

Jonah 4 **by Craig B.**

Resources:

Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah (The NIV Application Commentary 13)
James Bruckner

The Prodigal Prophet
Timothy Keller

Knowledge of the Holy
A.W. Tozer

Jonah 3

7 “By the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. 8 But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. 9 Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.” 10 When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

The compassionate concern of God

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1 But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. 2 He prayed to the Lord, “Isn’t this what I said, Lord, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. 3 Now, Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.” 4 But the Lord replied, “Is it right for you to be angry?”

The historical situation & Jonah’s logical response

“What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”

A.W. Tozer, *Knowledge of the Holy*

Psalm 50

16 But to the wicked person, God says: “What right have you to recite my laws or take my covenant on your lips? 17 You hate my instruction and cast my words behind you. 21 When you did these things and I kept silent, you thought I was exactly like you.

“Worship is pure or base as the worshiper entertains high or low thoughts of God.”

Tozer

“For this reason the gravest question before the Church is always God Himself, and the most significant fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like.”

“We tend by a secret law of the soul to move toward our mental image of God.”

“The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of Him. It begins in the mind and may be present where no overt act of worship has taken place.”

Tozer

Romans 1

21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

“The idolater simply imagines things about God and acts as if they were true.”

Jonah 2

8 “Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God’s love for them. 9 But I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. I will say, ‘Salvation comes from the Lord.’”

1 Samuel 15

22 But Samuel replied: “Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king.”

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5 Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. 6 Then the Lord God provided a leafy plant and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant. 7 But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. 8 When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah’s head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, “It would be better for me to die than to live.”

Psalm 130

5 I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope. 6 I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning,

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“It would be better for me to die than to live.” 9 But God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?” “It is,” he said. “And I’m so angry I wish I were dead.” 10 But the Lord said, “You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. 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?”

The timeless grace of the matter is that God brings him to participate in the wonder of God’s ways in the world, even when Jonah is not sure it is a good idea.

Revelation 7

9 After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. 10 And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” 11 All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying: “Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!”