

Jonah 4

vs. 1-9.

- A. Apostles (**ACT 14:15**) and prophets (**JAM 5:17**) were men of passions as other men; they were not supermen.
1. **passion**: Any kind of feeling by which the mind is powerfully affected or moved; a vehement, commanding or overpowering emotion.
 2. Jonah was particularly driven by passion: *displeased exceedingly, very angry* (v. 1); *despondent* (v. 3); *exceeding glad* (v. 6); *despondent, angry* (v. 9).
 3. His emotionalism put him in a position not unlike that which he seems to have hoped would be the fate of Nineveh. **PRO 25:28**.
- B. Consider Jonah's reaction to the Ninevites' salvation. **vs. 1-4**.
1. The repentance of sinners should be a cause for rejoicing, not anger. **LUK 15:10, 32**.
 2. The only gladness we see from Jonah is for a gourd that benefited him. v. 6.
 3. Even after his chastening, he was still justifying his flight to Tarshish. v. 2 c/w **JON 1:1-4**.
 4. In his *anger*, he prayed in complaint. We are to pray "...without wrath..." (**1TI 2:8**).
 - a. He was still in the city when he did this. v. 5.
 - b. Imagine the impression that this would have made upon the citizens had they overheard this.
 - c. God's minister may have occasion to regret the conversion of some because of their hypocrisy (**GAL 2:4**) but not because of their repentance.
 5. Whereas we are to come *boldly unto the throne of grace to obtain mercy* (**HEB 4:16**), Jonah went there to *complain* about it!
 - a. It is as if he was ashamed of his gospel's *success*, not its *reproaches*.
 - b. He basically *saw the travail of his soul* and was DISSATISFIED. c/w **ISA 53:11**.
 6. He presumed to contend with God about the "injustice" of the whole situation. v. 2.
 - a. His own nation which habitually rejected its own prophets (**2CH 36:16**) had just been shown up by these Gentiles. The Ninevites by repentance condemned his generation also. c/w **MAT 12:41**.
 - b. He had prophesied of something which did not come to pass (since the city was not destroyed in forty days, **JON 3:4**). God and the Ninevites had crossed him!
 - c. His despondency unto death is not like Paul when he "...despaired even of life" (**2CO 1:8-9**) but more like Ahithophel who could not endure his counsel being rejected. **2SAM 17:23**.
 - d. Matthew Henry noted here, "Hot spirits are usually high spirits. *Only by pride comes contention* both with God and man." See **PRO 13:10**.
 - e. We are commanded to not think too highly of ourselves. **ROM 12:3**.
 7. God's reproof of Jonah was a rhetorical question, a powerful method of conviction. v. 4.
- C. Jonah's response was to leave town and place himself in a good viewing position. v. 5.
1. Perhaps he thought that his presence there was the reason that judgment had not fallen upon the city, as with Lot. **GEN 19:22-24**.
 2. There Jonah could sit with the early morning sun on his back and take in a great show!
 - a. Keep in mind that God's final reproof of Jonah was for his lack of pity towards men. **vs. 10-11**.
 - b. Christ's disciples once errantly wished for fire from heaven to destroy a city that *rejected* Him (**LUK 9:51-55**) but here was a city which *received* Jonah!
 - c. But what ended up being consumed was not the city but his gladness and shade.
 3. Mind that Jonah was not acting here according to the will of the Lord.

- a. If anything, what he was doing was in rejection of the will of the Lord.
 - b. Note that *he put himself* in a place of distress because of his own obdurate will. Jonah exposed himself to the elements.
 - c. He fashioned himself a *booth* (a temporary dwelling covered with boughs of trees or other slight materials).
 - d. His booth was inadequate inasmuch as relief came from the gourd which God made for him (v. 6). The coverings which God provides are always superior to ones of our own making. **GEN 4:27, 31; PRO 28:13; ISA 30:1.**
 - e. Had he rejoiced in God's mercies instead of his own pride, he could have been billeted comfortably in the city. The Ninevites by faith were safe and in comfort but not Jonah---a synoptic preview of N.T. times.
 - f. Simply put, Jonah's troubles were of his own making. c/w **2CO 6:12.**
 - g. Matthew Henry observed, "It is common for those that have fretful uneasy spirits industriously to create inconveniences themselves, that, resolving to complain, they may still have something to complain of."
- D. God made the gourd and then took it away. **vs. 6-9.**
- 1. Jonah was *exceeding glad* for this creature comfort.
 - a. He was happy as long as *his* need was being met.
 - b. He was not so happy when the Lord took it away.
 - c. It is easy to be enthusiastic and happy when the Lord gives, but what about when the Lord takes away? **JOB 1:21.**
 - 2. There is need for caution against placing too much stock in the gladness that comes from the creation. Beware of *inordinate affection*. **COL 3:5.**
 - a. God is to be our *exceeding joy*. **PSA 43:4.**
 - b. Matthew Henry noted, "Inordinate affection lays a foundation for inordinate affliction; what we are over-fond of when we have it we are apt to over-grieve for when we lose it, and we may see our folly in both."
 - 3. God also *prepared a vehement east wind* to reduce Jonah even more. **v. 8.**
 - a. Rather than humble himself, "...he fainted, and wished in himself to die..."
 - b. faint: To lose heart or courage, be afraid, become depressed, give way or flag.
 - c. We are warned against fainting when God rebukes us. **HEB 12:5.**
 - 4. Jonah's morbid desire for death was ill-timed.
 - a. He was not then in the way of duty and righteousness but in angry dispute with God.
 - b. Paul could for better reasons say, "...to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better" (**PHIL 1:23**).

vs. 10-11.

- A. God here rebukes Jonah for his proud, recalcitrant, hard-hearted indifference---in the space of two verses. God needs not write a tome to drive a point home.
- B. From these verses we may observe:
 - 1. a greater claim on a thing accords with the labor one puts into it.
 - 2. animal life is more precious than plant life.
 - 3. human life is more precious than plant life.
 - 4. a long-standing community is more precious than a sensational moment of destruction.
 - 5. God is indeed willing to spare penitents, per **2PE 3:9.**
 - 6. the welfare of little children is more precious than one's own personal comfort.
- C. God does expect men to be faithful stewards of the creation. **DEU 20:19; PRO 12:10.**

1. Jonah's priorities, though, were warped.
 2. Whereas God cares for the brute creation, He cares more for man.
MAT 6:26-30; 10:29-31; 12:11-12.
 3. God forbid that we should value the brute creation more than our fellow-man.
- D. Mind that there is no record of a retort from Jonah. God had the last word, as ever it must be.
JOB 40:4-5; ROM 3:19.