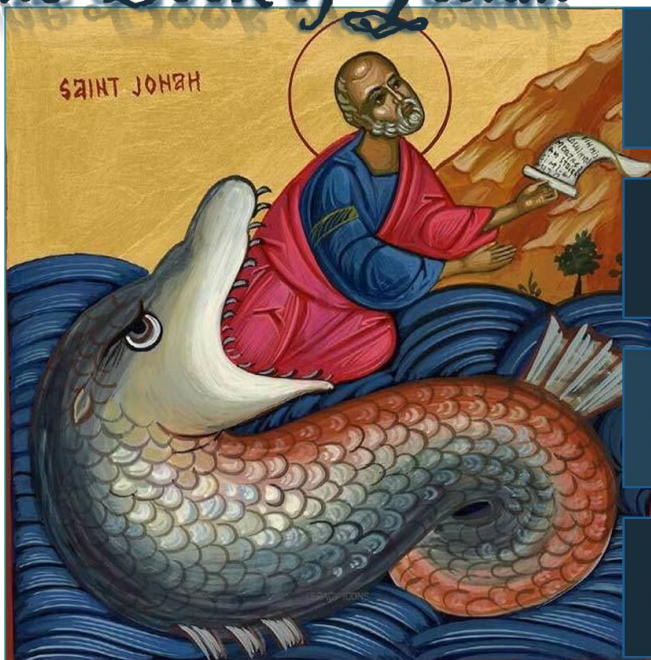


4:5 – 4:11

In the last study, we completed the 3rd chapter of Jonah, and started in chapter 4. Jonah's ministry had a tremendous effect on the Assyrians of Nineveh. They believed Jonah's preaching, believed in God, repented of their sins and wickedness, all in the hopes that God would relent from His Righteous judgement upon them. Just as Jonah had predicted, this is exactly what happened, as it is the nature of God to be faithful to forgive those who sincerely seek redemption. Naturally, this went a long way to sour Jonah's mood; he was greatly disappointed that God's judgment would not come down on Nineveh with Biblical veracity.

Before we dive into the last of the book of Jonah, let's look at the themes presented. The book of Jonah is divided into 4 sections: (The chapter don't necessarily follow the sections!)

The Book of Jonah



Section 1: Rebellion and Flight

1:1 – 1:17

Section 2: Psalm of Thanksgiving

2:1 – 2:9

Section 3: Nineveh's Salvation

2:10 – 4:4

Section 4: Jonah's Education

4:5 – 4:11

Section 1: Rebellion and Flight

1:1 – 1:17

➤ **Hidden Sin: Running, hiding, evading the sight of God!**

➤ **Consequences: Storms with a 'blast radius.'**

➤ **Salvation is of the LORD!**

Section 1, which is the whole of chapter 1, contains the following themes:

- Hidden/Invisible sin: The idea of hiding a sin (or anything) from God. This is similar to running/fleeing from God, as Jonah tried.
- There are consequences to actions: Jonah's rebellion caused him to be in the middle of a deadly storm. The storm threatened the lives of the innocent sailors just as much as Jonah's. Sins have a 'blast radius' which regularly affects bystanders. Also, being righteous, loving, Godly, has a blast radius, affecting those in the vicinity!
- Jonah, and the sailor on the boat, experienced the Salvation that can only come from God!

Section 2 contains Jonah's prayer of thanksgiving after being rescued from the belly of the sea creature by God. The Psalm of Jonah.

- Jonah realizes that his effort to flee from God, unto his own death, was just fruitless, because ultimately God is in control of life.
- Jonah's death, literal or figurative, and resurrection teaches Jonah that God is ultimately in control of death.
- The idolatry which caused Israel's sin was responsible for the raising of Assyria as a punishment. That caused the necessity for Jonah to be sent to Nineveh. Jonah's idolatry of the nation of Israel caused him to flee from God. Idolatry always pulls away from the Truth.
- Jonah's salvation from death (sea creature's belly) is only accomplished by the LORD, thus Jonah says (2:9) Salvation is of the LORD!

