

# The Only God Who Speaks is Angry

November 21, 2021

Zephaniah 1:2-6

**Have you ever thought about what provokes God to anger?**

- **If we don't understand what it is that provokes God to anger, then how will we turn from it?**
- **So I want to bring an awareness to a particular sin that makes God particularly angry so that Christians can walk worthy of Jesus Christ and the lost can turn from their idols to worship and serve the living God**

Watch this video: [\*What is Sin? How is it Different from Idolatry?\*](#)

**T/S: Let's pray before we unpack the context of today's text**

**CONTEXT: I want you to see the context through a God honoring lens**

**This video will help us do that**

Watch this video: [\*The Bible Project- The Prophets\*](#)

**Today, we will focus on the consequence for breaking the mutual partnership between God and His people**

- **Messenger-** Zephaniah- a prophet of the LORD
- **Message-** Destruction & deliverance
- **Mess-** Israel's history of unfaithfulness

### The black backdrop of Zephaniah's prophecy

**2 Kings 17:15-20** - They *despised his statutes and his covenant* that he made with their fathers and the *warnings that he gave them*. They went after false idols and *became false*, and they followed the nations that were around them, concerning whom the Lord had commanded them that they should not do like them. And they abandoned all the commandments of the Lord their God, and made for themselves metal images of two calves; and they made an Asherah and worshiped all the host of heaven and served Baal. And they burned their sons and their daughters as offerings and used divination and omens and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, *provoking him to anger*. Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel and removed them out of his sight. None was left but the tribe of Judah only. Judah also did not keep the commandments of the Lord their God, but walked in the customs that Israel had introduced. And the Lord rejected all the descendants of Israel and *afflicted them* and gave them into the hand of plunderers, until he had *cast them out of his sight*.

**T/S The context supports the timeless truth**

**BIG IDEA: Creator Christ will crush all of creation because His creatures commit cosmic corruption**

**T/S: Zephaniah 1:1, God revealed the sinfulness of Judah  
1:2-6 See Christ' response to idolatry**

**1:1- Hear, heed, herald the word of the LORD**

**1:2-6 See Christ' holy response to those who do not**

**God's Wrath-** *God intensely hates sin- wrath and eternal destruction are impending over the human race (Grudem)*

Watch this video: [\*The Doctrine of the Wrath of God\*](#)

**God is Jealous-** *continually seeks to protect His own honor (Grudem)*

**God's Will** *is the ultimate reason for everything that happens- it is the attribute of God whereby he approves and determines to bring about every action necessary for the existence and activity of himself and all creation (Grudem)*

**Crush-** 1. to administer justice

2. to make humble, contrite, and empty of self

*Definitions from Gesenius' Hebrew- Chaldee Lexicon*

**PREVIEW: The LORD proclaims to and through His prophets His promise to punish**

**I. His creation      II. His creatures      III. His children**

## I. The LORD proclaims to and through His prophets His promise to punish His creation

**T/S: This promise is like the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami**

*v2 “I will utterly sweep away everything from the face of the earth,” declares the LORD*

### **a. Creator Christ *will* completely crush creation**

- Who has this authority and power?
- Christ is the warning and the wrath
- Who can hinder Creator Christ from doing His *will*?

**Isaiah 46:11-** *I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it*

***Declares the LORD-* Make no mistake. It is the LORD Himself who proclaims His promise to punish creation**

**What are you holding onto eternally?**

**How will you escape God’s wrath? What is your hope?**

**T/S Now the LORD zooms in from creation to creatures**

**II. The LORD proclaims to and through His prophets  
His promise to punish His creatures (v3)**

**This promise is like a tsunami warning system**

**Witnesses warn the world of God's wrath**

*v3a "I will sweep away man and beast; I will sweep  
away the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea,*

**a. Creator Christ will crush His creatures**

- See Creator Christ reversing Genesis 1 (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> day)
- See man has no advantage over the beasts
- See no one will escape Creator Christ
- Punishment parallels the 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment (Ex. 20:4)

**Deuteronomy 4:16-** *beware lest you act corruptly by making a carved image for yourselves, in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any animal that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water under the earth*

- **The Lord will sweep away that which He commands us not to worship**
- **Great precision, transparency, faithfulness, and grace**
- **Intentional violation of the command provokes God to anger**

*v3b And the rubble with the wicked.*

**a. Creator Christ will crush condemned creatures and the causes of corruption**

**Stumbling block-** originally the trigger stick of a trap

**A trap which tempts and entices one into disobedience**

**The LORD's message never changes**

**Matthew 13:40-42-** *As the weeds are collected and burned in the fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will weed out of His kingdom **every cause of sin and all who practice lawlessness**. And they will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

**Christ will crush the wicked- persist in sin and practice it (1 John 3:8 and Psalm 145:20)**

*v3c I will cut off mankind from the face of the earth,” declares the LORD.*

**a. Creator Christ will crush all men in a common calamity**

**All of Judah was exiled- the righteous & the wicked**

*Though not all shall be cut off from the Lord, yet all shall be cut off from the land (Matthew Henry)*

**Christians are not immune from difficult times; however, the promised purpose makes all the difference (Ro. 8:28)**

- **The rebels are crushed unto condemnation (Ps. 145:20)**
- **The remnant is crushed unto Christlikeness**

**Psalm 119:71-** *It was good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes*

**Do you feel the weight of this promise of punishment?**

**Are you concerned for your own soul or the soul of others?**

**Are you ready to stand before Judge Jesus?**

**Will you warn others? Why or why not?**

**T/S The LORD zooms in one more time into the heart**

**III. The LORD proclaims to and through His prophets His promise to punish His children (v4-6)**

**The Tsunami is coming close to home**

***v4a- “I will stretch out My hand against Judah and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem;***

**a. Creator Christ will crush His children**

- Christ is the principal agent- *I will*
- Christ is against Judah as an enemy
- Christ is not against Judah as an enemy
- **Not everyone in the church is the Church**

**Romans 9:6-** *not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel*

## The LORD punishes His children by discipline

**Jeremiah 30:11-** *For I am with you to save you, declares the LORD; I will make a full end of all the nations among whom I scattered you, but of you I will not make a full end. I will discipline you in just measure, and I will by no means leave you unpunished.*

### Matthew Henry Commentary- Jeremiah 30:10-17

In these verses, as in those foregoing, the deplorable case of the Jews in captivity is set forth, but many precious promises are given them that in due time they should be relieved and a glorious salvation wrought for them.

- I. God himself appeared against them: he scattered them (v. 11); he did all these things unto them, v. 15. All their calamities came from his hands; whoever were the instruments, he was the principal agent. And this made their case very sad that God, even their own God, spoke concerning them, to pull down and to destroy. Now, 1. This was intended by him as a fatherly chastisement, and no other (v. 11): "I will correct thee in measure, or according to judgment, with discretion, no more than thou deservest, nay, no more than thou canst well bear." What God does against his people is in a way of correction, and that correction is always moderated and always proceeds from love: "I will not leave thee altogether unpunished, as thou art ready to think I should, because of thy relation to me." Note, A profession of religion, though ever so plausible, will be far from securing to us impunity in sin. God is no respecter of persons, but will show his hatred of sin wherever he finds it, and that he hates it most in those that are nearest to him. God here corrects his people for the multitude of their iniquity, and because their sins were increased, v. 14, 15. Are our sorrows multiplied at any time

and do they increase? We must acknowledge that it is because our sins have been multiplied and they have increased. Iniquities grow in us, and therefore troubles grow upon us. But,

2. What God intended as a fatherly chastisement they and others interpreted as an act of hostility; they looked upon him as having wounded them with the wound of an enemy and with the chastisement of a cruel one (v. 14), as if he had designed their ruin, and neither mitigated the correction nor had any mercy in reserve for them. It did indeed seem as if God had dealt thus severely with them, as if he had turned to be their enemy and had fought against them, Isa. 63:10. Job complains that God had become cruel to him and multiplied his wounds. When troubles are great and long we have need carefully to watch over our own hearts, that we entertain not such hard thoughts as these of God and his providence. His are the chastisements of a merciful one, not of a cruel one, whatever they may appear.

## **The LORD punishes the counterfeit and wicked children by wrath (John 3:36)**

***v4b- And I will cut off from this place the remnant of Baal and the name of the idolatrous priests along with the priests,***

**a. Creator Christ *will* crush creeps and their children**

- **Priest received the greatest privilege!**
- **Idolatrous priests are creeps**
- **Create corrupt christ' to satisfy their corrupt desires**
- **Worship crops and children- Worship gift vs. Giver**

- **Sensuality & prostitution- Condoning fornication and championing homosexuality in the church**
- **Child sacrifice- Murdering babies (abortion)**

