



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## The Most Blessed Prophet, Angry with God!

APRIL 17-19, 2013

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### Jonah 4:1-5

*“And it was evil to Jonah, a great evil, and he was burning with anger. 2) And he prayed to the LORD and said, ‘Please LORD, was not this my word, perpetually coming to pass in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish! Because I knew You are a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and relenting from the evil! 3) And now, LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.’ 4) But the LORD said, ‘Is it good for you to burn with anger?’ 5) But Jonah had gone out from the city and was dwelling in front of the city (East) and had made for himself there a booth. And he was dwelling under it in the shadow, perpetually, until he should see what would become of the city.”*

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*“REND YOUR HEARTS AND NOT YOUR GARMENTS, NOW RETURN TO THE LORD, YOUR GOD, FOR HE IS GRACIOUS AND MERCIFUL, SLOW TO ANGER, ABOUNDING IN LOVINGKINDNESS, AND RELENTING OF EVIL.” JOEL 2:13*

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What was evil, even a great evil to Jonah? Why was he so angry at God? Did Jonah consider his own word above or better than God’s Word? Why did Jonah say that he fled to Tarshish? Was Jonah really upset at the grace of God upon the Ninevites? Why does Jonah say he wants God to kill him? What is God’s manner in handling his angry prophet? How does Jonah’s booth show that he is confronting the city?

#### FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- APRIL 24-26: JONAH 4:6-11 **GOD TEACHES JONAH MERCY AND GRACE!**
- MAY 1-3: MT. 12:39, 16:4 **THE SIGN OF JONAH AND JESUS CHRIST**

Because the prophet Jonah had preached “*Still forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown!*” and God had granted genuine repentance to the entire city of Nineveh, Jonah was unhappy! The king down to the pauper, “*the greatest of them to the least of them,*” had done everything possible to repent and demonstrate that they believed that they deserved the annihilation prescribed for them. Probably Assur dan III (772-755 B.C.), a king of Nineveh, had led the capitol in repentance by abandoning his throne and royal robes to cover “*himself with sackcloth*” and join the people of the street when he “*sat in ashes*” (Jonah 3:6). Instead of becoming the next deepest crater on earth, like the Dead Sea (the former Sodom & Gommorah), the Assyrian Empire was renewed to greater strength under Tiglath-pileser III (745-727 B.C.). Probably Jonah, as a prophet, anticipated the conquering and deportation of his own people to Assyria about 721 B.C. because of their lack of repentance and blatant rebellion against their merciful God. So Jonah was extremely angry at God’s grace being given to the cruel Assyrians when He “*relented of the evil*” which He had sent Jonah to proclaim to them.

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**“WITHOUT SHAME JONAH LAYS BARE THE MOTIVATING IMPULSES OF HIS HEART WHICH WERE SO DESPICABLE. MAN CANNOT BEAR THE GRACE OF GOD TO OTHERS. IN HIS DESPONDENCY AND CHAGRIN HE JUSTIFIES HIS FLIGHT AND QUARRELS WITH GOD BECAUSE HE SPARED NINEVEH.”**  
**CHARLES FEINBERG**

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### I. REJECTION OF THE GREATEST REVIVAL JONAH 4:1

The same root word for evil is used eight times in the book of Jonah. It is first used in God’s first words to Jonah, “*Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it for their evil has come up before Me*” (1:2). It is then used of the sailors in the violent storm as they cast lots to know who was responsible for “*the evil upon us*” (1:7). The

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### BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY @ 7:00AM –BIBLE STUDY – FREDERICKSBURG – BOB EVANS ON RT. 3, 11:30AM – WOODBRIDGE – BOB EVANS, 13900 NOBLEWOOD PLAZA

THURSDAY @ 7:30AM –BIBLE STUDY – CHESTER – SHONEY’S AT RT. 10 (IRON BRIDGE ROAD) & 301(12531 JEFFERSON DAVIS HIGHWAY)

FRIDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – NORFOLK – GOLDEN CORRAL, 6103 N. MILITARY HWY, NEAR THE NORFOLK AIRPORT

# Virginia

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third time is in the previous verse as God “*relented of the evil which He had said that He would do*” to the Ninevites (3:10). And now it is used twice of Jonah in his opinion of God’s grace upon the “*evil*” capitol: “*it was evil to Jonah, a great evil, and he was burning with anger.*” By the use of the word “*evil*,” Jonah considers God’s grace upon Nineveh a greater evil than the evil God saw in Nineveh which ignited His cataclysmic judgment in the first place! Instead of rejoicing in the greatest revival in the history of the world, Jonah is appalled and fiercely angered by it.

