

Jonah 1:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.

Analysis

"But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken." This verse demonstrates God's sovereignty over creation. The Hebrew "sent out" (tul) means to hurl or throw—God actively hurls the wind. The "great wind" (ruach gedolah) and "mighty tempest" (sa'ar gadol) emphasize extraordinary intensity. This wasn't random weather but targeted divine intervention. The phrase "the ship was like to be broken" (ha'oniyah chishebah leshebor) means the vessel thought about breaking—Hebrew personification suggesting imminent destruction. This teaches that creation obeys God instantly and completely. Psalm 107:25 states: "For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind." Jonah's flight didn't escape God's presence (Psalm 139:7-12)—God pursued him with a storm calculated to stop him and protect the sailors while judging His rebellious prophet.

Historical Context

Ancient Mediterranean seafaring was dangerous. Ships were relatively small wooden vessels vulnerable to storms. Sailors, typically polytheistic, would pray to various gods during storms. The book's irony: pagan sailors show more spiritual sensitivity than God's prophet. They pray, Jonah sleeps (v. 5). This pattern recurs—Gentiles often respond better to God's word than covenant people (Nineveh repents while Jonah rebels). Jesus referenced this (Matthew 12:41).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does God's control over natural events refute deistic notions of an uninvolved deity?
2. What does Jonah's sleep during the storm reveal about spiritual complacency?

Interlinear Text

וַיְהִי הָ	הֵטָּ יֵל	רוּחַ	גָּד וּל	אֶל	בַּיָּם	וַיְהִי י	סַעַר	גָּד וּל
But the LORD	sent out	wind	a great	H413	in the sea	H1961	tempest	a great
H3068	H2904	H7307	H1419		H3220		H5591	H1419
בַּיָּם	וְהָ אֲנִי הָ	חֲשֹׁב הָ	לְהִשָּׁבֵר:					
in the sea	so that the ship	was like	to be broken					
H3220	H591	H2803	H7665					

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 135:7 (Parallel theme): He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasures.

Amos 4:13 (References Lord): For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, The LORD, The God of hosts, is his name.

Exodus 15:10 (Parallel theme): Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters.

Exodus 10:19 (References Lord): And the LORD turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red sea; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt.

Exodus 14:21 (References Lord): And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

Numbers 11:31 (References Lord): And there went forth a wind from the LORD, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth.