

Nahum ■ God Is Dangerous But Good

by Tim Conway

This sermon emphasizes the wrath of God as revealed in the book of Nahum, highlighting the fierce anger and vengeance of God towards sin and His enemies. It contrasts the terrifying view of God's wrath with His goodness and the refuge found in Him. The urgency of seeking refuge in Christ to escape the wrath of God is emphasized, calling for surrender and obedience to His voice to find true refuge and salvation.

Scripture: Psalms 21:9, Jeremiah 23:19, Isaiah 13:9, Zephaniah 3:8, Psalms 2:12, John 3:36, Hebrews 10:31, Ephesians 2:3, Romans 5:9, Luke 6:46, 1 Thessalonians 1:10

Topics: "God's Wrath", "Refuge in Christ"

Description

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Transcript

Turn in your Bibles to Nahum. Nahum. So, what do you all know about Nahum? Anything? What's that? Nineveh.

Nahum starts out this way. An oracle. Who knows what an oracle is? What's that? The word of the Lord? What's the word? Sane? Proclamation.

Proclamation concerning Nineveh. And so that's what all three chapters are about Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum of Elkash.

The Lord, just really think about this. This isn't like reading the newspaper where you hardly know what's true and what's not. And most of it isn't.

This is the word of God and this is truth. And this is God's word and this is God revealing Himself. We really don't know how to define God.

We don't know God's character. We know something about His power from the creation and the things that are made. We know that there is a God by the fact that we have the creation around us.

It speaks of a creator. But to know this God, to know what He's like, here Nahum is going to tell us really a string of verses that is probably as comparable as any place in the Bible that would give us a fearful view of God. The Lord is a jealous God.

That's the first thing you see here. The Lord is a jealous and avenging God. Avenge, revenge, vengeance.

Those are our English words. The Lord is avenging and wrathful. Now look, I know that there are different translations here.

And I'm reading from the ESV. Your Bible may say instead of wrathful, it may say furious. That's a scary word when connected with God.

Furious. God is furious. God is wrathful.

The Lord takes vengeance on His adversaries and keeps wrath for His enemies. Now you almost feel like there's a shift here. The Lord is slow to anger.

In other words, the things He's jealous about and avenging over shows His vengeance towards the things that cause His wrath. God is slow to get to the point where He pours that out. He's great in power, so when He does pour it out, it's powerful to the uttermost.

Then He says this, The Lord will by no means clear the guilty. And this is not the only time that's said in Scripture. Which we're going to give some time to looking at that.

But that's a scary statement. His way is in the whirlwind and storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet. You have a lot of clouds in Manchester.

Sometimes just go out and look at the clouds. And I don't mean when it's gray and you can't hardly discern the clouds. I mean when sun is kind of peeking through in places and you can see the makeup of the clouds.

Just ask yourself, what are those? Before you answer, well they're water vapor. Now answer the way Scripture does. What are the clouds? They're the dust of His feet.

As huge as they may be. As much of the sky as they may fill up. They're but the dust of His feet.

He rebukes the sea and makes it dry. He dries up all the rivers, Bashan and Carmel wither. The bloom of Lebanon withers.

The mountains quake before Him. The hills melt. The earth heaves before Him.

The world and all who dwell in it. Who can stand before His indignation? People think, oh they're going to stand before God on judgment day. Who can stand before His indignation? Or who can endure the heat of His anger? His wrath or His fury is poured out like fire.

And the rocks are broken into pieces by Him. And then you have this strange and sudden shift. The Lord is good.

A stronghold in the day of trouble. He knows those who trust Him. Or the ESV and the NASA take refuge.

There are other words for trust. This is actually the word for refuge. You can see where trust would come from that.

A refuge is a trusted place of hiding. The word is refuge. So this is the prophecy of Nahum.

This is a pronouncement concerning Nineveh. Now we remember Nineveh because we looked at Jonah not too long ago. This is about a century after Jonah.

These are the same people. Well these are the descendants of the same city. Who responded to a threat of the judgment of God.

But now a hundred years later. They've returned to their evil ways. And now their time has run out.

Look at Nahum 2.8. Nineveh is like a pool whose waters run away. You jump to verse 10. Desolate.

Desolation. Ruined. Hearts melt.

Knees tremble. Anguish is on all loins. All faces grow pale.

A few verses later, verse 13. Nahum 2.13. Behold, I am against you, declares the Lord of hosts. Nahum 3.5. Jump over to the last chapter.

Behold, same thing. Behold, I am against you, declares the Lord of hosts. And will lift up, what a picture.

I will lift up your skirts over your face. You can see that in your minds. Skirt is lifted up over the face of the wearer.

