

Jonah Running Ahead of God

Jonah Chapter 4

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The concluding chapter in the book of Jonah once again shows us Jonah's attitude toward doing the will of God. Despite the lesson he had already learned, Jonah still did not want the Ninevites to repent. Therefore, God must teach him another lesson: God is in control and wants all men to be saved. Jonah was angry when the Ninevites repented (v.1), and even asked God to take his life (v.3). Yet with the example of the gourd, God shows Jonah that if he can have pity on a plant, which Jonah did nothing for, God can show pity on men who were made in His own image. There is no partiality with God (Acts 10:34), therefore, Jonah should have been glad to see the Ninevites repent and be spared. There is great application in this chapter for Christians. The example of Jonah teaches us the proper attitudes to have toward evangelism and lost souls. No Christian should ever be like Jonah. Yet people have similar attitudes toward others, as we can even read about in the New Testament regarding Gentiles (Galatians 2:11-13). The account of Jonah should be a great warning to Christians, do not go against the will of God. It is not our job to choose who should be saved, we have not been given that authority. The only authority that Christians have is to carry what God has already revealed to the world. Jonah had this same authority. God gave him a mission, and he tried to avoid it, then became angry when it was successful. Jonah chapter four teaches Christians critical lessons and principles that must be applied to everyday lives.

As already mentioned, God is not a respecter of persons and wants all men to be saved. Even though at this time the Israelites were God's chosen people, the Ninevites were humans too. As such, they were loved by God. They could still do right and be saved. This has always been the case for mankind. Anyone that does well will be accepted by God (Genesis 4:7). This has been true from the beginning. Even now, there is no group of people that God does not want saved. 1 Timothy 2:1-4 says that prayers should be made for all, especially governments so that the spreading of the gospel can be done peaceably. James 2:1-13 condemns showing partiality to those that are less wealthy. Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). The apostle Paul sums it up like this: "*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*" (1 Timothy 1:15). Jonah had no business getting angry when sinners repent, and neither do we. It is not the Christian's business to determine whether or not someone is "good enough" to hear the gospel, it is our business to teach them.

(continued next week)