

# Jesus Displays His Deity by Walking on Water

## John 6:16-22

### John 6:16–21 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup> Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, <sup>17</sup> got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them. <sup>18</sup> Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing. <sup>19</sup> So when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; and they were afraid. <sup>20</sup> But He said to them, **“It is I; do not be afraid.”** <sup>21</sup> Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.

### Introduction:

It has been said that, Mark Twain was accompanied by his wife on one of his visits to the Holy Land. They were staying in Tiberius on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. It was a moonlit night, and the weather was perfect, which gave Twain the romantic idea of taking his wife for a boat ride on the lake. They walked down to the pier, and Twain inquired of a man sitting in a rowboat how much he would charge to row them out on the

water. Twain was dressed in his usual white suit, white shoes, and white Texas hat. The oarsman, presuming him to be a wealthy rancher from the USA, said, "Well, I guess about twenty-five dollars." Mark Twain thanked him, and, as he turned away with his wife on his arm, he was heard to exclaim, "Now I know why Jesus walked!"

If you read commentaries, or even read some of sermons of preachers, you can get the idea that there are a number of very strange reasons why Jesus walked on the Water.

No doubt there are many applications and lessons we can learn from this amazing miracle.

But I propose that there is really one reason ultimately that Jesus did this.

Remember the purpose of John  
**John 20:30–31 (NKJV)**

<sup>30</sup> And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup> but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

Mark 6:52

<sup>51</sup> Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. <sup>52</sup> **For they had not**

**understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.**

Mark 16:14 (NKJV)

<sup>14</sup> Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.

Mark alone explained (*gar, for*) **they had not** caught on to the meaning of **the loaves** miracle (cf. 6:35–44) as a pointer to His true identity. So they did not recognize Him when He walked on the water; they were spiritually imperceptive (cf. 3:5).

Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 132). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

What a singular statement! The meaning seems to be that if they had but “considered [reflected upon] the miracle of the loaves,” wrought but a few hours before, they would have *wondered at nothing* which He might do within the whole circle of power and grace.

Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Vol. 2, p. 75). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

The disciples had failed their test because they lacked spiritual insight and receptive hearts. The miracle of the loaves and fishes had made no lasting impression on them. After all, if Jesus could multiply food and feed thousands of people, then surely He could protect them in

the storm. Even a disciple of Jesus Christ can develop a hard heart if he fails to respond to the spiritual lessons that must be learned in the course of life and ministry.

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 133). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

### **Matthew 14:33 (NKJV)**

<sup>33</sup> Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God.”

## **Review**

The Feeding of the 20-25,000 in John 6:1-15

## **Lesson**

- I. **The Exposition**
  - A. **The Departure Described**
  - B. **The Danger Defined**
  - C. **The Deity Displayed**
  - D. **The Disturbed Disciples**
  - E. **The Distance Diminished**

## **II. The Application**

- A. The Authority of Christ**
- B. The Sovereign Power of Christ**
- C. The Omniscience of Christ**
- D. The Compassion of Christ**

## **I. The Exposition**

### **A. The Departure Described**

<sup>16</sup> Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, <sup>17</sup> got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them.

### **Matthew 14:22–23 (NKJV)**

*<sup>22</sup> Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent*

*the multitudes away. <sup>23</sup> And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there.*

6:16–17. According to Mark 6:45, Jesus compelled His disciples to get **into the boat** and go to Bethsaida while He dismissed the crowds. From Bethsaida they went on toward **Capernaum**. Both villages are at the north end of the Sea of Galilee. **His disciples went down to the lake**, for the land is hilly and high on the east side. As they got out on the lake, the sun went down and the wind picked up. Jesus was up in the hills praying while watching them in their toil (Mark 6:45–48).

Blum, E. A. (1985). John. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 294). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

## **B. The Danger Defined**

And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them. <sup>18</sup> Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing. <sup>19</sup> So when they had rowed about three or four miles,.....

### **Matthew 14:24 (NKJV)**

<sup>24</sup> But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

**megas: great**

**Original Word:** μέγας, μεγάλη, μέγα

**Part of Speech:** Adjective; Adverb, Comparative

**Transliteration:** megas

**Phonetic Spelling:** (meg'-as)

**Short Definition:** large, great

**Definition:** large, great, in the widest sense.

[1501](#) [e]

[eikosi](#)

**εΐκοσι**

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[pente](#)

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[triakonta](#)

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thirty

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**Then the sea arose**

**diegeiró: to arouse completely**

**Original Word:** διεγείρω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** diegeiró

**Phonetic Spelling:** (dee-eg-i'-ro)

**Short Definition:** I wake out of sleep, I arouse

**Definition:** I wake out of sleep, arouse in general, stir up.

### **Mark 4:39**

**And he awoke** and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

**And the sea was rising** (ἡ τε θάλασσα διεγειρετο [*hē te thalassa diegeireto*]). Imperfect (without augment) passive of διεγειρω [*diegeirō*], late compound to wake up thoroughly, to arouse. **By reason of a great wind that blew** (ἀνεμου μεγάλου πνεοντος [*anemou megalou pneontos*]). Genitive absolute with present active participle of πνεω [*pneō*], to blow, “a great wind blowing.”

Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Jn 6:18). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

### **stadion: a stadium (a Gr. measure of length), by impl. a racecourse**

**Original Word:** ΣΤΑΔΙΟΝ, ΟΥ, ΤΟ

**Part of Speech:** Noun, Masculine; Noun, Neuter

**Transliteration:** stadion

**Phonetic Spelling:** (stad'-ee-on)

**Short Definition:** one eighth of a Roman mile

**Definition:** (a) a stadium, one eighth of a Roman mile, (b) a race-course for public games.

Though they were only to travel a short distance, the storm was so violent that, despite all their efforts to control their boat, the storm had driven them nearly four miles out into the very midst of the sea. Being the fourth watch of the night (3:00 AM to 6:00 AM), they had been rowing and

straining at their oars for approaching nine hours! They were totally exhausted.

described in **Mark 4:37**:

A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped.

**Luke 8** describes the wind and raging waves during this storm. **Matthew** calls it a furious storm without warning.



High cliffs overlooking the Sea of Galilee

Such storms result from differences in temperatures between the seacoast and the mountains beyond. The Sea of Galilee lies 680 feet below sea level. It is bounded by hills, especially on the east side where they reach 2000 feet high. These heights are a source of cool, dry air.

In contrast, directly around the sea, the climate is semi-tropical with warm, moist air. The large difference in height between surrounding land and the sea causes large temperature and pressure changes. This results in strong winds dropping to the sea, funneling through the hills.

The Sea of Galilee is small, and these winds may descend directly to the center of the lake with violent results. When the contrasting air masses meet, a storm can arise quickly and without warning. Small boats caught out on the sea are in immediate danger.

The Sea of Galilee is relatively shallow, just 200 feet at its greatest depth. A shallow lake is “whipped up” by wind more rapidly than deep water, where energy is more readily absorbed.

Lake Erie [in the United States] provides somewhat similar to the Sea of Galilee. Erie is more than a hundred times larger, but it has the same 200 feet maximum depth, the shallowest of the Great Lakes. Lake Erie is especially well known as the stormy, moody member of the Great Lake system. It is easily stirred up by west winds to produce violent waves and even the largest fishing boats are put at risk.

### **C. The Deity Displayed**

<sup>19</sup> So when they had rowed about three or four miles, **they saw Jesus walking on the sea** and drawing near the boat;

**Matthew 14:25 (NKJV)**

<sup>25</sup> Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.

**Mark 6:47–48 (NKJV)**

<sup>47</sup> Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He *was* alone on the land. <sup>48</sup> Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, **and would have passed them by.**

**He was not going to pass by,... Hey guys, good to see you, hope you make it**

## They saw

**theóreo: to look at, gaze**

**Original Word:** θεωρέω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** theóreo

**Phonetic Spelling:** (theh-o-reh'-o)

**Short Definition:** I behold, look at, experience

**Definition:** I look at, gaze, behold; I see, experience, discern; I partake of. **2334** *theōréō* (from **2300** /*theáomai*, "to gaze, contemplate") – gaze on for the purpose of *analyzing (discriminating)*.

[**2334** (*theōréō*) is the root of the English term "theatre," i.e. where people *concentrate on the meaning* of an action (performance).]

## Walking

**peripateó: to walk**

**Original Word:** περιπατέω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** peripateó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (per-ee-pat-eh'-o)

**Short Definition:** I walk, conduct my life

**Definition:** I walk, hence Hebraistically (in an ethical sense): I conduct my life, live.

### HELPS Word-studies

**4043** *peripatéō* (from **4012** /*perí*, "comprehensively *around*," which intensifies **3961** /*patéō*, "walk") – properly, walk *around*, i.e. in a complete circuit (going "full circle").

