

The Greatest Revival in History

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[0:00] Well, good to see you this morning, and I want to ask you to open your Bibles to the book of Jonah.

Again, it's our third Sunday out in this series of messages through this marvelous little book in the Old Testament, the book of Jonah.

And we're going to be looking at chapter 3, so find chapter 3, and we'll get to that here in just a moment. What have we seen so far? Well, we looked at chapter 1 a couple of weeks ago and saw the unwilling missionary and the unstoppable God.

And then last Sunday we looked at chapter 2 and saw, I guess, really what I would call obedience the hard way. And if you remember that message and know anything about chapter 2, then you'll understand that title.

And now we're ready for chapter 3. And I would entitle it, The Greatest Revival in All of History. The Greatest Revival in All of History.

[1:17] So let me go ahead and read the chapter, and we'll read the entire chapter. Chapter 3. Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you.

So Jonah rose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city, a three-day journey in extent.

And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. Then word came to the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

And he caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his noble saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything.

[2:31] Do not let them eat or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth and cry mightily to God. Yes, let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands.

Who can tell if God will turn and relent and turn away from his fierce anger so that we may not perish? Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way.

And God relented from the disaster that he had said he would bring upon them, and he did not do it. Tremendous chapter. Now, I said at the outset that this is the greatest or was the greatest revival in all of history.

And I really believe that that's the case. No time before this, and certainly never again in recorded history, has there ever been a revival in spiritual awakening and harvest of souls where every single person in the city is saved.

[3:49] That's what we have here. Jonah says in verse 5, From the greatest to the least. That is, from the king to the slave.

The lowest of citizens. Everyone believed God. Not some, but all. That's what we just read about. Now, we have to ask ourselves, you know, if any thinking person would have to ask, anyone at all who would be engaged in the text of the scripture that I just read would have to ask, how is this possible?

That everyone would believe. The entire city saved. How is this possible? Every single person alerted to the certain judgment of God.

Every single person in Nineveh awakened to each one's utter sinfulness before God.

[4:54] That's just what I read about. That's what happened here. How is this possible? That every one of them repenting and casting themselves upon the mercy of God.

And, more importantly, every single one of them receiving that mercy. Every one of them from the greatest to the least of them.

Amazing. How is this possible? I would suggest that there is an even more pertinent question that we should all be asking. And the question is, is this kind of revival still possible today?

This kind of spiritual awakening, this magnitude of the harvest of souls for Christ.

Is this possible today? Could something like this happen in America today? It's a good question, isn't it?

[5:58] Probably most of us are thinking right now, no, that's not possible. All of us, I would imagine if we'd be honest, we'd be thinking that. This is not possible today.

Is God telling us something here in Jonah chapter 3 about that possibility? I think He is, and so let's just look at it. Chapter 3, if you were here a couple of weeks ago and you heard the message that I delivered from chapter 1, chapter 3 is very similar to chapter 1.

Very similar. In fact, we could spend a lot of time just putting the two chapters side by side. In a little bit I will put some of it side by side. But we could take the whole chapter and see a very interesting comparison or a likeness between the two chapters.

Chapter 3 is similar to chapter 1 in that we have the same three principal characters. Same key players in the story.

We have the saved, the sinner, and the sovereign. Those three characters. Saved, the sinners, and the sovereign. Right here in chapter 3, just like they were in chapter 1.

[7:17] In chapter 1, the saved one is Jonah, of course. Yes, and the sinners are the unbelieving sailors on board that ship headed to Tarshish. And the sovereign God, of course, is the same sovereign God.

It's Yahweh God. Same one. All right? Same characters in chapter 1 we have in chapter 3. And nothing changes in chapter 3 except the identity of the sinners.

In chapter 3, the sinners are the people of Nineveh. The saved one is still the same. It's Jonah. He's represented, or the saved are represented by Jonah.

He still is representative of God's people. And the sovereign God is still the same sovereign God.

It's Yahweh God. And really, this is not all that profound because the world has always been made up, populated by the same three people.

Same three players. The saved, the sinners, and sovereign God. But when the three come together in the way that they came together here in chapter 3, when the three get together as players in God's grand story of redemption, then something quite incredible takes place, as it did here in chapter 3.

[8:38] Let's just see how this unfolds for us here in chapter 3. And really, we see three movements in the story. And the three movements in the story are connected to the three key characters.

