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9-2-2020
JONAH PART 24
CH 4:3-4

The Israeli prophet Jonah had just finished forty days of preaching utter destruction and overthrow in Nineveh, the capitol of a vicious and evil empire of Assyria. When the entire city earnestly repented of their wicked ways with fasting and prayer while sitting in ashes and clothed with sackcloth, God heard them and relented from destroying them.

This made Jonah extremely angry. God had told him to cry out to them about His judgement, now God had backed off from it. Jonah might have felt God had made him look like a fool for prophesying destruction that did not happen. He felt like his integrity had been compromised and his good reputation destroyed.

Jonah prayed (v. 3, NKJV) and said, ***“Therefore now, Oh Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.”*** Jonah probably felt betrayed. He felt shame and disgrace. There seemed to be nothing more to live for since he reckoned his reputation was now destroyed. He just wanted to die.

God replied (in verse 4), saying ***“...Is it right for you to be angry (with me)?”*** God threw it back at him. Jonah had already acknowledged to God in verse 2 that God was merciful, gracious, slow to anger, great in kindness and very forgiving. Jonah had the notion before he ever went to Nineveh that this could happen, and that is why he had initially chosen not to go to Nineveh. God pointed this out and rebuked Jonah for his self-pity.

God’s plan, based upon Jonah’s preaching, had resulted in over 120,000 souls being spared. Jonah could only focus on how he felt embarrassed, betrayed, and shamed. This is not what pleased him.

How many people today blame God when things do not work out as they expected? How often do they blame God when things happen which appear to be very bad? It may be severe illness, or death of a loved one (especially one’s child) or some other tragedy. They not only blame God, but sometimes they get in so much despair, severe depression even, that they just want to “end it all”?

There is a fight of good versus evil. God is good, the giver of life. Satan is evil, the destroyer of life. Even in the worst of times, we must pray and trust God to bring us through it. God has a plan for us, and we must trust Him to bring it about.