

INVESTIGATING GOD'S WORD... AT SCHOOL

**EZRA-ESTHER
OBADIAH
NAHUM-MALACHI
ECCLESIASTES**

5TH GRADE
BIBLE CURRICULUM
UNIT 3



USING THIS TEACHER'S GUIDE

OVERVIEW

Investigating God's Word...At School is a Bible curriculum designed for Christian schools, grades 1st-5th. Each unit provides material for 9 weeks, divided into four lessons each week. More specifically, each lesson is designed to be taught over two days, in 30-40 minute teaching blocks. This Bible curriculum also includes Scripture memory.

DISTINCTIVES

This Bible curriculum is unique in the following ways:

- (1) It teaches the entirety of God's Word, from Genesis to Revelation, over the course of five years.
- (2) It teaches the students how to study God's Word for themselves.
- (3) It includes daily quizzes in order to help the students build their Bible knowledge.
- (4) It teaches the students a Word of the Week each lesson to build their vocabularies.
- (5) Each lesson puts the texts of Scripture in historical context, teaching the children that the Bible is real history.
- (6) It trains the students to apply God's Word to their lives.
- (7) It systematically inculcates a Biblical worldview, training children to think Biblically.
- (8) It gives the students tools to defend their faith in Christ.

COMPONENTS—DAY ONE

Each 2-day lesson begins with a lesson overview to give you the "big picture" of the Scripture being studied. It also includes a brief preparation section and a teaching encouragement to help get you started.

Introduction. Each "Day One" starts with an introduction to the lesson. Younger children will be asked a question to provoke their thinking. Older

children will be taught a Psalm or Proverb of the day to "call" them to study.

Quiz Time. Next, the students are quizzed in order to train them to remember what they have learned. These quizzes will often cover what they learned the day before, but sometimes will cover material elsewhere in God's Word that they should already know. Major knowledge areas like the Ten Commandments, Days of Creation, etc., may be quizzed more often. **It is recommended that your children write out the answers to the quiz and keep them in a Bible study journal.**

W.O.W! The W.O.W! is the Word of the Week. Each lesson will introduce the students to a vital Biblical vocabulary word. These words are either found in the Scripture text itself, or they are important theological words that the children need to learn. The W.O.W! often provides the theme for the entire lesson.

Historical Context. Each lesson, the Scripture text is placed in historical context by use of a timeline. It is essential that the children learn how the story of redemptive history fits together. Bible stories must not be viewed as detached scenes—they are to be shown as a part of a much bigger picture. The timeline is a useful tool toward that end.

Bible Investigation. The Bible Investigation time is the heart and soul of each day's lesson. It plunges the student directly into God's Word, not simply a paraphrase of a Bible story. All Scripture texts included in the curriculum are from the English Standard Version (ESV). The Bible reading is taken in short sections, separated by times of discussion, questions, and application points. This format allows ample opportunities to stop, think about and discuss what is being read.

Scripture Memory. At the end of each Day One of the two-day lesson, the students will be taught a Scripture memory verse. These memory texts will be connected to what was studied that day. And, since you will cover two lessons each week, the students will be memorizing two passages a week—twice as much as most memory programs.

COMPONENTS—DAY TWO

Day Two components include several Day One components, and add two very exciting sections to the study.

Quiz Time. Day Two begins with a quiz. These quizzes are most often an intensive review of Day One material. **Again, it is recommended that your children write out the answers to the quiz and keep them in a Bible study journal.**

Historical Context. As you prepare to read the Scripture, you will again have the opportunity to put it in historical context for the students. The timeline will visually demonstrate where you are in God's Word.

Bible Investigation. Again, this is the heart and soul of each day's Bible time. Your students will learn how to study God's Word for themselves, as they read, answer questions, discuss, and apply the Bible to their lives.

Worldview Builder. This component is found only in Day Two of each lesson. It has been created because of the need for our children to develop Christian worldviews. Developing a Christian worldview is the task of learning to look at everything in life through the lens of Scripture. It is being trained by the Holy Spirit and the Bible to think Biblically for the glory of God.

The Worldview Builder section helps the students to connect what they are studying to a "pillar" of a Christian worldview. The four main pillars that are used in this study are: Creation, Providence, Rationality, and the Fear of God. After putting the

particular pillar on the board, the students will be asked to list things about that truth that they learned in the lesson.

