *The Twelve Prophets*, ed. A. Cohen. Bournemouth, Hants: The Socino Press, 1948), p. 219.)



NOTES

In 2:5-6, Habakkuk turns attention to the greedy oppressor again in an indirect attack. Literally, “wine” is personified as a haughty man who is never at rest, and whose desires cannot be satisfied. It is a way of condemning the contemptible character of the conqueror, Chaldea, who is compared to “wine.” It is thus a transition into the next passage.

Section 3.6 THE PROPHET’S WATCHTOWER (2:6-20)

So much attention is given to the Babylonians (Chaldeans) in the book that some scholars think the major thrust of the book is a condemnation of them. This passage does relate primarily to their character, and they are presented under five symbols that describe their godless activity.

A. THE MERCILESS CAPITALIST (2:6-8)

Chaldea has increased its own wealth at the expense of others. This is seen under the figure of a loan-giver who exacts interest. But, those who have been exploited shall turn upon the Chaldeans and “suddenly arise” against them, and “make you tremble” and “will plunder you” (2:7-8). Thus, the law of retribution will work to the downfall of the oppressors.

B. THE WEALTHY VILLAIN (2:9-11)

Like a fleeing highway robber who attempts to secure his ill-gotten gain against recovery, Chaldea has attempted to “set his nest on high”. But such security shall not protect against the decrees of God. He has violated his own human nature; therefore, his own house will revolt and cry out against such action. He will have a haunted house.

C. THE DECEITFUL RULER (2:12-14)

The spoils of the Chaldeans are to be destroyed by fire. Their work will end in “vanity”. Thus, the cities and kingdoms built on blood are self-defeating. The nation that commits such atrocities commits suicide.

With true prophetic vision, Habakkuk sees (2:14) beyond the collapsing cities of earth to a golden age when the word of God shall prevail and the kingdom of God will be established over the whole world.

“New arts shall bloom of loftier mold, and mightier music fill the skies, and every life shall be a song, When all the earth is paradise.” John A. Symonds.

D. THE DRUNKEN EXPLOITER (2:15-17)

History bears almost a universal record of the coincidence of bloodshed, conquest, and strong drink. Nations saturated with liquor lay the foundation for their own decay.


NOTES

The “drink” mentioned here is a mixed drink. Perhaps there are drugs added to it that further destroy the one who drinks. But divine retribution is at work, and he who puts the cup to his neighbor’s lips shall drink of “the cup from the LORD’s right hand” (2:16). He shall taste the judgment of God. His glory shall be tarnished by the vomit of drunkenness. This is the sickening but literal meaning of the phrase, “disgrace will cover your glory.”

In connection with this condemnation, the prophet laments the stripping of the natural resources from the land. The Lebanon forests had been robbed (2:17). Such waste is seen to be worthy of divine punishment.

E. THE STUPID IDOLATER (2:18-20)

This woe deals specifically with a religious matter. The order of verses indicate it as more intense than the other woes for this reason. Here, the stupidity of idol worship is scored. “Idols” literally means “nonentities” and shows the foolishness of this worship. Smith-Goodspeed poignantly puts it: “Of what use is an idol when its designer has designed it, or a molten image, and a teacher of lies?” (2:18)

Note the striking observation about idols speaking. They declare lies, says the prophet. He knows that the dumb idol speaks only what is put into its mouth. A warped imagination, drawn by lusts, would naturally have its idol speak approval of the designer’s ungodly activities. But, this is not a revelation!

This applies to many modern critiques of religion, which say that God is only the projection of frustrated desires, and religion is a fanciful invention to provide what cannot be achieved in any other way, that is, to satisfy unfulfilled desires. Such views have overlooked the simple fact that God reveals himself in opposition to people’s sin and corruption, not in approval of it.

In 2:20, the emphasis is on comparing God with the dumb idols that sit in silence in their morbid temples surrounded by vile worship—“The LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.” This means, “Listen, the true God will speak.” It is a fitting conclusion to this series of woes.

Section 3.7 THE PROPHET’S WATCHTOWER (3:1-19)

This chapter is the basis for the theory that Habakkuk was a member of the Temple choir. It is clearly a hymn of worship. The use of “Selah” here (3:3, 9, 13), a musical rest, is the only occasion outside the Psalms.

Although designated a “prayer” (3:1), the prayer itself is limited. The key phrase is in memory of God’s deeds and requests “renew them in our day” (3:2), and the whole chapter is a development of this theme. It may be called a psalm of supplication in which the prophet is praying for the realization of his vision of God’s intervention.



NOTES

The strange phrase “upon Shigionoth” (3:1) is a musical sign that indicates a particular type of music, irregular and triumphant. It is considered to be especially suited to songs of victory. Thus, it is an instruction on rendering the psalm musically.

In line with the prophetic tradition, this song is rooted in the historical acts of God, especially the Exodus, which is the chief event of the Old Testament. In the light of this great deliverance, the prophet is now anticipating another great intervention of God. It is presented in terms of God’s activity in nature. It may also represent the vision from the prophet’s watchtower (2:1), being what he saw in the same way as 2:4-20 is what he heard.

