N.E.W. SEMINARY LECTURE RESOURCES

Nahum and Habakkuk: God's Mercy and Justice

Pastor Hoon Kim, 20 October 2026, Nahum 1:1

Pastor Hoon Kim explores the seventh-century BC prophetic literature, highlighting the theological balance between Jonah's relentless mercy and Nahum's righteous vengeance against Nineveh. He examines God's covenant jealousy, the power of prayer in Revelation, and Habakkuk's honest prophetic dialogue amidst collapsing world empires.

Teaching by Pastor Hoon Kim, N.E.W. Church. Transcribed with the help of AI. Shared on 15 November 2026, before its full review.

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Visuals

- Visual 1: A Refuge in Times of Trouble
- Visual 2: Prayers and Divine Judgment
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At a glance

- **Title:** Catalog Basics: Nahum and Habakkuk
- **Date:** October 20, 2026
- **Main Passage:** Nahum 1:1
- **Preacher/Teacher:** Pastor Hoon Kim (N.E.W. Church)

Core Truth

The sovereign God who exercises relentless mercy toward the repentant also executes righteous, covenant vengeance upon arrogant oppressors, calling His oppressed remnant to find refuge in Him and live by prophetic faith amidst shifting world orders.

Summary

In this lecture, Pastor Hoon Kim explores the seventh-century BC prophetic literature, centering on the theological complementary balance between Jonah and Nahum before introducing Habakkuk. God's judgment against Nineveh in Nahum is grounded in His covenant jealousy for His people, demonstrating that divine wrath is righteous justice rather than whimsical rage. By comparing Jonah's question of grace with Nahum's question of justice, Pastor Kim shows that the prayers of oppressed saints directly move God's sovereign hand in history, culminating in the imagery of Revelation. As world empires rise and fall, the remnant must maintain prophetic imagination, bring honest inquiries to God, and trust His faithful deliverance.

Main Movements

1. **Historical Context of the Seventh-Century Prophets:** Framing the 600s BC geopolitical transitions, the downfall of Assyria, and how biblical prophecy interprets modern global upheaval.
2. **The Jealousy of God and Divine Vengeance (Nahum 1):** Covenant jealousy as the bedrock of divine justice, the comfort of God's vengeance for oppressed saints, and the power of prayer in Revelation.

3. **Jonah and Nahum: The Balance of Mercy and Justice:** Contrasting Nineveh's repentance under Jonah with its proud demise under Nahum, highlighting God's unchanging holy character.
4. **A Shifting World Order and the Posture of the Remnant:** The transition of world empires, the audio-visual poetry of Nahum, and the good news (*euangelion*) of an oppressor's overthrow.
5. **Introduction to Habakkuk: Judgment on Babylon and the Edomites:** Prophetic lament, raising honest questions to God, and the posture of the righteous who live by faith during imperial collapse.

Teaching notes

1. Historical Background

- **The Seventh-Century Geopolitical Shift:** The prophetic ministries of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah operated during a profound transition of world superpowers.
- **Assyrian Imperial Trajectory:**
- In 722 BC, the Neo-Assyrian Empire destroyed Northern Israel, deporting its citizens and repopulating Samaria with foreign nations.
- In 701 BC, King Sennacherib invaded Southern Judah and besieged Jerusalem. King Hezekiah sought the Lord in prayer (Isaiah 37), resulting in divine deliverance, Sennacherib's retreat, and his subsequent assassination in Nineveh.
- After this failed siege, the Assyrian Empire gradually weakened, facing coalition attacks from Babylon, Elam, and Media.
- **The Rise of Babylon:** As Assyria collapsed, the Neo-Babylonian Empire under Nebuchadnezzar expanded rapidly, eventually conquering Jerusalem in 586 BC.
- **Persian Empire Expansion:** In the subsequent sixth century BC, the Persian Empire under Cyrus the Great conquered Media (550 BC), Lydia (546 BC), and Babylon (539 BC), demonstrating the continuous overturning of human empires under divine sovereignty.

2. Places and Geography

- **Nineveh:** Located on the eastern bank of the Tigris River in northern Iraq.

- Nineveh was an extraordinarily fortified ancient metropolis featuring outer walls, internal water gates, and moats fed by the Khoser and Tigris rivers.
- *Geographic Irony:* The complex hydraulic network and trenches engineered for defensive protection ultimately contributed to Nineveh's fall when severe floodwaters breached the city's sluice gates, fulfilling Nahum's water imagery.
- **Babylon and Regional Powers:** Located along the Euphrates River in southern Iraq; allied with the Medes (modern Iran) to dismantle Nineveh.