*v5a- those who bow down on the roofs to the host of the heavens,*

**a. Creator Christ will crush creatures who worship creation**

***Bow down***- an expression of worship, high regard, respect

**Romans 1:25-** *because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.*

- **Creator Christ magnifies Himself through creation**

*v5b- those who bow down and swear to the LORD and yet swear by Milcom (king),*

**a. Creator Christ will crush counterfeit children**

***Swear allegiance to*** refers to exclusive loyalty & devotion

**Swearing by mean to give honor to that which you swear by**

**Revelation 3:16-** *because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth*

**Are you balancing your love for God and the world?**

**James 4:4-** *You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?*

*v6- those who have turned back from following the LORD, who do not seek the LORD or inquire of him.”*

**a. Creator Christ will crush creatures who cherish corruption over Christ**

***turned back*** is used of an enemy when retreating; to draw back from the LORD

**John 6:65-67-** *And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.” After this many of his disciples **turned back** and no longer walked with him.*

***“Do you WANT to go away as well?”***

**Revelation 2:4-** *But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first*

## *Do you love Me?*

***seek-*** to search for Christ, strive after Christ, ask, desire

**Jeremiah 29:13-** *You will seek me and find me **when you seek me with all your heart***

Christians seek Christ **because** He first sought them (Luke 19:10)

**Christ will turn away from those who turn away from Him**

**Hosea 5:15-** *I will go away and return to My place until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face; in their affliction they will earnestly seek Me*

***inquire-*** to tread a place with the feet; to frequent it

**Luke 5:16-** *But Jesus Himself would **often** slip away to the wilderness and **pray***

**Who are you supremely following and seeking?**

**Can you genuinely say you *have found the one whom your soul loves?***

**T/S Let me remind you of where we have been today**

**The LORD proclaims to and through His prophets His promise to punish**

**I. His creation      II. His creatures      III. His children**

**T/S Zoom in one last time- From creation, to creatures, to children, to you**

**You must personally see this prophecy through the cross**

**Watch this video: [God Crushed Jesus Christ to Save Wretched Sinners](#)**

**From idolatry to intimacy. Thank Christ for crushing me!**

**Compassionately crushes His children unto Christ nearness**

**Creator Christ will eternally crush you if you do not biblically believe in Christ and His cross**

**Christ will crush you into a new creature**

**You don't know when your last day will be, but you can know where you will spend eternity because of Jesus Christ**

**Who are you worshipping?**

## LET'S PRAY

### **Extended Notes for a deeper understanding of Zephaniah 1:2-6**

**Read “Christian Beliefs” by Wayne Grudem” for a deeper understanding of God’s wrath, jealousy, and will**

**Read Matthew Henry’s commentary on Hebrews 12:5-15 for a deeper understanding of God’s discipline and chastisement (punishment)**

II. He argues from the peculiar and gracious nature of those sufferings that befall the people of God. Though their enemies and persecutors may be the instruments of inflicting such sufferings on them, yet they are divine chastisements; their heavenly Father has his hand in all, and his wise end to serve by all; of this he has given them due notice, and they should not forget it, v. 5. Observe,

1. Those afflictions which may be truly persecution as far as men are concerned in them are fatherly rebukes and chastisements as far as God is concerned in them.

Persecution for religion is sometimes a correction and rebuke for the sins of professors of religion. Men persecute them because they are religious; God chastises them because they are not more so: men persecute them because they will not give up their profession; God chastises them because they have not lived up to their profession.

2. God has directed his people how they ought to behave themselves under all their afflictions; they must avoid the extremes that many run into.

(1.) They must not despise the chastening of the Lord; they must not make light of afflictions, and be stupid and insensible under them, for they are the hand and rod of God, and his rebukes for sin. Those who make light of affliction make light of God and make light of sin.

(2.) They must not faint when they are rebuked; they must not despond and sink under their trial, nor fret and repine, but bear up with faith and patience.

(3.) If they run into either of these extremes, it is a sign they have forgotten their heavenly Father's advice and exhortation, which he has given them in true and tender affection.

3. Afflictions, rightly endured, though they may be the fruits of God's displeasure, are yet proofs of his paternal love to his people and care for them (v. 6, 7): Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

Observe,

(1.) The best of God's children need chastisement. They have their faults and follies, which need to be corrected.

(2.) Though God may let others alone in their sins, he will correct sin in his own children; they are of his family, and shall not escape his rebukes when they want them.

(3.) In this he acts as becomes a father, and treats them like children; no wise and good father will wink at faults in his own children as he would in others; his relation and his affections oblige him to take more notice of the faults of his own children than those of others.

(4.) To be suffered to go on in sin without a rebuke is a sad sign of alienation from God; such are bastards, not sons. They may call him Father, because born in the pale of the church; but they are the spurious offspring of another father, not of God, v. 7, 8.