Defend the Faith. A necessary component of a Bible curriculum is training our children how to defend the Christian faith. It is not good enough to give them Bible knowledge—they must learn how to answer questions about what they believe and why they believe it.

To that end, this section will present the students with a question that they will have to answer. You will also teach them the right answer after they have a chance to share their thoughts. This will begin the training of answering the skeptics and their attacks on Christianity.

Scripture Memory. The day's lesson ends with a review of the Scripture memory passage. You may use any method to help the students put it to memory.

AND FINALLY...

Teaching God's Word is unlike any other subject that you teach in school. It is the only book that is inspired by God! It is the only text that truly changes lives, by the power of the Holy Spirit. So teach it with great passion and excitement, as well as great care. When you teach the Bible you are giving your students the greatest treasure they can ever possess!

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LESSON 1 // OBADIAH, NAHUM

OVERVIEW

The Book of Obadiah is the shortest book of the Old Testament, “weighing in” at a mere twenty one verses. We don’t know much about the prophet Obadiah, other than what is important: that he spoke for God to the nation of Edom. The Edomites, being descendants of Esau, were blood-line brothers to the nation of Israel. Yet just like the rivalry that existed between Jacob and Esau, Edom had always fought against Israel. They also reveled in joy when Israel was taken off into captivity. For these generational sins, Obadiah pronounces the judgment of God upon Edom, from which there will be no escape. This proud and arrogant nation was destroyed by the Sovereign LORD.

The Book of Nahum is a “sequel” to the Book of Jonah. Nahum prophesies to the city of Nineveh and the Assyrians many years after Jonah had done the same. When Jonah called on Nineveh to repent, the people responded and God’s mercy spared the city from certain destruction. But the Ninevites had returned to their wicked ways, terrorizing Judah and other nations as before. So the LORD sent the prophet Nahum to pronounce judgment upon Nineveh once and for all. This time, there would be no repentance, and the city would receive divine retribution for its sin. As a consequence, Judah received mercy and comfort as the LORD takes care of her enemies.

PREPARATION

Read and meditate on the Books of Obadiah and Nahum this week.

TEACHING ENCOURAGEMENT

You probably won’t find other children’s Bible curriculum covering the Old Testament books of Obadiah and Nahum. This may also be the first time you have read them yourself! In these two books, we come to learn more about the justice and holiness of God as He deals with the nations of this world. God is sovereign over all peoples, not just His own people. He metes out punishment for sin. He is slow to anger, but that does not mean that He delays justice. Your children should walk away with a deeper knowledge of God as a righteous judge from this lesson. We too deserve judgment—that’s why we need Jesus!

LESSON SCHEDULE

Day One

INTRODUCTION

Psalm 64:10
2-3 mins.

QUIZ TIME

Jonah
3-5 mins.

W.O.W!

Judgment
3-5 mins.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Timeline
2-3 mins.

BIBLE INVESTIGATION

Obadiah
12-15 mins.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Nahum 1:3
3-5 mins.

Day Two

QUIZ TIME

Obadiah
3-5 mins.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Timeline
3-5 mins.

BIBLE INVESTIGATION

Nahum
12-15 mins.

WORLDVIEW BUILDER

Fear of God
5 mins.

DEFEND THE FAITH

Why am I guilty?
5 mins.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Nahum 1:3
3-5 mins.



INTRODUCTION

Start by reading Psalm 64:10.

¹⁰ Let the righteous one rejoice in the LORD and take refuge in him! Let all the upright in heart exult!

Say: *In Psalm 64, David begins by complaining to the LORD about how his enemies are attacking him. Psalm 64 ends with this verse—an acknowledgment that the only place for the righteous to hide is in the LORD. You and I should also rejoice today that God is our safety and refuge. Let’s learn more about Him today!*



QUIZ TIME

Now, let’s move on to QUIZ TIME.

Today’s questions: *Where did God tell the prophet Jonah to go? What did Jonah do instead? How did God get Jonah to repent and go to Nineveh? What happened when Jonah preached to the Ninevites?*

Answers:

1. Nineveh.
2. Hopped on a ship that took him in the opposite direction.
3. Caused a storm to swamp the boat; Jonah thrown overboard; Jonah rescued by big fish.
4. They repented and turned from their sins to God.

