

“The Book of Jonah” (Route 66)

When LAST we were on Route 66, we had JUST SEEN how the ONCE UNITED Kingdom of Israel becomes DIVIDED because of the FOLLY of King Solomon... We read about that in 1st Kings Chapter 11...

Then, we looked at some of the SPECIFIC WRITINGS of Solomon, in the Books of PROVERBS, the SONG of SOLOMON, and ECCLESIASTES...

But, today—BEFORE moving on to consider the various KINGS who FOLLOWED SOLOMON... We’re going to INSERT the Book of Jonah... Jonah is almost **UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED** as ONE of the earliest Old Testament prophets...

Now, there are OTHERS who ministered at—or AROUND—the SAME TIME as Jonah... He was a CONTEMPORARY of the prophets Joel, Amos, and Hosea...

And, so, why start with Jonah? – Well—for ONE thing—Jonah is a very “self-contained” story... A VIGNETTE, much like the Book of RUTH, or JOB...

It tells **NOT** the history of Israel, but of one man’s “mission” from God, his reluctance—and eventual ANGER—when God decides to show mercy to his own enemies... PLUS...

But, this account is also PERFECT for following-up our recent MISSIONS focus... Jonah has been called ‘**The Outstanding Missionary Handbook of the Old Testament.**’ – Because it DOES DEAL with a man SENT to a FOREIGN LAND, and how he RESPONDS to that call...

Jonah is a very WELL-KNOWN TALE—a WHALE of a TALE (I’m sure you saw that coming)... And, it’s PERFECT for “cuttin’ our teeth” when it comes to daily BIBLE READING... Because JONAH PRESENTS a SINGULAR, LINEAR NARRATIVE...

An author by the name of Charles Reade once said: “*Jonah is the most beautiful story ever written in so small a compass. It contains [just] 48 verses, 1328 English words... [and yet here] There is growth of character, a distinct plot worked-out without haste or crudity. Only a great artist could've hit on a perfect proportion between dialogue and narrative.*”

So, I want to break this study into THREE MAIN PARTS today... First, let’s consider some of the **DATA ABOUT JONAH**... then, we’ll consider the **SUMMARY OF JONAH**... And—finally—we’ll look at some of the **LESSONS WE LEARN FROM JONAH**...

In the Tanakh—the Hebrew Bible—the TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS (Hosea through Malachi)... were ORIGINALLY DESIGNED as A **SINGLE** BOOK, called ‘*The Twelve.*’ – And, Jonah is the FIFTH book among The Twelve.

That Jonah is the author has never **REALLY** been contested... One author writes: “*There's no persuasive reason to theorize about an unknown author.*”

Dr. Graham Scroggie writes: “*Two opposing views are held on the historicity of [this Book]... On one hand, it is regarded as an imaginative work with a moral lesson, and that the ancient prophet is chosen as its hero for his known anti-Assyrian bias... On the other hand, it is regarded as genuinely historical, and it is claimed that Jesus believed it to be so.*”

We SEE this because Jesus MENTIONS JONAH—by name—in Matthew Chapter 12... Matthew Chapter 16... and Luke Chapter 11...

Jonah’s name means “*dove*,” or “*pigeon*”... He was the son of Amitai, of the tribe of Zebulun... And—outside of the BOOK of Jonah—the only OTHER PLACE Jonah is mentioned in the Old Testament is 2nd Kings Chapter 14...

He appears to have lived in the NORTHERN KINGDOM, and—from what we can gather—exercised his ministry during the reign of Jeroboam II, who reigned from about 823 to 782 BC.

Now, interestingly, Jonah is the only Old Testament prophet who is *specifically* sent to preach to the Gentiles. Now, God sent people... to certain INDIVIDUAL Gentiles, from time-to-time...

Elijah was sent to Sarepta for a season... Elisha went to Damascus... But only Jonah is given a message of repentance... to preach to a GENTILE CITY...

And—even though Jonah is a PROPHET—this BOOK *really* isn’t a PROPHECY... He doesn’t present a MESSAGE... One author writes: “*The story itself IS the message.*”

Another author adds: “[*This*] story is full of stereotyped characters who... do the exact opposite of what you would expect. The prophet, a man of God, rebels... The sailors, who are supposed to be immoral pagans... turn to God... The king of the most murderous empire on Earth humbles himself because of Jonah’s five-word sermon... This story fits... with what we would today call satire—stories about well-known figures in extreme circumstances, using humor and irony to critique their stupidity and [flawed] characters.” – So, let’s talk about a QUICK SUMMARY...