Still, some scholars have held the view that while this event took place, it was not miraculous: [Albert Schweitzer](#), for example, suggested that the disciples saw Jesus

walking on the shore, but were confused by high wind and darkness; some scholars who accept this "misperception thesis" argue that Mark originally wrote that Jesus walked on the seashore rather than on the shore, and that John had a more accurate version.<sup>[21]</sup> Others have held that the entire episode is a "pious legend" (B.H. Branscomb, 1937), based perhaps on some lost incident; perhaps Jesus waded through the surf (Vincent Taylor, 1957), or perhaps he walked on a sand bar (Sherman Johnson, 1972, J.D.M. Derrett, 1981).<sup>[22]</sup>

Finally are those scholars who regard the story as an example of "creative symbolism", or [myth](#),<sup>[23]</sup> which probably was understood by a part of the audience literally and by others allegorically.<sup>[24]</sup> [Rudolf Bultmann](#) pointed out that the sea-walking theme is familiar in many cultures.<sup>[23]</sup> Furthermore, the motif of walking on water was associated with kings like [Xerxes](#) or [Alexander](#), but also rejected and satirized as humanly impossible and as proverbial for the arrogance of the rulers by [Menander](#), [Dio Chrysostom](#) or in [2 Maccabees 5:21](#).<sup>[24]</sup>

**By Sara Goudarzi**



Rare conditions could have conspired to create hard-to-see ice on the Sea of Galilee that a person could have walked on back when Jesus is said to have [walked on water](#), a scientist reported Tuesday.

## Amazing Animals That Walk on Water

Posted by [Mary Bates](#) in [Water Currents](#) on June 19, 2014

It's no miracle: More than 1,200 species of animals have evolved the ability to walk on water, from tiny insects and spiders to larger animals such as [birds](#), [reptiles](#), and even [mammals](#).

Walking on water isn't magical, though—it all comes down to physics.

Tiny animals can rest on the water's surface because their weight is supported by the water's surface tension, the force created when water molecules cling to each other. "Surface tension is a property of the air-water interface that makes it behave, roughly speaking, like a trampoline," said [John Bush](#), a professor of applied mathematics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who studies fluid dynamics.

### **D. The Disturbed Disciples**

<sup>9</sup> So when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; **and they were afraid.**

**Matthew 14:26 (NKJV)**

<sup>26</sup> And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out for fear.

### Mark 6:49–50 (NKJV)

<sup>49</sup> And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; <sup>50</sup> for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, “**Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.**”

### Afraid

**phobeó:** to put to flight, to terrify, frighten

**Original Word:** φοβέομαι

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** phobeó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (fob-eh'-o)

**Short Definition:** I fear, am terrified

**Definition:** I fear, dread, reverence, am afraid, terrified.

**Cognate:** **5399** *phobéō* – to fear, withdraw (flee) from, avoid. See **5401** (*phobos*).

## E. The Distance Diminished

<sup>20</sup> But He said to them, “**It is I; do not be afraid.**”

### Matthew 14:27–32 (NKJV)

<sup>27</sup> But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.”

<sup>28</sup> And Peter answered Him and said, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.”

<sup>29</sup> So He said, “Come.” And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.

<sup>30</sup> But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, “Lord, save me!”

<sup>31</sup> And immediately Jesus stretched out *His* hand and caught him, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” <sup>32</sup> And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

What is significant about the words "It is I"?

[Matthew 14:27](#); [Mark 6:50](#); [John 6:20](#).

**Comment:** These three words are in Greek only two words (*ego eimi*), and they are much more powerful and significant than most Bible readers realize. Jesus says not, "It is I" but "I am," which is a direct assertion of His deity. Moses had asked God:

"Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say

to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" ([Exodus 3:13-14](#)).

Clearly, Jesus is declaring that He is the *Yahweh* of the Old Testament. Throughout the New Testament, there are a number of significant amplifications of this: Christ is the "I AM" that is the bread of life; the light of the world; the good shepherd; the resurrection; the way, the truth, and the life; and the Alpha and Omega, among other things ([John 6:35](#); [8:12](#); [10:11](#); [11:25](#); [14:6](#); [Revelation 1:8](#)).

#### [Aramaic Bible in Plain English](#)

But Yeshua said to them, "I AM THE LIVING GOD, do not be afraid."

<sup>21</sup> Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.

**Immediately** (εὐθέως). Whether Jesus actually entered the boat or not, John does not say. The more natural inference is that he did. Both Matthew and Mark say so. Their immediate and miraculous arrival at the shore was simultaneous either with their entertaining the wish to receive Him, or with His actually coming on board. Only John mentions this incident. Matthew and Mark say that *the wind ceased*.

