

## Jesus Walking On Water

### Part 1

- “Jesus Walking On Water” is the fifth of the signs of Jesus John has recorded.
- Earlier he recorded Jesus turning water to wine, the healing of the nobleman’s son, the healing of the crippled man, and the feeding of the 5,000 men not including the women and children.
- Each of these signs demonstrated the unlimited power of Jesus.

1. This fifth miracle is recorded by three gospel writers. (Jn. 6:16-21; Matt. 14:24-33; Mk. 6:47-53).

a. John and Matthew were eyewitnesses of this amazing sign.

b. Mark was not an eyewitness, but he had a very close association with Peter who was an eyewitness to this miracle. (1 Pet. 5:13).

1 Pet 5:13 She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and {so does} **my son, Mark.**

1) Mark was not the biological son of Peter. (Acts 12:12).

2) He was one who had been greatly influenced by Peter and was an outstanding servant of the Lord that penned the gospel of Mark.

3) He obtained the information for this gospel by revelation and eyewitness reports from Peter and perhaps the other apostles.

2. This miracle or sign is not to be confused with Jesus stilling the storm on the Sea of Galilee earlier in His ministry. (Matt. 8:23-27).

Matt. 8:23 When He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him.

Matt. 8:24 And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves; but Jesus Himself was asleep.

Matt. 8:25 And they came to *Him* and woke Him, saying, "Save *us*, Lord; we are perishing!"

Matt. 8:26 He said to them, "Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?" Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm.

Matt. 8:27 The men were amazed, and said, "What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"

Matthew 8	John 6
Christ was on the boat when the storm arose.	Jesus was not in the boat when the storm arose.
Christ was asleep in the boat.	Here He was in the mountain praying.
The disciples were afraid of the wind and waves.	John emphasized they were afraid of Jesus thinking He was a spirit.

He rebuked the wind and the waves.	Here they responded to His will without an audible command
The disciples were amazed that the winds and sea obeyed Him.	Though they were likely amazed by all the events, John does not mention this fact.

3. John gave the most abbreviated account of this miracle.
4. The three accounts of Jesus walking on water bring out different, not conflicting, details about this impressive and controversial miracle.
  - a. Some have alleged we are dealing with two different events or occasions in the three gospel accounts.
    - 1) Some believe John was not recording a miracle, but Matthew and Mark were recording a miracle on a different occasion.
    - 2) They contend John was affirming Jesus was on the beach or merely wading in the water, but in the night the disciples only thought He was walking in the water.
    - 3) They seek to make the words “on the sea” to read “by the sea.”
    - 4) Most who hold this belief of Jesus also dismiss Matthew’s and Mark’s accounts in some natural way.
  - b. Others hold these are two different miracles.
  - c. A study of these accounts does not substantiate either of the views mentioned here.
    - 1) Jesus was not merely walking on the beach or in the shallow water near the shore.
    - 2) There is no good reason to conclude the three writers are not describing the same miracle.
    - 3) Jesus merely walking on the beach or in the shallow water near the shore would gave little or no meaning and certainly was not the meaning of John who penned this miracle to prove Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. (Jn. 20:30-31).
  - d. It is clear from John 20:30, 31 that John recorded this account and this sign to substantiate Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God.
    - 1) Jesus walking on water would manifest Jesus was not a mere man.
    - 2) Jesus walking on the beach or in the shallow water would prove nothing.
5. All three accounts need to be carefully studied to fully appreciate this marvelous miracle.
  - a. The previous miracle of feeding the multitude had been witnessed by thousands of people. (Jn. 6:10; Matt. 14:21).
  - b. This sign or miracle was witnessed by the apostles only.

