God's unstoppable pursuit

The book of Nahum is a prophetic book that announces the downfall of one of Israel's worst oppressors, the ancient empire of Assyria, and its capital city of Nineveh.

Nahum 1:2-3
2 God is jealous, and the Lord avenges; The Lord avenges and is furious.
The Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries, And He reserves wrath for His enemies. 3
The Lord is slow to anger and great in power and will not at all acquit the wicked.

When we read a passage like this in the Bible, it's very important to understand the context of what we are reading, so we don't end up with misconceptions or distorted ideas of who God is.

The book of Nahum addresses the cycle of human violence in every age. Human history is filled with tribes and nations elevating themselves and using violence to take what they want, resulting in the death of the innocent and how God is grieved and angered by it.

In it we also find encouragement for the people of God at the time, they were experiencing first-hand the "endless cruelty" of the Assyrians."

Nahum 1:7
7 The Lord is good,
A stronghold in the day of trouble;
And He knows those who trust in Him.

The first few verses in the book of Nahum describe God, the all-powerful Creator coming to confront the nations and bring His justice on their evil.
Right here we are confronted with the fact that God is righteous and just, it's part of His nature and character. God is good but He is also Just.

Psalm 145:9
The Lord is good to all,
And His tender mercies are over all His works.

Matthew 5:45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

Jesus died on the cross because of God's love and mercy towards every human being, and right now we are living under a dispensation of grace.
But that does not mean that God's nature has changed.
Malachi 3:6 "For I am the Lord, I do not change;

Our world changes, people change, but God remains the same.
Many people have issues with God's justness because they judge God according to their own finite changing standards. Instead of God being the standard for His own righteousness, they use themselves or their own opinions as the standard.

In our common post-modern thinking, there are no absolute standards of morality, resulting in everyone's judgments of right and wrong, being completely up to individual interpretation.

If we fail to understand this, we will be left with a distorted idea of who God is. God is good but He is also Righteous.
Therefore, when we come across passages in the Bible that speak about the final Judgement, where God will judge the nations, we are not left in shock or confused.

In the first few verses of the book of Nahum we see God telling the people of Nineveh that they were not going to get away with their evil acts.
When we study this whole story and in the proper context, we realise that these same verses also reveal other aspects of God's nature: His patience, mercy, and longsuffering towards those people!

The Assyrians were known to be ruthless barbaric people. In times of war the Assyrian armies were violent and destructive on a scale that the world at the time had never seen before.

This is the same city of Nineveh to which Jonah was sent by God 125 years earlier, to warn them to repent of their evil. When Jonah preached, they repented of their evil ways.

But God already knew from the beginning, that in a few generations they would go back to their evil ways, but He still sent Jonah to preach to them.
This shows us how God was being merciful and patient with those people.

In fact, this story helps us understand God's mercy and goodness to all of us.
Romans 5:8 God demonstrated His own love toward us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.

The entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation reveals God's love and His unstoppable pursuit of humankind.

God's unstoppable pursuit is to have a relationship with human beings, He wants His own creation to know who He is and that He loves them.
Let me take you on a very short journey through the Bible, in a summarised version to show you God's heart and His unstoppable pursuit of mankind.

Throughout the ages God has used many ways to come closer to us.

1. THE GOD OF HEAVEN WALKS WITH HUMANS.
<u>First, we have God in Heaven, above us</u>. Then God creates humans on earth, and He comes to fellowship with them.
But then things go wrong and God's relationship with humans is severed. They can no longer be in His presence because of sin, He is a Holy God.

2. THE GOD OF HEAVEN COMUNICATES FROM A DISTANCE

God does not give up on humans and He continues His pursuit.

He approaches a man called Abram to follow Him, and he does. God makes a covenant with this man and a nation is born, Israel, God's people.

3. **THE GOD OF HEAVEN COMES CLOSER**
God reveals Himself to a man called Moses and has a close relationship with him.

4. GOD GOES A STEP FURTHER AND HIS PRESENCE DWELLS IN A TEMPORARY ABODE
God instructs Moses to set up a temporary abode for His presence to dwell, the tent of meeting or the tabernacle. In this specific place God promised to meet with His people, He had moved closer to them.

Ezekiel 37:27
27 My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed, I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Later, during the reign of King Solomon a more permanent structure was built, and we have the first Temple.

But this was not enough for the Lord; He had much bigger plans in mind. It was not enough to have His presence dwell in a Temple, and to have a relationship with only a small portion of His creation. What about all the other nations that didn't know who He was?

So, God carries on with His unstoppable pursuit. After a period of silence when God did not communicate with anyone, He decided that it was time to move even closer to humans.

5. **GOD TAKES ON THE FORM OF A MAN– JESUS**

Jesus fulfills His ministry, He dies on a cross for the sins of humanity and is resurrected. And from now on through Jesus any person can have a relationship with God the Father.

But that would still be a long-distance relationship, because Jesus went back to Heaven and is with the Father. God was not going to abandon us. Before He went to the cross Jesus said:
John 14:16
16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—

It's no longer God above in Heaven, or God at a distance, or God's presence dwelling in a specific place, or God in the form of a man, now it's God inside of us. We are His temple; His presence resides in us.

1 Corinthians 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

Now, it's up to you and me to move closer to Him.

James 4:8
Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.