

Salvation Through Judgment | Nahum 1:9–2:2

The lecture discusses God's judgment of Nineveh and deliverance of Judah as a pattern fulfilled through Christ.

Artist: Erik Raymond

Automatic Shownotes

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Long Summary

Salvation Through Judgment | Nahum 1:9–2:2 Erik Raymond • Nahum 1:9–2:2 Main Point: God's judgment of the wicked should be good news for his people. Outline: 1. The promise of judgment and deliverance (Nahum 1:9–13) - Nahum announces that Nineveh will be completely destroyed, despite Assyria's power. The prophecy would have offered comfort to Judah, which had faced Assyrian threats, invasion, and captivity. - Assyria had been used to bring judgment on Israel for its idolatry, but it exceeded that role through its own wickedness. God promises to end Assyria's oppression and break the bonds holding Judah captive. 2. The arrival of judgment and deliverance (Nahum 1:14–2:2) - The prophecy shifts to the certainty of Nineveh's judgment. A messenger announces peace and victory, and Judah is called to worship and fulfill its vows. God will restore his people as Assyria is cut off. - The sermon describes this as a recurring biblical pattern: God judges evil while delivering his people. Examples include Noah and the flood, and Israel's escape from Egypt. 3. Salvation through judgment in the gospel - People desire justice, but they also fall short of God's standard. The sermon

argues that the gospel makes it possible to hope for evil to be fully judged: Jesus bore the penalty for sinners on the cross, while his righteousness is credited to those who trust him. - God's patience gives people time to repent and trust Christ. Believers can look forward to a world without evil and pray for God's kingdom to come.

Brief Summary

God judges Nineveh and delivers Judah, a pattern fulfilled through Christ.

Tags

God, judgment, Nineveh, deliverance, Judah, prophecy, pattern, fulfillment, Christ, salvation

Transcript

[0:30] Well, as we saw last week, Nahum is a prophet, 7th century BC prophet to Judah.

Nahum's Message: Salvation Through Judgment

[0:41] The prophecy, the book of Nahum, is directed in large part towards the city of Nineveh, which was the capital city of Assyria. It's likely that Nineveh never read it because it's really intended as a word of comfort, the meaning of Nahum's name or consolation to the people of Judah. And so that's what we find today as we make our way into the end of the first and into the second chapter of Nahum. What we see in this passage is this ongoing announcement of the judgment upon Nineveh. Next week, there's vivid details in this book of the actual judgment and what it will look like. Again, all of this before it happens. And then finally, there's the way the book ends in kind of a taunting way against Nineveh for standing up and rebelling against God and persecuting his people.

[1:40] But it's interesting, as the book goes, it's folded together between Nineveh and Judah. So you may have noticed just a few moments ago, as Diego read, you had, it was addressed to Judah and it's addressed to Nineveh, and it's back and forth, Judah, Nineveh. And that's because the way in which this passage works and the way a lot of prophetic literature works is it shows that God brings salvation for his people, through judgment upon his enemies. And that's the title for this sermon is salvation through judgment. And the main point that I would think that Nahum is bringing to the front in this section is that God's judgment of the wicked should be good news for us. God's judgment of the wicked should be good news for us.

[2:30] And so that's what we want to think about today as we look through this passage. It breaks into two halves, as you can see on the inside part of your bulletin. There's a promise of judgment and deliverance in verses 9 through 13 of chapter 1, and then the arrival of judgment and deliverance. So both have judgment, deliverance, so both dealing with Nineveh, judgment, deliverance, Judah. And

then you have the promise and arrival. That's how we'll look at it. And it was definitely good news for the people of Judah. It's intended to be good news for us as well. While we don't live in Judah and we don't have the enemy of Nineveh breathing down our necks, I trust you'll be able to see as we go through the importance, and relevance of the passage. So let's look at it. The promise of judgment and deliverance. It's in verses 9 through 13. Again, I think.

Assyria's Rise and Nahum's Prophecy

[3:23] I think this is just really important to make sure we have the context and understand the significance of what's going on. I mentioned we have Judah and we have Nineveh. Nineveh is the capital city of Assyria. If we go back to the time period of this book being written, which again, 7th century prophet, we're going into the 8th century to see the shadow of how long this influence is. Think of the most powerful nation in the world. That's Assyria. It is really not even close. They are dominant. They are absolutely powerful. And at the point when Nahum is writing this, this is ascent to its highest place, absolute power. And the history, just not to go into extreme detail here, but just to get something of the breadth of what's going on, when the time of Jonah, which was the last book we looked at, Assyria wasn't necessarily on its zenith. It was kind of in a bit of a lull as a nation. But shortly after Jonah and the repentance that was expressed by the king of Assyria in the city of Nineveh, there was a massive uptick. By the time 734 rolls around, about 30 years after Jonah.

