

Jonah

- I. The Book of Jonah is the divinely preserved account of a reluctant, recalcitrant prophet whose deliverance from a three-day entombment for sin ironically became the model of the foremost sign of the messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth. **LUK 11:29-30.**
- A. He is an eminent example of a rebellious yet truly called minister of God.
EPH 4:8 c/w PSA 68:18.
 - B. He is also an example of the fearful consequences of a minister refusing his duty.
1CO 9:16-17; JER 48:10.
 - C. He was specifically a prophet who spoke of Christ and the church age, as did all the prophets. **ACT 3:24; 26:22-23.**
 - D. He was otherwise a man subject to the kind of passions we all face (c/w **JAM 5:17**) and a cursory review of him definitely shows him to be driven by passion.
 - 1. passion: Any kind of feeling by which the mind is powerfully affected or moved; a vehement, commanding, or overpowering emotion.
 - 2. He stands as a warning to all believers about the dangers of letting emotions govern the mind rather than making the mind govern the emotions.
PRO 23:19; 25:28; 2TI 3:4.
 - E. He preferred judgment without mercy in the service of the God Who rejoices in mercy against judgment (**JAM 2:13**) and was therefore a great object of the mercy he scorned.
 - F. Jonah was from Gathhepher. **2KI 14:25.**
 - 1. Gathhepher was of the tribe of Zebulun's inheritance. **JOS 19:10-13.**
 - 2. This region was known as Galilee. **MAT 4:15.**
 - 3. The chief priests and Pharisees were therefore terribly wrong in their challenge, "...Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet" (**JOH 7:52**).
 - G. Jonah's name signifies "dove," an interesting name for a sent minister of God who had a mandate to cry against sin and call men to repentance.
 - 1. Christ told His apostles that they should be "...harmless as doves..." (**MAT 10:16**).
 - 2. Ministers should be Christ-like, harmless (**HEB 7:26**), though they mourn (as doves mourn, **ISA 38:14**) over sin.
 - 3. The time when Jonah was harmful was when he was not doing his job. **JON 1:12.**
 - 4. Ministers who are derelict in their duty to call men to repentance are also harmful and shall themselves bear the guilt. **EZE 3:17-18.**
 - 5. Doves are also known to have "flown the coop." **PSA 55:6-8.**
 - H. Interestingly, years later after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the man who was first sent to preach repentance to the Gentiles was "...Simon, son of Jonas..." (**JOH 21:15**), a Galilean. **MAT 4:18; ACT 15:7.**
- II. Jonah was sent to preach against "...Nineveh, that great city...for their wickedness..." (**JON 1:2**).
- A. This was the capital city of the Assyrian empire, the Rome of its day.
GEN 10:11 c/w 2KI 19:36.
 - B. Profane history and archeology confirm that it was indeed an immense city with walls many miles in circumference. Yet for all of its greatness, it was exceptionally wicked.
 - C. But they repented in faith (**JON 2:5**). Let us therefore not assume that people living in great darkness are beyond the reach of God and that preaching to them is futile.
 - D. Their repentance was a condemnation of the Jews of Christ's day Who would not repent when a "greater than Jonas" with a greater resurrection than Jonas preached against them.
MAT 12:41; LUK 16:31.

- E. Sadly, Nineveh's repentance did not last. Nahum shortly after this prophesied their doom. **NAH 3:1-7.**

Chapter 1

vs. 1-3.

