

The Book of Jonah
Class Notes
Session 11

Jonah 4.5-6 Jonah's anger reveals his heart...did Jonah fail or succeed? Jonah's anger also reveals his assumptions about God.

Perhaps Jonah was hoping that Yahweh would change his mind and destroy Nineveh.

Once again...Jonah is in trouble...He is in danger.

(v.6): The shelter is inadequate and does not keep the sun off Jonah's head!

God shows mercy and "appoints"... מִנָּח (mā-nā(h)... Lit., "To count" (Determine) ... a plant!

The word "discomfort" is עָרָא (rā')... "Evil" "Bad" The phrase literally reads... "To save him from his evil."

The phrase can be interpreted as... "to shade him from his discomfort" (the sun) Or... "to deliver him from his wickedness" A reference to Jonah's rebellion and misplaced anger.

Commentators point out significant words used in this text, reflecting Jonah's increasing understanding of who Yahweh truly is. For example, Page and Smith note:

"...the provision of this vine for Jonah's comfort is ascribed to "Yahweh-Elohim," the "LORD God." This composite name perhaps is chosen here to ease the transition from the use of 'Yahweh' in v. 4 to 'Elohim' in vv. 7 and 8. The name 'Elohim' is used to signify God's divine creative power, which caused the miraculous vine to minister to Jonah...Walton...further notes that the use of the compound name in v. 6...signals the reader that God is putting Jonah 'in Nineveh's shoes to help evaluate whether his anger is justified.' He further notes that in the object lesson, 'God then *did* to Jonah what Jonah *wanted* him to do to Nineveh.'"¹

Additionally, in v.6, the Hebrew word *mānā*, translated, "appointed," is the same Hebrew word in 1.17 to describe the "*appointing*" of the big fish!

Both the fish and the vine are illustrations of God's continuing mercy, love, and sovereignty over all creation...And Jonah and Nineveh!

Jonah has gone from angry to overjoyed! Translated literally... "Jonah rejoiced concerning the gourd a great rejoicing"²

More irony...Jonah was very happy for his "salvation" but not Nineveh's!

Jonah 4.7-8 Jonah's anger and displeasure (4.1, 4) turns to "exceeding" gladness (v.6) as God *appoints* a plant to shade Jonah.

Besides being shaded from the desert heat, some scholars suggest that perhaps Jonah's gladness was from his hope that Yahweh would still destroy Nineveh.

"...delight has been fueled by the miraculous provision of a plant. Now he can sit in the cool of the shade and watch as Nineveh is destroyed. He knows that the vine is a divine gift, and it is possible that he sees it as the

¹ B.K. Smith and F.S. Page. *Amos, Obadiah, Jonah* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995).

² D.J. Wiseman, T.D. Alexander, and B.K. Waltke. *Obadiah, Jonah and Micah: an Introduction and Commentary* (InterVarsity Press, 1988).

Lord's reconsideration of his decision to forgive Nineveh in the light of Jonah's personal protest. Jonah dares to believe that the Lord has come round to his way of thinking after all. If so, he takes it that the kind provision of a shade from the burning heat must be God's way of apologizing to him. This is vindication of the highest order....he sits down for a front-row viewing of the coming spectacle."³

However, God is not done with Nineveh or Jonah! Again...God "appoints" a worm that ate the plant.

God also "appoints" a hot, east wind that destroyed his shelter. What was God doing?

Jonah likely felt that God was finally answering his prayer in 4.3...That he will die.

Very similar to being in the belly of the great fish, Jonah has again "hit bottom."

What began as a question from God concerning the appropriateness of his anger....Jonah is being shown what is *truly* in his heart.

Jonah 4.9-11 God's question is a repeat of the one in v 4...Except for mention of the plant.

God's "object lesson" was coming to its end! How could Jonah care more for a plant than for people?

God is revealing to Jonah His divine character and Jonah's lack of understanding of God's character.

Jonah is more concerned for his *physical comfort*...then the *spiritual* and *eternal well-being* of an entire city!

"God's mercy toward Nineveh had made him angry, and then he was angered by God's withdrawing mercy from him. God attempted to deal with Jonah's inconsistency by asking him, "Do you have a right?" The question is identical to the one God asked in v. 4. Stuart is right in saying that this question is central to the whole book. "What right do we have to demand that God should favor us and not others? By reducing the question to the particular issue of the gourd, God focused it in a way that would cause Jonah to condemn himself by his own words. Jonah did just that."⁴

Again, Jonah's understanding of God is growing (a theme we have seen throughout Jonah).

Jonah did not create the plant that gave him shade...Nor could he control the east wind!

God is the creator of all...plants and people! God is free to love and redeem whom He chooses.

Jonah wanted things his way...even if it was not part of God's plan or if it conflicted with God's mercy!

Going Forward: "Do not allow anger or pride to remain in your heart. They led to Jonah's disobedience. Turn away from these attitudes, and seek to have God's character of mercy, grace, patience, forgiveness, and loving kindness."⁵

³ P. Mackrell. *Opening up Jonah* (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2007).

⁴ Smith and F.S. Page. *Amos, Obadiah, Jonah*.

⁵ NKJV *Spirit-Filled Bible*, Jack Hayford, Ed. (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2018).