

Matthew 14:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

Analysis

'But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.' While Jesus prayed on mountain (v.23), disciples encountered storm on Sea of Galilee. The ship was 'in the midst of the sea' (μέσον τῆς θαλάσσης/meson tēs thalassēs), far from shore, 'tossed with waves' (βασανιζόμενον ὑπὸ τῶν κυμάτων/basanizomenon hypo tōn kymatōn—literally 'tormented by waves'), and faced 'contrary' (ἐναντίος/enantios) wind blowing against them. Reformed theology sees multiple lessons:

1. Obedience to Jesus doesn't guarantee smooth circumstances—disciples obeyed His command (v.22) yet faced storm
2. Jesus knew storm was coming yet sent them anyway—sometimes He leads into difficulty for growth
3. Trials test and strengthen faith—disciples would witness Jesus's power over nature (v.25-33)
4. Jesus's awareness—He saw their struggle (Mark 6:48) and came to them.

The storm wasn't punishment but pedagogy. Believers face contrary winds, waves, mid-sea difficulties—not despite but sometimes because of obedience. Yet Jesus never abandons us in storms.

Historical Context

Sea of Galilee, though technically lake (13 miles long, 8 miles wide), was notorious for sudden, violent storms. Surrounded by hills, wind funneled through valleys

creating dangerous conditions. Experienced fishermen (Peter, Andrew, James, John) knew these dangers intimately. The storm was real, serious threat—these weren't panicked novices but seasoned sailors recognizing genuine danger. John specifies they'd rowed about 25-30 stadia (John 6:19), roughly 3-4 miles, suggesting hours of exhausting labor against contrary wind. The timing—'fourth watch' (v.25), 3-6 AM—meant they'd struggled most of the night. Jesus deliberately allowed this, remaining on mountain praying while disciples battled storm. Yet He never stopped watching them. Mark records: 'he saw them toiling in rowing' (Mark 6:48). Throughout Scripture, God allows trials while remaining present: Israel in Egypt, Job's suffering, Paul's thorn. The pattern: God permits difficulty, sees our struggle, comes at the right moment. The lesson: trust Him in the storm, knowing He's aware and will intervene according to His perfect timing.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How do you respond when obeying Jesus leads into difficulty rather than ease?
2. What does this teach about God's timing—He sees our struggles but doesn't always intervene immediately?
3. How does knowing Jesus is aware of your storm affect your perspective when facing contrary winds?

Interlinear Text

τὸ	δὲ	πλοῖον	ἤδη	μέσον	τῆς	θαλάσσης	ἦν
G3588	But	the ship	now	in the midst	G3588	of the sea	was
	G1161	G4143	G2235	G3319		G2281	G2258
βασανιζόμενον	ὑπὸ	τῶν	κυμάτων	ἦν	γὰρ	ἐναντίος	ὁ
tossed	with	G3588	waves	was	for	contrary	G3588
G928	G5259		G2949	G2258	G1063	G1727	
ἄνεμος							
the wind							
G417							

Additional Cross-References

Mark 6:48 (Parallel theme): And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.

John 6:18 (Parallel theme): And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew.

Matthew 8:24 (Parallel theme): And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep.