**“God of Mercy: The Miracle of Conversion”**

**Jonah 3:1-10**

(notes based on the sermon by Pastor Steve Massey, Hayden Bible Church, 7/4/21)

[Presentations were given about VBS and Cocolalla Bible Camp, both sowing Gospel seeds. We are reminded that God’s Word is TRUE and will not return to Him void. Another reminder: Jesus, You are Lord of the harvest!] (Q1)

“The seed of every sin lies latent in the heart of every man.”

John Owen (Q2)

God works mightily and miraculously through the Word of God to bring about our conversion. It’s fortunate that people, wicked as they are, are significant to God. God is not stingy with His saving mercy, nor does He play favorites. He is concerned with pagans as well as prodigals.

God’s message to the Ninevites was direct. Even today, God’s message is not candy-coated: the true gospel is a call to conversion. Conversion always is accompanied by belief in God and repentance from sin. Jonah warned that the Ninevites would be “overthrown”. This word in Hebrew can have two meanings. One meaning is “destruction” (Jonah wanted this one!). The other meaning is “a change, a radical turn-around” (God intended this one). What about you? You have been warned about God’s judgment for your sin. Are you ready to do something about it?

Read Jonah 3:5 again. Conversion has two parts: belief and repentance. What does it mean to believe? It’s more than just a mental assent. Belief comes from the word “amen”, which means “total agreement”. (Q3) Nineveh, a city of bloodshed, violence, and debauchery, was filled with unlikely converts, but they agreed with Jonah: “We are a wicked people.” Guess what? So are we! Much of our sin, when you come right down to it, is the worship of the false god of SELF. (Q4) In our day, “everyone does what is right in his own eyes.” We are desensitized to God. Many have declared independence from God. Read Rom. 1:18-20. In every human heart is stamped the knowledge of God, yet people still go on sinning (read also Rom. 3:23). But the Ninevite’s consciences were quickened, their hearts were broken, and they BELIEVED!

The second miracle of conversion is REPENTANCE. (Q5) Look at the second half of 3:5. This turnaround is a work of God that starts at the individual level, not from the government on down. There is no such thing as a Christian who believes, but does not turn from sin. The power of God accompanied the Word of God preached by Jonah. Have you had a complete turn-around? Are you converted?

In 3:6-8 the king repents and becomes like his people. 3:9 gives us not the language of presumption, but instead the language of contrition: a real sorrow for sin, an abiding sorrow for sin, and a Godly sorrow for sin. In genuine repentance there is also hope. Genuine repentance turns in sorrow from sin as it turns in hope to God for mercy. Have you repented? Is there hope for you?

God withholds His wrath of judgment when He grants true repentance and belief. Read Acts 3:19-26. God promised to send a redeemer: Jesus. This was planned even before the world began! We have a King who stepped down from His throne, clothed Himself in humanity, and took the judgment for sin that we deserve. The King of Glory came all the way down to Calvary to give us mercy. Will you repent and believe? (Q6)

**QUESTIONS**:

1. What is our part in this harvest?
2. What causes sin to come out of latency?
3. What does it really mean to believe?
4. How is each of the 10 Commandments related to SELF? (see Exodus 20: 3-17)
5. How is repentance a work of God?
6. If a genuine turning to God were to take place in America, what results would you expect to see?

“When the Roll is Called up Yonder” (Black)

When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound, and time shall be no more,

And the morning breaks, eternal, bright and fair;

When the saved of earth shall gather over on the other shore,

And the roll is called up yonder, I’ll be there.

Refrain:

When the roll is called up yonder,

When the roll is called up yonder,

When the roll is called up yonder,

When the roll is called up yonder, I’ll be there.

On that bright and cloudless morning when the dead in Christ shall rise,

And the glory of His resurrection share;

When His chosen ones shall gather to their home beyond the skies,

And the roll is called up yonder, I’ll be there.

Let us labor for the Master from the dawn till setting sun,

Let us talk of all His wondrous love and care;

Then when all of life is over, and our work on earth is done,

And the roll is called up yonder, I’ll be there.