

The Problem is God!?

Jonah 4

REASONS FOR REJOICING – work of God in this Book

CELEBRATION of JOY – MERCY AND FORGIVENESS of God

Sailors – saved from Storm and saved from SIN

WITNESSED MIGHTY POWER OF GOD – worshipped Him

Jonah – Saved from Himself, Stubbornness – Restored to Father God

SALVATION FROM LORD // WORD CAME A SECOND TIME

Nineveh – Saved from Wrath of God / SPARED BY COMPASSION

I have met men who would give their right arms to see what Jonah saw in Nineveh, for whom the privilege of being an instrument of awakening in the hands of God would be sweeter than life itself. Sinclair Ferguson

PAGAN City giving PRAISES to True God / Foreshadowing PENTECOST

we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God Acts 2.11

How WE would REJOICE to See Leaders of our Lands / Leading Repentance

CAUSE TO REJOICE – Mercy to Sailors, Jonah, Nineveh

JONAH – far from rejoicing – ANGRY, VIOLENTLY ANGRY

STORY NOT MYTH – no “happily ever after ending” REAL LIFE

SEE Jonah / SEE Ourselves > MIXED Motives of our Christian SERVICE

1. Case of Anger

END of Chapter 3 > GOD is FILLED with COMPASSION and MERCY

BEGINNING of Chapter 4 > JONAH is FILLED with CRUEL ANGER

v. 1 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry.

a. Self-Justification - Like US, Jonah wants to make CLEAR, Not my Problem!

Full Circle – back to God and Jonah

BEGINS – God and Jonah – Add Sailors, Fish, Ninevites

END – God & Jonah – STORY OF OUR LIVES – End – Alone before God

Jonah tried to JUSTIFY HIMSELF in eyes of God and Self

v. 2 That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish...

TOO OFTEN OFFER EXCUSES FOR OUR FAILURES

// ADAM in EDEN “It wasn’t ME!!” – IT was YOU GOD & THIS WOMAN!

FORGIVENESS IS REAL AND COMPLETE – So are the Scars of Sin

How could a Holy Man of God have so many godless holes?

OLD NATURE – DEAD BUT NOT ERADICATED / Still Hangin’ Around

WE have NO RIGHT to God’s MERCY > Angry when He gives to OTHERS!

b. Scripture Twisting Jonah tried to TURN GOD AGAINST GOD

v. 2 ... for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster.

Jonah’s THEOLOGY IMPECCABLE / Description of God Exod 34, Nehem 9

Having RIGHT DOCTRINE No GUARANTEE of RIGHT HEART / LIFE

“When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives”

James 4.3

JONAH quotes Bible back to God to PROVE THAT GOD IS WRONG

Jonah is CONSISTENT – God is ERRATIC – so he this man thinks

// Satan’s use of Bible to Jesus – Wilderness Temptation

SATAN QUOTED ACCURATELY – BUT WRONGLY

A TEXT WITHOUT A CONTEXT IS A PRETEXT

POSSIBLE TO MAKE BIBLE SAY WHATEVER YOU WANT

Take phrases, out of context, ignoring obvious meaning to support own ideas

“The using of God’s word to tempt God is a danger which threatens all Christians. Every time the Christian thinks he has God’s Word in store to be needed, he commits this sin, which is that of Satan himself against God. This is the attitude of a historian who dissects Scripture to set it against Scripture, of the theologian who uses a text to construct his doctrine, or of the simple Christian who opens his Bible to find himself justified there, or to find arguments against non-Christians or against Christians who do not hold the same views, arguments which show how far superior my position is than that of others...The Bible is not a neutral book which one can read and then take arguments from it. It is an explosive power which must be handled with care” Jacques Elull

BIBLE IS LIKE ELECTRICITY – Very Useful and Very Dangerous

BIBLE READING FORMULA –

Danger – Reading the Bible for Self-Justification

Blessing – Reading to see self as sinner and God as Savior

c. Suicide instead of Service

REPRISE of Chapter 1 – tells Sailors to throw into Sea

DEFAULT SETTINGS ON COMPUTER – Same DUMB Thing Over & Over

“Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me!” Psalm 19.13

PRESUMPTUOUS

BESETTING SINS – Habits Hard to Break – Struggle to Grow and Obey

FAMILY IN HAWAII – WOMAN VERY DEMANDING AND ROUGH

HUSBAND – MOSTLY SILENT – really was SEETHING IN ANGER

SO ANGRY HE SHOWED HER – REVENGE – HUNG HIMSELF

Finally, found peace from her – FAMILY FOREVER IN DEEP PAIN

Jonah AGAIN ASKED FOR DEATH - v. 3 “Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.”

