



Study 4 - Jonah 4:1-11 The Anger of Jonah

Recap: Jonah's mission to Nineveh was an outstanding success. Jonah must be the most successful prophet in Israel's history. God responded to the wholesale repentance of the population (even the 4 legged ones!) with grace, and judgement was averted.

Read 4:1-3

Q1. (O) Chapter 4 opens with an angry prophet. What to Jonah was so 'very wrong'? So very wrong, that he would rather die than live (v3).

Q2. (O) In v2 we learn the exact reason that Jonah sought to flee to Tarshish (1:3). What is it about God's character that Jonah feared?
See also Exodus 34:5-7.

Q3. (I) Writing 100 years after the book of Jonah is set, in around 650-620BC, the Old Testament prophet Nahum specifically prophesied against Nineveh. His prophecy was fulfilled when Nineveh was conquered by the Babylonians in 612BC. The Ninevites had a reputation for ruthless cruelty long before Nahum wrote, however. Based on Nahum 1:7-8, 3:1-5, 3:18-19 (for example), what general attitude toward Ninevites do you imagine Jonah & other Israelites would have?

In chapter 2, Jonah loved God's grace directed at himself. He feels different about the Ninevites also receiving grace. Why?

Q4. (I) Consider Luke 15:11-32 - especially the older brother's complaint. Bear in mind from Luke 15:1-2 who the brothers each represent. What do you think Jesus would have said to Jonah?

Read 4:4-11

4:4-11 seems to be a flashback. After Jonah completed his preaching commission (3:4), he had settled outside the City to watch and see God's judgement on it (4:5). When it becomes apparent that God is showing mercy to the Ninevites, he becomes angry.

Q5. (I) What point about the depth of Jonah's concern or attachment to the short lived plant does God make in v10? What should this teach Jonah about God's concern for the Ninevites (v11)?

Q6. (I) What is the impact of abruptly ending the book with a question? Who is forced to answer it?

Q7. (A) The apostle Paul reminded Timothy about 'God our Saviour who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth' (1 Timothy 2:3). Whom are the people or types of people, we might think don't deserve to be beneficiaries of God's grace?

What do you think the God we are reminded of in Jonah would say about this kind of thinking?

Q8. (A) Think of someone you would act or think differently toward if you had God's character of grace and compassion? Without naming the person, state some concrete ways in which your present behaviour towards this person would have to change. Pray for each other – asking God to bring about these changes.