3. Original-Language Insights

- **Euangelion (*εὐαγγέλιον*):**
- Appears conceptually in Nahum 1:15 (“the feet of one who brings good news, who proclaims peace!”).
- Pastor Kim connects this to the Greco-Roman and ancient Near Eastern practice where imperial couriers brought an official proclamation (*euangelion*) across the empire declaring the ascension of a new ruler, a decisive military victory, or the establishment of imperial peace.
- Mark adopts this established term in Mark 1:1, challenging imperial propaganda by proclaiming Jesus Christ, not Caesar, as the true Son of God and cosmic victor.

4. Spiritual Truths and Applications

- **The Covenant Basis of Divine Jealousy (Nahum 1:2):**
- God's vengeance is rooted in marital covenant jealousy (*qanna*). God relates to Israel as a husband to His wife or fiancée.
- Retribution against Assyria is not unbridled malice; it is a righteous husband defending His beloved bride from brutal abusers.
- **The Theological Balance of Jonah and Nahum:**
- *Jonah:* Emphasizes God's relentless mercy (*chesed*). Nineveh received a warning, repented, and judgment was withheld. Concludes with a question of grace (Jonah 4:11).
- *Nahum:* Emphasizes God's righteous justice. One hundred years later, Nineveh returned to unbridled arrogance and violence. Judgment was executed without remedy. Concludes with a question of justice (Nahum 3:19).
- God's character is consistent, not whimsical like pagan deities. He acts with full evidentiary justice, withholding wrath when people repent and executing wrath

when rebellion is entrenched.

- **Prophetic Imagination through Audio-Visual Imagery:**
- Nahum employs dynamic sensory effects: visual colors (red shields, scarlet dress, flashing chariot metal in Nahum 2:2–3) and acoustic descriptions (crack of whips, rattling wheels, galloping hooves in Nahum 3:2–3).
- This poetic imagery is intended to instill a realistic assurance of God's impending justice in the hearts of oppressed believers.
- **The Reversal of Worldly Pride (Nahum 2:11–13):**
- Nineveh prided itself as an invincible lion's den, feeding on conquered nations. God announced Himself against Nineveh, burning its chariots and starving its lions, demonstrating the ultimate reversal of worldly empires.
- **Spiritual Warfare and the Mechanism of Prayer (Revelation 6 & 8):**
- The saints under the fifth seal cry out for righteous judgment (Revelation 6:9–11).
- In Revelation 8:3–5, the incense offered on the golden altar represents the prayers of all God's people. When cast down to the earth, these prayers trigger cosmic judgments.
- Prayers offered by believers in real time penetrate the heavenly throne room and directly influence God's execution of justice and deliverance in history.
- **Prophetic Dialogue in Habakkuk:**
- Biblical prayer permits honest lamentation and hard questions (Habakkuk 1:1–4, 13).
- Habakkuk questions God's tolerance of Judah's internal corruption, and subsequently questions how a holy God can employ more wicked pagans (Babylon) to punish Judah.
- Revelation unfolds as God answers honest inquiries, empowering the righteous to live by faith amid moral and theological perplexity.

Scripture guide

Scripture Table

Reference	How Used	Where	What Pastor Kim Drew from It	Confidence
Nahum 1:1	Read / Alluded to	Historical Context of the Seventh-Century Prophets	The oracle and vision concerning Nineveh as a historical, poetic prophecy.	High
Nahum 1:2	Read	The Jealousy of God and Divine Vengeance	God's wrath and vengeance are rooted in His covenant relationship with Israel as a husband defending his bride.	High
Nahum 1:7	Read	The Jealousy of God and Divine Vengeance	God is a stronghold in times of trouble; He faithfully knows and protects those who trust in Him.	High
Revelation 6:9–11	Read	The Jealousy of God and Divine Vengeance	The souls under the fifth seal cry out for God's vengeance and righteous justice upon the earth.	High
Revelation 8:3–5	Read	The Jealousy of God and Divine Vengeance	The prayers of the saints rise before God's altar and are answered with fire hurled to the earth, altering world history.	High
Jonah 4:11	Read	Jonah and Nahum: The Balance of Mercy and Justice	Jonah concludes with God's question of relentless grace and compassion over Nineveh.	High
Nahum 3:19	Read	Jonah and Nahum: The Balance of Mercy and Justice	Nahum concludes with a question of unyielding justice over Nineveh's fatal wound and endless cruelty.	High

