

Nahum 1:1-12

I think of Dietrich Bonhoeffer when I study the book of Jonah and Nahum. Dietrich Bonhoeffer is the author of a classic Christian book called *The Cost of Discipleship* which I read years ago. He was born in 1906. The German government hanged him in 1945 due to his opposition to Nazi. He was a Lutheran pastor. He resisted Nazi's dictatorship and opposed Hitler's programs. He was vocal against His enemy about the wrongs of Hitler and his programs at the time Hitler was in power of German, and was highly influential across Europe. Pastor Bonhoeffer was like Jonah and Nahum where they pointed out the wrongs of the strong opposing power of Assyria.

Book of Nahum is a minor prophet book in the Old Testament. Nahum's prophecy was likely between the years of 663 and 654 BC, but some references indicate a wider date range (663-612 BC). The Assyrian Empire, which had its capital at Nineveh, was fairly powerful at that time. Its power had pressured Judah during King Manasseh's reign (2 Chronicles 33:10-13). Note, king Manasseh was a bad king in Judah. Nahum prophesized around that time period. The main point of the book of Nahum was to preach God's judgment for a second time to Nineveh. Jonah was the first about 120 years earlier. The purpose was to pronounce the final warning and judgment upon Nineveh, and he also addressed the rest of the Assyrian empire. The Assyrian had returned to wickedness shortly after they repented back in Jonah's day.

1) God is righteous but patience for people to repent

a. God is righteous and will punish the wrong doers

Nahum 1:1-3 clearly stated God is angry with those that oppose Him. God opposes sin. God is very clear on His position in respects to people who have sinned because he is a righteous God (verses 2 & 3)

b. God is patience for people to repent

Verse 3 also stated God is slow to anger. God is patience for people to repent. God used Jonah to warn the Assyrian once. They repented then but went back to their sinful way. God did not immediately attack the Assyrian, but

used Nahum to warn them again. Today, God is still patient with us for those who have not returned back to God (2 Peter 3:9, Joel 2:13).

2) The Lord is our strength and refuge

a. Point out the wrongs of others need God's strength

It is not easy to point out the wrongs of others. It is not necessary to be directing the message of wrong doings to your enemy but can also be towards your friend or relatives. You might have fear when you plan to do so. This requires wisdom from God as well as strength from God (Gal. 6:1, II Tim. 1:7, I Tim. 5:20).

b. The Lord protects His people

Nahum 1:7 states "The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him". We can be bold when we do what is right in God's eyes. The evil is against God. Nahum 1:9 states "Whatever they plot against the Lord he will bring to an end ..."

3) God is powerful and no one can be against His will

Verse 9 and on describe God is powerful. He had and will end transgressions and plots against Him. Regardless how strong an individual, a group or a country, God can end it with His almighty power. Nahum was not able to see the complete fall on Assyria. Likewise, Bonhoeffer was not able to see the death of Hitler and total collapse of Nazi. We might or might not see the changes or the end of those we warned about against God, but can be sure that God's will be done.

How to apply the book of Nahum in our lives today? One of the applications is that we should always remember God is righteous and powerful. He will support you if the Holy Spirit moves you to speak up against certain evil acts. Pray to God for wisdom and strength when you do so. Be patient as God is patient. We just trust God to do his work because we know His plan and will be done always.