A. THE PRAYER (3:2)

In the prayer the prophet speaks for the people. He has heard the report of God’s great deliverance from Egypt, and it produces fear or awe. On the basis of this awe-inspiring report, he prays for God to renew his work. The meaning is “redo” your work. God is implored to repeat this great act in these years of crisis, a time which the prophet designates as “in our time”. The last phrase of 3:2 may refer to the wrath of God outpoured, but pleads: “LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O LORD. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy.”

This would answer very well to the disturbance caused by the approaching Chaldean invasion.

B. GOD’S WORK (3:3-16)

God is seen as coming from the regions of Terman and Paran to aid his people (see Judges 5:4). His coming is described as a great storm, with dark thunderclouds from which lightning flashes, illuminating heaven and earth.

This brilliant poetic language is not intended to carry factual information, but rather to describe figuratively the terribleness of God’s presence. However, the Exodus is still in the background as the formative pattern. Habakkuk’s response to this vision is soul-shaking. He says, “I trembled.” Perhaps, his body throbbed, his teeth chattered, and he was ready to collapse.

C. A DECLARATION OF FAITH (3:17-19)

Habakkuk has loudly proclaimed the victory of God. But, should he not see it in his day, his faith in God will remain unchanged. Was that not the message given to him in 2:4? This is true religion: it does not hinge on outward circumstances but upon steady confidence in God. Such a faith produces the strength to tread the difficult paths of life. “He makes my feet like the feet of deer,” says the prophet (3:19). The deer is nimble in treading the risky mountains. The deer is so agile as to disappoint the hounds in pursuit. In life’s rocky cliffs of tribulation with uncertain footing, faith gives sure guidance and stability to tread one’s path. Furthermore, in confidence, the prophet says, I will “go on the heights”.

**NOTES**

These are not normal paths, but are sought only in times of war or danger when the enemy is in hot pursuit. But they are also highroads of triumph. Thus, there is a veiled promise of victory through suffering and trial. Faith endures: and faith triumphs, “The righteous will live by his faith.” (2:4)

polytheism [PAH-lee-thee-iz-um]

monotheistic [MAHN-uh-thee-is-tik]

CHAPTER 4. THE BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH



NOTES

Section 4.1 SUPERScription (1:1)

The meaning of “Zephaniah” (Yahweh hides) may indicate that the prophet was born during the treacherous days of Manasseh, when his life would be in danger. His name would be a confession of God’s protection. Some note that although both Zephaniah and Josiah were descendants of Hezekiah. Zephaniah was the fifth removed, while Josiah was only the fourth removed. This is easily accounted for by remembering that early marriage, the custom in those days, would have made the difference. The prophet is seen to be the mouthpiece of God, since it is God’s “word” that he speaks.

Section 4.2 THE THREAT OF WORLD JUDGMENT (1:2-18)

A. THE SCOPE OF JUDGMENT (1:2-3)

Without wasting words in introduction or building up to his message, this straightforward messenger launches into a description of the destruction that shall accompany the judgment of God. Man, nature, and living creatures shall be caught up in its universal sweep. Characteristics of this book include a grim message: no great hope, hardly any tenderness or glimpse of beauty. He gives special attention to the moral elements: “The wicked will have only heaps of rubble when I cut off man from the face of the earth.” (1:3)

B. JUDGMENT UPON JUDAH (1:4-13)

Since the Israelites had such strong idolatrous tendencies, being especially fond of Baal worship, which is specifically mentioned here, they too will be visited with wrath. Baalism was very corrupt, since it was a fertility cult, and often led Israel away from the holiness demanded by Yahweh.

Four groups are mentioned who will suffer the judgment on this great day. First is the out-and-out idolater (1:4); second is the halfhearted who renders allegiance to two deities (1:5) and thus complete devotion to none; third is the backslider who has turned back (1:6); and fourth is the indifferent who has “not sought the Lord” (1:6). Those who do not “enquire of him” almost means those who failed to worship at the Temple. A parallel verse is Psalm 10:4, which may be paraphrased, “The wicked, in the pride of his countenance, does not go to church.”

Zephaniah then turns his denunciation toward certain selected groups (1:7-9) who will suffer on that day. Perhaps he has in mind the coming of the Scythians, who will sweep down and devour their victims, especially these upper classes.



NOTES

The royal house is not exempt from this fate, and he especially mentions those who “clad in foreign clothes”. This implies the adoption of Assyrian customs of dress, which would be especially distasteful to a loyal Israelite. Those who plunder through violence will be included (1:9).

Attention is then turned to the business districts of Jerusalem and the merchants. Four locations are mentioned which take in the whole business life of the city: “the fish gate” (1:10), located on the north side where men from Tyre traded in dried fish; “New Quarter” was a part of the city on the north built by Manasseh; “the hills” refers to the northern part of the city which was built on hills; and “market district” was a hollow between the western and the eastern hills, probably the Phoenician quarter of the city.

In these times of trouble, God will search out the city (1:12) to find those responsible for the apathy toward true religion. These are those who are “complacent”. This is a metaphor taken from wine production, where the wine is left on its dregs too long and thus becomes thick and oversweet. It is a proverb for laziness and indifference. God, they thought, would not act, so they settled down in inactivity. This was practical atheism whereby the great causes of God and humanity are not defeated by the assaults of the devil, but by indifferent people. God’s causes are destroyed by explosions, but by ignoring them.

C. THE DAY OF THE LORD (1:14-18)

The concept of the day of the Lord is enlarged in 1:14-18. It is a time of disturbance in the natural world as well as in the political order. Similar descriptions are found in Joel 2:3 and Amos 5:20. This passage has a spirit of tumult and terror. “That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness, a day of trumpet and battle cry, against the fortified cities and against corner towers.” (1:15-16)

People’s lives will be worthless, their possessions will be of no value - devastation will overtake them on the final day.

Section 4.3 JUDGMENT ON THE NATIONS (2:1 - 3:7)

A. A CALL TO REPENT (2:1-3)

In 2:1-3, there is a summons to repent before the day of judgment falls. It is perhaps directed at the people of Judah. The phrase “O shameful nation” indicates that the people have not repented.

There is some evidence that 2:1-2 is a general summons, while 2:3 is a call to the remnant. There is some possibility - not a certainty, as is seen in the word “perhaps” that they may escape the day of trouble.



NOTES

These are difficult verses: “Gather together, gather together, O shameful nation, before the appointed time arrives and that day sweeps on like chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD comes upon you, before the day of the LORD’s wrath comes upon you. Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land, you who do what he commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the LORD’s anger.” (2:1-3)

Notice the ethical requirements for being delivered.

B. EXAMPLES OF JUDGMENT (2:4-15)

The four cities mentioned in verse 4 were the chief strongholds of the Philistines. The denunciation of these “inhabitants of the seacoast” ends with the country of the Philistines [FI-luh-steenz] being promised to the “remnant” (2:7). To this faithful few, God promises to give them attention (“care for them”) and to “restore their fortunes”.

Attention is then directed toward Moab [MOW-ab] and Ammon [AEM-aan] (2:8-11), located directly to the east of Canaan. The picture given here is of complete and utter destruction.

The brief reference to Ethiopia in 2:12 probably implies Egypt because of its Ethiopian kings. This country lay to the south of Canaan [KAY-nun]. Then Assyria is described with turbulent language rivalling the eloquence of Nahum, who also spoke against her. This is the climactic oracle (2:13-15) and probably the chief one, since Assyria was the colossus of the ancient world of Zephaniah’s time, and she was now beginning to totter. The fulfillment of this oracle, then, would be the close of an epoch.

The pride of Assyria and her complete annihilation are pictured in these poignant words: “This is the carefree city that lived in safety. She said to herself, ‘I am, and there is none besides me.’ What a ruin she has become, a lair for wild beasts! All who pass by her scoff and shake their fists.” (2:15)

C. JUDGMENT UPON JERUSALEM (3:1-7)

Finally, the prophet turns to Jerusalem itself. The rotting corruption of the city (3:1) is the result of turning away from God (3:2). The very essence of sin is not trusting in the Lord, and such perversion of faith often leads to depraved activity. The upper classes are especially guilty, as seemed to be the case throughout Israel’s history (3:3). The other prophets with social concerns always directed a message at them as they oppressed the poor and took advantage of their position to multiply their sins (see also especially Amos and Isaiah).

But, what is even worse, the religious leaders have failed in their function and become mockeries on true worship (3:4). The prophets declare their own ideas rather than the word of God and thus cannot be trusted. The priests have profaned the sacred, becoming worldly rather than being guardians of holiness, as was their intended function.



NOTES

But, God has not changed, his justice is still straight, and he is still “within her” (3:5). The regularity of natural processes testifies to his fidelity, but the calloused Israelites do not recognize it, so they do nothing by way of repentance. Consequently, they shall be punished (3:7).

Section 4.4 A WORD TO THE FAITHFUL (3:8-13)

The message is now addressed to those who have been true, urging them to be patient. They are to be examples to the nations of faithfulness to the true God, thus a witness against them in the day of judgment. At that point, the day of the Lord takes on another aspect.

In Zephaniah’s prophecy, the day had been dark and cloudy, a day of death and destruction. Now, we see gleams of the morning: the day of the Lord is becoming bright for those who remain true—the remnant.

The first promise is of a purified speech (3:8-9). “Then I will purify the lips of the peoples.” (3:9) Since speech or the lip is a sign of the inner life (see Isaiah 6:7), we have here an implicit promise of a pure heart to be given in the new day.