Say: *If you remember the story of Jonah, he became very angry when the people of Nineveh repented and turned to the LORD. Why? Because the Ninevites were evil, violent people who severely oppressed the Israelites. Jonah wanted them to get what they deserved, thus not receiving the grace of God. That’s why Jonah didn’t want to go to Nineveh in the first place—he knew God would have mercy on them. Watch for more about Nineveh later.*



W.O.W!

Our Word of the Week is **JUDGMENT**. Write it on the board. This is a familiar word. Who can give me a good definition of JUDGMENT? **Allow answers.**

A JUDGMENT is something that is given out by a JUDGE. A JUDGE is a person who has the authority to decide the guilt or innocence of a person. So a JUDGE renders a JUDGMENT that says either “guilty” or “innocent.”

God is the ultimate JUDGE of the universe. He has all authority and power to decide who is guilty and who is innocent. He is responsible to hand out JUDGMENTS to all people and all nations.

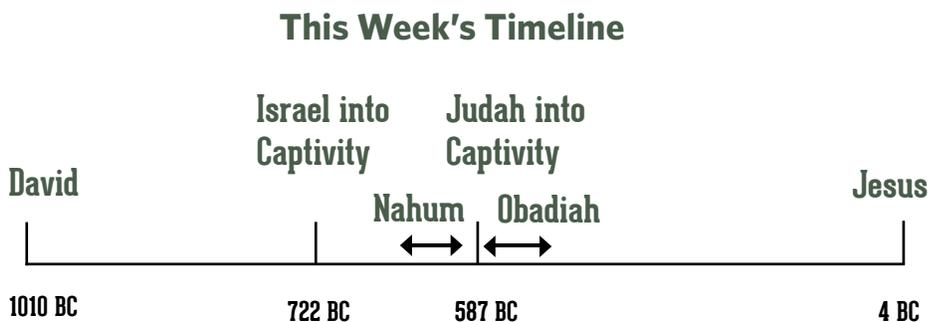
The only way a person could be innocent before God is to be perfect. None of us are perfect, which means that we ALL deserve a JUDGMENT of “guilty” from God. Only those who have received grace and mercy from God will avoid JUDGMENT.

In our reading today, we will see two cases of God the JUDGE handing out JUDGMENT. Watch for them!



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Draw the following timeline on the board to give the students some historical context.





BIBLE INVESTIGATION

Have the children open their Bibles to the Book of Obadiah (a short Old Testament book found right after Amos).

Introduction: *This week we are going to investigate two more Old Testament prophetic books: Obadiah and Nahum. Obadiah is actually the shortest book of the Old Testament—we will tackle it first.*

Obadiah is one of the LORD's prophets—he speaks to people from God. His prophecy is for the people of Edom. These are the descendants of Esau, the twin brother of Jacob. Do you remember him? Let's read the Book of Obadiah together.

Read Obadiah 1-4.

¹ The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord GOD concerning Edom: We have heard a report from the LORD, and a messenger has been sent among the nations: "Rise up! Let us rise against her for battle!" ² Behold, I will make you small among the nations; you shall be utterly despised. ³ The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rock, in your lofty dwelling, who say in your heart, "Who will bring me down to the ground?" ⁴ Though you soar aloft like the eagle, though your nest is set among the stars, from there I will bring you down, declares the LORD.

Discussion: *Edom was a nation with great pride. They thought they were invincible. Yet God tells these people through Obadiah that He alone is sovereign and all-powerful. God is the one who makes countries and kingdoms rise and fall.*

Application: *As you get older, boys and girls, you will find more and more people who act like the Edomites. These sorts of people believe they are invincible and they don't need the LORD. Like Nebuchadnezzar, they have hearts of pride. Make sure you don't become like the Edomites! Keep your heart humble before the Sovereign God!*

*Let's read more. **Read verses 5-12.***

⁵ If thieves came to you, if plunderers came by night— how you have been destroyed!— would they not steal only enough for themselves? If grape gatherers came to you, would they not leave gleanings? ⁶ How Esau has been pillaged, his treasures sought out! ⁷ All your allies have driven you to your border; those at peace with you have deceived you; they have prevailed against you; those who eat your bread have set a trap beneath you— you have no understanding. ⁸ Will I not on that day, declares the



LORD, destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of Mount Esau? ⁹ And your mighty men shall be dismayed, O Teman, so that every man from Mount Esau will be cut off by slaughter. ¹⁰ Because of the violence done to your brother Jacob, shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off forever. ¹¹ On the day that you stood aloof, on the day that strangers carried off his wealth and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, you were like one of them. ¹² But do not gloat over the day of your brother in the day of his misfortune; do not rejoice over the people of Judah in the day of their ruin; do not boast in the day of distress.

