

The LORD Is a Stronghold in Trouble: Nahum 1's Justice and Refuge Scriptures for Today: Nahum 1:1-8

Nahum 1:1-8 *The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite. 2 God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies. 3 The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. 4 He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth. 5 The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. 6 Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him. 7 The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him. 8 But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies.*

Introduction:

We are starting the book of Nahum. The 34th book of the Bible. It has 3 chapters and only takes a little over 7 minutes to read through the entire book.

Last Sunday evening, Josh preached on the book of Jonah. What city did God send Jonah to? God sent Jonah to Nineveh, which was the capital city of the Assyrian empire.

Jonah 1:2 *Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.*

Nineveh and the Assyrians were known for brutality, violence, and wickedness. Jonah cried against that city and said in forty days Nineveh would be overthrown.

If you remember what happened, the people believed God, God saw their works that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that he said he would do to them. He did not destroy.

Now over a hundred years later, Nineveh has turned back to the same wickedness they were committing before. But this time it's even worse.

Nahum 3:1 *Woe to the bloody city! it is all full of lies and robbery; the prey departeth not;*

God showed Nineveh great mercy, but they squandered and despised that mercy when they decided to return to their evil ways. **Proverbs 26:11** "As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly."

Nineveh was like a dog returning to its vomit. It's a gross picture. But it's used to show how disgusting and foolish it is to return to sin in your life. Especially when you know that sin will destroy you.

Jonah came to Nineveh with a warning; The warnings are done and now Nahum is delivering a burden of irreversible judgement.

That's how the book of Nahum begins:

Nahum 1:1 The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.

This burden is judgement on a nation that oppressed the people of God. Assyria destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel and scattered them among the nations. They didn't stop there. They marched to Jerusalem and mocked the living God.

They were a ruthless empire that skinned people alive, dragged captives away with hooks in their noses, they taxed God's people into the ground, and boasted that no god could deliver out of their hand.

Now the burden that Nineveh laid upon others will be placed upon them. The oppressor will become the oppressed.

Nahum's name means *comfort*, and that's exactly what this prophecy is. The same vision that pronounces crushing judgment on a wicked empire brings deep comfort and peace to God's people who put their trust in Him.

Many so-called Christians today like to create their own version of God. They have created a God that accepts them for who they are; a God that does not judge sin; a God that shows love at all times and condones any lifestyle under the sun.

They fail to realize that God is not one sided because they refuse to open His Word and understand His true nature. Do you want to know God's true nature? Then you need to open up this book.

Because the truth is that God's love extends farther than the east is from the west.
For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy. His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting. What does that mean? It means it's infinite. There is no end to His mercy and love.

But...at the same time...God has wrath that will consume everything in its path. He has anger that is kindled like a fire that burns unto the lowest hell. God's mercy is available to everyone for a time, but not all will receive it.

Maybe you're here today and you have your own understanding of who God is. Maybe you heard things from other churches that God loves everyone and everything all the time.

Maybe you created your own god that accepts your lifestyle and the activities that you don't want to give up.

As we read through this short passage, we're about to be reminded of God's true nature. You don't want to be on the wrong side.

Please pay close attention to these words that we are about to read.

Nahum 1:2 – God's Jealousy

Nahum 1:2 God *is* jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and *is* furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth *wrath* for his enemies.

Right away we see this truth that God is a jealous God. Most people today have the wrong understanding of what jealousy is. Jealousy is not a sin. If it was then God would not be jealous.

For example, there might be a single woman who sees a post on social media of another lady who gets engaged. Maybe she sees a picture of the engagement ring, a fancy dinner, and says "I'm so jealous of her"

Understand that single lady is not jealous; she is envious.

Jealousy is about **protecting what is rightfully yours.**

For example: Because my wife, Milana, belongs to me, and I belong to my wife, we are jealous for each other and our marriage. We are not going to allow anyone outside of our marriage to come between us.