Furthermore, worship is to be purified (3:9-10). The purified worshippers shall serve him in unity (see John 17:21), despite the fact that they come from all nations and all parts of the world. The indication is that the nation shall be converted and turn to Yahweh.

In 3:11-13, the remnant and its blessings are described. They shall “not be put to shame” for their deeds. This is set in contrast to 3:5, where the “unrighteous know no shame”. There will be no need for shame because sin has been removed, and like their Lord, they do no wrong (3:5). In further contrast to the haughty (3:2), they “trust in the LORD”. They look beyond the devastation of the old order, and they themselves are made so pure and perfect before God that, without exaggeration, they could be termed new creatures. (see J. H. Eaton, Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah. London: SCM Press, 1961, p. 155.)

Section 4.5 CONCLUSION (3:14-20)

A. HYMN OF GLADNESS (3:14-15)

These verses reflect the joy of the redeemed in the presence of the Lord, who is to be in their midst. Here is the final deliverance, the golden age, which is the climax of the day of the Lord. The verbs are in the prophetic perfect tense. This means that, although the events are yet to come, they are described as having already taken place.

There are three reasons for rejoicing: the judgments are removed; the enemy is cast out (the enemy referred to here is sin, the chief enemy of Israel); and the Lord is in the midst of his people, a presence of which they are now worthy (3:15).

**NOTES****B. ASSURANCE OF FAITH (3:16-18)**

The greatest cause for assurance is God's presence as a "mighty to save" force (3:17). "The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save." Furthermore, the scattered Israelites from the homeland shall be gathered together from exile to participate once more in the "solemn assembly" of the great feasts of the faith.

C. PROMISES OF RESTORATION (3:19-20)

The true prophets of God in the Old Testament consistently proclaimed God's judgment upon sin, even upon his own people. This judgment specifically took the form of an exile or captivity. But, just as consistently, they held forth a hope of repentance and return from this captivity. Thus, with this great tradition, Zephaniah closes his pronouncement. There is great hope in God's promise: "I will deal with all who oppressed you; I will rescue the lame and gather those who have been scattered. I will give them praise and honor in every land where they were put to shame." (3:19)

Philistines [FI-luh-steenz]

Moab [MOW-ab]

Ammon [AEM-aan]

Canaan [KAY-nun]

CHAPTER 5. THE BOOK OF HAGGAI



NOTES

Section 5.1 THE CALL TO ACTION (1:1-15)

A. SUPERScription (1:1)

This first verse dates the prophecy and gives the historical situation. “In the second year of King Darius” would be 520 B.C., and the specific time is the first day of September - the “sixth month” in the Jewish calendar, known as Elul.

The message was addressed to Zerubbabel, the political leader, and to Joshua, the religious leader (see Introduction). Zerubbabel was a descendent of David and had been appointed by the Persian king to this position. There seems to be high hopes that he, being of the lineage of David, would be the fulfillment of the Messianic hope. But, of course, he was only a foreshadowing of that great Figure.

The message was spoken to these two men as the key personalities in the situation. In the presence of the assembled worshippers, Haggai issued to them a stirring call to action.

B. THE CAUSE OF DELAY (1:2)

The people were waiting to build the Temple at a convenient time, which they said had not yet arrived. They had erected the altar and were carrying out a simple ritual, but were not pushing for the completion of the major building. There are several suggested reasons for this delay, but it all seems to boil down to insufficient incentive.

C. ATTACK UPON DELAY (1:3-6)

Haggai called attention to the fact that they had found time and means to build houses for themselves, while the Temple worship remained unhoused. Their homes had been furnished magnificently (1:4). Some have even suggested that the fine paneling procured for the Temple was used for their homes. In contrast to their luxurious homes, the house of God lay in ruins.

In view of these circumstances, Haggai asks them to consider their ways (1:5), which is best translated, “Give careful thought to your ways.” The results of waiting for a more convenient season have been unsatisfactory. Better days have not emerged. It may be that Haggai had in mind the words of the Preacher: “Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap.” (Ecclesiastes 11:4)



NOTES

The prophet repeats the same sad circumstance in 1:9: “You expected much, but see it turned to be little. What you brought home, I blew away.”

All this Haggai attributes to the displeasure of Yahweh for their failure to build the Temple.

D. CHALLENGE TO ACT (1:7-11)

They are now called upon to move into action by procuring materials to begin the work. Wood was the needed item since the original paneling would have been destroyed by fire. The stones would still be present.

The people cannot expect God’s blessing upon them until they begin to do God’s will.

E. RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGE (1:12-15)

The leaders and the people who had returned responded with obedience to this prophetic call. Immediately upon a positive reaction, God promised his presence. It is God’s work; therefore, God will do more than stand by as an interested onlooker. He will become an active Participant in the task.

Thus, the indifference was broken, and discouragement disappeared. Three weeks after Haggai’s first sermon, the foundation stone was laid (compare 1:15 with 1:1). They had probably spent the intervening time clearing away the rubbish accumulated on the Temple site.

