

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan

Jonah 4

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Jonah chapter 4 records one of the strangest happenings in scripture. God sent a prophet to preach a message to see life-change and the avoidance of judgment upon men, women and children. The prophet preached as directed and the result was repentance, change of direction and judgment avoided, but the prophet is angry and bitter that God spared a nation, which included children who have no knowledge or input into the direction of the nation. The prophet furthermore chides the loving and gracious God who spared all those lives by saying, **"Ah, LORD, was not this what I said, while I was still in my country? Therefore, I fled to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm."** (4:2)

This matter so troubled the prophet that he prayed for God to take his life right there on the spot! How could this be? How can a man who is called by God be so callous toward another group of people that happens to be different than he is? The answer is really not that difficult. It is sin! Simply sinful, shameful attitude toward those who are created in the image of God, just as Jonah, you or any

other man or woman on earth. That's correct. God is the God of all the earth. If any person will respond to the drawing of the Holy Spirit's call, repent of their sin, and seek the face of God, they can be redeemed; forgiving and judgment be abated. Jonah in his prejudice had stepped over the line in his hard-heartedness and lack of compassion. God taught him a lesson through a plant.

"Then the LORD said, 'You had compassion on the plant for which you did not work and which you did not cause to grow, which came up overnight and perished overnight. Should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know the difference between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?'" (4:11)

Prayer and Action Steps

It is easy for us to lose perspective when we focus on our own thoughts and comfort. God is interested in people outside of our people group or comfort zone. Will you ask God to see people, all people, as He sees them? God is asking you to reach out to people who are different than you. Are you willing to do that?

Date _____ Scripture _____

- Read the chapter. If you have time, read it again.
- Highlight, underline or circle the Key Verse or Verses of the chapter.
- Ask yourself these questions as you read through the chapter.

Is this historical narrative, analogy, metaphor, allegory, or some other element of speech or communicating truth?

Does the passage teach a Biblical Precept; that is, tells you something to be, do or act? _____

What is the Context? Old Testament? New Testament? What is the writer speaking or writing about? To whom is he writing? _____

Are there principles in this chapter that if followed, would require me to change my attitudes or actions? _____

Is this a clear passage of Scripture (can only be interpreted one way)? Or could the passage be interpreted legitimately, in two or more ways, according to grammar and context?

Does the passage give a Biblical Pattern that is followed here and other places in the Bible? _____