I'll make nations look at your nakedness. And kingdoms at your shame. I will throw filth.

That is an interesting word. It's an abomination. It's an abominable filth.

I will throw abominable things at you. Treat you with contempt. Make you a spectacle.

And all who look at you will shrink from you. And say, wasted is Nineveh. Now look, I'll say this.

What stands out, I've read this over and over and over. What stands out more than anything else is the first seven verses. There is an intensity.

Especially in verse two and verse six. You can't get away from it. But two through six.

One is just an introductory statement. Seven, there's this massive shift. But these seven verses, they reveal God.

The truth is that what we have here is a revelation of God that men honestly don't like. Nahum says that God is jealous, avenging, wrathful, furious. Verse six, indignant.

There's this fierce anger. And then verse seven. He's good.

I mean how do we describe the contrast there? Is that contradictory? Is that how you find it? On the one hand, God is avenging. God is furious. God is angry.

God is wrathful. And God is good. See, a lot of people would consider that to be contradictory.

How do you read that? How does all that strike you? Does it strike you as very fearful? Probably. Does it strike you as hopeful? Probably. I might even venture to say it strikes me as otherworldly.

You say, what do you mean? I mean just this. Do you know when I read, and I've read the Book of Mormon, I've read the Koran. Do you know what strikes me when I read those books? It sounds like men wrote them.

Do you know the thing about Scripture? Is it constantly sounds like men did not write it. Because the Bible constantly says things that men don't say. That men wouldn't say.

I mean, no man in the world dreams up a God like this. Do they? Think about the gods that man invent. What are they like? Think about the Greek and Roman gods.

Is it the same over here in England like it is in the United States? I don't know. Maybe it's not even all the places in the United States. Did you study the Greek and Roman gods in high school? Yeah.

No. We did. I had a teacher that, she was big on this.

And you know if you saw the stories of the Greek and Roman gods, were they jealous? Did they get angry? Were they vengeful? Were they spiteful? Yeah. But you know I never remember anybody ever saying they were good. Have you ever read about like the spirits that cannibals and pagans and the heathen worship? The kind of gods that they are? They demand to be placated.

They have to bring their offerings. And they're so fearful that these spirits are going to be angry with them. So you know they're always worried about fertility of their wives and fertility of their cattle.

And they want to make sure the rain comes. And so they're always trying to placate, placate, placate, placate. But you know you never hear that their gods are good.

What we have here is a strange, I'm talking to the way men think. This is a strange combination. That you have a god who is jealous.

He damns men. He's furious. He says in Scripture that he will tear sinners apart.

And he's good. You see that is a strange combination here. Ask people.

Just ask people of other religions if their god is good. Ask them that. You know, people imagine God is good.

Fill in the blank. Everybody here was lost one day. And I don't know any of you that was saved like John the Baptist from the womb.

So you probably have some idea about how you imagine God when you were lost. Just fill in the blank here. God is good if He does what? I mean, you have your own.

There's no right answer here exactly. But I'm just saying how does the world think? How did you used to think? Basically my mindset was this. God's good if basically God's a pushover.

And He allows me to sin and continues to smile at me. And He's a celestial Santa Claus. And so no matter what I've done, I ought to be able to go to Him at any time and ask Him for this, that, and the other thing.

And He's going to give it to me. And if God is like that, then He's good. Would you all agree? That's the worldly perspective of what a good God is.

This God. This God. He's no celestial Santa Claus.

The Lord is a jealous God. Contrary to popular opinion, this jealous God is a good God. You see, that right there ought to tell you.

Man does not invent a jealous God who's a good God. He never does. And so both are true.

Look at verse 2. Chapter 1. The Lord is a jealous and avenging God. Verse 7. The Lord is good. God is avenging.

But it's the vengeance of a good God. You see, that just seems so contradictory to men. Brethren, let me tell you something.

It's one thing to provoke a God who is bad, mean, ugly, spiteful, and needs to be placated. It's another thing when you provoke a good God to destroy you. That just sets it in a different context.

It's a different setting. What we have here is we have a good God who is extremely dangerous to men. We don't like that.

And you see, anytime a God threatens us, immediately we put that in the category of bad, not good. I mean, by nature. That's what men do.

This God is dangerous. But He's good. Men fight it.

Men fight it by default. Men feel threatened. What does Romans chapter 1 say that men do with this God? They suppress it.

Nope. None of that. We're not going to have a God like that.

If there's a God like that, we're going to redefine Him. If there's a God like that, we invent our own God. Nope.

None of that. If God is like that, He's severe. He's cruel.

We don't want it. None of that. Indignation.

