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## Jonah

The book of Jonah is a short prophetic book in the Christian Old Testament. It tells the story of a prophet named Jonah who was sent by God to preach to the people of Nineveh, a great city in Assyria known for its wickedness. However, Jonah initially tries to run away from God's call and sets off on a ship in the opposite direction.

While at sea, Jonah's ship encounters a great storm, and Jonah confesses to the crew that he is fleeing from God's call. He tells them to throw him overboard, which they do, and Jonah is swallowed by a great fish. In the belly of the fish, Jonah repents and prays to God, and after three days, the fish vomits him out onto dry land.

God again commands Jonah to go and preach to the people of Nineveh, and this time, Jonah obeys. He preaches to the people, and they repent and turn to God, which causes God to spare the city from destruction. However, Jonah is unhappy with this outcome, as he wanted to see the city destroyed. God rebukes Jonah for his lack of compassion and mercy towards the people of Nineveh.

The book of Jonah is often seen as a story about obedience to God's call and the importance of repentance and mercy. It also emphasizes the universal reach of God's mercy and the fact that even the most wicked people can turn to God and be saved.

Chapter 1: God calls Jonah to preach to the people of Nineveh, but Jonah tries to run away by boarding a ship heading in the opposite direction. A great storm arises, and the crew realizes that Jonah is the cause. Jonah tells them to throw him overboard, and he is swallowed by a great fish.

Chapter 2: Jonah is in the belly of the fish and prays to God for deliverance. He acknowledges his disobedience and vows to fulfill his mission if God will spare his life. The fish vomits Jonah onto dry land.

Chapter 3: God again commands Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach to the people. This time, Jonah obeys and delivers the message that the city will be destroyed in forty days.

Chapter 4: The people of Nineveh repent and turn to God, and he relents from destroying the city. However, Jonah is angry and bitter, as he wanted to see the city destroyed. God rebukes Jonah and reminds him of his compassion and mercy.

That's a brief summary of each chapter in the book of Jonah.

Jonah 1

New International Version

Jonah Flees From the Lord

1 The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: 2 “Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.”

3 But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord.

4 Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. 5 All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.

But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. 6 The captain went to him and said, “How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish.”

7 Then the sailors said to each other, “Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity.” They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. 8 So they asked him, “Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?”

9 He answered, “I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.”

10 This terrified them and they asked, “What have you done?” (They knew he was running away from the Lord, because he had already told them so.)

11 The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, “What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?”

12 “Pick me up and throw me into the sea,” he replied, “and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you.”

13 Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. 14 Then they cried out to the Lord, “Please, Lord, do not let us die for taking this man’s life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, Lord, have done as you pleased.” 15 Then they took Jonah and threw him

overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. 16 At this the men greatly feared the Lord, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows to him.

#### Jonah's Prayer

17 Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Chapter 1 opens with God calling Jonah, a prophet, to go and preach to the people of Nineveh, a great city known for its wickedness. However, instead of obeying God's command, Jonah tries to run away by boarding a ship headed in the opposite direction. While at sea, a great storm arises, and the crew realizes that Jonah is the cause of their misfortune. They ask him who he is and what he has done, and Jonah tells them that he is a Hebrew who worships the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land. Jonah confesses that he is fleeing from God's call to preach to the people of Nineveh, and he tells the crew to throw him overboard, as he believes that this will calm the sea.

The crew initially tries to row back to land, but the storm only grows stronger. They eventually realize that Jonah's God is the true God and ask Jonah to forgive them for throwing him overboard. They throw Jonah into the sea, and a great fish swallows him up.

Chapter 1 sets up the main conflict of the book, which is Jonah's disobedience to God's call and his attempt to run away. It also introduces the theme of repentance, as the crew comes to acknowledge the power of Jonah's God and ask for forgiveness. The chapter also sets up the miraculous events that follow, including Jonah's survival in the belly of the fish.

