

Upcoming Events

**BUSINESS MEETING
TODAY 3:30 P.M.**

**Saturday Meeting
Just 13 days away!
PREPARE!**

**WORKDAY: MEETING PREP
NEXT SATURDAY 9 A.M.**

MeetUp Class
Thursday, February 17, at 7:00 p.m.
28561 Sunnyslope St.
Desert Hot Springs CA 92241

February Birthdays
8 Zoie Perales

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.

Sunday.....10:45 a.m.

Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

Preacher:
Jack Critchfield

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One Gospel for All
By Ronald Bartanen

“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16).

An increasingly popular view is that different cultures have different religions available to bring people to God. While in America we are predominantly a somewhat Christian culture (at least for the present), in Muslim nations God is available through Islam, in Israel God is found through Old Testament law, in India access to God is through Hinduism, etc. Tolerance of other faith-systems has been seen in the past as the allowing of liberty to differ, but it has evolved into the shaming of those who would seek to actually convert someone of another religious persuasion to one’s own view. Some would even refer to preaching against the teachings of other religions as “hate speech.” Such a concept would make the Great Commission of our Lord—the preaching of the gospel of Christ to all nations, as Jesus commanded (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47)—no longer acceptable.

The gospel of Christ alone is *“the power of God unto salvation”* (Romans 1:16). It is one gospel for all. Jesus said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me”* (John 14:6). This may seem narrow-minded in our ears today, but it is either true, or Jesus is not to be believed.

There is one gospel for all because all are alienated from God by sin. *“All have sinned and come short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:23); and *“The wages of sin is death...”* (Romans 6:23). In such a state, man is alienated from God and from eternal

life. Dependence for acceptance with God on the basis of avoiding gross sins and being a good neighbor will not suffice.

There is one gospel for all because Jesus, God's Son, died for all. *"God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8).

There is one gospel for all because salvation is found only in Jesus: *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12).

There being but one gospel for all, those who sincerely would follow Christ should look beyond popular opinion, men and denominations to the Biblical standard for the means of coming to God. Believing Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God who died for us, was buried, and rose again (1 Corinthians 15:1-4), let all accept Him as Savior and Lord in accord with God's word—in repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38; 22:16), thus being assured by Christ, that *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"* (Mark 16:16). Continuing in faith and faithful living, we are assured, *"Be thou faithful unto death (even to the point of dying for that faith) and I will give thee a crown of life"* (Revelation 2:10).

Did Jonah Finally Get It? Do We?

By Joe Slater

"I'd rather die than . . ." We find some things so distasteful that we say we'd rather die than do them. Jonah meant that quite literally! The Lord ordered Jonah to preach repentance to Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire. But Jonah had no intention to obey. He boarded a ship going the opposite direction!

Jonah dreaded Assyria for good reason. Conquered people suffered unspeakable cruelty from Assyrian kings. Cutting off limbs, noses, and ears, skinning people alive, and burning them alive are just a few of the barbaric ways the Assyrians terrorized and humiliated their captives.

I've read comments by professing Christians in reference to Islamic terrorists: "I hope they die and go to hell!" That's likely close to Jonah's feeling toward the Assyrians. But while righteous indignation was justified, hatred was not. And it still isn't!

Even when God sent a storm to plague Jonah's ship, he chose death over repentance and obedience to the Lord's command to preach to Nineveh. No doubt he fully expected to drown when the sailors reluctantly threw him into the sea (Jonah 1:12-15).

Jonah finally submitted to God's order, but he still wanted to die when the Ninevites repented (Jonah 4:3). Such hatred! He lingered outside the city, hoping God might yet destroy it (Jonah 4:5). When the plant that shaded him withered, however, he again wished for death (Jonah 4:7-9).

The book concludes when the Lord shows Jonah that His own concern for lost souls was far more pressing than Jonah's concern about shade (Jonah 4:10-11). Such an abrupt ending makes us wonder: Did Jonah finally get it? More importantly do we understand that lost souls are more important than our comforts? And yes, God's love and concern extend even to the worst of sinners. Does ours? Do we get it?

Memory Verse Reminders

- **Ecclesiastes 12:13** *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all."*
- **Romans 3:23** *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"*
- **Romans 6:23** *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*
- **Matthew 11:28** *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*
- **Mark 16:16** *"He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."*
- **Revelation 2:10** *"...Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."*