Vengeance. Seriously? Have you ever seen how cute my grandchild is? You see, what does that have to do with anything? You know how sweet my grandmother is? You see, we defend men. We don't want no God like that.

What, a God that would throw my grandma in hell? I remember having a close family member. I remember telling him, Grandpa's in hell. Well, if your God's like that, you can have Him.

If my God's like that? No, no, no. What he should have said, Wow, seriously? Grandpa was like that? That he would deserve to be thrown? No. If God's like that, we don't want none of that.

You see, this is what people do. This is what people do all the time. Nahum's God, there's no question about it.

He makes us uncomfortable. The world says you Christians can have Him. We have nothing of it.

And you know what they feel? They feel justified in suppressing it. They feel justified in saying, If God's like that, He's cruel, He's severe. And so, we do well to believe that there's a big bang that threw all this into creation here.

I mean, you know they feel justified, don't they? Justified rejecting a jealous and avenging God. That's how they feel. What Nahum has to tell us is this, that though God is indeed all these things that make men tremble, the fact is, this God, He's really good.

Wow. Does He destroy sinners? Does He damn sinners forever? And you know the thing about that is, the Bible never portrays Him as cruel. It talks about judgment day as being a cruel day, but it never calls God cruel.

It never calls God cruel, bad. It doesn't label Him as a monster. The Lord is a good God.

And so, I just ask you this, because we're dealing with us. Here's the Word of God. How does that make you feel? Vengeance.

When you hear of God taking vengeance, I mean, you can start to do inventory. That means that by nature, the way we are by nature, that God is a God who has vengeance on sinners. We've all sinned.

We know that there's none righteous, no not one. What does that make you think? Vengeance. I mean, you know what that means, right? Vengeance.

When someone wrongs God, God doesn't forget. The Bible says He's slow to anger, but He does not forget. What that means is He may be slow before... You know, there's the guy who curses God in front of the Christian.

You're out there evangelizing. Well, if God's real, why didn't He strike me dead? I'm going to try to provoke Him. No, He's slow to anger.

He's slow. But God doesn't forget. And though slow, sooner or later, God is going to come to settle the matter.

That's what vengeance is all about. Revenge. What do we think of with revenge? It means I did something to you, and you're going to come back after and get revenge on me.

Well, see, that's what God does. You do something to Him, He's jealous. Remember, what's He jealous of? He's jealous for His honor.

He's jealous for His glory. Oh, my glory, I will not share with another. He's very defensive of His glory.

And you know what happens when we sin? We fall short of the glory of God. And He is angry. And what revenge is, is we've done this to Him, and though slow to retaliate, the day comes when He breaks out against His enemies.

That's the idea. See, we cause Him some kind of offense, and He is going to come and pay us for having done so. And you know the thing about it is, you may have forgotten.

Or you may have thought, eh, it was a small matter. You may not have even thought that that thing was a sin. But it doesn't really matter whether you think it is a sin or it isn't a sin.

If He thinks it's a sin, it is a sin. Sin is transgression of His law. It's offending Him.

It's falling short of His glory. Just because you don't think you fell short of His glory, if you do fall short of His glory, He's offended whether you think you have or not. And the fact is, you may say, well, hey, I stopped doing that sin a long time ago.

That doesn't matter. That doesn't erase it. That doesn't remove His wrath towards it.

You may say, well, I'm doing good. And so what? Your good is going to cover that up? That's how a lot of people think, but it never covers it up. Doing good doesn't somehow remove the wrath.

God is a vengeful God. And this is the reality. To God, no sin is small.

No sin is forgotten. No sin is erased by how much ever good you try to do. It's not offset.

That's the thing. Nahum says, listen to this, the Lord will by no means clear the guilty. See, the issue is this.

Are you guilty? Are you guilty? It doesn't matter whether you think, well, it's not that big a guilt. Nineveh was known. Here's the thing about it.

You know what Nineveh was known for? God nowhere ever that you'll find in this letter comes out and says, well, you did this to me. You know what Nineveh was known for? Nineveh was known for their cruelty towards people. But have you ever noticed this? This is a quote from Deuteronomy.

Paul picks up on it in Romans chapter 12. Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord. What's that about? Well, it's about this.

Even though Nineveh sinned against people, that's what they were known for. Their cruelty towards the people that they dominated after victory, their battles. They put holes in their jaws and cut their noses off and their ears off and they flayed people.

And you know what? God says, vengeance is mine. Your insult is against God, even though we may sin against people. Listen, those people may try to get revenge, but the reality is in the end, what God is saying is, you want to know who's responsible for revenge ultimately? I am.

