



OHBC VERSE – WEEK #39

THIS WEEK'S VERSE: MALACHI 4:1a & 2a

"For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up... But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings"

Why Malachi 4:1a and 2a?

Because for one final time, just as Peter said in Acts 3:21, an Old Testament prophet is pointing toward and preaching about the second coming of Christ, thousands of years before His first coming!

In these verses Malachi beautifully depicts our Lord as the "Sun of righteousness" rising on this planet to usher in "the Day of the Lord," in the same way the physical sun rises each day on the earth to usher in the morning, or the new day.

To fully understand God's choice of words in these two verses, it is important to understand some of the things the New Testament reveals. In John 9:5, Jesus said something monumental in terms of the whole of God's plan in history. He said, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." So, for 33½ years, this planet had light from a spiritual standpoint, because the "Light of the world," the "Sun of righteousness" was here. Just as the sun gets red before it sets and nighttime sets in, on the cross, the "Sun of righteousness" became red with His own blood, just as His time on earth was "setting," and just before a spiritual nighttime set in.

With the "Light of the world" no longer here, we are now living in that biblical "nighttime", and await the "rising" of the "Sun of righteousness". Several cross references affirm this "biblical nighttime":

- I Thessalonians 5:5-8 "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation."
- Romans 13:11-12 "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."
- Philippians 2:14-16 "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."

Notice in Philippians 2:15 that Paul says that in this "nighttime," we are not the Light that shines. He very specifically said, we shine "AS" lights. We must ask ourselves, what is it that shines at nighttime, that doesn't actually have light of its own, but reflects the light of the sun? The moon, right? The moon is actually a dead rock, yet it beautifully brings light to the darkness of the night. Paul is trying to get us to see that since Jesus is the "Sun of righteousness", we are here in the night, just as the moon, reflecting the light of His righteousness, not our own (Phil. 3:9).

What this all means, is that for the past 2,190,000 days, God has "rented out" the billboard of the sky to advertise the theme of the Bible, and that to which all of history and creation is pointing. The sun goes down at night and comes up in the morning. The same sun that burns away the morning fog and dew provides the nutrients necessary to make a healthy body. When the Lord Jesus Christ, the "Sun of righteousness" returns to this earth, His light will burn up all His enemies, and yet that same light will provide healing to those who know and fear the name of the Lord.

When we see the rising of the sun in the morning, may it jolt our minds to pray for the Lord's kingdom to come.

When we see the moon in the sky at night, may it remind us to pray that we will not allow there to be a lunar eclipse. . . when the earth comes between the sun and the moon (i.e. when the "world" comes between us and the Lord, the light God intended to light the night goes out).

When we see the sun and the moon in the same sky, may it cause us to live in anticipation of the "day of the Lord", when the "Light of the world" has risen on this planet in all of His splendor and glory, and we rule and reign with Him!

As you can see, hiding Malachi 4:1a and 2a in our hearts has the potential to keep us reminded of some incredible spiritual truths from God's physical creation.

DAY 191

TODAY'S READING: AMOS 1-6

OVERVIEW:

God's judgment upon eight nations (chapters 1-2); the guilt and punishment of Israel (chapters 3-6)

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

One of the most beautiful things about the Book of Amos was who God used to write it. Amos was just a common, ordinary guy of average intelligence. He didn't come from a well-to-do or noble family, so no family pedigree (i.e. Amos, the son of...) is given. When God called him, he made his living as a "herdsman" (1:1) – i.e. sheep-breeder, and as a tender of the sycamore trees (7:14). The significant thing about Amos, however, is that God used him in a very uncommon, extraordinary, and above average way! Always bank on it — God is a champion for the common man! Speaking of the time of Jesus' ministry, Mark 12:37 says, "And the common people heard him gladly"! It was the nobility and intelligential that had such a hard time with Him, spent their time contesting and contending with Him, and ultimately put Him to death! God has always taken great pleasure "[choosing] the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are" (I Cor. 1:27-28). He even says in I Cor. 1:26 – "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." Be sure you don't take this further than God does, however. Notice that He says "Not MANY wise, mighty and noble are called." He didn't say, "Not ANY wise, mighty and noble are called." There are SOME, there just aren't MANY. Recognize today, that the same uncommon, extraordinary, above average thing God did with Amos is the same thing He wants to do with common, ordinary, average folk like you and me! That may not help you to understand the Book of Amos, but it's well worth the price of admission, and will certainly help you to understand how incredibly God wants to use you!

