

## Stage IV. The Great Galilean Ministry

### I. Jesus' Third Tour of Galilee and its Aftermath

#### The DAILY JESUS NEWS #112

#### 5. Miracle #20: Jesus (and Peter) Walk on the Water in a Storm MT 14.22-33 (Parallel Texts: MK 6.45-52; JN 6.16-21)

22 <sup>MT</sup>Immediately Jesus made the disciples <sup>M</sup>go to Bethsaida to <sup>MT</sup>get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. <sup>J</sup>When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for the area near Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them.

23 <sup>MT</sup>After he had dismissed them, <sup>J</sup>knowing that they intended to come and make him King by force, <sup>MT</sup>he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, 24 and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, being buffeted by the waves because a <sup>J</sup>strong wind was blowing against it and the waters were rough.

25 <sup>MT</sup>Shortly before dawn, <sup>J</sup>when they had rowed about three miles (or five kilometers), <sup>M</sup>Jesus saw them straining mightily at the oars, <sup>MT</sup>and went out to them, walking on the lake. <sup>M</sup>He intended to pass them by. 26 <sup>MT</sup>When the disciples saw him walking on the lake they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

27 But Jesus immediately commanded them: *"Take courage! It is 'I AM.' I command you to stop being afraid."*

28 Peter replied, "Lord, since it's you, command me to come to you on the water."

29 *"Come,"* Jesus commanded him.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30 But since he kept on looking at the wind, he became afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. *"You of little faith,"* he said, *"why did you doubt?"*

32 And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down, <sup>M</sup>and they were totally astonished. They had learned nothing from the miracle of the loaves, for their hearts were hardened.

33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

<sup>J</sup>And immediately they arrived at the shore where they were going.

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = <sup>MT</sup>, Mark = <sup>M</sup>, Luke = <sup>L</sup>, John = <sup>J</sup>, Acts = <sup>A</sup>. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *the words of Jesus are italicized in red*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

CONTEXT DIGEST	
Location	On a Mountain Near Bethsaida, and the Sea of Galilee
Timeline	Late March/Early April (Month 26)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage IV: The Great Galilean Ministry

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Title	5. Miracle #20: Jesus (and Peter) Walk On the Water in a Storm

#### COMMENT:

The feeding of the 5000 men, plus women and children, created a great sensation among the huge crowd. They were about to seize Jesus and force him to become their King! Why not? Such a King would be perfect. He could feed them forever. He had shown that he could heal all their diseases. Such a "Son of David" would be more powerful than David himself, for he would be invincible in battle with his supernatural powers.

The intentions of the crowd to make Jesus their King by sheer force illustrated the many problems caused for him by twisted concepts regarding the Messiah. He had just healed many in this crowd, and fed them as well. Their gratitude was expressed by seeking to use Jesus' power against his will, for their own satisfaction. It was an ugly end to another miraculous day.

Attitudes toward Jesus ranged from this crowd, to the Pharisees and their hatred of Jesus that was strong enough to seek only his death. It is amazing that Jesus knew the hearts of all the people he ministered to, yet he loved and poured out his compassion upon them anyway. This is divine behavior.

Since Jesus knew what they were intending to do, he left the crowd, sent off the twelve by boat, and went up on the mountain to pray...staying at it from about 6:00 PM to 3:00 AM. This was the second time in Jesus' ministry that he prayed all night long. Just as prayer had preceded the feeding of the 5000, it was now crucial to Jesus for hearing his Father's guidance on how to handle the increasingly uncontrollable crowds. Jesus was facing a crisis.

Jesus had sent the twelve ahead of him by boat to cross the north section of the Sea of Galilee by night, from Bethsaida on the upper Eastern shore to the plain of Gennesaret on the Western shore, just south of Capernaum. It was normally faster to cover this distance by boat than on foot. Another strong night storm arose, however, and the twelve had only been able to fight their way through the waves for about three miles (five kilometers) in 9 hours, when it should have taken only two hours or less. They were exhausted, fearful for their lives, and praying for daylight at around 3:00 AM.

Jesus saw their torturous struggle against the wind and waves, and chose to walk on the water straight past them. Why would he do that? Because they had not learned anything from the miracle of the loaves, it appears that Jesus was showing them that he was in control of what seemed hopelessly impossible to them. In spite of the wind-whipped, mountainous waves, Matthew wrote that Jesus was "**walking on the water**," not on waves. Jesus had everything under his control, firmly under his feet. He wanted them to see that clearly. In retrospect, Matthew was able to see this perspective, which he included in his narrative..

When the disciples cried out in fear because they thought they were seeing a ghost, Jesus answered them by saying "**It is I AM.**" He chose to use the Greek equivalent of YHWH in Hebrew, which was the most honored name for God in the Old Testament. It was a serious Divine claim. At the close of the scene, the disciples ended up worshipping Jesus...the second time he was worshipped in the book of Matthew (The first was by the Magi at Jesus' birth). As "**I AM**," Jesus was worthy of worship in the same way as the Father.

Peter wanted to test Jesus' identity. Since the Lord was walking on the water, the proof of his power would be to give the command for Peter to do the same. So Jesus gave the command to "Come" on the water to him.

Peter got out of the boat and started walking toward Jesus. The text makes it clear that he quickly took his eyes off of Jesus, and had his eyes glued on the whipping wind and blowing waves instead. His faith in Jesus' ability to empower his obedience wavered, and he began to sink into the water. Jesus quickly took hold of him and walked

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with him back to the boat. The final aspect of the miracle was that they immediately found themselves safe at the other side of the Lake, at Gennesaret.

The power of Jesus' command for Peter to come to him on the water underscored Jesus' earlier description of the greatest faith he had ever seen, in the Roman centurion. He had recognized Jesus' authority, and said: *"Only say the word, and my servant will be healed."* (DJN #081) If Jesus, the King of the universe, commanded Peter to walk on water, then the swirling, surging H<sub>2</sub>O in the sea would obey his command and cause it to happen. This is why Jesus is worthy of worship—his word is absolute, for he is fully Divine.

It was an amazing night of prayer and power for Jesus, and serious learning about him for the twelve, and for us.

#### APPLICATION:

Jesus and Peter's walk on the water also illustrates the ***"I command that it be done to you according to your faith"*** principle. Peter knew that if Jesus gave a command, supernatural power would accomplish it. That is what makes the commands of Jesus different from any others. Faith is believing that God does what he says. Period.

Obedying God's commands can seem as impossible as walking on water when we rely on our own strength. Faith sees the absolute power and authority of God at work to empower what he says. Obedience to the commands of God is therefore an absolute certainty when we believe in God's power to make them happen in and through us.

Paul described God's power like this: *"And we eagerly await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who has the power that enables him to bring everything under his control..."* Phil 3.21

The same power that enabled Peter to walk on water when Jesus commanded it is at work in you to enable your obedience to Jesus' commands today, and every tomorrow.

*What command of Jesus do you need to obey today, because you believe in his power to enable it?*

*When will you get out of the boat and start walking in obedience?*