4. Those that are impatient under the discipline of their heavenly Father behave worse towards him than they would do towards earthly parents, v. 9, 10. Here,

(1.) The apostle commends a dutiful and submissive behaviour in children towards their earthly parents We gave them reverence, even when they corrected us. It is the duty of children to give the reverence of obedience to the just commands of their parents, and the reverence of submission to their correction when they have been disobedient. Parents have not only authority, but a charge from God, to give their children correction when it is due, and he has commanded children to take such correction well: to be stubborn and discontented under due correction is a double fault; for the correction supposes there has been a fault already committed against the parent's commanding power, and superadds a further fault against his chastening power. Hence,

(2.) He recommends humble and submissive behavior towards our heavenly Father, when under his correction; and this he does by an argument from the less to the greater.

[1.] Our earthly fathers are but the fathers of our flesh, but God is the Father of our spirits. Our fathers on earth were instrumental in the production of our bodies, which are but flesh, a mean, mortal, vile thing, formed out of the dust of the earth, as the bodies of the beasts are; and yet as they are curiously wrought, and made parts of our persons, a proper tabernacle for the soul to dwell in and an organ for it to act by, we owe reverence and affection to those who were instrumental in their procreation; but then we must own much more to him who is the Father of our spirits. Our souls are not of a material substance, not of the most refined sort; they are not ex traduce-by traduction; to affirm it is bad philosophy, and worse divinity: they are the immediate offspring of God, who, after he had formed the body of man out of the earth, breathed into him a vital spirit, and so he became a living soul.

[2.] Our earthly parents chastened us for their own pleasure. Sometimes they did it to gratify their passion rather than to reform our manners. This is a weakness the fathers of our flesh are subject to, and this they should carefully watch against; for hereby they dishonour that parental authority which God has put upon them and very much hinder the efficacy of their chastisements. But the Father of our spirits never grieves willingly, nor afflicts the children of men, much less his own children. It is always for our profit; and the advantage he intends us thereby is no less than our being partakers of his holiness; it is to correct and cure those sinful disorders which make us unlike to God, and to improve and to increase those graces which are the image of God in us, that we may be and act more like our heavenly Father. God loves his children so that he would have them to be as like himself as can be, and for this end he chastises them when they need it.

[3.] The fathers of our flesh corrected us for a few days, in our state of childhood, when minors; and, though we were in that weak and peevish state, we owed them reverence, and when we came to maturity we loved and honoured them the more for it. Our whole life here is a state of childhood, minority, and imperfection, and therefore we must submit to the discipline of such a state; when we come to a state of perfection we shall be fully reconciled to all the measures of God's discipline over us now.

[4.] God's correction is no condemnation. His children may at first fear lest affliction should come upon that dreadful errand, and we cry, Do not condemn me, but show me wherefore thou contendest with me, Job 10:2. But this is so far from being the design of God to his own people that he therefore chastens them now that they may not be condemned with the world, 1 Co. 11:32. He does it to prevent the

death and destruction of their souls, that they may live to God, and be like God, and for ever with him.

5. The children of God, under their afflictions, ought not to judge of his dealings with them by present sense, but by reason, and faith, and experience: No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness, v. 11. Here observe, (1.) The judgment of sense in this case-Afflictions are not grateful to the sense, but grievous; the flesh will feel them, and be grieved by them, and groan under them.

(2.) The judgment of faith, which corrects that of sense, and declares that a sanctified affliction produces the fruits of righteousness; these fruits are peaceable, and tend to the quieting and comforting of the soul. Affliction produces peace, by producing more righteousness; for the fruit of righteousness is peace. And if the pain of the body contribute thus to the peace of the mind, and short present affliction produce blessed fruits of a long continuance, they have no reason to fret or faint under it; but their great concern is that the chastening they are under may be endured by them with patience, and improved to a greater degree of holiness.

[1.] That their affliction may be endured with patience, which is the main drift of the apostle's discourse on this subject; and he again returns to exhort them that for the reason before mentioned they should lift up the hands that hang down and the feeble knees, v. 12. A burden of affliction is apt to make the Christian's hands hang down, and his knees grow feeble, to dispirit him and discourage him; but this he must strive against, and that for two reasons:-

First, That he may the better run his spiritual race and course. Faith, and patience, and holy courage and resolution, will make him walk more steadily, keep a straighter path, prevent wavering and wandering.

Secondly, That he may encourage and not dispirit others that are in the same way with him. There are many that are in the way to heaven who yet walk but weakly and lamely in it. Such are apt to discourage one another, and hinder one another; but it is their duty to take courage, and act by faith, and so help one another forward in the way to heaven.