Now, concerning understanding the Book of Amos. As verse one indicates, he prophesied during the days when Uzziah was king in Judah, and Jeroboam was king in Israel. That would mean he is a contemporary of Hosea, and places his prophetic ministry somewhere between the years of 783 to 753 B.C.

During this time, the physical aspects of the northern kingdom were going extremely well. Businesses flourished, the economy was good, and the government was stable. The spiritual climate, however, was something totally different. It was full and running over with idolatry, greed, injustice, immorality, pride and hypocrisy.

In the first two chapters, Amos pronounces judgment on eight nations, saying that God will attack them as a roaring lion (1:2; 3:8) and a consuming fire. (Heb. 12:29). Notice the repetition:

1:4 – "But I will send a fire"

1:7 – "But I will send a fire"

1:10 – "But I will send a fire"

1:12 – "But I will send a fire"

1:14 – "But I will kindle a fire"

There was certainly an historic application concerning these eight nations, but as always, the prophets are always pointing to a future fulfillment of these prophecies (i.e. the doctrinal or prophetic application).

The eight nations are Damascus (of Syria) – (1:3), Gaza (1:6), Tyrus (1:9), Edom (1:11), Ammon (1:13), Moab (2:1), Judah (2:4), and Israel (2:6). In 2:6-16, Amos identifies the specific sins that had prompted God's promise of judgment upon Israel: bribery, greed, adultery, immorality, selfishness, ungratefulness, drunkenness (even forcing the Nazarites to drink – vs.12), and rejecting God's Word. Notice also the repetition of the phrase, "For three transgressions and for four" (1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6). Very simply, three plus four equals seven, the number of completion. In other words, God had "reached the top" (completion) with the transgressions of these nations, and was about to execute His complete judgment upon them.

In chapters 3-6, Amos delivers three sermons to identify God's purposes in this judgment. Each sermon begins the same way, "Hear this word." In the sermon Amos preaches in 3:1-15, he tells the people the reason for His judgment upon Israel. In his sermon in 4:1-13, Amos lists all the things God had already sought to do to get them to repent, all to no avail. Note the fierceness of Amos' preaching in 4:12 – "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel"! In chapter 5:1-6:14, Amos preaches a message of lamentation, as he laments Israel's fallen condition. In 5:3 he says that unless there is repentance, 90% of Israel will die. Amos tells the people to seek the Lord (5:4, 6, 8, 14), and not just religious activity (i.e. "But seek not Bethel" – 5:4). All three messages have a tremendous devotional application to us, and a tremendous doctrinal application for Israel in the future.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As the CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE – Amos 5:8 (Heb. 1:2-3; Rev. 4:11).

DAY 192

TODAY'S READING: AMOS 7- OBADIAH 1

OVERVIEW:

The five visions symbolizing the approaching judgment: the plague of locusts, the devouring fire, the plumbline (Amos 7), the basket of summer fruit (Amos 8), the altar (Amos 9); the abasement of Edom's pride (Obadiah 1-4); the destruction of Edom (Obadiah 5-16); the restoration of Israel and Judah, and the extinction of Edom (Obadiah 17-21).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As we left off in yesterday's reading, Amos had just concluded the third of three sermons God anointed him to preach to provide the bewildered people of Israel the reason God's judgment was about to come upon them. They were bewildered because they seemingly had so many "spiritual" things in place. They observed the feast days; they made sacrifices and gave their offerings, and sang songs to the Lord (5:21-25). Like so many people and churches today, they could point to all these outward expressions of so-called "worship," but God, as always, wasn't looking at the outward appearance; He was looking at their hearts! Though they had all the correct actions, their problem was their corrupt attitudes (hearts). "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear"!

As we move into chapter 7-9 today, Amos continues his prophecy against the nation of Israel. He challenges those who have developed a false sense of security (6:1 – "them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in" everything but God! i.e. the mountain of Samaria – 6:1; their money, their homes, their ivory beds, etc.) to beware of impending judgment. God gives him, three visions in chapter 7 to serve as illustrations of His judgment. The first vision Amos sees is that of locusts ("grasshoppers") coming and stripping the land of all of its vegetation. Amos intercedes on Israel's behalf, and the Lord stays the plague of locusts. Never underestimate the power of intercessory prayer! God responded in Amos' day, Elijah's day (James 4:16-17), and He will respond in our day as well. Is there someone for whom God would have you intercede today?

