

Nahum 1

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Nahum chapter 1. We'll read it, pray, and then we will have our Bible study. It says there, Nahum chapter 1. The Oracle of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum, the Elkishite. A jealous and avenging God is the Lord. The Lord is avenging and wrathful. The Lord takes vengeance on His adversary, and He reserves wrath for His enemies.

The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, and the Lord will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. And whirlwind and storm is His way, and clouds are the dust beneath His feet. He rebukes the sea and makes it dry. He dries up all the rivers. Bashan and Carmel wither. The blossoms of Lebanon wither.

Mountains quake because of Him, and the hills dissolve. Indeed, the earth is upheaved by His presence, the world, and all the inhabitants in it. Who can stand before His indignation? Who can endure the burning of His anger? His wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken up by Him. The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knows those who take refuge in Him.

But with an overflowing flood, He will make a complete end of its sight, and will pursue His enemies into darkness. Whatever you devise against the Lord, He will make a complete end of it. Distress will not rise up twice. Like tangled thorns, and like those who are drunken with their drink, they are consumed, as stubble completely withered.

From you has gone forth one who plotted evil against the Lord, a wicked counselor. Thus says the Lord. Though they are at full strength and likewise many even so, they will be cut off and pass away. Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no longer. So now I will break his yoke bar from upon you and I will tear off your shackles.

The Lord has issued a command concerning you. Your name will no longer be perpetuated. I will cut off idol and image from the house of your gods. I will prepare your grave. For you are contemptible. Behold, on the mountains, the feet of him. Who brings good news, who announces peace. Celebrate your feast. Oh, Judah, pay your vows for never again will the wicked one pass through you.

He is cut off completely. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we come to you tonight, Lord, confessing and knowing that just as your word teaches us that you are a God who is, rich in compassion and mercy, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, but also that you are a God who will by no means clear the guilty, and that you reserve wrath and judgment and your indignation for your enemies, and that they will all be destroyed and consumed, Lord, in the wrath of your fire.

Lord, we see that there is no greater need that we have than to be reconciled to you. Lord, to count you as our heavenly father and not as our enemy who is set to destroy us. And so, Lord, we pray that we might be reconciled to you through the death of your son. Lord, we thank you that you have provided a way in which sinners who deserve nothing but your contempt, Lord, a way in which we can be reconciled in a way in which we can have your love and your favor, your grace and mercy.

Lord, by sending your own son into the world to take your wrath and your indignation that was upon us and for him to take it upon himself. So Father, as we study this book of Nahum, Lord, when we see and hear so much about your judgment and the indignation that you have. For your enemies. Lord, may it be a reminder to us of what we are in our natural state and what it is that you've done for us through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Lord, how great your mercy is toward us by delivering us from the wrath that is to come. So Lord bless us as we study and Lord teach us all things and it is in Christ's name that we pray. Amen. Well, again we're starting here the book of Nahum and this book is devoted to judgment against the Assyrians and specifically the city of Nineveh.

The city of Nineveh, which was one of the arch nemesis of the people of God, especially the northern kingdom, but also the southern kingdom as well. It was the Assyrian empire that ultimately brought down and brought to ruin and decimated the northern kingdom of Israel. Alright, it was under their leadership and under their tyranny that those people were completely dispersed and they were never brought back into their land again, but also they were a great source of consternation, of difficulty, of turmoil upon the southern kingdom as well.

They came down there and caused much problem and heartache and grief during the days of Hezekiah, when the armies of the Assyrians surrounded Jerusalem, and it was only a miracle of the Lord that delivered them from their wrath. And so this was a people who were a great enemy to God's people and to God himself in what they were doing in the world.

Though, They were not acting outside of God's control, but they were being used by God in order to bring about His purposes and His plans. Right, they were a rod or an instrument in the hand of the Lord to bring judgment upon the people of Israel because of their sin. However, because the Ninevites and because the Assyrians We're not motivated by goodwill.

What was motivating them was not a desire to obey God and to please God, but rather it was their own wickedness, right? A desire for evil. This is what led them to do the things that they did. So they intended these things for evil, though God used them for His own purposes and for His good. So ultimately, though, God would turn His wrath against them.

Those that were his rod, he would then turn and use another as a rod against them and to punish them because of all of their sins. Now, the book of Nahum, though it's primarily about Nineveh and Assyria and what God's going to do to them. The recipients of this book are the people of Israel and it is for their comfort and for their consolation, right?

It's not written for the Ninevites It's written for the people of Israel to be a comfort to them that God will deliver them From their enemies and that he will rise up and defend them once again and defend his own glory and honor But also as we mentioned in our prayer, it is a reminder to us That what is being laid out here, and when we see the judgments of God

throughout the Bible, whether we're dealing with Nineveh, whether we're dealing later with Babylon, whether we're dealing with the people of Israel.