[4:39] We have the Assyrian army pressing in to Judah, and Ahaz, the king, goes and takes money from the temple to pay off, essentially bribe or give money to.

[4:53] The Assyrians to keep them at bay. Then about 10 years after that, Assyria goes in and attacks the northern kingdom, so the northern part of Israel, and they siege that area in 722. They deport people. They begin enslaving them.

[5:16] Taking them away, it's horrible. They're carried out of their land. The land is destroyed and the people are afflicted. About 20 years later, they come again. They've already taken the northern kingdom and now they march further south into Judah. And they're going to take this land. And they're moving their way in. Hezekiah is the king. He goes and gets money from the treasury. He pays it off. But this time, God steps in and defends his people and protects them. He mercifully intervenes. And in one of the most amazing stories in the Bible, Isaiah chapter 36, you can also read.

[5:57] In 2 Kings, 185,000 Assyrians are defeated, not by the armies of Judah, but by the army of the Lord. The Lord destroys them. And he does that in 701. God protects him. But that's not the end, because just a handful of years later, the Assyrian dominance continues. And Israel gets a, Judah gets a new king, Manasseh. And this guy is not one who loves the Lord. His heart, not like his father, Hezekiah, his heart, Manasseh, is turned away from the Lord, and he leads the people away from the Lord. And he himself gets carried away, both in his idolatry, and then physically, literally carried away to Assyria in captivity, bound and chained to Assyria after trying to bribe them as well. And then about the time of Nahum, 640-ish, let's say, Manasseh's still the king.

[6:57] Nahum comes along and he says, in the midst of all this, in the midst of the loud threats, the dominant Assyrian, the encroachment upon the borders, the breathing out of threats, the king being carried away, the northern tribe done, the northern country taken over. Judah looks like it's on the brink. Here comes Nahum. He walks into the room. He taps the microphone a couple of times and he says, they're going down. And that sounds absolutely crazy, because they've done nothing but dominate everybody except for some divine intervention, as you see in Isaiah 36. And he says, this is all over. And then within 25 years, what happens? Nineveh falls. It's done. The Assyrian Empire is conquered, 612 B.C.

[7:52] So this timeline is important to us because it shows the context. As we look at it now, we say, yeah, Assyria got beat. They fell. They were prideful and they were destroyed. Well, what happened? They were at the zenith at the time of Nahum and Nahum predicts what's going to happen. He says it's because of the Lord. The Lord is going to bring judgment upon Nineveh and he is going to save or deliver his people. Can you imagine the comfort that would be for the people of Judah? God's going to stand up. So Nahum, a prophet aptly named, the comfort, the consolation, comes through and brings this message. The message is God's judgment of the wicked, and that would be really good news for the people of Judah. God's going to step in. He's going to fight the bully. He's going to push them back, and he is going to recompense them for what they deserve.

The Promise of Judgment and Deliverance

[8:47] And that's the good news. So let's look through this promise of judgment. We see it in verses 9 through 11 of chapter 1. There's a promise of judgment announced on Nineveh.

[8:59] And we see in verse 9, the first part of it, is a question. This is intended to be rhetorical. Why do you plot against the Lord? It's Nineveh. Why do you plot against the Lord? Assyrians, why are you plotting against God? Why are you making plans? The answer? Because he's going to wipe you out. He's going to bring an end to you. Trouble will not rise up a second time. This judgment that God's going to bring upon the Assyrians is going to be complete. They're not going to come back. They're going to be taken down forever.

[9:32] To the ground. So much so that verse 10 goes on to say there's to be a complete inability to defend in the way that they're going to be hemmed in and destroyed. There's word pictures that are used here in verse 10. They're like entangled thorns. So this is the idea of being trapped in thorns. It's just thorns encompassing and wrapping all the way around. You can't get out. You're just stuck in the thorns. This idea of being trapped. He said they're like drunkards is they drink. They're drunks in a stupor or daze. There's no way to get out of the problem. They're drunk. And they're going to be like stubble, fully dried, that's consumed. That is that it absolutely goes up in fire. So you see the word picture, you're trapped, you're in a daze, and you're consumed. It's a progression. You're hemmed in, you can't get out. you're in a daze and you don't know what you're doing and then utterly consumed like this dried stubble, and again the timeline of this is this is before they actually fall, and it's when

they're strong, what a subversive powerful word by the prophet saying this is what's going to happen god has spoken and said this is true.