**Multitude Sought To Make Jesus King  
Jesus Withdrew To The Mountain By Himself**

**Jn. 6:15** So Jesus, perceiving [knowing] that they [the multitude] were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone

- “perceiving” comes from “ginosko” [gee **noh** skoh] meaning “to know.”
- 1. This seeking to make Christ King followed Jesus feeding of the 5,000 men plus the women and the children. (Matt. 14:21; Jn. 6:15).
- 2. The multitude was convinced Jesus was “the prophet,” that is, the promised Messiah.
- 3. They were anxious to have Jesus take His position as God’s anointed King whom they believed would deliver them from the yoke of Rome and make them a great nation once again.
- 4. They did not understand Jesus had not come to establish an earthly kingdom (Jn. 18:36), but to save man by dying for the sins of all who would obey Him. (Matt. 20:27, 28).

Matt 20:27 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave;

Matt 20:28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

- 5. He withdrew alone again into the mountain to pray. (Matt. 14:23; Mk. 6:46).
  - The disciples had been with Jesus. (Jn. 6:3).
  - Jesus had sent them to the western side of Galilee. (Mk. 6:45; Matt. 14:22).
  - Mk. 6:45 Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of *Him* to the other side to Bethsaida, while He Himself was sending the crowd away.
  - “Bethsaida” is here presented as the destination.
  - It is interesting that the disciples did not want to leave without Jesus, but Jesus made them go without Him. (Mk. 6:45; Matt. 14:22).
- a. Prayer was very important in the life of Jesus.
  - b. It ought to be a vital part of our lives.
  - c. We ought to spend time praying alone as Jesus did.
  - d. This does not mean that we should always pray alone, and never together.
  - e. It is good to pray alone, but it is also good to pray with others.

### **Disciples Went Down To The Sea Of Galilee**

**Jn. 6:16** Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea,

1. The context reveals the disciples went down to the Sea of Galilee.
  - a. They had waited on Jesus until evening hoping He would join them.

- b. Jesus' delay in coming to the disciples was due to the time involved in "sending the crowd away." (Matt. 14:22; Mk. 6:45).
2. When Jesus did not return to them, they likely thought He had gone to Capernaum where He spent a lot of time teaching. (Matt. 9:1; Mk. 2:1).
  3. We do not know the exact time they began to row across the sea, but it was likely shortly after dark that they headed to Capernaum. (Jn. 6:17).
  4. Later we find after they had spent hours rowing across the sea fighting the strong wind, it was "about the fourth watch of the night." (Mk. 6:48).
    - a. This would be about 3 A.M. to 6 A.M..
    - b. It had taken most of the night to travel the 3 or 4 miles later mentioned in this account. (Jn. 6:19).
    - c. It was then Jesus was walking on the water.

### **At Dark The Disciples Started West In The Boat To Capernaum**

**Jn. 6:17 and after getting into a boat, they started to cross the sea to Capernaum. It had already become dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them.**

1. They were heading toward Capernaum where undoubtedly they hoped to later find Jesus there or Jesus would join them there.
2. Mark stated the disciples were going to Bethsaida rather than Capernaum. (Mk. 6:45).
  - a. The two cities were very near one another, and Bethsaida was a suburb of Capernaum.
  - b. They likely had gotten off course in the storm, and this may explain the reference to Bethsaida rather than Capernaum.
  - c. The Bethsaida they were headed for was on the western side of the sea of Galilee.
  - d. It is to be distinguished from Bethsaida Julius on the eastern side of the lake or sea.
  - e. Bethsaida Julius is the place where Christ fed the multitude. (Lk. 9:10-17).
3. Andrew, Peter and Philip belonged to the Bethsaida near Capernaum. (Jn. 1:44; 12:21).
4. Jesus had fed the multitude of 5,000 not including woman and children in Bethsaida of Julius.
  - a. The disciples entered into a boat to cross to Bethsaida near Capernaum.
  - b. While they were seeking to row there, Jesus came to them walking on the sea.
  - c. They eventually landed in the area known as Gennesaret and traveled to Capernaum leading to the conclusion Bethsaida must have been near Capernaum.
5. John pointed out it was now "dark," "but Jesus had not yet come to them."

- a. The idea seems to be they had hoped Jesus would join them before their departure.
- b. It could be Jesus had instructed them to wait for a certain time and then leave if He had not arrived.
- c. They evidently decided Jesus was not coming, and began to row across the sea [lake].