Reference	How Used	Where	What Pastor Kim Drew from It	Confidence
Nahum 1:15	Read	A Shifting World Order and the Posture of the Remnant	The proclamation of the oppressor's destruction is the good news (*euangelion*) of peace and restoration for Judah.	High
Nahum 2:2–3	Read	A Shifting World Order and the Posture of the Remnant	Vivid visual imagery (red shields, scarlet uniforms, flashing chariots) illustrating the certainty of Nineveh's overthrow.	High
Nahum 3:2–3	Read	A Shifting World Order and the Posture of the Remnant	Auditory effects (crack of whip, clatter of wheel, galloping horses) strengthening prophetic imagination regarding judgment.	High
Nahum 2:11–13	Read	A Shifting World Order and the Posture of the Remnant	Nineveh as a fierce lion's den brought to shame and ruined, reversing worldly power structures.	High
Habakkuk 1:1–4	Read	Introduction to Habakkuk	Habakkuk's first honest complaint regarding unchecked domestic violence, strife, and paralyzed justice in Judah.	High
Habakkuk 1:13	Read	Introduction to Habakkuk	Habakkuk's second complaint questioning how holy God can use ruthless Babylonians to punish those more righteous than they.	High
Isaiah 37	Alluded to	Historical Context of the	King Hezekiah's prayer, the deliverance of Jerusalem,	High

Reference	How Used	Where	What Pastor Kim Drew from It	Confidence
		Seventh-Century Prophets	and Sennacherib's failure and subsequent assassination.	
Matthew 5:39	Alluded to	The Jealousy of God and Divine Vengeance	Turning the other cheek is grounded in the assurance that ultimate vengeance belongs exclusively to God.	High
Obadiah 1–21	Alluded to	Introduction to Habakkuk	The judgment of Edom, Israel's brother nation, who shared the destiny of the wicked because of arrogance.	High
Zephaniah 1:7; 3:8, 17	Quoted / Paraphrased	A Shifting World Order and the Posture of the Remnant	Calling the remnant to be still, wait on the Lord, and rejoice as God marches forward in judgment and love.	High
Habakkuk 2:4, 20	Alluded to	A Shifting World Order and the Posture of the Remnant	The righteous shall live by faith, while the earth must be silent before the Lord in His holy temple.	High
Revelation 17–19	Alluded to	A Shifting World Order and the Posture of the Remnant	The fall of Babylon, the vindication of divine justice, and the final deliverance of the bride.	High

Biblical and Historical Setting

The seventh century BC was a pivotal period of geopolitical upheaval in the ancient Near East. The Neo-Assyrian Empire, which had brutally destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BC and besieged Jerusalem under Sennacherib in 701 BC, entered rapid decline following the reign of Ashurbanipal. As Nineveh's power eroded, allied armies of Medes and Babylonians closed in, culminating in Nineveh's catastrophic fall in 612 BC. Nahum ministered in the twilight of Assyria's dominance, declaring God's retribution on

this cruel metropolis. Soon after, the Neo-Babylonian Empire surged under Nebuchadnezzar, threatening southern Judah and leading Habakkuk to wrestle with God's inscrutable providence in using a barbaric empire as an instrument of divine discipline before Judah's fall in 586 BC.

Theological Connections and Application

Pastor Kim binds these prophetic texts together through the twin pillars of divine character: relentless mercy and righteous justice. Jonah highlights mercy toward repenting sinners, while Nahum showcases God's covenant jealousy avenging the oppression of His people. God's wrath is not an emotional outburst, but the execution of righteous justice grounded in His marital commitment to His covenant people. In the New Testament, this vengeance is anticipated eschatologically: Christ bore the wrath of God on the cross for believers, while final divine retribution against worldly empires is deferred to the end of history. In the interim, believers do not seek personal revenge; instead, they wage spiritual warfare through prayer. According to Revelation 6 and 8, the prayers of the saints rise like incense to the throne of God, directly moving His hand to alter the course of human history.