[2.] That their affliction may be improved to a greater degree of holiness. Since this is God's design, it ought to be the design and concern of his children, that with renewed strength and patience they may follow peace with all men, and holiness, v. 14. If the children of God grow impatient under affliction, they will neither walk so quietly and peaceably towards men, nor so piously towards God, as they should do; but faith and patience will enable them to follow peace and holiness too, as a man follows his calling, constantly, diligently, and with pleasure. Observe,

First, It is the duty of Christians, even when in a suffering state, to follow peace with all men, yea, even with those who may be instrumental in their sufferings. This is a hard lesson, and a high attainment, but what Christ has called his people to. Sufferings are apt to sour the spirit and sharpen the passions; but the children of God must follow peace with all men.

**6. Where afflictions and sufferings for the sake of Christ are not considered by men as the chastisement of their heavenly Father, and improved as such, they will be a dangerous snare and temptation to apostasy, which every Christian should most carefully watch against (v. 15, 16): Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God, etc.**

### Context of Zephaniah

- Last of the minor prophets before Judah goes into exile, at the hands of the Babylonians
- The final written word of the preexilic Minor Prophets
- The prophets are like covenant watchdogs
- Their primary responsibility was to confront and correct any deviation from God's law

*A charge against them for their gross sin, which provoked God to bring that destruction upon them (v. 5, 6); and so he goes on in the rest of the chapter, setting both the judgments before them, that they might prevent them or prepare for them, and the sins that destroy them, that they might judge themselves, and justify God in what was brought upon them (Matthew Henry)*

*The prophets were extremely **nationalistic**. They rebuked sin in high as well as low places. They warned the nation. They pleaded with a proud people to humble themselves and return to God. Fire and tears were mingled in their message, which was not one of doom and gloom alone, for they saw the Day of the Lord and the glory to follow. All of them looked through the darkness to the dawn of a new day. In the night of sin they saw the light of a coming Savior and Sovereign; they saw the millennial kingdom coming in all its fullness. Their message must be interpreted before an appreciation of the kingdom in the New Testament can be attained (Dr. J Vernon)*

*Prophets often give a heavenly perspective on our earthly circumstances so that every generation of God's people can be warned, challenged, comforted, and given hope for the future (The Bible Project)*

Zephaniah is like a resounding alarm to wake up unbelievers and shake up believers to the reality of God's pending and fierce judgment. The alarm simultaneously points to the One true God, Jesus Christ, who is willing and able to forgive the sins of the repentant believer and rescue him from eternal destruction (DOK)

This book is like a rescue mission in which God is urging and compelling all men to repent and believe in Him for salvation. He deploys Zephaniah as his ambassador to speak on His behalf to His people, the surrounding nations, and to us (DOK)

The land of Judah was given to the Israelites by God under the rule of Joshua

### **Jeremiah 32**

**16** *“After I had given the deed of purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed to the Lord, saying: **17** ‘Ah, Lord God! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you. **18** You show steadfast love to thousands, but you repay the guilt of fathers to their children after them, O great and mighty God, whose name is the Lord of hosts, **19** great in counsel and mighty in deed, whose eyes are open to all the ways of the children of man, rewarding each one according to his ways and according to*

*the fruit of his deeds. 20 You have shown signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, and to this day in Israel and among all mankind, and have made a name for yourself, as at this day. 21 You brought your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with a strong hand and outstretched arm, and with great terror. 22 And you gave them this land, which you swore to their fathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey. 23 And they entered and took possession of it. But they did not obey your voice or walk in your law. They did nothing of all you commanded them to do. Therefore you have made all this disaster come upon them. 24 Behold, the siege mounds have come up to the city to take it, and because of sword and famine and pestilence the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans who are fighting against it. What you spoke has come to pass, and behold, you see it. 25 Yet you, O Lord God, have said to me, “Buy the field for money and get witnesses”—though the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans.’”*

*26 The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: 27 “Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me? 28 Therefore, thus says the Lord: Behold, I am giving this city into the hands of the Chaldeans and into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall capture it. 29 The Chaldeans who are fighting against this city shall come and set this city on fire and burn it, with the houses on whose roofs offerings have been made to Baal and drink offerings have been poured out to other gods, to provoke me to anger. 30 For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have done nothing but evil in my sight from their youth. The children of Israel have done nothing but provoke me to anger by the work of their hands, declares the Lord. 31 This city has aroused my anger and wrath, from the day it was built to this day, so that I will remove it from my sight 32 because of all the evil of the children of Israel and the children of Judah that they did to provoke me to anger—their kings and their officials, their priests and their prophets, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 33 They have turned to me their back and not their face. And though I have taught them persistently, they have not listened to receive instruction. 34 They set up their abominations in the house that is called by my name, to defile it. 35 They built the high places of Baal in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to offer up their sons and daughters to Molech, though I did not command them, nor did it enter into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.*