[10:57] Verse 11 goes, it says, Nineveh, the one who has come, has plotted evil against the Lord, a worthless counselor. Who's this worthless counselor? We don't know precisely who he's talking about. It could be Sennacherib who has come and made all kinds of taunts. You want to read some upper level class A trash talk in the eighth century Middle East, read Isaiah 36. What's going on in that chapter? What he's saying about the people of Judah and about God. And then God comes and brings judgment.

Judah's Deliverance and Assyria's Fall

[11:33] This is the judgment that's promised on Nineveh. They will not be able to get out of it. But then with that judgment, there's a promise of deliverance for Judah. We see this in verses 12 through 13.

[11:45] Notice what he says, though they're at full strength, they will be cut down and pass away. This is good news because though the army is strong, they're going to be destroyed. They're going to be cut off. Literally, it's the word for shearing. It'd be this dishonor of cutting off their hair. It's like they're going to be like sheep that are going to be sheared. They're going to be destroyed. They're cut off. And then goes on to say, though they're afflicted, though they afflict, they will afflict no more. for though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no more. This is really interesting because it brings in a little bit of the historical context of what's going on. See, it says in Isaiah chapter 10 that Assyria is a rod of God's anger.

[12:34] I think it requires a little bit of explanation What's going on? Well, the people of Israel were rebelling against God. I've named Manasseh as one. He's just one example of a bad king. But if you read the book of Isaiah, we see that they really wander away from God and wandered towards idolatry. And if you want to say what makes God angry and wrathful in the Old Testament, over and over again, it's not worshiping him in truth. It's worshiping creation rather than worshiping God. And Israel just kept on doing this. Instead of worshiping God according to his word, they would worship the creation. They would worship themselves. They would worship the good things God gives. And God calls that idolatry. And he repeatedly brings judgment upon them after warning them over and over again to stop it. And it says eventually in Isaiah that he's going to use the nation of Assyria, the nation they trust to bring that judgment.

[13:35] And so they trust Assyria to protect them, and they continue to go into idolatrous ways to be like Assyria. God brings them in, and he says he's going to use them, as Isaiah 10 says, as the rod of his anger. But Assyria really enjoyed being the rod of God's anger, and they went too far, and they went above and beyond, and they were, as God says, wicked. So while God was bringing the judgment upon his people, which they justly deserved, Assyria goes too far, and they are judged as well. So God's going to deal with the injustice of Assyria, and he's still going to deal with the idolatry of his people. He's doing two things at once. And what's happening here in Nahum 1, verse 12, he's saying,

Though I have afflicted you, I have brought this judgment, this chastisement upon you. I will afflict you no more. I'm done with using Assyria. They're going to be judged for what they're doing, even as God protects them. That's why you read in Isaiah chapter 40, when Isaiah writes, comfort, comfort my people. Though the judgment came, now there shall be comfort.

[15:00] And how is he going to do it? Well, it says in verse 13, I will break his yoke from off you and I will burst your bonds apart. I'll break his yoke and bonds. These are terms for enslavement and subduing. And the Assyrians were famous at their ability to enslave and keep captives captive. You can go to the British Museum and see the reliefs from the city of Nineveh. And you could see these vivid images of the Assyrians carrying away their prisoners, even the Israelites as they were carried away, as they put wire through their mouth and through their ears and bonds on their hands, and they're carried away like fish being pulled out of the ocean, as they marched from their homeland to go into their new place where they've been deported to. And now God turns this around and says, just as they who are so proficient at enslaving and putting you in bondage...