The second vision Amos receives is almost the same as the first, but rather than locusts destroying the land, this time he sees it being destroyed by fire (7:4-6), after a severe draught. Once again, Amos intercedes on Israel's behalf, and God chooses to deliver the land.

The third vision is that of a plumbline (7:7-9). Amos sees the Lord holding a plumbline and standing by a wall that was perfectly plumb. The point is that God was inspecting Israel to see if Israel was "out of line," as we might say, or to see if Israel "measured up." (As God holds the "plumbline" of His perfect Word next to your life today, how do you measure up? Is there any area of your life that is out of line?) Notice in this vision, Amos offers no intercession, and God offers no backing off of His plan to judge them.

Notice in the remainder of chapter 7, that Amaziah, who was the “state priest” as it were, tells Amos “where to go” (Judah – 7:12), and do his little prophesying there. Amos tells him, “Listen pal, I was minding my own business tending sheep and picking fruit when God called me to prophesy on His behalf, and there ain’t anybody including you that’s gonna get me to stop! And while I’m at it, I just happen to have a prophecy for you! Your wife is go! ing to become a “streetwalker” and your entire family is going to die by the sword because of your sin and compromise!” Go Amos!

In chapter 8, God gives Amos a fourth vision. This time Amos sees “a basket of summer fruit” (8:1-3). Israel, like summer fruit, has ripened for judgment, and the end was near. Amos spends the remainder of chapter 8 identifying the sins for which the judgment was coming.

In chapter 9, Amos receives the fifth and final vision. He sees the Lord Himself standing at the altar (9:1-10). The message is the inescapability of God’s judgment. Regardless of where they go, God says He will find them. The Book of Amos doesn’t end on a negative note, however! In 9:11-5, God promises the future restoration of Israel which will unfold “in that day.” What day? The “day of the Lord;” the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Today’s reading also includes the little Book of Obadiah (only 21 verses!). Obadiah whose name means “servant of the Lord,” prophesied in the time period between 587 B.C and 580 B.C. As with every prophetic Book of the Old Testament, the theme is the second coming of Christ or “the day of the Lord.” This Book is unique in that it is the only Book of the Bible written against a nation of people: the Edomites.

The Edomites are the descendants of Esau, and are a group of people who have consistently caused Israel problems. In I Chronicles 18:14 they become servants to Israel, but later revolt in II Chronicles 21:8-10, only to continue to cause Israel problems. After that, they become a part of an alliance with Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar that led to Israel’s downfall.

The cold hard facts are, God hates the Edomites! Why? Because He said, “I’ll bless them who bless thee, and curse them that curse thee”! The Edomite nation cursed Israel, and thus, God’s cursing upon them.

This little Book will give you great insight into Romans 9:13 (where a lot of good people have lost their head). God says, “Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated.” Some (hypercalvinists) read that and immediately conclude that God chooses who goes to heaven and who goes to hell. If you go back to Genesis 25, however, God specifically said that there were two nations in Rebekah’s womb. This is about nations not individuals! The descendants of Esau, the Edomite nation hated Israel, and because of it, God hated them!

Don’t miss realizing that the Edomites are still in existence in the Middle East, we just know them by different names today. But, their game plan is still the same as it ever was: Give Israel problems! Notice also, that Psalm 83:4-6 lists the Edomites with the 10 confederated nations of the Antichrist. That’ll teach you a lot about current events in the Middle East!

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As the PLUMBLINE – Amos 7:7-8 (The Lord Jesus Christ alone is the perfect standard and He alone is qualified to walk in the midst of His people, measuring good and evil, and true and false – Rev. 2-3).

DAY 193

TODAY’S READING: JONAH 1-4

OVERVIEW:

Jonah’s call and rebellion (chapter 1); Jonah’s chastening and repentance (chapter 2); Jonah’s second call and obedience (chapter 3); Jonah’s rebellion and rebuking (chapter 4).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

There is perhaps no prophetic Book of the Old Testament more important than the little Book of Jonah. It is this Book that prophesies and teaches us about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In fact, Jesus Himself said, “An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas (Jonah): For AS Jonas was three days and three nights in

the whale's belly; SO shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:39-40). It is for that reason (as you can well imagine) the Book of Jonah has been more "SPOKEN AGAINST" (see Luke 2:24!) than any other Old Testament Book. The attacks come in many different forms. One of the most popular attacks from the unsaved world is that the events in this Book didn't really happen; they are just fiction. That is why the devil has handed down several similar stories in mythology (Andromeda, Orion, and not the least of which is Hercules, who was in the belly of the sea creature for three days and three nights!). He would love for the events in the Book of Jonah to be viewed as fiction right along with the fictitious stories of mythology. Obviously, the devil's attack isn't against Jonah and his being spit out on dry land after three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; his attack is against Christ and His death, burial, and resurrection! Remember, Jesus said, "AS was Jonah, SO was the Son of Man" (Matt. 12:39-40). If Jonah was fictitious, so was His death, burial and resurrection! We could put it another way; if Jonah is a lie, then Jesus is a liar!

Another key attack on the Book of Jonah is the attack that comes from "scholars" in the "saved" world. They believe that the events all happened, they just don't believe that Jonah was dead in the belly of that "great fish" (Jonah's words in Jonah 1:17) or "whale" (Jesus' word in Matt. 12:40). Again, the point is, "AS was Jonah, SO was Jesus"! If Jonah didn't actually die and resurrect from the belly of the whale, Jesus didn't die (enter the "swoon theory") and resurrect from the heart (belly) of the earth! I'm not the one that said that Jonah was going to be the only sign given of the resurrection, Jesus did! It doesn't matter that we can't figure it out physiologically, scientifically, practically or any other way. If Jesus said Jonah was a picture of the resurrection, then he had to die, and that's where we resign ourselves to Romans 3:4: "Let God be true, but every man a liar"! Interestingly, the Book of Jonah begins, "Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying" (1:1a). The name Jonah means "the dove" and the name Amittai means "truth or truth telling." A dove is a biblical type of the Holy Spirit (see Matt. 3:16), and truth is specifically defined in Scripture as Jesus (John 14:6) and as the Word of God (John 17:17). The Book of Jonah is the Book written by the Spirit of God (II Peter 1:21) to give us the truth about Jesus, and we'll leave it at that!

Historically, Jonah was a prominent prophet in the northern kingdom of Israel during the reign of Jeroboam (793-753 B.C.), with the specific events described in this Book taking place around 760 B.C. The real purpose of his ministry, as revealed in these four chapters, is to preach to Gentiles, who DO respond to his message with repentance, making it the record of the greatest revival in the history of mankind! (Note that Ninevah was a city of almost a million people, and thus the continued reference to it being a "great city" – 1:2; 2:2; 3:3; 4:11, and note that every single person in the city responded to the call to repent – 3:5!)

From a doctrinal or prophetic standpoint, Jonah is a type of the 144,000 in the Tribulation Period who preach to Gentiles when the world experiences its greatest revival in the history of mankind!

All of these things are necessary to understand both the importance of the Book of Jonah and its placement in the canon of Scripture, and hopefully, can help you to understand the big picture. Regrettably, space is about gone to give some of the important other details. Some brief things that may help to know or observe as you're reading:

- Ninevah is the capital city of Assyria (the dominant world power of that time). Jonah knew that two things were true: #1 – The wickedness of Assyria had come up to God (1:1), meaning God was about to blast 'em! #2 – Assyria was about to blast the Nation of Israel. If God judges Assyria for their sin first, Israel will be spared. If he preaches to Ninevah and they repent, he is not only signing his own death warrant, but the death warrant of his entire nation. That will help you make sense out of why Jonah goes in the opposite direction when he's called to preach to Ninevah, and why he's so ticked off when almost a million sinners repent. (See Jer. 18:7-8).
- Jonah went to Whale University.
- Everyone in the Book of Jonah obeyed God except the man of God, the one for whom the Book is named! The storm, the dice (lot), the sailors, the fish, the Ninevites (again, every last one of them!), the east wind, the gourd, the worm – everyone and everything obeyed except the one you would expect!
- Jonah shows us that it is very possible to serve the Lord, and yet not love people. God makes it very clear through the Book of Jonah that He (God) loves and has pity for lost souls (4:2,11).

This same Book makes clear that Jonah had more love and pity for himself and even for the lousy gourd (4:10-11) than he did for the lost multitudes in the city Ninevah. As you read this incredible Book, ask yourself, Do I care more about myself than I do God's will or the lost? To what is my life more consumed than it is the lost people on this planet?