Discussion: *Now we get a better understanding of why the LORD is judging Edom. What has Edom done? [They have violently attacked Israel; they have rejoiced over Israel's captivity.] Remember that Israel had entered into captivity. The Edomites were "brothers" of the Israelites (since Jacob and Esau were brothers), yet they acted more like enemies. So God is judging Edom for his mistreatment of his brother Israel—God's chosen people.*

*Let's continue in verse 13. **Read verses 13-18.***

¹³ Do not enter the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; do not gloat over his disaster in the day of his calamity; do not loot his wealth in the day of his calamity. ¹⁴ Do not stand at the crossroads to cut off his fugitives; do not hand over his survivors in the day of distress. ¹⁵ For the day of the LORD is near upon all the nations. As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own head. ¹⁶ For as you have drunk on my holy mountain, so all the nations shall drink continually; they shall drink and swallow, and shall be as though they had never been. ¹⁷ But in Mount Zion there shall be those who escape, and it shall be holy, and the house of Jacob shall possess their own possessions. ¹⁸ The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau stubble; they shall burn them and consume them, and there shall be no survivor for the house of Esau, for the LORD has spoken.

Discussion: *Edom will be destroyed by the LORD. But what will become of Israel, God's chosen people? [They will be saved and restored.] So even though Israel had sinned and been sent into captivity, God's mercy would restore them. Edom receives the judgment that the guilty deserve.*

*Let's finish this short book. **Read verses 19-21.***

¹⁹ Those of the Negeb shall possess Mount Esau, and those of the Shephelah shall possess the land of the Philistines; they shall possess



the land of Ephraim and the land of Samaria, and Benjamin shall possess Gilead.²⁰ The exiles of this host of the people of Israel shall possess the land of the Canaanites as far as Zarephath, and the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad shall possess the cities of the Negeb.²¹ Saviors shall go up to Mount Zion to rule Mount Esau, and the kingdom shall be the LORD's.

Discussion: *All of this happened just as Obadiah prophesied. Edom was destroyed and its land was split up. Did you notice that last verse? Who is sovereign over all the world? The LORD! The kingdom is the LORD's!*

Conclusion: *We will move on to the Book of Nahum next time.*



SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Read the Scripture Memory verse (Nahum 1:3) together.

Nahum 1:3 (ESV)

³ 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.

Say: *This verse teaches us that God is both merciful and just. As judge, He will punish the guilty. Yet, He is slow to anger, patient and merciful as well. We serve an awesome God who perfectly executes justice over all nations and all individuals.*

Review the verse.

Close in prayer.

DAY TWO



QUIZ TIME

Let's begin today with QUIZ TIME. Are you ready?

Today's questions: What is our most recent Word of the Week? Who received the prophecy from Obadiah? Why was the LORD judging the Edomites? According to Obadiah, what would happen to God's people, Israel?

Answers:

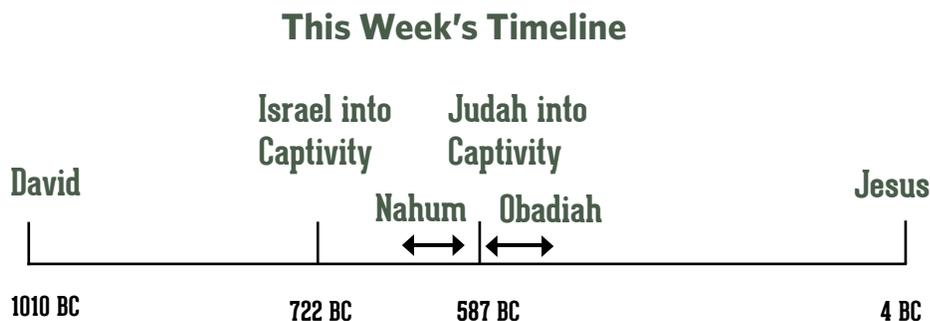
1. Judgment.
2. The Edomites.
3. They had violently attacked Israel and had rejoiced over their captivity.
4. Israel would be saved and restored.

