

The "I AM" Walks on the Sea

John 6:16-21

September 25, 2022

1. The Disciples Depart without Jesus (16-17)
 - a. Earlier that day, Jesus had gone up into the mountain alone (15).
 - b. That evening, the disciples went down to the Sea of Galilee (16).
 - c. They intended to sail a boat to Capernaum (17a).
 - d. They find themselves in the middle of the Sea of Galilee, alone (17b).
 - i. The disciples are alone because Jesus is not with them.
 - ii. The disciples are immersed in darkness.
 1. Darkness throughout this Gospel is a metaphor for man's spiritual condition without Christ (cf. 1:5).
 2. The darkness would later hinder the disciples from recognizing Jesus on the Sea (cf. 6:19), and so the spiritual darkness of this world hinders mankind from recognizing Jesus today.
2. Jesus Walks on the Sea (18-19)
 - a. A sudden wind began to whip up the Sea of Galilee into a treacherous storm (18).
 - i. The Sea of Galilee is known to this day for sudden, unpredictable storms.
 - ii. Storms on lakes are far more treacherous than storms on the open ocean because the waves come from different directions.
 - b. Even more terrifying than the storm was their encounter with the supernatural Son of God (19).
 - i. They had rowed about 3 ½ miles across the Sea of Galilee.
 1. The storm had likely exhausted their human ability.
 2. Jesus allows us to go through storms to teach us our limitations and open our eyes to our need for Him.
 - ii. They saw Jesus walking on the Sea, but they didn't recognize Him.
 1. In walking on the Sea, Jesus proves that He is God.
 - a. In the beginning, the Spirit moved upon the face of the waters (Genesis 1:2), Jesus, and here Jesus is walking on the waters.
 - b. Job declares that God alone treads on the waves of the sea (Job 9:8).
 2. As Jesus approached the ship, the disciples were filled with fear.
 - a. Moses was filled with fear when He realized that He was in the presence of God.
 - b. God is good to show us His almighty power.
 3. The Encounter with the Son of God (20)
 - a. Jesus proclaims His identity as the "I AM" (ego eimi) (20a).
 - i. "I AM" (ego eimi) in the Gospel of John has a central status in the identification of Jesus as the personal expression of God.
 - ii. John 4:26 "Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he."
 - iii. John 6:35 "Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life..."
 - iv. John 8:58 "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."
 - b. Jesus proclaims words of comfort, "Be not afraid" (20b).
 - i. Though we have every reason to tremble in the presence of God, because of Jesus we have hope.
 - ii. If Jesus is our hope, we have no cause for fear.
 4. The Disciples Receive Jesus (21)
 - a. The disciples willingly chose to receive Jesus into the ship (21a).
 - i. Jesus's offer of hope must be willingly received (cf. 3:16; Romans 10:13).
 - ii. Jesus has declared Himself as the "I AM", God Himself, the Son of God, but it is our responsibility to personally receive Him as such.
 - b. When the disciples received Him, they found themselves at the shore.
 - i. Our striving falls hopelessly short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).
 - ii. Where faith begins is where our works end (Ephesians 2:8-9).
 - iii. Hebrews 7:25 "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Conclusion:

1. There is a striking comparison to the stirring of the waters in 5:1-18 in which the lame man and a great multitude of sick huddle around the waters believing them to be the source of the healing power of God. But neither God nor his power were contained in those waters. God and His power were entirely located in the person of Jesus who walks on the waters!
2. Jesus is the "I AM"! Jesus reveals the Father. It is imperative that Jesus be understood as the only true spokesperson for God. God has spoken in the first person, the person of Jesus Christ, and there is no other name under heaven whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12).
3. In the presence of God, fear is both natural and unwarranted. God is terrifying, and yet when God is embraced there is no safer place. Psalm 46 serves as a beautiful expansion of Jesus's command, "Be not afraid." Though the world rages around us (46:6), Christian, be still (46:10) and know that God is with us (46:11).
4. Though the disciples were full of fear, they willingly chose to receive Jesus. A relationship with Jesus begins when you choose to receive Him in simple faith. Have you received Him? Christian, if you've received Him, are you growing in your trust in Him?