


GREAT THINGS OF WHICH JONAH SPEAKS

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I am highlighting the "Great things" of this prophecy because they are from the hand of God

(1) THE GREAT CITY (A) Arise and travel or walk to Nineveh THE GREAT CITY.

(B) But the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time. Jonah got a "second breathe"-a "second life"-a "second desire." The second desire was God's original desire but it was Jonah's "second life" and "second wish". His first wish was to run away from speaking to his nation's enemies-now his second wish or desire was to bravely go to these cruel enemies with the judgment of God. "Rise up, go to Nineveh THE GREAT CITY and proclaim to it the proclamation or preaching [*hayrq*] that I am speaking by oracle to you. *All the time God was reminding Jonah of his word which had not been proclaimed to the Ninevites.*

(C) And Jonah rose up and went to Nineveh according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was A GREAT CITY belonging to idols [*myhl al*] a city of three days journey. And Jonah expected to or **delayed to enter the city in a walk during the first day** but he was calling out and he was saying "There are yet forty days and Nineveh will be overturned.

To explore the greatness of Nineveh as an urban development see the file "About Nineveh" which gives some detail of its redoubtable outer walls and some idea of its internal plethora of villages served by a water supply from a series of three concentric circles of canals with the citadel at the centre and with animal life interspersed within the canal catchments and on the edge of each village. Hence it's the massive internal sprawl

(2) A GREAT WIND with the velocity of a spear [*Hiphil of lwf*] upon the sea. *The image is of a deadly storm which was directly targeting the ship on which Jonah sailed. The RUACH is in addition a manner of demonstrating that **the Spirit of God** was chasing Jonah.*

(3) A GREAT TOSSING STORM occurred in the sea. *The violent tossing of the sea reminds us of the deep turmoil of spirit in man when the Spirit of God is at work in man's life. Within just one verse of the beginning of scripture God's Spirit moved literally on earth's waters and brought forth life. In the Jonah narrative the sea was tempestuous but so are the lives of the merchant sailors and we would be dull of spirit indeed if we did not see that a great work of the LORD was proceeding in their hearts.* And the ship was taken prisoner to be broken in pieces. And the high sea sailors were terrified and each man was calling on his god and they caused the equipment or weapons or boats that were in the ship to be thrown out into the sea to lighten the burden from above them but Jonah **went down to the hinder parts or lower deck** [*literally "floor planks of the ship"*] and was lying resting and he was snoring. And the captain of the company was gradually coming near him and he said to him "What a snorer you are! Get up call upon your God. **Perhaps Elohim will have something done for us and we will not perish.**

(4) AND THE MEN FEARED A GREAT FEAR.... *This awe is a divinely given conviction of sin which may well have surprised Jonah-but there can be no doubt that when he spoke his ministry was attended by the Holy Spirit and this occurrence is no exception. These men were trembling before the Living God.*

...and they said to him "What is this you have done? For the men knew that he was bolting away from being close to the face of God for he had made that explicit to them.

(5) THIS GREAT TEMPEST is come upon you. But the strong men rowed valiantly [*Literally "dug deep" in the waves*] to make a return to dry land and they were not capable for the sea was going against them and was tempestuous [*Literally was "walking" over them and was "agitated"*] And they were calling out to Yahweh and they were saying "We plead O Yahweh please do not destroy us for the soul of this man and do not place on us the blood of the innocent for you O Yahweh have done your pleasure.[*Literally "You have carried out your wish" or "accomplished your desire (about him)"*]

(6) THE STRONG MEN FEARED THE GREAT LORD and **they continued to offer sacrifice to the Lord**(*Poel or Kal past continuous tense of jbz i.e." they have come on to be worshippers" and "were (even then) in awe of God a future tense of ary "to fear" and they were making vows. From this statement we know that the men made vows there and then to worship Yahweh and the Piel of the verb for "offerings" accompanying the future promise of the verb on vows indicated that Jonah followed the merchant sailors' lives afterward and found them making sacrifice. They may even have been with him at the temple in later years!*

(7) BUT THE LORD HAD BEEN LONG PREPARING [*Piel of hnm "to get ready"*] A GREAT FISH

(8) A GREAT CALAMITY. But Jonah was broken sad hurt [*[r NKJ "displeased"]*] it was A GREAT CALAMITY and he was burning with anger or wrath. **HE WAS PRAYING TO THE LORD** while the term of the impending disaster was not expired. In Jeremiah 18.8 we find Jeremiah quoting this truth from Jonah. And he said "Alas LORD did I not say this when I was still living upon my native soil?

For this reason I constantly anticipated fleeing to Tarshish for I knew well that You are

(1) A God of grace

(2) and mercy,

(3) Taking long to become angry and

(4) Great in covenant mercy

(5) And one who repents or grieves over calamity or sending evil

(9) GREAT JOY. And Jonah was radiantly happy over the Kiki -there was GREAT JOY. *He could not believe his good fortune but the text does not indicate any prayer of gratitude for it. It was like a festival for him and he seemed to be back in the paradise of the east whilst Nineveh sweltered under the sun and awaited its due judgment.*

(10)THE GREAT KIKI PLANT And the LORD said "You grieved for the Kiki which you did not toil over... [*l m*]That luscious garden plant grew by divine providence exactly where Jonah decided to erect his shelter. It was as if God planted his garden for him and he expressed no gratitude-only anger when it wilted. This is characteristic of us. Our blessings we accept without thanks and their loss we bemoan with anger... and you did not keep MAKING IT GREAT. It existed in prosperity built in a night and survived for a night "the building" or family was destroyed.

