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### **God's All-Embracing Love**

Definitions in **bold letters** are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance  
Other definitions are from **Webster's** Dictionary, 1828 Edition  
or Roget's Thesaurus - **May 28, 2017**

## **Jonah 4:1-11**

**Introduction:** We read, with a great deal of pleasure, in the close of the foregoing chapter, concerning the **repentance** of **Nineveh**. But in this chapter we read, with a great deal of uneasiness, concerning the **SIN of Jonah** and, as there is **JOY** in heaven and earth for the conversion of sinners, so there is **GRIEF** for the follies (act which is inconsistent with the dictates of reason, or with the ordinary rules of prudence [wisdom]. In this sense it may be used in the singular, but is generally in the plural. Hence we speak of the follies of **YOUTH**.) and infirmities of saints. In all the book of God we scarcely find a "**servant of the Lord**" (and such a one we are sure Jonah was, for the scripture calls him so) so very much out of temper as he is here, so very **peevish** (**SILLY** [destitute of ordinary strength of mind; **FOOLISH**: void of understanding or sound judgment]) and **provoking** (irritating) to God himself.

**Man's badness** and **God's goodness** **serve** here for a **foil** (anything that serves by **contrast** of color or **QUALITY** to adorn or **SET OFF** another thing to advantage; offset) to each other, that the former may appear the more exceedingly **sinful**, and the latter the more exceedingly **gracious**. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/mhm/jonah-4.html>)

**Jonah 3:4-5, 9-10**, And **Jonah** began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he **cried**, and said, Yet **FORTY DAYS**, and Nineveh shall **be OVERTHROWN**. So the **people** of Nineveh **believed God**, and proclaimed a **fast**, and put on **sackcloth (coarse loose cloth)**, from the greatest of them even to the **least** of them.

...Who can tell IF God **will turn** and **repent (pity)**, and turn away from his fierce anger, that **WE** perish NOT? And **God SAW** their **WORKS**, that they **turned FROM** **their EVIL way**; and God **repented (pity)** of (from) the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he **did it not**.

**Jonah 4:1**, But it **displeased** Jonah exceedingly, and he was **very angry (blaze up, of ANGER)**.

**NOTE:** There are different opinions about the exact point in this history that Jonah became angry. ...we believe there is a clue in the text itself, in the very next verse (Jonah 4:2). Jonah had observed the wholesale **conversion** of the people; and **his knowledge** of **God's true nature**, mentioned by Jonah in the next verse, led him to the conclusion that God would in **NO WISE** destroy a penitent (**REPENTANT**) and **PLEADING** people. That Jonah acted upon this deduction would explain the element of uncertainty in the clause, "to see what would become of the city" (Jonah 4:5). At any rate, the question is one of interest, but **NOT** one of importance. A far more urgent question is the one of "**WHY** was Jonah angry (under the emotion of **ANGER**)"?

Anger, a strong passion or emotion of displeasure or antagonism (opposition of action), excited by a **REAL** or **SUPPOSED** injury (wrong or damage done to a man's person, rights, **REPUTATION** or goods) or **insult** to **ONE'S SELF** or others.

## REASONS FOR JONAH'S ANGER

(1) There was a terrible "loss of face" on Jonah's part. His words concerning the restoration of Israel's cities (2 Kings 14:25) had been gloriously fulfilled; but now, **His reputation as a prophet** was **irreparably damaged**. He would be called a FALSE PROPHET, a liar, a DECEIVER, and would be ridiculed and denounced for prophesying something which did NOT occur.

(2) It **MAY** very well be that Jonah was also aware of the prophetic implications of Nineveh's conversion, forecasting the **ultimate rejection of Israel** as God's people, and the coming of the **Gentiles** into that sphere of God's favor, which until then was the sole prerogative (exclusive or peculiar privilege) of Israel.

Despite the plausibility of such reasons as those cited above, and without denying that traces of the **attitudes** mentioned must surely have existed **in Jonah**, there is, it seems to this writer, a far more compelling **reason for his anger**.