Or whether we're talking about the ancient world that was destroyed during the flood, the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, wherever we see God's judgment, His wrath, His condemnation poured out upon a people, it is a reminder to us of what we deserve. And if it were not for the grace of God, the same exact thing would happen to us.

And the only reason that we will be spared from such a miserable end is because of the grace of God given to us through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is because Jesus Christ stood in our place, that He took our place so that the wrath we deserved and that was poured out upon the people of Nineveh was poured out on Christ on our behalf, right, for our sake, and it is because of this that we now do not regard God as our enemy, but He has now become our Heavenly Father, and we cry out to Him, and we receive grace and mercy from Him in our time of need.

So, when we read these things, we need to be reminded of who we are in our natural state. That we're no better than they are. And if left to our own devices, everything that they did All of the atrocities and the sins and the crimes against God and men that they committed, we could do all of these things just as easily as they did.

When we see the wicked, we see a mirror into our own heart and what we are like. But also, when we see the judgment of God, it reminds us of what we deserve. What we deserve because of our own sin and also of how merciful God has been to us to not give us our just deserts, but instead to give us His grace and His mercy and to forgive us of all of our iniquities.

But this He does not capriciously and not in a willy nilly way, not by sweeping our sins under the rug, but by rather pouring out the wrath against us. And diverting it onto his own son so that he consumed the wrath of God on our behalf. So there is much of the gospel here in the book of Nahum, and that is the principle thing in which we must see and learn how this instructs and teaches us concerning our own salvation.

And it con and instructs us concerning the nature of God and how we need to live before him in fear and in righteousness. Also, it we should be reminded. that this is one of two books in the Old Testament Prophets and in the Minor Prophets that are dealing chiefly with the city of Nineveh. The other one being Jonah.

Jonah the prophet was sent to Nineveh and there this that took place about a hundred years before the book of Nahum was written, where it is predicting their ultimate destruction and the judgment of God that is going to come upon them. But we also remember that in the book of Jonah. God was merciful to those people, though they were every bit as wicked then as they are during the time of Nahum.

And it is again a reminder to us that God, if He chooses, can be merciful to people. And we should not despise God for being a God of mercy, nor should we lose hope or think that a people or a person is so far gone that He is unredeemable. Because who could be more unredeemable to the Israelites than the men of Assyria and the people of Nineveh during the days of Jonah?

And yet, what did God do to those people? He showed mercy upon them, right? Because they repented at the preaching of Jonah. But now, we are a hundred years later in the reformation that took place. During the days of Jonah are a thing of the past, and now they're back to their old ways, which is again a reminder that just as quickly as there can be repentance and revival and reformation, also people can turn back to their old ways again in another generation or two or three, and it can be back to what it was before.

And then God can judge them and not spare them because he can do whatever he wants. He will have mercy on whom he has mercy. He can have compassion on whom he has compassion. He will be merciful to one, He will judge another. To one generation, He sends a prophet in order to bring them to repentance. In another generation, He sends a prophet to pronounce their judgment and condemnation.

And then He executes that upon them. And it should be a reminder to us that during the day of salvation, then we ought to make use of what God has given to us, the blessings of God poured out upon us, and use those things to our advantage and our benefit. To secure salvation, right? To be in a right relationship with God and not to presume upon the richness of His kindness and forbearance and patience.

God's kindness. Is meant for what reason to lead us to repentance, repentance, but if it does not lead us to repentance, then we can be sure that there is a fury of fire that will consume the adversary. And this is what is confirmed in the book of Nahum. So there are many. Many implications to our own salvation and to our own present walk that are here in the book of Nahum.

So, we'll pick up then in, at the beginning, right? We're not going to go backwards. We're going to start in verse 1. Nahum 1. 1, the Oracle of Nineveh, the book of the vision of Nahum, the Elkishite. Here, all we know is that this oracle is concerning Nineveh and it is the book of Nahum, who is the Elkishite.

And this is all that we know about him, right, is that this subscription given here at the book. Then, he jumps right into the content and what it is that he is going to discuss. And he begins with this concept. A jealous and avenging God is the Lord. The Lord is avenging and wrathful. The Lord takes vengeance on his adversary, and he reserves wrath for his enemies.

Right? The first thing that he says concerning God is that God is a jealous God. God is a jealous God. Now, typically, when we think of jealousy, we don't think of it in a positive light. And if we ask people, in terms of humanity and mankind, is jealousy a virtue or a vice? 99.9 percent of the time, jealousy is always a vice.