You can **TAKE** just a FEW VERSES from EACH of the CHAPTERS of this book... and catch “The Big Idea”... In Chapter 1, the Lord says to Jonah: “**Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it...**”

Now, historians tell us that Nineveh was the CAPITAL CITY of ASSYRIA... It was the WORLD DOMINATING EMPIRE at that time... It was like a LONDON, or a NEW YORK CITY, of that day... Jon Courson writes:

“*Nineveh was one of the greatest cities of antiquity. With 1,200... 200-foot-high towers, and surrounded by a 100-foot-high wall [so wide] that 3 chariots could drive atop it side-by-side. 60 miles in circumference, enough corn grown inside to feed the entire population... There were magnificent palaces, with courtyards of more than 100 acres. Hanging gardens filled the city... Temples, palaces, libraries, & arsenals abounded to adorn & enrich the city beyond belief.*”

HOWEVER... Nineveh was also an incredibly **WICKED** city... The Assyrians were one of the **LONG-STANDING ENEMIES** of Israel... And Nineveh was founded by **NIMROD**, in Genesis Chapter 10... The FIRST FOUR VERSES of Nahum 3 provide this description:

“Woe to the bloody city!... all full of lies and robbery... There is a multitude of slain, a great number of bodies, countless corpses... because of the multitude of harlotries... the mistress of sorceries, who sells nations through her harlotries, and families through her sorceries.”

Nineveh was actually **KNOWN** for SKINNING their victims alive... They have found furniture made of human skin... Pyramids made of human skulls... One historian writes of:

“Reliefs with people being impaled, decapitated, flayed, and tongues pulled out... people being made to grind the bones of their dead ancestors, and vultures plucking out the eyes of the dead!”

But Nineveh was also known for its WITCHCRAFT and SEXUAL IMMORALITY... James Montgomery Boice said: *“Thousands of tablets uncovered in the Mesopotamian valley show abysmal superstition. Hundreds of sorcery incantations have been brought to light.”*

And, it is **TO** these people that God sends Jonah... a **HEBREW**—a man whose countryside had been RAVAGED by the Assyrians, whose **PEOPLE** had been carried away CAPTIVE by them... David Guzik has a good was of CONTEXTUALIZING the EXTREMITY of Jonah's call.

“Imagine a Jewish man in New York during World War II hearing God say, “I’m going to bring judgment on Germany. [But] I want you to go to Berlin and tell Nazi Germany to repent.”

Chapter 1, Verse 3, says: **“Jonah [fled]... to Joppa, and found a ship... so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.”** – Jonah did NOT want to DO what God TOLD him to do...

Tarshish was about as FAR **WEST** of Nineveh as one could GO... It was on the COAST of what is—today—Spain, PAST the strait of Gibraltar... The EXACT **OPPOSITE** DIRECTION...

But—before long—a STORM comes up... Jonah's ASLEEP... the PAGAN SAILORS are PRAYING TO THEIR FALSE GODS... And, Verse 7 says they **“cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this trouble has come upon us.”** – **“and the lot fell on Jonah.”**

In Verse 10, they say: **“Why have you done this?”** [Because they] knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because [Jonah] had told them.” – And, **“they said to him,”** Verse 11: **“What shall we do... that the sea may be calm for us?”**

And—in Verse 12, of Chapter 1... Jonah actually says: **“throw me into the sea...”** – Jonah would rather DIE than BE OBEDIENT and go and preach to Nineveh...

So, they THROW Jonah overboard... But, at the VERY END of Chapter 1—we read that: **“the LORD... prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And [he] was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.”** – Now, this is really the CONTROVERSIAL part of this book...

A lot of people say “*This could never happen, because there’s no way a man could survive in the belly of a whale.*” – EVEN THOUGH science has said it IS possible for a whale to SWALLOW a person... But this DOESN’T actually SAY that it WAS a WHALE...

It’s called a FISH... AND, we ALSO read that God specifically “**prepared**” this fish to swallow Jonah... It’s very possible—in fact, I like to THINK of it this way—that this was a ONE-OFF, UNIQUE CREATION **BY GOD** for this moment...

But... the BIGGEST REASON we should ACCEPT this as TRUE is because JESUS acknowledges it in the Gospels... In Matthew 12, Verse 40, Jesus said: “**As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.**”

This is one of the GREATEST LESSONS, or POINTS, to the Book of Jonah... It is a POWERFUL OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETIC PICTURE of the death & resurrection of Jesus... Jesus refers to it **THREE TIMES** as “**the sign of the prophet Jonah.**” – And, **OF** Himself, He said: “**indeed a greater than Jonah is here.**”

Now, Chapter 2 sees Jonah CRYING OUT to God from WITHIN this GREAT FISH... In fact, Verse 2 **SEEMS** to indicate that Jonah thought he had DIED...

When he says, “**Out of the belly of Sheol I cried...**” – Or, “**The earth with its bars closed behind me forever; Yet You have brought my life [up] from the pit,**” Verse 6...

These references to ‘**SHEOL**,’ and ‘**THE PIT**’... those are ancient references to **THE ABODE OF THE DEAD**... One author writes: “*Pointing towards the Messiah... death did not hold [Jonah]; after three days and nights of imprisonment, he [will be] alive and free.*”

SOME EVEN suggest Jonah **ACTUALLY DID DIE** during this account... They’ll say when Jesus says: “**JUST AS Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish**”

They’ll say the phrase ‘**JUST AS**’ means ‘**IN THE SAME WAY AS**’... And that Jesus is saying “*Jonah actually died.*” – Now—for the record—I don’t AGREE with that...

Because it would mean that Jesus is **NOT** the “**first-fruits**” of the resurrection—He is **NOT** the “**first-born from [among] the dead**”—and that someone was “resurrected” before Him...

But—as we READ this—it becomes **CLEAR** Jonah knew the Word of God... There are SEVERAL REFERENCES—or ALLUSIONS—to the PSALMS in Jonah Chapter 2...

We **SEE** it—CLEARLY—if we put these passages right next to each another... My POINT is... Here’s a guy CRYING OUT TO GOD from the DEPTHS of an EXTREMELY DESPERATE SITUATION... But, he is PRAYING **TO GOD**... GOD’S **OWN WORD**... Which means...

He had it MEMORIZED... Right? – There was no BIBLE in the fish’s belly... It wasn’t PLACED THERE by the GIDEONS... Jonah didn’t have a FLASHLIGHT, or an I-PHONE...

And, Chapter 2 concludes with the LORD SPEAKING to the fish, “**and it vomits Jonah onto dry land.**” – Chapter 3 begins with: “**the word of the LORD [coming] to Jonah [a] second time, saying, ‘Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you.’**”

It’s almost the EXACT SAME THING the Lord said to him Chapter 1... Now, I think there’s a lesson here about WHO—and **HOW**—God wants to use someone...

There’s LOTS of ideas floating-around in our modern Christian vernacular... like “*God doesn’t NEED any of us.*” – People say that ALL the time, right?

Well, wouldn’t that IMPLY, then, that God just could have just raised-up **ANYBODY** to take this message to Nineveh? – So, why does God go to such great lengths to **PRESERVE** and send **THIS MAN** to **THIS CITY**?

Clearly, there is something UNIQUE about Jonah that God WANTED **HIM** for this purpose...

So—with that in mind... WHO—out there—might **YOU or I** be **THE ONLY PERSON** God **WANTS** TO USE to reach... and yet, **we haven’t gone...** We’re **AVOIDING** the call of God?

See, God has told EVERY SINGLE ONE OF US to “**Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel... Go and make disciples...**” – And, you know as well as I do, a **LOT** of us DON’T... And, a LOT of times, we have this attitude of “*God will send somebody else.*”

And then, we’ll experience certain CHALLENGES—or TRIALS—and we’ll wonder WHY...

Isn’t it POSSIBLE that God is ORCHESTRATING CIRCUMSTANCES to bring us INTO ALIGNMENT with his PURPOSES, PLANS, and WILL for our lives... EVEN IF WE TRY TO RUN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION?? – That’s EXACTLY what He did with JONAH...

Jon Courson writes: “*This fish swam from somewhere in the middle of the Mediterranean... with a human being in his belly... [all the way] BACK to the place where God wanted Jonah.*”

You know, I’ve always thought that it would be INTERESTING to **ASK JONAH**—AFTER THE FACT—if he thought it would have been BETTER to just OBEY GOD the FIRST TIME... instead of being INGESTED by a GIANT FISH and VOMITED onto dry land!

