

Do We Have a Right?

Jonah 4:4-11

“God saw to it... that Jonah’s glad appreciation from the shade of the gourd plant lasted only one day, for He sent a special worm to destroy its roots and cause it to wither away in one day...”

The worm was distinctive in another sense as well, although this could hardly have been obvious to Jonah himself at that time. It was known as the ‘scarlet worm’ (Hebrew towla), as being the source of the red fluid used in those days to produce beautiful scarlet and crimson cloth. In fact, the same word was actually translated ‘crimson’ in Isaiah 1:18, speaking of sins being ‘red like crimson.’

The striking significant thing about this word that it is used prophetically as applied to Christ on the cross in the marvelous 22nd Psalm. There he says, ‘But I am but a worm’ (Ps. 22:6). Not just any worm, but the scarlet worm, whose blood red fluid emerging from the body of the female worm as she dies in giving birth to her young speaks eloquently of the shed blood of the Lord Jesus as He died, to bring life to others.” Henry Morris

- I. Jonah, remember he’s writing about himself and his attitude after he got his heart straightened out by the Lord, is being very honest about his petty, self-centered, arrogant attitude of anger and self-pity. He says in verse 1, I am exceedingly ticked off at you God for making me preach to a godless, violent, despicable people whom I hate with a passion. He didn’t want God to bless them, because he knew that if they truly repented of their sin, he would show them mercy and spare them from His wrath. The thing to understand with this powerful example of God’s forgiveness is that he honors repentance. He’s a gracious, kind, merciful God who loves to save anyone who repents and understands their need for a Savior.

Jonah 3:10-4:3

Acts 4:12

Rom. 3:23

Rom. 6:23

Rom. 5:7-8

John 3:16

- II. God's question, "*Do you have a right to be angry,*" hits at the core of understanding who God is and how we see ourselves in light of that. We don't know what Jonah saw or experienced with the Assyrians, but whatever it was made him adamantly opposed to them. Did his anger begin as a righteous anger which then became a sinful anger? Whatever the case might be, his anger superseded God's mercy, became sinful and allowed Satan to gain a foothold in his attitude toward God and the Ninevites.

Jonah 4:4-9

Eph. 4:26-27

Eph. 4:30-31

Ps. 103:10-14

Ps. 4:4-5 *In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. Offer right sacrifices and trust in the Lord.*

- III. God stays true to His character, i.e., His immutable attributes. He cannot and will not act outside of a perfect and exceedingly holy expression of His love, grace, mercy, and justice toward those who humble themselves before Him. He knew that the heart of the Ninevites were ripe for repentance. Perhaps they knew even before Jonah showed up that what they were like was evil. God's moral law was written on their hearts and it must have convicted them, yet they did not know where to turn for help. So, God sent Jonah as His voice to a desperate people in need of repentance to help them get their heart's right before Him.

Jonah 4:10-11

Ps. 34:18 *The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.*

Romans 2:14-15 *(Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. 15 They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.)*