## 2 Kings 17

*Yet the Lord warned Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, in accordance with all the Law that I commanded your fathers, and that I sent to you by my servants the prophets."*

***14** But they would not listen, but were stubborn, as their fathers had been, who did not believe in the Lord their God. **15** They despised his statutes and his covenant that he made with their fathers and the warnings that he gave them. They went after false idols and became false, and they followed the nations that were around them, concerning whom the Lord had commanded them that they should not do like them. **16** And they abandoned all the commandments of the Lord their God, and made for themselves metal images of two calves; and they made an Asherah and worshiped all the host of heaven and served Baal. **17** And they burned their sons and their daughters as offerings[a] and used divination and omens and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger. **18** Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel and removed them out of his sight. None was left but the tribe of Judah only.*

***19** Judah also did not keep the commandments of the Lord their God, but walked in the customs that Israel had introduced. **20** And the Lord rejected all the descendants of Israel and afflicted them and gave them into the hand of plunderers, until he had cast them out of his sight.*

### Idolatry provokes God to anger

**Deuteronomy 31:29** *For I know that after my death you are sure to become utterly corrupt and to turn from the way I have commanded you. In days to come, disaster will fall on you because you will do evil in the sight of the LORD and arouse his anger by what your hands have made."*

**1 Kings 14:9** *You have done more evil than all who lived before you. You have made for yourself other gods, idols made of metal; you have aroused my anger and turned your back on me*

**Jeremiah 8:19** *Listen to the cry of my people from a land far away: "Is the LORD not in Zion? Is her King no longer there?" "Why have they aroused my anger with their images, with their worthless foreign idols?"*

## What is the purpose of punishment?

Punishment for the wicked is the administration of justice and an expression of the wrath of God while punishment for His people produces passionate purity

### Matthew Henry Commentary- Read Jeremiah 30:7-17

1.) Jacob's troubles shall cease: *He shall be saved out of them.* Though the afflictions of the church may last long, they shall not last always. *Salvation belongs to the Lord,* and shall be wrought for his church.

*Therefore* they were brought into trouble and made to *serve their enemies* because they had not *served the Lord their God* as they ought to have done, *with joyfulness and gladness of heart,* Deu. 28:47. But, when the time shall come that they should be *saved out of their trouble,* God will prepare and qualify them for it by giving them a *heart to serve him,* and will make it doubly comfortable by giving them opportunity to serve him. *Therefore* we are *delivered out of the hands of our enemies,* that we may *serve God,* Lu. 1:74, 75.

- I. God himself appeared against them: he *scattered* them (v. 11); he did *all these things unto them,* v. 15. All their calamities came from his hands; whoever were the instruments, he was the principal agent. And this made their case very sad that God, even their own God, spoke concerning them, to pull down and to destroy. Now,
  - 1. This was intended by him as a fatherly chastisement, and no other (v. 11): *"I will correct thee in measure, or according to judgment, with discretion, no more than thou deserves, nay, no more than thou canst well bear."* What God does against his people is in a way of correction, and that correction is always moderated and always proceeds from love: *"I will not leave thee altogether unpunished, as thou art ready to think I should, because of thy relation to me."* Note, A profession of religion, though ever so plausible, will be far from securing to us impunity in sin. God is no respecter of persons, but will show his hatred of sin wherever he finds it, and that he hates it most in those that are nearest to him. God here corrects his people *for the multitude of their iniquity,* and *because their sins were increased,* v. 14, 15. Are our sorrows multiplied at any time and do they increase? We must acknowledge that it is because our sins have been multiplied and they have increased. Iniquities grow in us, and therefore troubles grow upon us. But,

- 2. What God intended as a fatherly chastisement they and others interpreted as an act of hostility; they looked upon him as having *wounded them with the wound of an enemy and with the chastisement of a cruel one* (v. 14), as if he had designed their ruin, and neither mitigated the correction nor had any mercy in reserve for them. It did indeed seem as if God had dealt thus severely with them, as if he had turned to be their enemy and had fought against them, Isa. 63:10. Job complains that God had become cruel to him and *multiplied his wounds*. When troubles are great and long we have need carefully to watch over our own hearts, that we entertain not such hard thoughts as these of God and his providence. His are the chastisements of a merciful one, not of a cruel one, whatever they may appear.