And, THIS TIME, he LISTENS... Chapter 3, Verse 3, says: “**Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD.**”

Verse 4 says Jonah entered: “**the city on the first day’s walk. Then he cried out and said, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!”**” – Scholars LOVE to point-out that—in the ORIGINAL LANGUAGE—Jonah’s sermon is FIVE WORDS LONG...

Probably one of the **SHORTEST SERMONS EVER PREACHED**... And yet, Verse 5 says: “**The people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. [And] word came to the king... and he arose from his throne**

and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water... let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God... let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands." – Verse 10 says: "God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it."

Now, Chapter 4 says that—in Nineveh—there were "**more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons...**" – SOME estimate that Nineveh had a population of about 600,000...

One author writes: "*Many classify the revival which Jonah brings to Nineveh as one of the greatest evangelistic efforts of all time.*" – Now—for ONE thing—Jon Courson writes:

"In the three documented cases of men being swallowed by whales, all three... emerged in the same condition. Due to the gastric juices in the stomach, they looked like hairless albinos – pure white with not even an eyelash or eyebrow to be found."

So, imagine this BALD, NAKED, HAIRLESS, TOTALLY SKIN-BLEACHED guy walking down the streets, screaming: "*Repent!*" – So, I'm sure people LISTENED to him!

And, you'd THINK Jonah would have been ECSTATIC about the result, right? – I mean, if I preach a message... and ONE PERSON responds, I will COAST on that for a MONTH!

But, Chapter 4 says this "**displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry.**" – David Guzik writes: "*Not only was this strange, it was very strange, because Jonah was upset at the success of his preaching... [and] the language in the original Hebrew is [very] strong.*"

This is why Jonah has been called '**The Angry Prophet.**' – One author writes: "*Dispositionally, Jonah is regarded as strong-willed, fretful, pouting, hasty, and clannish.*"

And, this is INTERESTING TO ME in MORE THAN ONE way... For ONE THING... I think this SAYS something about the way we measure **SUCCESS**—or **EFFECTIVENESS**—in ministry... Jonah preached 5 WORDS... and at least 120,000 PEOPLE REPENTED...

JEREMIAH preached for FORTY YEARS... without a SINGLE CONVERT... So, who do you think would be INVITED to be the GUEST-SPEAKER at a conference nowadays???

And yet, when we examine the LIVES, and the ATTITUDES, and CHARACTER of these two men... JEREMIAH was CLEARLY more "faithful."

And... I think it should SAY something... that Jesus was NEVER MISTAKEN FOR JONAH... When Jesus asked, "**Who do the crowds say that I am?**" – "**They answered... 'Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah...'**"

NOBODY MISTOOK Jesus for JONAH... Even though JONAH led the SINGLE GREATEST REVIVAL in human history... And yet, they **DID** mistake Jesus for JEREMIAH... who had not a SINGLE CONVERT... but, he was **COMPASSIONATE**... and his **HEART** was right...

The book CONCLUDES with God giving Jonah... an OBJECT LESSON... In Chapter 4, Verse 5, we read: **“Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side... [and] he made himself a shelter and sat under... the shade, till he might see what would become of the city. And the LORD... prepared a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver him from his misery. So, Jonah was very grateful for the plant.”**

“But,” Verse 7, **“As the morning dawned the next day God prepared a worm, and it so damaged the plant that it withered. And it happened—when the sun arose—that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat on Jonah’s head, so that he grew faint. [And] he wished death for himself, and said, “It is better for me to die than to live.”**

Now, we could preach an ENTIRE SERMON SERIES on the modern Christian’s tendency to value “creature comforts” over the SOULS OF MEN...

Most of us in here spend more time on our YARDS... than ON OUR KNEES... We’ve invested **MORE** in VACATIONS than the WORK OF GOD... we speak more of GOSSIP than the GOSPEL... It’s because we suffer from the SAME DELUSION as JONAH...

David Guzik writes: *“This is the first time [in the story] we see Jonah happy... Even though the plant was just a plant... Jonah had no personal... investment in the plant except for what it provided for him at the moment. When God took the plant and its... shelter away from Jonah, he missed the plant so much that he wanted to die.”*

James Montgomery Boice said: *“Jonah is pleased because at last, after all the compassion of God for other people, God finally [did] something for Jonah. Selfish? Of course. And petty, too!”*

F.B. Meyer said: *“Jonah allowed... a silly thing like a plant to become an idol. [And] In spite of all we... do to keep them green [in our lives], their leaves turn more and more yellow, until—at last—they droop and die.”* – Like we do... What a WASTE of time...

