

GOD IS SLOW TO ANGER

Nahum 1:3 ... "The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked."

If you are ever arrested and tried in court, there are two possible words that you will hear from the judge at the end of your trial: Guilty or acquitted. The word "guilty" has an obvious meaning. It means you did the crime for which you were arrested and can expect to be punished; probably sent to prison. The word "acquitted" means that the charges against you could not be proven and you are free to go.

Nahum was a prophet in the city of Nineveh. You might remember Nineveh from the story of Jonah who God sent to the city to evangelize the people. Jonah hated the citizens of that city, which is why God punished him by having a big fish swallow him when he tried to disobey God by running in the opposite direction of Nineveh. Jonah finally gave up trying to rebel against God and went to Nineveh to tell the citizens about God. Surprisingly, the Ninevites saved themselves from God's judgment by accepting the teachings of Jonah and repenting of their sins. However, the book of Nahum tells us that about one hundred years later, the people of Nineveh returned to their old practices of violence and idolatry.

We learn in verse 2 that God avenges his adversaries (the idolatrous Ninevites) and reserves his wrath for his enemies. In verse 6 we learn that no one can stand or endure the fierceness of God's anger. It says "His fury is poured out like fire." We have seen how that happened to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. No place in the Bible do we find that God simply ignores people who rebel against him. You will either profit from your devotion to God, or you will be punished. There is no island half way between heaven and hell to where God sends good people who reject him. There are no "grey areas" in God's point of view; everything is either black or white; bad or good; lost or saved.

Today's verse says that God is slow to anger. If you are living in disobedience to him or have not yet accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, God is waiting. He is giving you yet another chance to change your mind. But he will not wait forever. Your moment of death is already carved into your legacy. The power of his anger is great and you will eventually feel it if you are found guilty on judgment day. There will be no chance of acquittal if you die without accepting Christ's blood for your sins. God's wrath is the same for cities as it is for provinces; the same for countries as it is the earth; the same for a community as it is for individuals who reject him. God is slow to anger, but his wrath will eventually be poured out like fire on those who reject him. What would be the verdict on yourself if you stood before the judge in God's court tomorrow? Guilty or acquitted?

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