Judah was warned by God's prophets of the harm that would come to them if they disobeyed God

Judah was not careful but careless toward God and His commandments

Before the Hebrews entered the Promised Land, the Lord God warned against worshipping Canaan's gods (Deuteronomy 6:14-15), but Israel turned to idolatry anyway.

**Deuteronomy 6:14–15 (ESV)** *14 You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you— 15 for the Lord your God in your midst is a jealous God—lest the anger of the Lord your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth.*

### Jeremiah 25

**3** *“For twenty-three years, from the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, to this day, the word of the Lord has come to me, and I have spoken persistently to you, but you have not listened. 4 You have neither listened nor inclined your ears to hear, although the Lord persistently sent to you all his servants the prophets, 5 saying, ‘Turn now, every one of you, from his evil way and evil deeds, and dwell upon the land that the Lord has given to you and your fathers from of old and forever. 6 Do not go after other gods to serve and worship them, nor provoke me to anger with the work of your hands. Then I will do you no harm.’ 7 Yet you have not listened to me, declares the Lord, that you might provoke me to anger with the work of your hands to your own harm.*

## John Calvin Commentary

*Since, then, the pious king had strenuously and courageously promoted the interest of true religion, it seems a wonder that God was still so much displeased. But we must remember, that though Josiah sincerely worshipped God, yet the people were not really changed; for it has often happened, that God roused the chief men and leaders, while few, or hardly any, followed them, but only yielded a feigned obedience. This was no doubt the case in the time of Josiah; the hearts of the people were alienated from God and true religion, so that they chose rather to rot in their filth than to return to the true worship of God. And that this was the case soon appeared by the event; for Josiah did not reign long after he had cleansed the land from its defilements, and Jehoahaz succeeded him; and then the people immediately relapsed into their idolatry;*

## The Character of God

**The anger of God-** the ὀργή attributed to God in the N. T. is that in God which stands opposed to man's disobedience, obduracy (especially in resisting the gospel) and sin, and manifests itself in punishing the same:

**The freedom of God-** God's freedom is that attribute whereby he does whatever he pleases. Nothing in all of creation can hinder God from doing his will. Not constrained by anything external to himself and he is free to do whatever he wishes to do (**Wayne Grudem**)

### **The Omnipotence of God (Sovereignty)**

Means God is able to do all his holy will

Omnipotence refers to the power of God to do what he decides to do

Almighty means he is the possessor of all power and authority

There are some things that God cannot do

- deny his own character
- Cannot lie
- Impossible for God to lie
- Cannot deny himself
- Cannot be tempted with evil
- Does not tempt
- Cease to exist or be God
- Or act in a way inconsistent with any of his attributes

### **Excerpts drawn from Wayne Grudem's book "Systematic Theology"**

Although God's power is infinite, his use of that power is qualified by his other attributes just as all God's attributes qualify all his actions.

God's sovereignty is his exercise of rule over his creation (He is King)

When we use our will and our freedom to make choices that are pleasing to God, we reflect his character and bring him glory to him

God's will is that attribute of God whereby he approves and determined to bring about every action necessary for the existence and activity of himself and all creation

This definition indicates that God's will has to do with deciding and approving the things that God is and does

It concerns God's choices of what to do and what not to do.

Scripture frequently indicates God's will as the final or most ultimate reason for everything that happens.

God continually brings about everything in the universe according to the counsel of his will (literal translation of Ephesians 1:11)

God is Jealous- earnestly protective or watchful (Deuteronomy 5:9)

### Matthew Henry Commentary on 1 Corinthians 10

*The reason with which the second commandment is enforced is, I am a jealous God. God cannot endure a rival in matter of worship; nor give his glory, nor suffer it to be given, to another. Those who have fellowship with other gods provoke him to jealousy, Deu. 32:16.*

*And, before this be done, persons should consider whether they are stronger than he. It is a dangerous thing to provoke God's anger, unless we could withstand his power. But who can stand before him when he is angry? Nah. 1:6.*

***This should be considered by all who continue in the love and liking of sin, and in league with it, while yet they profess to keep up communion with Christ***

Demanding exclusive service

Those who worship false gods (including but not limited to self) hate the one true God

If you love God, you will obey His command to exclusively worship Him.

God desires and demands our worship

He will punish all who do not worship him

### Matthew Henry's Commentary on Jeremiah 5

Can you yourselves think that the God whose name is *Jealous* will let such idolatries go unpunished, or that a God of infinite purity will connive at such abominable uncleanness?" These are things that must be reckoned for, else the honour of God's government cannot be maintained, nor his laws saved from contempt; but sinners will be tempted to think him *altogether such a one as themselves*, contrary to that conviction of their own consciences concerning the judgment of God which is necessary to be supported, That *those who do such things are worthy of death*, Rom. 1:32.