And I will get it. That's what we have here. God takes these things personally.

So when you hear God getting revenge on His enemies, how do you react to that? I mean, some people instinctively recoil. Like, oh, that's uncalled for. That's over the top.

That's overreacting. Some people hear, you hear about God taking vengeance. You know, it probably really begins to sink in only when you really think about the things that you've done.

The things that demand that revenge. I mean, we can look at Nineveh. Maybe you don't care.

I'm better than them. Or, good riddance. They were bad people.

It's good God did that to them. I'm not as bad. Some might find this fearful, unsettling.

Whatever. Some might just not want to think about it. You know, all have some kind of response.

But the problem is, here's the problem, folks. You know what Scripture says. There's a way that seems right to man.

You know how Scripture says that? There's a way that seems right to man. Do you know what that way is for the vast multitudes of mankind? It's this. My sin's not that great.

And God's not going to hold me accountable. It's the lie of the devil. You'll not surely die.

And we love to believe that lie. We're not going to die. There's not going to be any wrath at the end.

You see, there's a way that seems right. Man basically thinks that this way is the right way. I can do whatever I want.

And God's really not going to get that angry over it. In fact, God is smiling on me. That's what men imagine.

That's the way that seems right to them. Men have this tendency to think very highly of themselves, to think very well of self. Men tend to be insensitive to their own sin.

They tend to be insensitive to the holiness of God. They imagine God is just pleased with them. And if He's not, well, they just think, I'm going to tell God this, that, and the other thing on judgment day.

I'm going to stand up and... The devil's just there all the time whispering in your ear. That's not even a sin. It's not that bad.

God's not that angry. You won't die. You know what the cure for all of this is? Our Bible.

The cure for all of it is truth. Look at Nahum 1.2. The Lord is a jealous and avenging God. The Lord is avenging and wrathful.

KJV, New KJV say furious. The Lord takes vengeance on His adversaries. And notice this word, and keeps.

It's the word for reserves. Wrath. That wrath right there, if you've got a lot of your translations, you'll see that it's in italics.

It's implied. It's not in the original, but it's implied right there. Wrath for His enemies.

He reserves. He keeps. Did you ever think about this? God keeps something for the sinner.

Something is held in reserve. Do you remember how Paul said it? Because of your hard and impenitent heart, you are storing up wrath. Who? Me? I'm no enemy of God.

All you have to have is a hardness of heart. You know what a hardness of heart is? It's not soft towards God. It's not soft towards His voice.

It's not soft towards His leadership. You just harden yourself. You want to go your own way.

You want to do your own thing. Whatever it looks like. It might be religion.

It might be in the brothels. It might be expressions of self-righteousness in religion. It can look a whole lot of different ways.

It's just impenitent. It's not going to change your thinking about any of this. Because of your hard and impenitent heart, you're storing up wrath for yourselves on the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

And you know what? Men don't know this. Men don't feel this. Why? The sun shines.

I love the birds here in the UK. You have the sweetest singing birds. I can hear them right through the windows.

Every morning they're out there. Even sometimes in the evening they're outside. They're back in the front.

I love to hear them. We go out hiking in different places. And you know what happens? Sinners are in this world.

And what happens? Oh, the coffee smells good. My pillow last night was soft. The birds sing.

The sky is blue. Sometimes it's not so blue here. But the rain falls.

And what happens? Somewhere where they can't see, there is this fierceness of God that is being stored up for them. But they don't feel it. They don't see it.

They don't sense it. There is this accumulation. There is this amassing.

There is this swelling of wrath for those who don't know Christ. Listen, that's the vast majority of this world. And even there, if God doesn't forgive, if God doesn't acquit, if God doesn't clear the guilty, then we better even wonder about is there even safety over there in Christ? We'll get to that in a second.

But I'll tell you this. Men just walk around and well, you know, life is good. It's not so good when they bump your energy bills up by 52%.

But we still have life. We still have breath. We still have some hope for tomorrow.

We're going on. We're thinking everything's good. We're thinking hopefully in the end this is all going to turn out.

But they have no concept of this reality that amassing, accumulating. They don't realize that every single day of their life, every sin they commit, every idle word, isn't that what Jesus said? On judgment day, men are going to be held accountable for every single idle word that they've ever spoken. The intentions of men's hearts are going to be laid out there.

You know what happens? Every time somebody's intention is not right, more wrath. Every time their word is idle, more wrath. Every time they're ugly, they're angry, they're lustful, more wrath.

It's just accumulating. It's reserved. It's just keeping on, storing up more and more this wrath.

Every deviation from God's will, from God's law, from God's commandments, from God's standard. They're just accumulating more and more. You know what happens in this world? People want to save money.