Section 5.2 THE CALL TO COURAGE (2:1-9)

A. THE OCCASION (2:1-5)

The second message preached by the prophet came after the lapse of about a month. Apparently, the work had lagged. On the occasion of a public assembly - the Feast of Tabernacles - Haggai preached again. This time, the work had slowed because the people had had the opportunity to compare the proportions of the Temple they were building with Solomon’s Temple, and the contrast was discouraging. Their high hopes were dashed when they realized that this Temple was little more than a “shack” in comparison to the luxurious and magnificent Temple that had been destroyed.

Haggai now again addresses himself to Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the people. He reminds them (2:5) that the God who led them out of Egypt has promised to be with them in this endeavor. He will not fail to keep his covenant, and the essence of this covenant-keeping is the presence of the Spirit.



NOTES

B. THE SERMON (2:6-9)

The need is for encouragement. This is answered in terms of a prophecy which sees God intervening “once again,” as the RSV has it. The reference is to the great shaking at Mount Sinai, and the promise is that he will “in a little while” perform another great shaking, which will usher in the Messianic age.

The misfortunes that Haggai anticipates are thought by most interpreters to be reflections of the revolts that were going on in the Persian world during the early reign of Darius (see Introduction). The issue of these developments will be the establishment of the Lord’s house and its exaltation. In contrast to the present poverty of the Israelites, there will be great wealth available for its building. “The desired of all nations” refers to the wealth of the nations, which shall be made available to this endeavor (see Isaiah 60:5). Why is this possible? Because God is the Owner of the wealth of the world (2:8).

The prophet continues his bold prediction with two further promises: “The glory of this present house (the new Temple) shall be greater than the glory of the former house (Solomon’s Temple);” and second, God will give it “peace” (2:9).

The true glory of this Temple is to be the presence of the Spirit of God. This prophecy was partially fulfilled, but the complete fulfillment awaits the climax of the Messianic age when all nations shall flow into the Lord’s house as the heritage of Israel.

Section 5.3 THE CALL TO PATIENCE (2:10-19)

This message came three months after the work began and two months after the last sermon. Discouragement was still in the air, and there was a need to remind the people of the necessity of patience. Haggai addresses two questions to the priests, who are authorized to give a judgment in case there is no written law (see Deuteronomy 27:8-13). The first question is: “Would a garment bearing ‘consecrated meat’ make holy what it touches?” The priests answered, “No.” Regarding the second question: If a person defiled by contact with a dead body “touches one of these things, does it become defiled?” The priests responded “Yes.” (2:13).

The point of the questions was to show that it is much easier to become defiled than to become clean, for uncleanness is more contagious than holiness. The argument turned on the conclusion that what was ceremonially holy could not sanctify what it touched. On the contrary, what was ceremonially unclean infected not only the person in contact with it, but whatever he touched thereafter as well (see Numbers 19:11-22).

The people had been defiled by their disobedience to God’s will and their consequent captivity (2:14). As a result, the “work of their hands” - the work they are now trying to do - is defiled. Although they had erected an altar and carried out a ritual of purification, the curse of defilement still remained upon them, thus hindering their work. This they must recognize. The ritual they enacted at the altar would not remove their past negligence.


NOTES

It is easy to acquire defilement, but it is not easily cleansed. This meant that the people had created their own difficulties and now would have to live with them. Sins once committed may be forgiven, but their consequences remain to be reckoned with. Therefore, there is a need for patience.

With these principles before him, Haggai interprets the seventeen years of difficulty which the returned Jews had suffered (2:15-18). Moses predicted blasting and mildew as two diseases that would come as chastisement for disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:22), but the prophet did not leave them with this apparently discouraging message. He depicts a brighter future.

But, look ahead, from this onwards (from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month), start from the day when the foundation of the temple of the Eternal One was laid. Will your seed be lying idle in the barns? Will the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive still fail to bear fruit? No, from now on, I will bless you with prosperity.

Section 5.4 THE CALL TO FAITH (2:20-23)

Haggai's final message is addressed to Zerubbabel (2:21-23) alone. It was given on the same day as the sermon on patience and is a word of promise for safety and distinction. He sees Zerubbabel being established as God's representative.

Zerubbabel is to be God's "signet." A signet was a ring with the owner's name engraved on it, guarded by him with jealous care. It was the symbol of both ownership and authority. An Eastern monarch sometimes gave a signet to an important minister as a mark of confidence and authority. Thus, Zerubbabel's leadership is to bear the stamp of divine authority.

Although there seems to be a feeling, even on Haggai's part, that Zerubbabel is to be the Messianic figure, Zerubbabel only becomes a type of Christ. Thus, we have a reassertion of the Jewish Messianic hope of a divine Deliverer from the house of David who would sit on David's throne. This great hope came to its culmination in the Son of David - Jesus Christ.

Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah and Haggai Study Questions

Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOKS OF NAHUM, HABAKKUK, ZEPHANIAH AND HAGGAI

Section 1.1 INTRODUCTION TO NAHUM

1. The only facts known about Nahum are those which can be inferred from his prophecy.
 - A. true
 - B. false

**NOTES**

2. Nahum's name is almost identical in meaning to which other name that implies "full comfort"?
 - A. Noah
 - B. Nebuchadnezzar
 - C. Nehemiah
 - D. Jeremiah

3. Nahum is designated as the _____ ?
 - A. Israelite
 - B. Judean
 - C. Elkoshite
 - D. Elamite

4. Nahum centers his message of doom upon the capital city of the Babylonian empire and proclaims its collapse.
 - A. true
 - B. false

5. In Nahum's time, which city had been the dread of the nations, causing death and destruction to all who stood in the path of conquest?
 - A. Rome
 - B. Jerusalem
 - C. Nineveh
 - D. Samaria

6. What clue helps us date Nahum's prophecy?
 - A. a reference to the fall of No Amon
 - B. the date of the fall of Nineveh
 - C. Nahum's silence about the sins of his own people
 - D. all of these

7. The key verse of the book is _____, which sums up the theological basis for Nahum's denunciation.
 - A. 1:1
 - B. 1:2
 - C. 1:3
 - D. 1:4

8. The Book of Nahum is one of literature's finest examples of English poetry.
 - A. true
 - B. false


NOTES

9. What is true about the book of Nahum as literature?

- A. His word pictures are superb.
- B. His rhetorical skill is praiseworthy.
- C. The abiding message of the book is a clear expression of two fundamental prophetic insights.
- D. all of these

Section 1.2 INTRODUCTION TO HABAKKUK

10. What is true about the prophet Habakkuk?

- A. He is surrounded by many traditions but very few facts.
- B. His name probably means “to clasp or embrace”.
- C. There is strong evidence that he was a member of the Temple choir.
- D. all of these

11. What is not true about the prophet Habakkuk?

- A. He is one of the few in the Bible called a prophet (nabi).
- B. He was perhaps a professional prophet.
- C. He reverses the prophetic tradition.
- D. He usually speaks to people for God.

12. When did the prophet Habakkuk prophesy?

- A. around 400 B.C.
- B. around 500 B.C.
- C. around 600 B.C.
- D. around 700 B.C.

13. Of what great prophet was Habakkuk a contemporary?

- A. Ezekiel
- B. Daniel
- C. Isaiah
- D. Jeremiah

14. What is true of the background of Habakkuk’s message?

- A. He knows something about the reformation of King Josiah.
- B. He would be a witness to the rising power of the Chaldeans.
- C. He would know something about the wickedness of the people as a result of the influence of the wicked King Manasseh.
- D. all of these

15. The key verse to Habakkuk’s message is _____?

- A. 1:14
- B. 2:1
- C. 3:1
- D. 3:14


NOTES

16. What question of theodicy is Habakkuk concerned with?

- A. Who is God?
- B. Why does God allow wickedness to prevail?
- C. Who is Satan?
- D. Why did mankind sin?

17. In days when God's finger is difficult to trace in history, and when wickedness prevails, the message of Habakkuk comes to us with terrifying relevance.

- A. true
- B. false

Section 1.3 INTRODUCTION TO ZEPHANIAH

18. Our biographical information about Zephaniah is restricted to the last verse of his prophecy.

- A. true
- B. false

19. Zephaniah's name is borne by three other biblical characters, and means _____?

- A. "Have a good day."
- B. "Hide your children."
- C. "Yahweh hides."
- D. "You are hidden."

20. Zephaniah was a descendant of which good king of Judah?

- A. Josiah
- B. Hezekiah
- C. Zerubbabel
- D. Zachariah

21. What is the approximate time that Zephaniah preached?

- A. 638 B.C. to 621 B.C.
- B. 738 B.C. to 700 B.C.
- C. 690 B.C. to 660 B.C.
- D. 661 B.C. to 641 B.C.

22. It is fair to infer that Zephaniah preached during the early part of whose rule?

- A. Josiah
- B. Hezekiah
- C. Zerubbabel
- D. Zachariah

 NOTES

23. Zephaniah was a contemporary of _____ but probably preached before the latter prophet came into prominence in Jerusalem.
- A. Ezekiel
 - B. Daniel
 - C. Isaiah
 - D. Jeremiah
24. Politically, the world was in turmoil during Zephaniah's time.
- A. true
 - B. false
25. What is true about Babylon during Zephaniah's time?
- A. It was a rising power.
 - B. It had conquered Assyria.
 - C. It had conquered Egypt.
 - D. It had conquered Judah.
26. What is true about the Scythian hordes during Zephaniah's time?
- A. They were a threat to world security.
 - B. They were from the north.
 - C. They were fierce, bloodthirsty barbarians.
 - D. all of these are true
27. Zephaniah is called the prophet of "the day of the Lord".
- A. true
 - B. false
28. Zephaniah tended to see the day of the Lord as an eschatological myth.
- A. true
 - B. false

