

# OUT OF NAZARETH

*“Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked.*  
—*JOHN 1:46*

Over two thousand years ago, Nazareth was a small, isolated town where many outcasts, vagrants and thieves made their home. There weren't any trade routes running through it, so it held no commercial value, and was virtually a community left on its own. Hidden away from the mainstream of society, it was the ideal place for the 'unwanted' to seek refuge. The reputation of Nazareth became one of such ill repute that when Philip told Nathanael he had found the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, Nathanael's immediate response was, "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?"

No one expected a prophet or priest, much less the Messiah, would come out of such a displaced arena. People were prejudiced against anything to do with Nazareth and sadly, prejudices are just as commonplace today. They are what hamper our progress and divert us from truth, sometimes with devastating results. Many people, the young in particular, have low self-esteem, because they've been habitually told they'll never amount to anything, simply because of their dress or the music they like. There are stigmas attached to countless things, and people with great potential are quickly written off because they're a little different.

Can anything good come out of our prisons, out of a broken home, out of a debilitating illness? Can anything good come out of run down high schools, a disintegrating marriage or a terrible tragedy? Can anything good come out of suffering? C.S. Lewis wrote, "A miracle involves God

reaching into life here on earth. When a miracle occurs, the barrier that separates heaven and earth is opened up and our natural world is touched by the supernatural power of God. The whole Christian Gospel is based on a miracle. Jesus was born, He lived, He died, He rose from the dead; He lives by His Holy Spirit within us. He is still alive within us and therefore miracles can still take place.”

God specializes in entering the lowliest of places. Whether these places are remote, forgotten little blots on the map or within our own hearts, we need to bring God into them. We are all equal in His sight and of incredible value. Being on the receiving end of prejudice is hurtful, and on the giving end, it's harmful. Both need to be brought to Jesus. He is not a guest in our lives, but is ever-present and the source of what defines, determines and sustains us. When we bring Him in, He brings about good from the most hardened places.

***PRAYER: Dear Lord Jesus, I want to see everyone through your eyes. Keep me from ever being prejudiced in any way, and enable me to be of support to those who are victims of it. Thank You, Lord.***

***TO REFLECT UPON: Has any form of prejudice hampered my life, and if so, have I brought it to Jesus?***