



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

God teaches Jonah Mercy and Grace

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Jonah 4:6-11

“And the LORD God appointed a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head to deliver him from his evil. So Jonah was glad for the plant, a great gladness. 7) But God appointed a worm, when dawn came up the next day, which smote the plant, so that it withered. 8) And it came to pass when the sun arose, God appointed a scorching east wind and the sun smote the head of Jonah, so that he fainted, and he asked for his life, to die. For he said, ‘It is better for me to die than to live.’ 9) But God said to Jonah, ‘Do you do well to be angry for the plant?’ And he said, ‘I do well to be angry, to death!’ 10) Then the LORD said, ‘You yourself had pity for the plant which you did not labor (upon it), which especially you did not grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night. 11) And should not I Myself have pity upon Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right had from their left, and also much cattle?’”

“DO NOT REJOICE WHEN YOUR ENEMY FALLS, AND LET NOT YOUR HEART BE GLAD WHEN HE STUMBLES, LEST THE LORD SEE IT AND BE DISPLEASED, AND TURN AWAY HIS ANGER FROM HIM.” PROVERBS 24:17-18

What was the evil from which God was delivering Jonah? Is this the only time in the entire book that Jonah is happy? Why is Jonah so extremely happy? How long did his happiness last? Why the worm, and so quickly? Would Jonah probably have already been suffering from a skin problem? Does Jonah receive a small portion of that which he wishes upon Nineveh? Is Jonah’s anger really patriotic or personal? What is God’s great heart toward this repentant capitol of the world empire?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- > MAY 1-3: MT. 12:39, 16:4 THE SIGN OF JONAH AND JESUS CHRIST
- > MAY 8-10: INTRODUCTION: ACTS – THE MOST IMPORTANT BOOK OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

After the cruel capitol of the Assyrian empire had been granted genuine repentance, Jonah was furious! He saw God’s pity upon these violent tyrants as *“evil, a great evil!”* He even justified his previous disobedience in running the opposite direction to Tarshish by saying that he knew all along that God would have mercy on the Ninevites. *“Because I knew you are a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and relenting from the evil”* (Jonah 4:2). He expected that since these loving attributes of God were first presented to Israel, then they had exclusive rights to them, and they were certainly not to be given in grace to these abominable Assyrians! Jonah views his enemies’ deliverance as Israel’s demise and he would rather die than be part of such a reversal for God’s people, so he begs God to just go ahead and kill him. But the LORD lovingly responds, *“Is it good for you to burn with anger?”* Instead of answering verbally, Jonah answers with his actions and he builds a booth in front of the city, overlooking their repentant afflictions and desiring Nineveh’s complete devastation by God.

“DESPITE CLEAR EVIDENCE THAT GOD HAD ACCEPTED NINEVEH’S REPENTANCE, JONAH DID NOT ACCEPT THEM.”
RICHARD PHILLIPS

I. GLADNESS FOR GRACE

JONAH 4:6

In Jonah’s happiness, he ascribes to the *“LORD God”* the divine cause of the supernatural spreading plant. Previously, he had consistently used the name *“LORD”* in reference to those in Israel and *“God”* when referring to the Ninevites. Now he is excited in the best of both

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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names and is so thrilled over this super growing plant, providing instantaneous shade, he is “glad” with “a great gladness.” Most likely his skin is very sensitive to the sun due to the acids in the stomach of the “great fish,” his previous supernatural deliverer appointed by the LORD. This kind deliverance from the heat of the sun not only blesses him with comfort, but it also delivers him from his evil anger at God and probably makes him think that God delights in his perpetual confrontation of the city.

“THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE IN THE BOOK WHERE IT IS SAID OF JONAH THAT HE WAS GLAD, AND IT WAS SELFISH JOY OVER HIS OWN COMFORT.”
CHARLES FEINBERG

II. ANGER FOR ADVERSITY JONAH 4:7-9

Jonah’s intense happiness only lasts as long as his beloved plant. By the crack of dawn the following day, “God appointed a worm which smote the plant so that it withered.” With little to protect him as the sun arose, “God appointed a scorching east wind” to add to Jonah’s plight, “and the sun smote the head of Jonah, so that he fainted.” Just like the worm had smitten the plant so that it withered, so the sun had smitten Jonah and he withered under its blazing heat. He could go down and enjoy refreshment and even kind hospitality and fellowship in Nineveh, but that is the last thing he would be willing to do! Instead, he is again angry at God and asks God to kill him, saying, “It is better for me to die than to live.” God now includes the plant in His probing question, “Do you do well to be angry for the plant?” Though Jonah was quiet the first time God asked him about his anger, in this heat he is even more incensed and hotly retorts, “I do well to be angry to death!” Now that the pouting prophet is suffering a little bit of what he has been continually wishing upon the Ninevites, he is so enraged that he answers God without thinking, unaware he has snared himself in his own irrational trap.

“EUPHORIC OVER A PLANT AND INDIFFERENT TO THE DESTRUCTION OF A CITY, HE STANDS IN NEED OF DIVINE INSTRUCTION.” PAUL MACKRELL

III. PITY FOR THE PLANT JONAH 4:10

The LORD shows Jonah his unreasonable selfishness. He reminds Jonah that he had done absolutely nothing to contribute to the life of the plant and therefore had no reason to be so much in love with it. “You yourself had pity for the plant which you did not labor (upon it), which you did not grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night.” The intensive pronoun, “you yourself,” helps Jonah view his own completely irrational thinking and emotions. The plant was so temporal, fleeting and worthless it is literally called a “son of the night.” It had come up one night and was gone the next! How could Jonah possibly extend his heart of love and pity to a plant while angry at God for having pity on an entire capitol city of a world empire?

“THIS MEANS THAT THE CHURCH MUST BE INTERESTED IN MEN APPOINTED TO OFFICE IN CIVIC AFFAIRS.”
G. CAMPBELL MORGAN

IV. COMPASSION FOR THE CAPITOL JONAH 4:11

The LORD then contrasted Jonah with His own intensive pronoun, “And should not **I myself** have pity upon Nineveh, that great city.” The first argument God presented defending His love for this capitol is the strategic nature of the city. The first and final words of our LORD in this book of Jonah, bookend with an emphasis on the greatness of the city. Through this revival in Nineveh, all the nations of the world of that day would hear of the wonderful work of God! In contrast to the innocent unborn in our country, God argued for the 120,000 innocent children as undeniable objects of compassion as well as all the innocent animals.

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Are there those in the body of Christ which God has accepted that you do not accept?
- 2) Do you see the capitol as a strategic place to be a witness or is your political agenda your only priority?
- 3) Have you ever repented and received Jesus Christ as your Lord so that you will enjoy God’s pity rather than His wrath?