

CHRIST'S SEVEN SIGN MIRACLES OF HIS PERSON AND MISSION

V. Christ's Walking On The Water: His Protective Interventions In Trials

(John 6:16-21)

I. Introduction

- A. John's Gospel presents only seven miracles of Jesus in His earthly ministry, each of them sign-miracles that reveal His Person and mission for readers to believe that He is the Messiah, the Son of God, and by believing to receive eternal life, John 20:31; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, "Intro. to the Gospel Acc. to John," p. 1492.
- B. Viewing these sign-miracles both strengthens our faith in Christ and offers us talking points in witnessing to the unsaved, so we view the fifth sign-miracle, Christ's walking on the water, for our edification (as follows):

II. Christ's Walking On The Water: His Protective Interventions In Trials, John 6:16-21.

- A. The miracle of Christ's walking on the water is set in circumstances that typify great trials, John 6:16-19:
 - 1. The miracle was set in the discouragement of an anticlimax to a great spiritual ministry, John 6:15:
 - a. We noted in our last lesson that the feeding of the five thousand was so great a miracle that it is the only miracle of Jesus' earthly ministry that is recorded in all four gospels, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 293.
 - b. However, instead of believing on Christ for eternal life, though the people who were fed realized that Jesus was by this miracle indicating He was the prophet like unto Moses that Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15-19 predicted would arise, in unbelief, they tried by force to make Jesus their own kind of a king.
 - c. Jesus thus withdrew from them (John 6:15) and sent His disciples away by boat to Bethsaida (Mark 6:45), an anticlimax for both the people and the disciples given the people's desire then to make Jesus king.
 - 2. The miracle was set in the darkness of night, generally a foreboding time for people, John 6:16a, 17b.
 - 3. The miracle was set in a journey at sea, a place of potential danger for many people, John 6:16b-17a.
 - 4. The miracle was set in the context of Jesus' absence, typical of a sense of isolation from God, John 6:17b.
 - 5. The miracle was set in the exhausting experience of fighting a wind storm at sea, John 6:18-19:
 - a. Having crossed over to Bethsaida and then starting to row west toward Capernaum, the disciples found the west wind that often picks up in the evening beginning to blow against them, Ibid., p. 294; John 6:18.
 - b. John 6:19 claims the disciples had rowed 3 or 4 miles from Bethsaida, but that town is less than 3 miles from Capernaum (The MacMillan Bible Atlas, 1968, map 233), so they likely had been blown off course and were far out to sea, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to John 6:19.
 - 6. The miracle was set in the hard experience of sleeplessness at night and great fatigue, for Jesus came to them in the fourth watch of the night, between 3 a. m. and 6 a. m. (Ibid., fn. to Mark 6:48); John 6:19a.
 - 7. The miracle was set in the unsettling experience of fear of an unknown, potential danger, John 6:19b:
 - a. In the middle of the sea far off course at night in great fatigue amid hours of struggle to row against a contrary wind and waves, the disciples saw Jesus walking toward them on the water, John 6:19b.
 - b. Mark 6:49 reports they thought they were seeing a spirit, presumably a demonic spirit who was about to destroy them, so they cried out in fear. John 6:19c simply adds that they were afraid.
- B. However, Christ's miracles on the sea totally delivered His disciples from each of these trials, John 6:20-21:
 - 1. Christ ministered verbally to clarify to His disciples what they were beholding was Him, not an evil spirit come to destroy them as they presumed, that they were not to be afraid, but encouraged, John 6:20.
 - 2. Christ then ministered miraculously to end all of the physical trials His disciples faced, Jn. 6:21; Mk. 6:51:
 - a. Christ miraculously ended the dangers of the disciple's voyage: Mark 6:51 reveals that when Jesus entered the ship, not only did they enjoy His comforting presence, but the wind ceased, what would have caused the sea as well to settle down, ending the disciples' difficult and dangerous predicament.
 - b. John 6:21 also reveals that when Jesus entered the ship, "at once, immediately" (*eutheos*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 344; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 320) the boat "came to be" (*ginomai*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 157-159) at the land to which they had been going. (*hupagon*, imperfect tense of *hupago*, "go"; Ibid., p. 844; The Analyt. Grk. Lex., 1972, p. 416)
 - c. This miracle ended the labor the disciples had faced in their hours of rowing throughout the night, for Jesus instantly moved the boat and all aboard several miles across the sea to their desired destination!

Lesson: Christ's walking on the water to His disciples, then calming them, calming the wind and calming the sea and instantly moving their boat and all aboard to their port of destination solved all the disciples' trials.

Application: May we trust Christ to handle all our trials and testify of His ability and willingness to help others!