Jonah and Nahum Two Tales of One City "I flayed all the chief men who had revolted, and I covered the pillar with their skins . . . others I bound to stakes . . . I cut off the limbs of their officers . . . 3000 captives I burned with fire . . ."

"Covering some 1850 acres, contained famous hanging gardens, water dams, parks, a fifty-mile aqueduct to bring water from the mountains,

"great roads, a double wall protecting the city . . . the palace boasted almost two square miles of carved stone reliefs."

# Nineveh, the beautiful capitol of the brutal **Assyrian war machine**

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- It's a prophecy in <u>story form</u> rather than messages or visions.
- It's **satirical**: Jonah looks ridiculous in his own book.
- It creates awkward <u>questions</u> for the reader.

Chapter 1 - Land and Sea

"I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land."

Jonah 1:9b

## Does Jonah **fear the Lord?**

## How is Jonah's response good?

Chapter 2 - The Fish's Belly

Chapter 2 - The Fish's Belly

**Did Jonah repent?** 

## Chapter 3 - Inside Nineveh

Chapter 3 - Inside Nineveh "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"

Jonah 3:4b

Chapter 3 - Inside Nineveh
Is Jonah obeying and giving **the whole message?** 

"Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. "Let them not feed or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God. "Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands."

Jonah 3:7b-8

"Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish."

Jonah 3:9

Chapter 4 - Outside Nineveh

"But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. And he prayed to the LORD and said, 'O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country?'

"That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster."

Jonah 4:1-2

## Can a messenger of God <u>hate people God</u> <u>loves?</u>

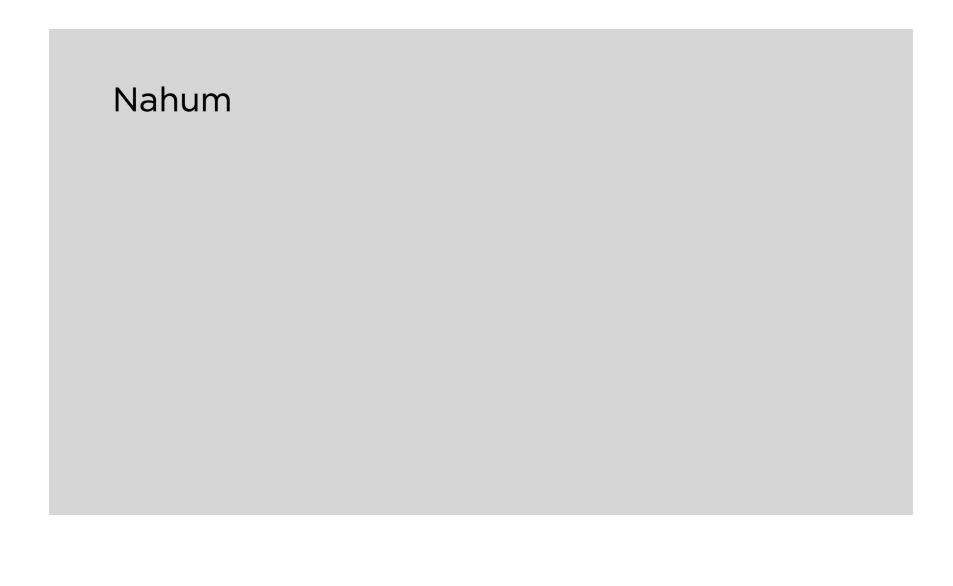
## Can a messenger of God hate people God loves?

"Do you do well to be angry?" Jonah 4:4b

"And the LORD said, 'You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night.

"And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?"

