

Beginnings Famous & Endings

Jonah 4:11

“And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?”

I am in the middle of a study of famous quotes in the book of Job. There are quite a few. The theme in it all is the ultimate question Why does God allow things to happen or be silent? People make judgment calls on help based on rumors, the eye test, and information. Does God? They say that God is outside time. That seems impossible. Is our time as humans an era? Is it something to be boxed in like 4 quarters of a football game?

If God can see the beginning and end of time, then what is constant? If people have free will then how does that factor into time? Jonah knows about the Ninevites. He has seen and heard the rumors. They are a bad city. Jonah believes he was picked by God. He was to give Gods word to these people. Deep inside his heart, Jonah hated that. There were better things to do. Better people to save. His eye test made him resent Gods direction.

This is a famous ending because God is showing compassion to the sinful. Most Christians would not touch the sinful with a ten-foot pole. Deep down many Christians believe that “once saved” means they are clean enough in God’s eyes. The saved are the blessed. Yet, here in Jonah. Isn’t Nineveh blessed? God came to save them. Jesus helped dirty Samaritans. God helped a troubled nation of Israel. Over and over God choses those we would reject.

This last verse is interesting on several levels. God mentions the amount of people. In the story of Sodom and Gomorrah Abraham asks God how many people would be spared if one was righteous. Jesus said that the ninety-nine are not as important as the one who got away. Jesus also said that God clothes the flowers, so how much more would he cloth humans. The story of God is a story of saving and blessing those who need it. Many people like Jonah beg to differ.

I feel this verse is famous because it tells of redemption. It tells of grace. It tells of judgment and compassion. We are commanded over and over to look at the world through Gods eyes. To see people by his eye test. Yet, time after time, we say we see, judge, and evaluate by Gods terms. However, we also tend to segregate, ignore, and judge based on levels of sin. God says all sin is sin. There is no degree. Yet, we are just like Jonah. We have an opinion on that don't we.

Psalm 53:1-3 "The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, and their ways are vile; there is no one who does good. 2 God looks down from heaven on all mankind to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. 3 Everyone has turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one."