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“IT IS NOT JUST A LITTLE IRRITATION THAT JONAH FEELS – IT IS ABSOLUTE FURY. . . HE IS ENRAGED THAT THERE IS NO CALAMITY. HE LOOKS AT THE KINDNESS AND MERCY OF THE LORD AND CALLS IT EVIL.”

PAUL MACKRELL

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### II. COMPLAINT AGAINST GOD’S CHARACTER JONAH 4:2

Jonah then reveals his deepest motives in prayer, “*Please, LORD, was not this my word perpetually coming to pass in my country, why I made haste to flee to Tarshish?*” Jonah tells God that he really knew God had sent him on a mission of mercy to Nineveh rather than the annihilation his proclamation had promised. So, it had been Jonah’s inner word perpetually, before he left his country, and why he fled to Tarshish! For Jonah it is all about “*my country.*” He believed that only his country should be granted the gracious favor of God, and surely not the evil Assyrians, guilty of such horrific violence! So he complains that he knew when he was first commissioned to Nineveh, that God, by His character, was much more desirous to pour out his goodness, love and grace rather than His wrath. “*Because I knew You are a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and relenting of the evil!*” These precise attributes are only spoken specifically of God and to those of His own people, Israel, but Jonah is complaining that they are no longer just for Israel, but

also for the most fierce and cruel enemies of Israel, and he was angry, considering God guilty of “*a great evil!*”

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“THE OVERTHROW OF NINEVEH BY DIVINE JUDGMENT, ACCORDING TO HIS PROCLAMATION, WOULD MOST MIGHTILY HAVE STRENGTHENED HIM ON HIS RETURN TO HIS COUNTRYMEN, ENFORCING THE REPENTANCE WHICH HE SHOULD PREACH TO THEM ALSO. . . THE FAVORABLE REACTION THAT MIGHT HAVE ENSUED AMONG ISRAEL, HE HAD APPARENTLY BEGUN TO CALCULATE UPON.”

HUGH MARTIN

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### III. HIS CRY FOR CATAclysmic CHANGE JONAH 4:3-4

Jonah grows more urgent in his prayer, “*And now Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.*” Jonah, focusing on his nation, subtly hints to God that He can’t love both His people Israel, and these vile Assyrians, “so kill one of us, either me or them! You promised to kill them, so go ahead, annihilate them!” Jonah thinks he loves God’s people more than God does! But God patiently responds, “*Is it good for you to burn with anger?*” It is like the question asked Cain in Genesis 4:6.

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“PERHAPS . . . JONAH HAD MORE FAITH IN THE ASSYRIANS TO DO EVIL THAN IN GOD TO DO RIGHT.”

HENRY MORRIS

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### IV. HIS CONFRONTATION OF THE CAPITOL JONAH 4:5

Even Jonah’s placement of his booth is designed to invite God to destroy the city. He had abandoned the wicked capitol and “*was dwelling in front of the city (East)*” where he could lodge in his hut among the hills overlooking the city. He was enjoying the discomfort of their fasting and fighting with their hungry animals, as he comfortably wished for their calamity “*dwelling under it in the shadow, perpetually, until he should see what would become of the city.*”

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#### Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Are you desirous to see even those on the opposite side of the isle blessed with God’s grace?
- 2) Do you find yourself complaining when those you think should get what they deserve, don’t, and even prosper?
- 3) Do you demonstrate you are blessed by your delight to see other legislators saved and consistently pray for them?