

Jonah 4 Running against God

Jonah's God

Jonah was angry with God – and tells him so in his prayer
He had a lot of wrong attitudes, but he was honest with god
That is real prayer
I knew what would happen
I know you God
I guessed right

- 1 You are gracious and generous
- 2 Merciful – giving more than anyone deserves
- 3 Slow to anger – unlike me thinks Jonah
- 4 Abounding in steadfast hesed love – and loyal. Stick to your word
- 5 Yet you can choose to replace punishment with forgiveness

Every part true. Yet Jonah uses it as a criticism of God
Right words, right theology, - wrong in heart
“These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me” Isaiah 29:13 & Mark 7:6b

The prodigal son's brother lived under the same roof as Father – the embracing, compassionate Father – yet in contrast he is indignant, self-righteous and critical.

God gave no rebuke, no argument, no sermon, - only a question “Have you any right to be angry?”
Jonah gives no response – and sulks.

Why did Jonah not want to go to Ninevah?

1. Fear of foreign places? Yet he was not afraid to get on a ship sailing in the opposite direction to the end of the known world.

2. Personal – Consider his prestige as a prophet (part 1) He preached that the city is to be destroyed and it isn't. He would look silly. If God decided to show mercy his prophecy would be null and void. Spiritually devalued and bankrupt – even stoned to death!
3. Political – Israel was next on the list to be absorbed by conquering Assyrian empire. Jonah wanted them destroyed. It pleased him to think their days were numbered. That their doom was certain. True enough, shortly after Jonah's visit and their brief repentance, 10 of the 12 tribal regions are conquered by Assyria.
4. Racial prejudice – he was a Jew and they were Gentiles. Jews wanted God all to themselves and resented sharing Him. Jonah did not want to lower himself to take a message from God to gentiles. Yet we observed his care and concern for the idol worshipping sailors during the ferocious storm, which ended when he was thrown overboard.
5. Psychological – It is suggested that the thought of Gentiles getting God's grace and salvation easier than they did made him churn inside Pausanias calls him a "mentally sick Pharisee"
6. Jonah loves God too much! He was jealous for God. He could not bear to see people abuse God's grace. Jeroboam had preached to him the love of God and had abused it to live an evil life

2 Kings 14:24-25

He did evil in the eyes of the Lord and did not turn away from any of the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit. He was the one who restored the boundaries of Israel from Lebo Hamath to the Dead Sea, in accordance with the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, spoken

through his servant Jonah son of Amittai, the prophet from Gath Hopher.

Human nature abuses grace of God as a blank cheque book for sin. Jonah says – I know what it will be like – you'll let them off – they'll be evil again. And history shows that Jonah was absolutely right.

Jonah says I'd rather die than go through this again – as had Elijah who felt Israel's responses after Carmel were all hollow.

Yes Jonah was right – stopped fasting

Started feasting, theatres opened

Cruelty, stealing, plundering even in Israel

God would be forced to change his mind again and destroy them.

As we will see next week in Nahum

5th Nature Miracle

Bush grows to cool the hot headed prophet. Jonah thanks God and for a while is happy

6th Nature Miracle

God appoints another of his creatures to teach Jonah a lesson – a trained worm. The bush withers and Jonah cries, I've had enough. His joy shrivels in the heat

God repeats the question – Do you have a right to be angry?

God's words pour into Jonah's soul like salt into sun-scorched blisters. With a light hand but a sharp hoe, God cultivates the object lesson He planted in Jonah's heart. Essentially, God puts His arm around Jonah and seems to be saying, "Let's talk about this concern you had for the plant, Jonah."

"What did it really mean to you? Your attachment to it could not be very deep, for it was here one day and gone the next. Your

concern was dictated by self-interest, not by a genuine love. You never had for it the devotion of the gardener. If you feel as badly as you do, what would you expect a gardener to feel like, who tended a plant and watched it grow only to see it wither and die, poor thing? And this is how I feel about Nineveh, only much more so. All those people, all those animals—I made them, I have cherished them all these years. Nineveh has cost me no end of effort, and they mean the world to me. Your pain is nothing to mine when I contemplate their destruction."

God says I have pity for the city and long to put off the discipline as long as possible.

I have pity for 120,000 little children

I have pity for the animals I made

How much effort into building shelters – homes

How much effort into raising plants – gardens

How concerned with creature comforts and selfish living

How concerned with deep spiritual needs of people, of Tenby people?

What happened to Jonah? Did he admit he was wrong? Did he die in Assyria? Did he return to Israel?

In the book named after him, God gets the first (1:1) and last word (4:10) and says also to us

Should I not have pity on evil Tenby because of the innocent

Rom 10:11-15

As Scripture says, 'Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.' For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile – the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to

them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'

Isaiah 6:1-8

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: with two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another:

'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory.'

At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

'Woe to me!' I cried. 'I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.'

Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, 'See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.'

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?'

And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'

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