Slips and Verifications

- **Dating of the Seventh Century BC:** Pastor Kim stated, "these are the seventh-century prophets. That means 700 years before Jesus came." Chronologically, the seventh century BC encompasses 699–600 BC (roughly 600–650 years before Christ), whereas 700 years before Christ corresponds to the eighth century BC.
- **Geographic Location of Nineveh:** Pastor Kim stated that Nineveh is located in modern-day southern Iraq or Syria, before settling on Iraq. Geographically, Nineveh lies in northern Iraq (adjacent to modern Mosul on the Tigris), whereas ancient Babylonia occupied southern Iraq.
- **Jonah's Repentance Decree:** Pastor Kim remarked that Nineveh repented "from king to even the dogs." While Jonah 3:7–8 records that the king ordered herds and flocks to fast and wear sackcloth alongside humans, dogs are not specifically mentioned in the biblical text.
- **Interval between Nahum and Habakkuk:** Pastor Kim noted that Habakkuk and Zephaniah ministered "about 100 years later" before the fall of Jerusalem. Nineveh fell in 612 BC and Jerusalem fell in 586 BC, an interval of 26 years, though Nahum's ministry may have begun several decades earlier (c. 660–650 BC).

- **Revelation Citation:** Pastor Kim referenced "Revelation chapter 8, 17 through 19" when discussing the vindication against Babylon. The text of Revelation 8:3–5 describes the golden censer and prayers, while the fall of Babylon and vindication occur in Revelation chapters 17 through 19.

Word studies

1. Euangelion (*εὐαγγέλιον*)

- **Word as Taught:** *euangelion*
- **Language:** Greek
- **Passage Referenced:** Nahum 1:15 (alluded to in connection with Mark 1:1)
- **Section Heading:** The Good News of Judgment (Nahum 1:15)
- **Meaning Explained by Pastor Kim:** The term refers to "good news" or "the gospel." In ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman imperial contexts, it denoted an official heraldic announcement sent across territories after a decisive battle. Couriers proclaimed the victory, the overthrow of an old regime, and the arrival of a new emperor or era of peace. Pastor Kim explained that Mark 1:1 adopted this secular and prophetic idiom to proclaim that Jesus Christ, rather than the Roman Caesar, is the true Son of God inaugurating the true kingdom. In Nahum 1:15, the "good news" is the announcement that the brutal oppressor Nineveh is broken, bringing liberation to Judah.

(Note: Pastor Kim did not provide detailed Hebrew lexical analyses during this lecture, focusing primarily on the conceptual and historical application of the heraldic gospel announcement).

Places and timeline

Place Name	What Happened There, as Taught	Modern Location	Reference
Nineveh	Capital of the Neo-Assyrian Empire; spared under Jonah after repenting,	Northern Iraq, on the east bank of the Tigris	Nahum 1:1; 2:8; 3:19;

Place Name	What Happened There, as Taught	Modern Location	Reference
	but destroyed by flood and allied armies as prophesied by Nahum due to unrepentant cruelty.	River, opposite modern Mosul.	Jonah 4:11
Tigris River	River bordering Nineveh; its surrounding trenches and defensive channels became the means of Nineveh's inundation and destruction.	Flowing from eastern Turkey through Iraq into the Persian Gulf.	Nahum 2:6
Euphrates River	Major Mesopotamian river along which the city and empire of Babylon were centered.	Flowing from eastern Turkey through Syria and Iraq.	Transcript 1:24
Babylon	Rising Mesopotamian power in southern Iraq; joined by Medes and Elamites to overthrow Nineveh; later used by God to judge Southern Judah.	Southern Iraq, approximately 85 km south of modern Baghdad.	Habakkuk 1:6
Media / Elam	Allied nations from the east that joined the Babylonians in the military siege and downfall of the Assyrian Empire.	Modern-day Iran.	Transcript 1:24
Jerusalem	Capital of Southern Judah; miraculously spared from Sennacherib's Assyrian army during Hezekiah's reign, but later besieged and destroyed by Babylon in 586 BC.	Jerusalem, modern Israel / West Bank.	Isaiah 37; 2 Kings 25
Samaria	Capital of Northern Israel; captured and destroyed by the Assyrian Empire in 722 BC, leading to the northern exile.	West Bank, Palestinian Territories.	2 Kings 17

