



Episode Four

Will the Real God of the Old Testament Please Stand Up?

Jonah 3:1-4:4

Getting God Right

Jonah showcases God's true character against a backdrop of misrepresentation
 Misrepresentation #1: God Who kills disobedience prophets in dramatic fashion
 Misrepresentation #2: Jonah's preferred vision of a God Who kills one's enemies
 Similar caricatures of the God of the Old Testament persist today
 Richard Dawkins in [The God Delusion](#) and other New-Atheists

God's Self-Revelation

Gracious, merciful, slow anger, abounding steadfast love, relenting from disaster: 4:2
 These descriptors are rooted in the Exodus Covenant making: Exodus 33:18-19; 34:5-7
 Directly after the Golden Calf debacle: Exodus 32
 The Exodus progression: I am Who I am (3:14); the ten plagues; Jealous (20:5)
 What will God be like after He is betrayed?
 Grace and mercy linked to God's "name": see Exodus 33:19 and 34:5,6
 What about visiting the inquiry of fathers on children to the fourth generation? 34:7
 This is NOT punishing children for parents' sins (see Ezekiel 18:20)
 This is evidence of a non-co-dependent love (cf. Exodus 20:5,6)
 Wanting to forgive but unwilling to play games: the rebel planet analogy
 George MacDonald: God is quickly pleased but not easily satisfied.
 Don't miss the unbelievable contrast: 1000 generations to 3 or 4 generations

Nineveh's Surprising Repentance and God's Typical Response

Notice Jonah's particularly short and unhelpful proclamation: 3:4
 Repentance rose up among the people: 3:5
 The King followed suit both in person and in public proclamation: 3:6-9
 Here is the God of the Old Testament: forgiving and relenting: 3:10

What About....?

Cherry pick your version of God
 Harsh laws, genocidal commands and ethnic cleansing, misogyny, sacrificing Isaac
 Ancient Near East cultural context needs to be understood
 Different contexts needs different tools
 Canaanite extermination, for example (see Paul Copan, [Is God a Moral Monster?](#))
 Ancient Near Eastern Exaggeration rhetoric
 Stereotypical language "men, woman, children"
 Jericho as a military garrison; Israel military tactics as compared to neighbors
 Jesus the frame with which to view the God of the Old Testament