

Episode #816 Matthew 14 Part 3-Lord of the Sea

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. The Lord had just fed a great multitude of five thousand men, plus women and children, with five biscuits or flatbreads and two herring-sized fish. Now today, He again proves His power over nature by His control of the sea.

III. The Ghost on the Sea. Matthew 14:22-27.

- A. Verse 22. “Immediately” is one of Mark’s favorite words (40 times). Matthew uses it 15 times, second most. He “made” them because the matter was urgent. Paul in Acts 26 describes that before his conversion he compelled believers to blaspheme. The ship is the same as in Matthew 8, a ship with a deck. Dismissing the multitude required power, for they all wanted to take Him by force and make Him their king, as John 6 tells us. For Him to dismiss them in such a mood took the authority of God.
- B. Verse 23. That the Lord prayed bothers some people, but this is all in the character of the Godhead, as in the Deity there is communion. If you have never communed with yourself, you have never gotten very far in the great art of meditation.
- C. Verse 24. This is not the word for “tossed.” The Greek is *basanizo*, the word often translated “tormented.” Obviously, no ship can be tormented. This word comes from the word for a touchstone, which reveals whether metal is genuine or not. It meant a thorough and revealing test. As the Roman Empire degenerated and prisoners were questioned by torture, it came to mean torture, but that was not its original meaning. Here, it means that the ship was being thoroughly tested by the waves. “Contrary” means opposite, they were headed into the wind, in other words.
- D. Verse 25. There is controversy among the rabbis as to whether there were three watches or four in the temple, but the New Testament always marks out a fourth watch. For whatever reason we always speak of Jesus “walking on the water,” but this phrase is not applied to Him in Scripture. He was walking on the sea. (Peter asks to come to Him “on the water.”) The Lord is the God of nature and its every law. He is the God of gravitation, buoyancy, and so forth. He can order those laws as He wishes.
- E. Verse 26. It started out as agitation, then turned to fear. They thought He was a phantasm, a specter or ghost.
- F. Verse 27. “Immediately” again, as is common in Mark. “Be of good cheer” or comfort is a phrase used only by the Lord eight times. This is the third and last in Matthew. “It is I” is the Greek *ego eimi*, often translated “I am.” Be He ever so powerful, for His people the appearance of the Lord should never cause fear. We are His, and however mysterious and awe-inspiring we find Him, we know if we belong to Him we will find love when He comes to us.

IV. Peter on the Water. Matthew 14:28-33.

- A. Verse 28. If is not in doubt, but more the idea of since. Peter does not presume, but asks the Lord for a command to do it before he tries to come.
- B. Verse 29. Peter’s request is immediately granted. As powerful as He is, He is equally gracious. Peter walked on the water, whereas the Lord walked on the sea. The whole sea is under His command, but Peter could only walk on water with His permission.

- C. Verse 30. This is a picture of what happens many times in the life of a believer. When people step out in faith on the Lord Jesus Christ, often the winds and water are boisterous and they start to lose faith. He might have doubted, but at least he turned to the right Source to save him from the results of his doubt!
 - D. Verse 31. The deliverance was immediate. He never was truly in danger with the Lord there. Why, then, did he doubt? "O you of little faith" is five times said by the Lord, four in Matthew: of those disciples who doubted God's ability to clothe them in Matthew 6:30 and Luke 12:28, of the disciples before He calmed the storm in Matthew 8:26, of Peter here, and of the disciples when they worried about having forgotten to bring food in Matthew 16:8. "Doubt" could also be "waver" or "hesitate." The only other occurrence is Matthew 28:17, when some wavered while they were worshipping Him. Describes starting in faith but then hesitating from carrying through.
 - E. Verse 32. When the Lord arrived their troubles were all over.
 - F. Verse 33. "Worship" is the Greek *proskuneo*, which should only be done to God. This is what they should have believed, and what we should believe as well.
- V. Conclusion: The Lord proved His power over nature once again by coming to His disciples, walking on the sea. Peter wanted to join Him, and he did walk on water as long as he kept his eyes on the Lord. When he looked at the water and noticed the wind, however, he wavered and started to sink. The Lord rescued Him, and we should remember the lesson: keeping our eyes on the Lord is the way to confidence and victory!