God often used His prophets to speak words of blessing for His people and curses for His enemies. God's people were supposed to see the beautiful mercy of the LORD!



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Draw the following timeline on the board to give the students some historical context.





BIBLE INVESTIGATION

Have your students turn in their Bibles to the Book of Nahum.

Introduction: *Nahum prophesied throughout the southern kingdom of Judah. This entire book is a prophecy from the LORD through Nahum to the people of Nineveh. Remember them?*

Let's read it together. Read Nahum 1:1-8.

¹ An oracle concerning Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum of Elkosh. ² 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. ³ 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. ⁴ He rebukes the sea and makes it dry; he dries up all the rivers; Bashan and Carmel wither; the bloom of Lebanon withers. ⁵ The mountains quake before him; the hills melt; the earth heaves before him, the world and all who dwell in it. ⁶ 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. ⁷ The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him. ⁸ But with an overflowing flood he will make a complete end of the adversaries, and will pursue his enemies into darkness.

Discussion: *Wow! We learn a lot about God and Nineveh in these verses. Nineveh had repented when Jonah preached in that wicked city. But over time, the Ninevites returned to their wicked ways. Now it was time for God to avenge His people, since Nineveh continued to persecute God's people. What do these verses tell you about God? [That He is slow to anger, but always just; His wrath is poured out on the wicked; He punishes the guilty.]*

Application: *It is so important that you know that God is both merciful and just. He showed mercy to Nineveh by sending them Jonah to preach to them. But after repenting, the people turned away from God again. This brought God's justice. You and I deserve God's just judgment for our sins too. Yet we receive mercy through Jesus Christ. But if you reject Jesus, you will be judged just like the Ninevites!*

Let's move down to verse 11. Read verses 11-15.

¹¹ From you came one who plotted evil against the LORD, a worthless counselor. ¹² 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. ¹³ And now I will break his yoke from off you



and will burst your bonds apart.”¹⁴ The LORD has given commandment about you: “No more shall your name be perpetuated; from the house of your gods I will cut off the carved image and the metal image. I will make your grave, for you are vile.”¹⁵ Behold, upon the mountains, the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace! Keep your feasts, O Judah; fulfill your vows, for never again shall the worthless pass through you; he is utterly cut off.

Discussion: *Did you hear the good news for Judah, God’s chosen people? The judgment upon Nineveh brings comfort and mercy for Judah. No longer would Nineveh attack God’s people. They would never again invade Judah. What good news! God’s just judgment on Nineveh would bring peace to God’s people.*

Application: *For the Christian, God’s promise is that our enemy, Satan, will ultimately be destroyed in the future. That’s great news for those who put their faith in Christ! Christians will celebrate and rest in Heaven when God finally defeats Satan once and for all. This is our great guarantee.*

Let’s read some of Nahum 2. **Read Nahum 2:8-13.**

⁸ Nineveh is like a pool whose waters run away. “Halt! Halt!” they cry, but none turns back. ⁹ Plunder the silver, plunder the gold! There is no end of the treasure or of the wealth of all precious things. ¹⁰ Desolate! Desolation and ruin! Hearts melt and knees tremble; anguish is in all loins; all faces grow pale! ¹¹ Where is the lions’ den, the feeding place of the young lions, where the lion and lioness went, where his cubs were, with none to disturb? ¹² The lion tore enough for his cubs and strangled prey for his lionesses; he filled his caves with prey and his dens with torn flesh. ¹³ 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.

Discussion: *Nineveh was going to reap the consequences of all its evil actions. Could this evil city avoid this terrible judgment? [No!] God clearly condemns the evil and all that He says He will do will certainly come to pass.*

Let’s go to Nahum 3. **Read Nahum 3:1-4.**

¹ Woe to the bloody city, all full of lies and plunder— no end to the prey!

² The crack of the whip, and rumble of the wheel, galloping horse and bounding chariot! ³ Horsemen charging, flashing sword and glittering



spear, hosts of slain, heaps of corpses, dead bodies without end— they stumble over the bodies! ⁴ And all for the countless whorings of the prostitute, graceful and of deadly charms, who betrays nations with her whorings, and peoples with her charms.

