

SERMON NOTES

A New Perspective: Jonah Is Confronted by His Great and Compassionate God

Jonah 4:1–11 | Matt Green | August 2, 2020

Jonah Resents God's Compassion (4:1–3)

- God's reprieve for the Ninevites is *greatly evil* to Jonah
- Jonah had feared God would have compassion on the Ninevites
 - Grace, mercy, and compassion are central to God's character (see Exodus 34:6–7)
 - This was easy to accept for God's people, Israel — but, hard to swallow regarding an evil nation like Assyria
- This was a profound challenge to Jonah's worldview
 - The Law specified retribution: “Eye for eye, tooth for tooth” (see Leviticus 24:17–20)
 - The Lord was going to punish His enemies (see Psalm 92:6-9)
- Jonah doesn't understand a world where people like the Ninevites can be spared — and he doesn't want to live in it

God Gently Responds to Jonah (4:4)

- Jonah is benefiting from God's kindness
- Jonah assumes he is on the right side of justice and godliness
- Jonah responds in silent anger

JONAH 4: A NEW PERSPECTIVE

AUGUST 2, 2020

God Reveals Jonah's Misplaced Compassion (4:5–8)

- God graciously improves Jonah's shelter outside the city (4:6)
 - He appoints the plant for His purposes
 - Jonah is happy because of the comfort the plant gives
- God quickly turns Jonah's comfort to discomfort (4:7–8)
 - Jonah is miserable
 - Again, he just wants to die

God Challenges Jonah's Perspective (4:9–11)

- Jonah cares about the plant (4:9–10)
 - Even though the plant was God's work, and Jonah had nothing to do with it
 - The plant had provided for Jonah's comfort
- God cares about the people of Nineveh (4:11)
 - Nineveh was a great city, full of people
 - Nineveh was worth pitying and saving
- The open question:
 - Is God not correct in caring about Nineveh?
 - Do we care about those around us—including those who need the opportunity for repentance and forgiveness?

How Are We Like Jonah?

- Quick to see shortcomings in others, slow to see them in myself?
- Not sharing in God's compassion for all people?