

Jonah 1:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you.

Analysis

Jonah's solution: "And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you." Jonah accepts responsibility and proposes self-sacrifice. The phrase "I know" (yode'a 'ani) indicates certainty—he understands his guilt and the solution. His willingness to die rather than repent reveals the depth of his rebellion—he'd rather die than obey God's command to preach mercy to Nineveh. Yet this also foreshadows Christ's greater sacrifice. Jesus, the better Jonah (Matthew 12:39-41), voluntarily entered the storm of divine wrath against sin, was "cast into the sea" of death, and through His sacrifice brought calm—salvation—to others. The typology isn't perfect (Jonah dies as judgment; Christ dies as atonement), but the parallel is significant.

Historical Context

Ancient honor cultures valued self-sacrifice for others. Jonah's proposal, while born from rebellion rather than heroism, at least accepted responsibility rather than blaming sailors or circumstances. The sailors' hesitation (v. 13) shows their moral superiority—they're reluctant to execute even a guilty man. This pagan compassion contrasts Jonah's hardness toward Nineveh, highlighting the prophet's spiritual bankruptcy.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Jonah's imperfect sacrifice point toward Christ's perfect sacrifice?
2. What does it mean to accept responsibility for sin's consequences affecting others?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	אֵלֵיהֶם	שָׂא וְנִי	וְהִטִּיל נִי	אֶל	הַיָּם
And he said	H413	unto them Take me up	and cast me forth	H413	into the sea
H559		H5375	H2904		H3220
וְיִשָּׁט	הַיָּם	כִּי	יֹדַע	אֶנִּי	כִּי
be calm	into the sea	H5921	H3588	unto you for I know	H589
H8367	H3220		H3045		H3588
בְּשָׁלִי	הַיָּם	הַגָּד וְ	הִנֵּה	עֲלֵיכֶם:	
that for my sake	tempest	this great	H2088	H5921	
H7945	H5591	H1419			

Additional Cross-References

2 Samuel 24:17 (Parallel theme): And David spake unto the LORD when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house.

1 Chronicles 21:17 (Parallel theme): And David said unto God, Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, O

LORD my God, be on me, and on my father's house; but not on thy people, that they should be plagued.

Joshua 7:12 (Parallel theme): Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.

Acts 27:24 (Parallel theme): Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.

Ecclesiastes 9:18 (Parallel theme): Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good.

John 11:50 (Parallel theme): Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.