[16:01] I'm going to set you free. I'm going to break his yoke off of you and I'll burst your bonds apart. That's deliverance. Everything that they do, I'm going to reverse. I'm going to set you free. I'm going to release you. They plot evil and God brings judgment. So all of this, this is the promise

[16:20] of judgment and deliverance. And what consolation would be for Judah hearing this. And then is the arrival of judgment. We actually see this in the second part from verse 14, down to chapter 2, verse 2. We know it's the arrival because now the tense is changing. Rather than talking about future, now we move into the present tense. You can notice that we see in verse 14. The Lord has given the commandment about you. No more shall your name be perpetuated. From the house of your gods, I will cut off the carved image and metal image. I will make your grave. You are vile. Behold, upon the mountains, the feet of him who brings peace, who publishes peace. Keep your feasts, fulfill your vows, for never again shall the worthless pass through you. He is utterly cut off.

Judgment Arrives; Good News Proclaimed

[17:09] This is what he's doing. He's declaring that this is the time of judgment on Nineveh. What's the reason given in verse 14? It says you are vile. This is interesting. There's different reasons given for the judgment of Nineveh in the book of Nahum. In chapter 1, what was the reason that God grounded his judgment upon them? Do you remember last week? What was the reason why God, almost as if we're reading Nahum chapter 1 and seeing what's going on, you'd say...

[17:42] Why must God judge? Well, there's a number of reasons why Assyria should be judged, but chief among them seems to be verse 7. What does it say in chapter 1, verse 7? The Lord is good. In other words, God, if you're good, how can you not punish Nineveh? If you're good, you've got to punish it because they are not good. They are evil, or as he says here, they are vile. So in chapter 1, it's the character of God intersecting with the sin. Now in chapter, end of chapter 1 into chapter 2, the reason Nahum's bringing out is that they are just so vile.

[18:34] And later on, we're going to see the description of these actions as it goes. And this is what it is. This is God's judgment. Because verse 14, they're vile. Then there's the deliverance for Judah, verse 15. Behold, up the mountains, look at the feet who brings good news, who publishes peace. This is hope. The image here is the prophets are so good in imagery, showing us the thorns and the stubble and the drunken man. And now we look up to the mountains and we see this image. Nahum's drawing a picture for us and he's showing, saying, look to the mountains, and look, there's a man running on the mountains and he's coming down to us. He's urgent. He's got a message and that's how they would do it. There's no text messages, obviously, back in the eighth century BC. There's no instant breaking news, news alert.

[19:29] It's the way it would be. It would be a herald that would be coming. Heralds of victory saying, this nation's down. This king's been defeated. You are now set free. It's a proclamation of emancipation. You're free. And so the king is coming. I mean, the announcer's coming and he's saying, victory is here. But only it hasn't happened yet. It's off to the future, but he's saying, look to the mountains. It's as if the man is coming, bringing the good news. Isaiah 52.7 talks about how beautiful are the feet of him who brings good news. It's the idea of the one bringing the victory that has happened. That's the image here. Nahum is announcing that Nineveh, Assyria, is so defeated that the guy bringing the breaking news is already cresting the hill and running back. It's as good as done. The judgment is happening.

[20:30] And then he gives a response. What do you do? Keep your feasts, O Judah. Fulfill your vows. That means worship. Worship. Worship the God who delivers you. Don't go into idolatry. Continue to worship the God who's worthy of worship because God did it and you have security. No more will this happen to you. Why? Because he is utterly cut off. Assyria has been defeated. And so there's the announcement and there's the arrival of judgment and deliverance, in verses one and two of chapter two it just it's the same thing and the imagery is now being ramped up getting us ready for the actual battle scene, the scatter has come against you now addressing Nineveh man the ramparts watch the road dress for battle collect all your strength, get ready for a fight Assyria you like to fight it's time to fight you're going to be destroyed And the explanation is, the Lord is restoring the majesty of Jacob, the majesty of Israel. For the plunderers have plundered them and ruined their branches. God is judging them. He's going to restore them.

[21:37] He's going to bring them victory by defeating their enemies. Salvation through judgment.

Why We Long for Justice

[21:46] This is interesting. Just as we think about this, this is really what everyone wants, isn't it? None of us would sit here and say, no, actually, I object. Actually kind of holding out for evil over good. Nobody talks like that. Even as post-Christian as our world is right now, people aren't walking around saying, yeah, I really, really want evil to win. It would be great? This is a more evil place? No. Everybody wants good to triumph over evil. That's the stuff of movies. That's what we want. The great

stories, we want victory over evil. We want injustices to be dealt with. We want wrongs to be righted. We want justice to be served. We thirst for justice. That's what we want because we're made in the image of God. That's what we want because that's who God is. We thirst for judgment. So what do we need? Well, we need a standard. In order to have justice, you need to have a standard. Well, what's the standard? Well, we got to have a standard that's actually good enough, that can be the baseline for what good is. There needs to be a just standard that's good enough. Well, where do we get that? Well, God alone is the basis for that standard.