NOTICE it is a PRAYER > THAT is Good Thing > TELL it to GOD

v. 9 “Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die.”

JONAH OUTWARD OBEDIENCE - SEETHING, INWARD ANGER

Jonah was an angry servant, which is often the tragic consequence of service without love. Ministry motivated by love will build you up, but ministry motivated only by obligation or duty can produce hidden anger and eventually wear you down
Warren Wiersbe

MANY PEOPLE – even Christians – ANGER IS JUST BELOW SURFACE

OUTWARDLY SMILING – INWARDLY SEETHING

The same thing happens when we become angry. We begin being angry at big things, but quickly we become angry at petty things. First we are angry with God. Next we express our anger at circumstances, then minor circumstances. Finally, our shoelace breaks one morning and we find ourselves swearing...Is this right? Is this the way you want to live? Do you want to spend the rest of your life swearing at petty annoyances?
James Boice

2. Cause of Anger

a. Insistence on Own Way -- No Acceptance of God’s Will

He did what God wanted / God did not do what he wanted

Not RECONCILED with the WILL OF GOD

REASON FOR MANY MISERABLE, BITTER CHRISTIANS

God let them down, Failed them > WRONG Life, Marriage, Kids, Job, Health

JOY OF THE LORD IS OUR STRENGTH – Content and Confident

GOD HAS US WHERE HE WANTS US – Apt, Job, Marriage

JOY NOT IN ANY OF THOSE THINGS – ONLY IN JESUS

Ex. Job of Pastor – Only HALF Day a Week / Sit and Read Bible

DIFFICULTY IN MINISTRY – If did not have any people, no problems!

LOOKING FOR JOY IN BEING PASTOR – SORELY DISAPPOINTED

ONLY IN JESUS – JOY OF LORD IS STRENGTH – ENDURE PROBLEMS

b. Ignored God's Mercy FORGOTTEN GOD'S MERCY TO HIM

LONG JOURNEY from Mediterranean shore to walled city of Nineveh

Like the WANDERING ISRAELITES who longed to return TO EGYPT

Forgot MIGHTY DELIVERANCE thru RED SEA

Have we forgotten MIGHTY DELIVERANCE – Jesus upon Cross?

Mt 18 – Servant who was forgiven millions of dollars by Great King

FINDS FELLOW SERVANT WHO OWES HIM CHUMP CHANGE

Refuses to forgive that SMALL AMOUNT – even though forgiven much

King angrily says to this unmerciful servant – “You should have had mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you” Matthew 18.33

ANGRY BELIEVER – MERCILESS BELIEVER – SHORT MEMORY

c. Ignorance of God Did NOT Know God as Well as he Thought

PROBABLY A PROUD JEW – Revelation of only True God - TORAH

v. 2 “for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful” A BAD THING?

Grace and Compassion FOR NINEVITES? Isn't this Monopoly of Jews??

Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love. 2.8

SUBSTITUTED TRUE GOD FOR ONE OF HIS OWN IMAGINATION

KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT GOD – BUT NOT MOST IMPORTANT

Did not Know God's Grace and Mercy – for himself and for Nineveh

LIKE OLDER SON who SULKED AS FATHER CELEBRATED w/ Prodigal
 Jonah was caught between the vice of his own self-will on the one hand, and the strong hand of God on the other. The more he pushed, the more God pressed. He was bound to remain miserable until either he or God let go. Sinclair Ferguson

Nineveh – Greatest Revival in History // Jonah – Greatest Evangelist

NOT ULTIMATELY Important – IS NAME WRITTEN IN GOD’S BOOK?