It is something that rises up within man because of rivalry, because of envy, because someone else is superior to him in some talent or some gift or some position or rank. And it is man's jealousy, his pride, his self centeredness that drives him to envy his fellow man. So jealousy is generally speaking an evil thing.

But God is a good God. So how are we to put these two together? Jealousy, which is a vice, but God who is always good and who only does what is right. But there is a case in which jealousy is good and right. And even among men, there is a place for there to be proper jealousy, such as The jealousy that a husband has for the faithfulness and the devotion of his wife, right?

If a man comes and begins to try to woo another man's wife. It is good and right for that man to have a jealous indignation against this man because he is trying to take away that which belongs to this man. The faithfulness, the devotion, the loyalty that the wife has given to the husband should not be given to another man.

And it's good and right for that husband and for the wife for there to be mutual jealousy for this relationship and for the purity of that relationship to be preserved. And in the same way, God is jealous. for his own glory. And this is not an evil thing. It is a good thing. It is good for God to be jealous of His glory because His glory belongs to Him, and it belongs to no other.

And when God's glory is given to another, then God is provoked to jealousy, because that which is His, by right, right, by right of who He is, as the creator of all things, and as the ultimate object of all of our love, All glory and honor should be given to God, and it should not be given to any man, and it should not be given to any idol, or to any other false gods.

And when men create gods and give the glory that belongs to God to their images, to these false gods, it provokes God to jealousy. Right? And it's rightful for Him to be jealous, because He is the one who gives to mankind all things. He gives to all mankind life, breath, and all things. And yet, when men give what is due to God to other things, God is provoked to jealousy.

And here, He is jealous against the Ninevites. Because the Ninevites are a people who are great and powerful, who have been given a great kingdom. And who gave them that kingdom? God is the one who gave them that kingdom. Who is the one that gave them life, breath, and all things? God gave them all of those things.

And yet, do they thank God for that? Do they give glory to God? Do they worship God as they should? Do they live for His glory? Do they obey His commandments? No. They give it to themselves. They credit themselves with what they have done. They give it to their false gods, but they do not give one iota of thanks and praise to God.

And so God is jealous. He is jealous because of this. Also God is jealous. Because who are they tormenting? The Assyrians. They are tormenting God's people. They are ravaging God's

people. They belong to the Lord, and yet they are doing evil things against them, and this provokes God to jealousy against them.

So God is a jealous God. Now why is Isaiah 42? Isaiah chapter 42,

Isaiah chapter 42, verse eight.

Isaiah 42. 8 says, I am the Lord, that is my name. I will not give my glory to another, nor my praise to graven images. My glory will not belong to another. My praise will not belong to graven images. But notice in Romans chapter 1, when the apostle is laying out the sinfulness of men. Notice where he begins.

What is it that men are doing chiefly in their sins against God? They're not giving Him praise and glory. They're not worshipping Him, but they're worshipping and serving creatures as if they are their gods. As if they are the ones that created them, and they are giving to them the worship that belongs to God.

Romans chapter 1, 18. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. Because that which is known about God is evident within them, for God has made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes and His divine power have been clearly seen in the things that have been made, so that they are without excuse.

For although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, but became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

They exchanged the glory of God for images of creation. They worship the sun, the moon, the stars, they worship animals, they worship men, they worship all of these. things that are in creation, but they are not giving their worship to the creator of all these things, to the one who has given them life, the incorruptible God.

Though they know him, though they know his invisible attributes and his eternal power, these things are clearly evident and manifested to them, yet because of their sin, they do not worship God. And this provokes God to jealousy. This is the basis for his jealousy against the nations. And then as a result of his jealousy, he is an avenging and a wrathful god who takes vengeance on his adversaries.

This is How God is described here, toward his enemies, and this is true toward his enemies. Now this is a far cry from what the average person thinks about God today. Most people, this idea, these concepts about God are completely foreign to their theology, to their doctrine, to their understanding of the attributes of God.

But here, these are clearly revealed in scripture. And God does not change, right? It is very important that we understand that what is being described of God here in Nahum chapter 1 is still true of God today. God is still a jealous God. God is still a God who is avenging and who is wrathful and who takes vengeance on his adversaries and reserves his wrath for his enemies.

Right, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. God does not change. This is who He is. And as a result of who He is, He takes vengeance. He acts towards mankind, right? He has jealousy. He has vengeance in his heart. And as a result of this wrath that is within him, because of the sin of man, there is a period in which God is slow to anger.

He is patient, but eventually His slowness to anger gives way, and he, his anger is aroused, and he acts upon these sins. And when he does, when he rouses himself in this way, then he executes his judgments upon mankind and upon sinners. And when it happens, it is furious. It is devastating. It completely obliterates and it destroys them.

