

God's Wrath Not Withheld

by Tom Garner

God's wrath is a terrible and irreversible fate that falls upon those who have rejected Him and His mercy, but it can be escaped by seeking refuge in Him and repenting of our sins.

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Nahum 1:2, Nahum 1:7-8, John 3:18

Topics: "Gods Wrath", "Divine Judgment"

Description

Tom Garner preaches about the importance of understanding all aspects of God, including His Wrath and Judgment, to have a complete picture of who He is. Through the book of Nahum, the sermon delves into God's attributes of being a Great Judge, slow to anger yet just in His punishments. The sermon emphasizes the consequences of turning away from God's mercy and grace, leading to His wrath falling upon those who do not repent. It highlights the prophetic warnings in Nahum regarding the judgment on Nineveh and Sennacherib, showcasing the thoroughness and irresistibility of God's Wrath, while also pointing to the hope found in seeking refuge in God to avoid His judgment.

Transcript

WHEN I READ THIS VERSE "The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knows those who take refuge in Him" (Nahum 1:7), this one verse gives me comfort and hope, for which I am grateful. For you see, the rest of this small book deals with a subject that many in Christianity today would rather not deal with, which is God's Wrath and Judgment.

Though many try to ignore this attribute, it is still an attribute of God. And within this small book of Nahum it is stated so strongly and so concisely it can not be denied. What I hope to share with you this day is this, that to truly know who God is, we must have a full picture of the one we serve.

To do that we must understand and learn all aspects of what makes God, God. God is more than a loving God; He more than just a merciful God; He is more than just a gracious God. To be able to show grace and mercy there must be an offense to show mercy to. To give grace and pardon there must be a judgment of being found guilty.

God is the Great Judge. We all know there have been many good judges both past and present, both now and biblical times. And from these fair judges there has come fair and impartial judgments that have been rendered. Now, if God is indeed "The Great Judge", then, His judgments that are reached are just. If there is a need for punishment within His judgment, they are true and just. So when the wrath or judgment of

God is given, it has come out of fairness and from His Holiness. When God's anger is kindled and judgment falls, there is always fairness and justice in it for He can nothing less. This little book is also full of prophesy, history while it also shows us this great and awesome side of our God.

To get a background on this book we must see on whom the judgment has come and what nation the judgment is about to fall. The country is Nineveh, the person is Sennacherib.

This book reveals what is about to happen to this great nation, whom the other nations tremble with fear. Let us stop and think for a moment; Do you remember the name of the nation to whom Jonah was sent?

Jonah 1:1-2--"Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2 Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me."

Now do you remember what happened when Jonah spoke the Word of God to the king and to the city? They repented of their evil and covered themselves with ashes and sackcloth from the great king down to the lowest citizen, and God withheld His wrath and judgment this time.

Jonah 3:4-10--And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

This is the very same nation now Nahum is sent some 100 years later.

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

Now, this is the same nation whom had repented of their great sin almost a century before. They have now repented of their repentance. Let me repeat that again so you can understand, they had repented of their repentance of Jonah's proclamation of judgment. Now God's judgment is prophesied again and His wrath has now been rekindled towards this same nation and against this man named, Sennacherib.

Within Nahum you can find the following pattern regarding God's Judgment and His terrible Wrath. These are the four basic points contained within Nahum that describe the Wrath of Our God.

God's Wrath Is Terrible - 1:1-7

God's Wrath Is Personal - 1:8-15

God's Wrath Is Thorough - 2:1 - 3:11

God's Wrath Is Irresistible - 3:12-19

God's Wrath Is Terrible

A jealous and avenging God is the LORD; the LORD is avenging and wrathful. The LORD takes vengeance on His adversaries, 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. In whirlwind and storm is His way, and clouds are the dust beneath His feet. - Nahum 1:2-3

When I read this side of God which, to many, is foreign or forgotten, I see not only is our God great and awesome, but he is slow to anger. This nation to whom God has pronounced judgment before had repented, and He withstood (or held back) the judgment they deserved, for they repented of their sin, and they saw their sin as God saw their sin and they were broken by it.

Now, they have turned back on God, a second time. Those to whom He had shown great mercy towards, have now returned to their old sinful and idolatrous ways. In the past 100 years this country has grown strong and powerful. History records they were one of the cruelest army's ever, and their wrath was every before the nations of their day. They had burned one city after another, they had destroyed many nations and plundered and killed like no other people before them. The other nations trembled before them.

So God, now uses this man Nahum, His prophet, to warn them a second time. You see, God is just, he punishes the wicked but He is slow to anger. When God's wrath does fall, it falls hard, and it terrible to witness. But we must see, for if we see only the Love of God we miss His fairness, and to only see this one side of God which many today preach and teach, will not give to us a overall picture of Him. We will not be able to understand the full nature of God. For to be just, he must judge fairly, and to judge he must pronounce sentence on those whom are found guilty and wanting. So He sends this man Nahum, and in this oracle. He has him describe the terribleness of His coming Wrath to this nation and this man.