d. Isolation

Jonah had a “Pity Party” – Only Guest INVITED was HIMSELF

BUILT his own BOOTH as DESCRIBED in Leviticus 23 – Feast of Booths

WHY BUILD SHELTER – every house in Nineveh open, incl. King’s Palace

HE WAS GOD’S INSTRUMENT OF THE ENTIRE CITY’S SALVATION

Should have been like JOHN CALVIN – taught Scripture to city of Geneva

INSTEAD – Jonah got HILLSIDE VIEW of Nineveh

WANTED TO SEE PREACHING FULFILLED “Nineveh will be destroyed”

Shelter = Christians building Denominations – HISTORY – Unresolved Anger

Being Spectator, not a Servant makes One Overly Critical - Angry

MOTIVE FOR COMING TO BICF ZGC? – Spectator or Participant?

Actively participate in Worshipping God – Encourage Saints – Spread Gospel

OR SIT LIKE SPECTATOR & CRITIQUE A SUNDAY PERFORMANCE?

SURE to BECOME ANGRY – Not Good Performance – NOT My Part anyway!

I find in my heart the seeds of every known sin. Robert Murray M’Cheyne

3. Cure for Anger

Not fully solvable in this life – BUT CAN GET SOME HANDLE ON IT

a. Right Perspective – Ultimate Truth

Calm Questions – Ex. God’s use of Questions

To Adam & Eve – Guilty in Court Room of Eden –

“Where are you?”...“Who told you that you were naked?” Genesis 3.9,11

To Cain whose Brother’s Blood was on his Hands -

“Where is Abel your brother?” Genesis 4.9

To Judas Iscariot who Sold Out our Lord -

“Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?” Luke 22.48

ANSWERS REVEAL WHERE WE STAND BEFORE A HOLY GOD

First Question to Jonah – v. 4 “Do you do well to be angry?””

PERSPECTIVE – Who is Right? – Angry Prophet or Awesome God

When God does not let himself be instructed by his proud and angry prophet...
Jonah wants to die...God is incorrigible, he won’t learn a thing...If the wicked
do not get their just reward, then there is no sense to God and faith, and person
might as well end it all. The life of faith is meaningless. Death is to be preferred.

Elizabeth Achtemeier

2 OPPOSITE OPINIONS - God is Pleased, Jonah is Angry

WHATEVER OUR THOUGHTS OR FEELINGS – GOD IS RIGHT!

PAUL “Let God be true, and every man a liar” Romans 3.4

JONAH SO ANGRY – IGNORES GOD – WALKS OUT OF CITY

God’s 2nd Question to Jonah – v. 9 “Do you do well to be angry for the plant?””

ONLY TIME IN WHOLE BOOK see – v. 6 “Jonah was exceedingly glad
because of the plant”

NOT ABOUT Sailors Conversion, Big Fish, Salvation of Nineveh

“Jonah was very happy about the SHADE GIVING Vine”

GOD Sent HOT SIROCCO Wind in FROM the DESERT

NOW JONAH IS ANGRY ABOUT THE SHRIVELED VINE – enough to die!!

HEBREW Word for ANGRY Used Here – Lit. = GET HOT!

NOW HE’S NOT ANGRY AT GOD – ANGRY AT WORM – PETTINESS

In a work which stresses divine compassion and mercy, the destruction of the gourd appears strangely out of place. It dramatically reveals, however, that God’s sovereignty is not restricted to acts of compassion. As one who gives life, he also has the right to bring it to an end...symbolizes the future destruction of Israel by these Assyrians.

Desmond Alexander

b. Right Authority – Ultimate Power

Some have only a BIG, MUSHY, TEDDY-BEAR GOD / not Biblical

1.4 “the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea” - We Cheer and Marvel

1.17 “the LORD appointed a great fish” – We Praise His Great Power

4.6 “Now the LORD God appointed a plant” – We Agree

4.7 “God provided a worm which chewed the vine” – What is this?

4.8 “God appointed a scorching east wind” – How could a good God do that?