This is who he is. He takes vengeance and he acts against his enemies. Psalm 75,

Psalm 75

in verse 8. Psalm 75 verse 8 says, For a cup is in the hand of the Lord, and the wine foams. It is well mixed, and he pours out of this. Surely, all the wicked of the earth must drain and drink down its dregs. This cup that is in the hand of God, right, this is the cup of God's wrath, and He will make the wicked drink from it, and they will drink it down to its dregs.

They will, He will make them consume the wrath of His fury, the cup of His wrath, and they will drink it to its dregs. Now, who are the ones that are going to experience this? Well, notice, He calls them His adversaries. These are the ones who will experience the vengeance, the retribution, the wrath of God.

These are the wicked, unrepentant sinners, those who continue in their sinful ways, who practice Now, in contrast, we see in James chapter two, verse 23, that not all men are counted as God's enemies. And this is the pivotal key issue for us to understand in all of the world. How is it that we can go from being God's enemies to being God's friends?

Because that determines our eternal destiny, right? If we are God's enemies at our death, We will go into the life to come and we will experience eternal wrath, fury, vengeance from the Lord. If we are God's friends, we will go into the life to come and we will experience joy, peace, comfort, pleasures at the right hand of God forever and ever.

So, can we be friends with God? Can we be on good terms with Him so that instead of Him consuming us and destroying us, He delivers us and preserves us and saves us and treats us in this kind and favorable way. Well notice James chapter two, verse 23. It says, in the scripture was fulfilled, which says, and Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness, and he was called the friend of God.

Abraham is not called the enemy of God. He's not called the adversary of God. How is Abraham described in James chapter 2 verse 23? He is the friend of God. God has wrath and vengeance for his adversaries. But not for his friends. And Abraham clearly is not one of these enemies. Abraham was a friend of God, so Abraham did not receive the wrath of God.

Now, how? That's the question. How is it that this was true of Abraham? Was it by his birth? Was it by his heritage? Was it by his will? Was it by his own deeds of righteousness that he performed, that he presented these to God as the basis for his becoming the friend of God? And the answer to all of those is no.

None of those are the basis for how it is that a man goes from being an enemy of God to being a friend of God. But James chapter 2 verse 23 tells us. He believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. How was Abraham made into a friend of God? Through faith. And through faith in who? Through faith in Christ.

Right? It was through faith in Christ, and the righteousness of Christ being ascribed and granted to him, that Abraham was transformed from being an enemy of God, dead in his trespasses and sins, to being alive in Christ, and being made into a friend of God. This is how. Abraham attained this standing before God through the righteousness of Christ that he received by faith.

And that is the most important question that any of us can ask. Am I an enemy of God or am I a friend of God? Is God my greatest adversary, or is God my greatest advocate and my greatest benefactor? And that is because what is happening here to the city of Nineveh is a picture, a small window into what will happen to the whole world on the Day of Judgment.

This wrath and fury of God will be poured out upon the entire world and we are told to be delivered from the wrath that is coming on the world. If we look at 1 Thessalonians, 1 Thessalonians 1, verse 10. 1

Thessalonians 1, verse 10. Actually, we'll read verses 9 and 10. It says, For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is, Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.

The wrath to come. That is the wrath of God that is coming upon the wicked world. On the day of judgment, at the end of this age, the wrath is coming and Jesus is the one who rescues or delivers us from this wrath that is coming upon the world, upon the enemies of God, through faith in Christ, we are delivered from these things.

Also in Acts chapter 2, Acts chapter 2, there the apostle Peter, when preaching to the men on the day of Pentecost, told them in chapter 2, verse 40, He says, and with many other words, he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting him saying, be saved from this perverse generation. Be saved. Saved from what?

Saved from the wrath of God that is coming upon this perverse generation. And how were they to be saved, to repent. And be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins through faith in Christ. That is the only way that one can be delivered and saved from this perverse, wicked, crooked generation, the world in which we live, the wrath of God that is about to come upon them.

Verse 3, Nahum 1, 3. The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, and the Lord will by no means leave the guilty. The Lord is slow to anger. This is one of his attributes, or one of his characteristics, that makes God glorious and makes Him wonderful. He is slow to anger. And because God is slow to anger, men assume, because they are presumptuous, that God will never be aroused to anger.

They mistake slowness to anger with indulgence. That God will never be aroused, that He'll never do anything about it. But this is not the case. We should not fall into this deception. And this is a deception that is very powerful and that comes upon many people. They assume because they go for many, many years living in sin, and they never see any consequences, there's never any result because of these things, they believe that God will never do anything about it because they assume slowness of anger means that God is indulgent against and toward sin.

