

**Date:** 23 Oct 2022

**Scripture Passage:** Jonah 4:1-9

**Title:** Jonah's Sinful Anger

### **Introduction**

- Anger in itself is not wrong. The Lord Jesus Christ was angry at the desecration of the temple and the hypocrisy of the pharisees. Therefore, anger can be of the righteous kind, as when God is angry with sin. The danger, however, with men is that fine line between righteous & sinful anger that we often cross. We often let self-righteousness enter and we lose control of our anger.
- Jonah crossed the line of righteous anger to sinful passion. We learn positive and negative lessons from Jonah, just as we learn from the children of Israel, David, etc. (Rom. 15:4). Jonah was a man with a nature like ours (James 5:17), at the same time he was mightily used by God. He was called by God to be His servant, sent to a distant land in a day when travel was difficult and dangerous, to preach those most unlikely to believe in his time, who were destined to be saved in the mighty revival that followed his preaching. Physical, emotional, and spiritual exhaustion accounted for his condition which, though not excusable, was used by God to reveal His sovereignty and compassion.
- Matthew 12:40, the event of Jonah thrown overboard, swallowed up in the belly of the fish for 3 days & 3 nights is a sign of Christ's death & resurrection. We must not lose sight of this central message. As Jonah was commissioned the second time to preach in Nineveh, the repentance of Ninevites provoked a violent reaction within Jonah. Jonah's sin points us to God's mercy in Christ. God's mercy is shown by His long suffering towards sinners and by providing salvation in Christ.

### **God's longsuffering (v1-4)**

- Jonah sinned against God (1-3) in three ways. (i) By becoming angry at God. No one has the right to be angry against His Creator. What is hidden in the heart is known to God. (ii) By lecturing God. The prayer turned into a session of complaint, even rebuke, against God. Prayer out to be of repentance, thanksgiving, praise, intercession, petition, commitment. (iii) By questioning God's wisdom & right. Jonah knew God's merciful character (2b), but did not want God's mercy to be extended to others beyond "my country". It was God's prerogative to save Ninevites. It was His right to use Jonah as an agent of truth. Jonah ran away the first time, but now preferred to die knowing that he was breaking his vow (2:9). A believer will sin, and genuine repentance is needed.
- Jonah was questioned by God (4) to awaken him to his situation. (i) Is it right? God is the Creator. He has shown His mercy to Jonah (2:9). (ii) For you...? Even when we obey God, we have only done our duty to serve Him the Creator. It is not for us to steal God's glory. But we must also not slack in obedience. Faithfulness called for. (iii) To be angry? At God's mercy to others? After useful service, Jonah fell after triumph. Take heed, lest you fall (1 Cor. 10:12).

### **God's provision of salvation (v5-9)**

- God provided shade for Jonah, despite Jonah's unworthiness (5-6). (i) Jonah had a bad spirit. He sat down on the east side of the city, expecting God's blessings to be withdrawn from the city. We ought to rejoice when other repent and God's blessing is upon them. A more generous spirit required of us towards other people that God is blessing (Luke 15:10; Phil. 1:18). (ii) Jonah's make-shift shelter was inadequate under the hot sun. Jonah did not notice that God caused the plant to grow miraculously because of his bad spirit. (iii) God's provision of shade was fully adequate and satisfying, but it had to suffer death in God's plan. This was not expected by Jonah until it was explained.
- Do we have a bad spirit? Are we unhappy that God is blessing others more than us? Are we like Jonah, not noticing God's provision to us that is fully adequate?
- God provided understanding to Jonah (7-9). The plant that sheltered him had to die, to proclaim the gospel of Christ's death to save. The plant miraculously grew, and it suddenly withered and died. The Son of God was sent to this earth miraculously, and He died to save undeserving sinners like us. Jonah was too absorbed in himself to notice. The sun burned down, the hot wind (called "sirocco")

blew, but Jonah was still in bad spirit and wished to die (8). God asked a second time, 'is it right for you to be angry'? (9). Self-centeredness causes us not to see, not to hear, not to notice God's provision of salvation. Cast your eyes upon the cross of calvary, and you will find salvation in Christ alone. It is a time for personal reflection. A time to take stock of self. A time to repent & come to Christ!