- A. Jonah was clearly called to *cry against* Nineveh. **v. 2.**
1. cry: To entreat, beg, beseech, implore, in a loud and moved or excited voice.
 2. Rebuking prophets were to “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet...” (**ISA 58:1**).
 3. N.T. ministers are similarly called to *rebuke* sinners. **2TI 4:2.**
 - a. rebuke: To beat down or force back; to repress or check (a person); to repulse. 2. To reprove, reprimand, chide severely.
 - b. chide: To give loud or impassioned utterance to anger, displeasure, disapprobation, reproof.
 4. Sin and impending wrath must be authoritatively addressed. **ACT 13:46.**
 5. Mind that the Ninevites' wickedness had *come up before the LORD*.
 - a. Funny how idolaters' wickedness never *came up before* their idol gods.
 - b. If anything, their idol gods sanctioned and demanded wickedness. **DEU 12:31.**
- B. Having received his commission, Jonah elected to avoid it. His reaction was not exactly, “...Here am I; send me” (**ISA 6:8**).
1. His reluctance was at least partially based on what he perceived to be the dissatisfying and contradictory nature of his mission. **JON 4:2.**
 2. He would look foolish, prophesying of wrath which wouldn't come. But willingness to be a potential spectacle is the lot of God's messengers. **1CO 4:9-10.**
 3. If Jonah's flight was based on fear, his fear was misplaced. **MAT 10:27-28.**
- C. Hiding from God, even at sea, is futile. **PSA 139:7-12.**
1. The LORD is not a geographically limited God like the pagans' gods. **1KI 20:23.**
 2. To turn from God is to be turned over to delusions. **2TH 2:11.**
- D. Jonah intended to flee to Tarshish.
1. That he found a ship going to Tarshish is NOT because God was blessing him. Beware of being governed by coincidences or circumstances! **ACT 28:3-4.**
 2. Tarshish was a maritime city noted for commerce. **1KI 10:22; EZE 27:12.**
 3. Jonah fell prey to what many ministers of God have fallen prey to: the allure of a place of worldly advantage when duty was calling to something else. **2TI 4:10.**
 4. This is the lot in general of the thorny-ground hearer of the word. **MAT 13:22.**
 5. The power of the call of commerce and prosperity played a significant role in the Jews' resistance to Messiah. **MAT 22:2-7 c/w HEB 10:34-35.**
 6. NOTE: If a person is bent on being someplace where God is not, a place or a people who are sold out to materialism is probably as good as any other.
- E. Ministers who reject known duty are usually poor choices for further work. **ACT 15:37-38.**

vs. 4-10.

- A. No ship is safe when amongst its boarders are those who defy God, not even the Titanic.
1. Mind that these verses present a man of God who was asleep to the imminent peril to which unbelievers were awake. **LUK 16:8.**
 2. Such are the delusions of sin: they numb us to things that even the brute creation accounts for. **PRO 6:6-11.**

- B. See how the LORD is God over all things, including the elements, which He uses to accomplish His purposes. **JOB 38:22-23; PSA 148:8.**
- C. The tempest was sent for Jonah's sake, not for the mariners. Yet they were imperiled by it.
1. Judgment begins with those closest to God to whom much has been given. **1PE 4:17; JAM 3:1.**
 2. Should we be shocked if the comrades or culture of deserting disciples are put to peril?
 3. See here a picture of corporate church judgment: the group falls under judgment for the sin of one. **JOS 7:1, 12-13; REV 2:14-16.**
- D. There is a mixture of wisdom and folly in the way the mariners processed their situation.
1. They *cried every man unto his god.* v. 5.
 - a. They were a marvelously diverse religious crowd, using the shotgun approach. Their uniting principle was ignorance.
 - b. They did not cry to the LORD though vs. 9-10 imply that they were familiar with Him. Many prefer gods and “truths” of their own choosing to the disregard of the God and the truth---and God will accommodate them. **JOS 24:15; MAT 7:13-14.**
 - c. When their efforts proved fruitless, they awakened Jonah to call on his God (v. 6). This implied that their gods were no gods, indifferent gods, deaf gods or powerless gods. Idolatry is truly stupid. **ISA 44:19-20.**
 2. They *cast forth the wares* (merchandise, goods, commodities to sell). v. 5.
 - a. Would that believers would be so wise. **MAT 16:26.**
 - b. Those that insist on being materially rich at all costs are prone to drowning. **1TI 6:9.**
 3. They assumed that their troubles were divine punishment.
 - a. Troubles should urge us to examine our lives since sometimes they are the chastening stripes of God. **PSA 119:67; HOS 5:13-15.**
 - b. But it is superstitious folly to automatically assume that troubles or dangers are the direct result of crime or sin. **JOH 9:1-3; ACT 28:4; 2CO 11:26.**
 4. They cast lots in superstitious inquisition for justice. v. 7.
 - a. This folly was based upon the faulty premise that troubles or dangers are always because of crime or sin. One error begat another.
 - b. The lot fell on Jonah because God rules over the lot. **PRO 16:33.**
 - c. Their superstition appears to continue in v. 8 as if they want to be able to guard against a repetition of their present distress by shipping with cursed men.
 5. Note the mariners' frightened response when they found out that Jonah was a Hebrew, a servant of the LORD. vs. 8-10.
 - a. God had said that He would use Pharaoh to make His name known throughout the earth. **EXO 9:16.**
 - b. For centuries, the nations knew of and feared the LORD God Who had His way in the sea. **JOS 2:10.**
 - c. Sadly, the man who had been sent as a reprover to the heathen ended up being reproved by heathen (v. 10). It is a bitter pill to swallow when unbelievers justifiably reprove a believer for the inconsistency of his profession.
- vs. 11-16.**
- A. Note that after Jonah was discovered, the sea still raged. Knowledge of the offender is not what abates the wrath of God; it is the execution of justice.
- B. Jonah never bothered to pray. Such would be futile; his sin was essentially a *sin unto death*. **1JO 5:16.**

1. This resignation is typical of those who have abandoned hope in hiding their sin from God.
 2. They reckon their damnation is just and justify God. **MAT 21:31-32 c/w LUK 7:29.**
 3. Their only hope is mercy. **LUK 18:13.**
- C. God's justice caught up with Jonah for his own sins but caught up with Christ for our sins.
- D. The scene in **vs. 12-13** bears similarity to Christ's disciples' reluctance to accept His account as to how justice must be satisfied. **MAT 16:21-22; 17:22-23.**
1. The mariners tried to avoid the necessary solution but wrath can only be abated by the means which God has ordained. **NUM 35:33.**
 2. They typify all who would seek favor with God other than through Christ and His sacrifice for sin. **GAL 6:14-15.**
- E. Curiously, this situation produced a conversion of sorts in these heathen. **vs. 14-16.**
1. Jonah's disobedience facilitated a conversion in these heathen before his obedience facilitated conversion in the Ninevites!
 2. God may be known by both the judgments which He does not execute and by those He does. **ROM 15:9; ACT 19:13-17.**
 3. The wicked and the troubled sea have much in common. **ISA 57:20.**
 - a. Thus Jonah "...made his grave with the wicked..." **v. 15 c/w ISA 53:9.**
 - b. But he could not promise any there with him that they would be with him that day in paradise. **LUK 23:43.**
 4. Note how peace came for the mariners. Through the judgment of sin in the depths of the sea, the wrath of God subsided. **MIC 7:19; COL 1:20; ROM 5:9.**

v. 17.

- A. God *prepared* a great fish to receive Jonah, even as He later *prepared* a grave for Christ. **JOH 19:41.**
1. Jesus called it a whale. **MAT 12:40.**
 2. Worry not over the subjective scientific distinctions between fish and mammals; it was a big marine creature such as was created on the fifth day. **GEN 1:20-23.**
 3. If God equates a whale with a fish, so be it! **ROM 3:4; MAT 11:19.**
- B. This is the first of four things which God *prepared for Jonah*. **JON 4:6-8.**
1. The Holy Spirit also revealed many *heavenly* things which God has *prepared for us* in Christ. **1CO 2:9-10; JOH 14:2; MAT 25:34; HEB 11:16.**
 2. Others pertain to this life and they are not all *gourds to shade us*. **PRO 19:29; HEB 12:6.**
- C. Jonah's burial and resurrection typify Christ's burial and resurrection to save us. **MAT 12:39-40; 1PE 1:3-4; ROM 4:25.**
1. Mind that the whale was a tomb for Jonah yet also a place of salvation.
 2. As the whale's belly could not consume nor continually hold Jonah, so the grave could not corrupt nor hold Jesus Christ. **ACT 2:24-27.**
 3. Jonah's being cast into the sea should have been his death but that a prepared whale's mouth and belly received him for a season until his "resurrection" was a case of "...Death is swallowed up in victory" (**1CO 15:54**).