Section 2: Psalm of Thanksgiving

2:1 – 2:9

➤ **Submission: Life and death are in His hands!**

➤ **Consequences: Idolatry always leads away from God!**

➤ **Salvation is of the LORD!**

Section 3: Nineveh's Salvation

2:10 – 4:4

➤ **Redemption: Even the wickedness of Nineveh may be forgiven!**

➤ **Confronted with God: Substance of the heart!**

➤ **Salvation is of the LORD!**

Section 3 details Jonah when he finally makes it to Nineveh to minister. Nineveh, to Jonah's displeasure, accepts his message and repents. Thus, Nineveh is saved from the judgment from God.

- God is faithful to forgive, even sin as bad as the Assyrians had accomplished. Even their murderous, cruel, inhuman way may be rehabilitated when they sought God's mercy and righteousness.
- The individual reaction to any confrontation with God is dependent on the state of the person's heart. The king of Nineveh had a heart which was ready to melt, whereas the heart of Pharaoh (Exodus) hardened.
- Nineveh's wickedness could only be countered by the just righteousness of God. Their salvation could have only come from God's boundless mercy and compassion! Salvation is of the LORD.

Before examining the 4th and final section of Jonah, there is a question that does NOT require answering. It may help to shed some light on the forthcoming themes, however. The question is, who wrote the book of Jonah?

No one, but God Himself, knows.

The very last verse of Jonah is an unanswered question from God. The author left the question hanging, as if to challenge all the readers as well as Jonah. Presumably, Jonah had a soul searching, thoughtful reflection in consideration to the answer. Jonah should have 'figured it out.' None of that is detailed, seemingly to avert any credit to Jonah. The supposition is that Jonah himself wrote the book. In shame for his unjust attitude, he left the pertinent question hanging, unanswered, to highlight its importance. Jonah seeks no redemption for his heart, in the eyes of the reader, because he when he finally understood his own flaw, he was deeply ashamed.

It is unimportant who wrote the book of Jonah!

⁵ Then Jonah went out from the city and sat east of it. There he made a shelter for himself and sat under it in the shade until he could see what would happen in the city.

Jonah 4:5 NASB95

After God forgave Nineveh, Jonah expressed his displeasure by telling the LORD that he knew this would happen (4:2). Nevertheless, his mission complete, instead of returning home, Jonah decides to watch to see what would happen to the city. Why? Just as he predicted, God forgave Nineveh, so what more is there to see? God has called Jonah to account for his anger several times. Jonah's anger, at this point, has turned into bitterness and wrath!

⁷ "Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; And their wrath, for it is cruel. I will disperse them in Jacob, And scatter them in Israel.

Genesis 49:7 NASB95

On his deathbed, Jacob is blessing his sons, but he has this to say of Simeon and Levi. Jacob is angry with his sons for their Murder of Shechem.

The story is often called the "rape of Dinah" but that seems to be an unfair description. The Biblical account supports a coercion, or seduction of Dinah, not a forceful rape.

