

His Ways Are Everlasting

Nahum; Habakkuk; Zephaniah

Insights

What insights did you have from this week's lesson?



Nahum

It is believed that Nahum is trying to describe a vision of what he saw, and he is trying to describe it the best he can with his abilities

Can infer from the text around when it was written. In Nahum we read Populace which another name for The city of Thebes. Thebes is Luxor or Carnak. Nahum warns the Assyrians that they are taking about how great Thebes is and how Assyria had destroyed it, then he says, you will likewise be destroyed.

Thebes was destroyed in 663 by the Assyrians, and Nineveh was the capital of Assyria for only the last 100 years of their empire. So Nahum is written after the destruction of Thebes and before the fall of Nineveh so sometime between 660-612 BC.

One other fun side note, Nineveh is the city that Jonah was asked to preach

in.

Some interesting things about how Nahum was written. Nahum is written in poetry. These three chapters can be divided into 7 verses of a song. The first one is Vs. 2-10. This describes the savior as a divine warrior. He will fight our battles for us. He gives examples of what he has already done, dividing the red sea and drying the Jordan River. We also get this idea “Am I worthy to stand before God, if not here is what I have to look forward to”.

Also, Nahum uses the Assyrians battle cries against them here. That is why you see sayings such as “Over running flood” because that is how Assyrians referred to their armies.

Images taken from Unsplash



Habakkuk

We can infer when Habakkuk was written by context clues in these verses. The Chaldeans are mentioned; this is another name for the Neo-Babylonians. As we know, the Babylonians destroyed Assyria and eventually took over Jerusalem. Nineveh was destroyed in 612 BC. The battle of Carkemish took place in 605 BC. And at this point, Jerusalem is still standing. So at this point, Babylon is on the move, but they have not reached Judah and Jerusalem. So these were written between 605 BC - 587 BC.

Fun note, this is during Lehi's time.

Habakkuk is written in prayer and answer format for the first two chapters and a song for the third chapter.

Habakkuk is very human in these prayers. He starts with a similar prayer we

have seen from other prophets, asking the Lord how long do they need to suffer for. When the Lord responds that he will send the babylonians to destroy Assyria, which will allow them to return to Jerusalem, Habakkuk then responds with a wait, what? Why them they are not righteous, and we are trying to stay righteous... which the Lord then responds to starting in Chapter 2 verse 2. God also tells Habakkuk to write down what he learns and to share it in his own words in such a way that the people will understand, which leads to the song in Chapter 3.

Image of Jerusalem from <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/mormon-jewish-delegation-jerusalem>

Zephaniah



Zephaniah

Chronologically Zephaniah should be placed between Nahum and Habakkuk.

Unlike the other books, we are told at the beginning around when Zephaniah was prophesying in Judah which is 640-609 BC.

You can read all three chapters of Zephaniah as one continuous whole.

Image taken from <https://news-ca.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/bible-brought-to-life-on-ancient-jerusalem-set>

Dead Sea Scrolls



One thing to note about all three of these books. We actually have the most persevered Dead Sea Scrolls on these books. I have heard a lot about the Dead Sea Scrolls, but I didn't quite understand what they were, so if there any of you out there like me, here is what they are.

The Dead sea scrolls are a jewish commentary written 500 years or so after these prophets words were written. These scrolls were found by beduin tribesmen in caves in the desert, and in multiple other locations.

According to Dr. Joshua Matheson in the Follow Him podcast "These texts tell us about how scripture was written, how they interpreted scripture, and also a collection of texts that told us how their community sought to live their faith. They're very Jewish texts and about 40% of them are biblical in orientation, so what we have in our Old Testament. Another 30% are texts about the Bible and about people in the Bible, so it's kind of expanding our view of what the Bible has to say, including these commentaries on Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah. And then another 30% that tell us just about their life. We get receipts, and records, and discussions about how the community is organized. So it's almost this lens into the ancient Jewish world that the Savior was a part of"

Every book in the Old Testament can be found in the dead sea scrolls except for Esther and Nehemiah.

Image taken from Smithsonian magazine article <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/who-wrote-the-dead-sea-scrolls-11781900/>

Follow Him Podcast Links:

Episode 49 - Nahum; Habakkuk; Zephaniah with Dr. Joshua M. Matson

Part 1 - <https://youtu.be/Ph68ogID638>

Part 2 - <https://youtu.be/ZIQwhSBPGOU>

Website - <https://followhim.co/old-testament/>



The topics for this week are:

The Lord is both powerful and merciful (Nahum 1)

We can trust the Lord's will and His timing (Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4; 3

The Lord will rejoice with His people in Zion (Zephaniah 3:14-20)

Images taken from:

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/manual/old-testament-seminary-teacher-material-2018/exodus/lesson-50?lang=eng>

<https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/erin-holmes/waiting-upon-lord-antidote-uncertainty/>

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/video/2022-07-0100-jesus-christ-appears-in-the-ancient-americas-3-nephi-8-11?lang=eng&alang=eng>

**We Can
Trust The
Lord's Will
And His
Timing**



Our next topic is We can trust in the Lord's will and His timing.

Habakkuk was concerned about what he saw in the world around him.

Image from <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/erin-holmes/waiting-upon-lord-antidote-uncertainty/>

Habakkuk 1:1-4

1 The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see.

2 O Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save!

Lets start by reading Habakkuk 1:1-4

Habakkuk 1:1-4

3 Why dost thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention.

Habakkuk 1:1-4

4 Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth.

So what are Habakkuk's concerns?

He is asking God, why are you not listening, we are crying to you and you will not hear - this is Joseph Smith's plea in Liberty Jail also in Psalm 13: 2-3... They all say something similar, I am just not seeing the answers. It's the question of how long do we have to wait.

Does this sound familiar?

Mark 4:37-38

D&C 121: 1-6

Let's look at some other scriptures that have similar pleas.

**What similar questions
do people ask about
God today?**

How does God respond?

Habakkuk 2:2-4

Mark 4:39-40

D&C 121:7-8

Let's read how God responds to these pleas.



Here is what Jeffrey R. Holland has to say about waiting on the Lord. (Note: there are fades between the clips so you can see where things were clipped out from the full talk)

Clip Length 6:30

Clips taken from Jeffrey R. Holland's talk "Waiting on the Lord," Ensign or Liahona, Nov. 2020, 115–16.

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2020/10/57holland.2,6,9?lang=eng#2>

**How has the Savior
helped you live by your
faith even when you
have unanswered
questions?**

**Count Your Blessings
Name Them
One By One**

Now let's move to Habakkuk Chapter 3. This is the song that Habakkuk wrote to help share what he learned in Chapters 1-2. Before we start, think about or write a list of the blessings God has given you.

What would happen if you lost some of your temporal blessings?

Ponder this question.

Habakkuk 3:17-19

17 Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:

How does Habakkuk respond to these trials?

Habakkuk 3:17-19

18 Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

Habakkuk 3:17-19

19 The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.

**Why might it be hard to
“rejoice in the Lord”
during hardships?**

**How can we develop
faith like Habakkuk’s?**

The Lord Is Both Powerful & Merciful



Now lets go back to the first topic, The Lord is Both Powerful & Merciful

Take some time to review Nahum 1:1-9 and point out what we learn about the Savior:

- God is jealous
- The Lord revengeth
- The Lord can get furious
- The Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries
- The Lord reserveth wrath for his enemies
- The Lord is slow to anger
- He is great in power
- Not acquit the wicked (a fair judge)
- Controls nature
- It will be hard to face him if we are not striving to do our best (vs 6)
- The Lord is good

- He will shelter us in times of trouble
- He knows us
- He will end those who are his enemies

Image from <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2019/04/trust-in-the-saviors-deliverance?lang=eng>

Why was it important for the Israelites to hear Nahum's message about God?

Remember Nahum's message is about the Lord's judgements against Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, and Assyria had oppressed the Israelites for many years. Remember the stories of destroyed cities that we talked about previously.

With that in mind, Why was it important for the Israelites to hear Nahum's message about God?

Why is this important for us today?



Our last topic is “The Lord will rejoice with His people in Zion”

Image from <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/video/2022-07-0100-jesus-christ-appears-in-the-ancient-americas-3-nephi-8-11?lang=eng&alang=eng>

"Be Glad & Rejoice With All The Heart" Because...

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Read Zephaniah 3:14-20 and think about how you would complete the sentence, "Be Glad & Rejoice with all the heart" because...

How do these promises help us during difficult times?



Testimony

Image From <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/come-follow-me-for-sunday-school-old-testament-2022/49?lang=eng>