

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG172 – The Anger of this Age

Hello, blessings, and welcome to the podcast today. I want to talk to us about the story of Jonah, and use it as a discussion for us about the things that are going on in this age we seem to be living in. I just recently did a podcast called *The Way of Cain*, and this in some ways is a follow-up on that podcast; because we pick up the same concern about what really is going on in this age around us and what we see so prevalent today. Whether it is on the news or on the internet, on social media, there is just this unbelievable outrage of anger and division and speech, which to me is an expression of what is going on in the heart of man in this age. Something is really taking root; and maybe some people feel like, “Well, now, it's just comments, it is just social media, it is just a post I am doing. You know, I'm just kind of expressing something of an opinion.” But it is going deeper than that; and when you read it, you feel the impact of the anger and the division and the hatred. You feel really what is transpiring in the loss of love for mankind.

I just feel like it is something we need, as believers in Christ, to try to cry out to Him to see something transpire in this world that reverses the direction that we seem to be on. We are on a trajectory towards conclusions that I feel are very devastating in their results.

I know the concept is that we are in the end days; most believers have that idea. I think part of that idea, with a lot of believers, is that there is judgment that transpires in the time of the end. Now I do not want to get into the doctrines of judgment, or talk about that aspect of it, but I feel like there is a way in which that can be negatively thought about and used. I feel like there is also a way that we can say, “Well, that is the way it has be. We read the book of Revelation and we see these judgments transpiring, and it is just going to be that way.” A lot of times, I do not know that what God is showing us is not for a reason, as His people, that we contend for those events to change. And so, as we look at the book of Jonah, I want to bring out an example of this idea.

Maybe it is that God is coming in this age with an intent of judgment. Maybe He is coming back to the earth and He is really mad. I have heard slogans like that talked about; but it does not mean that things are necessarily concluded because God is angry. And I think that we, as Christians and as the church, have made this wrong assumption relative to Israel and the Jewish people; where we read in the text that God was angry with Israel, and God allowed the Temple to be burned down and negative things to happen. They were carried away into the Diaspora, and we see there still exists a Diaspora today. But just because God is mad, you better read the rest of the prophecies and the rest of the chapters of the Book, because it does not end up that God stays angry with them. God reverses that anger and blesses them, and, boy, He imparts a new heart and a new spirit, and He redeems them, and He restores them, and all of these things happen.

So, yes, can God get angry? Of course, He can get angry. Does He determine disciplines and judgements for people in situations when He is angry? Absolutely, we see that very biblically. But just because those things are stated, it does not mean that necessarily He remains angry and that He executes fully and completely the results of that anger, which He may have even proclaimed. So I think we need to be

careful in these times to ratchet down the sense of belief in a judgment and an angry God that is returning or coming to the earth, and feeling like that is really what is happening and there is no reversal of it. So, as I said, Jonah is a good book to read relative to these ideas. I am going to look in Jonah the third chapter, starting there, and we will go through into chapter 4. But I want to begin with Jonah 3, at verses 6-9.

Now we know the story here: God spoke to Jonah, told him to go to Nineveh and prophesy judgment. You know, He was going to decimate the city of Nineveh; and Jonah, of course, has issues with God, because he has been through previous dealings with Him. So not only is God dealing with Nineveh, but it is very evident that God is also dealing with Jonah. And I think that is what we see happening in the age around us today, that not only is God dealing with this age, He is dealing with His people – both the Jewish people, in the covenant that He has with them, and Christian believers, in the covenant that He has with them. Now don't jump over a cliff here, I am not promoting dual-covenant doctrine. You have to be careful with everything you say, because somebody is going to jump on it and criticize it for some reason; so I am not saying that, okay? But it is obvious that God is dealing with the Jewish people, and God is dealing with His Church. So finally, I can get to verse 6!

When the word [about this judgment, which is what he is speaking of] reached the king of Nineveh, he arose from his throne, laid aside his robe from him, covered himself with sackcloth and sat on the ashes. He issued a proclamation and it said, "In Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let man, beast, herd, or flock taste a thing. Do not let them eat or drink water. But both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth; and let men call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands. Who knows, God may turn and relent and withdraw His burning anger so that we will not perish."

The king of Nineveh here believes the word of Jonah, and believes that God is coming to destroy them in His anger. He is going to destroy them, the king recognizes, because of their wicked way and their violence. So we see, again, that we could apply these words and these concepts to the age we are living in; because obviously we are living in an age that has become more and more wicked before God, and we see violence increasing more and more. Which, again, violence is always a result of angry emotions, and emotions that are driving those actions of anger; and as we talked about in *The Way of Cain* podcast, we see that those emotions are driven by thoughts that arise in the mind and the brain. Those thoughts can be controlled by our mind, and therefore, our mind is capable of changing the thoughts in our brain – which is capable of changing the emotions, which is capable of changing the actions that are happening. That whole progression is very real, and I encourage you to go back and find that podcast; I think it was probably the last one that was posted chronologically.

But the king recognizes that their ways are wicked, and that the violent actions that they are executing have enraged God, and He is coming now to destroy them. However, the king also realizes that if "in earnestness" – see, there have to be emotions of repentance going back to God that are more powerful than the anger which is bringing about and evoking the violence. So if men "call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands, who knows, God may turn and relent and withdraw His burning anger so that we will not perish."

Verse 10, "When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which he had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it." We have to recognize that in this age, if Christ is returning and He is angry, if God is coming with Him and He

is angry, and what we are facing is angry judgments and calamity from God in this day and age, and it looks like that is the way that the age will end, there is not necessarily an end to our hope that something can change. It is possible that God can relent and bring about a different conclusion; and that is what the king said was possible. So God did hear their voice, and God did relent, and He did not bring the calamity that He had planned.

Going on into chapter 4, verse 1, it says, "But it greatly displeased Jonah and he became angry." And this is part of the concern that I have in this podcast: is the Church, are the believers, so set on this idea that the world has, you know, gone haywire? that it is enveloped in wickedness, it is enveloped in the violence, and man has gone into depravity which is beyond salvation? There is a lot of thinking in the believers, there is a lot of thinking in the Church, there is a lot of thinking just in other people, that this is really the state that the world is in right now, and there is no hope. And so, I want us to be careful; because when all of a sudden God relented for what He was going to do to Nineveh, Jonah was the one who became angry. And it was the anger of Jonah that is now dealt with through the remainder of the book of Jonah.

It says in verse 2, "He prayed to the Lord and said, 'Please Lord, was not this what I said while I was still in my own country? Therefore in order to forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity.'" Jonah knew all this about God. He knew the way God was; and therefore, he did not want to go talk to Nineveh and proclaim judgment on Nineveh, because he thought, "In the end of it, I am going to look like an idiot because I proclaim judgment. Now God relents, forgives them, doesn't bring the judgment, and I end up looking not like a prophet, but I end up looking like a mad man."

Well, that was Jonah's own evaluation in his own sight. But one thing about it is, Jonah really did know the heart of God. He knew that God was slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and that He relented of calamity; and He relented of the things that He had proclaimed in His anger, because obviously God was angry. He was angry at the way they were living, the way they were acting. And I think He is angry at this age. I think we see that in the Scriptures. But it does not mean that God's anger will be what is the final conclusion or action of what He does when He comes in this age.

Verses 3-4, "Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for death is better to me than life.' The Lord said, 'Do you have good reason to be angry?'" I think this is interesting, because that is the same question He asked Cain: "Why are you angry, Cain? What are you angry about?" And I think it is important, when we have these emotions that are driving us, that we stop and look at what is going on in our brain, in our thinking, maybe even in our mind; because remember, the thoughts of your brain are different than your mind. Your mind has control over your thoughts. And we should analyze: Do you have a good reason to be angry? What is the anger about? I wish the age that we live in would stop and analyze its emotions and its thoughts and its actions. But certainly, we as believers need to be doing this, because I do not want us to be caught in the same thing that we are looking upon the world out there and saying it is going to be judged for.

Verses 5-8,

Jonah went out from the city and sat east of it. There he made a shelter for himself and sat under it in the shade until he could see what would happen in the city. So the Lord God appointed a plant and it grew up over Jonah to be a shade over his head to deliver him from his discomfort. And Jonah was extremely happy about the plant. But God appointed a worm when

dawn came the next day and it attacked the plant and it withered. When the sun came up God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on Jonah's head so that he became faint and begged with all of his soul to die, saying, "Death is better to me than life."

You know, to whatever extent we can apply these verses, I do feel that we are in a time when God is working with His people and His Body. I think He is working with our attitudes; I think He is working with our thoughts, with our emotions, with our judgments, with our feelings. Sometimes I feel concerned, because when people talk about, "Judgment's coming," and, "the second coming of Christ," it is almost with a glee that they see negative things transpiring; because it means to them that God is coming to rapture them out, or something. It is like there is too much of an excitement about the negativity of what potentially could happen in this age. And so, I think God is in a time right now. Not only is He working with the world and what is going on and transpiring among them in the ways of the world, just like He dealt with Nineveh for their wickedness and for their violence; He is also dealing with the heart of His people. How are you feeling towards this age? How are you feeling towards the people in this world? How are you feeling towards those who are living and expressing the wickedness through their words, through their actions, expressing the violence and the murder that is in their hearts? How are your thoughts towards them? Are you more concerned about yourself and what is happening with you than what is maybe transpiring for them? I think it is something we should think about. It is something that Jonah becomes an example of, a parable to us of.

So, Jonah was mad. God brings a plant, puts it over him; then all of a sudden, He sends a worm. And as you are waiting on the Lord today, you should think about that. Did God send the worm that ate your plant, that brought out the sun, that made you be sort of in a miserable state today? Maybe there is something that the Lord is reaching deep into your heart for you to realize about Him and what He is doing in this end time, and how we are to respond to it.

We see that the sun came out and beat down on Jonah's head, so that he became faint and begged with all of his soul to die: "Death is better to me than life."

