

Psalms 89:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.

Analysis

Thou rulest the raging of the sea (אַתָּה מֹשֵׁל בְּגָאוֹת הַיָּם)—Moshel (rule, have dominion) over the ge'ut (pride, swelling, arrogance) of yam (sea) demonstrates sovereignty over chaos. In ancient Near Eastern mythology, the sea represented primordial chaos gods; here, Yahweh alone controls the raging waters. **When the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them** (בְּשָׁוֹא גַּלְיוֹ אַתָּה תִּשְׁבֹּחַ)—Shabach (to still, calm) shows God's effortless mastery over violent natural forces.

This imagery appears throughout Scripture: God's Spirit hovering over chaotic waters (Genesis 1:2), God parting the Red Sea (Exodus 14), Jonah in the storm (Jonah 1), and supremely Jesus calming the storm (Mark 4:39), proving His deity. The disciples' question 'What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?' reveals recognition of divine power. For New Testament believers, this assures us that no chaos—circumstantial, emotional, or spiritual—exceeds Christ's sovereign control.

Historical Context

Israel had minimal seafaring tradition and viewed the sea with fear and suspicion. Unlike maritime nations who deified the ocean, Israel worshiped the God who commanded it. The Red Sea crossing and Jordan River parting were defining national memories of God's power over threatening waters.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What 'raging seas' (circumstances, emotions, relationships) in your life need to be stilled by Christ's word?
2. How does Jesus calming the literal storm inform your faith when facing metaphorical storms?
3. In what ways does recognizing God's sovereignty over chaos change your response to uncertainty?

Interlinear Text

תְּרִיכָּתָה וְאַתָּה מִרְשָׁל בְּגָא וְתַּחֲמִם בְּשָׁא אַתָּה וְתַּחֲמִם
H859 Thou rulest H4910 the raging H1348 of the sea H3220 thereof arise H7721 when the waves H1530

תְּשִׁיבָה אַתָּה
H859 thou stillest H7623

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 65:7 (Parallel theme): Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people.

Mark 4:41 (Parallel theme): And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

Mark 4:39 (Parallel theme): And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

Psalms 29:10 (Parallel theme): The LORD sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever.

Nahum 1:4 (Parallel theme): He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth.

Matthew 14:32 (Parallel theme): And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

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