

DEEP SIX STUDY

October 19th, 2025

Awaken – “Surprising Decisions”

MESSAGE HIGHLIGHTS *(You can view the full message online at capecodchurch.com)*

Opening: We’ve been talking about history – history that happened right here on Cape Cod in the early 1800s. Which is kind of odd, perhaps, since we’re a fairly “modern” church. But as the saying goes, “those who don’t learn from history are destined to repeat it” – and there are many great lessons from the story of the Awakening of 1809 – lessons about how awakening happens – that we can learn from.

1. What You Believe *Matters*

- In the late 1700s, the “Age of Reason” was sweeping across the Christian world. France had all but outlawed Christianity and converted the Notre Dame cathedral into a “temple of reason.” In New England, the Unitarian Movement – which denied the deity of Christ – was rapidly gaining traction, and Congregational churches in towns and cities across the region were becoming Unitarian churches. That *almost* happened in Falmouth, until the young gospel preacher Barnabas Bates came to town...
- As Bates preached the true gospel in Falmouth and other Cape Cod towns, and as the Awakening progressed, those who believed and were saved began to fill Falmouth Congregational Church, eager to worship Jesus and be disciplined there. The church’s pastor, Henry Lincoln, resisted the movement, as he was not yet a believer himself. Tensions arose as the believers asked, “Why didn’t you tell us?”
- As New England’s churches experienced (or didn’t...) the awakening of faith in Christ, the differences between them became very evident. They became known as “New Light” (evangelical) or “Old Light” (unitarian) congregations, with four clear markers distinguishing the “awakened” churches:
 - a. A Focus on Jesus (1 John 4:1-3) – Awakened (evangelical) churches are “Christocentric” – that is, they are focused on Jesus. They acknowledge and proclaim that he came to earth as God in the flesh, then lived, died and rose again – and that the whole story of history is *his story*.
 - b. A Call to Conversion (1 John 4:13-15) – Jesus extends an invitation to all, but the process of embracing him is a process of individual *conversion* – a rebirth that takes place at the moment of sincere declaration “that Jesus is the Son of God.”
 - c. Bible as Authority (1 John 4:4-6) – Awakened churches may disagree on their interpretation and application of specific passages of Scripture, but they all take the Bible (not the “reason” of man) as the ultimate authority for our lives and for the life of the church.
 - d. Acting on Belief (1 John 4:11, 19-21) – For awakened/evangelical believers and churches, our faith is meant to lead to *action* and a change in how we live our lives – a change that shows others the beauty, joy and gospel message of living life “in Christ.”

2. Salvation is Christ’s Work; Faith is Your Choice (Romans 10:9-11)

- As time progressed and his church filled with born-again believers, something stirred in the heart of Henry Lincoln, Falmouth’s Congregational (almost Unitarian...) pastor. At some point in 1811, Lincoln gave in to the call of the Holy Spirit and publicly embraced Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
- As Falmouth’s awakening and Lincoln’s conversion displayed, there’s only *one way* to new life in

Christ: through our personal, sincere decision of faith. As Paul puts it clearly in Romans 10, salvation comes by “believing in your heart and confessing with your mouth” that Jesus is “the Way, the Truth and the Life.” Jesus offers everyone an awakening to eternal life in him – the decision is ours to make.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

These passages may provide additional insights related to the subject of this week’s message. All verses are NLT unless otherwise noted.

John 14:6; 1 Corinthians 15:1-6; 2 Corinthians 5:16-18; Ephesians 2:8-10; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; James 2:17-20

Video of the Week: [Eternal Life](#) by the Bible Project

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. As we’ve explored the history of the Awakening of 1809, what’s been the most interesting or surprising part of the story to you?
2. Does it surprise you that Christianity was struggling and that “Christian” churches in New England had largely fallen away from the gospel by the early 1800s? Why or why not?
3. The “Age of Reason” that flourished in the 1700s precipitated the movement away from (true) Christian faith in Europe and America, as religious faith and “reason” were deemed incompatible. Are they? In other words, does reason have to be ignored/suspended in order for an “awakening” of faith to occur?
4. Read 1 John 4:13-15 again. “A Call to Conversion” is one of the 4 marks of an awakened/evangelical church – yet many pre-believers struggle with the idea of being “born again” (converted). Why is the concept of conversion so important to the gospel – and sometimes so off-putting to those who don’t yet believe?
5. If you read the whole thing, you’ll find that The Bible is filled with odd rules, weird characters, highly improbable stories and perhaps a few contradictions. When we say that – as a church and as believers – “we take the Bible as the ultimate authority for our lives,” what do we really mean by that?
6. Can we really know if someone else is a true follower of Jesus or not? If so, how?