¹ Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to visit the daughters of the land. ² When Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the land, saw her, he took her and lay with her by force. ³ He was deeply attracted to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the girl and spoke tenderly to her. ⁴ So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Get me this young girl for a wife." ⁵ Now Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter; but his sons were with his livestock in the field, so Jacob kept silent until they came in. ⁶ Then Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him. ⁷ Now the sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard [it;] and the men were grieved, and they were very angry because he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, for such a thing ought not to be done. ⁸ But Hamor spoke with them, saying, "The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter; please give her to him in marriage. ⁹ "Intermarry with us; give your daughters to us and take our daughters for yourselves. ¹⁰ "Thus you shall live with us, and the land shall be [open] before you; live and trade in it and acquire property in it." ¹¹ Shechem also said to her father and to her brothers, "If I find favor in your sight, then I will give whatever you say to me. ¹² "Ask me ever so much bridal payment and gift, and I will give according as you say to me; but give me the girl in marriage." ¹³ But Jacob's sons answered Shechem and his father Hamor with deceit, because he had defiled Dinah their sister. ¹⁴ They said to them, "We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that would be a disgrace to us. ¹⁵ "Only on this [condition] will we consent to you: if you will become like us, in that every male of you be circumcised, ¹⁶ then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters for ourselves, and we will live with you and become one people. ¹⁷ "But if you will not listen to us to be circumcised, then we will take our daughter and go." ¹⁸ Now their words seemed reasonable to Hamor and Shechem, Hamor's son. ¹⁹ The young man did not delay to do the thing, because he was delighted with Jacob's daughter. Now he was more respected than all the household of his father. ²⁰ So Hamor and his son Shechem came to the gate of their city and spoke to the men of their city, saying, ²¹ "These men are friendly with us; therefore let them live in the land and trade in it, for behold, the land is large enough for them. Let us take their daughters in marriage, and give our daughters to them. ²² "Only on this [condition] will the men consent to us to live with us, to become one people: that every male among us be circumcised as they are circumcised. ²³ "Will not their livestock and their property and all their animals be ours? Only let us consent to them, and they will live with us." ²⁴ All who went out of the gate of his city listened to Hamor and to his son Shechem, and every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city. ²⁵ Now it came about on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword and came upon the city unawares, and killed every male. ²⁶ They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem's house, and went forth.

Genesis 34:1-26 NASB95

Simeon and Levi's fierce anger and murderous wrath brought about the horrible deaths of all the men in the city. That is why, years later Jacob looks back at their action with disgust and loathing. Their anger at the mistreatment of their sister, caused a blind rage with devastating results.

² LORD, I have heard the report about You [and] I fear. O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years, In the midst of the years make it known; In wrath remember mercy.

Habakkuk 3:2 NASB95

Unlike Simeon and Levi and Jonah, even in His RIGHTEOUS anger, God remembers mercy!

⁶ So the LORD God appointed a plant and it grew up over Jonah to be a shade over his head to deliver him from his discomfort. And Jonah was extremely happy about the plant. ⁷ But God appointed a worm when dawn came the next day and it attacked the plant and it withered.

Jonah 4:6-7 NASB95

In response to Jonah's bitterness and anger, God tries to show him his error, by using a plant. The plant grows to cover Jonah with pleasant shade, but it withers and dies in the morning. This exposes Jonah to the harsh sun and the biting scorching heat, furthering his displeasure.

קִיָּאֵן
QÎQĀYŌN
A PLANT: PERHAPS A GOURD,
CASTOR-OIL PLANT, BOTTLE-GOURD
UNIQUE TO BOOK OF
JONAH
Strong's H7021

The Hebrew word used for "plant" is unique to Jonah; it's used nowhere else in the Old Testament. The reason for this may be that it was a plant exclusive to the area. Perhaps this word is used to show Jonah's unique relationship with the plant, incidentally. The plant is meant to represent Israel, to Jonah. Although Ecclesiastic Israel is often allegorized as a woman, or a bride, or a harlot; national Israel is often compared to plants, trees, vines, etc.

¹⁰ I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your forefathers as the earliest fruit on the fig tree in its first [season]...

Hosea 9:10 NASB95

In Jonah mind, when the plant withers and dies, it symbolized the withering and death of Israel...

⁸ When the sun came up God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on Jonah's head so that he became faint and begged with [all] his soul to die, saying, "Death is better to me than life."

Jonah 4:8 NASB95

Without Israel, what is the point of Jonah's life? Jonah's idolatry blinds him to a grand Miracle of God, and has him wishing death upon himself. Jonah is embedded in dire misery; Israel's enemy, his enemy, the Assyrians have been saved to one day kill Israel.

⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on [the] evil and [the] good, and sends rain on [the] righteous and [the] unrighteous."

Matthew 5:43-45 NASB95

Jonah was commanded by God to love his enemy. He was commanded to bring the opportunity of God's Mercy (NOT getting what is deserved) and Grace (Blessed with what is NOT deserved) to his despised enemy. Jonah was also to bring, which he did successfully, the knowledge of God to these people. Isn't the knowledge of God more important than the burnt offerings in Israel (Hosea 6:6)?

