

# God Is | Nahum 1:1-9 | 3/8/15

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- The minor prophets
  - The Minor Prophets make up 12 books of the Old Testament.
  - They are only “minor” because they are short books as compared to say Isaiah.
  - Each of these books contains important revelations from God that applied both to the people during the time period in which they were given but also equally to us today.
  - The books give warnings.
  - Prophecy regarding Christ
  - Repent and turn to God
    - They don’t say hey you guys are perfect!
  - The Israelites were scattered so there were several Prophets
- The Book of Nahum
  - This book was written by the Prophet Nahum around 650 B.C.
  - In short the book of Nahum was God’s prophecy to the Israelite people where God is foretelling the destruction of the city of Nineveh, which is the capital of the Assyrian empire.
    - This would be reassuring to the Israelites because they Assyrian’s were there enemies and were cruel and evil people who were harming the Israelites.
    - The Assyrians were cruel and evil
      - The Assyrians were not know for being nice or kind, in fact they were known and feared for their cruelty and evil that they posed upon their enemies.
      - The city also was severely influenced with idolatry and sexual immorality.
    - The world would be happy with their demise.
      - Nahum 3:19
    - God’s prophecy would be fulfilled in 612 B.C by the Babylonians.
  - The oracle concerning Nineveh
    - This opening is common in other books of the Bible when a divine message of judgment is given against a foreign nation.
  - God’s Word was revealed in a vision to Nahum
    - This is of course how God’s message was revealed to the prophet Nahum through a vision.
- Who is Nahum?
  - Other than the fact that he was God’s chosen prophet and an Elkoshite we don’t know much about him.
  - This is common with a few of the other prophets as well, were we have very little focus on the background of the prophet but we have a great focus on the Word that was brought to them from God.
- Background and Setting
  - This book gives us God’s condemnation for the city of Nineveh.
  - Nineveh may sound familiar because a century prior Jonah was a witness to these people and he proclaimed God’s truths and called the evil city of the Assyrian empire to repentance.
    - Jonah 3:1-5
    - Jonah 3:10
  - For a time the city did in fact repent and turn to God, however roughly a century later we see that the next generation chose not to follow God and they have returned to their evil ways.
  - God is now bringing His just punishment upon this wicked city.

- Nahum 3:4-5a
- God's Vengeance | Nahum 1-3a
  - **Read Nahum 1-3a**
  - God Is - God's character revealed
    - In the opening verses of this book before God reveals the fore coming destruction of Nineveh we see that God is making part of His character and personality known.
    - God makes it clear that He is not a passive God that will sit idly by forever, but a God that will show His vengeance when He chooses to.
    - **God reveals that He is a jealous God, an avenging God, but at the same time God is patient and slow to anger. He is good and just and He loves those who take refuge in Him.**
    - Old Testament/New Testament
      - **Some like to say that in the Old Testament that God's character is primarily that of wrath and vengeance.**
      - **Then the God in the New Testament is one of love and forgiveness.**
      - While there may be certain passages of Scripture that stick out in our minds to make us think this, the truth is that God is exactly the same God that He was then that He is in the New Testament and the same that He is today.
      - **The OT and the NT alike are full of God's vengeance and wrath but also His love, mercy and great compassion that He has on His people and the world.**
  - God is a jealous God
    - But not perhaps in the way that we might think when we look at jealousy today.
    - Because jealousy is often seen as a sign of weakness or something that isn't desired. We look down upon those who have jealous tendencies.
      - If you have a couple and one is overly jealous it can show insecurity and lack of trust.
    - However this is not the type of jealousy that is seen in the character of God.
      - Now it is similar in the fact that just how a someone would be jealous if their spouse was being unfaithful so to is **God if we are spiritually unfaithful** to Him.
        - Look at what happened with the Israelites when they would worship idols instead of God.
      - **However God's jealousy is never because of weakness or insecurity but instead because of His love for us.**
      - **His jealousy is also shown in His vengeance against His enemies.**
  - God's jealousy is portrayed in two different ways in the Bible.
    - It is portrayed in His steadfast love for us in that He does not want spiritual imperfection or unfaithfulness in His children.
      - If we look back in the Book of Exodus we can see an example of God's jealousy in the form of His love for His people.
      - God is jealous in that He loves His people so much that He does not want us to do anything that would cause us spiritual harm or to be pulled away from him.
        - He doesn't want us to be unfaithful or sinful in our actions and behavior.
        - Exodus 20:3-6
      - As part of the Ten Commandments God made it clear regarding our worship of other idols.
        - God does not want us to worship idols or something that God has created instead of Him.



- There are numerous times in the Bible where God has taken his vengeance out on those that are against Him, this isn't something new.
  - Those that have sinned and rebelled to a point that God has chosen to punish them severely.
  - We see God's wrath against Nineveh, as this is the premise of the vision that came to Nahum.
    - Nahum 1:8
      - "But He will completely destroy Nineveh with an overwhelming flood, and He will chase His enemies into darkness."
  - We also see Gods' vengeance on Babylon
    - Jeremiah 51:11
      - "Sharpen the arrows! Fill the quivers! The LORD has put it into the mind of the kings of the Medes because His plan is aimed at Babylon to destroy her, for it is the LORD's vengeance, vengeance for His temple."
  - We see God's vengeance on Sodom and Gomorra
    - Genesis 19:12-14
      - "Then the angels said to Lot...for we are about to destroy this place because the outcry against its people is so great before the LORD, that the LORD has sent us to destroy it."
  - Then of course the great flood in the time of Noah
    - Genesis 6:11-13
- The Bible makes it clear that God will take vengeance upon His enemies and also the enemies of His people.
- **God does not enjoy evil and sin in the world, there will come a time where God will avenge the wrong and the sins of the world.**
- **God will not leave the guilty of the world unpunished.**
- We must be sure that we do not forget that God is also just in His vengeance.
  - While God will show His vengeance on the guilty we must remember that God is just.
  - He will not take out His vengeance on those that do not deserve it, God is the supreme of all of the supreme courts and His decisions are always holy.
- **How does seeing God take vengeance upon His enemies make you feel?**
- It is God's responsibility to avenge our enemies.
  - Vengeance is not something that is unique to God, we has humans have a desire to seek vengeance on those that do us wrong.
  - We desire to get back at them and to punish those that wrong us.
  - However this is contrary to God's instruction to us, as God has said that vengeance is His and that we must let God take care of it.
    - Romans 12:19
      - "Friends, do not avenge yourselves; instead, leave room for His wrath. For it is written: Vengeance belongs to Me; **I will repay**, says the Lord."
    - God will repay those that do us wrong even though we would rather take matters into our own hands.



- How thankful is the Christian that God is patient and that He did not take out his vengeance upon us!
  - While we may think our sins are nothing compared to others in the world, to God our sins are still sins that deserve a just punishment and the wrath of God.
  - In fact we were once enemies of God!
    - Romans 5:10
      - “For if, **while we were enemies**, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, then how much more, having been reconciled, will we be saved by His life!”
  - But God being the patient and loving God that He is gives us time to turn from our evil ways and He extends this to those in the world.
  - Joel 2:13
    - “Tear your hearts, not just your clothes, and return to the LORD your God. For He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, rich in faithful love, and He relents from sending disaster.”
- God is patient because He desires our return to Him.
  - With God’s patience He desires our repentance so that we can turn to Him. God would rather not punish us that is why He is patient to give us time to repent.
  - 2 Peter 3:9
    - “The Lord does not delay His promise, as some understand delay, but **is patient with you**, not wanting any to perish **but all to come to repentance.**”
- So when we think that God should act in vengeance in a particular circumstance, we must remember that God will decide when that appropriate time is.
  - If God is patient then it is for His holy purpose that we are able to understand.
  - We must rely on His Word that reassures us that God will act at the appropriate time.
- God’s patience however will not last forever.
  - While God is slow to anger and He has patience with us, this will not last forever.
  - There will come a time when God’s patience will run out and His holy vengeance and justice will be served.
  - This book of Nahum shows us clearly how this was the case for the city of Nineveh.
    - God gave them an opportunity to repent when Jonah visited them, which they did for a time.
    - However they returned to their evil ways and instead of this time sending another prophet God’s patience has run out.
    - Nahum 1:7-9
    - Nahum 3:4-5
  - Christians also must realize this that when we continue in a particular sin that we are unrepentant of that while God is patient with us, it won’t save us from His holy punishment.
  - It is by far better that we turn from our evil ways before the patience of God runs out.
- God’s is good and full of love | Nahum 1:7
  - While these passages were dedicated to seemingly a lot of doom and gloom we are assured that God is good and He is a gracious and loving God.
  - Exodus 34:6

- “Then the LORD passed in front of him and proclaimed: Yahweh-Yahweh is a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in faithful love and truth, maintaining faithful love to a thousand generations, forgiving wrongdoing, rebellion, and sin.”