

Jonah 1:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.

Analysis

"And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah." Casting lots was common ancient practice for discerning divine will. Proverbs 16:33 states: "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD." God sovereignly controlled the lots to identify Jonah. This demonstrates God's providential control over seemingly random events. There are no accidents in God's universe—He governs all things, even lot-casting, to accomplish His purposes (Ephesians 1:11). The sailors' method was pagan, but God used it to reveal truth. This teaches that God can communicate through various means, though Scripture is His primary and authoritative revelation.

Historical Context

Lots involved objects (stones, sticks, dice) cast or drawn to determine outcomes. Israel used Urim and Thummim (priestly lots—Exodus 28:30, Numbers 27:21) and cast lots to divide Canaan (Joshua 18:10), choose Saul (1 Samuel 10:20-21), and select Matthias (Acts 1:26). The New Testament church stopped this practice after Pentecost—the Spirit's indwelling provides direct guidance. The sailors' lots functioned as God intended, proving His sovereignty transcends human methods.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does God's sovereignty over "random" events shape understanding of providence?
2. What role do circumstances play in discerning God's will, and how do we avoid superstition?

Interlinear Text

הַגּוֹךְ לְ יִפְלֶא וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־ רַע־הוּא לְכָה
And they said every one to his fellow and let us cast and the lot
H559 H376 H413 H7453 H1980 H5307 H1486

לְנַדְּעַ הַבְּשִׁלְמָה בְּשִׁלְמָה לְזַעַם הַבְּשִׁלְמָה
that we may know for whose cause this evil and let us cast
H3045 H7945 H7451 H2063 H0 H5307

יְוָנָה: עַל־הַגּוֹךְ לְ יִפְלֶא
and the lot and let us cast and the lot upon Jonah
H1486 H5307 H1486 H5921 H3124

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 16:33 (Parallel theme): The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.

Joshua 7:10 (Parallel theme): And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?

Numbers 32:23 (Parallel theme): But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.

Acts 13:19 (Parallel theme): And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot.

Psalms 22:18 (Parallel theme): They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

Matthew 27:35 (Parallel theme): And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

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