**“God of Justice: His Goodness and Severity”**

**Nahum 1:1-15**

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Steve Massey, Hayden Bible Church, 8/8/21)

 Psalm 145:4 says in part, “One generation shall praise your works to another…” It is our privilege and our purpose to share God’s glory with the next generation. That’s how it’s supposed to work. But it didn’t work out that way in Nineveh. The Book of Nahum is the sequel to the Book of Jonah. It graphically answers the question: Whatever happened to Nineveh?

 Nahum chapter 1 records the judicial sentence passed by God upon Nineveh one hundred years after the repentance and revival recorded in Jonah. Over that century, the faith of the parents and grandparents had NOT been passed down to their children and grandchildren. They had returned to their proud, evil, and violent ways. Consequently, they were obliterated thoroughly, so much so that even the location of that once great city was not discovered until the mid-1800’s. The Book of Jonah showed us our God of mercy. The Book of Nahum shows us our God of justice.

 At the time of the Book of Nahum, the northern kingdom of Israel had already been overrun by Assyria. Judah was next on the list… But God chose that moment to judge Assyria. No one escapes God’s justice. In fact, both Assyria and Judah were judged for failing to bring God glory.

 1:2 tells us that God is jealous for His glory. God is jealous for His name to be exalted among all people at all times in all nations. You and I exist for the glory of God. God’s people are to have no other god but Him (Exod. 20:3). Look again carefully at 1:2. What does God call people who are disloyal to Him? His enemies! And God reserves wrath for His enemies! Here is a key fact: The repentance and belief of one generation does not guarantee faith for the next generation. The Ninevites were headed for chaos and destruction. Now look at 1:3. God is slow to anger, but it is foolish to mistake God’s patience for indifference to sin. The hope of God’s people is found only in God Himself.

 1:6 tells us that no one can endure the fierceness of God’s anger. Are you prepared to meet this God? His wrath **IS** reserved for you unless you repent, believe, and follow Jesus. Another key fact: People must know of God’s wrath if they are to look for His favor. 1:7 is the judicial sentence written about God’s enemies, but if you look closely, you’ll see that it also contains comfort for God’s people. Wrath for His enemies, but shelter for His people. God shelters His own as He judges the wicked.

 Does the last verse of Nahum 1 sound familiar to you? The phrase “how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news” is used here in Nahum 1:15 to announce that Judah will be saved from the Assyrians. In Isa. 52:7 the “good news” was the exiles’ return to Jerusalem. And then in Rom. 10:15 Paul uses this phrase to describe those messengers who bring the Gospel of Christ to others. That’s us, folks! The Book of Nahum records our God bringing a seemingly invincible nation to ruin. This is to show a far greater victory He has for His people, a victory through His Son, Jesus.

 There is an abundance of fear in the world today. People are imprisoned by their sin nature. It’s the victory of Christ that is foreshadowed in the obliteration of Nineveh. Satan was CRUSHED when Jesus went to calvary for you and me. Jesus took God’s wrath for the sins of all His children **FOR GOD’S GLORY.** (read Phil. 2:9-11) Are you believing in this Jesus who delivers you from this horrible kingdom that will be judged severely and with finality? God is building a kingdom of righteousness **for** His people and **with** His people. He takes us just as we are, but He doesn’t leave us that way. God is restoring His people from all nations as His image bearers of His glory. We must passionately believe and teach and preach and live the gospel. That is what brings Him the glory!

**QUESTIONS:**

1. How is God’s holiness a terror to the wicked? How is God’s holiness a comfort to the righteous? What makes you righteous?
2. Why is it good that our God is a jealous God?
3. You exist for the glory of God. How do you manifest that in your day-to-day living?
4. Pastor Steve said, “People must know of God’s wrath if they are to look for His favor.” What does this mean?
5. Pastor Steve said, “He takes us just as we are, but He doesn’t leave us that way.” What does this mean?

**“A Mighty Fortress is Our God” (Martin Luther)**

A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing

Our Helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing

For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe

His craft and pow’r are great, and, armed with cruel hate

On earth is not his equal

Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing

Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God’s own choosing

Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He

The Lord of hosts His name, from age to age the same

And He must win the battle

That word above all earthly pow’rs, no thanks to them, abideth

The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him who with us sideth

Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also

The body they may kill; God’s truth abideth still

His kingdom is forever.