Timeline

Date as Given	Event	Reference
c. 841 BC	King Jehu of Northern Israel pays tribute to King Shalmaneser III of Assyria (depicted on the Black Obelisk).	
c. 760 BC	Jonah prophesies against Nineveh; Nineveh repents and judgment is withheld.	Visual 109
722 BC	Neo-Assyrian Empire conquers Northern Israel (Samaria), exiling its population and resettling foreigners.	2 Kings 17; Visual 103
701 BC	Sennacherib's Assyrian army invades Judah, besieges Jerusalem, fails after Hezekiah's prayer, and retreats to Nineveh where he is assassinated.	Isaiah 37; Transcript 1:12
c. 670–660 BC	Prophet Nahum delivers the judgment oracle declaring the complete overthrow and destruction of Nineveh.	Nahum 1:1; Visual 109, 112
612 BC [implied]	Fall and destruction of Nineveh by allied Babylonian and Median forces.	Transcript 1:24
586 BC	Fall and destruction of Southern Judah and Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.	Transcript 1:33; Visual 119
550 BC	Cyrus the Great conquers the Median Empire, initiating Persian imperial expansion.	Visual 120, 121
546 BC	Cyrus the Great conquers the Lydian Empire.	Visual 120, 121
539 BC	Cyrus the Great captures Babylon, ending the Neo-Babylonian Empire.	Visual 120, 121
525 BC	Cambyses II of Persia expands imperial conquests into Egypt.	Visual 120, 121
521 BC	Darius I ascends and consolidates further territorial expansion across the Persian Empire.	Visual 120, 121

Teaching outline

Main Passage: Nahum 1:1–15; Habakkuk 1:1–13
The Big Idea: The sovereign God who shows relentless mercy to the repentant also executes righteous covenant vengeance upon wicked oppressors, calling His faithful remnant to trust His justice and live by prophetic faith during shifting world orders.

Movement 1: The Geopolitical Shift and the Covenant Husband

- **Key Scripture:** Nahum 1:2; Isaiah 37
- **Teaching Point:** The seventh-century BC prophets ministered during massive geopolitical transitions as the brutal Neo-Assyrian Empire began to fall. Nahum reveals that God's terrifying wrath is rooted in marital covenant jealousy: God stands up as a faithful husband defending His oppressed bride against a violent predator.
- **Core Insight:** Divine vengeance is not an emotional loss of control; it is righteous justice that brings comfort and vindication to God's suffering people.
- **Visuals:** Visual 101 (Themes of the Minor Prophets), Visual 103 (Assyrian Exile Map), Visual 104 (City of Nineveh), Visual 105 (Nahum 1:2 Scripture).

Movement 2: The Spiritual Mechanism of Prayer in History

- **Key Scripture:** Nahum 1:7; Revelation 6:9–11; Revelation 8:3–5
- **Teaching Point:** When believers face oppression, they are commanded not to take personal revenge, but to leave vengeance to God. As seen under the fifth and seventh seals in Revelation, the prayers of God's people rise like incense to the heavenly throne room and are answered by fire hurled to the earth.
- **Core Insight:** In real time, the crying prayers of a local congregation move the sovereign hand of God to execute justice and alter human history.
- **Visuals:** Visual 1 (A Refuge in Times of Trouble), Visual 2 (Prayers and Divine Judgment).

Movement 3: A Century Apart: Relentless Mercy and Sure Judgment

- **Key Scripture:** Jonah 4:11; Nahum 3:19
- **Teaching Point:** Jonah (c. 760 BC) and Nahum (c. 660 BC) present two complementary aspects of God's unchanging holy character toward Nineveh. When Nineveh repented, God extended relentless mercy; when Nineveh returned to chronic cruelty a century later, God executed unyielding justice.

- **Core Insight:** God's character is consistent, not whimsical. Jonah ends with a question of grace; Nahum ends with a question of justice.
- **Visuals:** Visual 109 (Jonah and Nahum Compared), Visual 3 (Questions of Grace and Justice).

Movement 4: Poetic Prophecy and the Good News of Overthrow

- **Key Scripture:** Nahum 1:15; 2:2–3; 3:2–3
- **Teaching Point:** Nahum announces the downfall of Nineveh as *euangelion*, the heraldic good news of imperial liberation and lasting peace. Nahum employs vivid visual colors (scarlet warriors, flashing chariots) and acoustic effects (cracking whips, rattling wheels) to cultivate prophetic imagination and guarantee the certainty of God's impending judgment.
- **Core Insight:** Worldly powers that boast like invincible lion dens will be completely reversed by God's sovereign decree.
- **Visuals:** Visual 112 (Seventh-Century Prophets), Visual 113 (Nahum and the Minor Prophets), Visual 4 (The Good News of Peace).