Jonah 4:10-11



## Nahum

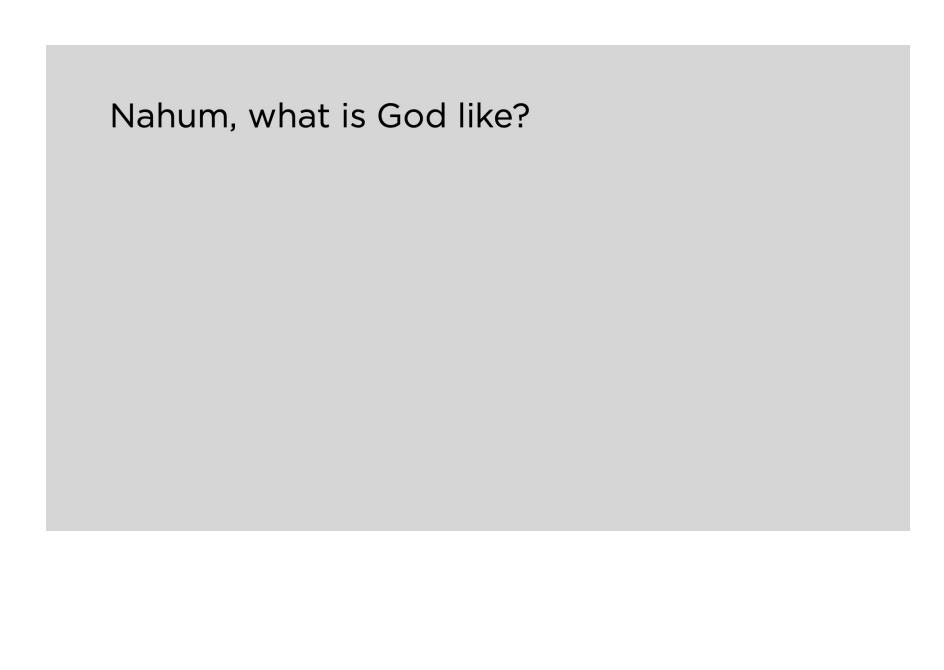
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### Nahum

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### Nahum

- It's a verbal recording of a prophetic vision.
- It's purposefully <u>vague</u>. You don't always know who he is addressing.
- It is full of vivid and violent **imagery**.



"The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD is avenging and wrathful; the LORD takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies. "The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and the LORD will by no means clear the guilty. His way is in whirlwind and storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.

"He rebukes the sea and makes it dry; he dries up all the rivers; Bashan and Carmel wither; the bloom of Lebanon withers. "The mountains quake before him; the hills melt; the earth heaves before him, the world and all who dwell in it.

"Who can stand before his indignation?
Who can endure the heat of his anger?
His wrath is poured out like fire,
and the rocks are broken into pieces by him.

"The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him. "But with an overflowing flood he will make a complete end of the adversaries, and will pursue his enemies into darkness."

Nahum 1:2-8

Nahum, why is God judging Nineveh?

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1. God is specifically avenging the wrong done **to his people**.

"Thus says the LORD, 'Though they are at full strength and many, they will be cut down and pass away. "Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no more. And now I will break his yoke from off you and will burst your bonds apart."

Nahum 1:12-13

"For the LORD is restoring the majesty of Jacob as the majesty of Israel, for plunderers have plundered them and ruined their branches."

Nahum 2:2

Nahum, why is God judging Nineveh?

- 1. God is specifically avenging the wrong done to his people.
- 2. God is generally avenging the wrong done to the nations.

"Woe to the bloody city, all full of lies and plunder — no end to the prey!

"The crack of the whip, and rumble of the wheel, galloping horse and bounding chariot!

"Horsemen charging, flashing sword and glittering spear, hosts of slain, heaps of corpses, dead bodies without end — they stumble over the bodies!"

Nahum 3:1-3

"And all who look at you will shrink from you and say, 'Wasted is Nineveh; who will grieve for her?' Where shall I seek comforters for you?"

Nahum 3:7

"All who hear the news about you clap their hands over you. For upon whom has not come your unceasing evil?"

Nahum 3:19b

Nahum, what does God's justice look like?

"Behold, I am against you, declares the LORD of hosts, and I will burn your chariots in smoke, and the sword shall devour your young lions.