Chapter 2

vs. 1-7.

- A. Jonah's choice of flesh over obedience had thrust him into a place of corruption (**v. 6**). Such is the lot of those who pursue the flesh. **GAL 6:8.**
- B. "Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly" (**v. 1**).

1. This is the first record of Jonah praying. No such thing is said of him when the shipmaster said unto him, "...arise, call upon thy God..." (**JON 1:6**).
2. The first record of prayer unto the LORD is that of the heathen mariners (**JON 1:14**)! It is a curious reproof when heathen show more faith in God than do the covenant people. **MAT 8:10**.
3. Perhaps Jonah's knowledge of his own disobedience had smothered his confidence as it had for Adam. **GEN 3:8-10 c/w 1JO 3:20-21**.
4. The belly of a whale was not the most commodious place for offering prayer but difficult environs or circumstances should not prohibit it. **1TI 2:8; ACT 16:25**.
 - a. NOTE: Thick blubber is no barrier to prayer but should rather excite it. Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden..." (**MAT 11:28**).
 - b. Neither is our personal inadequacy a barrier to prayer since the Spirit has promised to help us in prayer. **ROM 8:26**.
5. Jonah cried unto God because of his affliction. **v. 2 c/w JAM 5:13**.
 - a. Jonah had played the fool and won affliction which drove him to prayer. **c/w PSA 107:17-19**.
 - b. God's chastening rebooted Jonah to duty and acting like a minister. **PSA 119:67 c/w 2CO 6:4**.
 - c. Why do we neglect prayer until we are in trouble? It was when Jonah's soul fainted within him that he remembered the LORD (**v. 7 c/w PSA 107:5-6**). Rather, we should always pray and not faint. **LUK 18:1**.
 - d. Sometimes it takes affliction to remind us of our dependency upon God. **2CO 1:8-10**.
6. Jonah had been *swallowed* alive and was facing *mortality*, and thus he prayed for deliverance, "...that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (**2CO 5:4**).
 - a. He longed for the redemption of his body from corruption. **c/w ROM 8:21-23**.
 - b. He longed for deliverance from the power of the grave. **c/w 1CO 15:54-55**.
 - c. The hope of resurrection power is everywhere in Scripture!
7. He cried "...out of the belly of hell..." (**v. 2**). This was a hell from which a man may pray and God hear him to deliver him. This cannot be said of the hell of torment *after* death. **LUK 16:23-26**.
 - a. Jonah here experienced some of the horrors of hell itself.
 - b. He was under God's judgment as are those in hell.
 - c. He was cast out of God's sight and separated from Him as are those in hell.
 - d. He was trapped in a deep place of darkness as are those in hell.
 - e. These are sorrows, torments and horrors of the soul in which Jonah for his own sin formed a type of Christ who suffered similar soul distress (and more) because of our sins. **ACT 2:31**.
 - f. Compare Jonah's description of his troubles here with **PSA 88:7, 15-17**.
8. Jonah deemed himself as cast out of God's sight. **v. 4**.
 - a. But his faith overcame his perception: "...yet will I look again toward thy holy temple" (**v. 4**).
 - b. A believer may, because of tribulation or persecution, be "...cast down, but not destroyed..." (**2CO 4:8-9**).
 - c. A believer may, by not reining in bodily desires, be made a *castaway* (**1CO 9:27**) in that he loses his inheritance or office in God's kingdom.
 - d. But thankfully, God's faithfulness to His covenant is such that His elect are not permanently cast away. **ROM 11:1-2, 25-29**.

