



EXPLORE **THE BIBLE.**

Adults

Matthew 14–28

Commentary

Spring 2026



WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

If you're an adult of a particular generation, you'll probably remember a toy called The Magic 8 Ball™. For those who aren't as familiar, this was a foolproof tool for getting answers to any questions about the future . . . sort of.

In one sense, the 8 Ball guaranteed you an answer to every question. If you asked about your future spouse or whether you were going to pass your history test, the 8 Ball had an answer. The problem was that the Magic 8 Ball carried about as much prophetic authority as a fortune cookie. At best, the answers were vague. At worst, they were irrelevant.

Then again, it was designed for entertainment. No one with a modicum of sense would entrust their future to an oversized pool ball.

Of course, human nature still longs to know what's ahead. Whether we're thinking about this life or the next, we seek clarity. We want to see what's just around the bend.

Jesus understood that. That's why He often talked with His disciples about what would happen in the short term and in the distant future. Throughout the Gospels, including Matthew's Gospel, Jesus reminded His followers that He holds the future. He is God. He loves us more than we can imagine. He remains in control, and His people can trust Him.

Jesus might not give you every answer you've ever wanted, but He has promised to give you peace for today, tomorrow, and eternity. That starts with a personal relationship with Him. If you're seeking answers to the most important questions in life, here's what you need to do . . .

- **Admit** to God that you are a sinner. Repent, turning from your sin.
- **By faith receive** Jesus as God's Son and accept His gift of forgiveness from sin. He took the penalty for your sin by dying on the cross. Jesus also rose from the dead, making a new, eternal life possible for us.
- **Confess** your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. You may pray a prayer similar to this as you call on God to save you: "Dear God, I know that You love me. I confess my sin and need of salvation. I turn away from my sin and place my faith in Jesus as my Savior and Lord. In the name of Jesus I pray, amen."

After you have received Jesus Christ into your life, tell a pastor or another Christian about your decision. Show others your faith in Christ by asking for baptism by immersion in your local church as a public expression of your faith.

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*Evangelistic Emphasis

MEET THE WRITERS



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Explore the Bible: Adult Commentary (ISSN 1092-7174; Item 005075123) is published quarterly by Lifeway Christian Resources, 200 Powell Place, Suite 100, Brentwood, TN 37027-7707, © 2025 Lifeway Christian Resources.

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Explore the Bible
Adult Commentary
Spring 2026
Volume 3, Number 3

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Printed in the United States of America

FROM THE TEAM LEADER



Timeless Truth

Two weeks ago, I stumbled across a box that held jewelry and small trinkets that once belonged to my grandmother. My task of organizing a closet suddenly felt like a treasure hunt. Somehow, I'd forgotten about putting this box away, meaning to sort through it "someday." Unpacking each item slowly, I took time to inspect each piece. While some pieces of jewelry were very familiar, bringing memories quickly to mind, others were less so. Each one felt like a prized possession. Every piece was dear to me because of its original owner.

The Gospel of Matthew provides us with a look at the key teachings of Jesus. We get a glimpse into Jesus's ministry in Galilee, His time spent in Jerusalem, and the week leading up to His crucifixion and resurrection. Matthew described the morning of Jesus's resurrection when the women arrived at His tomb only to find it empty. Not bound by death, Jesus arose! Time spent in this Gospel reminds us of Jesus's identity as the promised Messiah.

This quarter, we will examine several of Jesus's important teachings. Each one is valuable. Each teaching offers us a deeper understanding of Jesus's earthly ministry. Together, these teachings show us how to live as faithful followers of Christ, giving daily guidance and continual encouragement. Like the cherished possessions I recently discovered, each biblical truth turns our attention to the One we received it from. I hope this quarter leads you to a deeper appreciation of God's Word and the One who gave His life to bring us salvation.

In Him,

Amber Vaden

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Explore

Discover



BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

Matthew 14–28 calls us to radical trust in Jesus, to faith that walks forward even when it’s hard, and to a surrender that sees beyond earthly loss to eternal gain. The question remains: Are we willing to follow Christ, no matter the cost?

