



God's heart loves the nations

Aim: to challenge all who share God's heart of love
to consider how they fit into God's Mission Action Plan.

Bible focus: Jonah 4:1-11.

Additional: John 3:16, Luke 6:36, Ps 22:27-28, Ps 67:3-4, Ps 86:9, Ps 82:8, Ex 18:1-12, Rom 10:12

God sent Jonah, a Jew, to the Assyrians in Nineveh. He thought God should only care about the Jews so he didn't want to go. God DID care about the other nations, and he still does.

God cares about all the nations

- Jonah thought this was so (Jonah 4:2 *gracious and compassionate*), but mistakenly thought that because God had a special purpose for Jews, he had no interest in others. But God went to great lengths to show Jonah he is not the God of Jews ONLY. He cares about all people. NT confirms this OT truth (Jn 3:16).
- If God cares for the cattle (Jonah 4:11), how much more for the people! The creation story shows God's concern for his special creation of humankind, who are different from animals, all people reflect God's image and have a unique personal dignity.
- God's *common grace* is for all people. Can you give examples? e.g. he cares for the just and unjust by sending sunshine equally on both,
 - our duty is to be merciful as genuine children of God (Lk 6:36): Jonah failed
 - even if their home, culture, language different from ours, ALL humankind is God's special creation, made in his image.

God created all the nations

- 'All nations whom You have made shall come and fall down before You, O Lord; and they shall glorify Your name' (Ps 86:9).
- People of all nations must answer to him as their Creator and he remains their judge whether they acknowledge him or not. 'Arise, O God, judge the earth! For to You belong all the nations' (Psa 82:8).

God calls individuals from all the nations

- Old Testament and New Testament contain personal stories of those who had a place in the wider picture (e.g. Jethro - Ex 18:1-12). 'For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek. The same Lord is Lord over all and He generously bestows His riches upon all who call upon Him' (Rom 10:12).
- This is important for local evangelism, God cares about those closest to us as well as immigrants and those in other countries culturally different from us
- This is an encouragement to pray. We can be certain that God wants all people to turn from sin, just as he did the people of Nineveh
- If God is concerned for individuals, so should we be. Numbers alone can mean little. Do we have a personal list of unsaved individuals we are trying to witness?

God deserves the praise of all the nations

- God's plan is to bring his saved people from all nations to a response of giving their lives in worship to him, the very reason why he created them in the beginning
- He expressed his plan in the Psalms (Ps 67:3–4, Ps 22:27–28)
- Sin hides this plan and turns us from this special goal. Only through the gospel do we see God as our Creator and Saviour, then we respond gladly.
Such praise is not merely by words, but by the worship of our obedience

SO what does it all mean for us today?

Until we know him for ourselves, we have no message to take to others.

When we **DO** know him for ourselves, we will want to take that message to others.

The whole Bible is *a missionary book*, because the God of the Bible is *a missionary God*.

This is one of its major themes, it is made clear from the beginning of the Bible

How do **WE** fit into God's Mission Action Plan?