Discussion: *Do you get the picture? Nineveh was a violent city, destroying the lives of many nations. It had gone on long enough!*

*Let's go down to verse 12. **Read verses 12-17.***

¹² All your fortresses are like fig trees with first-ripe figs— if shaken they fall into the mouth of the eater. ¹³ Behold, your troops are women in your midst. The gates of your land are wide open to your enemies; fire has devoured your bars. ¹⁴ Draw water for the siege; strengthen your forts; go into the clay; tread the mortar; take hold of the brick mold! ¹⁵ There will the fire devour you; the sword will cut you off. It will devour you like the locust. Multiply yourselves like the locust; multiply like the grasshopper! ¹⁶ You increased your merchants more than the stars of the heavens. The locust spreads its wings and flies away. ¹⁷ Your princes are like grasshoppers, your scribes like clouds of locusts settling on the fences in a day of cold— when the sun rises, they fly away; no one knows where they are.

Discussion: *Fascinating imagery here. Over and over again, the prophet Nahum, speaking for the LORD God, pronounces JUDGMENT on Nineveh. They can try and protect themselves, but when God is against you, there is no place to run and hide.*

*Let's finish this Old Testament prophecy. **Read verses 18-19.***

¹⁸ Your shepherds are asleep, O king of Assyria; your nobles slumber. Your people are scattered on the mountains with none to gather them. ¹⁹ There is no easing your hurt; your wound is grievous. All who hear the news about you clap their hands over you. For upon whom has not come your unceasing evil?

Conclusion: *The rest of the world will rejoice when Nineveh and the Assyrians are destroyed. Why? Because throughout their history—except for the short time of repentance—they have been endlessly cruel to all other nations. God's justice comes to Nineveh. God will also judge our country if we continue in our pagan ways. The LORD brings judgment upon nations all the time, as our study of Obadiah and Nahum tell us today. But we also deserve God's judgment as individuals. How can you and I avoid the wrath of God? Only through faith in Jesus Christ, our merciful Savior.*



WORLDVIEW BUILDER

Say: Now, it's time to use what we have learned in God's Word this week to build our Christian minds. God has given us minds to think rightly and to believe the TRUTH. So, each week we connect what we learn from God's Word to HOW we are to think about all of life!

Draw the "Fear of God" pillar on the board. We will be building on our "Fear of God" pillar today. To fear God is to love Him, honor and worship Him, and obey Him. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom!

So, what things did we learn about the FEAR OF GOD in Obadiah and Nahum?

Assist your students to think of the following truths (connect them to the pillar on the board):

1. The Edomites did not fear the LORD.
2. The Edomites acted in pride.
3. Nineveh returned to their old evil ways, after repenting and fearing God for a time.
4. All those who do not fear the LORD will ultimately be destroyed by God's wrath.

We can either remain in our pride and sin, or enjoy God's grace and serve the LORD!



DEFEND THE FAITH

Say: Now, it's time to build our "defenses" up. You and I must always be prepared to defend and protect our faith in Jesus Christ. Just remember what the apostle Peter said:

I Peter 3:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ ...Always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you...

Let's get more PREPARED to give answers about the hope we have in Jesus Christ! Let me ask you a question and see how you do...



Q: Why are all people guilty before God?

*The Israelites were judged and found guilty before God. The Edomites and the Ninevites were also found guilty. But most people today believe they are innocent of any grand sins before the LORD. They don't believe they deserve judgment. So how would you explain the fact that they are really guilty before the LORD? **Allow answers.***

Make sure the children have these elements in their answer:

A: God is perfectly holy and demands that His creation be perfectly holy too. But no one perfect; we are all sinners. So even if we don't feel guilty of major sins, we are all guilty as sinners. We can never claim innocence since we are filled with sin. If we say we have no sin, we are liars!

Say: *A holy God cannot look upon the least sin. As judge, we are condemned for our sins and deserve punishment. Thank God for Jesus, who takes our guilt and shame so we can enjoy right standing before the LORD!*



SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Review the Scripture Memory verse (Nahum 1:3) with the students.

Nahum 1:3 (ESV)

³ 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.

Use any method to review the memory work with the students.

See if any student can say it from memory.

Close in prayer.