

Nahum Chapter 1

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[0 : 00] few of them in the letters that he writes. This one's very personal to him, but something that each one of us as Christians finds echoing in our hearts and minds. 1 Timothy 1.15, here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am in the AV chief, or the NIV puts it, the worst. But for that very reason, I was shown mercy, so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.

When Paul thinks about these things, he thinks about the Lord Jesus coming into the world and giving himself and dying for him, and he realizes that he is such an awful sinner, but this was God's mercy, it means that he breaks out into praise, doesn't he? You think, why is verse 17 there? Now to the King, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory forever and ever. It's because as he's thought about what Christ has done for him, he can't help but the Holy Spirit, in one sense, overflowing in his heart to praise God. And that should be our sense, whenever we consider the awesome work of Christ for us, when we realize the depravity, the vileness of our sins, it makes the glory and the loveliness and the sacrifice of Christ all the more brilliant.

And really from our hearts, not just on a Sunday, but through the week, should billow forth, burst forth those words, to the King, eternal, immortal, invisible, be honour and glory and praise.

Look of Neon. Now, if you've got a church Bible, I'll help you out. Okay, if you've got a church Bible, one of these blue ones, then it's on page 937.

[2 : 04] If you haven't got a church Bible and you're not sure where it is, the best thing to do is find the beginning of Matthew, that's the beginning of the New Testament, and work backwards, around about 20 or 25 pages. So you'll go back from Matthew through the minor prophets, Malachi, Zechariah, Zephaniah, Haggai, and if you've got Habakkuk, and then you should find Nahum. If you've got into people like Amos and Micah and Jonah, you've gone too far. Okay? But Nahum. I'm not, please don't think I'm being rude when I'm saying that, because if you are, you know, most of us find it hard to find the, I don't know the order of the minor prophets. If you ask me, tell me all the books about, I'm fine until I get to the minor prophets, and it all goes to part after that, because I know who they are, but I can't remember what order they come in, but there's a song, yeah, it helps if you're musical to know that song, which is helpful, and I want children learn as well.

But Nahum, we're going to look at Nahum, God willing, this week, next week, and the week after, because just a mini-series, in one sense, on this unfamiliar passage of God's Word, and, but I'm sure we will find it a useful time. So I'm going to read chapter one.

Nahum's prophecy, and as you can see at the very beginning, an oracle concerning Nineveh. Nineveh was the capital city of the Assyrian Empire, and the Assyrian Empire was the power, the mega power of its day, before the Babylonians came, and Nebuchadnezzar, we know about him, but Assyria, and Assyria was one of the nations that attacked and overran the northern tribes of Israel, the northern part of God's people, Israel, and took many of them away in captivity.

So we're going to read, this is not directly to God's people, though it clearly is, as we'll see, but especially it's concerning and about Nineveh. So an oracle concerning Nineveh, the book of the vision of Nahum the Elkishite.

The Lord is a jealous and avenging God. The Lord takes vengeance and is filled with wrath.

[4 : 34] The Lord takes vengeance on his foes and maintains his wrath against his enemies. The Lord is slow to anger and great in power.

The Lord will not leave the guilty unpunished. His way is in the whirlwind and the storm, and clouds are the dust of his feet. He rebukes the sea and dries it up.

He makes all the rivers run dry. Bashan and Carmel wither, and the blossoms of Lebanon fade. The mountains quake before him, and the hills melt away.

The earth trembles at his presence, the world and all who live in it. Who can withstand his indignation? Who can endure his fierce anger?

His wrath is poured out like fire. The rocks are shattered before him. The Lord is good. A refuge in times of trouble.

[5 : 43] He cares for those who trust in him. But with an overwhelming flood, he will make an end of Nineveh. He will pursue his foes into darkness. Whatever they plot against the Lord, he will bring to an end.

Trouble will not come a second time. They will be entangled among thorns, drunk with their wine. They will be consumed like dry stubble.

From you, O Nineveh, has one come forth who plots evil against the Lord and counsels wickedness. This is what the Lord says. Although you have allies and are numerous, they will be cut off and pass away.

Although I have afflicted you, O Judah, I will not afflict you anymore. Now I will break their yoke from your neck and tear their shackles away. The Lord has given a command concerning you, Nineveh. You will have no descendants to bear your name. I will destroy the carved images and the cast idols that are in the temple of your gods. I will prepare your grave for you are vile.

