

[Nahum 1:1-15](#)

This Is God: Wrathful, Good, Worth Proclaiming

Introduction

What if a man preached a sermon that included the bad news that God in His wrath would destroy the city you lived in unless people repented of their sin? Would it make you sit up and take notice? In that same sermon, the preacher included the good news that God is good; He is a stronghold during trouble; God is the Savior for all of those who take refuge in Him? Wouldn't that be good news worth proclaiming?

Nahum, a prophet of God, preached such a sermon in Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, sometime between 663 and 612 B.C. About 100 years earlier, Jonah had preached there. Unlike with Jonah, the Ninevites did not repent when God spoke through Nahum. Indeed, the city of Nineveh was destroyed by the Babylonians a few years after Nahum's warning to repent.

So, from a little-known book of the Bible, the overarching theme in this message is found in the following three points that God is:

- Wrathful ([Nahum 1:2](#))
- Good ([Nahum 1:7](#))
- Worth proclaiming ([Nahum 1:15](#))

1. God is wrathful ([Nahum 1:2](#))

Nahum wanted to make it crystal clear that God's wrath is real. He takes vengeance on His adversaries; He keeps wrath for His enemies. God's wrath is a signature of His holiness and righteousness. D.A. Carson, author and theologian, had this to say: "God's holiness and righteousness are intrinsic to who he is; his wrath and anger are simply responses to sin." Apart from Christ, if your heart is hard and unrepentant, then wrath is being stored up against yourself ([Romans 2:5](#)). In fact, you're no different than those in hell, who at this very moment, are experiencing God's anger as a response toward sin.

Jonathan Edwards, an American revivalist preacher, philosopher and theologian in the 1700's gave a sermon in 1741 titled "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." Here's an excerpt from the text of this sermon: "O sinner! consider the fearful danger you are in: it is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you, as against many of the damned in hell."

That should be a wake-up call! But some of you may be asking yourselves, "Why is he preaching about God's wrath and hell? I'd rather hear nice things about God." Indeed, the truths of Scripture are offensive. In fact, the gospel is folly to those who are perishing ([1 Corinthians 1:18](#)). So, if you're being offended by this preaching or think what you've heard so far is foolish, remember this: The hard-to-hear part of this message is actually pointing to God's love. His desire is that no one should perish, but that all would come to repentance ([2 Peter 3:9](#)). That's why we need to take God's Word seriously. When the writer of Hebrews says "It is a fearful thing to fall into

the hands of the living God" ([Hebrews 10:31](#)), he really means it. Jesus Himself says this in [Matthew 10:28](#), which He really means.

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

[Matt 10:28](#) (ESV)

This message is meant to reiterate the truth that God is serious about punishing sin; He judges unrighteousness; His vengeance is poured out upon His enemies. Accounts in Scripture of God's wrath are meant to display His love for justice and purity. Despite His wrath, there is salvation for those that He declares righteous.

For example, in the account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, there was an outcry against both cities and their sin was very grave ([Genesis 18:20](#)). God's wrath and judgment was manifested by fire and sulfur reigning down from heaven ([Genesis 19:24](#)). Sin was punished and all of the unrighteous perished. Only a man named Lot, deemed righteous in God's eyes, was rescued from destruction ([2 Peter 2:7-9](#)). Lot's wife and two daughters were spared also. However, Lot's wife turned into a pillar of salt when she turned to look back ([Genesis 19:26](#)).

Ruth Bell Graham, wife of well-known evangelist, Billy Graham, once said: "If God doesn't punish America, He owes an apology to Sodom and Gomorrah." There is much in our culture that deserves God's wrath and punishment, as was the case with Sodom and Gomorrah. In fact, there's nothing new under the sun - sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire and covetousness. On account of these, the wrath of God is coming ([Colossians 3:5-6](#)).

Yet, even in the face of judgment, there's hope. When God was about to destroy Sodom, what was Abraham's response? Let's take a look at [Genesis 18:25](#).

"Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?"

[Gen 18:25](#) (ESV)

Whether America, Assyria or Israel, sin deserves punishment because God is holy and righteous. Yet, in the midst of His wrath, God's steadfast love, His rich mercy and abundant grace are evident. Here's [Ezekiel 33:11](#).

"Say to them, 'As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?'"

[Ezek 33:11](#) (ESV)

Abraham interceded for Sodom; God was just; He punished the wicked in His wrath; He saved the righteous in His goodness. God has provided an intercessor for you and me. His name is Jesus. Indeed God is good. In His grace and mercy, He makes the only way to escape His wrath through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. God is good (Nahum 1:7)

Nahum proclaims the truth that the LORD is good; He is a stronghold in the day of trouble; He knows those who take refuge in Him. With an ominous, foreboding nation, such as Assyria, a threat to Israel, Nahum wanted the people of Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel, to be assured of the truth that God is good to His people. In a world filled with chaos and despair, God wants you and me to know that truth too. Here's [Psalm 100:5](#).

For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.
[Psalms 100:5](#) (ESV)

The LORD is good because no matter what trial or trouble that comes along, His steadfast love endures forever. He is faithful to those who belong to Him, just as a good and loving father is faithful to his children. That's why the Lord Jesus affirmed His love for Peter at the breakfast on the beach, following Peter's denial of knowing Jesus three times on the night of His betrayal ([John 21:15-17](#)). That's why the prodigal son was welcomed by his father, even after the son had squandered his entire inheritance ([Luke 15:11-24](#)). That's why those led by the Holy Spirit are called sons and daughters of God. If that's you, rejoice with me. Because of the Lord Jesus, we get to call God Almighty our Abba Father, Daddy ([Romans 8:14-16](#)).

Now I realize there is abuse between some parents and their children, but let me assure you that God is the good, good Father; He knows and loves deeply those who take refuge in Him. The prodigal son and Jesus' affirmation of Peter are wonderful examples of God's covenant-keeping hesed love. Hesed is a Hebrew word, which is defined as the ever-faithful, never-ending love of God. To see God's hesed-type love, we must trust in Him as good all of the time. If our trust in God only happens when things are going well, then we'll have a difficult time trusting Him when things go bad. [Psalm 46:1](#) say this:

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
[Psalms 46:1](#) (ESV)

Dave Branon, an author for *Our Daily Bread* devotional, knows that God is good; He knows God is a stronghold in the day of trouble. Branon experienced the heartbreaking loss of his 17-year-old daughter, Melissa, when she was killed in a car crash in 2002. He and his wife, Sue, find comfort in knowing that "in the midst of our sadness we trust God doesn't do the wrong thing."

Indeed God never does the wrong thing. Nahum's preaching to the citizens of Nineveh was anything but wrong. He wanted everyone to know that He is avenging and wrathful; He would destroy them in His wrath. He would cut them down; He would make their grave for they are vile ([Nahum 1:8-14](#)). At the same time, Nahum's preaching must have assured the people of Judah that God was their refuge and strength. They need not fear His wrath as an enemy. They belong to Him; they take refuge in Him. In Christ, that promise is as good today as it was then. Yes, because of Jesus, you're a child of God, not a child of wrath. You're a friend of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

In Scripture, we see this in the story of King David and Mephibosheth, the grandson of David's enemy, King Saul ([2 Samuel 9](#)). In the Near East culture, the reigning king had every right to kill all of those related to his enemies. Mephibosheth deserved death. Yet King David in his mercy and grace received him into the family as a son, to sit at the king's table always. Once an enemy, now a son seated with the king at his table. That's a picture of the grace, mercy and love that's found only in Christ, the King of kings. We are to see ourselves as Mephibosheth. Once an enemy of God, but now a son or a daughter seated in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Isn't that good news? Yes! Thank you Jesus! But wait; there's still more good news!

3. God Is Worth Proclaiming ([Nahum 1:15](#))

How beautiful to behold those who bring good news! Nahum had a good news message for Judah. Since his name means "comfort", Nahum's message should have been a comfort to God's people that was worth proclaiming. The good news was that God would protect His people; He would cut off their oppressors and enemies, the Assyrians. Nineveh would be destroyed. God is the Savior of His people. In essence, God Himself is the good news; He is peace; He is the reason to shout from the mountaintop.

