

Date: 16 Oct 2022

Scripture Passage: Jonah 3:1-10

Title: Repentance All Round!

Introduction

- Repentance is an unpopular doctrine. But it is taught in the Bible and must be preached. Repentance is primarily a change of mind, with the conviction of the heart, and reflected in a change of will.
- Jonah was undergoing a crisis of faith. Jonah understood God's covenant to the Jews and stayed in the northern nation of Israel to preach God's word despite them doing evil in the sight of the Lord (2 Kings 14:23-27). But now Jonah was instructed to preach to the wicked gentiles in Nineveh.
- Jonah was thrown overboard and swallowed up by a big fish. The 3 days & 3 nights in the belly of the fish is a sign of Christ's death & resurrection (Matt. 12:40). God used the event to save the mariners who in turn worshipped Jehovah and made vows (1:16).
- It is important that we do not miss the central message of this book, which is that salvation is found in Jesus Christ who died and rose to make atonement for sin.

Jonah repented (v1-4)

- The Lord was merciful, giving Jonah a second chance (v1). The apostle Peter was given another chance. Which one of us have not failed or been afflicted? How many chances have we been given? If not for God's long-suffering, where would we be? Do we learn from each failure or affliction that we encounter? Jonah was to act by faith, to proclaim the message to be revealed. Are we acting in faith by proclaiming the gospel to those who are lost?
- Jonah was genuinely repentant (v3-4). He acted in humble obedience, "according to the word of the LORD" (v3). He acted in faith, for three days to walk to that "great city". He acted with clear resolve, where he started proclaiming God's word upon entering the city (v4). True repentance to be distinguished from worldly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:10). True repentance is to be followed by acts of obedience, faith, and clear resolve to live for Christ.

Nineveh repented (v 5-9)

- The people of Nineveh repented, as shown by their actions (v5). It was a genuine revival from the bottom up, where the people repented, and the king repented as well. The means that God use are by hearing the preached word and prayer. Humans are only the instrument used by God in saving His people. How can a single man like Jonah turn the entire city of Nineveh around? It was truly the work of the Spirit. A broken, chastised, humbled, and obedient man such as Jonah was used by God to preach the Word. Pray for such preachers to be raised for GBRBF!
- The repented king issued a decree (v7). The nation mourned for their sin (v8). They turned to God for mercy (9). The God whom we have offended is the God who must forgive (2 Sam. 24:14). This was a deep work of God in the city of Nineveh, as shown by changed lives. This is what we ought to pray for in a genuine revival.

God's mercy on the repented (v10)

- God is merciful, but He has to punish sin. The actions of the Ninevites did not change God's mind. God immutable and His decree unchangeable. He is sovereign. He knows end from the beginning. The mercy that he showed to Nineveh was within His sovereignty. God has incorporated the prayer of His people in his decree. All sins are forgivable, except the refusal to repent. You have heard the call so many times. Are you still adamant in your sin? How many chances have you been given?
- Jonah pointed to Christ, who has done everything necessary to save sinners. There is forgiveness in Him. God receives all who come to Him in His Son's name. Come to God for mercy! Trust in Christ alone for acceptance before Him! Pray for a season for revival. That starts with a time for personal repentance. May God grant us both!