[6 : 53] Look, there on the mountains, the feet of one who brings good news, who proclaims peace. Celebrate your festivals, O Judah, and fulfill your vows.

No more will the wicked invade you. They will be completely destroyed. Even if I write things down, I forget them.

Like praying for Suzanne. So let's do that even now. Forgive me for that. Amen. Amen. So back to Nahum. Please do have that chapter, that first chapter open before you.

I'm sure all of us are well aware of that very famous narrative, that story of Robert Louis Stevenson's from the Victorian period, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

You know the story revolves around Dr. Edward Jekyll, a great and brilliant doctor who experiments in producing a potion which will allow the bad side, the evil side of his personality to have dominance for a while.

[8 : 06] When that potion is drunk, he's transformed into this Mr. Hyde. Unexpectedly, for Dr. Jekyll, Mr. Hyde was much more wicked than he realised.

His evil side was more evil than he thought. And so Dr. Jekyll, in the form of Mr. Hyde, commits murder. And it soon transpires that these transformations that take place become involuntary. He's unable to control them. He becomes more and more Mr. Hyde and less and less Dr. Jekyll, eventually fearing that he's lost control and will forever remain as Mr. Hyde.

He takes his own life. It's a tragic story. But so popular, of course, that the very phrase Jekyll and Hyde is something that's passed into the English language, a sort of speaking of a person who maybe has mood swings.

Nice one minute, nasty the other, giving perhaps the appearance of a split personality. When we read through the book of Nahum, especially chapter 1, it may appear to some that there is something pertaining to a split personality in the very person of the Lord our God.

[9 : 21] We find him being spoken of here as being jealous in verse 2. And throughout the rest of the verse and onwards, he is spoken of vengeful.

Even at the end, the one who is angry, who is filled with wrath. And yet, as we read through, we find that he is described as one who is slow to anger, in that sense, patient.

There in verse 7, the Lord is good. And there, also in that verse, he cares. Can this be true? Can God be both jealous, vengeful, angry, and at the same time be patient, good, and caring?

Many people question and have questions in their minds about God of a similar nature when they look at the world. And they may say to us, or they may question in their own minds, how can God be good when there is so much suffering in the world?

How can God be caring when there is so much evil in the world? I had that question even put to me in one sense over lunchtime when chatting with somebody. It's a great struggle for people.

[10 : 36] It's a great concern for people. How can there be a God? How can I believe in a God when I see so much evil and wickedness?

But of course we know, and the Bible makes very clear, and as we shall understand, I hope, as we go through, God is not a divided personality. He is not one thing and then another. Some people very foolishly, even amongst the church, speak about the God of the Old Testament being different to the God of the New Testament. That is complete nonsense. God is not divided. He is united. He is in perfect unity with himself. There is a perfect and wonderful balance between his jealousy, vengeance, and wrath, his patience, goodness, and care. He doesn't suppress his jealousy when he shows patience, nor does he limit his goodness when he acts with anger. His care is not compromised by vengeance.

[11 : 35] So I want us to look at these things here, to deal with some of these questions which maybe we also struggle with as Christians, which we also know that the world struggles with.

And as we are those who are called to give an account for what we believe, for the hope that's in us, it's good that we should understand how we should answer them. How can we apply these things to God's word and to our lives?

This little known book, Nahum, is a vital part of God's self-revelation. That's what we believe the Bible is, don't we? It's not just history. It's not just an account of what God has done through in the past, or just an account of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible is the revelation of God to the world. It's God saying, this is what I'm like. And it's written for our comfort, our encouragement, our blessing.

In fact, the very name Nahum in the Hebrew means compassion, comfort. Strange, isn't it? They should have such a name. As we've been reading through, there's been these terrible words of vengeance spoken.

[12 : 49] But it's to that very end that this letter is written. Particularly, this prophecy rather is written because though it is written against Nineveh, it is actually written for the blessing and benefit of God's people.

That's why we read there, the Lord is good in verse 7, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him. It's written, we know, to Judah, God's people there at the end of the chapter, verse 15.

