

# Under the Unpredictable Plant

*Jonah 4:1-10*



## Studies in the Book of Jonah

*<sup>1</sup> But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry. <sup>2</sup> He prayed to the LORD, "O LORD, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. <sup>3</sup> Now, O LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live."*

*<sup>4</sup> But the LORD replied, "Have you any right to be angry?"*

*<sup>5</sup> Jonah went out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. <sup>6</sup> Then the LORD God provided a vine and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the vine. <sup>7</sup> But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the vine so that it withered. <sup>8</sup> When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live."*

*<sup>9</sup> But God said to Jonah, "Do you have a right to be angry about the vine?" "I do," he said. "I am angry enough to die."*

*<sup>10</sup> But the LORD said, "You have been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. <sup>11</sup> But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?"*

What is Jonah's emotional response to Ninevah's salvation?  
(Where else in the book of Jonah does "anger" occur?)

What did Jonah say he "knew" about God?

Read Exodus 34:5-7. What does it tell us about God's character? (Do you think Jonah had read Exodus 34?)

Why in the world did Jonah want to die?

Read 1 Kings 19:1-18 about another depressed prophet. Who is he, what's his problem, and how does God answer?

What do you think Jonah is waiting for in verse 6?

What things does God "provide" in this chapter?... in the rest of the book of Jonah?

Why is it ironic that Jonah would have a "death wish"?

What is the contrast between Jonah's concerns and God's concerns?

## **LIFE RESPONSE: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ME?**

Summarize in one sentence the interchange between God and Jonah in chapter 4.

What things do you think God is trying to teach us by including this chapter in the Bible?

Can you identify with Jonah? Have you ever had similar feelings?

Do you ever selfishly cling to something like Jonah was attached to the vine?

Is there a person or group of people that you, if you're honest, think of the way Jonah thought of the Ninevites? Has God ever asked you to extend compassion to them?

List the major things you learn from the book of Jonah about human nature (that is, yourself!):

List the major things you learn from the book of Jonah about God's character: