10 And YHWH said, “You had compassion for the qiqayon over which you did not labor and you did not cause it to grow, that a son of a night it was and a son of a night it perished. 11 And as for me, should I not pity Nineveh the great city that in her there are multitudes more than 120,000 people that do not know his right hand from his left and many herd animals?”

—translation by the Rev. Frank Logue

4:10 Unlike Jonah, who did not labor to create the plant, God appointed the plant to grow, just as God is involved in all creation. In the theology of Jonah, God is involved in many "acts of nature" from the storm on the sea, to the great fish, the plant and the stiffling wind.

4:11 God notes that the people of Nineveh don't know their right hand from their left and loves them anyway. The Book of Jonah ends with this unanswered question, causing the camera to pan to you the reader. These answer is for you to supply as you consider to whom God should show mercy and compassion.
Chapter 1

1 Now the word of YHWH came to Jonah son of Amittai (say-
ing), 2 “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against
her for their evil has risen up to my face.”

3 But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the face of
YHWH and he went down to Joppa and found a ship going to
Tarshish and he paid its fare, and he went aboard to go with
them to Tarshish from the face of YHWH.

4 Then YHWH hurled a great wind upon the sea and a
great storm came on the sea and the ship considered being bro-
cen to pieces. 5 Then the mariners were afraid and they cried out
each to his god and they cast out the cargo that was in the ship
into the sea to lighten it for them. Jonah went down to the re-
cesses of the ship and he lay down and fell into a heavy sleep. 6
Then the captain of the mariners went to him and he said to him,
“What are you doing sleeping? Arise! Call to your god, perhaps
the god will take notice of us and we will not perish.”

7 And they said, each to his neighbor, “Come let us throw
down lots to find out on whose account this evil has happened
to us.” And they cast lots and the lot fell to Jonah. 8 Then they
said to him, “Tell us, because of who is this evil on us? What is
your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your
country and of which people are you?”

9 And he said to them, “I am a Hebrew. And YHWH God
of the heavens I fear, who made the sea and the dry land.”

1:1 Though “YHWH” is usually translated as “the LORD,”
YHWH is used here. The use of divine names in Jonah offers
insight into both the narrator and the character of Jonah, so it
is important to leave the translation clear as to which divine
name is being used.

1:5 Jonah goes below decks as the mariners start to cast lots.
This defies expectation, as Jonah often does in this book.
1:9 Jonah teaches the mariners the personal name of the God
of Israel, YHWH, and they address God using this name.

4:2 This is a common refrain in the Old Testament to say that
“God is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding
in covenant loyalty.” Here Jonah turns these words into an
indictment against God. The Hebrew for "slow to anger" means
literally, "long of nose." God is routinely referred to in the
Hebrew as being long of nose, which is a way of describing
God's patience and mercy. This is because in Hebrew thought,
anger burned in your nostrils. To have a long nose, would be
like having a long fuse. God is routinely referred to in the
Hebrew as being long of nose, which is a way of describing
God's patience and mercy.

4:6 qiqayon is the Hebrew word for the plant, the exact species
of which is uncertain. When the plant grows over Jonah, he
feels like he is finally getting the kind of care a prophet de-
serves. God will turn this against him at the end of the book.

what I said while I was still on my own soil? Therefore I went
ahead to flee to Tarshish, for I know that you are a God gracious
and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in covenant loy-
alty and changing your mind concerning evil 3 And now YHWH,
take my soul from me as my death is better than my life.

4 But YHWH said, “So, to do good anger you?”

5 And Jonah went out of the city, and he sat east of the
city, and he made himself there a booth and he sat under it in the
shade, until he might see what would happen to the city. 6 And
YHWH-God appointed a qiqayon and it grew up over Jonah to
be shade over his head to save him from his evil. And Jonah re-
joiced about the plant a great joy.

7 And God appointed a worm, the rising of the dawn on
the next morning, and it attacked the plant and it withered. 8
Then the sun rose and God appointed a stifling east wind, and
the sun struck the head of Jonah and he felt faint and he asked
his soul to die. And he said, “Better is my death than my life.”

9 But God said to Jonah, “Is it good for you to burn (with
anger) about the qiqayon?” And he said, “It is good that I am
angry to death.”

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of which is uncertain. When the plant grows over Jonah, he
feels like he is finally getting the kind of care a prophet de-
serves. God will turn this against him at the end of the book.
Then the men feared a great fear, and they said to him, “What is this you have done?” For the men knew that he was fleeing from the face of YHWH, because he told them.”