[23:05] And so while humanity may thirst for judgment, it falls short in the moral standard of what good actually is. And then you actually have to have power to enforce the standard. Otherwise, it just becomes like ideal. Wouldn't it be great if things were better? Yeah, great. Let's get to work on that. Yeah, forget it. We can't do anything. This place is a mess. Right? That doesn't work. But here's God saying, here's the standard. And I have the power to bring about that which I want. So he can actually enforce the standard. And so what we see with God in the scripture over and over again is...

[23:47] There's a punishment of wicked from the very beginning. Even in the first pages of the Bible, in Genesis chapter 3, when Adam and Eve sin, they're punished for it. They're judged. Next chapter, chapter 4, Cain and Abel. When Cain kills his brother Abel, there's punishment. And on and on and on it goes, there's actually punishment for evil because God is good. But at the same time, God demonstrates patience, doesn't he? He's patient.

[24:27] That's why when Adam and Eve sinned, God didn't just say, I'm done with everything, and blow the whole thing up. But he's patient. That's why when you and I sin and fall short of God's standard, he doesn't just say, done with you, eject, clear the decks. He's patient. That's why those verses in chapter 1, which allude to chapter 34 of the book of Exodus, that God is full of steadfast love and abounding in mercy and patience. He's a patient God. The Hebrew has a picture of being long-nosed. He is patient. So he will punish the wicked because he's just, but he's also patient. And then at the same time, he promises deliverance or salvation to his people.

Salvation Through Judgment in Scripture

[25:25] So you've got all three of those things happening.

[25:29] Punish wicked, patient against wickedness, and deliverance for people. That's amazing. In fact, you see it throughout the Bible, this same theme of this salvation through judgment happening over and over again. Do you remember Noah? What did Noah do? He walked around preaching righteousness and saying, God is going to bring judgment on you for your wickedness, promise of judgment, and an offer for mercy, repent, and patience, 120 years preaching.

[26:08] And then eventually what happens? Noah gets in the ark, the storm comes, everything is judged, destroyed, except Noah and his family and the animals upon the ark. They're saved, Noah and his family, in the ark through the waters of judgment. Think of the book of Exodus. Didn't that

happen with Egypt? With the people of Israel are in Egypt and God is warning them. How many plagues? 10 plagues, continuing. God is showing himself to Pharaoh over and over again to stop with this madness, and bow the knee to Yahweh. And over and over again, Pharaoh is just, who is this Yahweh? Who is he? And eventually what happens? The firstborn son is killed. Plague of darkness on the Passover and the people of Israel leave and they go through and they part through the ocean. As they move through the ocean, the waters come and collapse upon the Egyptians that pursued him and they wash up upon the shore. The people of Israel saved through the waters while the judgment comes upon the enemies. And we see the same thing in Nineveh with the people of Israel, the people of Judah, where God brings the judgment upon Nineveh for their wickedness, for their evil. God has a standard.

[27:36] And he was patient. Jonah, God brings repentance to Nineveh. But in time, he will bring judgment to those who do not repent. And so whether you're talking about Noah and God saving the people through the waters, they were rejoicing. Or you think of the Exodus, read chapter 15 of Exodus, the great song of Moses rejoicing in God's salvation. They rejoiced at God bringing judgment upon the evil and salvation to his people, or here in Nahum, where God brings salvation to his people by judging his enemies. I can imagine if we were in Judah's shoes in those days, we would be so happy. God is going to bring us salvation by delivering us from our enemies. He's going to judge our enemies and bring us salvation.

The Gospel Makes Judgment Good News

[28:33] I would imagine after the buzz of excitement, there would be some self-aware, inhabitants of Judah that might just say.

[28:47] Didn't we get in this problem in the first place because we were idolatrous? At the end of the day, what's the difference between us and Assyria other than they are extremely vile, but we're vile too. That's why we're in this problem. We got our own issues. And this God who is patient is also just. The one that's now saving us is also the one who's just. So how do we navigate this thing? How can we rejoice in our deliverance when we know we're imperfect? How can you today rejoice in a God who judges wickedness.