But I don’t want to close on THAT SOMBER of a NOTE... No, I wanna get-up even MORE “into your grill,” as we used to say (back in the ‘90’s)...

One of the **MAIN POINTS** of the **ENTIRE OLD TESTAMENT** is the UNIVERSAL NATURE of the LOVE OF GOD... You see, in the ABRAHAMIC COVENANT, God had promised that **“In [Abraham’s] seed all the nations of the earth [would] be blessed...”**

This is called *“one of the most profound theological concepts in the [Bible]. [That] God loves ALL people and desires to share His forgiveness and mercy with them. Israel had been charged with REVEALING [this] message, but somehow did not grasp the importance of it.”*

“Instead”—one author writes—“Israel became NATIONALISTIC and EXCLUSIVISTIC, and REFUSED to fulfill [their divine] mission.” – By the way...

The SAME THING HAPPENED with the CHURCH... In Acts 1:8 Jesus said: "**You [will] be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem... Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.**"

But—by Acts Chapter 8—the church had **NOT** TAKEN THE GOSPEL TO THE WORLD... They had REMAINED in JERUSALEM, CLUSTERED TOGETHER...

But, the PROBLEM—one author writes—is that: "*This failure [of Israel... to fulfill their divine mission] led to extreme religious pride. And Jonah,*" he says: "*[would have shared a] strong commitment to [the] same 'nationalistic' philosophy.*"

It's been said: "*In [the Book of] Jonah [is] the SEEDBED of New Testament Pharisaism.*" – Dr. Graham Scroggie writes: "*The object of the [Book of Jonah was] to correct [this] extreme form of Jewish nationalism... and proclaim the mercy of God for Gentiles...*"

See, back in Verse 2 of Chapter 4, we find that the **REASON** Jonah was ANGRY about this whole situation is because—he says—**"LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country?"** – He's like, "*I KNEW You were gonna do this!*"

"[This is why] I fled... to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness... Who relents from doing harm."

Jonah was ANGRY... because HE KNEW GOD was going to SHOW MERCY... to people that JONAH THOUGHT **DIDN'T DESERVE** it... Okay, this speaks VOLUMES about Jonah...

For ONE THING: Jonah CLEARLY thought that he **DID** deserve the grace of God... SECOND; Jonah—CLEARLY—did **NOT** have a good understanding of the 'universal nature' of God's grace... And these are 2 of the BIGGEST PROBLEMS PLAGUING the modern-day church

Let me get UNCOMFORTABLE for a moment... We do not have a good understanding of our **OWN** SINFUL nature... We think we "deserve" God's grace, when other people don't...

And, it's REFLECTED in our unwillingness to share the gospel... Because, if we think ALL people should KNOW the grace of God, why aren't we sharing the gospel more often???

But, I would say it's reflected EVEN MORE in the very SAME characteristics we see on display in Jonah... We will get ANGRY, and VENOMOUS, and RESENTFUL, and HATEFUL towards people who WE think don't deserve God's grace...

I want you to just think—in "general" terms—about the way the modern church treats the homosexual community... or the "trans" community...

Or – I'll just say it (even though some people won't like it) – I want you to think about the way modern CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIANS THINK and SPEAK about LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

How we'll go on FACEBOOK... and RANT about OTHER CHURCHES who may speak FAVORABLY about POLITICAL inclinations that we disagree with...

How many Christians have you seen online, recently, VENTING THEIR ANGER towards Chip & Joanna Gaines... for "showcasing" a homosexual couple on their latest TV show...

And—around the room, or on the internet—some people are thinking, "*Kevin does that mean you support these things?*"

Let me tell you something, I support the grace of God... And I support the grace of God for all people, because if I don't support the grace of God for all people, than God's grace does not apply to me... because I do not deserve God's grace...

And if anyone in thinks they DO deserve God's grace—and ACTS like OTHER PEOPLE DON'T... that makes you a PHARISEE...