Movement 5: The Prophetic Dialogue of Habakkuk

- **Key Scripture:** Habakkuk 1:1–4, 13; Habakkuk 2:4
- **Teaching Point:** As the Babylonian Empire rose to replace Assyria, Habakkuk engaged in honest prophetic prayer, asking hard questions about internal injustice in Judah and God's perplexing use of wicked Babylon as an instrument of discipline.
- **Core Insight:** Prophetic prayer does not hide human perplexity; it brings honest questions to God and receives sovereign revelation. In the midst of collapsing empires, the righteous shall live by their faith.
- **Visuals:** Visual 119 (Seventh-Century Timeline).

Closing Response

Call the church to renounce personal bitterness, engage in spiritual warfare through intercession for righteous justice, and anchor their faith in the unchanging God who remains a refuge for all who trust in Him.

Study guide

Core Truth

The sovereign God who exercises relentless mercy toward the repentant also executes righteous, covenant vengeance upon arrogant oppressors, calling His oppressed remnant to find refuge in Him and live by prophetic faith amidst shifting world orders.

Key Verse

“The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of distress; He cares for those who trust in Him.”
Nahum 1:7 (BSB)

Background Notes

1. **The Geopolitical Crucible:** During the seventh century BC (the 600s BC), the ancient Near East experienced massive superpower transitions. The Neo-Assyrian Empire, which had conquered Northern Israel in 722 BC and besieged Jerusalem in 701 BC, entered irreversible decline after Ashurbanipal's reign. Allied forces from Babylon, Media, and Elam besieged Nineveh, destroying the city in 612 BC, fulfilling Nahum's prophecy.
2. **Covenant Jealousy (*Qanna*):** In Nahum 1:2, God's wrath and vengeance are explicitly tied to His covenant identity. Scripturally, God relates to His covenant people as a faithful husband. When foreign empires brutally exploit His people, divine vengeance is the holy, loving response of a husband intervening to defend His bride.
3. **The Heraldic Gospel (*Euangelion*):** Nahum 1:15 proclaims the "feet of him who brings good news." In ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman antiquity, *euangelion* denoted the official imperial announcement of a military triumph, the overthrow of an oppressor, or the crowning of a new ruler. The Gospel writers later adopted this term to proclaim Jesus Christ as the true cosmic King who has decisively defeated evil.
4. **Prophetic Lament and Revelation:** Habakkuk illustrates that genuine biblical faith includes honest lamentation. The prophet questions God regarding Judah's domestic violence and the moral problem of using wicked Babylon as an instrument

of judgment. God answers by revealing that worldly pride carries its own doom, but "the righteous shall live by their faith" (Habakkuk 2:4).

Discussion Questions

1. **Understanding the Text:** How does understanding God as a faithful husband defending His bride transform our perspective on the terrifying language of divine vengeance in Nahum 1:2?
2. **Exploring the Themes:** Compare the endings of Jonah (Jonah 4:11) and Nahum (Nahum 3:19). How do these two books together demonstrate the perfect balance of God's holy character rather than a contradiction?
3. **Connecting Scripture:** According to Revelation 6:9–11 and Revelation 8:3–5, how do the prayers of suffering believers on earth participate in God's cosmic execution of justice in history?
4. **Prophetic Imagination:** Nahum uses vivid sensory descriptions (red shields, cracking whips, galloping horses, the ruined lion's den) to depict Nineveh's fall. How does cultivating this "prophetic imagination" help us look past the apparent strength of worldly corruption today?
5. **Personal Application:** In Habakkuk 1, the prophet brings raw, honest questions to God when divine actions seem to contradict human logic. What difficult situations in your community or nation do you need to bring honestly before God in prophetic prayer, choosing to trust His refuge?

Phone Summary (WhatsApp)

The sovereign God who showed relentless mercy to Nineveh under Jonah executed righteous covenant justice under Nahum when they returned to cruelty. True faith does not take personal revenge, but offers bold prayers that move the throne of heaven while resting in God during changing world orders. "The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of distress; He cares for those who trust in Him" (Nahum 1:7, BSB).

Prayer

A prayer for “Catalog Basics: Nahum and Habakkuk”

Nahum 1:1

Eternal Creator and righteous Judge,
you live in the heavenly realm and reveal yourself in history.
You are not like false idols without steady character,
for you are both a merciful and a holy God.
Your faithful love reaches to the heavens,
your relentless mercy saves the repentant out of the storm,
and your righteous wrath sweeps away the wicked like a flood.