God continually and earnestly seeks to protect his own honor

He commands his people not to bow down to idols or serve them

He desires that worship be given to himself and not to false gods

**Exodus 34:14** *Do not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.*

Pride is wrong because humans don't deserve the honor that belongs to God alone

He alone is infinitely worthy to be praised. To realize this fact and to delight in it is to find the secret of true worship (**Wayne Grudem**)

## **The wrath of God**

If God loves all that is right and good and all that conforms to his moral character then it should not be surprising that he would hate everything that is opposed to his moral character

God's wrath directed against sin is therefore closely related to God's holiness and justice

God's wrath means that he intensely hates all sin

**2 Kings 22:13** *“Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found. For great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us.”*

**John 3:36** *Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.*

**Romans 1:18** *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.*

**1 Thessalonians 1:10** *and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*

**1 Thessalonians 5:9** *For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,*

**Excerpts from Wayne Grudem's book, "Systematic Theology"**

Wrath viewed alone would arouse only fear and dread

Yet it is helpful for us to ask what God would be like if he were a God that did not hate sin.

He would then be a God who either delighted in sin or at least was not troubled by sin

When we meditate on the wrath of God we will be amazed to think that our Lord Jesus Christ bore the wrath of God that was due to our sin in order that we might be saved

The delay of the execution of God's wrath upon evil is for the purpose of leading people to repentance

We should never think that God is a loving God at one point in history and a just or wrathful God at another point in history

He is the same God always

He is the same God always, and everything he says or does is fully consistent with all of his attributes

God is a unity and everything he does is an act of the whole person of God

No attribute can be singled out as more important

It is God himself in his whole being who is supremely important and it is God himself in his whole being whom we are to seek to know and to love.

## Idolatry

"Idolatry is the most heinous injury and affront to the true God; it is transferring his worship and honour to a rival"

Idols are like rat poison; they look good, smell good, taste good, yet kill you

Idolatry is transferring his worship and honor to a rival

Idols can be subtle and wear camouflage

Israel and Judah put aside worshipping the Creator in order to worship the creation

We are just as guilty when God no longer holds first place in our lives

When we think more about wealth, pleasure, prestige, or material possessions than about God, we are actually worshipping them as gods. Because of idol worship the people of Judah were eventually sent into captivity in foreign lands. We may not be sent into captivity but discipline awaits all those who continually put earthly desires above spiritual priorities (**NASB Life Application Bible**) Matthew Henry

Now there can be no agreement between *the temple of God and idols*. Idols are rivals with God for his honour, and God is a jealous God, and will not give his glory to another.

Man does his very best to remove God from his thought life - Romans 1:18

Man does his very best to exchange the glory of Jesus for something or someone else - Romans 1:23

Exchange: to cause one thing to cease and another to take its place,

Furthermore, man does his very best to deny the truth about God and to replace it for a lie

In so doing, man worships the creature rather than the blessed Creator

Romans 1:25 *they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.*

How is it that Judah could think they were worshiping the LORD while worshiping Milcom and Baal?

Do you see how sick we are? - Jeremiah 17:9

Jeremiah 32:33 *They have turned to me their back and not their face. And though I have taught them persistently, they have not listened to receive instruction.*

Why would anyone do such a thing?

Why would you turn your back on someone, even God?

Because you don't want to see them

Because humans naturally see God through a sinful heart

We look at that which we perceive to be beautiful and satisfying- we need a miracle

**2 Corinthians 4:4-** *In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

Ezekiel 36:26 is the cure to our sickness

Romans 7 in part teaches us that we will not be sinless, but passionate

Ephesians 6 teaches us that we are in a spiritual war at all times

## Creation magnifies Christ

**Psalms 33:6-** 6 By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,  
And by the breath of His mouth all their lights.

**Nehemiah 9:6** - 6 “You alone are the LORD.

You have made the heavens,  
The heaven of heavens with all their lights,  
The earth and everything that is on it,  
The seas and everything that is in them.  
You give life to all of them,  
And the heavenly lights bow down before You.

**Romans 1:19** *For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.*

**Isa 40:26** *Raise your eyes on high*

*And see who has created these stars,*

*The One who brings out their multitude by number,*

*He calls them all by name;*

*Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power,*

*Not one of them is missing.*

Rather than seeing the glory of God in and through all He has created, man sees through a dark and foolish heart and esteems creation as supremely glorious and worthy of worship (DOK)

***Man wants to speak with ambiguity while God speaks with incredible precision and clarity (DOK)***