(11)GREATNESS OF CHARACTER DEVELOPING IN JONAH

With such a hideous storm tossing the ship as a cork on the sea we might fancy Jonah thinking "This votive act will kill the tempest" and I will swim around for a time and soon be rescued". Such thoughts did not enter his head. It would be more consistent with his attitude that he was acting in absolute faith and trusting not to the sea but to God. If the LORD had done finished with him this was the end. He still knew of the mission God held out for him and that it was not accomplished. Had his hours in the ship all been undisturbed sleep? If this is the son of the widow of Zarephath-thought this is far from certain-did he still believe against all that he could see that the LORD could overrule and raise him from what seemed certain death? Things like that don't usually happen a second time. Did Jonah say "Where is the God of Elijah? After all he had probably known Elisha. His whole demeanour so far as we can gauge it would suggest that he did not-but we must not underestimate that other greatness-the GREATNESS OF CHARACTER that God was working in this man's life in the same manner that the LORD worked in the life of Peter in New Testament days. Jonah like Peter tells "the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth" about his life in this most candid of biblical testimonies. You cannot read this prophecy without sensing the writer's candour and that he walked the streets of Nineveh amid revival and that he met the sailors at the temple. This man saw fruit from his ministry and became a model to Daniel and Jeremiah in a day when so much was owed by so many to just one obedient prophet of God whose heart was made soft by the grace of God.

...and the sea will become settled for you for I know too well that because of me THIS GREAT TEMPEST is come upon you. But the strong men rowed valiantly [Literally "dug deep" in the waves] to make a return to dry land and they were not capable for the sea was going against them and was tempestuous [*Literally was "walking" over them and was "agitated"*]

(12) THE GREATNESS OF GOD EXPOUNDED

(A) JONAH'S IMPRESSION

And he said "Alas LORD did I not say this when I was still living upon my native soil? For this reason I constantly anticipated fleeing to Tarshish for I knew well that You are

(1) A God of grace

(2) and mercy,

(3) Taking long to become angry and

(4) Great in covenant mercy

(5) And one who repents or grieves over calamity or sending evil.

Jonah states his "doctrine of God" in what approaches New Testament terminology. He puts grace first and exalts the mercy of God to the sinner. He recognises the "longsuffering" of God and his "covenant type" love that houses even the Ninevites under his covenant with Adam and Noah. But most of all he is frustrated that the LORD can respond so readily and so immediately to genuine repentance. This is our God for ever and ever! This is our Saviour the same yesterday today and for ever. That the LORD could contemplate Nineveh becoming before its ultimate fall His family and its small children becoming aware of His salvation and asking their parents about the God of the prophet and learning the truth about repentance and forgiveness.

(B) THE MERCHANT SAILORS' IMPRESSION

And they were calling out to Yahweh and they were saying "We plead **O Yahweh** please do not destroy us for the soul of this man and do not place on us the blood of the innocent for you O Yahweh have done your pleasure. [*Literally "You have carried out your wish" or "accomplished your desire (about him)"*] The men were not so much pleading for the prophet but they were interpreting his willingness to die as a sign that he was resigned to the will of God and willing to be a votive offering.

So they lifted Jonah and tossed him to the sea and the sea stood or ministered from its fierce anger.

The strong men **FEARED THE GREAT LORD** and **they continued to offer sacrifice to the Lord** (*Poel or Kal past continuous tense of jbz i.e. "they have come on to be worshippers" and "were (even then) in awe of God a future tense of ary "to fear" and they were making vows. From this statement we know that the men made vows there and then to worship Yahweh and the Piel of the verb for "offerings" accompanying the future promise of the verb on vows indicated that Jonah followed the merchant sailors' lives afterward and found them making sacrifice. They may even have been with him at the temple in later years!*)

(C) JONAH'S LASTING IMPRESSION

And the LORD said to Jonah Does "Does your burning anger over the Kiki cause it to be any better?" But he said "It is good for me to be angry to the point of death." And the LORD said "You grieved for the Kiki which you did not toil over... [*lm*] That luscious garden plant grew by divine providence exactly where Jonah decided to erect his shelter. It was as if God planted his garden for him and he expressed no gratitude-only anger when it wilted... and you did not keep **MAKING IT GREAT**. It existed in prosperity **built in a night** and survived for a night "**the building" or family** was destroyed. The use of the Hebrew *hnb* suggests a family home-which was very short-lived. It served as a magnificent contrast to Nineveh which God oversaw in its growth and Israel which He founded. The LORD could contemplate Nineveh becoming before its fall His family and its small children becoming aware of His salvation and of being to Him and asking their parents about the God of the prophet and learning the truth about repentance and forgiveness. This profoundly affected Jonah. God poses the unanswerable question which Jonah leaves for our hearts to contemplate also:- Ought not I to be grieved over Nineveh that great city where there exist in rich abundance one hundred and twenty thousand of mankind who cannot discern between their right hand and their left and a great number of beasts or animals? How Great is our God. The term *ldg* means "twisted together". It is the might of the Father Son and Holy Spirit in Salvation that renders God's greatness accessible & awesome to us!