IF GOD IS SOVEREIGN – ABSOLUTE POWER & AUTHORITY

EVERYTHING COMES FROM HIS HAND

WE WILL RECEIVE THE OBVIOUS BLESSINGS of our LIFE

BUT We QUESTION – EVEN CURSE – APARENT CONTRADICTIONS

God gives Children / how about Barrenness?

God gives Safe Travel / how about Plane Crashes?

God gives Health / how about Sickness?

God gives Food / how about Starvation?

God gives Life / how about Death?

PREACHERS in USA After September 11, 2001

“God had NOTHING TO DO with FALLING of WORLD Trade TOWERS!”

Suppose they HOPED to COMFORT People and DEFEND God

Do the DIFFICULT THINGS – COME FROM SATAN?

If WORLD HALF-CONTROLLED by SATAN Really is SCARY PLACE!

Has God given over His Sovereign Rule to the Evil One? – Not 2 gods!

One is Creator – other a MERE CREATURE

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. Romans 8.28

give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you
1 Thessalonians 5.18

“be thankful IN all circumstances” – NOT FOR ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

NOT Thankful FOR Barrenness, Plane Crashes, Sickness, Starvation, Death

BELIEVER IN SOVEREIGN GOD – “even in greatest tragedy

God Working, Working for GOOD of His People, and GLORY of His Name”

Joseph’s brothers had sold to SLAVERY > Many Wasted, Painful Years LOST!

“You meant these things for evil, but God intended them for good, and the saving of many people”
Genesis 50.20

“The LORD has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble.”
Proverbs 16.4

“Surely the wrath of man shall praise you” Psalm 76.10

APOSTLE PAUL TO ROMANS “Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.” Romans 11.22

c. Right Motive – Ultimate Love - GOD’S 3rd and Final Question to Jonah

v. 11 “should not I pity Nineveh, that great city... more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?”

IF YOU DON’T CARE ABOUT ADULTS IN NINEVEH – Kids? Cattle?

Jonah was Sorry about WILTED VINES // God sorry about Wicked Sinners

“This is a warning that it is possible to obey God but to do so with such a degree of unwillingness and anger that, so far as we are concerned, the obedience is no better than disobedience”
James Boice

BOOK ENDS WITH THIS QUESTION --- No Written Answer

Question Echoes Down the Corridors of Time Right into THIS ROOM!

Question that God wants YOU and I to Answer

We DO NOT KNOW when will be LAST TIME God will SPEAK to US

We will DO WELL to ASSUME this IS the LAST TIME and be READY!

Book of Jonah – Picture of Every Believer – in Israel and Church

Do we care more about the items in our gardens, the produce of our fields, or perhaps the contents of our garage, or home, than we do about other men and women and the spread of the gospel to them? Do we care more, in the last analysis, about our own comforts and plans than about the evangelism of the world in our time? The statistics of our giving, or praying, or going in the cause of Christ throughout the earth provide embarrassing reading to the church...If God is concerned, can we remain unconcerned? Sinclair Ferguson

In Moments of Victory – Moments of Shame – God’s Mercy will Find Us

SHOCKING DISCOVER – FOUND Problem > NOT God > HE is SOLUTION!

Book – Most Importantly – Picture of God > VERY BIG GOD

La Salle St. in Chicago – Church Crucifix on Wall – 1000’s see Inscription -

“Is it nothing to you, all who pass by? Look around and see. Is any suffering like my suffering that was inflicted on me, that the Lord brought on me in the day of his fierce anger?”
Lamentations 1.12

“Should I not be concerned about that great city?” – Nineveh, Chicago, Beijing?

As we look to God – who even Jonah Describes as – “slow to anger” 4.2

May we find Grace to Exchange Anger for Adoration / Selfishness to Service

Jonah 4:1 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. 2 And he prayed to the LORD and said, “O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. 3 Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.” 4 And the LORD said, “Do you do well to be angry?” 5 Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city. 6 Now the LORD God appointed a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant. 7 But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant, so that it withered. 8 When the sun rose, God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint. And he asked that he might die and 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, “Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die.” 10 And the LORD said, “You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night. 11 And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?”