

# Coach House Church BEACONS

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## GOD DESIRES TO SAVE

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31ST MAY 2021

Last Sunday I was really drawn to read a verse from Nahum. This is a book of the bible that we rarely read and once I read the whole thing (it is a very short book) I understood why. The book is about the judgement of Nineveh. This was a large town in the ancient world, that was a political cornerstone of that area. This was the same Nineveh that Jonah preached to and the same Nineveh that had repented and been saved about 200 years before.

Nahum was a minor prophet - this doesn't mean he was less important, but simply that he wrote less than some other prophets. He lived in a place called Alqosh, scholars are not quite sure where that is today. He didn't live in Israel but he was definitely a Jew in favour of Israel. He wrote all about the destruction and God's judgement on Nineveh. He wrote it in beautiful poetry that is somewhat lost in our language. This was supposed to be an acrostic poem, with each line starting with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet, but it isn't possible to translate it into English and keep that beauty.

We don't read it very often because we don't often see that there is anything for us in reading about destruction and wrath, especially when it is dedicated to a place that is long since gone. However, in the middle of all the destruction, there are verses of great hope for the Israelites, and us as those adopted into God's family. God is the same all the way through the bible and we can follow the common threads that run all the way through. In Nahum 1:7 it says "The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in Him"

This reminds me that this is the theme of the bible. We, as sinful humans, deserve to be punished. We deserve nothing more than absolute separation from God and all the wrath He could pour out on us. But God, in His great mercy, longs to save us. We hate this idea because it means that there is nothing we can do to rescue

ourselves and we like to be independent, but the truth is that there is nothing we can do at all. Not a single thing.

We needed Jesus to come to earth and die to save us. We needed His covering to be able to be called children of God and come into the presence of the Lord. We need His Holy Spirit every day to keep us going the right way. It will always be a battle to do the right thing, but we can win more than we lose with the help of the Holy Spirit.

This theme can be found in so many places in the bible. It can be found with Abraham as God chose him to become a holy nation. It can be found in Lot as God saved him and his family from a town dedicated to destruction. It can be found in Noah as God saved one faithful man and his household. It can be found in Rahab, when one woman and her family were saved because she feared God. And it can be found in the new testament when Jesus died for our sins, when the wrath of God was poured out on Him so we could live.

This is God's plan. He needs to judge and He needs to destroy anything that is evil. This can sometimes seem harsh but if you really stop and think about it, it's what we think is right and what we want too, as long as it's not us that's being destroyed. We want justice. We want those that have hurt others and done bad things to be punished. We just always leave ourselves out of the "bad person" category. But, unfortunately, God's standards are so much higher and so much fairer that we all end up in that category. So we were all in the path of God's wrath and we were all destined to be destroyed.

If we decide to go our own way and not choose to be with Him and we choose to not come into that great relationship and start the process of becoming like Him, then unfortunately we still come under His judgement. His wrath for our sins has to be poured out somewhere and if we choose to stand outside of Jesus' umbrella, we will get covered in wrath. We will be destroyed and sent to hell. We will be separated from God forever.

But God had a plan. He didn't want to destroy us. So He made a way that we could escape. He had a rescue plan, just like He'd shown us a picture of many times before. He gave us a way out. But to take this way out, we have to choose Him. He is not going to force anybody to become a christian or to spend eternity with Him. We have to choose to do that. There are many advantages if we do, but it has to be our choice.

Let's remember this week what God has saved us from. It's something that should make us grateful and something that should give glory to God. He wants to save us all as 2 Peter 3:9 tells us. His desire is that all should turn to Him. But He won't force anyone. We need to share the gospel message to make sure that as many as possible are saved, but let's be gentle. No one ever responded well to being hit over the head with judgement, but that's what they'll be faced with if we don't find a way to introduce them to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.



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