Probably. Some people don't have self-control, but they like to think that they could save up some money for retirement, so when they get old they've got something. And I'll tell you this, whether they accumulate wealth or not, they're accumulating something, and they don't even know it.

They don't have any idea that this is happening. More and more. Listen to Nahum in verse 6. Who can stand before His indignation? Who can endure the heat of His anger? His wrath or His fury is poured out like fire.

It's poured out. Is poured out. You know what? What is stored up doesn't stay stored up forever.

Slow to anger, but even if it's slow, it's coming. And when it lets loose, I'll tell you this. I've stood beside people.

I've seen people on their deathbeds. I've seen the body there still twitching after life is gone. They can seem so serene because now there's quiet.

The body is still, but I'll tell you where those people are and what they're experiencing at that moment if they died outside of Christ. It is horrifying to the uttermost. It is absolutely fearful.

What is stored up for them doesn't stay stored up forever. The day comes when God says enough. You remember what God said to Abraham.

You know what? The sin of the Amorites is not yet full, but in 400 years it will be. When Jonah went, the sin of Nineveh is not yet full. In fact, God granted repentance.

But the day came. And I'll tell you, in what's being threatened here, Nineveh was wiped out. Nineveh was basically erased.

The Chaldeans came in and they leveled this place. Wrath. What do you think about when you think of wrath? The word has synonyms.

If we're basically looking at fury, heat, the word used right here in Nahum can be poison. It can be venom, rage. There's no hidden meaning here.

It means an extreme, fierce anger. It's that burning. It's that intense upsurge in God's nature.

His reaction against someone who does insult to His glory. That's precisely. Wrath is that divine reaction against evil, whereby God judges and renders punishment.

And I'll tell you, God's wrath is never out of control. But that doesn't mean it's not violent. The thing is, God's wrath is never unjust.

It always accords with what is right. But that doesn't mean it isn't severe. God's wrath is holy.

It comes from a good God. God's wrath is perfect. He recognizes this.

He destroys sinners perfectly. It's a righteous, measured response to man's sin. And you know what Nahum says? It says in verse 2 that it's for God's adversaries and for His enemies.

And here's the thing. There's a way that seems right to men. See, men are blind to this.

I'm not His enemy. Certainly not me. If you would have asked me 40 years ago, you God's enemy, I'm not God's enemy.

Even when I was out there doing all the things that God hates, I thought God's smiling at me when I die. God's not going to throw me in hell. I'm good enough.

I'm not that bad that He'd put me in that place. I'm not His adversary. I'm no enemy.

I don't hate Him. Folks, what's important is not what you and I think. What's important is what God thinks.

I can say I'm no adversary. I can say I'm no enemy. But if God has a different opinion, and His wrath is actually stored up for me, what good are my words? What I am about to tell you is almost incomprehensible.

Not only to the world, in many religious circles. You know this. Just listen.

To the Christian, now you want to get this. You want to hear this for exactly what it says. Paul is speaking to Christians, and he is going to describe them, what they were before God saved them.

And you were, this is how you were, Ephesian Christians, dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature, we were by nature, children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. You know what Paul just said? How we were? We were children of wrath. But not just us.

We were just like the rest of mankind. Your neighbor, child of wrath. Do you recognize this? If anybody is not a child of wrath, they were.

Something happened to them that changed them from that classification. Every single person in this world who is not a Christian, is a child of wrath. Think of the imagery.

Wrath is your father. You are a child of wrath. Wrath is what defines you.

You are one of these individuals who is having wrath stored up against you. And it is going to break forth at some point. Listen to this.

Romans 1.18, which we already talked about, The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. The wrath of all. Any unrighteousness, there is wrath.

Do you know what Paul says? The law brings wrath. Have you ever read that? What does that mean? It means every single son and daughter of Adam and Eve. The law is to them wrath.

Why? Because none of them have kept it. Not a single person in this room has kept the law of God. So the law ends up being a source of wrath.

The law is wrath. God's anger right there. I know it shocks people.

I know people don't like this. But man's greatest need is not to be saved. You need to recognize this.

Man's greatest need is not to be saved from sin, or from the devil, or from hell, or from death, or from the world, or from the flesh. Man needs to be saved from God. That's almost incomprehensible to people.

You know what scripture says? Much more shall we be saved by Christ from the wrath of God. Oh, that's what we need to be saved from. Jesus delivers us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 1.10 What you need to recognize is this. As sons of Adam, we are born dead in trespass. Did you get that from Ephesians 2? We are dead in trespasses and sins.

There's no spiritual life. Everything you do falls short of the glory of God when you're lost. Everything you do falls short of loving God perfectly when you're lost.

