

Love & War #1
A Good God's Rightful Wrath

Word

Scripture Reference

Nahum 1:1-8

Discussion Questions

1. Have you been rightfully angry with someone? What made your anger right?
2. In the same way that we have preconceived notions of what someone should be or how another person should behave based on what we think we know about that person, we have developed a preconceived idea about God. Because we know God to be a God of love, mercy, and forgiveness, we cannot imagine Him getting angry. However, the Scriptures tell us that God's anger has led to the destruction of nations, empires, and groups of people. How can we reconcile a loving God to one who can also be rightfully wrathful? Is God allowed to get mad? If He does get mad, does that mean that He cannot be a loving God? What does it tell you about God's character, that His wrath is on the unrighteous?
3. The ruthless Assyrians had already conquered Israel and were causing great suffering and oppression in Judah. The book of Nahum tells us about God's pronouncement of judgment on Assyria, which brought comfort and encouragement to His people in a time of great distress. Nahum was a prophet of God who had seen the city of Nineveh repent from their evil ways many years earlier. However, Nineveh had fallen back into wickedness, and so God sent Nahum to this Assyrian capital to warn the people of God's impending judgment on their evilness. Read Nahum 1:1-8. In Nahum's opening statement we find that God reveals three things about Himself through these three implied questions:
 - a. *Question #1: Does God have the right to be angry (v. 2)?* Righteous jealousy is when you are jealous for something that rightfully belongs to you. Because the oppressed Israelites were God's people, He is rightfully jealous for them and will avenge them. How does this truth assure you that God will avenge you from the people who oppress you? Share about a time when instead of taking personal revenge, you allowed God to work it out for you. Discuss why it is just for God to punish evildoers who do not repent?
 - b. *Question #2: Is God's power limited because He doesn't act right away (v.3)?* The slowness of God's anger does not mean that He cannot handle a situation. God's Word reminds us that He will act and everyone will face His judgment—the Judgment Seat of Christ for the believers (2 Cor. 5:10) and the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15). God does not acquit the

wicked. Why should it please you that God does not punish evil immediately? Discuss why acts of God through nature give you glimpses of His power? Knowing that God is slow to anger, why should you never think, "I will stop sinning when God punishes me"?

- c. *Question #3: Can anyone stand up to God (v.6)?* A temporal kingdom like Assyria, no matter how powerful, can never challenge God's awesome power. No one is on the same level with Him, and no one can ever be on equal footing with Him. It's easy to say that no one can stand up to God. What should therefore be your attitude towards a God you can never stand up to? Discuss why many Christians stand up for the world instead of standing up for God when they know that the world's power is temporal and nothing compared to God. Describe the many ways a person (even a Christian) demonstrates a belief that he/she can be on equal standing with God.
4. Verses 7-8 assure us that "God is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in Him." Those who seek Him have nothing to fear, but if you stand against Him—picture this: faced with a rightfully jealous and angry God who is all-powerful and whose might is limitless, what would Your attitude be?

Walk

Nahum prophesied that the proud and powerful nation of Assyria would be utterly destroyed because of its sin. Their sin would be punished severely by a righteous and holy God who rules over all the earth. He has the right to be angry toward unrighteousness. His power is not limited by His choice not to act swiftly. In fact, we should be glad that He is slow to anger and great in power. Nobody, not even the most powerful person or nation, can stand up to God. He is a patient God but will not allow sin to get away. Ponder these thoughts and ask God to examine your heart for anything that that defies and angers Him. Is there anything in your thoughts and actions that undermine His power? How should you deal with it?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, it is a sobering thought that You get rightfully, viciously angry because of evilness in this world. Oftentimes I only think of your lovingkindness, but how can I expect You to always bless me when my heart transgress against You. You have the right to deal with my sin, and if you don't do it right away, I am thankful that You are giving me a chance to repent from it. Lord God, please help me to be humble before You. Search my heart if there is anything that makes me live in sin. Help me not to wait until I start feeling your wrath, before I turn around and change my ways. Give me the strength to live righteously with You. In Jesus' name. Amen.