Vincent, M. R. (1887). *Word studies in the New Testament* (Vol. 2, p. 147). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

## Immediately

**eutheós: at once, directly**

**Original Word:** εὐθέως

**Part of Speech:** Adverb

**Transliteration:** eutheós

**Phonetic Spelling:** (yoo-theh'-oce)

**Short Definition:** immediately, soon

**Definition:** immediately, soon, at once.

## II. The Application

### Mark 6:51–52 (NKJV)

<sup>51</sup> Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. **And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled.**

The disciples **were completely amazed** (*existanto*, lit., “out of their minds”; cf. 2:12; 5:42) among themselves at this revelation of Jesus’ presence and power

Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 132). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

### **Matthew 14:33 (NKJV)**

<sup>33</sup> Then those who were in the boat came and **worshiped Him, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God.”**

## **A. The Authority of Christ**

### **Matthew 14:22–23 (NKJV)**

<sup>22</sup> *Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.*

### **Matthew 14:27–32 (NKJV)**

<sup>27</sup> But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, **“Be of good cheer! It is I; ( I AM) do not be afraid.”**

<sup>28</sup> And Peter answered Him and said, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.”

<sup>29</sup> So He said, **“Come.”**

## **B. The Sovereign Power of Christ**

The third significant point is that Jesus proved Himself to be in command of the elements, something only God can do. He revealed this truth to the disciples who recognized His divinity and responded with a confession of faith in Jesus as God:

in Matthew 8:27: “What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him.” Here they answer their own question: “Truly you are the Son of God.”

### **Job 9:8 (NKJV)**

<sup>8</sup> He alone spreads out the heavens,  
And treads on the waves of the sea;

### **Psalms 93:2–4 (NKJV)**

<sup>2</sup> Your throne *is* established from of old;  
You *are* from everlasting.

<sup>3</sup> The floods have lifted up, O Lord,  
The floods have lifted up their voice;  
The floods lift up their waves.

<sup>4</sup> The Lord on high *is* mightier  
Than the noise of many waters,  
*Than* the mighty waves of the sea.

### **Psalms 107:23–25 (NKJV)**

<sup>23</sup> Those who go down to the sea in ships,  
Who do business on great waters,

<sup>24</sup> They see the works of the Lord,  
And His wonders in the deep.

<sup>25</sup> For He commands and raises the stormy wind,  
Which lifts up the waves of the sea.

### **Psalms 135:6–7 (NKJV)**

<sup>6</sup> Whatever the Lord pleases He does,

In heaven and in earth,  
In the seas and in all deep places.

- <sup>7</sup> He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth;  
He makes lightning for the rain;  
He brings the wind out of His treasures.

### **C. The Omniscience of Christ**

Mark 6:47

<sup>47</sup> Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He was alone on the land. <sup>48</sup> Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them.

### **D. The Compassion of Christ**

Jesus always comes to us in the storms of life. This is reminiscent of the words of God to Isaiah: “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you” ([Isaiah 43:2](#)). The Lord may not come at the time we think He should come, because He knows when we need Him the most. Jesus had waited until the boat was as far

from land as possible, when all their hope was gone. In essence, Jesus was testing the disciples' faith, and this meant removing every human prop.

### **Isaiah 41:10 (NKJV)**

<sup>10</sup> Fear not, for I *am* with you;  
 Be not dismayed, for I *am* your God.  
 I will strengthen you,  
 Yes, I will help you,  
 I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'

### **Psalms 27:1 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> The Lord *is* my light and my salvation;  
 Whom shall I fear?  
 The Lord *is* the strength of my life;  
 Of whom shall I be afraid?

### **Psalms 46:1–3 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> God *is* our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.  
<sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear,  
 Even though the earth be removed,  
 And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;  
<sup>3</sup> *Though* its waters roar *and* be troubled,  
*Though* the mountains shake with its swelling.

Selah

### **Romans 8:31–38 (NKJV)**

<sup>31</sup> What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? <sup>33</sup> Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? *It is* God who justifies. <sup>34</sup> Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. <sup>35</sup> Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup> As it is written:

*"For Your sake we are killed all day long;  
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."*

<sup>37</sup> Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, <sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*When Augustine was writing about this incident he said, "He came treading the waves; and so he puts all the swelling tumults of life under his feet. Christians--why afraid?" It is the simple fact of life, a fact which has been proved by countless thousands of men and women in every generation, that when Christ is there the storm*

*becomes a calm, the tumult becomes a peace, what cannot be done is done, the unbearable becomes bearable, and men pass the breaking point and do not break. To walk with Christ will be for us also the conquest of the storm. William Barclay*

## **Conclusion**

Though they had a long way to go in their spiritual understanding, the disciples were growing in their faith in the Lord. Also, this was the first time the disciples are said to have worshiped Jesus. In Matthew 2:11, the magi from the East worshiped Jesus. Later, a leper is said to have worshiped Jesus (Matthew 8:2). A synagogue ruler does the same thing in Matthew 9:18. But this is the first time the disciples worshiped Him. It is also important to note that their worship is joined to their confession (Matthew 14:33).

And this is what worship is, acknowledging who God is and praising Him both for who He is and for what He has done. It was in this story that the disciples took the first step and worshiped Jesus as the Son of God.