

Psalms 107:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters;

Analysis

This verse begins the fourth rescue scenario: deliverance from storm at sea. 'They that go down to the sea in ships' describes mariners. 'That do business in great waters' uses melakah (מְלָכָה), meaning work, business, or occupation. These are professional sailors conducting commerce on the ocean. This scenario differs from the previous three (wandering, imprisonment, sickness) by describing ordinary occupation meeting extraordinary peril. It teaches that even legitimate work can bring us to circumstances requiring God's intervention. God's sovereignty extends over natural forces and commercial endeavors.

Historical Context

Ancient Israel wasn't primarily a seafaring nation (that was Phoenicia's role), but maritime trade occurred through ports like Joppa. Solomon's fleet sailed from Ezion-geber (1 Kings 9:26-28). Jonah's ship encountered God-sent storm (Jonah 1). By post-exilic period, Jewish diaspora included maritime traders. The imagery would resonate with international commerce experience. For Christians, Jesus calming the storm (Mark 4:35-41) fulfills this deliverance pattern.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does God's sovereignty extend over natural forces and human commerce?
2. What does it mean that legitimate work can bring us to situations requiring divine intervention?
3. How do Jesus' storm-calming miracles demonstrate His deity and power?

Interlinear Text

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|-------------------|------------|------------|---------|-----------|----------|----------|
| יֹרְדִים | הַ יָּם | בְּאֶנְיֹת | עֹשִׂים | לְאֵלֶיךָ | בְּמַיִם | רַבִּים: |
| They that go down | to the sea | in ships | that do | business | waters | in great |
| H3381 | H3220 | H591 | H6213 | H4399 | H4325 | H7227 |

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 18:17 (Parallel theme): For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,