Celebrate your festivals, O Judah. The beginning of the verse. Look there on the mountains, the feet of one who brings good news and proclaims peace. This is what Nahum has come to do. He's come as a messenger to God's people, proclaim peace. He's on the feet that carry the good news. God is doing something. God is active. God is working for the sake of his people, for the sake of his church, for the sake of those who trust in him, who he loves and cares for.

So what I'm going to do, I want us, as we go through, to just take up a couplet, as it were, three couplets. One which we might perceive as negative, one which we perceive as positive, and see how in the Lord God and in the light of this prophecy and what's going on and what God's promising to do, we see how they complement one another and how they are perfectly blended and perfectly to be understood in the life of our God.

[14 : 16] So first of all, I want to take hold of jealousy. The Lord is a jealous and avenging God. And care. He cares for those who trust in him.

Now jealousy, of course, like all the words we use in English, is conditioned. Our understanding of that word is conditioned by our upbringing, our culture, how that word is used generally in the world around about us.

And as we know, the jealousy, of course, is seen as something like the green-eyed monster. Jealousy is something which is like envy. It's almost covetousness.

To be jealous of somebody is to want something that they have or to be like somebody or in some way to have something that we don't already have.

Jealousy is a bad thing in our culture and understanding of the word. But that can't be how we're meant to understand the word in the scriptures, is it? And that's what we've got to be very careful of.

[15 : 14] And that's one of the mistakes that many people make, including especially non-Christians, but the church as well at times, is we take our understanding of a word or of God and we supplant it onto the scriptures.

And so we say, well, I know what jealousy means. And therefore, when it says that God is jealous, that must mean that God is in that way of my thinking. That's always a danger. Whenever we as Christians come to the word of God, we've got to come and be shaped by the word, not shape the word by ourselves.

So God cannot be jealous in the way that we've been thinking of someone who is envious of others. Somebody who wants something that he does not already have. Well, it's impossible for God to be jealous in that way, of course, because God has everything.

He made everything. He owns everything. Everything belongs to him. He's the creator. He's the possessor of everything. He doesn't need anything at all. But the Bible tells us that God is not just the God who feels jealousy.

But in revealing himself to Moses in Exodus 34, he tells him, Do not worship any other God, for the Lord whose name is jealous is a jealous God.

[16 : 32] So it's not just that we attach an emotion to God, but God declares that in himself, in his very character and nature, he is jealous. But he doesn't need anything.

He has no want of anything. And yet, to understand this word jealousy, we need to understand, as the Bible teaches us, there is something that God desires. He doesn't need.

He isn't jealous for in the sense of he must have at all costs, but he is jealous in the sense he desires the love and the faithfulness of his people.

God is jealous for the love and faithfulness of his people. And again, as we understand the Bible, we can understand that more. Because over and over again, the relationship that the Lord has with his people, both in the Old Testament with the Israelites and in the New Testament with the church, is likened to and illustrated by a marriage of a husband and a wife.

So in Isaiah 62, we have, as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you. And in Ephesians chapter 5, verse 25, husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church.

[17 : 46] So God is jealous in the sense of a husband being jealous for the love and affection of his wife. That's a good thing. What sort of husband doesn't care whether his wife is faithful to him or not?

What sort of husband doesn't care whether his wife no longer loves him or not? And likewise, what wife would not feel jealous if her husband was unfaithful or turned his attentions to another woman? It's part of loving someone. It's a part of caring about someone that produces this type of jealousy. It's a zeal for, it's a feeling strong about how others treat us and respond to us.

And God was jealous for his Old Testament people. He was jealous for their affection. He was jealous for their love. And it was because of that jealousy that he was moved to correct them when they sought false gods.

When they turned away from him and turned to that which was idolatrous and blasphemous and was bringing upon them all sorts of sorrow.

[19 : 00] God saw the people of Israel in that way and so he sent Assyria as his instrument to prune them, to correct them, to bring them back to himself.

That's why he says himself in verse 12. Although I have afflicted you, O Judah, I will afflict you no more.

The coming of the Assyrian armies upon Israel was part of God's jealous love for his people. But that jealousy for Israel now moves not just to afflict them but then to punish those who did afflict them.

The Assyrians, verse 14. The Lord has given a command concerning Nineveh. You will have no descendants to bear your name. I will destroy the carved images and cast idols.

God's beloved bride had not been faithful to him but had committed adultery by worshipping false gods. God had brought them back to himself. He'd pruned them. He'd refined them through the hand of the Assyrians.