You are the jealous Husband of your covenant people,
defending and avenging those who belong to you.
You rule over the turmoil and upheaval of shifting empires.
Before your sure judgment, proud fortresses fall into their own water channels,
and the lion's den of worldly royalty is brought to shame.
You remain faithful yesterday, today, and forever,
our good refuge in times of trouble,
caring for all who trust in you.

We confess that we were once your enemies,
deserving your wrath against our sin.
Too often we have followed the trail of unbelieving Jonah,
forgetting that salvation belongs to you alone,
or shared the arrogance of Nineveh and Edom, refusing to repent.
Forgive us for doubting your justice in times of trouble
and wanting to take vengeance by ourselves.
Have mercy on us through Jesus Christ.

We thank you that when we were your enemies,
you poured out your wrath against our sin onto Jesus Christ.
Upon his cross your justice was done and our sin was atoned.
Thank you for the good news that proclaims peace through Jesus, the true Son of God,
and for the prophetic Word that gives us a lens for our times.

Help us to live by faith as your remnant.
Teach us to ask honest questions in prayer like Habakkuk,
and grant us revelation for our past, present, and future.
Let our prayers rise like incense to your golden altar.
Execute justice against corrupt leaders and the evil system of Babylon.

Break the spirits of poverty and oppression,
and protect, provide for, and feed your people.

Here we are, Lord.
We offer ourselves to wait on you, seek your face, and be still.
Trusting your sure judgment, we leave vengeance to you,
loving our neighbors and turning the other cheek.
We give ourselves to prayer at this end time
until you march forward and rejoice over us.

In the name of Jesus Christ, our righteous Judge and King,
be all glory and praise forever.
Amen.

A blessing

May the Lord who is good be your refuge in times of trouble,
for he cares for all who trust in him.
May he proclaim peace to you through the good news of his kingdom,
and keep you living by faith until his justice is done. Amen.[1]

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[1] *Drawn from Nahum 1:7, 15.*

Scripture behind this prayer: Nahum 1:1; Nahum 1:2-15; Nahum 2:11-13; Jonah 4:11; Habakkuk 1:1-4; Habakkuk 2:4; Zephaniah 3:8-17; Revelation 8:3-5.

A prayer written with the help of AI to go with Pastor Hoon Kim's lecture. These are not his own words. Shared on 15 November 2026, before its full review.

Review quiz

Questions

1. **Multiple Choice:** According to Nahum 1:2, what is the biblical root of God's wrath and vengeance against Assyria?
2. A) Uncontrolled divine anger and capricious irritation
3. B) Covenant jealousy, like a husband defending his bride
4. C) Retribution for Assyria's economic taxation policies
5. D) An arbitrary reaction without prior legal evidence

1. **Short Answer:** What dramatic historical irony occurred regarding Nineveh's defensive water network during its final siege?

1. **Multiple Choice:** Approximately how many years elapsed between Jonah's preaching in Nineveh and Nahum's oracle of destruction?
2. A) 10 years
3. B) 40 years
4. C) 100 years
5. D) 300 years

1. **Short Answer:** How does the ending of the book of Jonah contrast thematically with the ending of the book of Nahum?

1. **Multiple Choice:** In Revelation 8:3–5, what is offered upon the golden altar in front of the throne that directly precedes peals of thunder, lightning, and an earthquake on earth?
2. A) The blood of bulls and goats
3. B) The crowns of the twenty-four elders
4. C) The incense mingled with the prayers of all God's people
5. D) A sealed scroll of prophetic deeds

1. **Short Answer:** Explain the ancient historical meaning of the Greek term *euangelion* as used conceptually in Nahum 1:15 and Mark 1:1.

1. **Multiple Choice:** Why did Nahum employ vivid visual colors (scarlet, flashing chariots) and auditory effects (whips cracking, wheels clattering) in chapters 2 and 3?
2. A) To fulfill ancient poetic meter requirements for temple music
3. B) To cultivate prophetic imagination and impart certainty regarding divine judgment
4. C) To entertain readers with fictional drama
5. D) To record technical military engineering specifications

1. **Short Answer:** In Nahum 2:11–13, what powerful animal metaphor did Nahum use to describe the imperial pride of Nineveh, and how did God reverse it?