But is that the case? No. Just because he's slow to anger doesn't mean that his wrath is not furious and is not powerful when it comes and when he executes it upon the wicked. He is slow to anger but he's great in power. And when his anger is aroused within him and he begins to act in his power against the wicked.

It will be furious and it will be terrible, and it will completely consume and destroy them. The Assyrian people, the city of Nineveh, right? They existed for about 2000 years. This is how long this people existed, you know, as a distinct people group and as this city that was there for 2000 years. And during that 2000 year period of time, except with the very small period of time with the prophet Jonah.

They lived in complete darkness. They worshiped idols. They did not serve God. They did not worship God. They committed all sorts of sins, every kind of sin imaginable. And for all of those years, God was patient with them. God was slow to anger with them. God did not execute His wrath and His vengeance upon them in this terrible way, in this way of finality, as He's predicting through the prophet Nahum.

And then, from about 900 They were the most powerful nation in the world, right, in the known world at that time. They had great power over the ancient Near East and they went all the way down into Egypt and conquered Egypt. They conquered Israel. They conquered Babylon, right? Their territory, their kingdom, covered the whole area of Mesopotamia.

And this was for over 300 years that they had such might and power. Longer than, Our own nation has even existed. They had this power for so many years. And during that time, except with this small period of time during the Prophet Jonah, they worshipped and served their idols. And they were barbaric people.

The crimes and the violence, they had a thirst for blood that was so, so evil and wicked. What they did to other nations, how they pillaged, how they killed, merciless, they were without any mercy, without any natural humanity. The things that they would do to those that were subjugated to them, they are appalling, they're horrible, they're awful.

And they did this for hundreds of years, that they continued on year after year after year. God was slow to anchor. But eventually, their sins reached up to the heavens. The iniquity of the Assyrians was complete. Just as it was completed so many years before with the Canaanites. We remember that when Abraham was there in the land of Canaan, God told him that it would be another 400 years before he would bring his judgment upon the Canaanites.

And why was there such a delay? Because the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet brought to its completion. In the same way with the Assyrians. But eventually, it would be brought to completion. And when it was brought to completion, Then God was great in power, and there was no one who could deliver them from the hand of God.

Their gods could not deliver them, their great armies could not deliver them, all of their wealth and might could not deliver them, but when God raised up another nation to come and to judge them, they completely destroyed and annihilated them, and they ceased to be a people from that point onward. And they continue to cease to be a people to this very day.

There are no Assyrians. They were completely wiped off the face of the earth. This is what God does. So, He was very patient. He was very slow to anger with them. And yet, Eventually, His great power was manifested against them. He would not leave the guilty unpunished, but He will bring His punishments upon them.

Now, in terms of application for us in considering these things concerning the attributes of God, we know from Peter that, Just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all that you do, for it is written, You shall be holy because I am holy. that we are to be like our Heavenly Father. In terms of the way we live in terms of our godliness, our pursuit of righteousness, our pursuit of holiness.

However, there are some aspects of God. that are unique to Him, in which He does not call us to follow Him in these things. And one of those is the execution of vengeance. Vengeance belongs to God, and we're not to be vengeful as God is vengeful. And if we go to Matthew chapter 5, 43 to 48, We are to be slow to anger.

We are to abound in love toward our enemies. But we're not to get vengeance the way that God gets vengeance. Matthew chapter 5, verse 43.

Says, You have heard that it was said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may

be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For He causes His Son to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, What more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore, you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. So there, the way that God treats the wicked, His love toward them, His being slow to anger, for this very long period of time, and He continued to cause the sun to rise on them, He continued to send the rain to fall upon them.

And in that way, God was loving them. He was doing good toward them. Well, God does that toward them for 2, 000 years. Then is it too much for God to expect us to love our enemies during the short period of time that we're here on this earth? No, we should love our enemies and we should do good to those who hate us and to those who persecute us and not seek retribution against them on our own.

Now again, he doesn't mean that in the sense of if someone murders your child that you can't call the police and turn them over to the authorities. That is given to the authorities. But it's not given to me to go get vengeance on my own, and to seek vengeance and retribution through my own means and through my own power.

If there are God ordained means for me to obtain that, that's one thing. But in many cases, whatever offenses are committed against us, That they are there's no avenue for us to seek retribution or to seek justice for whatever crimes are committed. But when that happens, how are we to treat our enemies?

We're supposed to love them, to care for them, to be compassionate toward them, even to pray for those who persecute you. Right, we are to be like the Lord. in terms of love toward our enemies, but we are not to be like the Lord in terms of execution against our enemies, in vengeance against our enemies, but rather we are to leave that to God.

