

Jonah's Anger

Jonah 4

by Don Falkos

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Jonah was greatly displeased that the people of Nineveh had repented. He was angry and prayed to the Lord, "Isn't this what I said would happen when I was still at home? That's why I ran away to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to become angry and filled with unfailing love. I knew you would turn back from destroying these people. If you're not going to kill them, kill me. I'd be better off dead."

The Lord asked, "Do you have any right to be angry?"

Jonah went out to a place east of Nineveh. He made a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. Then the Lord provided a vine, which grew up and spread its broad leaves over Jonah, shading him from the sun, easing his discomfort; and Jonah was very happy about the vine. But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed through the vine so that it withered. When the sun rose, God sent a scorching east wind to blow on Jonah. The sun blazed on his head and he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "I would be better off dead."

But God said to Jonah, "Do you have any right to be angry?"

"I do," said Jonah, "I'm angry enough to die."

But the Lord said, "You have been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who don't know the difference between right and wrong, not to mention all the innocent animals. Don't you think I should be concerned about that great city?"