[20 : 06] But now his hand is raised against Assyria. Now they have done his work. God's jealousy for his bride, for those he loves, shows itself in defending his people.

In setting them free from those who have oppressed them. Verse 13. 13. Now I will break their yoke from your neck and tear your shackles away.

Love does that. It does defend. But it is also jealous. When we think about our relationship with God and our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, we need to understand that Christ is jealous for our love.

He is jealous for our devotion. The devotion of his church. And if that love becomes cold, then his jealousy will move him to chastise us and to discipline us.

We get the evidence of that in the letter that he wrote through John in Revelation chapter 2. You know it very well. It's the church in Ephesus.

[21 : 12] An ideal church in lots of ways. But what does God have to say? What does Christ say to that church? Verse 4 of Revelation 2. Yet I have this against you. You've forsaken your first love.

They were doing all sorts of things right. They persevered, we're told. They worked hard, we're told. They didn't put up with false teachers. They endured hardships. But Jesus said, The thing that I desire from you, the thing that I want most is your love, and you've lost it.

He was jealous. And so he comes with words of correction, words of discipline. His jealousy is out of concern and care for us.

You see, if our hearts grow cold to Christ, there is certainly something that will happen. As we grow cold toward Christ, then our hearts will wander from him and we will wander into sin.

Just as when a husband or a wife's love for their partner grows cold, it will be certain that soon their love will be turned to another. How vital it is, dear friends, that we guard our love for Christ.

[22 : 16] How vital it is that we seek to inflame that love for Christ and to stir that love for Christ more and more. How important it is that we have no idols before him.

How important that we don't lift up other people or we lift up things or careers or jobs or whatever it may be. That we are faithful to the one who loved us and gave himself for us.

Do I love Christ with a single love? Has there any reason to be jealous? The reason that the Lord God was jealous was because he cared for those who trusted in him.

His jealousy moved him because he cared about their love. He cared about them continuing in a way of self-destructive sin. And so he acted to bring them back.

So we see that in the person of our God, these two things are balanced. Secondly, and very strongly, God speaks about vengeance, doesn't he?

[23 : 18] Verse 2, the Lord is avenging God. The Lord takes vengeance. The Lord takes vengeance on his foes. Very, very, very powerful words.

But again, we understand the word vengeance as a bad thing. It's the sort of thing that we read about in an Agatha Christie novel. It's the motive to a murder.

That person has been done wrong in the past. Or their parents were done wrong in the past. Or their dog was done wrong in the past. Anyway, for any something past has happened, it's led to a bitterness and unforgiveness in their hearts.

And so they have plotted vengeance to kill. That can't be how the Bible means the vengeance of God, can it?

In fact, we're told in the Bible very clearly that the only person who is allowed to act with vengeance is the Lord God himself. In the Old Testament and the New, we have instructions and commands that we should not take vengeance ourselves.

[24 : 24] Rather, as Romans 12 quotes from the Old Testament, It is mine to avenge. I will repay, says the Lord. That's because revenge is the punishment of sin.

To take revenge is to act as a judge and an executioner against somebody else's sin. But who is without sin? Who of us has the right to set ourselves up as a judge of another to determine ultimately what punishment that sin deserves?

Because that's what vengeance is. Remember Jesus, as he stood with the woman who'd been caught in adultery, and they all wanted him to say, Yes, stone her. Bring the law down on her.

And with the incredible wisdom, which belongs to the Son of God alone, he says, You without sin, you first throw the first stone. You without sin, you first throw the first stone.

But God is sinless, isn't he? God is sinless and perfect. He is the judge of the whole earth. It's his right alone to act in justice against those who attack God's people, and ultimately against those who sin and attack him.

[25 : 39] For this is what we see Assyria have done, in attacking God's people, in suppressing, taking them into captivity, which they did, and treating them so harshly, they have attacked the Lord.

Verse 11, From you, O Nineveh, has one come forth who plots evil against the Lord. Those who touch the Lord's people touch the Lord.

That's why we're precious to him. That's why he cares for us and protects us. We are his. We are one with him. Those who stretch out their arm against us stretch out their arm against the Lord.

Vengeance against Nineveh, against the Assyrian nation, is God acting in justice to punish those who have attacked him, those who've blasphemed his name by worshipping other gods, and we see that in verse 14, about their carved images, and temple of gold, and so on, and those who

cruelly have oppressed the ones he loves.

Later on in chapter 3, verse 1, God gives them this title, Woe to the city of blood, full of lies, full of plunder, never without victims.

[26 : 54] God's vengeance is seen that he is a God who does not ignore evil, but he acts against it. How good that is, isn't it?

How good that is, that as he says here, the Lord will not leave the guilty unpunished. What sort of a just ruler leaves the guilty unpunished? Only an unjust ruler.

No vengeance. To act against sin, to respond to sin, not to look idly at it, or to brush it under the carpet, or to walk on the other side of the road, is a sign of the very goodness, and patience, and grace of God.

But again, he is vengeance, and yet he is slow to anger, isn't he? After he's said three times in verse 2, the Lord is avenging and vengeful, verse 3 says, the Lord is slow to anger.

God is patient. God is patient, and gives time for repentance, gives time for forgiveness, and so he has with Nineveh.

[28 : 05] Don't need to tell me the answer to this, because I know you'll know it. Which other prophet wrote a prophecy about Nineveh? Which other prophet was sent to Nineveh?

I think you know who I'm talking about, but he ran away, didn't he, to see? Jonah. Jonah was sent to Nineveh, by God, a hundred years before Nahum writes this prophecy.

A hundred years earlier, he was sent, eventually getting there, as you know, and preaching to them, repent, because God's judgment is coming. What happened? We're told that they did repent, and they turned away from their evil, and God withheld his judgment.

You can read all about it in chapter 3 and 4 of the book of Jonah. God was patient. In fact, Jonah running away, we're told, was because, not that God was angry against sin, he didn't like the fact that God was going to forgive Nineveh and the Assyrians.

He didn't want them to be forgiven, because they were such awful people, so he didn't want to take them the good news of the gospel. The sad truth is, though, we know that, in spite of that brief turning away from their evil ways, they very quickly turned back.

[29 : 19] Within two or three generations, they were back to their wicked ways, their sinful ways, and now God's patience has come to an end, and now judgment is imminent.

Why is it that the Lord Jesus Christ has not returned and executed judgment upon the world? Why is it when evil goes on around about us, and wicked men and women carry out atrocities, that God doesn't judge them there and then?

Why doesn't he act immediately, and bring them up, and punish them? Is it because he doesn't care? Is it because he's impotent?

He's too weak, he can't do it. No, the Bible tells us clearly, it's because he's patient. 2 Peter in chapter 3 and verse 9, Peter is dealing with those who say, where is Jesus coming?

When's he going to come back again? Here's the answer. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise. As some understand slowness, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

[30 : 29] That's why. That's why God withholds his judgment against this wicked world in which we live. That's why he allows wickedness, in one sense, to have its free reign, because he is patient, because his desire and his longing is that those who walk in wickedness might repent and be saved.

Think about it for yourselves, dear friends. If the Lord God had struck you down and entered in and brought judgment upon your life and mine when we sinned for the first time, when we told a lie for the first time, when we acted and spoke bitterly to somebody else for the first time, we'd never have been able to come to faith, would we?

Isn't God merciful? He allowed us to walk in our lives of sin until that time he brought us to himself. No, God is not weak. He is not uncaring. He is not indifferent.

He is patient. Yes, he will judge sin. That's the thing here. Yes, the Lord is slow to anger and great in power, but the Lord will not leave the guilty unpunished.

How perfect is his vengeance and his patience together. And finally, we come to this other last couplet, as it were, this last pair. Wrath and goodness.

[31 : 44] And again, notice what it says there at the end of verse, or at the end of verse one, the Lord takes vengeance on his foes and maintains his wrath. And then later on, he says as well,

sorry, earlier on rather, in the same verse two, is filled with wrath, filled with anger.

The actual literal phrase is, he is the Lord of anger. He's the Lord of anger. He is the one, the king of anger. Just as Paul expresses himself as the chief of sinners, in one sense, he was the worst. In saying what, full of anger, he's saying God is the one who has the most anger, the most wrath. And yet we find as well, verse seven, the Lord is good.

How can these things be correct? Remember the Lord Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount, he denounced anger and said it deserved judgment. Matthew in chapter five, verse 22, as Jesus begins the Sermon on the Mount, he's done the Beatitudes and he goes on to talk about the fulfillment of the law.