Everything you do has to do with selfishness and hardness of heart. And even if you're a nice old grandmother, or you're that sweet little grandchild, it's like no matter how sweet we are in our lost state, no matter how nice, you know nice people. There's mean people, ugly people, horrible people, and there's nice people.

But you know what? They're nicely lost. And under the wrath of God. And this is the picture.

It shocks people. Yeah. Men need to be saved from this very thing.

The thing is, mankind by their very nature provoke God. Not just Nineveh. Not just Nineveh.

Man offends God. Man infuriates God. You need to recognize that.

We don't get it. We don't recognize. He sins.

He falls short of the glory of God. And even nice people are selfish. Even nice people, they don't love God with all their heart.

They're transgressors before God. And God is angry. And listen.

Make no mistake about it. This God of Nahum means to do man harm for what man has done. Don't make any mistake about it.

God is sharpening the sword. That's what Scripture says. And when it's sharp enough, He comes wielding it.

Wow. All men by nature. Children of wrath.

What a statement. What a truth. It's almost incomprehensible.

The media never says it. The schools never say it. Man just goes and runs around imagining himself to be good.

Man thinks so highly of himself. God says a whole lot of you are born to wrath. Not born to be wild.

Not born free. We're born as children of wrath. Listen to me.

Listen. Church, if this biblical doctrine of the wrath of God is true, I just ask you this. Is there anything more important for us than to tell the world about this that there's a way of escape? That they're under this wrath and there's a way of... Is there anything that matters more? I mean, when you think about all the people and everything that they're doing and all they have on their minds and all the agenda that they have and the goals they have and the direction people are going and the things that they have in their mind right now that they want to accomplish this day and in life, is there anything else more important than the fact that at the end of that road, there's a God of wrath who's going to unleash it.

He's storing it up. Storing it. It's getting bigger and bigger and bigger and it's going to burst like this great flood of this wrath upon their heads.

Is there anything more important than that? I mean, we're flying, folks, into the future. Breakneck speed added towards eternity. You and I and the world all around us.

And then you get these people. Oh, they're glad that there's no wrath in the preaching. It's like wrath in the preaching? We don't want to go to that church, not hear that.

Listen, should we be glad when we hear preaching that leaves the wrath of God out? The thing is, men don't know about the wrath of God. And because they don't, they don't realize how desperately wicked their sins are. And because they don't, they don't recognize how desperately they need the Lord Jesus Christ and His saving power.

And because they don't realize that, they don't realize the significance of Christ. You recognize that Christ is insignificant to most men. When we go out, you go door to door, you talk to people, you send out the different things, you go to the city center.

We'll find this down in the slums of Nairobi. People just simply don't see Christ as significant. Why? Because of all this.

This is the reality. And because He's insignificant in the estimation of most, most men remain lost. That's just how it is.

Fact is, we need Nahum at this hour. Nahum teaches us about God. He's not a God to be trifled with.

Who is He really? Well, this is Him. God's rage, God's wrath, God's fury. They burn against His enemies.

We need Paul at this hour to tell us that men by nature are enemies and children of God's horrifying wrath. Just listen. Listen.

We come across these verses I recognize, but brethren, when we look around, you look at your family, you look at your neighbors, you look at the city of Manchester, you don't want to just leave this part out of the message. Psalm 21. Your hand will find out all your enemies.

Your right hand will find out those who hate you. You will make them as a blazing oven when you appear. The Lord will swallow them up in His wrath and fire will consume them.

Jeremiah 23. Wrath has gone forth, a whirling tempest, it will burst upon the head of the wicked. Isaiah.

Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger to make the land a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it. As one gathers silver and bronze and iron and lead and tin into a furnace to

blow the fire on it in order to melt it, so I will gather you in My anger and in My wrath and I will put you in and melt you. Zephaniah.

My decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms and to pour out upon them My indignation, all My burning anger, for in the fire of My jealousy all the earth shall be consumed. God is jealous, folks. And that's what Nahum tells us, that's what Zephaniah tells us.

Listen. And when you look at Christ, you better remember this. This is New Testament, folks.

Christ says this. For these enemies of Mine, what makes somebody an enemy of Christ? What makes somebody an enemy of God? As for those enemies of Mine who did not want Me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before Me. Christ is no baby in a manger anymore, folks.

He's no dead guy on a crucifix. Do you know who this Christ is? This is the Christ that is spoken of in Psalm 2. Kiss the Son. Why? Lest ye be angry and you perish in the way, for His wrath is quickly kindled.

Or this. Listen to how John describes Judgment Day. Men call to the mountains and rocks to fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who is seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb.

