

- ii. The Jews, Jonah, and the Ninevites “are all in the same basic relationship to Yahweh” (James Bruckner).

B. Are we okay with God’s tree that died?

*God’s concern for his remnant people does not preclude his concern and action on behalf of other peoples.*

C. Knowing that Nineveh’s repentance was short-lived, we must take the message of Jonah seriously.

James Bruckner: “[God’s response to Jonah] means that the world will be a place where the potential for great evil will remain, precisely because God hopes for the salvation of the wicked. This is a complex faith that challenges even the true prophet of God, and it continues to challenge believers to trust God more completely for the future.”

### LIVE THE STORY

*The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

- How effective were Jonah’s efforts and protecting himself from the blistering heat with his booth? Explain.
- What are the three things which God provides Jonah in this scene and what do each of them do for Jonah?
- What is the simple point which God is making to Jonah in this living parable? What reason does God offer for his pity on Nineveh?
- What do shade trees often symbolize in Scripture? What is God’s promise for shade and how does this *qiqayon* picture it well?
- How do Isaiah 11:1 and Mark 4:31-32 help us understand how God’s provision of shade is sometimes not as we might hope? Why is that?
- What is the unanswered question in Jonah 4, and how is it answered on Yom Kippur in the Jewish tradition? Is it still a question for us?
- How might our text answer the question of why evil persists in the world? Or why wicked people prosper?

## Jonah: The Absurdity of God’s Compassion (part 7) A Mysterious Tree and God’s Way of Salvation

Jerry Cisar — July 10, 2022

Text: Jonah 4:5-11

### Introduction:

### I. A Simple Parable

A. Jonah’s Self-Made Booth (4:5)

B. God’s Triple Provision (4:6-8)

i. A *qiqayon*

a) It provides shade for Jonah.

b) Jonah rejoiced in his salvation (6c) because of the tree which grew overnight.

ii. A worm and a scorching east wind

a) God provides these to save Jonah from something he didn’t know he needed saving from!

b) In order for Jonah to be saved from *himself*, his comforts must be taken away.

*The sun that caused the pain for Jonah, but the Lord provided the worm and the wind to remove Jonah’s protection from its pain.*

C. The Lord addresses Jonah's Anger

- i. This scene reminds me of another scene (Gen. 18:20ff).
  
- ii. God's point is clear: "You had pity on the plant, for mostly self-serving reasons, but you have a problem with me having pity on these people and animals whom I have made. I made them so I pity them!"

## II. A Deeper Meaning

A. The threats to Jonah are in the threatening storm (part 1) and the blazing heat (part 2).

- i. Isa. 25:3-5
  
- ii. The storm and heat are ruthless foreigners, like the Assyrians, whom Jonah wants protection from!

*God is the one who is a shelter from the storm and shade from the heat. He is the great fish, and he is the shade which the tree provided. But it is not the shelter we might expect anymore than the great fish was the sea monster Jonah expected.*

B. Jonah's failed booth: Israel's failed effort at providing itself shade.

- i. Give us a king!
  
- ii. Kingship was a booth of sorts for Israel. A failed booth at that. God gave them a king, who failed, and replaced him with David.
  
- iii. The fallen booth of David (Amos 9:11)
  - a) The royal line of David is referred to as, "the booth of David."
  - b) The apostolic church in Acts 15 saw this promise in

Amos as fulfilled in Christ who reigns at the right hand of God over all things through His church.

C. What is God's answer to shade us from the heat?

- i. God's answer is a mysterious tree!
  - a) Judges 9:7-15
  - b) Isaiah 30:1-3
  - c) Ezekiel 17:10, 23-24
  - d) Ezekiel 31:3-6
  - e) Hosea 14:6-7

*Kings and kingdoms are represented by trees and their shade. God's answer, however, is not a purely human king, but a divine-human king, Jesus Christ.*

- ii. The place of true shade is the kingdom of God under the Messiah.
  - a) Mark 4:31-32
  
  - b) God promises a future king who will protect Israel, who will be shade in the heat. Someone who will rise up miraculously as this *qiqayon* did.
    - Isaiah 11:1

## III. An Unending Question

- A. "Should not I pity Nineveh?"
- i. Micah 7:18-20.