Section 1.4 INTRODUCTION TO HAGGAI

29. Haggai is known as a postexilic prophet.
- A. true
 - B. false
30. Haggai preached after the great Babylonian empire had fallen to the Greeks and Romans.
- A. true
 - B. false



NOTES

31. Which king declared the freedom of the Israelites and allowed them to return to their homeland?
- A. Nebuchadnezzar
 - B. Belteshazzar
 - C. Darius
 - D. Cyrus
32. Who was the governor when Haggai prophesied?
- A. Josiah
 - B. Hezekiah
 - C. Zerubbabel
 - D. Zachariah
33. Who was the high priest when Haggai prophesied?
- A. Joshua
 - B. Hezekiah
 - C. Jeremiah
 - D. Zachariah
34. Which neighbors strongly opposed the rebuilding of the temple in Haggai's time?
- A. the Moabites
 - B. the Ammonites
 - C. the Samaritans
 - D. the Egyptians
35. There is general agreement that Haggai was a very young man at the time of his preaching.
- A. true
 - B. false
36. Haggai's prophecy is made up of the fourteen sermons that he preached.
- A. true
 - B. false

Chapter 2. THE BOOK OF NAHUM

Section 2.1 SUPERScription (1:1)

37. The first part of the superscription of the Book of Nahum gives the objective of the message.
- A. true
 - B. false
38. The word translated as "oracle" (1:1) literally means "lifting up the axe".
- A. true
 - B. false

NOTES

Section 2.2 THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD (1:2-6)

39. God's government is based on his nature, and consequently, the prophet Nahum begins by declaring the character of Yahweh.

- A. true
- B. false

40. In 1:4, Nahum calls attention to God's saving acts in history.

- A. true
- B. false

Section 2.3 THE APPLICATION OF GOD'S GOVERNMENT (1:7-15; 2:2)

41. To those who are _____, God is declared to be "good" and a "stronghold in the day of trouble".

- A. resentful
- B. backslidden
- C. faithful
- D. downfallen

42. The prophet challenges the Assyrians' smugness and, in an agricultural metaphor, compares them to wheat.

- A. true
- B. false

Section 2.4 THE FALL OF NINEVEH (2:1, 3-13)

43. Military authorities have studied the defeat of Nineveh, but their expert opinion conflicts with Nahum's account.

- A. true
- B. false

44. What is true of the plundering of Nineveh?

- A. The treasure houses of Nineveh had been overflowing with stolen merchandise.
- B. The treasure houses of Nineveh were stripped bare
- C. There was "no end to the plunder treasures all untold!"
- D. all of these are true

Chapter 3. THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK

Section 3.1 SUPERScription (1:1)

 **NOTES**

46. Habakkuk loudly preaches his doubts as he wrestles them out with God.
- A. true
 - B. false

Section 3.2 THE PROPHET'S PROBLEM (1:2-4)

47. The prophet Habakkuk is disturbed over the evil ways of his own people.
- A. true
 - B. false
48. Those who have faith in a good God have a problem with regard to the government of the world.
- A. true
 - B. false

Section 3.3 GOD'S ANSWER (1:5-11)

49. What instrument does God intend to use for his work in 1:5-11?
- A. the Assyrians
 - B. the Egyptians
 - C. the Chaldeans
 - D. the Scythians
50. God is the Lord of history, who makes even the wrath of people praise him.
- A. true
 - B. false

Section 3.4 THE PROPHET'S SECOND PROBLEM (1:12-17)

51. Habakkuk wonders why God should choose to a wicked nation such as the Chaldeans to punish Judah.
- A. true
 - B. false
52. Habakkuk sees the victims of the Chaldeans as helpless "sheep in the pasture".
- A. True
 - B. False



NOTES

Section 3.5 THE PROPHET'S WATCHTOWER (2:1-6)

53. What is true of Habakkuk 2:1-6
- A. This is the most familiar passage from the Book of Habakkuk.
 - B. It is also the central passage of the Book of Habakkuk.
 - C. Habakkuk seems somewhat shaken by this outburst and now prepares to receive God's rebuke.
 - D. all of these are true

Section 3.6 THE PROPHET'S WATCHTOWER (2:6-20)

54. Which of the following does not symbolize the Chaldeans' godless activity?
- A. merciless capitalist
 - B. wealthy villain
 - C. alert philosopher
 - D. deceitful ruler

Section 3.7 THE PROPHET'S WATCHTOWER (3:1-19)

55. Which of the following is a musical sign that indicates a particular type of music, irregular and triumphant?
- A. Selah
 - B. Shigionoth
 - C. Amen
 - D. gittith
56. True religion does not hinge on outward circumstances but faith in God.
- A. True
 - B. False

Chapter 4. THE BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH

Section 4.1 SUPERScription (1:1)

57. What does Zephaniah's name suggest?
- A. He was born during the treacherous days of Manasseh.
 - B. His life was in danger.
 - C. A confession of God's protection
 - D. all of these are true


NOTES
Section 4.2 THE THREAT OF WORLD JUDGMENT (1:2-18)

58. What is characteristic of the Book of Zephaniah?

- A. a grim message
- B. no great hope
- C. hardly any tenderness or glimpse of beauty
- D. all of these are true

59. Zephaniah's concept of the day of the Lord, as enlarged in 1:14-18, is a time of disturbance in the natural world as well as in the political order.