Listen. For the great day of their wrath. Their.

This Father and Son. This duo. Make a terrifying duo of wrath.

As our Bibles come to an end, one of the last descriptions of Christ is as a rider on a white horse. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with a rod of iron.

He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On His robe and on His thigh, He is name written King of kings and Lord of lords. I just say this.

What prophet? Look at your neighbors. Maybe some of you in this very place. Just because you're in these walls does not... Listen, this is no hiding place, folks.

There is a refuge, but it's not these four walls. Nor is it simply calling yourself a Christian. There was a church that Jesus spoke to that had a name that they were alive and yet they were dead.

A lot of people hide behind a dead religion. There's no hiding place. There's one hiding place.

There's one place of refuge, folks. And the fact is we can look around at everybody. You can look at yourself.

What prophet is there in gaining this vast abundance of wealth and pursuing all the things that the world has to offer when this trumpet of eternal judgment shall call forth over this whole land? England, it's time. That trumpet will sound. And what will happen then? Men are going on.

Wait, I have holiday coming up. It won't matter. It's now time to face the wrath for your sins.

You can just go on like this is never going to come to an end. That's what people think. Well, things have been going on just like it ever been, just like it was with the fathers.

Yeah, it's going to be just like it was in the days of Noah. You're just going on with life. You're marrying and giving in marriage.

Maybe you've got plans of this, that, and the other thing, and all of a sudden God just says, Enough. It's over. I am now going to pour wrath and my fury upon all the nations.

There is going to be this trumpet call that is going to wake the sleeping sinners from across this land who are dead in their trespasses and sins. And yes, they'll call out then. They'll call out for the rocks and the mountains to have mercy on them, cover them from the face of this wrath of the Lamb, but there will be no place of protection at that time.

Listen, folks. Let me tell you something. That day comes, and what will happen? Imagine this.

Imagine that day comes. The trumpet of God sounds, and that may be this day. And what? I've got nowhere to hide.

He's coming, and His eyes are fixed on me, and they're not happy eyes. And He's looking at me, and if I run over here, His eyes are still on me. If I run over there, they're still on me.

I want that mountain over there to fall on me. I cannot get away from His eyes, and His wrath is coming, and I am guilty, and I'm without a hiding place. And it's too late.

Folks, I'll tell you this. You know what this day is? This is the day when the guilty, the guilty... I find this very interesting. God says He will pardon sin, but then He won't acquit the guilty.

I find that very interesting contrast. But you know what I look at in Scripture? I find this, that when somebody seeks God as a refuge, God does acquit them of their sins. Who are these guilty that He never forgets? Well, you remember Moses came along, and right there where God said, I pardon sin, but I don't acquit the guilty.

You know what? He could turn around and say, pardon the people. And God could say, you know what? I will pardon. However, those who have seen My works these many times, those who have not trusted Me and sought refuge in Me and have not obeyed My voice, they will not enter the land.

And it says very specifically, isn't that Psalm 96 that's quoted over there in Hebrews, that they won't enter His rest? God says that in His wrath. You know what happens? You resist God long enough, and He stamps guilty on your forehead, and now it never comes off. Those are the ones He doesn't forget.

If you will seek refuge in Him, you see it from verse 7. There is refuge to be had. In your King James, it doesn't say refuge, it says trust in Him. But it's the word for refuge.

Folks, listen. I'll tell you what happens now. I'll tell you what happens in this day.

You've got people. You know what it's like? It's like this. Well, I've been a pretty good person.

I'm going to construct that as my refuge. What do you think that looks like? It's like taking some twigs and taking this rotten piece of fabric and you kind of string it over it. It's just these stupid little twigs.

And there's a mighty calvary coming across the field. They've got their swords out. They've got spears.

They're running at you. And you've got this little thing and you're hiding behind it. There's no refuge.

It's not going to protect you. Some people, it's the Christian name. I'm a Christian.

But again, it's this tattered little thing. But you know what you find? You find that in Scripture, at this time, it's like the calvary comes riding up over the hill. I used this illustration back when I was speaking to you about Sardis.

But I love it. This is what He said to him. This is what He said to them.

He said, you have a name that you're alive, but you're dead. In other words, you're still objects of God's wrath and you're in trouble. But He gave them an opportunity to repent.

You know what it's like today? Christ is coming across this battlefield in full array. Wrath is being kindled against you. It is stored up.

And He's got the sword of the wrath of God. But you know, right before He gets to you, the whole calvary stops. He gets off His horse.

And He comes up to you and He comes behind your little tattered thing. And He puts His arms on your shoulders. And He says, that's no refuge.