Here are some important verses from Jonah chapter 1 in the Christian Bible, along with a brief explanation and where to find them:

1. Verse 1: "The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: 'Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.'" This verse sets the scene for the rest of the book, as God calls Jonah to go to Nineveh and deliver a message of repentance.
2. Verse 3: "But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord." This verse reveals Jonah's disobedience to God's command, as he tries to run away from his mission.
3. Verse 4: "Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up." This verse shows how God intervenes to stop Jonah from running away, by sending a storm that endangers the ship and everyone on board.
4. Verse 9: "He answered, 'I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.'" This verse is part of Jonah's response to the sailors, who ask him who he is and why he has brought the storm upon them. Jonah confesses his faith in the one true God and acknowledges his responsibility for the storm.
5. Verse 15: "Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm." This verse marks the climax of the chapter, as the sailors realize that

Jonah's God is the true God, and they reluctantly throw him overboard in order to appease the storm. The sea immediately becomes calm, showing the power of Jonah's God.

The Book of Jonah in the Old Testament of the Bible, specifically Jonah chapter 1, contains several theological thoughts and has had significant theological influence throughout history. Here are some key theological thoughts and influences from Jonah chapter 1:

#### Theological Thoughts:

**Divine Sovereignty:** One of the central theological themes in the Book of Jonah is God's sovereignty. In Jonah chapter 1, God commands Jonah to go to Nineveh, but Jonah attempts to flee from God's presence by boarding a ship going in the opposite direction. This chapter highlights God's control over creation and His ability to orchestrate events, including the storm that arises and threatens the ship.

**Human Disobedience:** Jonah's disobedience to God's command is a key element of the story. His attempt to escape from God's mission leads to a series of calamities, including the storm. This chapter illustrates the consequences of human disobedience and the importance of following God's will.

**Repentance:** While not explicitly mentioned in chapter 1, the theme of repentance is central to the Book of Jonah. Jonah is sent to Nineveh to deliver a message of impending judgment, and the people of Nineveh ultimately repent and turn to God. This highlights God's willingness to show mercy and forgiveness when people genuinely repent.

#### Theological Influence:

**God's Compassion and Mercy:** The Book of Jonah has had a profound influence on the understanding of God's compassion and mercy in the Judeo-Christian tradition. God's willingness to relent from judgment when the people of Nineveh repent demonstrates His compassionate nature and willingness to forgive.

**Theological Reflection on Disobedience:** Jonah's disobedience serves as a cautionary tale about the consequences of not following God's will. It has been used throughout history to encourage self-examination and obedience to God's commands.

**Universal Message:** The story of Jonah and his mission to the people of Nineveh has been interpreted as a symbol of God's concern for all nations, not just the people of Israel. This universal message has been influential in promoting the idea of God's care for all of humanity.

**Jesus' Reference:** In the New Testament, Jesus makes reference to the story of Jonah, particularly Jonah's time in the belly of the great fish, as a sign of His own impending

death and resurrection (Matthew 12:39-41). This reference has theological implications regarding Jesus' identity and mission.

Overall, Jonah chapter 1 and the Book of Jonah as a whole offer rich theological insights into themes such as divine sovereignty, human disobedience, repentance, and God's compassion. These themes have had a lasting impact on theological thought and continue to be studied and reflected upon by theologians and religious scholars.

New International Version

2 1 [a]From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God. 2 He said:

“In my distress I called to the Lord,  
and he answered me.  
From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help,  
and you listened to my cry.  
3 You hurled me into the depths,  
into the very heart of the seas,  
and the currents swirled about me;  
all your waves and breakers  
swept over me.  
4 I said, ‘I have been banished  
from your sight;  
yet I will look again  
toward your holy temple.’  
5 The engulfing waters threatened me,[b]  
the deep surrounded me;  
seaweed was wrapped around my head.  
6 To the roots of the mountains I sank down;  
the earth beneath barred me in forever.  
But you, Lord my God,  
brought my life up from the pit.

7 “When my life was ebbing away,  
I remembered you, Lord,  
and my prayer rose to you,  
to your holy temple.

