

September 21, 1930

Jonah 4:1-11

*What is represented by Jonah's sitting in a booth, waiting to see what becomes of the city?*

1. But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. Jonah's waiting in a booth represents self-complacency and self-protection, while he waits for the fulfillment of his prediction, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

2. And he prayed unto Jehovah, and said, I pray thee, O Jehovah, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I hastened to flee unto Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness, and repentest thee of the evil. *What is represented in the various symbols in verses 6, 7, and 8?*

3. Therefore now, O Jehovah, take I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live. The symbols and the situations in the verses mentioned represent the changing attitudes in the mind of one who is uncertain of his spiritual guidance. Jonah acted like a disobedient child and whined, "It is better for me to die than to live."

4. And Jehovah said, Doest thou well to be angry?

5. Then Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shade, till he might see what would become of the city. *What relation exists between the growth of Jonah's gourd in a night, and the mercy of Jehovah toward Nineveh?*

6. And Jehovah God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over his head, to deliver him from his evil case. So Jonah was exceeding glad because of the gourd. The wisdom that brings forth so simple a thing as a gourd should be equal to the task of judging a city full of wicked people. No man, no matter how wise he may be, should question the divine mercy.

7. But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd, that it withered.

8. And it came to pass, when the sun arose, that God prepared a sultry east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and requested for himself that he might die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live.

9. And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death.

10. And Jehovah said, Thou hast had regard for the gourd, for which thou hast not labored, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night:

11. And should not I have regard for Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?

*What is the result of this giving power to negation?*

The result is disobedience. Instead of realizing Jehovah's willingness to forgive the sinners of Nineveh, Jonah wanted them destroyed.

*What effect does this attitude of mind have upon the consciousness?*

Instead of holding fast to the thought of redemption through the power of prayer, the consciousness becomes negative, faultfinding, and rebellious against divine law.

June 25, 1950

Jonah 4:1-11

1. But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry.

2. And he prayed unto Jehovah, and said, I pray thee, O Jehovah, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I hastened to flee unto Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness, and repentest thee of the evil.

3. Therefore now, O Jehovah, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live.

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5. Then Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shade, till he might see what would become of the city.

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*Is it more important to us that our word be not discredited or that we should succeed in awakening others to Truth?*

Whether our words are fulfilled to the letter or not is of little importance compared with the weight of conviction they carry and their ultimate effect of inspiring those who hear them to seek Truth.

*What is the purpose of any prophet's message?*

To save his hearers from the error of their ways by a call to repentance. If this is effected the prophecy has served its purpose.

*What attribute is a prerequisite to persisting in our chosen work in the face of apparent failure?*

Patience. We do not always see clearly the effect of our words on others, and we cannot know how great it may be. Therefore we should never be discouraged, but should trust divine love and wisdom to express themselves in and through our mind and heart in full measure. As we do this understanding develops in us, and we begin to see that our labor was not in vain.

*What lesson is there for us in this story?*

That as shown in the example of Jonah, it is childish for us to allow ourselves to become angry about the apparent failure of our vision when, as a matter of Truth, the long view reveals success.

*Why are cattle mentioned in the closing verse of the text?*

Cattle represent the natural animal forces of the body, which are worth conserving irrespective of higher considerations.

November 24, 1929

Jonah 4:5-11

5. Then Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shade, till he might see what would become of the city.

6. And Jehovah God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to deliver him from his evil case. So Jonah was exceeding glad because of the gourd.

7. But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd, that it withered.

8. And it came to pass, when the sun arose, that God prepared a sultry east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and requested for himself that he might die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live.

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*What was the result of Jonah's giving power to negation?*

The result was disobedience. Instead of realizing the good and God's willingness to forgive the sinners of Nineveh, Jonah wanted Nineveh destroyed.

*What effect did this attitude of mind have upon the prophet?*

He became negative, fault-finding, and rebellious against divine law.

*What was the result?*

A brain storm resulted which threatened to destroy his body. His attitude of mind was such that he said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

October 28, 1923

Jonah 4: 10, 11

10. And Jehovah said, Thou hast had regard for the gourd, for which thou hast not labored, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night;

11. And should not I have regard for Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?

*What relation exists between the growth of Jonah's gourd in a night, and the mercy of Jehovah toward*

*the Ninevites that brings forth so terrible a storm? Should we be equal to the task of judging a city of wicked people? No man, no nation, has the right to judge another people. We should question the divine law.*

*What is the outcome of such an attitude?*

Thoughts that under the natural law control the body instinctively recognize that something is wrong, and automatically eliminate the discordant condition.

*What then becomes of God's representative who is rebellious and unforgiving?*

As explained in the book of Jonah, he is swallowed up by the great subconscious elemental life (the fish).

*What is the meaning of Jonah's being thrown upon the land?*

In the depths of this trial (hell) Jonah prayed to Jehovah and Jehovah preserved him from destruction. Divine law saved and forgave him, as it did the people of Nineveh.

*What great lesson do we get from the story of Jonah?*

The great lesson that we learn from the story of Jonah is that we should never think of evil as real. With Jesus, we should affirm that "the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins," and that, through the power of God, He does forgive all sin and sickness for those who repent.

June 30, 1940

Jonah 4:10, 11

10. And Jehovah said, Thou hast had regard for the gourd, for which thou hast not labored, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night:

11. And should not I have regard for Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?

*How does the gift of prophecy or intuitive foresight compare, in desirability to man, with love?*

"If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge . . . but have not love, I am nothing."

*How did Jonah learn meekness?*

By comparing his feeling about the gourd, which was a low form of life, with his lack of feeling for the Ninevites, whom his words had turned from evil to good and who were thus in harmony with divine love and capable of responding to it.

*What completes man's realization of meekness?*

His considering the dumb animals—creatures of instinct without capacity for divine love but nevertheless the objects of divine love—gives man a deeper understanding of the infinity of God's love and makes him truly meek.