- e. Faith in God's eternal covenant promises gives the believer hope that temporal separation from God is not permanent separation from God and that there is forgiveness with Him Who is ever faithful. **PSA 130:1-5; LAM 3:18-24.**
 - f. Even though he was cast into the deep, he hoped for God's holy temple. Afflictions and chastening should not crush but enhance our longing and enthusiasm for God's house. **ISA 38:22; PSA 27:4, 13.**
9. NOTE: Jonah never died physically here and thus in that sense *his flesh saw no corruption* (the destruction of anything, esp. by disintegration or by decomposition.... decomposition as a consequence of death; dissolution).
- a. Yet he said, "...yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption..." (v. 6).
 - b. This would seem to agree with what was said of Christ in **ACT 13:34-37.**
 - c. Thus, "corruption" in **JON 2:7** and **ACT 13:34** must refer to the *place* of corruption, not the *condition* of corruption.
 - d. The record does not indicate that Jonah's body was in any way digested by the whale's gastric juices.
 - (1) Neither did Daniel's brethren's bodies bear any indication of the fire in which they were cast. **DAN 3:27.**
 - (2) It is truly "...of the LORD'S mercies that we are not CONSUMED..." (**LAM 3:22**).

vs. 8-10.

- A. vs. 8-9 imply that the idol-worshippers reneged on their vows or perhaps rendered their vows unto their idols. c/w **JON 1:16.**
 - 1. God will hold accountable those who renege on their vows to Him. **ECC 5:4-6.**
 - 2. Jonah, though, resolved to be faithful to his vow if God should save him.
 - 3. "Salvation is of the LORD," not of lying vanities or any other name. **ACT 4:12.**
- B. Jonah spoke to God but God spoke to the whale. Answers to prayers for deliverance may come from God speaking to nature. **ACT 4:31; 16:25-26.**
- C. The whale did not just vomit out Jonah into the sea to be swallowed again or destroyed some other way. It deposited him safely on dry land and had no more claim on him. v. 10.
 - 1. The grave likewise could not hold Christ nor reclaim Him. **ACT 2:24; 13:34.**
 - 2. In Christ's resurrection, believers have assurance of FULL deliverance to safety. **JOH 6:40; 11:25-26; 1TH 4:14-18.**
 - 3. The believer identifies with resurrection power by rising from the burial of water baptism to walk in newness of life. **JOH 6:1-6; EPH 4:22-24.**
- D. This chapter, so richly figurative and prophetic of Christ's entombment and resurrection, has been relegated to the realm of fantasy and fable by many as has the account of Christ's entombment and resurrection. **MAT 28:11-15.**
- E. Remember important distinctions between Jonah's experience and Jesus' experience.
 - 1. Jonah never died in the flesh and was "raised from the dead" in a figure.
 - 2. Jonah's "resurrection" did not deliver him from the dominion of death.
 - 3. Jesus truly died in the flesh, rose in the flesh, lives in the flesh and death has no more dominion over him. **ROM 6:9.**
 - 4. Truly in every way, Jesus is "...a greater than Jonas..." (**MAT 12:41**).

Chapter 3

vs. 1-4.