Men, if you have a lady in your life, and you are in a relationship, and you think you are jealous for her, then it's time for you to man up and get married. Because the truth is that she does not belong to you, and you do not belong to her in the eyes of God. Get married. And then have true Godly jealousy for your wife. And you protect your marriage with everything you have.

Jealousy is about **protecting what is rightfully yours.**

Envy is having resentment towards someone because you want what they have.

Next time you use the word jealous, make sure you're using it properly because most of the time people are actually envious and not jealous.

So if God is Jealous, who is he jealous over? He's jealous over His people.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? **20** For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Understand you are bought with a price. (*If you believe*) You belong to God. God is jealous for His people in different ways.

1. God is not going to allow his people to worship anything other than Himself. This is an exclusive relationship.

Exodus 34:14 For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name *is* Jealous, *is* a jealous God:

Deuteronomy 4:23-24 Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, *or* the likeness of any *thing*, which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee. **24** For the LORD thy God *is* a consuming fire, *even* a jealous God.

2. God is not going to allow anyone to hurt His people and get away with it.

Nahum 1:2 God *is* jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and *is* furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth *wrath* for his enemies.

God's jealousy is terrifying to those who rebel against him, but it's comforting to His children. His jealousy means you belong to Him. And he protects what is His.

Remember that in your life. You don't want to go up against God's fury and vengeance. Make sure you are seeking God's will and walking in obedience.

He is reserving his wrath for his enemies. That's why you don't need to be discouraged when you see wicked people prospering around you. Understand God's vengeance is coming. And that vengeance belongs to Him.

Nahum 1:3 – God's Longsuffering

Nahum 1:3 The LORD *is* slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit *the wicked*: the LORD *hath* his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds *are* the dust of his feet.

Think about how perfectly balanced God's character is. Yes, he is a Jealous God, He is vengeful and very furious and filled with great wrath. But he is also slow to anger and long-suffering.

Again, This longsuffering that God has is very comforting to His children who are walking in His will, But at the same time, that longsuffering is a danger to the rebellious and wicked.

People often interpret God's patience for permission. Or they think that God's silence means judgement will never come.

For example: If you are currently living with someone that you are not married to, and you are committing fornication. And you want to continue living that way because everything seems to be going fine. Understand God is longsuffering...But don't skip the part right after it says He is slow to anger.

Nahum 1:3 The LORD *is* slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit *the wicked*...

When it says "he will not at all acquit the wicked" that means He is not just going to let things go. You need to have a fear of God, because it is the beginning of Wisdom. And it is very unwise to keep pushing God's limits to see how far you can go before He says enough.

Understand who God is...

"the LORD *hath* his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds *are* the dust of his feet."

Think about tornadoes, and hurricanes. A hurricane can flatten everything in its path. That's only a small little taste of God's unlimited power. Do you realize who you are going up against when you say, "I think we'll just continue to live together and fornicate because nothing bad is happening right now."

Remember God's longsuffering is a great comfort to those who are trying to walk in obedience, but for those who continue to rebel...His wrath is being stored up.

2 Peter 3:3-9 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, **4** And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation. **5** For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: **6** Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: **7** But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. **8** But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. **9** The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Remember, the name Nahum means comfort. I want you to see the common theme throughout this passage so far...

- God's jealousy and vengeance is very comforting to those who stay close to God and walk in His ways, but it's terrifying for the wicked.
- God's longsuffering is very comforting to His people who are seeking God's will, but it carries an extreme warning for those in rebellion.

It's sort of like a two-sided coin of God's Character.

The same attribute that comforts God's people condemns God's enemies.

Let's look at the next verses that reveal more of God's true nature.

Nahum 1:4-6 – God's Consuming Presence

Nahum 1:4 He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth.

So we see these powerful attributes of God. The fact that He can rebuke the sea and make it dry. He has power over the whole universe and everything within.

We see these locations listed, Bashan, Carmel, and Lebanon. These are all places that represent power, prosperity, beautiful landscapes, fruitful land, majestic forests.

All of those places can be stripped bare in a moment by His terrible power. And remember those places can also represent the things that you think are strong in your own life.

5 The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein.

Many people do not realize the magnitude of God's power just from his mere presence alone. It says the mountains quake, the hills melt, the earth is burned, everything would be consumed by Him just being there. When you start to understand who God really is and what He can do, it makes you think twice about wanting to sin against Him.

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: **9** Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

Many people think that going to hell is eternal separation from God. Understand, it's the complete opposite. Those who reject the gospel of Jesus Christ will be eternally punished by His literal presence and from the Glory of His power.

Nahum 1:6 Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.

God is a consuming fire. That is an amazing comfort for those who believe on Jesus Christ. But it's absolutely terrifying for those who reject Him.

You do not want God to be storing up His wrath and indignation against you.

Nahum 1:7-8 – God's Stronghold

So far, these verses have been revealing the true nature of God.

We see that God is a jealous God.

God is longsuffering.

God's presence consumes.

These three attributes of God are comforting to those who want to obey and seek the Lord. But they are very scary for those who choose wickedness and rebellion.

There is one more point that brings the most comfort and it's also the most terrifying at the same time.

Nahum 1:7 The LORD *is* good, a strong hold in the day of trouble...

God is a strong hold in the day of trouble. If you are seeking God in your life—if you truly want to please your Creator by putting your trust in Him—then understand this: **you have a safe place to run to when trouble comes.** He is the ultimate refuge. He never collapses, never cracks, never fails. But notice the second half of this verse...

Nahum 1:7 The LORD *is* good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.

If you do not have 100% of your trust in Jesus Christ today, God does not know you.

The Assyrians did not have their trust in the Lord, the city of Nineveh did not have their trust in the Lord. They despised His mercy, they rejected His Word... God did not know them.

The source that brought protection and refuge to Judah was the same source that would bring utter destruction to a wicked and unbelieving generation...

So the main question for you this morning is – does God know you today? Do you have a strong hold to run to?

Matthew 7:22-23 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? **23** And then will I profess unto them, **I never knew you:** depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Those are the four words that you never want to hear. "I never knew you"

You can make sure you never hear that by placing 100% of your trust in Jesus Christ right now. He's the only one that can save you from hell.

But for those who God does not know, there is a terrifying end that awaits them.

Nahum 1:8 But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies.

When God finally judged Nineveh, history records that the Tigris River overflowed, the floodwaters smashed through their massive walls, and the Babylonians and Medes poured in and destroyed the city completely. The very thing they trusted for strength—their walls, their power, their security—was washed away in one moment. God literally used a flood to bring an utter end, exactly as He said He would.

And that is a picture of the final judgment awaiting every person who rejects Jesus Christ. Nahum's "overrunning flood" is a preview of something far worse:

A flood of wrath, a flood of justice, a flood of holy judgment that no man can stand against.

Hell is the final "utter end" of all who remain God's enemies.

Darkness *will* pursue them forever and ever.

Conclusion

Nahum shows us a God who is not one-dimensional like the world likes to portray Him. He is not the soft, sentimental god our culture invents. He is the true and living God whose nature has two sides.

To His people, He is jealous for what is His, rich in mercy, powerful to protect, and a stronghold in the day of trouble.

But to the wicked, those same attributes are terrifying—His jealousy ignites judgment, His longsuffering reaches its end, His power and presence consumes, and His stronghold becomes the very storm that sweeps the wicked away.

Nahum reminds us that you cannot invent your own version of God. You must take Him as He reveals Himself—**full of mercy, full of love, but also full of justice, wrath, and vengeance against sin.**

And the dividing line between comfort and terror is simple:

Do you trust Him—or do you resist Him?

For those who trust Jesus Christ, God is your stronghold.

For those who reject Him, God Himself becomes the storm.

When you understand God's character and nature and you see what He can do, will you continue to go against Him? Or will you do what's right in the eyes of the Lord. Make that choice today.

Let's Pray.