Verses 9-11,

Then God said to Jonah, "Do you have good reason to be angry about the plant?" And he said, "I have good reason to be angry, even to death." Then the Lord said, "You had compassion on the plant for which you did not work and which you did not cause to grow, which came up overnight and perished overnight. Should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know the difference between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?"

God was trying to get Jonah's attention in his thinking to bring him around; because I think God was using him. I mean, this is such a beautiful story, because I think it is the first great example of God using a Jewish prophet to bring salvation to a Gentile city, and world; and boy, is that ever prophetic of what was to happen. I think that He is looking to use us as believers again as those who minister to this age. Certainly, what He is not looking for is for us to engage in the same thoughts and emotions that they had in Nineveh; and it concerns me that we are allowing our thoughts and our emotions to be uncontrolled in the way that we are relating both to the Lord and to the world around us.

Luke 6:36-38 says, "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned. Give, and it will be given to you." You know, you look at these emotions, and it concerns me when you hear

and you see and you read about people who are proclaiming to be Christians and believers on social media, and the anger and the hatred and the division that they are spewing out. They are not helping what is going on in this age, but literally feeding back to it the same emotions that God is angry about. God was angry at Nineveh for their thoughts and their actions; and turns around to find that Jonah is feeding back these same emotions and actions into this city that he was to be the prophet to bring and proclaim their deliverance.

I think there are a lot of believers who need to disconnect from social media. We need to disconnect from the spirit of anger and judgment and hatred. Don't think you are going to be able to just drop it in a moment; that is what happened to Jonah. You know, God's Presence was there, God's covering was there; all of a sudden God removed it and what was revealed was the anger. And Jonah realized he was stuck with his own anger and emotions; he could not get rid of it. He was willing to go to death because he had so created and solidified in his own heart and mind the thoughts and feelings of the age he lived in.

As believers, we need to be disconnecting from that. Do not judge. We do not have permission to judge. We are told not to judge. Do not judge, and you will not be judged. If you are out there judging, do not think you are going to get away with it. Do not think you are not going to face it. Do not think it is not going to come back around. You are not dealing with people and situations, you are dealing with the laws of the Spirit. You are dealing with the laws of God that are set in motion, and you are setting something in motion that you are not going to be able to get out from under. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Are you condemning? Are you judging? And not only that, are you expressing it in anger? And is what you are saying the truth? Is it something you know firsthand, or is it something you are just repeating that you heard from somebody else that was angry, and judging, and condemning?

"Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned." Are you pardoning, or are you holding to account? "Give, and it will be given to you." A lot of times we relate this to blessing, but just read it in context: "Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return." It is not talking about blessing, it is talking about whatever you are giving out. Whatever you are giving out is on its way back to you. It is going to be pressed down; it is going to be good measure; it is going to be poured into your lap; it is going to be running over; and by your standard of measure, it is going to be measured. Are you just heaping it on others? heaping on the anger, heaping on the judgements? It is coming back. You are not dealing with people; you are not dealing with natural situations; you are dealing with God. You are dealing with the principles of the Spirit that He has set in motion.

Matthew 12:33-37, "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart." You can't just say these things like, "Oh, well, it was just an opinion." No, the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. "The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil. But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." This I know, that we will all stand before Him. We will all stand before Him. And when we stand before Him, there is nobody

else; there is nobody else there. There is God and Christ, and you are going to stand, and I am going to stand; and we are going to give an account for our words on that day to Him.

We above all people should know and understand the carefulness with which we should act in evil times. Jonah was facing an evil age, an evil city filled with evil people, wicked people; and he engaged in their same thoughts and feelings, and God dealt with him. You know what is interesting about this book of Jonah? When we read verse 11 here, about, "Should I not have compassion on Nineveh?" this is the end of the story. What is interesting to me about the book of Jonah is that we do not know what happened with Jonah. And I think it is fitting that God leaves this story that way, because we do not know what is going to happen with us. Why? Because it is up to us. Just like it was up to Cain when He said, "Listen, if you do well, then your countenance will rise. You can stop this right now, and you can stop the results of what is going to happen if you continue in these ways." And God is coming to all of us, saying the same thing to us. We, as believers, are facing a world out here that is wicked, that has the acts of wickedness in their hands. But if we respond like Jonah, instead of becoming the voice of God's compassion, the voice of faith that says, like the king of Nineveh, "Maybe God will relent and withdraw His burning anger." We should be the voice saying, "Yes, God can withdraw His burning anger." But you better get to it. You better get rid of what He is angry about. I do not see how we, as believers, can be looking at the judgments that are about to come, looking at an angry God maybe coming to this earth, and not think that He is not angry if the same things exist in our own heart. Disconnect from this world. "Be ye not conformed to this age, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." We need to get out of the thinking, the acting, the feelings, the emotions of this age, and we need to be transformed by the renewing of our mind, so that we can prove what the will of God is.

I bless us. We need to spend some time sitting before the Lord and sorting out our thoughts, our feelings, and our actions before Him.

Amen.