⁹ *Then God said to Jonah, "Do you have good reason to be angry about the plant?" And he said, "I have good reason to be angry, even to death."*

Jonah 4:9 NASB95

God tries to address Jonah's petulant anger and bitterness again. Yet, Jonah sticks to his stiff-necked reluctance to accept God's message.

⁸ *Did the LORD rage against the rivers, Or [was] Your anger against the rivers, Or [was] Your wrath against the sea, That You rode on Your horses, On Your chariots of salvation?*

Habakkuk 3:8 NASB95

God's response to His own anger and wrath, which are always just and righteous, is to fly in on a 'chariot of salvation' as Habakkuk says. We, Jonah included, seem to always respond, instead, with bitterness and resentment.

¹⁰ *Then the LORD said, "You had compassion on the plant for which you did not work and [which] you did not cause to grow, which came up overnight and perished overnight."*

Jonah 4:10 NASB95

God spells it out for Jonah...

Jonah had no say in where he was born. He had no choice to be born of Israel or not. Jonah hadn't earned being an Israeli. Jonah didn't choose Israel to be blessed with the knowledge of God, nor be born of His hand. Jonah, just got lucky; like Jonah got luck with the plant that just happened to extend its shade to him.

⁴⁸ *"...From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more."*

Luke 12:48 NASB95

To Israel, Jonah's people, much was given: The Law and the Prophets; the Promised Land; the Seed of the woman, the Seed of Abraham, the Seed of David; the Messiah who will save all mankind. Thus, much was expected of Israel. They were held to a higher standard. Jonah was held to a higher standard of Godliness.

¹¹ *"Should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know [the difference] between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?"*

Jonah 4:11 NASB95

A historical study of the Assyrians, just like most other empires, shows a gruesome portrait of cruelty, inhumanity, and evil. Visitors to the lands of the Mongolians, during their empire days, thought they were looking at a majestic, snow-covered mountain, until they got closer and realized that it was a mount of human skulls. The Assyrians, just like the Mongolians, just like the Huns, just like the Romans, just like Simeon and Levi, did what made sense in a worldly, secular, utilitarian, flesh-oriented way, to serve themselves. We call this evil.

¹² *There is a way [which seems] right to a man, But its end is the way of death.*

Proverbs 14:12 NASB95

Even as Jonah thought he was saving Israel, by his death, he was condemning the 120,000 inhabitants of Nineveh to their destruction. It seemed right to Jonah, just as it seemed right for the empires of history to do the evil which they found necessary or convenient.

After this revelation from God, Jonah seems to 'get it.'
 He wrote the book of Jonah, and finished it here, with this haunting question, to put the shame of his attitude, wrath, and actions to the world; that we may learn from him.
 He did not include his repentance, as it might make his actions and attitudes seem justified.
 This only highlights the depth of his remorse.

<p>➤ Jonah: REBEL</p>	<p>Is Jonah a REBEL? He does rebel against the command of God to go to Nineveh the first time, in a misguided effort to save Israel. However, I wouldn't call him rebellious.</p>
<p>Is Jonah a COWARD? He doesn't seem to personally fear the Assyrians, or Nineveh. He did fear for the destruction of Israel, at their hands, which does come to pass in about 40 years. He, however, is not a coward.</p>	<p>➤ Jonah: COWARD</p>
<p>➤ Jonah: IGNORANT</p>	<p>Is Jonah IGNORANT? Surely not! He knows exactly what is happening the whole time. He has all the book knowledge possible. Instead, his heart was not in the right place.</p>
<p>Jonah is JUST LIKE THE REST OF US! He rebels when it suits his interest; he's afraid of the wrong things, and that which he can't control; he may have all the facts, Bible quotes and references, but he missed the heart of God!</p>	<p>➤ Jonah: LIKE US</p>

No matter what Jonah thought of the Ninevites; no matter how we may feel about the Assyrians in our lives: those who make us bitter and angry and resentful...

Unto all of them, and all of us:

Salvation is of the LORD!

¹⁸ And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20



NASB95