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As the ONE WHO WOULD DIE, BE BURIED, AND RISE FROM THE DEAD AFTER THREE DAYS –
Jonah 1:7-2:10. (Matt. 12:39-41).

DAY 194

TODAY'S READING: MICAH 1-7

OVERVIEW:

Micah prophecies of God's wrath (chapter 1); God's attitude toward oppression (chapter 2); God's judgment on Israel's leaders (chapter 3); the restoration of Israel (chapter 4); Christ foretold (chapter 5); the Lord's controversy (chapter 6).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

Micah, whose name means, "Who is like Jehovah", was a country boy from the foothills of Judah. He prophesied to the nation of Israel before the captivity by Samaria in 722 B.C. (735-710 B.C.). His ministry spanned the reigns of Jotham (750-731 B.C.), Ahaz (731-715 B.C.), and Hezekiah (715-686 B.C.). Most of his prophecy is directed toward Judah (the southern kingdom) since the northern tribes of Israel were about to fall to Samaria. He was a contemporary of Hosea and Isaiah.

God opens the book by addressing all of creation (1:1). He foretells His judgment against both Judah (two southern tribes) and Israel (ten northern tribes). This prophecy is partially fulfilled when Israel is taken captive by Samaria in 722 B.C. and Judah is taken captive by Babylon in 605 B.C. However, when taken literally, the verbiage points to a time when Israel (as a nation) will be judged again. There is no doubt that the reference to the Lord coming forth out of His place to tread upon the high places of the earth refers to the coming tribulation/Day of the Lord.

God then singles out one of Israel's sins in chapter 2. It is the sin of injustice. He speaks to those who devise ways to oppress their neighbor. God makes it clear throughout the Bible that He will repay those who oppress the less fortunate, especially the fatherless and widows. What an opportunity for us to make our Christianity "real" (James 1:27)! Look for those around you who are oppressed. Where are the fatherless and widows in our church? When you understand the heart of God you will see the need to minister to single moms, students whose fathers have left, and those who have been oppressed by others. Real ministry means really sacrificing to meet the needs of others. Are you involved?

Micah 2:10 warns Israel to prepare for their coming captivity. Those prophets who tell Israel that the captivity isn't coming will be received by the people (2:11). Mark it down; the popularity of a pastor in no way indicates the accuracy of a pastor. The Bible proves over and over again that people tend to believe the person who tells them what they want to hear (II Tim. 4:2-4).

In chapter 3 God warns the leaders of Israel that they will be held accountable for their failure. God's judgment always begins at His house with His leaders (I Peter 4:17). Just as the anti-Christ will proclaim peace before the tribulation (Daniel 8:25), the leaders of Israel were proclaiming peace before the coming captivity (3:5).

Micah prophecies of the coming millennium in chapter 4. This parallels Ezekiel's prophecy in Ezekiel 44-48. The people of the earth will flow to the throne of Christ (4:1). It is a time when the Lord will reign over all the nations of the earth (4:7) and nations will be at peace with other nations (4:3-5). The world seeks to bring in peace without Christ. However, there will be no peace without Christ. This principle applies to our own personal walk as well. We all want peace in our life. Many times we see others (and many times even ourselves!), try to find peace without allowing Christ to have victory over strongholds in our lives and reign from the throne of our hearts. Christ brings peace only when He rules.

Micah chapter 5 contains one of the most well known prophecies concerning Christ. His place of birth is foretold (Bethlehem – 5:2) and His kingdom is foretold (5:4).

Micah chapter 6 contains a trial. The Lord is bringing a legal argument (controversy – 6:2) against His people. He calls on nature to serve as the jury (6:1), and Micah to act as His prosecuting attorney. He reminds Israel of His goodness to them and the leaders He has provided for them (6:3-5). It should be noted that Moses, Aaron and Miriam were not without sin. Aaron and Miriam are most often remembered by their failures (the golden calf and questioning Moses' authority). However, they were all God's chosen leaders and God reminds Israel that they are a sign of His goodness. How often God's people complain against the leaders He has provided.

God then admonishes Israel to rise above religious ceremony and experience a genuine relationship with Him (6:8). He wants them to walk WITH HIM! He wants them to do what is right, but show mercy to those who don't. This thing called Christianity is summed up in this one verse. Walk with God! Do right! Love mercy!