WRITER

While Matthew did not identify himself as the author of this Gospel, he did leave clues to his identity. Most scholars acknowledge the author as being a Jewish Christian because they see his knowledge about the Jewish law, customs, traditions, and language throughout the Gospel. The Romans normally hired people from the local population who could speak both Aramaic and Greek. Such individuals could communicate with the locals and relate well with Roman officials. Matthew would have fit the bill.

This Gospel’s content points to a Jewish author, and most scholars include Matthew as the likely candidate. This is indicated by the strong early tradition supporting Matthew as the writer, along with the vocabulary and writing style, the Jewish themes, and the financial references. Matthew’s inclusion of the genealogy tracing Jesus’s ancestry from a Jewish perspective (1:1-17) provides additional support of him as being the author of this Gospel.

The early church fathers, including Papias, Irenaeus, Origen, and Eusebius attested to Matthew as the human writer of the Gospel that bore his name. Written in relatively good Greek (and better than Mark’s Gospel but not to the level of the native Greek writer Luke), Matthew’s contacts with Gentiles as a tax collector would have made him culturally educated and capable of writing in the style found in this Gospel. Given his Jewish background and his familiarity with the Jewish Scriptures (Matthew contains more Old Testament quotations than any other Gospel), Matthew presented Jesus as the fulfillment of prophecy. His frequent use of Jewish terminology, for example “kingdom of heaven” instead of “kingdom of God,” suggests the author wrote for a Jewish audience and is consistent with Matthew’s background.

As a former tax collector and also known as Levi (Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27), Matthew’s training in meticulous record keeping and organization fit the structured nature of this Gospel. He included specific financial references not found in other Gospels, such as the temple tax (Matt. 17:24-27) and the parable of the unforgiving servant (18:23-35). The calling of Matthew (9:9-13) with its personal details indicates the author was writing about a firsthand experience.



DATE

The exact date of the Gospel of Matthew remains a debated topic, but scholarship generally places it prior to AD 100. Some scholars suggest it was written between AD 70–85. The three strongest pieces of evidence for this dating include: the final separation between the church and the synagogue sometime after AD 70; the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple in AD 70; and the generally held belief of Matthew’s use of Mark’s Gospel. The church father Clement (late first century AD) claimed Mark wrote while Peter lived in Rome (AD 45–65), which requires a date for Matthew’s Gospel later in the first century. Irenaeus (second century AD) also said Matthew wrote his Gospel while Peter and Paul were evangelizing in Rome (mid AD 60s). Others favor a date in the 60s–70s.

Most scholars see the relationship among the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) and identify Mark as the earliest of the three, written somewhere between AD 50 to 70, possibly just before or during the fall of Jerusalem. Furthermore, scholars also agree that Matthew and Luke used Mark’s Gospel extensively as one of their sources.

PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

Matthew wrote to demonstrate that Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies concerning the promised Messiah and to instruct Christians—especially Jewish Christians—on what it means to live as citizens of the kingdom of God. Therefore, he saturated his Gospel with Hebrew Scriptures, referring to the Old Testament 129 times (fifty-three direct citations and seventy-six allusions) taken from more than half of the Old Testaments books. He drew from every part of the Jewish Bible: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. These believers would have included Gentile Christians who also had an interest in the fulfillment of prophecy in Jesus as Messiah. The original readers, who may have included Hellenistic Jews and Jews of the Diaspora, probably struggled with their identity. Most likely some of the Jewish leaders sharply condemned what they would have called apostates who had defected from Judaism.

THEMES

The last half of Matthew’s Gospel contains a rich mix of narratives and teachings that reveal both who Jesus is and what it means to follow Him. Here are the major themes found across these chapters:

Jesus’s Divine Authority and Identity. From walking on water (14:22-33), healing the sick (15:29-31), providing food for thousands

from a little bread and fish (vv. 32-39), casting out demons (17:14-20), healing the blind (20:29-34), and even His own death (28:6) and resurrection (vv. 18-20), Jesus consistently revealed His unmatched authority. These miracles combined to demonstrate His authority over creation, spiritual forces, and death. Matthew progressively revealed the nature of Christ's divine authority and identity, culminating in Peter's confession (16:16-19) and the Transfiguration (17:1-8). Even in His trial and death on the cross, Jesus exercised quiet control, fulfilling Scripture and declaring His kingship (26:52-56; 27:50; 28:6).