8 “Those who cling to worthless idols  
turn away from God’s love for them.  
9 But I, with shouts of grateful praise,  
will sacrifice to you.  
What I have vowed I will make good.  
I will say, ‘Salvation comes from the Lord.’”

10 And the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

## Footnotes

Jonah 2:1 In Hebrew texts 2:1 is numbered 1:17, and 2:1-10 is numbered 2:2-11.

Jonah 2:5 Or waters were at my throat

Chapter 2 opens with Jonah in the belly of the great fish, where he prays to God for deliverance. Jonah begins by acknowledging his dire situation, describing how he was "thrown into the deep" and how "the waters closed in over me to take my life." He then describes how he called out to God for help, and how God answered his prayer by sending the fish to swallow him up.

Jonah then describes his experience inside the fish, saying that he was "at the roots of the mountains" and that the seaweed was wrapped around his head. He acknowledges that it was God who brought him up from the pit of the fish, and he vows to fulfill his mission to preach to the people of Nineveh if God will spare his life.

Chapter 2 is a prayer of thanksgiving and repentance by Jonah, as he acknowledges his disobedience to God's call and his desperate need for deliverance. The chapter also emphasizes the power of God to rescue those who call upon him in times of trouble, as well as the importance of repentance and obedience to God's will. It also sets up the events of the next chapter, in which Jonah will finally fulfill his mission to preach to the people of Nineveh.

Here are some important verses from Jonah chapter 2 in the Christian Bible, along with a brief explanation and where to find them:

1. Verse 1: "From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God." This verse marks the beginning of Jonah's prayer of repentance from inside the fish. It shows that Jonah has recognized his disobedience and is now turning back to God.
2. Verse 2: "In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry." This verse shows Jonah's desperation and the depth of his distress as he was swallowed by the fish. Despite this, he acknowledges that God heard his cry and answered his prayer.
3. Verse 7: "When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, Lord, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple." This verse highlights Jonah's recognition that he was on the brink of death and his realization that only God could save him. He also acknowledges the holiness of God and the importance of prayer.
4. Verse 9: "But I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. I will say, 'Salvation comes from the Lord.'" This verse is the culmination of Jonah's prayer of repentance, as he promises to offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God and acknowledges that salvation comes from God alone.
5. Verse 10: "And the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land." This verse marks the end of Jonah's time inside the fish and shows God's mercy in delivering him from certain death. It also sets the stage for the next chapter, where Jonah will finally go to Nineveh to deliver God's message.

Jonah chapter 2 in the Old Testament contains the prayer of Jonah while he is in the belly of the great fish. This chapter provides additional theological thoughts and influences that build upon those found in chapter 1:

#### Theological Thoughts:

**Repentance and Prayer:** Jonah's prayer in chapter 2 reflects his repentance and acknowledgment of God's sovereignty. He prays from a place of distress and desperation, recognizing his disobedience and the need for God's mercy. This chapter highlights the role of repentance and prayer in seeking God's forgiveness.

**Salvation and Deliverance:** Jonah's experience inside the great fish serves as a metaphor for his predicament and his hope for salvation. His prayer emphasizes God's power to save and deliver him from the depths of the sea, which can be seen as symbolic of God's ability to rescue and redeem those who turn to Him in repentance.

**Acknowledgment of God's Sovereignty:** Throughout Jonah's prayer, there is an acknowledgment of God's sovereignty over creation, including the sea and the fish. Jonah recognizes that God is in control of all things and has the power to both bring about calamity and deliverance.

#### Theological Influence:

**Repentance and Prayer as Paths to Restoration:** Jonah's prayer and his eventual release from the fish have been cited as examples of how repentance and earnest prayer can lead to restoration and reconciliation with God. This theme of repentance and prayer as means of seeking God's grace and forgiveness has been influential in Christian and Jewish theological traditions.

**Prophetic Significance:** Jonah's experience inside the great fish is often seen as a foreshadowing or a type of Christ's death and resurrection. Just as Jonah emerged from the belly of the fish, so too would Jesus emerge from the tomb after His crucifixion. This theological connection has been explored in Christian theology as a symbol of Christ's victory over death.