Micah ends his Book by prophesying about the eventual restoration of Israel (7:12-20). What a reminder to us that God delights in mercy! He pardons our iniquity! He has compassion on us! And He has cast off our sins! Why? He wants to walk with us. Check that out — WITH US!

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As the RULER IN ISRAEL WHO WAS BORN IN BETHLEHEM – Micah 5:2. Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem as the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give to Him the throne of His father David (Luke 1:32-33; 2:4-6).

DAY 195

TODAY'S READING: NAHUM – HABAKKUK

OVERVIEW:

Nahum, whose name means "comforter", comforts God's people by unveiling God's plan to take vengeance on the wickedness of the nation of Assyria, beginning with the capitol city of Nineveh (1:15).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As we have already learned, the vast majority of the Old Testament is written to and by Israelites, the chosen people group of God, so when we discover any book written to a nation other than Israel, we have discovered something significant in the plan and revelation of God. There are only three prophets (out of 16) who prophesy to Gentile nations: Obadiah is addressed to Edom, while Jonah and Nahum concern Nineveh, the capitol city of Assyria. What do Edom and Nineveh have in common? Both were Gentile nations who worshiped false gods and were used by Satan to persecute the nation of Israel. God doesn't take either of these offenses lightly (1:14; 3:19). To add insult to injury, just 150 years earlier God proved to Nineveh that He is "good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon [him]" (Ps. 86:5) when He sent Jonah (Jonah 3) to warn them of coming judgment. The Ninevites repented and revival broke out, but apparently the Ninevites failed to "make disciples," because God is once again ready to pour out His wrath (1:2-6 – Look out Nineveh! hurricane Jehovah comin' through!). Nahum describes how the city of Nineveh would be destroyed by "an overrunning flood" (1:8) and the "gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved" (2:6), while enemy invaders would ravage and spoil the fortified city (3:1-7) until an "utter end [was made] of the place" (1:8, 9). Eighteen years after Nahum's prophecy, Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, unsuccessfully besieged Nineveh for three years until the Tigris River suddenly overflowed its banks and washed a hole in the city wall and the Babylonian army rushed into the city, murdering and pillaging. So complete was the destruction that Alexander the Great marched over the former city without recognizing any evidences of a previous civilization. In fact, archaeologists didn't begin excavating the city until 1845 AD. I guess God's word is true ;>.

The moral of the story is this: God is longsuffering, but He isn't a door mat. When you worship false gods (modern day false gods are wealth, self, sex, etc.) and/or mess with God's people, God will make a complete and utter end of you (II Thess 1:7-9). But those who have placed their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are safe in the Day of Judgment (1:7).

Also in Nahum, God addresses a man and a woman whose full identities are revealed in greater detail in the book of Revelation: the Antichrist (1:11) and Mystery Babylon, the Mother of Harlots (3:4-19 c.f. Rev. 17, 18). Nineveh and her king are types of these end time characters.

If the moral of Nahum's message is that God is not a doormat, then the moral of Habakkuk's message is: God sure seems to be a doormat. Nahum is the prophet of God's wrath realized; Habakkuk is the prophet of God's patience realized. Habakkuk is struggling with two of the most common questions of life (1:2-4). First, "If God is good and all powerful then why does He allow evil and suffering in the world?" Second, "Why doesn't God answer my prayers?" The very first verse of the Book describes Habakkuk as an indignant prophet pinned under the unbearable burden of life's injustices. This man of God has suppressed his frustration and confusion until he can no longer take it. Habakkuk unleashes his pent up indignation, puts God on trial and asks Him why the wicked are allowed to evade judgment and prosper. God leads Habakkuk up a specific path that ends at the mountain peak of the only possible answer: God knows what He is doing, so relax (3:17-19). The path is as follows: ! from a burden (1:1), to a vision (2:1-4), to a prayer (3:1), to a song (3:18, 19). If you examine your past you will see that all of your wrestling matches with God have followed this path and what you thought was an obstacle is actually a stairway leading you high above the nagging questions of life. May our feet be as hinds' feet.

Historically, Habakkuk predicts the Babylonian captivity (1:5-11). Prophetically, chapter three describes some of the events surrounding the return of Jesus Christ.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As **THE STRONG HOLD OF THE FAITHFUL IN THE DAY OF TROUBLE** – Nahum 1:7 As **THE HOLY ONE** – Hab. 3:3. As **THE COMING SAVIOR OF ISRAEL** – Hab. 3:4-6, 18.