- A. Jonah's duty still awaited him. NOTE:
1. *Rebellion* against known duty does not excuse us from that duty nor from chastening but only from blessings. **JAM 4:17 c/w LUK 12:47.**
 2. *Punishment* for rebellion against known duty does not excuse us from that duty.
 3. *Deliverance* from punishment for rebellion against known duty does not excuse us from that duty.
 4. If God be reconciled to the wayward who failed in duty and they, like Peter, be given a second chance, let them make the most of it. **JOH 21:15-19.**
 5. Remember Paul's saying, "...necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (**1CO 9:16**)!
 6. That Jonah had been *buried in baptism to rise to walk in newness of life* (**ROM 6:4**) meant that he should do just that. A submitted, obedient life should follow baptism.
- B. With his commission refreshed, "...Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD..." (**v. 3**).
1. Before he was afflicted he went astray but *afterward* he kept the word. **PSA 119:67.**
 2. His grievous chastening *afterward* produced the intended good fruit. **HEB 12:11.**
- C. It appears from **LUK 11:29-30** that the Ninevites had knowledge of Jonah's experience.
1. He was a *living witness* of God's judgment, mercy, forgiveness and power to save.
 2. Can you think of a better reason for repentance? **ACT 17:30-31.**
 3. Jonah would have gone to preach with the power of an incredible historical event to back up his message.
- D. Mind that in his recommitment, God told him "...go unto Nineveh and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee" (**v. 2**).
1. He had been told *to cry against* that city (**JON 1:2**); now he *cried against that city* (**v. 4**). The post-resurrection message was the same as the pre-resurrection message. c/w **ACT 26:22-23.**
 2. God told him to "...preach unto it the preaching that I BID thee" (**v. 2**).
 - a. He would have to trust in God to direct his speech in a potentially dangerous situation. c/w **MAR 13:11.**
 - b. He must preach what God wanted him to preach. c/w **MAT 28:20; 2CO 4:5; 2TI 4:2.**
 3. He thus cried, "...Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown" (**v. 4**).
 - a. There was no specific call to repentance, only of impending judgment. But they figured out the rest. **v. 10.**
 - b. The wise will take the threat of divine judgment to heart and repent.
 4. NOTE: From the standpoint of naked human reasoning, the Ninevites might have on the 41st day concluded that they had just been conned.
 - a. Maybe there never was any such judgment coming and their repentance had been brought about by a false fear.
 - b. Mind, though, that the Ninevites:
 - (1) had evidently been affected by Jonah's experience. **LUK 11:30.**
 - (2) were a few thousand years closer to a divine judgment upon wickedness than the scoffers of the last days who reject the historicity of the Flood. **2PE 3:3-7.**
- E. Though Nineveh's sins were great enough to warrant immediate judgment (**JON 1:2 c/w GEN 19:13**), God showed Himself to be "...a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger..." (**JON 4:2**).
1. They were given forty days. **v. 4.**
 2. They could have all fled the city but they had sense enough to know that it was their sins

that God wanted destroyed, not their city. And running to hide from God would be to acknowledge that He was God, and if He was truly God, what good would running and hiding do?

3. They thus concluded the best thing to do was repent, which God honored. This was their *space of repentance*. c/w **REV 2:21**.
 - a. What Nineveh was given *forty days* to do after his resurrection, Israel was later given *forty years* to do after Christ's resurrection for the sake of the elect within it. **2PE 3:9**.
 - b. This space of repentance is nothing to trifle with for it is a time established by God and not always revealed. **MAR 13:31-33**.
 - c. Mind that when Sodom and Gomorrah's sins had reached to heaven, they basically had NO time left for repentance and no mighty signs or works were provided for them to drive them to repentance. **MAT 11:23**.
 - d. It behooves us therefore to repent promptly and beg mercy when we sin. **HEB 3:7-15**.

vs. 5-10.

- A. The Ninevites, upon hearing Jonah, "...believed God..." (v. 5).
 1. They did not receive Jonah's words as being merely the words of a man. c/w **1TH 2:13**.
 2. The receiving of a man of God declaring the word of God is receiving God. **MAT 10:40**.
 3. By contrast, to reject such a messenger is to despise God. **LUK 10:16**.
- B. Their belief was proven valid by their works. v. 10 c/w **JAM 2:18-20**.
- C. Their *works* were summed up as *repentance* in **MAT 12:41**.
 1. This shows that repentance is a work. c/w **ACT 26:20**.
 2. Those who say that the new birth comes by keeping the commands of **ACT 2:38** are thus plainly advocating a works-salvation scheme which is contrary to grace. **ROM 11:6**.
 - a. Campbellites may argue that it is only man's natural works that are invalid for regeneration but doing God's works does procure regeneration.
 - b. **ROM 9:11** shows that all works, good or evil, are excluded in the election of grace.
 - c. **TIT 3:5** shows that regeneration is "NOT by works of righteousness which we have done..."
- D. Mark the characteristics of the Ninevites' works of repentance.
 1. It was universal, "...from the greatest of them even to the least of them" (v. 5). Usually such godliness is foreign to the mighty, wealthy and noble. **1CO 1:26; JAM 2:5**.
 2. The king himself took no refuge in his power or riches (v. 6), and "Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death" (**PRO 11:4**).
 3. They proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth (and ashes in the king's case), tokens of humble repentance which were obviously genuine.
 4. Even the beasts were made to fast in sackcloth and cry to God. **vs. 7-8 c/w JOB 38:41; JOEL 1:18-20**.
 5. Most importantly, "...they turned from their evil way..." (v. 10).
 6. Mind that there is no indication that they sacrificed any beasts to appease God.
 - a. They only sacrificed their sins by repentance, a superior sacrifice. **PSA 51:17**.
 - b. These penitent Gentiles thus practiced a N.T. form of sacrifice: the presentation of themselves as living sacrifices. **ROM 12:1-2**.
- E. Their repentance would stand as a condemnation of the Jews of Christ's generation. **MAT 12:41**.
 1. They did not have Moses and the prophets (**PSA 147:19-20**) yet repented because of a disobedient prophet from Moses' people who had not actually died and risen again.

