

The Rebel Prophet - Part 3

The book of Jonah is loaded with numerous shocking places. Jonah refused to go and preach to the Ninevites as God directed (Jonah 1:1-3). After being thrown into the sea, God doesn't let Jonah die (Jonah 1:17). He prepared a fish to swallow the prophet and give him another chance to obey His will!

The people of Nineveh repented after hearing God's message proclaimed by Jonah (Jonah 3:4-5). God then relented and decided to destroy them (Jonah 3:10).

Jonah's Response

- Instead of being happy and celebrating the repentance of the Ninevites, Jonah gets angry (Jonah 4:1). He is frustrated that God would spare people who are enemies of the Israelites.
- Jonah prayed to God about the matter (Jonah 4:2). He fled to Tarshish because he didn't want God's grace and compassion to be extended to all people (Exodus 34:6).
- Jonah told the Lord that he rather be dead than see the repentance of the Ninevites (Jonah 4:3). He had an intense hatred for them!

God's Response

- God told Jonah that he had no reason to be angry (Jonah 4:4). God had the right to show mercy and grace to whoever He desired.
- Jonah made a place of shelter east of the city of Nineveh. He wanted to see if God would change His mind or if the people would go back to their old sinful ways (Jonah 4:5).
- God appointed a plant to grow and provide shade for Jonah from the intense heat (Jonah 4:6). Jonah was extremely pleased with this plant.
- God appointed a worm to kill it (Jonah 4:7). God did this to teach Jonah a lesson about His grace and compassion.
- Jonah was outraged angry when the plant died (Jonah 4:8). He said, "Death is better to me than life." He felt that he was right to be upset about the dead plant (Jonah 4:9).
- God told Jonah that his thinking was wrong! If the prophet was upset about the destruction of a plant, shouldn't the Creator be concerned about the destruction of people's souls (Jonah 4:10-11)? Shouldn't He also be concerned about the demise of innocent animals?

Key Questions

- How do we see God? Do we see Him as someone who should only offer grace to the people we like or as a God who has the right to offer that to anyone He desires?
- How do we see the lost? Do we see them as people who need our compassion, grace, and attention? Do we see them as people who, like the Ninevites, need messengers to proclaim to them God's will (Matthew 18:19-20)?
- How do we see Jesus (Matthew 12:38-41)? While Jesus and Jonah both were prophets who spent three days inside of something, Jesus is greater than Jonah. Jesus is the superior prophet who died and rose again. He is the Christ and Savior of the world.

Conclusion:

How are you responding to the gospel of the One who is greater than Jonah?

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