11 And they said to him, “What should we do to you so that the sea will become calm from upon us?” For the sea was growing stormier. 12 And he said to them, “Lift me up and throw me down to the sea, so that the sea will be calmed from against you for I know that on account of me this great storm is upon you.”

13 Then the men rowed in order to return to the dry land and they were not able to for the sea was growing stormier against them. 14 And they cried out to YHWH and they said, “Ah YHWH let us not die on account of the soul of this man and do not put on us innocent blood, because you are YHWH. What pleased you, you did.”

15 Then they lifted up Jonah and they threw him down to the sea and the sea became calm from its raging. 16 And the men feared YHWH with a great fear and they sacrificed a sacrifice to YHWH and they vowed vows.

Chapter 2
1 And YHWH appointed a great fish to swallow down Jonah, and he was in the guts of the fish three days and three nights. 2 And he prayed to YHWH, and he said, “Ah YHWH! Is this not cloth from the greatest to the least.

6 And the word reached the King of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne and removed his cloak from on him and he covered himself with sackcloth and he sat in ashes. 7 Then he caused to be proclaimed in Nineveh and he said by decree of the king and his elders (saying), “Man and beast, herd and flock shall not taste anything, they shall not eat and they shall not drink water. 8 And let them cover themselves in sackcloth, man and herd animals, and they shall cry out mightily to God and they shall turn back each from his evil ways and from the violence that is in their hands. 9 Who knows? The God may turn back and change his mind, and turn back from his burning [anger] so that we do not perish.”

10 When God saw their deeds, how they turned from their evil ways then (the) God changed his mind concerning the evil, which he said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

Chapter 4
1 But it was evil to Jonah a great evil and he burned with anger. 2 And he prayed to YHWH, and he said, “Ah YHWH! Is this not the word that I was afraid of because of evil?”

3:6 King of Nineveh is an odd term as the king was the King of the Assyrian Empire of which Nineveh was the capital. A slight could be intended, by referring to him as king of the city alone. In any case, the king extends to fast and sackcloth to the animals as well as the people, lending a comic element as we picture herd animals walking through the streets in sackcloth with ash on their heads.

3:8 Just as with the mariners, the king hopes that their actions will convince God to change his mind and relent from destroying Nineveh.

3:10 God changes God’s mind about destruction here just as God did in Exodus 32:14 in the incident with the golden calf.

4:2 The author withheld this information until now. When Jonah first refused to go to Nineveh, he did so telling God that he knew God would relent from punishing the Ninevites.
And Jonah prayed to YHWH his God from the guts of the fish. 3 And he said, “I called from my trouble to YHWH and he stooped to me, in the belly of Sheol I cried out, you heard my voice.”

And Deep cast me out in the heart of the seas and River enclosed me. All your breakers and your waves on top of me have passed.

And as for me I said, “I am driven out from in front of your eyes. Ah, I would once again look to your holy temple.

Waters surrounded me up to the soul, Deep turns about me. Reeds are bound to my head. To the depths of mountains I went down the underworld with her bars behind me forever, but you brought my life from the pit, YHWH my God.”

As my life was enfeebled, I remembered YHWH and my prayer came to you, to your holy temple.

The ones tending the vapors of emptiness, they have abandoned their loving kindness.

But I with a voice of thanksgiving, let me sacrifice to you what I vowed, let me make whole, salvation belongs to YHWH!

And YHWH spoke to the fish and he spewed out Jonah on the dry land.

Chapter 3

Then the word of YHWH came to Jonah a second time (saying), 2 “Arise, Go to Nineveh, the great city, and cry out against her, the preaching that I say to you.”

And Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of YHWH. And Nineveh was a great city to God, three days walk [across]. And Jonah began to enter the city one day’s journey. And he cried out and he said, “Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown.” And the people of Nineveh believed in God, and they cried out a fast, and they dressed in sack-

Vapors of emptiness refers to vain idols or faith in nothingness, or gods that do not exist.

The idiom translated here as "a great city to God" means from God’s perspective. The word God is used as an adjective, so it could be translated "a God-sized city."

The word overthrown connects the overthrow of Nineveh with the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, where the same word overthrown is used to describe God’s destruction. The word also connotes some ambiguity as it can mean “transform” as well as “destroy.” Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, but Nineveh could be seen as being transformed as the people turned from their evil ways. Also note that “Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown" is the prophet’s entire message. With this brief word, all of Nineveh repents in contrast to Israel who did not turn back to God despite the many attempts of prophets such as Hosea and Amos who cried out against the evil in Israel.