2. But the Jews rejected an obedient prophet from their own country who did actually die and rise again, a *greater than Jonas*. They would not believe though one rose from the dead. **LUK 16:31.**
3. God saw the Ninevites' works of repentance and "...repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them..." (v. 10).
4. But God saw no such works of repentance in Jerusalem and therefore did not repent of the evil that He said would come upon them. **LUK 19:41-44; 1TH 2:15-16.**

Chapter 4

vs. 1-9.

- A. Apostles (**ACT 14:15**) and prophets (**JAM 5:17**) were men of passions as other men; they were not supermen.
 1. passion: Any kind of feeling by which the mind is powerfully affected or moved; a vehement, commanding or overpowering emotion.
 2. Jonah was particularly driven by passion: *displeased exceedingly*; *very angry* (v. 1); *despondent* (v. 3); *exceeding glad* (v. 6); *despondent, angry* (v. 9).
 3. His emotionalism put him in a position not unlike that which he seems to have hoped would be the fate of Nineveh. **PRO 25:28.**
- B. Consider Jonah's reaction to the Ninevites' salvation. **vs. 1-4.**
 1. The repentance of sinners should be a cause for rejoicing, not anger. **LUK 15:10, 32.**
 2. The only gladness we see from Jonah is for a gourd that benefited him. v. 6.
 3. Even after his chastening, he was still justifying his flight to Tarshish. v. 2.
 4. In his anger, he prayed in complaint. We are to pray "...without wrath..." (**1TI 2:8**).
 - a. He was still in the city when he did this. v. 5.
 - b. Imagine the impression that this would have made upon the citizens had they overheard this.
 - c. God's minister may have occasion to regret the conversion of some because of their hypocrisy (**GAL 2:4**) but not because of their repentance.
 5. Whereas we are to come *boldly unto the throne of grace to obtain mercy* (**HEB 4:16**), Jonah went there to complain about it!
 - a. It is as if he was ashamed of his gospel's *success*, not its *reproaches*.
 - b. He basically *saw the travail of his soul* and was DISSATISFIED. c/w **ISA 53:11.**
 6. He presumed to contend with God about the "injustice" of the whole situation. v. 2.
 - a. His own nation which habitually rejected its own prophets (**2CH 36:16**) had just been shown up by these Gentiles. The Ninevites by repentance condemned his generation also. c/w **MAT 12:41.**
 - b. He had prophesied of something which did not come to pass. God and the Ninevites had crossed him!
 - c. His despondency unto death is not like Paul when he "...despaired even of life" (**2CO 1:8-9**) but more like Ahithophel who could not endure his counsel being rejected. **2SAM 17:23.**
 - d. Matthew Henry noted here, "Hot spirits are usually high spirits. *Only by pride comes contention* both with God and man." See **PRO 13:10.**
 - e. We are commanded to not think too highly of ourselves. **ROM 12:3.**
 7. God's reproof of Jonah was a rhetorical question, a powerful method of conviction. v. 4.
- C. Jonah's response was to leave town and place himself in a good viewing position. v. 5.
 1. Perhaps he thought that his presence there was the reason that judgment had not fallen