1. **Multiple Choice:** What makes the prophet Habakkuk's interaction with God distinct compared to conventional prophetic oracles?
2. A) He refused to speak to God and fled to Tarshish

3. B) He engaged in a two-stage honest dialogue, asking hard questions and receiving sovereign revelation
4. C) He delivered prophecies exclusively through symbolic street theater
5. D) He wrote solely to Gentile kings without addressing Judah

1. **Short Answer:** According to Pastor Kim, how should believers respond to personal offense and injustice in light of Matthew 5:39 and biblical prophecy?

Answer Key

1. **B**, Covenant jealousy, like a husband defending his bride. (Section: The Jealousy of God and Divine Vengeance)
2. The complex water channels and moats engineered to defend Nineveh became the very means of its destruction when severe floodwaters breached the city walls. (Section: The Geopolitical Fall of Assyria / Historical Context)
3. **C**, Approximately 100 years. (Section: Jonah and Nahum: The Balance of Mercy and Justice)
4. Jonah ends with a question of relentless grace and mercy over Nineveh (Jonah 4:11), whereas Nahum ends with a question of unyielding justice over Nineveh's fatal wound and endless cruelty (Nahum 3:19). (Section: Jonah and Nahum Compared)
5. **C**, The incense mingled with the prayers of all God's people. (Section: The Power of Prayer in Spiritual Warfare)
6. It refers to royal heralds dispatched across an empire to announce good news: the victory of a battle, the fall of an oppressor, or the enthronement of a new king bringing peace. (Section: Poetic Prophecy and the Good News of Judgment)
7. **B**, To cultivate prophetic imagination and impart certainty regarding divine judgment. (Section: Poetic Prophecy and the Good News of Judgment)
8. Nineveh was described as a fierce, ravenous lion's den; God reversed this pride by declaring "I am against you," cutting off their prey, and burning their chariots in smoke. (Section: Poetic Prophecy and the Good News of Judgment)
9. **B**, He engaged in a two-stage honest dialogue, asking hard questions and receiving sovereign revelation. (Section: Introduction to Habakkuk: The Prophetic Dialogue)
10. Believers do not take personal revenge; they turn the other cheek and pray, leaving final retribution entirely to the sovereign justice of God. (Section: Divine Jealousy and Righteous Vengeance)

In three minutes

Welcome to this lecture titled Catalog Basics: Nahum and Habakkuk, from Nahum chapter one verse one, taught by Pastor Hoon Kim of N.E.W. Church. The seventh-century prophets lived about seven hundred years before Christ, during massive international upheavals when world empires rose and fell. Today, as we see turmoil across the nations, we use their prophetic writings as a lens to interpret our own realities and understand what God is doing in the world. About one hundred years before Nahum, the prophet Jonah preached to Nineveh, and God showed relentless mercy because the city repented. But one hundred years later, Nineveh became arrogant, destroyed northern Israel, and returned to endless cruelty. God then sent Nahum to announce Nineveh's complete destruction. This shows that God is both merciful and holy. He is not like whimsical pagan idols; He acts with righteous justice based on evidence and covenant love. Nahum describes the Lord as jealous and avenging. Just as a husband defends his wife when she is harmed, God defends His covenant people. Israel's enemies are God's enemies. Believers do not take vengeance into their own hands; instead, we turn the other cheek, wait patiently, and trust God to execute justice. Nahum chapter one verse seven reminds us that the Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble, caring for those who trust in Him. Nahum uses vivid poetry filled with sights and sounds, like galloping horses, clattering wheels, flashing chariots, and devastating floods. In our everyday lives, when we go to a movie theater, the visual and sound effects make the story feel powerful and real. In the same way, Nahum uses these vivid sensory details to give us complete assurance that God's righteous judgment is certain. Furthermore, Nahum speaks of the feet of him who brings good news. In the ancient world, after a major war, heralds traveled across territories to proclaim that an evil ruler was defeated and a new king had brought peace. For the church, the true gospel announces that Jesus reigns and God's justice will prevail over every oppressive system. Finally, in Habakkuk, we learn how to engage God in prophetic prayer. In times of confusion and rising world powers, Habakkuk brought his honest questions to God and waited for divine revelation. Even when the world feels chaotic, God's remnant can bring honest questions to Him and live by faith.

Scripture quotations: The Holy Bible, Berean Standard Bible (BSB), in the public domain, from eBible.org.