**Sovereignty of God:** Jonah's acknowledgment of God's sovereignty over creation has had a lasting impact on theological discussions about God's providence and control over the natural world. It underscores the idea that God is not only the Creator but also the sustainer of all things.

**Spiritual Reflection and Contrition:** Jonah's prayer has been used as a model for spiritual reflection and contrition. Believers have turned to Jonah's prayer as a template for their own moments of repentance and seeking God's forgiveness.

In Jonah chapter 2, the theological themes of repentance, prayer, God's sovereignty, and salvation are prominently featured. These themes have continued to shape theological thought and reflection in both Christian and Jewish traditions, offering insights into the nature of God and the human experience of seeking reconciliation with the divine.

### Jonah 3

New International Version

Jonah Goes to Nineveh

3 Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: 2 “Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.”

3 Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. 4 Jonah began by going a day’s journey into the city, proclaiming, “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown.” 5 The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

6 When Jonah’s warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. 7 This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh:

“By the decree of the king and his nobles:

Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. 8 But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. 9 Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.”

10 When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

Chapter 3 opens with God calling Jonah a second time, commanding him to go to Nineveh and preach to the people there. This time, Jonah obeys and travels to the city, which was a great and powerful capital of the Assyrian empire.

Upon arriving in Nineveh, Jonah proclaims a message of doom and destruction, saying that the city will be overthrown in forty days. The people of Nineveh, from the greatest to the least, hear Jonah's message and respond with repentance and fasting. They put on sackcloth, a sign of mourning, and turn from their evil ways, hoping that God will spare them.

When God sees their repentance, he relents from destroying the city, and does not carry out the destruction that he had threatened. This greatly angers Jonah, who had wanted to see the city destroyed. He complains to God, saying that he knew all along that God was merciful and would not carry out the destruction he had threatened.



Chapter 3 emphasizes the power of repentance and the mercy of God, as the people of Nineveh are spared from destruction through their sincere repentance. It also emphasizes the importance of obeying God's call, as Jonah finally fulfills his mission to preach to the people of Nineveh. However, it also sets up the conflict of the next chapter, as Jonah struggles with his own anger and bitterness towards the people of Nineveh and God's mercy towards them.

Here are some important verses from Jonah chapter 3 in the Christian Bible, along with a brief explanation and where to find them:

1. Verse 1: "Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: 'Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.'" This verse marks the start of Jonah's second chance to fulfill God's command to go to Nineveh and deliver a message of repentance.
2. Verse 5: "The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth." This verse shows the impact of Jonah's message on the people of Nineveh, as they all respond with repentance and fasting. It also shows that God's mercy is available to all, regardless of their status or background.
3. Verse 8: "Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence." This verse is part of the king of Nineveh's proclamation of repentance, as he orders his people to turn away from their wickedness and violence and seek God's forgiveness.
4. Verse 10: "When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened." This verse shows the power of repentance and God's mercy, as he spares Nineveh from the destruction he had originally planned. It also shows that God is willing to forgive and show mercy to those who turn away from their sin and seek his forgiveness.
5. Verse 4: "Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, 'Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown.'" This verse shows Jonah finally fulfilling his mission, as he goes into the city of Nineveh and delivers the message of repentance that God had given him.

Jonah chapter 3 in the Old Testament marks a significant turning point in the story of Jonah and contains several theological thoughts and influences:

**Theological Thoughts:**

**Divine Second Chance:** In Jonah chapter 3, God gives Jonah a second chance to deliver His message to Nineveh. This reflects God's willingness to offer opportunities for repentance and forgiveness even after initial disobedience. It underscores the theme of God's mercy and longsuffering.

**The Message of Repentance:** The central message delivered by Jonah to the people of Nineveh is a call to repentance. The chapter emphasizes the importance of repentance as

a response to God's message and impending judgment. The people of Nineveh respond by fasting, wearing sackcloth, and turning away from their evil ways.

**God's Compassion for All Nations:** The chapter highlights God's concern for all nations, not just Israel. God is willing to extend His message of salvation and offer the opportunity for repentance to a foreign city like Nineveh. This reflects a broader theological theme of God's universal care and concern for all of humanity.

**Theological Influence:**

**Repentance and Forgiveness:** Jonah chapter 3 has had a profound influence on the understanding of repentance and forgiveness in both Jewish and Christian theology. It serves as a reminder that genuine repentance can lead to God's forgiveness and the mitigation of judgment.

**Mission to the Nations:** The story of Jonah's mission to Nineveh has influenced discussions about the mission of God's people to the nations. It has been cited as an example of God's call for His followers to share His message of salvation with the world.

**God's Sovereignty and Divine Purposes:** The fact that God's purposes are ultimately accomplished despite Jonah's initial disobedience underscores the theological concept of God's sovereignty. This has been a topic of theological reflection and discussion about how God works through human agency to achieve His plans.

**Prophetic Tradition:** Jonah's role as a prophet and his experiences have been examined within the context of the prophetic tradition in the Old Testament. His story highlights the challenges and responsibilities of being a spokesperson for God.

**Mercy and Compassion of God:** Jonah's frustration with God's compassion toward Nineveh has sparked theological discussions about the nature of God's mercy. It prompts reflection on whether humans should limit God's grace based on their own judgments.

In Jonah chapter 3, the theological themes of repentance, God's compassion for all nations, and the fulfillment of divine purposes are central. These themes have had a lasting impact on theological thought, emphasizing the universal scope of God's mercy and the importance of responding to His call with repentance and obedience.

Jonah 4

New International Version

Jonah's Anger at the Lord's Compassion

4 But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. 2 He prayed to the Lord, "Isn't this what I said, Lord, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. 3 Now, Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live."

4 But the Lord replied, "Is it right for you to be angry?"

5 Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. 6 Then the Lord God provided a leafy plant[a] and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant. 7 But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. 8 When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live."

9 But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"

"It is," he said. "And I'm so angry I wish I were dead."

10 But the Lord said, "You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. 11 And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?"

#### Footnotes

Jonah 4:6 The precise identification of this plant is uncertain; also in verses 7, 9 and 10.

chapter 4 of the book of Jonah in the Christian Bible, Jonah becomes angry and complains to God after the people of Nineveh repent and are spared from destruction. Here is a full description of the chapter:

1. But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry.
2. He prayed to the Lord, "Isn't this what I said, Lord, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.
3. Now, Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live."
4. But the Lord replied, "Is it right for you to be angry?"
5. Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city.
6. Then the Lord God provided a leafy plant and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant.
7. But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered.
8. When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live."
9. But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?" "It is," he said. "And I'm so angry I wish I were dead."

10. But the Lord said, "You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight.
11. And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?"

Here are some important verses from Jonah chapter 4 in the Christian Bible, along with a brief explanation and where to find them:

1. Verse 1: "But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry." This verse shows Jonah's reaction to God's mercy towards the people of Nineveh. Jonah did not want God to spare Nineveh, and he became angry that God had chosen to show mercy rather than destruction.
2. Verse 2: "He prayed to the Lord, 'Isn't this what I said, Lord, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.'" This verse reveals Jonah's true motivations for running away from God's command to go to Nineveh. Jonah knew that God was merciful, and he did not want God to show mercy to the people of Nineveh because they were the enemies of Israel.
3. Verse 4: "But the Lord replied, 'Is it right for you to be angry?'" This verse shows God's response to Jonah's anger and reveals his compassionate nature. God questions Jonah's anger and tries to help him understand the importance of showing mercy and forgiveness to others.
4. Verse 10: "But the Lord said, 'You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?'" This verse shows God's final response to Jonah and highlights the importance of God's mercy and compassion towards all of his creations. God cares not only for the people of Nineveh but also for the animals in the city.
5. Verse 3: "Now, Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live." This verse shows Jonah's despair and his desire to die rather than witness God's mercy towards the people of Nineveh.

Jonah chapter 4 in the Old Testament contains important theological thoughts and influences that conclude the book's narrative:

#### Theological Thoughts:

**God's Compassion and Jonah's Anger:** The central theological theme of Jonah 4 is the contrast between God's compassion and Jonah's anger. God shows compassion toward the people of Nineveh, relenting from His plan to destroy the city when they repent. In contrast, Jonah becomes angry with God for sparing Nineveh, revealing a lack of understanding and acceptance of God's gracious and merciful nature.

**God's Sovereignty and Divine Will:** The chapter highlights God's sovereignty and His ability to make decisions that align with His divine will. Jonah's frustration with God's decision underscores the tension between human expectations and God's purposes.

**Teaching on Compassion and Empathy:** Jonah's discomfort with God's compassion for the people of Nineveh serves as a lesson in compassion and empathy. It highlights the need for individuals to show understanding and mercy toward others, even those they may consider enemies or undeserving.

**The Lesson of the Plant:** In Jonah 4, God provides Jonah with a plant that provides shade and comfort, but then He causes the plant to wither. This episode illustrates the theme of God's control over nature and His ability to use it to teach important lessons. Jonah's reaction to the loss of the plant reflects his self-centeredness and lack of concern for the fate of the people of Nineveh.

**Theological Influence:**

**Divine Compassion and Human Judgment:** Jonah 4 has had a significant influence on theological discussions about divine compassion and human judgment. It highlights the tension between human judgments of right and wrong and God's willingness to show mercy and compassion even to those we might consider undeserving.

**Teaching on Forgiveness and Mercy:** The chapter's message about compassion and empathy has been influential in discussions about forgiveness and mercy in both Jewish and Christian theology. It challenges believers to extend grace and understanding to others, following God's example.

**God's Sovereignty and Human Response:** The tension between God's sovereignty and Jonah's response underscores the theological concept of the relationship between God's control and human free will. It prompts reflection on how individuals respond to God's plans and purposes.

**Prophet's Role and Attitude:** Jonah's attitude and struggles as a prophet have been examined within the context of the prophetic tradition in the Old Testament. His story serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of resisting God's call and allowing personal biases to influence one's ministry.

**Theology of Creation:** The episode with the plant and its subsequent withering has been used in discussions about the theology of creation and God's control over the natural world. It reminds believers of their dependence on God for sustenance and comfort.

In Jonah chapter 4, the theological themes of God's compassion, divine sovereignty, human judgment, and the call for compassion and empathy are central. The chapter concludes the book with a powerful message about the nature of God and the need for individuals to align their attitudes and actions with His merciful character.

Notes:

The Book of Jonah raises several difficult questions that have puzzled readers and scholars for centuries. Some of these questions include:

1. Did Jonah survive in the belly of the fish for three days? This is a topic of debate, as some argue that it is physically impossible for a person to survive inside a fish for that long. Others believe that the story is meant to be taken as a metaphorical representation of Jonah's spiritual journey.
2. Was Jonah a historical figure or a fictional character? While some scholars believe that Jonah was a real person who lived in the eighth century BC, others argue that the story is a work of fiction designed to teach a moral lesson.
3. What is the meaning of the story's ending? The book concludes with God's rebuke of Jonah for his lack of compassion toward the people of Nineveh. However, the narrative ends abruptly, leaving readers to speculate about Jonah's response and his ultimate fate.
4. What is the significance of the plant that God provides for Jonah's shade? God provides a plant to shade Jonah from the scorching sun, but then causes it to wither and die, causing Jonah great distress. The plant has been interpreted as a symbol of God's mercy and provision, or as a representation of Jonah's fleeting comfort and material possessions.
5. What is the lesson of the story of Jonah? The story of Jonah is a complex and multi-layered narrative that has been interpreted in many ways. Some see it as a warning against disobedience to God's call, while others view it as a lesson in forgiveness and compassion. Ultimately, the book of Jonah teaches that God's love and mercy extend even to those who seem unworthy or hostile to his message.