### **Storm On The Sea**

1. They would not start out in a storm, but evidently the storm began as they rowed to or toward Capernaum.
2. These men were experienced fisherman who often fished and traveled on the sea at night.
3. This was not their first storm, but this did not make it less frightening or deadly.

#### **Jn. 6:18 The sea *began* to be stirred up because a strong wind was blowing.**

1. They were having difficulty rowing the boat because of the “strong wind.”
  - a. Matthew and Mark indicate the wind was contrary.
  - b. All of this made this trip most difficult and dangerous, but not impossible.
2. This was a frightening and difficult time even for these experienced fishermen.

#### **Jn. 6:19 Then, when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat; and they were frightened.**

1. There was no way of knowing exactly how far they had rowed, but John reported it was “about three or four miles.”
2. Literally John has about 25 or 30 “stadion.”
3. A “stadion” was about 1/8 of a Roman mile, and nearly equal to a furlong [201.45 yards].
  - a. Technically a “stadion” [**stah** dee ahn] was about 605 feet.
  - b. They had traveled approximately between 15,125 and 18,150 feet.
  - c. It was about sixty-one “stadion” across the sea at its widest point, that is, over 6 miles.
  - d. It does not appear they were crossing the sea at its widest point, but were traveling from northeast to northwest.
  - e. The exact point of departure or arrival is not known, but would have been less than the 6 miles since it was not at the widest point of the sea.
  - f. Mark’s account does not pinpoint exactly where they were on the lake, but does indicate they were a long distance from the shore. (Mk. 6:47).

Mark 6:47 When it was evening, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and He was alone on the land.

- 1) “Middle” is from “mesos” [**meh** sahs] meaning “middle, midst” or perhaps approximately the middle.
- 2) There was no way to measure the exact distance they had traveled that night, but it is clear they were not near

the shore. The exact distance they had traveled is insignificant.

4. The disciples “were frightened” when they saw Jesus walking “near to the boat.”
  - a. They did not know it was Jesus.
  - b. Their fearful reaction was a very natural one. (Mk. 6:50; Matt. 14:26,27).
    - 1) Who would not be afraid seeing someone walking on water especially at night?
    - 2) Such an occurrence would be frightening even in the day!
5. Matthew and Mark both record the disciples fearful reaction to seeing someone walking on the sea. (Matt. 14:26; Mk. 6:49).

Matt 14:26 When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear.

Mark 6:49 But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out;

- a. All the disciples saw what they believed to be a spirit [ghost] walking on the sea.
- b. The Greek has “phantasma” [**fahn** tah smah] meaning “a phantom, spectre” [a visible disembodied spirit, a ghost].”
- c. As already stated they did not know it was Jesus, but thought it was “a ghost.” (Matt. 14:26; Mk. 6:49).
  - 1) There is no such thing as a ghost, but the disciples did not know that especially when there seemed to be no other logical explanation.
  - 2) The apostles erroneously later thought the resurrected Christ was “a spirit.” (Lk. 24:36-44).

Luke 24:36 While they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst and \*said to them, "Peace be to you."

Luke 24:37 But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit.

Luke 24:38 And He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?"

**Luke 24:39 "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."**

**Luke 24:40 And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.**

Luke 24:41 While they still could not believe {it} because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?"

**Luke 24:42 They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish;**

**Luke 24:43 and He took it and ate {it} before them.**

Luke 24:44 Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

- 3) Inspiration related to the revelation of God, not to the superstitions of men.
  - 4) They knew men cannot walk on water, but in fear they turned to the superstitions of men to explain what they saw.
- d. Not even Jesus had ever walked on water and this came as a total shock to them.

e. Men today would respond to one walking on water in a similar way.

- 1) Many would respond with doubt and rejection.
- 2) Some would say it was “a ghost.”
- 3) Some would say it was an illusion or magical trick.
- 4) Some might even say it was an alien being.
- 5) Some would have no explanation and would seek to deny the event ever occurred.

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