Think about this: If it weren't for the good news that God in Christ is Savior, then there would be no hope of salvation, no rescue from God's wrath. The truth of the matter is that we all deserve God's wrath. Because we are descendants of Adam and Eve, we are sinful by nature. None is righteousness, no not one ([Romans 3:10](#)). We have all sinned and fall short of God's glory ([Romans 3:23](#)). The wages of sin is death. In other words, what we've earned and deserve as sinners is God's wrath.

Whether we know it or not, all of us are in desperate need for grace and mercy only found in Christ. In His goodness, God provided the only way of salvation through Jesus, which is really good news. Joe Thorn, author and pastor, said it well: "It is only because of the love of God, the sacrifice of His Son, and the powerful work of the Holy Spirit that we have been rescued from wrath and will be received into glory." Here's [1 Thessalonians 5:9](#).

For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ... [1 Thess 5:9](#) (ESV)

Several years ago I watched a video, which showed people holding up a sign to display their identity before receiving Christ. Then, they would flip the sign over to show their "born again" new identity in Christ. So, I've got a sign, which displays a sin that identified my life before receiving Christ as Savior - *critical spirit*. To be honest, there's hardly one person that I've crossed paths with that I haven't criticized inappropriately in thought, word or deed. I apologize for that and ask your forgiveness, if you're one of those people.

Even though I still wrestle with criticizing others, that sin has been forgiven and forgotten by God. On the other side of the sign, here's my new identity in Christ because He rescued me from my sins - *forgiven*. Embracing the good news that the Lord Jesus is my Savior means I'm forgiven for sins of the past, present and future. My sins are forgotten by God forever. In fact, God gives the following assurance concerning the permanent and complete forgiveness and forgottenness of sin. Here's [Micah 7:19](#).

He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.

[Micah 7:19](#) (ESV)

If you're trusting Jesus as Savior, what would your sign have written on it about your identity before Christ? What about your identity now that you're in Christ? And even though we wrestle with sin as believers, our "in-Christ" signage doesn't change. Once forgiven in Christ, always forgiven in Christ. God's wrath need not be feared; Savior Jesus is always our good news.

Jesus is worth proclaiming; He is the good news of reconciliation between God and man. God has entrusted to us, His faith-family, which is the church, the message of reconciliation. Here's [2 Corinthians 5:20](#).

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

[2 Cor 5:20](#) (ESV)

Someone out there is listening; someone out there is needy of the Savior; perhaps a friend, a co-worker, or a family member. Are you and me ambassadors for Christ? Indeed beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news, who publish peace ([Isaiah 52:7](#))! If you don't know the Lord, I plead with you; hear the good news; receive Him today through faith alone in God's grace alone. Because the bad news is that if you don't know Jesus as Friend and Savior, then God's wrath remains upon you ([John 3:36](#)).

Conclusion

When Nahum preached to the people of Nineveh, they wouldn't listen; they didn't turn away from their sin and turn toward God. They were destroyed in God's wrath. Sodom and Gomorrah were also destroyed for the same reason. It's a sobering truth that apart from Christ we are all under God's wrath. That's true whether in La Crescent, Sodom, Nineveh or anywhere across the world. The bad news is that for God's enemies there is unthinkable terror found in His wrath. The good news is that for God's friends, those found in Christ, there is peaceful refuge in His goodness. Where are you at with God - enemy or friend?

Jesus is coming again. When He does, He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty ([Revelation 19:15](#)). Whether it was 600 B.C. or 2021 A.D., the LORD is just and right to punish sin in His wrath. Only in Christ is the vengeance and wrath of God appeased against His enemies through the sin-cleansing blood of Jesus. Righteousness and reconciliation found in Christ alone is our only hope.

Now, an exhortation to end with. Be an ambassador for Christ. Preach the good news in season and out of season ([2 Timothy 4:2](#)). Always be prepared to give an account of the hope that is within you; yet do it with gentleness and respect ([1 Peter 3:15](#)). He is worth proclaiming. May that be our delight as the church to proclaim the excellencies of the One who called us out of the darkness and into His marvelous light ([1 Peter 2:9](#)). Amen.