

## Is a God of Love also a God of Wrath? Nahum 1

### Introduction:

1. When you think of the Assyrian city of Nineveh, most likely you immediately think of the prophet, Jonah.
2. But there is another prophet whose prophecy centered on the city of Nineveh. The prophet's name is Nahum. vs. 1
3. Nineveh was the capital city of the powerful Assyrian empire. Nahum's prophecy came at the height of the Assyrian's power. They were well known for their violent, ruthless, barbaric treatment of other nations that they captured.
4. Nineveh had repented under Jonah's preaching 100 years earlier, but by now they had relapsed into their former sin and wickedness.
5. They had already taken captive the northern kingdom of Israel, and now they were threatening the southern kingdom of Israel (Judah).
6. Nineveh was proud, idolatrous, and wicked. It was situated on the Tigris River and seemed absolutely impenetrable. Yet the theme of Nahum is the coming wrath of God.
7. We know that God is a God of love. **1 John 4:8** declares that "*God is love.*" But is God also a God of wrath? If so, who does God pour out His wrath on? Why doesn't He pour out wrath immediately on sinners? How can His wrath be avoided?
8. We will answer all of these questions in this message as we learn four principles concerning God's wrath here in Nahum 1.

### First, God's wrath is promised against His enemies. vs. 1-3

1. Nahum begins by saying, "*The burden of Nineveh.*" The word "*burden*" in the Bible usually introduces a threat of divine judgment.
2. Nahum wastes no time introducing God as a God of vengeance. vs. 2; cf. **Romans 12:19; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8**
3. There are three declarative statements that Nahum makes concerning God's actions:
  - "*The Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries*" - vs. 2
  - "*He reserveth wrath for his enemies*" - vs. 2
  - "*He will not acquit the wicked*" - vs. 3
4. God cannot treat sin as if it is righteousness. This is the idea of the word "acquit." If God did this, He would **not** be holy and just. He would be dishonest and unjust. **Genesis 18:25**
5. God's wrath is reserved for His enemies. What makes a person the enemy of God? It is when a person commits acts that are **ungodly** and **unrighteous**. **Romans 1:18; Jude 15; Colossians 1:21**
6. How many people today have committed unrighteous deeds? **Romans 3:10**

### Second, God's wrath is not immediately poured out on His enemies. vs. 2-3

1. Nineveh did not get in its wicked state over night. They had been continuing in wickedness for years upon years.

2. Why hadn't God judged them? Where was God's wrath? Why doesn't God judge sin immediately today? Why do wicked nations and wicked people seemingly "get away" with sin and wickedness?
3. The reason is found in verse 3, "*The Lord is slow to anger.*" God is patient and has a long fuse. We should all rejoice in this blessed truth. **Psalm 103:8, 145:8; Romans 15:5**
4. God had been longsuffering with Nineveh, but Nahum announces that wrath is coming. Today, we live in the dispensation of grace. We live in a time where sin abounds, but God's grace abounds even more. **Romans 5:20**
5. But we are mistaken if we believe that God's wrath will **never** be poured out on those who sin against God, rebel against His Word, and reject the gospel. Paul says that the time of wrath **will** come. **Romans 2:5; cf. Ecclesiastes 8:11**
6. Only God's patience and grace keeps God's wrath from falling. We live in a time of "wrath delayed." The wrath is coming (just like Nineveh), but God is patiently waiting and longing for people to turn to Him. **Isaiah 55:7; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9**

**God's wrath comes suddenly on His enemies. vs. 4-6, 8-14,**

1. Many falsely assume that because God's wrath doesn't come immediately that God is in heaven powerless to do anything about the sin and wickedness in the world. Nahum refutes this in verse 3. While God is "*slow to anger*", He is still "*great in power.*"
2. When the storms of God's judgment finally break forth, He is all powerful and it happens very suddenly and unexpectedly (vs. 3b-5). As hard as man may try, they are like putty in God's hands in the time of wrath. vs. 6
3. Verses 8-10 give vivid detail as to what would eventually happen to Nineveh in 612B.C. Archaeological discoveries attests to Nahum's accuracy.
  - While the king and the people were in a drunken stupor, the banks of the Tigris River overflowed; destroying part of Nineveh's protective wall and the armies of the Babylonians entered and destroyed this city with fire.
4. Verses 11-14 are a prophecy concerning the **sudden** destruction of Assyria's king, Sennacherib, as recorded in **2 Kings 19:35-37**.
5. The apostle Paul also taught that when God's wrath is poured out on this earth, it will come suddenly as a thief in the night. **1 Thessalonians 5:1-3**
6. Just like Nineveh, man feels invincible while living on the earth, but so many times death comes suddenly without warning. The wise man thinks about death before it is too late.

**God's wrath can always be avoided by His enemies. vs. 7, 15**

1. This chapter is one of darkness and judgment, but in the midst comes the shining light of verse 7. What a verse! What a blessed thought!!
2. God is good. He does not want to judge and bring wrath. **Micah 7:18** declares that God "*delighteth in mercy.*" He simply asks that we trust Him.
3. In time past, you could avoid God's wrath different ways such as entering the ark, leaving Sodom with Lot, befriending Israel like Rahab, approaching God with a blood sacrifice, etc.

4. Today, God has provided a way of escape for all of His enemies in the world. Jesus Christ has made a full and complete payment for the sins of mankind. **Romans 5:6**
5. When a person places their faith and trust in Christ, they are no longer the enemy of God, but are made at peace with God. **Romans 5:1**
6. We are saved from wrath through the finished work of Jesus Christ.  
**Romans 5:8-10**

**In Conclusion:**

1. We have learned four principles concerning God's wrath:
  - God's wrath is promised against His enemies.
    - Why is this? Because God is just.
  - God's wrath is not immediately poured out on His enemies.
    - Why is this? Because God is patient.
  - God's wrath comes suddenly on His enemies.
    - Why is this? Because God is powerful.
  - God's wrath can always be avoided by His enemies.
    - Why is this? Because God is merciful.
2. God is a God who longs for peace. Nahum declared to Judah that despite Nineveh's vicious power, messengers would come to them declaring peace. vs. 15
3. Today we have a message of peace for this world. May God find us declaring this message of peace to individuals in all nations - the message of Jesus Christ!  
**Romans 10:15**