Leave it to God in the God ordained means that He has established. And that would be Romans chapter 12. Romans chapter 12,

Romans 12 verse 14. Says, Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. Never pay back evil for evil to anyone.

Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God. For it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord. But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink.

For in so doing, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. So there, we are not to repay anyone evil for evil. But rather we are to do good to bless those who persecute us and not to curse them and do good to them, right? Give them food, give them drink, right?

Do good to the enemy and let retribution come from God. God knows how to do those things and God will do that in his own time. Now, it's important for us to understand that because. If vengeance was in our hands, it would not go well, right? It would not go well because men have no ability, the slightest offense that we ever receive, we blow these things into massive ordeals that are so far greater than what the actual crime is.

That there would be no end to retribution, to vengeance, to the fury and wrath of man. This is how we take our slights. God is able to perfectly, with perfect righteousness and justice, He is able to execute retribution and vengeance. And He never goes beyond, He doesn't go too far, and He isn't too lenient, but He does it with perfection.

But if we would try to do those things because of our weaknesses and because of the flesh and because we take personal offenses so grievous against us, then we would never practice this with justice and righteousness. And so, therefore, we must leave it to the Lord. Leave it to the Lord. And we are reminded also in 1 one of the attributes of love is that love is not easily provoked.

It is not easily provoked. However, what is often true of us, especially in terms of the flesh. The flesh is very easily provoked. We are provoked at the slightest offense and ready to execute retribution upon anyone who would dare provoke us in any way. And yet this is not the way of godliness and so we must pursue those things.

He mentions here that God will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. And this is a reminder of Exodus 34. Exodus 34, and it's important to see here that in the prophets, though the prophets are being inspired by God, and what they're writing is the very word of God, they also are depending upon and interpreting and Previous scripture that came before them, and especially the law of Moses, the first five books of the Bible.

All of the other prophets are in some way or another interpreting or giving further clarification, reiterations of what was already delivered and revealed through the prophet Moses. In Exodus 34, verses 6 to 7, here when the Lord appears to Moses and reveals himself to him, this is what he reveals about himself.

It says, Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in loving kindness and truth, who keeps loving kindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin. Yet, He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.

So God is a God who is rich in love, in compassion, in forgiveness, and He does all of these things for us. However, He will not leave the guilty unpunished. Those who remain in their sin and who have the guilt of their sin abiding upon Him, God will ultimately punish them and deal out retribution against them because of their sin.

Okay, how does He do this? in chapter, verse 3, the second half, down through verse 5. Here, God has plenty of weapons in His arsenal by which He is able to execute judgment upon the ungodly. He says, In the world wind and storm is His way, and clouds are the dust beneath His feet. He rebukes the sea and makes it dry.

He dries up all the rivers, Bashan and Carmel wither, the blossoms of Lebanon wither, mountains quake because of Him, and the hills dissolve. Indeed, the earth is upheaved by His presence, the world, and all the inhabitants in it. So here, God is able to use the whirlwind, the storm, the clouds. He rebukes the sea.

He dries up the rivers. He causes Bashan and Carmel to wither. He can use drought. He can use plague. He can use famine. He uses all of these things to bring His judgments upon men. Men who rely upon God to control all of these elements of the natural order. And yet God can put these things into such an imbalance.

Deprive men of those good things and what happens to them? What happens to the Assyrian Empire if a great drought comes upon them and there's no food for them to have? Well, they all, they're all going to die. That's what's going to happen to them and then all their power and might is gone. And who's the one that sends rain to them?

God does. Who's the one that causes the sun to shine upon them? God does. And just as quickly as He gives those things, He can deprive them of those things. He can take them away. He can send an earthquake upon them. And their whole city will come crashing and crumbling down. He can do whatever He wants in order to bring about His judgments upon this present world.

So, He has plenty of tools. At his disposal, by which he can punish the wicked. And all of these things, whirlwind, blight plagues, famines, droughts, earthquakes. What can men do to stop these things? They can do anything, right? When a tornado comes through, we all know about this. You can't do anything, there's nothing we can do to stop it.

You just have to, to hide from these things. To run, to flee and get out of the way. When an earthquake comes, there isn't anything that they can go down into the earth. Some machine to make these earthquakes stop. When they happen, they happen, and they're devastating in what they do. They cannot stop the so called global warming, which is a big farce anyway, but they think that they can predict and stop weather, and they can't do anything.

They can't even accurately predict these things. But God is the one that controls them all. And at His disposal, He can change things in an instance so that these things that typically

are favorable toward mankind and elements of God's tokens of His love and kindness, He can take them away very quickly.