A jealous and avenging God is the LORD; the LORD is avenging and wrathful. The LORD takes vengeance on His adversaries, 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. In 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. - Nahum 1:2-6

Oh, the terribleness of God's wrath, that falls upon the guilty, whom repent not!

God's Wrath Is Personal

We also see that God's wrath is personal, which again we today find really hard to believe. We must understand that God's wrath can be directed at a person or a nation, but in the next 3 verses we see to whom this directed. First, to a nation.

But with an overflowing flood He will make a complete end of its site, 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. - Nahum 1:8-10

This nation who is now under God's judgement, He will not allow them to rise up twice. Do you see that? "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." They arose once and repented, yet they will not rise up again, for their hearts are set against the One whom had shown great mercy to them, so their demise is now fixed.

Now we come to the person, Sennacherib. This is the great king, the great general who has sweep over the nations and is now in Israel and has destroyed all cities but Jerusalem.

From you has gone forth One who plotted evil against the LORD, a wicked counselor. - Nahum 1:11.

The Bible records the invasion of this man into the nation in Isaiah 36 and 37 as well as II Kings 18. It records that after destroying the nations and cities like Lakish, he finally comes to Jerusalem. This same man sends a letter to King Hezekiah which stated "who can protect you, can your God?. The other gods of over nations have fallen to me, can your god protect you? Yet, this man, Sennacherib, has been judged and God's wrath is about to fall on him and his armies.

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." - Nahum 1:12-14

The Bible records that this man who is at Jerusalem's door, STANDS JUDGED:

"This is the word that the LORD has spoken against him: 'She has despised you and mocked you, the virgin daughter of Zion; she has shaken her head behind you, the daughter of Jerusalem! 'Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? And against whom have you raised your voice, and haughtily lifted up your eyes? Against the Holy One of Israel! - II Kings 19:21-22

His army melts away as described in II Kings 19:35-37, and he goes back to his temple and carves (or writes) a freeze on his temple walls about his battles and his successes, like Lakish and other cities he has destroyed, but when he gets to Jerusalem what can he say? He has to say "I had Hezekiah pinned up like a bird in a cage." He could not tell what really happened. Now the prophesy regarding his death comes true. While praying in his temple this man, Sennacherib, is killed by his two sons, so God's Wrath has fallen completely as prophesied on this man.

God's Wrath Is Thorough

Recorded in Nahum is the prophesy, which predicted, the events that were to come about regarding the destruction of Nineveh. The great Babylonian nation now comes and totally lays waste to this city to whom God had once shown great mercy. The events that were to come, has now happened. History records the events and when compared to the events recorded in Nahum they go hand in hand. This nation has God's Wrath upon them and He uses the Babylonian's to complete his judgement. You see, when God judges and His Wrath is upon a nation or a person, it is completed when there is no repentance. There is much I like to say regarding this but for time sake read Nahum 2:1 - 3:11 to see the thoroughness of God's Wrath. It starts with the Babylonian's coming to the gate and the final destruction of this once great city. Which leads us to the next point.

God's Wrath Is Irresistible

You see, the prophet in verses 3:12-19 warns this nation to prepare itself again this great destruction which is coming. Why warn them? To show others, that God is a "Great and Mighty God," and that when His wrath is poured out it can not resisted. Once wrath is pronounced and these peoples hearts are set against God and there is no repentance, His judgement comes and no matter what they do, no matter what provisions are made, or what preparations are made, the Wrath of God will fall, and how terrible is that wrath which falleth on them that do not repent!

So let us bring this to our own understanding, and to our own day. When God judges and finds you guilty how heavy is the wrath that falls on you. But then how can we escape this Great Judgement? It is found in Nahum 1:7 - "The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knows those who take refuge in Him." You see this one verse in the midst of the Description of God's Wrath, this is our promise, our saving Grace. We must seek refuge in God, we must repent which means we agree with him, that we, like this great nation Nineveh, that we have sinned and then turn our eyes off the LORD and have not sought Him. Let me give you this, no one who turns to God and seeks Him and then turns from their evil ways will ever experience this great wrath, but will find pardon today.

2 Chronicles 7:14 - "and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Ah! brothers and sisters there are many today here today that have turned to their own way just like this man Sennacherib, and our nation is like Nineveh for we have abandon the Lord. Do you not see that you are in a precarious position? Do you not see that our nation is also in the same position. You have turned away, you have not sought God, and since you have set your face away from God, you are under His judgement. My friend, turn to Him today, seek Him while he maybe found. For you see, God is just when he judges, and your rejection of His grace condemns you to a side of Him which no one needs to experience, which is His Judgement and His Wrath!

Jesus said to a man who was knowledgeable about religion: "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. "For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. "But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God." - John 3:18-21

May God Bless the reading of His Word.

Amen.

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