**Biblical Allusions in the Tempest**

**The Bible is an important work that has influenced writers throughout the ages. References to famous Biblical stories allow the audience to understand themes and idea, the writer is trying to explore. This referral to ideas and themes from the Bible is a literary technique called a biblical allusion.**

**During the Elizabethan and Jacobean era, England was predominately a Christian country with attending church and civilians could be issued fines if they did not. Thus, the general population would be familiar with stories from the Bible.**

**TASK ONE:**

**Look at the quotes below from the Tempest and the Bible. Highlight the correct quote from the Tempest to that which aligns most with the quote from the Bible and the ideas being explored. The first one has been done for you.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Biblical Quote** | **Tempest Quote** | **Ideas Explored** |
| 1. 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 (Jonah 1:4) | Hell is empty and all the devils are here (Act 1 Sc2**)** | Forgiveness for one who recognises their wrongs or forgiveness as an act of charity |
| 1. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” ([John 1:9](https://bible.bibleask.org/#/search/1%20John%201:9/KJV)) | For you, most wicked sir, whom to call brother. (Act 5 Sc 1) | Suffering, punishment and judgement for those who have done wrong. |
| For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment. ([Peter 2:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Peter+2%3A4&version=ESV)) | ‘Must ask my child forgiveness’ (Act 5 Sc 1) | Those who fight in the path of God/goodness are rewarded and those w |
| 1. And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. (Genesis 37) | ‘[PROSPERO: Hast thou, spirit, Performed to point the tempest that I bade thee? ARIEL: To every article.’ (Act 1 Sc2)](https://www.allgreatquotes.com/the-tempest-quotes-50/) | The weather as a tool to punish those who have sinned/wronged. |
| 1. Ariel, the lion of God (Isaiah 29:1) | If by your art, my dearest father, you have put the wild waters in this roar, allay them. The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking pitch, but that the sea, mounting to th' welkin’s cheek, dashes the fire out. (Act 1 Sc2) | Sibling rivalry and jealousy. |

**EXTENSION ACTIVITY:**

Find a quote of your own from the Tempest and link it to the bible and explain which ideas/ themes they focus on.

**TASK TWO:**

**Using the quotes in task one, write a PEEL/PETAR paragraph exploring the use of biblical allusions in the Tempest. An example has been written for you based on the idea as weather as a tool to punish those who have sinned.**

The Tempest begins with a great storm conjured up by Prospero to ensure she can entrap and punish his sibling Antonio who betrayed him and usurped his position as Duke of Milan. The image of the storm would have clearly established in the minds of the Elizabethan audiences, who the villain and the hero of the play. As a Christian majority country, audiences would have been familiar with the idea of the storm as a punishment for man’s sins and their redemption, reminding them of the story of Jonah and the whale in Genesis.

Jonah is a prophet who rebels against God commandment and escapes onto a ship. God sends a terrible storm which leave the crew believing someone has offended God. ‘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.’ It is discovered it is Jonah, who is then thrown overboard, where he is swallowed by a whale. During his three days in the whale, Jonah recognises his error and submits to God’s will and he is forgiven.

This story has clear parallels with the story of Prospero and his money, by aligning Prospero with the ‘Lord’ and giving him the power to send a storm, it is clear he is the ultimate good in his play despite some of his dubious actions. Antonio is sent to the island to contemplate his ‘errors’ not accepting his position and Prospero as the true leader. The storm foreshadows Prospero’s punishment of Antonio and his ultimate forgiveness. Thus, the Tempest can be seen endorsing many of the themes established in the Bible.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:**

1. Read the story of Joseph and his brothers from Genesis 37 in the Old Testament. Note parallels between the story and themes in it, with those in the Tempest.
2. Explore how Prospero can be seen as a metaphor for God in the Tempest.