Okay? And so we have Jonah first. Jonah, remember this about Jonah in chapter 3, Jonah responded obediently. Finally. Then we have the Ninevites.

The Ninevites repented dramatically. And then finally, we have God. God relented mercifully.

Those are the three movements in this chapter. Jonah responded obediently. The Ninevites repented dramatically. And God relented mercifully.

Those three things. All right? So let's see the first. Jonah responded obediently. And to get at this, or to begin to look at this, let's really go back a step back into chapter 2 and see verse 10, kind of lead up into chapter 3.

[9:49] The Bible says in verse 10 of chapter 2, So the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land. All right, so we have God rescued Jonah with a great fish.

God reserved Jonah in the belly of that fish. And God restored Jonah safely on the dry ground. And now here in chapter 3, God recommissioned Jonah to go to Nineveh.

He recommissioned him. Verse 1. Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, And here is the very same commission that he gave in chapter 1.

Arise, go, and preach. Same thing, isn't it? It's identical. I know the word preach is here instead of cry, but it's the same Hebrew word. It's translated preach.

And same idea. To cry. Same commission. Now, right off, I think you ought to notice that in this recommissioning of Jonah, there is no admonishing from the Lord here.

[10:57] Now, we would expect that. That is, I mean, there's no scolding of Jonah here at this point because of his previous disobedience. The fact that he disobeyed the first calling.

No word of scolding. No verbal reprimand of Jonah here. Not a single word about the past. Past failure. Past disobedience.

Not a single word about that. No warning, by the way, about what will happen if Jonah refuses to go again. If Jonah disobeys. And by the way, what do you think would have happened if Jonah disobeyed again a second time?

Good question. Would God have just commissioned somebody else then? All right, Jonah. Okay. I'll get somebody else.

Or would the Ninevites have just perished because Jonah would not go? I don't think that would have happened. Or maybe God would have sent another fish.

[11:55] I don't know. Maybe this time, since he's on dry ground, he would send a giant seagull. Come down and gobble him up and carry him off into the sky. I don't know what would have happened. And we don't have to really speculate about it because this time Jonah obeyed.

He obeyed. Verse 3. So Jonah arose. Just like before, by the way. Just like before.

So Jonah arose. Only it's different this time. He went. He went to Nineveh. What a stark contrast then there is between chapter 3 and chapter 1.

What a stark contrast we see between the two commissionings of Jonah. Just compare the two. Chapter 1 and chapter 2. Or chapter 3 rather. In chapter 1 and verse 1, it begins this way.

Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah. Guess why? Chapter 3 verse 1 says the same thing. Identical. So the word of the Lord came to Jonah.

[12:59] Same thing. Identical. With one addition. The second time. And then chapter 1 verse 2. The Bible says arise. Go to Nineveh, that great city.

And cry against it. And chapter 3 and verse 2 says arise. Go to Nineveh, that great city. And preach to it. Same idea as cry against it.

The message that I tell you. Virtually identical, isn't it? And then chapter 1 verse 3 says, but Jonah arose.

And chapter 3 and verse 3 says, so Jonah arose. Same thing. That is, Jonah got up to go.

That is, in both instances, he went. That is, he did go. He did go somewhere, didn't he? Only here is where we have the significant difference.

[13:59] Chapter 1 verse 3 says, but Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. And chapter 3 and verse 3 says, so Jonah arose.

Same thing, but here. And went to Nineveh according to the word of the Lord. Really similar construction. Identical construction. Just the destination is different.

He fled to Tarshish first. He went to Nineveh. Second, he fled to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord in chapter 1.

But he went to Nineveh according to the word of the Lord in chapter 3. And so the whole idea is very clear. Jonah responded obediently.

Jonah arose and went. And so we want to know, is it possible today for a community, a city, a nation to be awakened to the gospel?

[15:00] To be saved? All of them? Is it possible? I have to believe. Yes. I have to believe it.

Yes. When the saved respond obediently. When, that is, the church responds obediently.

That is, when the church gets up and goes. Do you see? And Jonah represents us here today. And so just like Jonah, for the church today, rebellion must give way to repentance.

If there is going to be the kind of anything like the kind of spiritual awakening that took place in Jonah chapter 3 in the city of Nineveh.