[29:30] By delivering his people when we look in the mirror and say, we fall short of that good standard too? Doesn't that seem to collide in your mind a little bit? Yeah, God delivers people. Defeat the wicked ones. I'm wicked. I sin. I'm no different. See, the only way, the absolute only way that the judgment of the wicked can be good news for you is through the gospel, through the good news of Jesus Christ is the only way that you can consistently, and honestly long for evil to be punished, full and finally.

[30:22] Consider the alternative. Without the gospel and you want evil to be punished, you're going to have to say, only really bad evil and by that I mean evil worse than me because it's going to stop when it gets to me because I don't want to be judged.

[30:46] Compromise at some point on the character of evil, where at some point, evil just gets to that point where it's relative. It's not really evil anymore. It's kind of in that moral neutrality. But with the gospel, you're actually able to say, all evil, punished. Full stop. Rejoice. 100% full stop. How?

The Cross: Judgment and Grace

[31:19] Because of salvation through judgment. What I mean, on the cross, Jesus Christ was judged in the place of sinners, evil people like me and you. When he went to the cross, he became, though he never sinned, he was counted to be the sinner. He bore the punishment that sinners deserved. And it wasn't 30% evil or 50% evil. 100% evil is what he bore. He paid the full penalty for all of our sin. On the cross, it is Christ declaring that evil must be paid for, judgment. And it is Christ declaring that his people's sin can be paid for, grace. So when Christ is upon the cross and he declares it is finished, he means that he paid for evil 100%. When he drank the cup, he didn't leave an ounce of wrath in it. He drank it dry. Implications for you and I over here, the sinners.

[32:37] Who deserve God's judgment. We get everything he earned. What did he earn? He perfectly obeyed God. There was no evil. He was perfectly loving God. There was no selfishness. There was perfect love for neighbor. There was no hatred of neighbor. So there upon the cross, my sin goes to him. He's judged in my place and he removes the death penalty due my sin. And all of his righteous living comes to my account. It's the change. He takes our sin. We get his righteousness. The law breaker gets treated as the law keeper. The law keeper gets treated as the law breaker. It's the great exchange. And God says that he, Jesus, took all of our sin. So you see, it's only in the gospel where you can actually say, I want evil to be 100% punished. And I can rejoice in it, being punished with any type of consistency and humility. In honesty.

Responding to God's Justice and Mercy

[33:57] So if you're a Christian here this morning.

[34:02] On one level i share this with you and try to belabor the point about evil and goodness to remind you, of how complex and how glorious the gospel is how that should humble you because we don't deserve that, we don't do we deserve the wrath we deserve to be queued up with with nineveh in assyria that's who we are but he's been gracious to us, and for you to rejoice in God comprehensively punishing evil. And to prepare you for heaven, which will be a place where we rejoice in there being no evil, but only his glory.

[34:46] And if you're walking around and seeing evil in the world, that which would oppose God, it is right for your stomach to be turned and your heart to be squeezed and saying, I want this to stop, and to pray for his kingdom to come and his will to be done. If you're not a Christian, and you'd say, I really would like to see evil removed. I really want to approach it consistently and honestly. I actually think this sounds right. Then you should know that one of the reasons why God gives a space of time in

your life, according to Romans chapter 2, why God has been waiting, if you will, and not punishing, it's because he's being kind and patient. And it says in Romans chapter two, that that patience, that kindness is intended to provoke you to repent and to turn and to trust him. That's why he does it.

[35:54] That they would turn from their sins and trust Him. See, if we turn and we trust Him, then God's judgment of the wicked, would be good news for us because we realize that our sin was paid for and that God is committed to justice and He extends His hand of grace to us. So here, from this prophet, I said eight centuries BC, seems like ancient history, but the problem is very relevant, isn't it? And the solution is eternal.

[36:33] This God, through the gospel, punishes sin and grants deliverance. He brings salvation through judgment. That's the cross. We have salvation through his judgment.

Closing Prayer

[36:49] And praise the Lord. Let's pray. Lord, thank you today for your word. Thank you for its beauty. We thank you for the reality that every time an archaeologist flips over a rock in the Middle East, there is a testimony to your word, it seems like, over and over again, of the truthfulness and veracity of your word. And I pray that even as we are reminded of its truthfulness, we would treasure the implications for ourselves, that we would trust in Christ, and rejoice in sin being fully and finally and completely dealt with. May we rejoice in Him, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen.