

Job 14:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up:

Analysis

As the waters fail from the sea (אֶזְלוּ־מַיִם מִיַּמִּין, azlu-mayim minni-yam)—'fail' uses אָזַל (azal, 'to go away, be exhausted'). Ancient observers noted inland seas and lakes that evaporated during drought. **And the flood decayeth and drieth up** (וְנָהָר יֶעָרָב וְיָבֵשׁ, nahar yecharav veyavesh)—'flood' (נָהָר, nahar, 'river/stream') becomes 'parched' (יֶעָרָב, charev) and 'dry' (יָבֵשׁ, yavesh, thoroughly dried). Job uses permanent, irreversible drying—not seasonal variation—to illustrate human mortality's finality.

The contrast is devastating: trees revive (verses 8-9), but humans, like dried-up seas, do not return. This reflects Job's limited revelation—he lacks the full resurrection hope revealed in Christ. Yet his question prepares the way. Jesus reverses the metaphor: believers have 'living water' that becomes 'a well of water springing up into everlasting life' (John 4:14). What appears permanently dried up in Job's understanding, Christ promises to restore eternally. Revelation 21:1 envisions new creation where 'there was no more sea'—the old order, including death symbolized by dried seas, passes away.

Historical Context

Palestine's geography includes the Dead Sea and seasonal streams (wadis) that completely dry up in summer. Ancient peoples regularly observed drought's destructive power—once-flowing rivers becoming dusty channels. Job's imagery reflects this harsh reality. His statement 'man lieth down, and riseth not' (14:12)

expresses honest hopelessness apart from resurrection revelation, demonstrating that even the righteous struggled with mortality's mystery before Christ.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Job's hopelessness about death, contrasted with Christian resurrection hope, help you appreciate the gospel's power?
2. When have you felt like a dried-up sea spiritually, and how did Christ's 'living water' restore you?
3. What does Job's honest struggle with mortality teach about bringing hard questions to God rather than pretending false confidence?

Interlinear Text

אָזלֹו	מִיִּם	מִן־	יָם	וְנָהָר	יִחַר־בִּ	וַיִּבְשׁ:
fail	As the waters	H4480	from the sea	and the flood	decayeth	and drieth up
H235	H4325		H3220	H5104	H2717	H3001

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 19:5 (Parallel theme): And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and dried up.