Don't hide there. There is wrath stored up against you. And it's going to be unleashed.

But I'm telling you, seek refuge in Me. And there is a hiding place. You'll be protected there.

Give up that tattered thing. Give up your religion. Give up your title.

Give up that name you're hiding behind. Give up that self-righteousness. Give up going your own way, doing your own thing.

Where's it ever got you? Give up your atheism. You think just because you don't think I'm going to strike you that I won't? Just because you think it's true doesn't mean it is. I'm telling you, I am the Son of God that you better kiss.

And my wrath will be kindled against you. My anger. Trust Me.

Hide in Me. You see, He gives us that chance now. What a fool it would be if anybody said, no, I'm going to trust my tattered thing.

I'm going to seek refuge there. Don't want any of that Christ thing. This seems substantial.

I think it will stand the test in that day. You're just being a fool. This wrath is very real, folks.

And you know the thing is, you think about how Paul said, children of wrath like the rest of mankind. But God being rich in mercy because of the great love with which He loved us. It's like there's the contrast again.

Avenging, furious, good, and a refuge. Wrath, mercy, and love. You see, what you need to recognize is the cross.

That's where God's wrath and God's love meet together. Some people say, you know, wrath of God. Well, it's not just the wrath of God at the cross because if it's just the wrath of God, we're all in hell.

But it's where the wrath and the love meet. It's where God shows, I will pour out my wrath for every single sin that has been committed. And behold my son suffering when he becomes sin.

But you might be the righteousness of God in him. But it's not just wrath there. It's where it meets His love because He never would have put His son up there to be a substitute in our place if it wasn't for His love.

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. And I'll tell you at the end of that, there is a perishing. A perishing fully, we may get used to the term, but it fully captures all the reality of this wrath.

I'll tell you, don't play around. Don't play around. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ, it's no gesture, folks.

He suffered the wrath of God there. And if that doesn't happen in your place and you surrender to Him. Listen, Jesus said this, there's a wise man and there's a foolish man.

The foolish man hears Him and does not obey Him. You know what Jesus said to Moses? I am not going to pardon those and I am not going to let them into my promised land that did not obey my voice. You see, you can say, I'm no enemy of God, but you are His enemy if you will not do what He says.

Listen, I recognize that we wrestle with the flesh. I recognize that. I recognize we have the devil who's an enemy and he seeks to trip us up and he's seeking to tempt us.

I recognize all that. Listen, folks. You know what gets you the permanent guilty on the forehead that he'll never acquit? It's if you don't obey His voice.

You know what makes you a perpetual enemy that He is going to wreak havoc upon? It's those who say, I know what He says and I'm not going to do it. It's one thing when we're striving, we come and confess and we go on and we're looking for grace to help. It's a whole other thing.

When you try to play this religion where you full well know, I am not surrendered to Him, you basically pick and choose. Because I'll tell you this, if Jesus tells you ten things and you pick and choose and you take six, leave four, then who's really Lord in your life? You are. You're making the decisions.

You're deciding what's right and wrong. No, folks. Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do the things I say? Let me tell you this, if you'll find refuge in this good God, then it comes with surrender.

And if you don't obey His voice, don't think there's pardon. You say, we're not saved by works. No, I'm not saying we're saved by works.

We're saved by His grace. But I'll tell you in His grace, He is not going to extend that grace to anybody who's determined to continue on fighting against Him. What His grace demands is that you surrender.

Lay down your weapons of warfare and surrender to His mercy. That's the expectation. He comes to the guy behind his tattered thing and He says, turn from trusting that and trust Me.

The guy says, no, I won't do that. You think Jesus is going to then offer pardon and forgiveness to him? That doesn't happen. Don't be a fool.

Don't be a fool. If you came this close to the truth and this close to salvation and you were actually among the people of God and you perish in the end, you of all people are most miserable. I didn't run with the world and live it up and have it all here.

I lived this halfway place. Not being like the world, but not joining in with God's people, surrendering to Christ and trusting Him. I kind of lived in this middle ground.

You of all people are most to be pitied. You lost out on the world and you forsook the only refuge. And in the end, you're going to be damned and you came so close.

What a miserable place to be. Of all people, you will be most to be pitied. Don't do that.

Surrender. Father, I pray that this idea of the wrath of God would not be easily spurned by anybody that hears my voice. I pray that you would cause good trembling and fear.

Lord, I pray that Your love for sinners is expressed there at the cross to provide a way to divert the wrath of God and provide a refuge, a hiding place from the wrath of God that is coming. Lord, I pray. Use this, Lord.

I pray in Christ's name, Amen. You dismissed.

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