...(7) The conversion of Nineveh was the doom of Jonah himself, as far as any further acceptable relationship with Israel was concerned. Jonah could NOT, after the conversion of the **greatest pagan city on earth**, **RETURN in triumph and honor** to his native land. No indeed! Take a look at the case of Saul of Tarsus. The uncompromising hatred and animosity (bitterness) of Israel which already existed toward Nineveh, would, after the conversion of that city, have been intensified and **transferred to Jonah**.

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/jonah-4.html>)

**Jonah 4:2**, And he **prayed (intreat [entreat: make an earnest request])** unto the Lord, and said, **I pray (oh now! I beseech [BEG])** thee, O Lord, was NOT this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for **I KNEW** that thou art a **gracious God**, and **merciful**, **SLOW** to **anger**, and of great kindness, and **repentest (pity)** thee of (from) the evil.

**Thought 1.** As we can see, at this time, Jonah didn't really understand God (Yahweh) nor the purpose of his ministry. His anger and remarks are saying "God put me through all the stuff that happened to me for nothing!" Because God changed his mind about destroying the people, as he knew he would! So, he actually believed God had done him wrong, which means he couldn't do anything but react in this manner!

There are folk and preachers of today who are **ANGRY** with God because of a "supposed" injury or insult by him! Some erroneously believe that he, by death, **TOOK** a loved one. And sometimes we've heard, some ministers, in error, help them with this belief! The truth God receives our spirit. But, by faith in him and his promises, he will let us live until we're satisfied! (Psalm 91:14-16, Eph. 6:1-2) So, people die early due to LACK of knowledge.

Furthermore, Jonah's actions also tell us he didn't preach out of **LOVE** for God's people. It was because he was obeying ORDERS from God to do so! And that's NOT bad! But, as we obey him and listen to him, he'll teach us and **RENEW** our minds to think just like he does. Then, we'll be able to obey him and **LOVE like Jesus loved us!** (John 13:34-35)

**1 Corinthians 9:16-19**, For though I **preach** the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, **woe** is unto me, if I preach **not** the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have **a reward**: but if AGAINST my WILL, a **dispensation (stewardship [office of a steward])** of the gospel is committed unto me.

**1 Corinthians 4:1-2**, Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and **stewards** of the **mysteries (secrets)** of God. Moreover it is **required** in **stewards**, that a man be found **FAITHFUL**.

**Thought 2.** Stewards will have to give account of HOW well they've distributed!

**Jonah 4:3**, Therefore now, O LORD, **take**, I beseech thee, **my life** from me; for it is **better** for me to DIE than to LIVE.

**NOTE:** Even in the state of **rebellion** (open resistance to lawful authority) which still

marked Jonah's condition, there are elements of nobility in it. Desiring death, he would NOT take his own life, but rather pray the Lord to remove him. The entire world of **spiritual reality**, as **Jonah** had **misunderstood it**, had come crashing down around him; and his frustration was complete. "He saw, or **thought he saw**, **ALL** of his usefulness destroyed." (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/jonah-4.html>)

**Jonah 4:4**, Then said the LORD (Yahweh), **Doest thou well to be ANGRY?**

**NOTE:** This remonstrance (earnest presentation of REASON in opposition to something) is a gentle endeavor (effort) on the part of the Lord to provoke in Jonah a **self-examination** of his **OWN emotions** and **attitudes**.

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/jonah-4.html>)

**Thought 1.** Scripture TEACHES to be SLOW to anger. And also, to be angry, but SIN NOT.

**Ecclesiastes 7:9**, Be NOT **hasty** in thy spirit to **be ANGRY**: for anger **resteth (remains)** in the bosom of **fools**.

**Ephesians 4:26**, Be ye **angry**, and sin NOT: let not the sun go down upon your wrath...

**James 1:19-20** ...let every man be SWIFT to hear, SLOW to speak, SLOW to **WRATH**: For the **wrath** of man **worketh (perform [fulfill])** **NOT** the **righteousness** of God.

**Jonah 4:5**, So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a **booth (hut, tabernacle)**, and **sat** under it in the **shadow**, till he might **SEE** what would become of the City.

**NOTE:** "Made him a booth ..." "This was a rough structure made of poles and leaves, like those of the Feast of Tabernacle." ...Although Jonah had already decided that God would spare the city, he was NOT yet certain of it; and as long as there was hope of its destruction, he would wait.