"I will cut off your prey from the earth, and the voice of your messengers shall no longer be heard."

**Nahum 2:13** 

"Behold, I am against you, declares the LORD of hosts, and will lift up your skirts over your face; and I will make nations look at your nakedness and kingdoms at your shame.

"I will throw filth at you and treat you with contempt and make you a spectacle."

Nahum 3:5-6

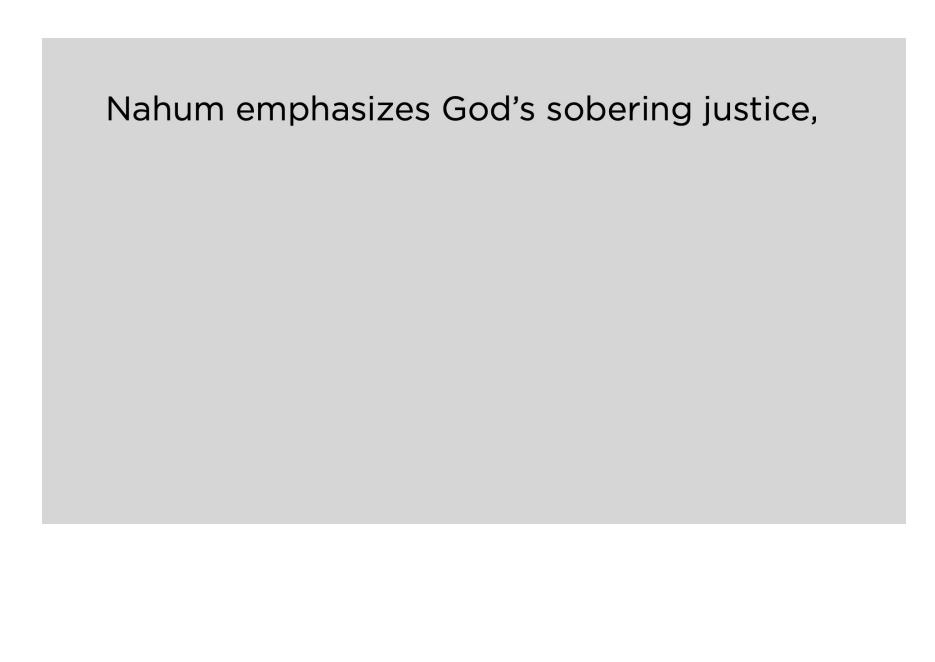
"Draw water for the siege; strengthen your forts; go into the clay; tread the mortar; take hold of the brick mold!

"There will the fire devour you; the sword will cut you off. It will devour you like the locust . . .

"O king of Assyria; your nobles slumber. Your people are scattered on the mountains with none to gather them. There is no easing your hurt; your wound is grievous."

Nahum 3:14-19a

Jonah and Nahum reveal the sobering **justice** and surprising **mercy** of God.



Nahum emphasizes God's sobering justice, but Nahum is not absent of mercy. "The LORD is slow to anger and great in power,"