And then all of a sudden, all the prosperity, the blessing, the goodness is gone. And men are left and brought to a miserable state. and they die a miserable death. Verse 6. Who can stand before His indignation? Who can endure the burning of His anger? His wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken up by Him.

Here, this verse is so important for us to think about, to reflect upon, to consider. Who can stand before God's indignation? What man can stand before His indignation? What man can endure the burning of his anger? In ourselves, right? In our own sin. If we stand before God in our sin, in our natural state, we cannot stand before His indignation.

We cannot endure His burning anger. If God should regard our iniquities against us, Who could stand? No one could stand. And if God dealt with us based strictly upon His justice and His righteousness, then what would be the fate of every single man, woman, boy, and girl in the world? It would be eternal damnation.

Eternal fire in the lake of fire. And this would be what our lot would be. So what then is the only hope for man? Is that God is gracious. That God will forgive us of our sins. That is our only hope. And there's only one man who has ever lived, who has ever walked the face of the earth, who could stand before the indignation of God.

There's only one man who can endure the burning anger of God, and who could quench that anger and that indignation in himself. And who is that one man? It is only our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And this is the only way that we can stand before God. In our sin, in our natural state, we would be completely consumed by the fury of God's wrath.

We are dry stubble, right? Just like those wildfires that take off across Colorado and California. The stubble, the dry wood that is there on the forest, when those fires are raging and spreading, It consumes that stuff. It completely burns it to a crisp. And this is what we are like in our sin before God.

God is a consuming fire, and we are stubble, we are hay, we are dry wood. We are these types of things, and we will be consumed in His wrath. And only our Lord Jesus can bear the wrath of God, the indignation of God, the anger of God, and come through those things gloriously on the other side and be resurrected to new life.

And it is only in Him that we can stand before God and that we also can pass safely through the fire of God's judgment and come through the other side unscathed and to a glorious resurrection. To a hope of a glorious resurrection. Only in our Lord Jesus Christ. Only if He empties the indignation against us in His own life.

This is why Colossians 3. 3 tells us. Your life is hidden with Christ in God. Your life must be hidden in Christ. We must be hidden in Him, so that He takes the wrath of God for us. And

only then can we stand before the Lord. So, that is They only hope any sinner, only through our Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 7, the Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble.

He knows those who takes refuge in Him. You see how you have these, these going back and forth. One, a statement concerning God's anger, His indignation, His wrath, who can endure and stand before these things. But then also hope and comfort and consolation. That though God is full of wrath and anger, Is He a capricious God?

Is He an evil God? Is He a spiteful God? No, He's a good God. The Lord is a good God. And His goodness is seen in that He is a stronghold in the day of trouble. In the day of wrath, God Himself provides the stronghold by which sinners can be saved and preserved from the wrath of God. God is the one who does that because of His goodness, His kindness.

And his mercy and God knows his Children. All of those who take refuge in Him, He will spare every one of them. Not one of them will be lost. Not one of them will slip through the cracks. Not one of them will be destroyed by the wrath of God. But every one of them will be preserved and will be brought safely into His heavenly kingdom.

Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure of heart. It says in Psalm chapter 73, verse 1. So, in this we see then that there's not one of God's enemies who will escape, and there is not one of His friends who will be lost. All of His enemies, every single one of them, what will happen to all of them?

They will be destroyed. And all of His friends, every single one of them will be preserved, and they will be protected, and they will be brought to everlasting life. This is the way God is. It is true. It is His truthfulness that will be manifested in due time. In human history, and in due time, on the Day of Judgment, all of this will be manifested.

Who are God's enemies and who are His friends? Who are the sheep? Who are the goats? Who will have eternal damnation and who will have everlasting life? In this present life, sometimes it's hard to discern and tell these things. But on the Day of Judgment Christ will perfectly judge the nations and he will separate the peoples as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

And he will do so with perfect precision. So that not one goat will accidentally slip into heaven. And not one sheep will accidentally be cast into the lake of fire. All of his sheep will be taken to everlasting life. All of his enemies will be cast There into the lake of fire, and that is a certainty and a fact, so we better make sure that we are his friends, that we have been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, that we belong to his flock, that we are his people, that we are his sheep.

That is what is more important than anything else in this life. That is all that matters for us, for our wives, for our children, for our friends, for our family. Have we been reconciled to God through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? Verse 8, But with an overflowing flood, He will make a complete end of its sight, and will pursue His enemies into darkness.

Whatever you desire, would devise against the Lord, He will make a complete end of it. Distress will not rise up twice, like tangled thorns, like those who are drunken with their drink. They are consumed, as stubble completely withered. From you has gone forth one who has plotted evil against the Lord, a wicked counselor.