Still another reason why Jonah appears in this verse still expecting and hoping for the destruction of Nineveh may be in the **estimate** which **he had** of the **depth** and **sincerity**, or rather, of the LACK of such depth and sincerity, in which case Jonah would have supposed that the punishment was only deferred, NOT cancelled altogether, and thus he would go ahead and wait for it!

One of the practical lessons that should NOT be overlooked in connection with Jonah's actions here was stated thus by Blair, "**He overlooked the importance of following through.**" If there was ever a time when the Ninevites needed Jonah it was immediately **AFTER their repentance**. Uncounted thousands had turned to the Lord, but they were still as (LIKE) newborn babes without any complete knowledge of what turning to God really meant. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/jonah-4.html>)

**Jonah 4:6**, And the LORD God **prepared a gourd**, and made it to come up **over** Jonah, that it might be a **shadow over** his head, to **deliver him** from his **GRIEF**. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the **gourd**.

**NOTE:** "God prepared a gourd ..." All kinds of fanciful "explanations" of this have been attempted, one of the favorite devices being that of making this "gourd" to be a "castor bean plant," the remarkably rapid growth of which leads some scholars to accept it as the "gourd" mentioned here. **These notions should be rejected.**

"The attempt to FIND a plant which would grow high enough in a SINGLE day to provide shade for Jonah is beside the point. This plant **grows suddenly, at God's command**, just as the **great fish swallowed Jonah at God's command**. The author does NOT mean to describe NATURAL happenings."<sup>[19]</sup>

The **supernatural appearance** of this "gourd" **overnight** is ONE of no less than SIX

lesser wonders that surround, confirm, and support the far greater wonder of Jonah's deliverance from death. (See full discussion of this under Jonah, the Great Old Testament Type, at the end of the commentary on Jonah.)

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/jonah-4.html>)

**Thought 1.** As we know, God is setting up Jonah to learn a lesson. In gentleness, he's going to make the most of this gourd to help him SEE the truth. And God wants us, like him, as much as possible, to stay close to his people, so in gentleness, we can teach them!

**2 Timothy 2:24-26**, And the servant of the Lord must **not** strive; but be **GENTLE** unto ALL men, apt to teach, **PATIENT**, in **meekness (humility)** instructing those that **oppose themselves**; if God per adventure will give them **REPENTANCE** to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may RECOVER themselves out of the **snare** of the **devil**, who are taken **captive** by him **at his will**.

**Jonah 4:7**, But God **prepared** a **WORM** when the morning rose the **NEXT** day, and it **smote** the gourd that it withered.

**NOTE:** Here, too, the record plainly refers to a supernatural event, that of God's preparing and commissioning a worm to destroy the gourd which had enjoyed such a short period of growth. This also is ONE of the "SIX **supportive miracles**" mentioned under Jonah 4:6, above.

This worm struck effectively against the very source of **Jonah's great gladness**, which, strangely enough, was NOT connected in any way with the great repentance of Nineveh, but was derived from a wretched gourd vine which provided him shade! If there was ever an **example** of a **man's** being "**exceedingly glad**" for the **WRONG reasons**, here it is in these two verses. There are millions of Jonahs everywhere in our society today, people who are glad, exceedingly so, for the comforts and luxuries they ENJOY, **rather than** for the **great hope** of the **soul's eternal redemption IN Jesus Christ** our Lord. They are more thankful for sports contests, outings on the beach, air-conditioning, soft drinks, plenty of beer, etc., than they are for the right to worship God without molestation (disturbance). Yes, there are a lot of Jonah's who are still "exceedingly glad" for gourds!  
(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/jonah-4.html>)

**Jonah 4:8**, And it came to pass, when the **SUN** did **arise**, that God prepared a vehement east **WIND**; and the **SUN** beat upon the head of Jonah, that he **fainted (be languid** [drooping; hence, weak]), and **wished** in himself to **die**, and said, It is **better** for me **to die** than **to live**.

**NOTE:** This is the **third miracle** in as many verses, the gourd and the worm having already been cited. It is a blind and unlearned objection, however, which fails to see the connection which these LESSER WONDERS have with the central event of the book, Jonah's delivery from death. These lesser wonders are NOT capricious (fanciful [wild]), unnecessary, or USELESS miracles at all.