That wicked city, that Gentile city. Rebellion must give way to repentance. Pride must give way to prayer. Just like Jonah prayed in the belly of the great fish.

[16:04] Fear must give way to faith. Just like Jonah began to live according to the word of the Lord. Obstinacy to the will of God must give way to obedience.

Jonah arose and went. And I would add this. Security. Personal security. Personal comfort must give way to sacrifice.

Verse 3. Look at it. Further. Jonah arose and went to Nineveh. He went there. Now, you know, we have the idea that suddenly he's there.

The fish, the great fish came to the shore. Expelled him out. On the dry ground. And Jonah went to Nineveh.

Did you know that Nineveh was 900 miles away? From probably any location on the Mediterranean Sea where the fish might have spit him up.

[17:10] Jonah up. 900 mile journey. And if he walked, and it's likely that he did, it would have taken him nearly three months to get there. Jonah went.

I mean, this is personal sacrifice. This was not easy for him. And I would add to that, the Bible says here, Jonah went to Nineveh.

Let me emphasize Nineveh here at this point. That is, he, that is Jonah, a Jew, went to the very stronghold of the Assyrian Empire, the archenemies of Israel.

He went there. I think I mentioned a couple of weeks ago that a number of prophets that we read about in the Old Testament prophesied to Gentiles.

But Jonah was the only one who actually went to them. And not just any group of Gentiles, the Assyrians. Cruel people. Archenemies of Israel.

[18:17] Now, Nineveh, it says in verse 3, Nineveh was an exceedingly great city. A three-day journey in extent.

Now, that's translated various ways. It just basically means that if you wanted to walk around the city, it would take you three days. The circumference of it.

And based upon about the average of how far you could go in three days or in a day walking, it probably was nearly 40 miles around the city.

That's a big city. Now, I understand that some scholars say that it was very likely not just a city, but a group of sister cities that were close together there.

Kind of a conglomerate of cities there in the very heart of the Assyrian Empire. Still. God said, go there.

[19:20] And it was a big place. A lot of people lived there. And then we have it saying that Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk.

That's a little confusing as well. Basically, it means that Jonah went right into the very center of the city. The day's walk. Somewhere in the middle of it.

So, Jonah, when he got to Nineveh, he did not stand at some safe distance and shout out God's message from some place of relative security so that if they came after him, he could run, hightail it. Jonah did not just go to the gate and yell out his sermon and then flee. Jonah walked right on into this wicked city.

The enemies of Israel and walked to the very center of it and began to preach against them. The message that God gave him. What I'm talking about here is his own personal interests and security had to give way to sacrifice if the city of Nineveh was going to be saved, if Jonah was going to have anything to do with it.

[20:44] Listen, this Jewish boy was a long way from home. 900 miles from home.

Among people who looked different. Talked different. Among people who lived a completely different kind of life.

Worshipped in a totally different way. And people who did not like Jews. Did not like Israel. But here is the connection with us.

You and I do not have to go very far to place ourselves among people who think differently than we do. I'm talking about us right here. Differently than we think.

We don't have to go very far to find ourselves and place ourselves among people who act and live differently than we do. Or speak differently than we do.

[21:43] Or look differently than we do. Who have a different set of values. Different culture. We don't have to go very far to place ourselves among people who do not really like Christians.

And I'm not just talking about going to some Muslim country. We don't even have to leave the city of Bartleson. To find ourselves among people who are different than we are.

In nearly every way. And on top of that. Verse 4. When Jonah got there. He cried out and said.

That is he preached. Yet 40 days. And Nineveh shall be overthrown. What a sermon. By the way.

The word overthrown is the same Hebrew word that was used to describe what God did to Sodom and Gomorrah. Same word. And you know what happened to Sodom and Gomorrah.

[22:45] Right? Fire and brimstone. We're talking about God overthrowing a city. A couple of cities. Overthrowing them in such a way that there was absolutely nothing left of them.

Nothing. Not even anything archaeologists might be able to find. It's gone. Obliterated. Destroyed. That's what overthrown meant.

The word overthrown meant when God judged Sodom and Gomorrah. And I think we can assume that what happened to Sodom and Gomorrah would have happened to Nineveh if they had not repented.

We can assume that. I think, therefore, this is a testimony to their utter wickedness. The extent of their sinfulness before God. And it's also an indication of the severity of judgment God promised them in Jonah's sermon.

This is serious stuff. But what about this message? Is that it? Is that all of it? Is that what Jonah preached?

[23 : 57] Yet forty days at Nineveh shall be overthrown. Is that all of it? Well, there are scholars, and I've read a number of them, respected Bible theologians, who would suggest that this was simply a summary of the sermon.

The gist of it, or the final appeal of the sermon. Maybe this is not all of it. You know, we just have just some of it.

And there are those who would suggest that Jonah very likely related his own personal testimony as he preached. That is, the things that had happened to him when he rebelled against God.

The storm at sea, the great fish, and being swallowed by the fish, and the fierce judgment of God that came upon Jonah, that brought him to the very brink of death itself, and then God's gracious mercy as he repented.

And maybe Jonah related that story in his preaching. And that's why his sermon had such a profound effect upon the Ninevites.

[25 : 03] I'm talking about some very conservative theologians who would suggest that, and maybe they're right. I don't have a problem with people believing that. Maybe then what we have here in this verse is just simply a summary of the sermon.

And if that's the case, then that was included here because that was the part that Nineveh heard. That was the part that got them. But really, I don't think we have to think that there was more to the sermon.

I think this was it. This was the whole sermon. Not a popular message. Nothing warm and fuzzy about it.

Certainly not a seeker-friendly kind of message. Not something you would hear most preachers preach on TV. Those who preach with big smiles.

No, no. This was a message of truth. It was God's message. He said, you go and preach to them the message I'm going to give you. I don't know when he gave it to Jonah.

[26 : 13] May it have been that God put the words in his mouth. The minute Jonah opened his mouth. I don't know if there was any sermon preparation here. Or if God said, now this is what I want you to preach.

And write this down. And Jonah wrote it down. And then he got in there and he preached. I don't know when the message came. But this was God's message. He said, I'm going to give you the message to preach. And there's no indication from Scripture that Jonah's reluctance as a missionary was exhibited here.

That somehow he didn't preach all that God wanted him to preach. I think we just have to believe this was it. This was the whole message.

And I believe that repentance is implied in the message. And not only that, but hope is there.

He said, I don't really see that. We'll talk more about that here in a minute. But the point I really want to make here at this juncture is that Jonah was willing to preach a message that he knew would not be popular.

[27 : 18] And that's no different than it is for us today. We like to make the message more popular. We have a tendency in our politically correct kind of culture to skew and tweak the message of God's Word so that it would be more palatable for people and less offensive.

In fact, we really have a desire to take all offense out of the gospel. But Jonah didn't do that, did he? He preached the truth.

And the fact that it was not popular did not matter to him and it should not matter to us. It's God's message. And no one, no one will be saved apart from our obedient preaching of it.

No one will be. And then, let's leave Jonah for now and move to the Ninevites. Jonah responded obediently.

The Ninevites repented dramatically. Now, I think you'd have to agree that is an apt word for this. They repented dramatically.

[28:41] Now, let me ask you something. Can you imagine the kind of reception Jonah would get in America today? I mean, can you imagine Jonah walking into any city in America and preaching?

You have 40 days and God is going to destroy you. Can you imagine that? Can you imagine, for example, the reception in, say, the city of New York?

And they would arrest him as a terrorist today. Or any city.

How about San Francisco or Las Vegas or Tulsa? Bartlesville. Can you imagine one like Jonah coming into the midst of the city and crying out and saying, 40 days and God is going to destroy this city.

How would that message go over today? You remember, Lot preached to his son-in-laws and told them that God was going to destroy their city.

[29:51] And what did they do? They just laughed at him. But the people of Nineveh did not laugh, did they? Verse 5.

So the people of Nineveh, what? They believed God. Isn't that amazing?

Does that shock you in any way? The people of Nineveh, these Assyrians, these cruel, wicked people, these Gentiles, they heard that message and they believed God.

How many of them? From the greatest to the least of them. I know it's hard to believe. And I know the scholars who try to explain this away, basically.

Because it's beyond our imagination. Beyond what we think even possible. That every single one of them believed.

[31:15] Every one of them. Look at how the Bible describes this. Verse 5. So the people of Nineveh believed God.

Proclaimed a fast. Put on sackcloth. From the greatest to the least of them. Now all this is nothing more than just cultural.

A cultural thing. A token of their belief. An outward display. An outward display. Of reality on the inside.

