

Miracles of Nature



Another category of miracles is what we call "The miracles of Nature." In many ways, this describes all miracles. Miracles, by definition are "Super-natural" - the things that nature cannot do. A better description might be "Miracles of Rescue," which in many ways is what Jesus came to do. His "seek and save what is lost" mission, was a rescue mission.

This study focuses upon two miracles: **calming of the storm** and **walking on water**. There are many similarities and points of interests:

- Both miracles involved the disciples in a boat on the same sea
- Both involved storms at night
- Both miracles show the disciples afraid and lacking faith
- There is great transition in the disciples' response from stilling the storm to walking on water: "What kind of man is this..." to "You are certainly God's Son"
- There are two firsts here:
 - first time the disciples worshipped Jesus
 - first time the disciples declared that Jesus was God's Son
- There were multiple earlier miracles involving water (Noah: Flood; Moses: turning the Nile to blood; parting Red Sea; striking the rock and water coming out; Joshua: parting the Jordan River; Elijah: pouring water over the sacrifice on Mt. Carmel; Jesus: turning water to wine)
- These miracles were not the first to involve nature: most of the ten plagues involved aspects of bugs, weather and darkness; the sun stood still for Joshua; stars pointed the wise men to baby Jesus
- These miracles of rescue demonstrated that Jesus had authority over not just man but all creation
 - Weather is larger than we are. We can dress for the weather but we cannot change it.

Robert Taylor: *"Faith begins or ends with the miraculous. No man can believe in God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, while denying the Biblical miracles in both testaments."*

A. Calming The Storm (Mt 8:23-27; Mk 4:35-41; Lk 8:22-25)

- Matthew: there arose a "shaking storm;" the boat was covered with the waves (8:24)
- Mark: fierce gale of wind (where we get our word for earthquake); waves were OVER the boat; the boat was filling up with water (4:37)
- Luke: they began to be in danger (8:23)

1. There are some parallels to Jonah

- both were asleep in the boat during a storm
- in both the sailors were fearing death
- in both the storm suddenly stopped: for Jonah: he was tossed overboard;
for Jesus: He stopped the storm

We have a hymn: Master, the tempest is raging

In 1986, a boat from the first century period was discovered at the bottom of the Sea of Galilee. It was 26 ft long and 7.5 ft wide. Room enough for 12 passengers. It has been called "The Jesus boat."



The disciples ask: "Save us, Lord, we are perishing" (Matthew)

- Jesus rebukes the disciples for little faith
- Jesus rebukes the wind
- the men marveled, were amazed and became very much afraid that the wind and the sea obeyed Him

Mark: He said to the sea, "Hush, be still" (4:39).

- Who do you think Jesus was talking to?
- Can the sea "hear?"

This miracle demonstrated Jesus' control of an impossible situation. The storm was IMMEDIATELY obedient to Jesus.

B. Walking on Water (Matthew 14:22-33; Mark 6:45-52; John 6:16-21)

- Matthew and Mark tell of both miracles of rescue
- Only Matthew tells of Peter walking on water
- this takes place between 3-6 AM
- Jesus made His disciples get into the boat immediately" - the massive crowd that had been fed wanted to make Jesus a king (Jn 6:14-15)
- the disciples are alone. Jesus is praying on a mountain
- they had gone 3 or 4 miles (middle of the sea)
- the sea became stirred up because of a strong wind
- Jesus appears walking and they think it is a ghost—it was common to believe the sea held evil spirits and something was coming to hurt them
- Jesus said, "It is I" which really means, "I AM" - the name God used when He spoke to Moses



Peter's Walking On Water

1. Peter understood that he could not walk on the water himself. He asked the Lord.
2. It took courage to do what Peter did
 - many of the modern pictures of this shows Peter walking on calm water in the daytime. This was not the occasion. It was dark and stormy with strong winds.
3. Peter started to sink because he lost faith. He was afraid.

There are actually FOUR Miracles Here:

1. Jesus walked on water
2. Peter walked on water
3. The storm stopped immediately
4. The boat was immediately at the shore (Jn 6:21)

Some Lessons:

1. It is remarkable how many times these disciples were afraid. Their fear was in visible things.
2. Jesus shows that fear and faith do not fit together
3. Jesus calmed the hearts of the disciples
4. These miracles attest that Jesus is beyond the laws that confine us and limit us. He had all authority.
5. Storms help us to see Jesus.
6. Storms come
7. Jesus is there
8. We must believe
9. Lord, help us to help others who are dealing with storms