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/jonah-4.html>)

**Jonah 4:9**, And God said to Jonah, *Doest thou well to be **angry** for the **gourd**?* And he said, I DO WELL to be **angry**, even unto **death**.

**NOTE:** ...**dost thou well to be angry for the gourd?**.... Or, "art thou very angry for it?" as the Targum: no mention is made of the blustering wind and scorching sun, because the gourd or plant raised up over him would have protected him from the injuries of both, had it continued; and it was for **the loss of that** that **Jonah was so displeased**, and in such a **PASSION** (emotion, FEELING).

**and he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death;** or, "I am very angry unto death", as the Targum; ...how **ungovernable** are the passions of men, and to what **insolence**



(quality of being insolent [abusive, insulting, offensive]) do they rise when under the power of them! (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/jonah-4.html>)

**Jonah 4:10**, Then said the LORD, Thou hast had **PITY** on the **gourd**, for the which thou hast NOT laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night:

**NOTE:** ... thou hast had pity on the gourd,.... Or, "hast spared it"; that is, would have spared it, had it lain in his power, though but a weed and WORTHLESS thing:

**for the which thou hast not laboured;** in digging the ground, and by sowing or planting it; it being raised up at once by the Lord himself, and NOT by any, human art and industry; nor by any of his:

**neither madest it grow;** by dunging the earth about it, or by watering and pruning it: **which came up in a night, and perished in a night;** NOT in the same night; for it sprung up one night, continued a whole any, and then perished the next night. The Targum is more explicit, "which was in this (or one) night, and perished in another night;" by all which the Lord suggests to Jonah the vast difference between the gourd he would have spared, and for the loss of which he was so angry, and the city of Nineveh the Lord spared, which so highly displeased him; the one was but an herb, a plant, the other a great city; that a single plant, but the city consisted of thousands of persons; the plant was not the effect of his toil and labour, but the inhabitants of this city were the WORKS of God's hands. In the building of this city, according to historians<sup>F4</sup>Eustathius in Dionys. Perieg. p. 125. a million and a half of men were employed eight years together; the plant was liken mushroom, it sprung up in a night, and perished in one; whereas this was a **very ancient city**, that **had stood** ever since the **days of Nimrod**.

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/jonah-4.html>)

**Jonah 4:11**, And should NOT I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than **sixscore (120) thousand persons** that cannot **discern** between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?

**NOTE:** And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city?.... See Jonah 1:2; what is such a gourd or plant to that?

**wherein are more than six score thousand persons;** or twelve myriads; that is, twelve times ten thousand, or a hundred and twenty thousand; meaning not all the inhabitants of Nineveh; for then it would not have appeared to be so great a city; but **infants only**, as next described:

**cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand;** do NOT know one from another; cannot distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong; are NOT come to years of maturity and discretion; and therefore there were room and reason for pity and sparing mercy; especially since they had NOT been guilty of actual transgressions, at least not very manifest; and yet must have **perished with their parents** had Nineveh been overthrown. The number of infants in this city is a proof of the greatness of it, though not so as to render the account incredible; for, admitting these to be a fifth part of its inhabitants, as they usually are of any place, as Bochart<sup>F5</sup>Phaleg. l. 4. c. 20. p. 253. observes, it makes the number of its inhabitants to be but SIX or SEVEN hundred thousand; and as many there were in Seleucia and Thebes, as Pliny<sup>F6</sup>Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 26. relates of the one, and Tacitus<sup>F7</sup>Annal. l. 2. c. 60. of the other:

**and also much cattle;** and these more valuable than goods, as animals are preferable to, and more useful than, vegetables; and yet these must have perished in the common calamity. Jarchi understands by these grown up persons, whose knowledge is like the beasts that know NOT their Creator. No answer being returned, it may be **reasonably supposed Jonah**, was **convinced of his sin and folly**; and, to **SHOW HIS repentance** for it, penned this, narrative, which records his infirmities and weaknesses, for the good of the church, and the **instruction of saints** in succeeding ages.

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/jonah-4.html>)