

James Rafferty Q1-L5- 2025-God is Slow to Anger-Jan 27

Lesson 5: The Wrath *of* Divine Love (Monday)

January 25-31

Monday *January 27*

God Is Slow to Anger

God becomes angry at evil because God is love. God is so compassionate and gracious that one biblical prophet even chastised God for being too merciful!

Consider the story of Jonah and reflect on Jonah's reaction to God's compassionate forgiveness of the Ninevites, in Jonah 4:1–4. What does this tell us about Jonah, and about God? (See also Matt. 10:8.)

“But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray Thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that Thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest Thee of the evil. Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech Thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live. Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry?”
Jonah 4:1-4.

Jonah's reaction to God's mercy is telling in two primary ways. First, it displays Jonah's own hardheartedness. He hated the Assyrians so much for what they had done to Israel that he did not want God to show them any mercy.

What a lesson for us! We must be careful to guard against this same attitude, however understandable it may be. Of all people, those who have received the grace of God should recognize how unmerited grace is and thus be willing to extend grace to others.

Secondly, Jonah's reaction reinforces how central God's compassion and grace is to His character. So familiar was Jonah with God's mercy that—precisely because God is “gracious and merciful” and “slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness” (*Jon. 4:2, NKJV*)—Jonah knew that the Lord would relent from bringing judgment against Nineveh. God deals justly *and* mercifully with all peoples and nations.

The Hebrew phrase translated “slow to anger” or “longsuffering” could be literally translated “long of nose.” In Hebrew idiom, anger was metaphorically associated with the nose, and the length of nose metaphorically images how long it takes for one to become angry.

References to God as “long of nose,” then, convey that God is slow to anger and longsuffering. While it does not take long for humans to become angry, God is exceedingly longsuffering and patient, and bestows grace freely and abundantly, yet without justifying sin or turning a blind eye to injustice. Instead, God Himself makes atonement for sin and evil via the cross so that He can be both just and the justifier of those who believe in Him (*Rom. 3:25, 26*).

Have you ever failed to show mercy or grace to someone who has wronged you? How can you best remember what God has done for you so that you become more gracious to others in response to the abundant grace God has shown you? And, how do we do this, show mercy and grace, but

without giving license to sin or enabling abuse or oppression?

SHELLEY QUINN OUTLINE - IF TIME

SE-1Q-2025, *God's Love and Justice*, by John C. Peckham