upon the city, as with Lot. **GEN 19:22-24.**

2. There Jonah could sit with the early morning sun on his back and take in a great show!
 - a. Keep in mind that God's final reproof of Jonah was for his lack of pity towards men. **vs. 10-11.**
 - b. Christ's disciples once errantly wished for fire from heaven to destroy a city that rejected Him (**LUK 9:51-55**) but here was a city which received Jonah!
 - c. But what ended up being consumed was not the city but his gladness and shade.
3. Mind that Jonah was not acting here according to the will of the Lord.
 - a. If anything, what he was doing was in rejection of the will of the Lord.
 - b. Note that he put himself in a place of distress because of his own obdurate will. Jonah exposed himself to the elements.
 - c. He fashioned himself a *booth* (a temporary dwelling covered with boughs of trees or other slight materials).
 - d. His booth was inadequate inasmuch as relief came from the gourd which God made for him (**v. 6**). The coverings which God provides are always superior to ones of our own making. **GEN 4:27, 31; PRO 28:13; ISA 30:1.**
 - e. Had he rejoiced in God's mercies instead of his own pride, he could have been billeted comfortably in the city. The Ninevites by faith were safe and in comfort but not Jonah---a synoptic preview of N.T. times.
 - f. Simply put, Jonah's troubles were of his own making. c/w **2CO 6:12.**
 - g. Matthew Henry observed, "It is common for those that have fretful uneasy spirits industriously to create inconveniences themselves, that, resolving to complain, they may still have something to complain of."

D. God made the gourd and then took it away. **vs. 6-9.**

1. Jonah was *exceeding glad* for this creature comfort.
 - a. He was happy as long as *his* need was being met.
 - b. He was not so happy when the Lord took it away.
 - c. It is easy to be enthusiastic and happy when the Lord gives, but what about when the Lord takes away? **JOB 1:21.**
2. There is need for caution against placing too much stock in the gladness that comes from the creation. Beware of inordinate affection. **COL 3:5.**
 - a. God is to be our *exceeding joy*. **PSA 43:4.**
 - b. Matthew Henry noted, "Inordinate affection lays a foundation for inordinate affliction; what we are over-fond of when we have it we are apt to over-grieve for when we lose it, and we may see our folly in both."
3. God also *prepared a vehement east wind* to reduce Jonah even more. **v. 8.**
 - a. Rather than humble himself, "...he fainted, and wished in himself to die..."
 - b. faint: To lose heart or courage, be afraid, become depressed, give way or flag.
 - c. We are warned against fainting when God rebukes us. **HEB 12:5.**
4. Jonah's morbid desire for death was ill-timed.
 - a. He was not then in the way of duty and righteousness but in angry dispute with God.
 - b. Paul could for better reasons say, "...to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better" (**PHIL 1:23**).

vs. 10-11.

- A. God here rebukes Jonah for his proud, recalcitrant, hard-hearted indifference---in the space of two verses. God needs not write a tome to drive a point home.

- B. From these verses we may observe:
1. a greater claim on a thing accords with the labor one puts into it.
 2. animal life is more precious than plant life.
 3. human life is more precious than plant life.
 4. a long-standing community is more precious than a sensational moment of destruction.
 5. God is indeed willing to spare penitents, per **2PE 3:9**.
 6. the welfare of little children is more precious than one's own personal comfort.
- C. God does expect men to be faithful stewards of the creation. **DEU 20:19; PRO 12:10**.
1. Jonah's priorities, though, were warped.
 2. Whereas God cares for the brute creation, He cares more for man.
MAT 6:26-30; 10:29-31; 12:11-12.
 3. God forbid that we should value the brute creation more than our fellow-man.
- D. Mind that there is no record of a retort from Jonah. God had the last word, as ever it must be.
JOB 40:4-5; ROM 3:19.