That's no different than the Pharisees who brought the woman caught in adultery before Jesus in John Chapter 8... and said: "**Teacher, the LAW commands that [she] should be put to death!**" – Now, TECHNICALLY, they're RIGHT! – The law DOES say that!

And there are a LOT of Christians in the world, who—TECHNICALLY—they're right... They'll say: "*The Bible says homosexuality is an abomination.*" – And they'll USE that as AMMUNITION to be right in their judgment of other people...

People who—in their HEART OF HEARTS—they CAN'T STAND... And yet, here's the CONUNDRUM... God wrote the law... and Jesus—Who IS God—chooses NOT to do what the law—that HE wrote—recommends for her sin... and instead chooses to forgive her.

We'll look at people from other countries... who—POLITICALLY... NATIONALLY—we'll think "have no right" to be here... Listen, that has NOTHING to do with our Christianity...

Now, we will CLAIM it does... But—if we are PROCESSING that through a "Christian" lens—Ephesians 2 makes it clear that we were once "**ALIENS...**" – IMMIGRANTS! – "**strangers from the covenants of promise, [without] hope and without God in the world.**"

That's not a CHRISTIAN SENTIMENT... that's an AMERICAN POLITICAL SENTIMENT... But MANY PEOPLE weave the TWO THINGS TOGETHER... Listen: Just like the JEWS did in Jonah's day... This is what GOD is TRYING TO CORRECT...

Do we EVER stop to think that MAYBE God has brought people here... to OUR country... for us—as the CHURCH—to share the GOSPEL with, and not JUDGE, or be ANGRY about them being "in our country?"

We'll look at MUSLIMS... We'll mutter things like, "*If we're not careful, THOSE PEOPLE are gonna take over the world.*" – Let me tell you something, it was to 'THOSE PEOPLE' that God sent JONAH... Nineveh was an ANCIENT CITY located in modern-day Iraq...

It is SO EASY to SAY things like "**love your enemies...**" – When we ALL have a TENDENCY to SURROUND OURSELVES with people who often THINK, and BELIEVE, and SPEAK, and PRIORITIZE **EXACTLY** the way WE do...

But then... we'll turn on the T.V.—or we'll log onto FACEBOOK—and we'll SEE and HEAR people who THINK and SPEAK and BELIEVE RADICALLY DIFFERENT from us... POLITICALLY... NATIONALLY... SEXUALLY... RACIALLY... RELIGIOUSLY...

And we'll SPOUT VENOM... We will THINK and SAY and DO and FEEL things that are COMPLETELY OPPOSITE the REVEALED CHARACTER of God... and we can be 100 PERCENT CONVINCED that we are RIGHT! – That we are JUSTIFIED for doing so!

Don't you think that Jonah thought he was RIGHT... for his bitterness, and anger, and hatred toward the Ninevites??? The LAST PART of the Book PROVES IT!

TWICE God ASKS him: "**Is it right for you to be angry?**" – And [Jonah] said, in Chapter 4, Verse 9: "**It is right for me to be angry, even to death!**" – I've heard "brothers and sisters" in Christ practically SAY that same thing...

"But the LORD said [to Jonah]" – in Verse 10 – "You have had pity on [a] plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. And, Should I not pity Nineveh," God asks... "**The BLOODY city?**" Remember?

Here's a MODERN WAY of TRANSLATING THIS: "*You are worried about your CAR, and should I not pity the TRANS COMMUNITY? – You want a BIGGER HOUSE, and should I not pity LIBERAL DEMOCRATS? – You're worried about your 401K, and should I not have mercy on ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS? – Or MUSLIMS? – Or HOMOSEXUALS?*"

One author writes: "*Jonah CALLED on the mercy of God, and ENJOYED the mercy of God when it was extended to Jonah. But now, he RESENTS the mercy of God it when it is extended to people [Jonah thinks doesn't deserve it]. – What if God treated Jonah the way Jonah wanted God to treat the people of Nineveh?*"

Another author writes: "*It's FUN to SPECULATE on ALL THE REASONS Jonah might not have wanted to go to Nineveh... but, it's MORE important to consider why WE won't go and share the GOSPEL with people we are uncomfortable with.*" – David Guzik writes:

"God told Jonah to go and preach to Nineveh; [but] every Christian has the same command in Matthew Chapter 28... And, with Jonah's example before us... AS THE CHURCH... we have even LESS [of a] reason [for disobedience] than Jonah did." – It's a POWERFUL LESSON...