

## Having A Basic Understanding of Some Old Testament Truths

Part 439 – It Displeased Jonah Through Should Not I Spare (Jonah 4:1-11)

1. What was Jonah's reaction when God decided not to destroy Nineveh?

*"(1) But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. (2) And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. (3) Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live" (Jonah 4:1-3).*

- The king of Nineveh proclaimed a fast and repentance if perhaps God would turn away his anger (**Jonah 3:6-9**). God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not (**Jonah 3:10**).
- Jonah should have rejoiced in the repentance of the people of Nineveh (**Luke 7:36-50** and **II Corinthians 7:9**). Think about the Parables of the Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, and Lost Son as well as why they were taught (**Luke 15:1-32**).
- It is disappointing to read this of a prophet of God, for God's people should be merciful (**Proverbs 11:17, Micah 6:8, Matthew 5:7, Luke 6:36, Colossians 3:12-13, and James 2:8-13**).
- It should be noted though, after the days of Jonah God used Assyria to punish Israel (**II Kings 17:5ff.**). Assyria takes that too far and ends up punished by God (**Isaiah 10:5-19**).
- Jonah knew that God was gracious, merciful, slow to anger, of great kindness, and willing to change His mind (**Psalms 86:15, Psalms 116:5, Psalms 145:8, Joel 2:12-13, and Jeremiah 18:8**). That makes his anger very puzzling.
- Twice in this chapter, Jonah is so upset and miserable he wants to die (**Jonah 4:3; 8**). All I can say is, "what?" He pleaded for life in the first chapter and wants to die now??? He sounds like the complaining Job (**Job 7:15-16**).

2. What was the Lord's reply to Jonah?

*"Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry" (Jonah 4:4)?*

- If you know the history of God's people, you know that God does not overlook the words of his people even when they speak or act emotionally (**Psalms 106:32-33; cf. Numbers 20:1-13, Deuteronomy 3:23-26, and Deuteronomy 34:4**).
- As you might shake your head at Jonah, and rightfully so; this is a great time in your studies to think about anger (**Psalms 37:8, Proverbs 14:17, Proverbs 14:29, Proverbs 16:32, Proverbs 22:24, Ecclesiastes 7:9, Ephesians 4:26-27, and James 1:19-20**).

3. Why did Jonah leave Nineveh and sit outside the east side of the city?

*“So 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 shadow, till he might see what would become of the city” (Jonah 4:5).*

- Is Jonah so upset that he has become unreasonable? With God, He is not going to destroy the city at this time seeing as how He has rendered His judgment based on their repentance (**Isaiah 55:7** and **Micah 7:18**).

4. What did God prepare to come up over Jonah for a shadow over his head?

*A gourd: “And the LORD God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd” (Jonah 4:6).*

- A gourd was some kind of plant (Strong’s # 7021).
- Jonah was happy for the shade. Apparently, it was more shade than the tent he made himself. God provides better in this case in a manner that lifted the spirits of Job (**Psalms 3:3**).

5. What did God prepare a worm for?

*To smite the gourd: “But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered” (Jonah 4:7).*

- From the days of Egypt, God has shown the ability to send forth creatures of the earth to destroy that which He had caused to grow (**Psalms 78:43-50**, **Psalms 105:34-35**, and **Joel 1:1-5**).

6. After the worm did its task and Jonah fainted, what did Jonah wish for again?

*Death: “And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live” (Jonah 4:8).*

- The worm wasn’t the end of it. God sent a vehement [harsh, hot, sultry, silent; Strong’s # 2759] east wind (**Exodus 10:13**, **Exodus 14:21**, **Psalms 48:7**, and **Ezekiel 17:10**).
- The east wind that God sent during the days of Joseph that lead to a seven year famine comes to mind here (**Genesis 41:1-36**).
- The Lord lifted him up and then put him down (**Psalms 102:10**).
- He was so hot he fainted. The Lord was no longer his shade (**Psalms 121:5-6**).
- Again, he wants to die.

7. What lesson(s) was God teaching Jonah as the book concludes?

The hypocrisy of Jonah's pity for the gourd, but not for the people of Nineveh whom were ignorant and deserved pity after their show of repentance: "(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) Then said the LORD, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: (11) And should not I spare 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*" (**Jonah 4:9-11**)?

- What a lesson to learn (**Proverbs 21:3**, **Hosea 6:6**, **Micah 6:6-8**, and **Matthew 9:9-13**)!
- God looks at humanity as the Creator as His offspring (**Acts 17:24-28**). As a Father (**Psalms 103:13**).
- God considered how many would die in His wrath. Again, they repented. We see Jesus looking at Jerusalem this way (**Luke 19:41-44**).
- God considered that they were ignorant. Not willfully, but simply did not know what was right and left. Sin requires some possibility of knowledge (**Luke 12:47-48**, **John 15:20-22**, and **James 4:17**).