

Jonah 3:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying,

Analysis

God gives Jonah a second chance: "And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying." The Hebrew vayehi devar-YHWH el-Yonah shenit lemor (וַיְהִי) קֹרֵב־יְהוָה אֶל־יֹוָה שְׁנִית לְאֹמֶר emphasizes divine persistence—God doesn't give up on His rebellious prophet.

"The second time" (shenit, שְׁנִית) is theologically significant. Jonah failed the first time, yet God renews the commission. This demonstrates God's patience and commitment to His purposes. He could have chosen another prophet, but He pursues Jonah until the mission is accomplished. This reflects God's character throughout Scripture—giving second chances to failing servants. Peter denied Christ three times, yet Jesus restored and recommissioned him (John 21:15-19). Mark deserted Paul on the first missionary journey, yet later became useful to him (2 Timothy 4:11).

The repetition of "the word of the LORD came" (vayehi devar-YHWH) parallels 1:1, showing that God's call hasn't changed. The message is the same; the prophet is chastened but the mission remains. This teaches that God's purposes are not negotiable. We can delay through disobedience, but we cannot ultimately thwart what God has determined. As Philippians 2:13 declares: "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

This verse offers hope to believers who've failed. God's gifts and calling are irrevocable (Romans 11:29). If we've run from His call, He pursues us—through

storms, fish, or whatever means necessary—to bring us back to His purposes. The question isn't whether God will accomplish His will, but whether we'll obey willingly or be dragged kicking and screaming like Jonah.

Historical Context

Jonah son of Amittai prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II of Israel (2 Kings 14:25), around 780-760 BC. God commanded him to preach repentance to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria—the brutal empire that would later destroy Israel (722 BC). Assyrian kings were notorious for extreme cruelty, boasting in their inscriptions about impalement, flaying, and mass deportations. For an Israelite prophet, preaching salvation to Assyria was like asking a Holocaust survivor to evangelize Nazi Germany. Jonah's flight to Tarshish (opposite direction) reveals both ethnic prejudice and theological confusion about God's mercy extending to pagan nations. When Nineveh repented and God relented, Jonah became angry, preferring their destruction. The book concludes with God's gentle rebuke, revealing His compassion for all people.

The book of Jonah stands as a rebuke to narrow nationalism and an anticipation of the gospel's universal scope. Jesus referenced Jonah's three days in the fish as a sign of His death and resurrection, while condemning His generation for not repenting like Nineveh did (Matthew 12:39-41). The early church struggled with the same prejudice Jonah displayed when Gentiles began believing in Christ.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does Jonah 3:1 deepen your understanding of God's character, particularly His holiness, justice, and mercy?

2. What specific attitudes, thought patterns, or behaviors does this verse call you to examine and change in light of the gospel?
3. How does this passage point forward to Christ and His redemptive work, and how should that shape your worship and obedience?

Interlinear Text

לֹאמֶר: שְׁנַיְתִּי יְהוָה יְהוָה יְהוָה יְהוָה
H1961 And the word of the LORD H413 came unto Jonah the second time saying
H1697 H3068 H3124 H8145 H559

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