He says this, I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Well, how can it be then that the Lord God is declared as one who is full of anger, full of wrath?

[33 : 00] But again, we need to understand God's words as God has revealed them, not as we see them, not as we understand them.

God's anger at sin is a mark of God's perfect goodness. Just as his vengeance was in punishing sin, so his anger against sin is a sign and a proof that he is a good God.

It's evil to love sin, isn't it? It's wrong to love wickedness. Surely it's right to hate and to be angry with wickedness.

Here's a quote from a commentary. We admire the character of a father who is opposed to disorder, sin, and disobedience in his family and who expresses his opposition in a proper way.

We admire the character of a ruler or king who is opposed to all crime in the community and who expresses those feelings in the law. Why should we not be equally pleased with God who is opposed to all crime in all parts of the universe and who determines to express his opposition in the proper way for the sake of preserving order and promoting peace.

[34 : 20] It is good that God is angry. As I say, one of the things that would be the most unpleasant type of thing is if we worshipped a God who was indifferent.

A God who didn't care. A God who was unmoved. Who on earth here is not angry when they see a little boy drowned on the beach of Turkey?

Who is not angry when they hear of five or six pedophiles who have been put in prison because of abuse against babies and children?

Who is not angry with those things? But if we are angry then how much more must and is God angry with these things? When God brought downfall against Assyria when he crushed them and destroyed them and brought his vengeance against them we are told that everybody who heard about it was glad.

Very end of the book. Everyone who hears the last verse of chapter 3 verse 18 everyone who hears the news about you claps their hands and says who is it your fall?

[35 : 27] Who has not felt your endless cruelty? There was virtually nobody in that region who had not suffered under the tyranny of the Assyrian Empire who wasn't suffering under the tyranny.

So cruel were they that God gives them that nickname. Chapter 3 verse 1 the city of blood. Here's historically what one Assyrian emperor boasted found on a tablet.

I stormed the mountain peaks and took them. I slaughtered them and with their blood I dyed the mountain red like wool. The heads of their warriors I cut off and formed them into a pillar.

That's the mildest quotation of the evil atrocities that the Assyrians got up to. Isn't it good that God is angry with such things? Isn't it good that he's not indifferent with how men and women behave in this world?

Yes, God's anger and his goodness go together. And the most perfect expression of his anger against evil and his goodness is seen of course in the most wicked act the world has ever witnessed when the sinless Son of God was crucified and suffered and died.

[36 : 46] The only innocent the only perfect the only law keeping the only obedient person who's ever lived taken and cruelly wickedly murdered and yet we know that there on the cross God's goodness and anger met.

There his goodness was displayed in that he gave his Son to be the propitiation the one who turns away wrath for our sin the one who has brought appeasement the one who has brought pardon in the cross we see God's anger and his goodness satisfying the justice that our sin calls for in the death of his only Son.

And now dear friends now because the anger of God has been dealt with at the cross for us through faith we rest in the goodness of God. God will never ever be angry with us again because his anger and his wrath has been fully satisfied at Calvary.

We are those who only enjoy his goodness who only bask in his smile who only enjoy his embrace. We are sheltered from the wrath of God never to be touched by it again because Christ our refuge covers over us and every dealing that God has with us is good.

This is the God of the Bible. This is the God of Nahum. The God who is perfect in every one of his attributes. He's not to be judged by our human standards.

[38 : 32] He's not to be found out by our imperfect understanding but rather he's to be worshipped, he's to be adored, he's to be feared, he's to be loved.

That's the good news. Look there on the mountains, the feet of one who brings good news, who proclaims peace. This is what we have, a message for the world that God is not a God who is too powerless to be concerned about the evils of this world.

Not a God who sees what is going on and is indifferent but a God who is active and has acted on the behalf of this world to send a saviour for men and women who may come to him and find rescue, refuge, goodness and life.

Well let's sing together our closing hymn. To this God. Lord, we have a foundation you saints of the Lord be saved for your faith in his excellent word.

What more can he say that to you we are spread? You who are to Jesus forever you transfer to him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy to the only God our saviour.

[40 : 29] Be glory, majesty, power, and authority through Jesus Christ our Lord before all ages now and forevermore.

Amen. Amen.