



HEAR THE HOLY ROAR

THE BOOK OF NAHUM

A Comforting Wrath

September 6, 2026

³ The Lord is slow to anger but great in power; the Lord will not leave the guilty unpunished.

Nahum 1:3 (read vv. 1-11)

Terrible and good. Powerful and patient. Full of grace, and with complete justice. As we read these descriptives placed, not in contrast, but in a complimentary construct, something tends to grate on our polite nerves. How can someone be simultaneously terrible AND good? How does absolute power wait with calm patience? How is it actually possible to be absolute in both grace and justice?

In our “either/or” culture, we find it difficult to hold together in delicate tension such apparently-competing characteristics. C.S. Lewis highlighted this inability—or refusal—for the contemporary mind to do this very thing. The overall dialogue between the human children and the creatures of Narnia in C.S. Lewis’ *The Lion, The Witch, And The Wardrobe*, suggests that people from our world often assume something, i.e., Aslan, cannot be deeply good and terrifying at the same time. And yet, that is exactly how Nahum portrays God.

This 7th Century, B.C., prophet opens up with a flurry of disconcerting descriptions of God: “jealous, avenging, powerful, fierce, wrathful, punishing.” Within these unsettling characteristics, Nahum also speaks of God as “slow to anger, good, a refuge in times of trouble, and [one who] cares for those who trust in him.”

And yet, even in a culture that demands, not only tolerance, but acceptance of all things, we universally recognize inappropriate actions that should be condemned. It is absolutely impossible to be “for” something without being “against” its opposite. If God is genuinely a good, loving, just being then, of necessity, he must be against all things genuinely evil. In the end, Nahum tells us that the good God who rages against violence is the very one in whom we can take refuge. Rather than running **from** him, we are to run **to** him!

Small Group Guide

September 6, 2026

What did you hear in this morning’s message that stood out to you? What was interesting, important, or confusing?

Where are you tempted to take justice into your own hands rather than trust God?

What does this passage reveal about God’s character?

Where do you need to trust God with justice?

How does God’s goodness in verse 7 encourage you in trouble?

Some Background

Between roughly 663 and 612 BC, Assyria was the dominant military power of the ancient Near East, with Nineveh as its imperial capital. Assyria had conquered Israel, oppressed Judah, deported conquered peoples, and employed notorious brutality to maintain its empire. Nahum announces that this seemingly invincible power would fall. Nineveh is condemned because its imperial power had become characterized by violence, exploitation, deceit, arrogance, idolatry, and bloodshed (Nah. 3:1–7). Rather than an emotionally-explosive response from a fickle deity, Yahweh’s judgment of Nineveh proceeded after much long-suffering and warning (cf. Jonah). Nahum is not merely celebrating Judah’s enemy being defeated; he proclaims that God’s justice will ultimately confront oppressive human power.

Reflections

Nahum 1:1–11 reminds us that God’s goodness and justice are not competing attributes. He is “slow to anger,” yet He will not overlook evil forever. For Judah, living under Assyria’s shadow, this was deeply comforting: their suffering was neither unseen nor forgotten. Nahum calls God’s people to entrust vengeance to God rather than take it into their own hands. The passage also warns us not to presume upon God’s patience. Nineveh’s power could not protect it from accountability. Yet the God who judges evil is also “a stronghold in the day of trouble” (1:7). For us, God’s justice assures us that evil will ultimately be answered, while His character invites us to find our refuge in Him.