

The Sea and the Waves Roaring

The world is becoming more and more concerned about climate change, and it would seem with good cause. Many parts of the globe have been experiencing more extreme weather, sometimes causing terrible devastation and tragic loss of life. Even in the United Kingdom, usually known for mild weather (if somewhat wet!) the coasts have been lashed by huge storms during recent winters, presenting some impressive pictures of roaring waves but causing damage where they hit land. This month's front page is very calm and picturesque by comparison.

Storm on the Sea of Galilee

In the Gospels, we often find Jesus and his disciples in boats on the Sea of Galilee. Some of the disciples were lifelong fishermen who had grown up by the sea and had experienced it in all weathers – they were not easily frightened by storms. So how terrifying must have been the storm which petrified these hardened seamen and brought them to Jesus crying “*Master, Master, we are perishing!*” (Luke 8:24).

Jesus wasn't a fisherman, he was a carpenter; and yet he was still able to sleep in the boat despite the storm. supremely calm, we read that Jesus *arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was calm* (v24).

There is a certain irony in the record here, for Luke tells that NOW the disciples were afraid! They realised that

although the storm had frightened them with its destructive power, they were in the presence of a man with even greater power, although a kind master who used that power to care for them and to further God's will.

And they were afraid, and marvelled, saying to one another, “Who can this be? For he commands even the winds and water, and they obey him!” (v25).



In fact by the time we come to the record of Jesus walking on water in Matthew 14, when again he calmed a storm, they understood more: *Then those who were in the boat came and worshipped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God”* (v33).

Storms in Bible Language

His power over the forces of nature proved that Jesus was sent by God. However, it teaches another truth when we consider how the sea and waves are used in the Bible. They are used to represent the restless nations and peoples of the world. We find this in Isaiah, where the prophet writes:

The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt (Isaiah 57:20).

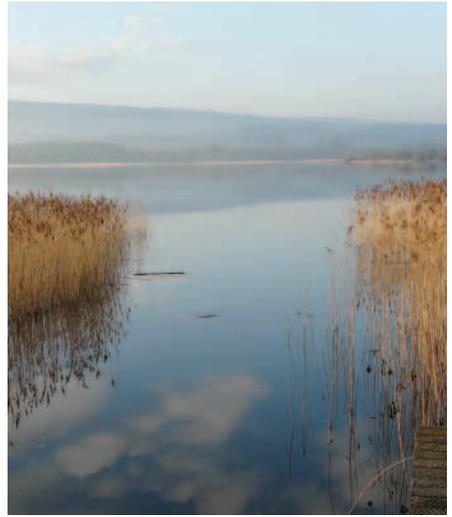
The picture is vivid when we think about nations so often in conflict, full of internal unrest, never really at peace, churning like a rough sea. Jesus picks up exactly this picture when talking to his followers about his return to the earth, for which we are still waiting. Speaking about the state of the world at that time, he says:

“And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken” (Luke 21:25–6).

This dramatic description may well be telling us to take events in the natural world as warnings that Christ’s return is near. We are certainly being shown the state of the world, nations in distress and unable to find calm in the confusion. The image of a violent, raging, restless sea is a striking illustration of today’s world. No wonder that this is reflected in individuals in panic and alarm.

The Calm of the Kingdom

This is a good point to remember the storm on Galilee. However dreadful the natural storm or the unrest in the world, the Lord Jesus has power to control it and the compassion to do so. When he returns to the earth, it will be to bring peace and rest to all who accept him, to calm the world for good in God’s kingdom.



In this issue, we look again at the book of Revelation and see how God controls human history in bringing about His kingdom; we will also consider Jerusalem as the capital of that kingdom. Looking at the name, character and appeal of Jesus, we are reminded that he can also bring peace to troubled lives if we let him, and that he has always done so. Additionally we will look at how setting the right priorities and following God’s laws will enrich our lives now and give us the hope of being in that future kingdom.

This is the good news, the gospel. If we are baptised and part of God’s family, we need not be terrified by events global or local, but can have confidence because of the words of Jesus, continuing in Luke 21:27–8:

“Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”

Editor