

Jonah 4:1-11

- Chapter 4 has two divisions:
 - 4:1-4 – follows the 40 days of waiting on the east side outside of the city
 - Jonah is bitterly disappointed with the Lord’s verdict
 - 4:5-11 – takes place after Jonah had proclaimed the Lord’s message in Nineveh and was waiting outside the city for the 40 days to be completed before Jonah knows what we are told in 3:10
 - Jonah is waiting to view a Sodom like destruction of Nineveh
 - Jonah is given an object lesson so that he might understand the Lord’s verdict concerning Nineveh’s fate
- In Chapter 4 God is referred to as Yahweh (LORD), Elohim (God) and Yahweh-Elohim (LORD God)
 - Yahweh – 4x in 4:1-4 and 1x in 4:5-11 in 4:10
 - Elohim – 2x in 4:5-11 (4:7 with the article and 4:9 without the article)
 - Yahweh-Elohim – 1x in 4:6
- Jonah knew the LORD as the nationalistic Yahweh, but did not embrace the True character of Yahweh. Jonah’s view was a form of idolatry that rejected the True nature of the Lord in preference for his personal truth of god (as in post-modern). Jonah would rather die than submit to the true God. We see the same thing in:
 - progressive Christianity view of Jesus
 - doctrines and denominations
 - our own personal preferences and limited understanding of the Lord

Jonah 4:1 – **But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry.**

	2734 [e]	1419 [e]	7451 [e]	3124 [e]	413 [e]	7489 [e]
lōw.	way-yi-ḥar	gē-dō-w-lāh;	rā-‘āh	yō-w-nāh	’el-	way-yê-ra’
• לֹוּ	וַיִּחַר	גְּדוֹלָהּ	רַעָהּ	יֹנָה	אֶל-	וַיִּרַע 1
he	and became angry	greatly	exceedingly	Jonah	to	But it displeased
Prep 3ms	Conj-w V-Qal-ConseclImperf-3ms	Adj-fs	Adj-fs	N-proper-ms	Prep	Conj-w V-Qal-ConseclImperf-3ms

1. Literally: “It became evil to Jonah as a great evil” or
“It became wrong to Jonah as a great wrong.”
2. It cannot be said any stronger in the Hebrew that what the Lord did was wrong.
3. Forty days had gone by and the Lord had done nothing.

Jonah 4:2 – **“And he prayed to the LORD and said, “O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster.**

1. For the first time in the book Jonah reveals why he fled from this mission.
2. Jonah knew scripture from Exodus 34:6 when the Lord passed by Moses: “The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness...”

Jonah 4:3 – “Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.”

1. Jonah wanted to die and was depressed like Elijah in 1 Kings 19:3-18
2. Jonah loved his idolatrous image of Yahweh, but hated the True character of God

Jonah 4:4 – “And the LORD said, “Do you do well to be angry?”

	2734 [e]	3190 [e]	3068 [e]	559 [e]
lāk.	hā·rāh	ha·hê·têb	Yah·weh,	way·yō·mer
לָךְ	תָּרָה	הֲהִיטֵב	יְהוָה	וַיֹּאמֶר 4
for you	to be angry	[is it] right	Yahweh	And said
Prep 2fs	V-Qal-Perf-3ms	V-Hifil-InfAbs	N-proper-ms	Conj-w V-Qal-ConsecImperf-3ms

1. This section ends with the Lord asking Jonah a question with only three Hebrew words.
2. The same question is asked in 4:9 with the addition of a reference to the plant.
3. The Lord asked Elijah the same question twice in Elijah’s state of depression

Jonah 4:5 – “Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city.

1. “went” and “sat” are likely “had went” and “had sat” meaning the last words in chronological order are the Lords’ words in 4:4. These words recount Jonah’s time outside the city waiting.
2. Jonah would have used stones or clay for the shelter. Not wood. Maybe some brush for a ceiling/covering
3. Jonah needed protection from the hot dry sun and the scorching breeze (and, eventually, wind). Being in the open in the daytime outside Nineveh was brutal.

Jonah 4:6 – “Now the LORD God appointed a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant.

1. “appointed” or “prepared” is used:
 - a. Fish
 - b. Vine
 - c. Worm
 - d. East wind
2. Literally: Jonah rejoiced with a great joy at the climbing gourd.”
3. Jonah is “happy” because his God is performing according to Jonah’s expectations. But, as soon as the Lord operates outside of Jonah’s parameters (idolatrous standards) Jonah wants to die. Happy to Suicidal because God’s Truth doesn’t match Jonah’s theology.

Jonah 4:7 – “But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant, so that it withered.

Jonah 4:8 – “When the sun rose, God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint. And he asked that he might die and said, “It is better for me to die than to live.”

1. The hot air and wind could physically deprive Jonah of the fluids and chemicals needed for balanced thinking and reasoning leading to exhaustion, depression and feelings or bizarre unreality that is known to occur in situations like this in the Middle East.

Jonah 4:9 – “But God said to Jonah, “Do you do well to be angry for the plant?” And he said, “Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die.”

5921 [e]		2734 [e]	3190 [e]	3124 [e]	413 [e]	430 [e]		559 [e]
'al-	lə-kā	hā-rāh-	ha-hê-têb	yō-w-nāh,	'el-	'ē-lō-hīm		way-yō-mer
עַל-	לְךָ	תָּרַח	הַיָּטֵב	יֹנָה	אֶל-	אֱלֹהִים		וַיֹּאמֶר 9
about	for you	to be angry	[is it] right	Jonah	to	God		And said
Prep	Prep 2ms	V-Qal-Perf-3ms	V-Hifil-InfAbs	N-proper-ms	Prep	N-mp	Conj-w V-Qal-ConseclImperf-3ms	

4194 [e]	5704 [e]		2734 [e]	3190 [e]		559 [e]		7021 [e]
mā-weṭ.	'ad-	lī	hā-rāh-	hê-têb		way-yō-mer		haq-qī-qā-yō-wn;
מָוֶת:	עַד-	לִי	תָּרַח	הַיָּטֵב		וַיֹּאמֶר ?		הַקִּיקָיוֹן
death	even to	for me	to be angry	[it is] right		and he said		the plant
N-ms	Prep	Prep 1cs	V-Qal-Perf-3ms	V-Hifil-InfAbs	Conj-w V-Qal-ConseclImperf-3ms			Art N-ms

- Jonah answers a rhetorical question wrong. The obvious answer to the Lord’s rhetorical question is, “No, I do not do well becoming angry about a plant.” But, Jonah answers it with a stubborn, “Yes, I am going to die clinging to my wretched theological position!”

Jonah 4:10 – “And the LORD said, “You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night.

- The point: Jonah has sympathy and concern for his plant because it made him comfortable and the Lord is supposed to bless Israel and Jonah.

Jonah 4:11 – “And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?”

- The priority list:
 - People are important
 - Animals are more important than a plant
 - A Plant...Jonah was concerned about a plant! But, if Jonah was willing to be concerned about a plant why was Jonah not concerned about the animals or the people?
- The book ends in this position so that the readers may reflect on their idolatrous views of god and self-centered priorities that conflict with the Lord’s priorities.
- “do not know the right hand from thei left” is idiomatic expression for:
 - “lack of knowledge”
 - “innocence”
 - They lacked insight and therefore could not make the right decision. They were trapped in their evil situation and did not know what was wrong.
- “Animals” were important in this conversation simply because they were more important than a plant. Other ideas, probably not correct interpretations:
 - Humor
 - Animals are important too! Just like humans.
 - Animals are innocent because they do not know
 - Animals are valuable property