Here, this is comfort for The people of God, because we are reminded that God's enemies and our enemies are one in the same and God will get vengeance against his enemies. So when God vindicates his own glory, when he gets vengeance against his enemies, he's also at the same time vindicating his people and granting them vengeance against those who are tormenting them.

In here, the chief tormentors of his people are the Assyrians. And yet God is going to bring them to a glorious ruin, right? They have devised all of their plans against the Lord, but it's all going to come to nothing, right? He's going to completely destroy them. He will wipe them off the face of the earth.

Verse 12, Thus says the Lord, Though they are at full strength, and likewise many, Even so, they will be cut off and pass away. Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no longer. So now I will break his yoke bar from upon you, and I will tear off your shackles. Though they are at full strength, and many.

This is what the current state of the Assyrian Empire is when Nahum is writing this. There's many of them, they are at full strength, and these empires seem invincible. They seem as if they are eternal, that they will never come to an end. Yet, what does human history tell us? It is a succession from one empire to another.

They rise up, they have their strength, they have their power, and what eventually happens to all of them, even the mightiest of them, eventually they all come crumbling down. They are many, they are very powerful, but ultimately, they will be cut off. And though God afflicted His people with the Assyrians, the Assyrians will not afflict them anymore because God is going to destroy them.

He will break the yoke from them and tear off their shackles. This is what these wicked empires and these wicked rulers are like toward God's people. They are yokes, they are burdens, they shackle them, they torment them because of their righteousness. But eventually, this will no longer be the case. He will break all of these yokes, all of these bars, all of these shackles.

And God's people will be free to serve God and worship God without any harassment, without anyone there to make them fear or to put them in dread, without having to sneak around and worship God in hidden rooms, right in these kinds of places, because of fear of being cast into prison or having your property plundered or being drug off and thrown into prison or being taken away and executed, which is the way it is in many places, even this day.

And that creates a great burden upon the people of God. And eventually, God will bring all of this to an end. And His people will be able to serve and worship Him freely without any harassment. from any wicked people. Because in the new heavens and new earth, will there be any Assyrians? Like this, wicked Assyrians.

There may be believing Assyrians, but there won't be any of these wicked ones. And there won't be any of those to antagonize the people of God. Only those who love the Lord will be there who have been made Perfect as well. And we will worship and serve the Lord together. Verse 14, the Lord has issued a command concerning you.

Your name will no longer be perpetuated. I will cut off idol and image from the house of your gods. The Assyrians The city of Nineveh, the king of this great people, all of these will be cut off. They will no longer be perpetuated throughout the earth. People will not talk about Sennacherib anymore. They will not talk about the great city of Nineveh.

They will not talk about the powerful Assyrian empire. They will talk about them in the past tense as relics of a bygone age, but no one will speak of them in terms of fear and dread and terror because they're going to be no more. They will no longer be found on the earth. And they're gods. They're false gods.

Everyone will know that these gods could not deliver them. That they were absolutely nothing at all. God, he says, I will prepare your grave for you are contemptible. He is making a grave for the king of Assyria and God will put him in that grave. That ought to be a terrifying statement, right, to all those who are in their sin.

Because He will do the same to all the wicked. He will make a grave for them. Isn't the lake of fire called the second death? It is likened unto a grave. And all those who are contemptible to God will be cast into that grave, into that second death. Verse 15, Behold, on the mountains the feet of Him who brings good news, who announces peace.

Celebrate your feasts, O Judah, pay your vows. For never again will the wicked one pass through you. He is cut off. Not completely, right? We read this and there's so much doom, gloom, judgment, condemnation, vengeance, wrath, anger of the Lord. And we think, Oh, this is a very terrifying, a terrible message. But what does it say in verse 15?

What kind of message is this? It is a message of good news. It is a message of deliverance. Yes, it is a bad word against the Assyrians, but it's good for everyone else because they are the ones depriving all other people of any peace. And when God destroys his enemies, it brings about peace for his people.

And this is the way it is for us. Now, what was here in terms of a symbol and type with Nineveh. is fulfilled ultimately in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And in Romans chapter 10, this passage, which is actually quoted from Isaiah, Nahum is quoting Isaiah and then the Apostle Paul in Romans 10 also quotes Isaiah when he says, how beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news.

When he's speaking about the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is good news because it announces to us The way in which we can have our sins forgiven, and the way in which all of our enemies can be destroyed. The enemy of sin, of death, the enemy of Satan. How we can be delivered from all of these things, so that we can serve God without fear in holiness and righteousness.

All of our days, and that is the message that we need, and this is what is being proclaimed here in the book of Nahum and what is further explained in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and it is to that that we must look right to our only hope, who is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.