

S.O.H.L.

WEEKLY MINISTRY MEDITATIONS

Pronounced "Soul"

June 27, 2016

Restoration thru "Repentance"

READ: JONAH 3:4-10

Jonah's message from God was a shock to the people. To his surprise, they actually listened to what he had to say – they heard his warning and his message frightened them. The people realized they were in serious danger and immediately showed remorse, engaging in behavior reinforcing their contriteness for their past actions. To show their sincerity, they dressed in a *sackcloth (a very rough dress) and fasted for several days, everybody from the very rich to the very poor

The news of Jonah's warning came to the king of Nineveh. He immediately responded in much the same way as his people. He was the king he understood that God was much greater than any king. He was much wiser than Jehoiakim, an evil Jewish king who ruled Judah from 609-597 BC. When Jeremiah warned Jehoiakim, directly from God, to change his evil ways, Jehoiakim only laughed (Jeremiah 36). Soon afterwards, God punished Jehoiakim. A powerful enemy captured Judah. Jehoiakim died. Judah was never again a free country (2 Chronicles 36:6-16).

"Sackcloth" and "ashes" were signs of self-affliction that indicated one's humility before God. The king of Nineveh traded in his robe for a burlap bag. He traded his throne for an ash heap. He moved from the throne to the city dump. He was not afraid to be criticized by political contemporaries. During this time, sitting in "ashes" indicated deep mourning and humiliation before God. It was a signal of a person's sorrow for sin.

The king of Nineveh hurried to call his important officials. They immediately advised the king to make a royal declaration. Everybody must show that their sorrow for their actions was sincere. Thus, they adorned *sackcloth instead of their ordinary clothes. They fasted, not eating or drinking. They cried with loud voices to God asking for forgiveness. They halted all cruel actions. They even put *sackcloth on their animals. The animals did not understand the reason but their cries of anguish and hunger soon joined their owners. Through Jonah, God's warning had frightened the king, his officials, and the people. The king hoped God would notice that he and the people were sincere in their desire to live a better life. Then God might decide not to destroy them. God saw what the people of Nineveh were doing. He saw their efforts to repent for their *sins. God saw and believed them. Although they did not deserve God's love, He was generous. He forgave them their *sins and did not destroy their city.

SCRIPTURE READING

LUKE 9:51-62

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Freedom is more than just a word, Its Jesus.