They clothed themselves in sackcloth. That's what they did. They fasted. Did that. They did other things. Verse 6. Then word came to the king of Nineveh.

This is a powerful king. We're talking about very likely. The very heart of the Assyrian empire. The greatest city in Assyria. The king was a great man.

[32:19] Great king. Powerful king. He's a pagan! At least he was before. And what does the king do? He arose from his throne.

Laid aside his robe. That is. I'm not king anymore at this point. And covered himself with sackcloth. And sat in ashes. Again. A display. A symbol. Ceremonial kind of thing. To exhibit his grief over his sin.

That's what the king did. And he did more. Verse 7. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king.

All the authority of the king and his nobles, his administration, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything.

[33:18] Do not let them eat or drink water. He's serious. One indictment to the kings of our day. Verse 8.

Because his decree is not over. Verse 8. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth and cry mightily to God. What's that? That's prayer.

Pray to the one true God. Yes, let everyone turn from his evil way and from violence, that is cruelty, injustice, that is in his hands.

What a decree. From the king. Top down. Now it started at the bottom. Got to him. It came from the top and all the way down. See, listen, here's what we need to understand here.

Religious symbols and ceremony that symbolize or exhibit a person's sorrow over sin is not enough. That's not enough. Singing songs about your grief over sin.

[34:23] And, you know, speaking words about your grief over sin. And doing maybe these kind of acts to make a show of it. That's not enough.

Even prayer is not enough. All must repent. Repent. That's what the king meant when he commanded decree that all must turn.

He's talking about repentance. And we all must turn and forsake all our evil ways and all cruel and unjust things that we do with our hands.

We're to repent. Totally. Repent. And what he said next is astounding. Verse 9. Who can tell?

Who can tell? Who knows? If God will turn and relent.

[35 : 22] There were no guarantees in his mind about it. He's not looking at these acts as a formula for success. He's not embracing some idea that if you'll just do this and this and this, God will do this.

He's bound to do this. There isn't anything in this that suggests any presumption on the part of the king or the people of Nineveh. He says, who can tell?

If God will turn and relent and turn. The word turn appears there, but it's a different word. It means to return or withdraw. Turn away from his fierce anger.

His burning anger. Rage. So that we may not perish. What? A statement. True repentance.

True repentance. Now, let me ask you something. This should have occurred to you. We talked about the message.

[36 : 31] And the contents of it. Let me ask you something. Where did this king get the idea that any hope existed for his city? Where did he get that idea?

What part of Jonah's one-sentence sermon, and that's just as far as we can definitely say, is one-sentence sermon, what part of that sermon offered any hope whatsoever?

Did Jonah's sermon say anything specifically about repentance? Did it?

Thank you. I guess, you know, we could speculate, as some have, that Jonah, that they knew about Jonah and what had happened to him, as I said before.

Maybe the story got to them about Jonah. And they knew that Jonah had rebelled against God and come under the judgment of God.

[37 : 41] And yet, but through repentance, he received God's mercy. It worked for him. Maybe it will work for us. Who can tell? There are some who understand it in that way and speculate in that way.

But I don't think we have to speculate in that way. I think that repentance is implied in the sermon. Clearly implied. And with it, therefore, hope.

There's hope in this sermon. And we see it when God instructed Jonah to tell them, 40 days. 40 days.

And you will be destroyed. 40 days. Why 40 days? Have you ever wondered that? Other than the fact that it seems clear from Scripture that 40 days is always associated with God's judgment.

The flood. 40 days and 40 nights. And there are other examples. But why 40 days? If nothing else is meant by this than simply a period of time before judgment comes, just a period of time, then I would suggest to you if that's all there is to it, there is still hope in that.

[39 : 11] There's still hope there in those words. They imply the patience of God, the long-suffering of God, and therefore the possibility of mercy.

That's implied there very clearly. I tell you, listen, even today, for unbelievers today, there is only one thing that stands between the sinner and the certain judgment of God.

Do you know what it is? Time. That's the only thing that stands between the two. Time. And I suggest to you that that is the mercy of God.

Time. Otherwise, the moment I sinned, God would just snuff me out. Why give me time?

Why suffer sin in the world and wickedness in the world? Why a long-suffering God? Why give us time if there's not the possibility of mercy?

[40 : 17] And that's the way it is. All unbelievers had better see the hope in that. They had better see the hope in that and repent right now. Because now there's time to repent.

How much time? Forty days? I don't know. It may not even be one day for you. But the time is now. And the possibility of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ is offered to you right now. Right now. Right now.

At this time. And that's why I say the forty days in the part of the message is an implication of hope and an implication of repentance.

Repentance. Repent right now. Now the people of Nineveh were hoping in that. Weren't they? I think so. I think they were asking themselves why would God save forty days if He did not intend to

show us mercy if we would repent?

[41 : 24] And so they did repent. All of them. And they did believe in the one true God. All of them from the greatest to the least of them.

And by the way that was very likely some six hundred thousand people. You say do we know that for sure? We know the population of Nineveh? Well God tells us in chapter four verse eleven that there were a hundred and twenty thousand Ninevites who did not know their right hand from their left hand.

That doesn't mean they were stupid. It means they were children. Infants. Infants don't know the right hand from the left hand and there were hundred and twenty thousand of them in Nineveh. We could at least triple that number and the best estimate best guess would be at least a six hundred thousand population and they all believe the greatest revival in all of history.

I think we can assume the largest one day harvest of souls ever. We talk about the day of Pentecost and three thousand people saved that day.

[42 : 32] That's a lot. but six hundred thousand. Great revival. All because first as we can see it in the text Jonah responded obediently.

The Ninevites repented dramatically. But now we got to add this third one. God relented mercifully. It all depended upon that.

Verse ten. Look at it. What does it say? Then God saw their works that they fasted. Is that what it says?

It doesn't, does it? Then God saw their works that they clothed themselves in sackcloth. Doesn't say that, does it?

Then God saw their works that the king was sitting in ashes. Doesn't say that either, does it? Now God certainly saw those things.

[43 : 37] He sees all things. But that's not what God saw that he wanted to see that would really matter to him. All these other things are just symbols of what he really saw, wanted to see, and must see.

that is, God saw their works that they turned from their evil ways. That's repentance.

He saw their repentance. And repentance always results in fruit. The fruit of repentance. And so then what did God do?

nothing. I'm serious. God did nothing.

That's what the Ninevites were praying for. Now follow me here. They were fasting and praying and repenting in hopes that God would do nothing.

[44 : 48] nothing. And that's what God did. Nothing. And God relented from the disaster that he had said he would bring upon them and, and I love this line, he did not do it.

I love that. He did not do it. What? Judge them. Destroy them.

He did nothing. And that's what they prayed for and repented for. And God did not do it.

All right, now having said that, let me say very quickly, in case that makes you feel a little uneasy. It is not that God has been doing nothing at all.

In fact, in reality, God has been doing it all from start to finish. It was God who called Jonah.

[46 : 00] It was God who prepared him. And he went to great lengths to do that, did he? Not. It was God's message that Jonah preached.

not Jonah's message. I tell you, the message would have been quite different if Jonah had put the message together himself. It was God's message.

God's prophet, prepared by God. The message was his. And it was God who empowered that message.

God that message. only way to explain what happened. God empowered that message and used it to convict the Ninevites of their sin and to bring about repentance in their life.

And it was God who relented. I don't mean he repented. I think there are some translations that have the word turn or repent in there.

[47 : 05] God did not repent. repent in the truest meaning of that word. God did not change his mind. God did not repent.

God is unchangeable. Now there's more to this than just simply the mystery of God.

You know God's will is really threefold. You've got to understand this about God's will. And you understand how God could quote repent or relent.

There is as a part of his will, his secret decrees. Secret to us, we just don't know.

And those never change. God God's decrees. there is also or are also his precepts, his word, given to us so that we will be who he wants us to be.

[48:18] That's his will. That's why we need to read this book. His precepts. will. That is what he wants us to be.

And then there is as a part of his will, his desires. His desires. And that's what we have here. Confused? God relented. God withheld his judgment from Nineveh because his desire all along was to do that.

They repented and he had mercy. It's his desire all along. And so is it possible for an entire city to be saved?

Is it possible today for there to be a great revival, a great spiritual awakening, a great harvest of souls in America like the one we read about here in Jonah 3?

[49:39] Is that possible? I pray so. I hope so. I have to believe that that can happen.

That God can do that. When a church responds obediently, when sinners repent dramatically, and when God remits mercy that's our prayer that's our prayer