- A. True
- B. False

Section 4.3 JUDGMENT ON THE NATIONS (2:1 - 3:7)

60. What example of judgments is given in 2:4-15?

- A. Moab
- B. Ammon
- C. Ethiopia
- D. all of these

61. What is true of judgment upon Jerusalem in 3:1-7?

- A. The putrefying corruption of the city is the result of turning away from God.
- B. The upper classes are especially guilty.
- C. The religious leaders have failed in their function and become a mockery of true worship.
- D. all of these are true

Section 4.4 A WORD TO THE FAITHFUL (3:8-13)

62. Zephaniah 3:8-13 urges those who have been true to now take up their swords.

- A. True
- B. False

63. Zephaniah 3:11-13 describes the remnant and its blessings.

- A. True
- B. False

Section 4.5 CONCLUSION (3:14-20)

64. What is true of the hymn of gladness in 3:14-15?

- A. It reflects the joy of the redeemed in the presence of the Lord.
- B. The verbs are in the prophetic perfect tense.
- C. It speaks of the golden age, the climax of the day of the Lord.
- D. all of these are true


NOTES

65. What is true of the promises of restoration in 3:16-18?
- A. There is great hope in God's promise: "I will deal with all who oppressed you."
 - B. God will rescue the lame and gather those who have been scattered.
 - C. God will give them praise and honor in every land where they were put to shame.
 - D. all of these are true

Chapter 5. THE BOOK OF HAGGAI

Section 5.1 THE CALL TO ACTION (1:1-15)

66. When did Haggai write his prophecy?
- A. in the second year of King Darius
 - B. 520 B.C.
 - C. the "sixth month" in the Jewish calendar
 - D. all of these
67. What was the cause of the delay in rebuilding the temple?
- A. low finances
 - B. lack of building stones
 - C. insufficient incentive
 - D. poor communication
68. Three years after Haggai's first sermon, the foundation stone was laid.
- A. True
 - B. False

Section 5.2 THE CALL TO COURAGE (2:1-9)

69. What was the occasion for Haggai's second sermon?
- A. The work on the temple had lagged.
 - B. The people were discouraged.
 - C. He preached during public assembly for the Feast of Tabernacles.
 - D. all of these
70. Haggai affirmed that the true glory of this temple is to be the presence of the Spirit of God.
- A. True
 - B. False

Section 5.3 THE CALL TO PATIENCE (2:10-19)

71. Haggai's call to patience came three years after the work on the temple began.
- A. true
 - B. false


NOTES

72. The people had been defiled by their disobedience to God's will and their consequent captivity.

- A. True
- B. False

73. Haggai affirmed that it is more difficult to acquire defilement than it is to have it cleansed.

- A. true
- B. false

Section 5.4 THE CALL TO FAITH (2:20-23)

74. What is true of Haggai's final message?

- A. It is addressed to Zerubbabel alone.
- B. It was given one month after the sermon on patience.
- C. It was a warning about the hazards ahead.
- D. It named Zerubbabel's successor.

75. Haggai assured people of the Jewish Messianic hope of a divine Deliverer from the house of David who would sit on David's throne.

- A. true
- B. false

Methods of Study

Have you enjoyed this study of the Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Haggai? Do you wish to study further? If so, here are a few more suggestions.

1. Examine the authorship of the Book of Nahum.
2. Examine the authorship of the Book of Habakkuk.
3. Examine the authorship of the Book of Zephaniah.
4. Examine the authorship of the Book of Haggai.
5. Examine the use of symbolism and parallelisms in the Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Haggai.
6. Contrast Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Haggai with the major professional prophets.

Allow God to examine your concept of prophecy as you study the Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Haggai!

**NOTES****Pronunciation Guide**

Ammon [AEM-aan]
Canaan [KAY-nun]
Carchemish [KAR-kem-esh]
Cyraxes [SAI-aks-uh-rees]
eschatological [eh-skuh-tuh-LAA-juh-kl]
Habakkuk [huh-BAK-uk]
Khoser [KOHS]
Mesopotamia [meh-suh-puh-TAY-mee-uh]
Moab [MOW-ab]
monotheistic [MAHN-uh-thee-is-tik]
Nahum [NAY-um]
Philistines [FI-luh-steenz]
polytheism [PAH-lee-thee-iz-um]
postexilic [POST-eks-il-ik]
Samaritans [suh-MAIR-uh-tunz]
Scythian [SITH-ee-an]
Zerubbabel [zuh-RUH-buh-bul]