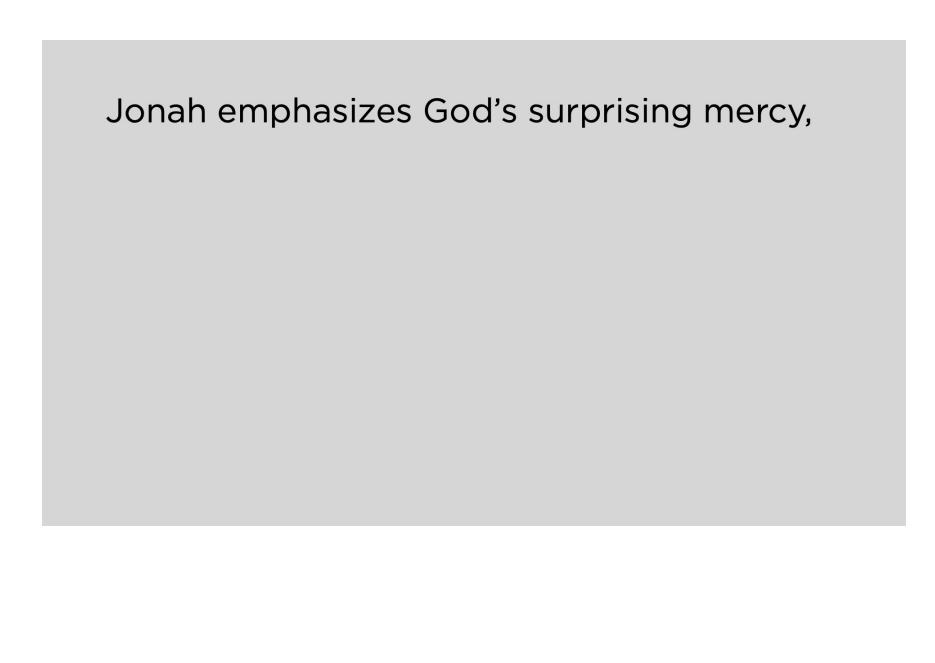
Nahum 1:3a

"The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him."

Nahum 1:7

"For the LORD is restoring the majesty of Jacob as the majesty of Israel,"

Nahum 2:2a



Jonah emphasizes God's surprising mercy, but Jonah is not absent of God's sobering justice. Jonah and Nahum reveal the sobering justice and surprising mercy of God.

1. **Respect** God for who he is -

1. **Respect** God for who he is - resist highlighting and hiding.

"A lot of people have abandoned the 'God is angry' narrative and simply replaced it with the exact opposite: 'God is never angry at all.'

"As followers of Jesus, when we read these stories [like Nahum] about Yahweh's anger or wrath or judgment, "we feel like we need to apologize to our friends or explain it away or hide this socially unacceptable part of God away in the back room, as if Yahweh needs a little PR help to survive in the modern world. "The imagery of an angry God is passé. We've moved on, evolved to a more progressive world. It's time that we update Yahweh for the twenty-first century.

"And with this move to recast God comes an even more disconcerting move to redefine love. For a lot of people, love has come to mean tolerance.

"Think of the common slang in our culture: 'Hey, what's good for you is good for you.' 'Who am I to judge?' 'Live and let live.'

"I can't help but think, Really? Would you say that about an ISIS bomber? A deranged killer sneaking into an elementary school with a machine gun? A pedophile? I'm guessing no." John Mark Comer "God is opposed to idolatry, to rape, to racism, to abuse, to theft, to murder, to bloodshed, and to exploiting the poor [and] will treat these atrocities as he has promised he would.

"We can't only tell the story of Jonah delighting in God's surprising mercy. We must also tell the story of Nahum where God's justice says, 'enough is enough.'

"We can't highlight God's mercy at the expense of his justice."

Derek Rishmawy

2. **Respond** to God appropriately.

"For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

"For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls."

1 Peter 2:21-25

Jesus, "continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly."

1 Peter 2:23b

"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

"By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls."

1 Peter 2:24-25

"The strict justice of God, and even his revenging justice, and that against the sins of men, never was so gloriously manifested as in Christ . . .

"when he had a mind to save sinners, he was willing to undergo such extreme sufferings . . .

"And as he is the Judge of the world, he doth himself exercise strict justice, he will not clear the guilty, nor at all acquit the wicked in judgment. "Yet how wonderfully is infinite mercy towards sinners displayed in him!

"And what glorious and ineffable grace and love have been and are exercised by him, towards sinful men!

"Though he be the just Judge of a sinful world, yet he is also the Savior of the world. Though he be a consuming fire to sin, yet he is the light and life of sinners."

Jonathan Edwards

Jonah and Nahum reveal the sobering justice and surprising mercy of God.