The Nature of True Discipleship. Matthew weaved a thread of discipleship throughout these chapters. Jesus called His followers to deny themselves, take up the cross, and follow Him (16:24-26). Additionally, Jesus warned that greatness in the kingdom comes through humility and service (18:1-5; 20:25-28), not status. The example of the rich young ruler (19:16-22) showed that following Jesus may cost everything, but doing so will lead to eternal life.

The Kingdom of Heaven Reorders Everything. Through parables and interactions, Jesus painted a radically different picture of the kingdom where the first are last, and the last are first (19:29-30; 20:1-16). Jesus elevated children, outsiders, and the poor, while He often rebuked the religious elite. Jesus's teachings and parables on judgment (21:28-45; 22:1-14; 23:1-39; 24:1-25:46) revealed that those confident of their position in heaven might be surprised to find themselves excluded, while the marginalized find themselves welcomed.

Conflict with Religious and Political Powers. As Jesus entered Jerusalem, tension escalated. He cleansed the temple, confronted the Pharisees and Sadducees, and exposed their heresy (21:1-23:39). He taught that external religion without internal transformation had no worth (23:27-28). His arrest, trial, and crucifixion reflected how the corrupt religious and political systems opposed true righteousness.

Suffering, Death, and the Mission of the Messiah. Jesus predicted His suffering and death (16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19) to prepare His followers. His crucifixion fulfilled God's redemptive plan. While betrayed by Judas Iscariot, abandoned by His followers, mocked by the religious leaders and soldiers, and crucified under Pilate, Jesus remained obedient to His Father's will (26:47-27:50). His cry from the cross (27:46) and the tearing of the temple veil (v. 51) revealed His role as the sin-bearing Savior.

His Triumphant Resurrection and the Mission to the World. By His resurrection (28:1-10), the turning point of all history, Jesus conquered death, thus validating His claims and authority. Matthew concluded his Gospel with the Great Commission (vv. 16-20), Jesus's commissioning His disciples to make disciples of all nations. He fueled this mission with His authority and sustaining presence, "I am with you always" (v. 20).



Gospel of Matthew

- I. **Birth and Infancy of Jesus**
(Matt. 1:1-2:23)
- II. **Beginning of Jesus's Ministry in Galilee**
(Matt. 3:1-4:25)
- III. **Discourse One: The Sermon on the Mount**
(Matt. 5:1-7:29)
- IV. **Jesus's First Miracles**
(Matt. 8:1-9:38)
- V. **Discourse Two: Ministry of Jesus's Disciples**
(Matt. 10:1-42)
- VI. **Responses to Jesus's Ministry** (Matt. 11:1-12:50)
- VII. **Discourse Three: Parables about the Kingdom**
(Matt. 13:1-58)
- VIII. **Close of Jesus's Ministry in Galilee**
(Matt. 14:1-17:27)
- IX. **Discourse Four: Character of Jesus's Disciples**
(Matt. 18:1-35)
- X. **Jesus's Ministry on the Way to Jerusalem**
(Matt. 19:1-20:34)
- XI. **Jesus's Ministry in Jerusalem**
(Matt. 21:1-23:39)
- XII. **Discourse Five: Olivet Discourse**
(Matt. 24:1-25:46)
- XIII. **Betrayal, Crucifixion, and Burial**
(Matt. 26:1-27:66)
- XIV. **Resurrection and Commission**
(Matt. 28:1-20)

Courage

JESUS IS GREATER THAN ANYTHING WE FEAR.

While attending seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, I also pastored a church about 110 miles to the west where my wife and I lived in the parsonage. This meant making a couple of trips each week for classes and returning on Wednesday and Friday afternoons to go about my pastoral responsibilities. This schedule posed numerous challenges for us, especially in our first pastoral experience. Preparing for sermons and classes while also doing evangelistic visits and pastoral visits in homes and hospitals in this rural setting completely filled my schedule.

One of the more memorable hospital visits happened on one of the return trips from seminary for the midweek prayer meeting. I stopped to see Jesse, one of our deacons, who had been hospitalized with diverticulitis. Although this condition generally affects people who are older, this young man with two young children suffered from severe pain. As he talked with me about the fear he faced during the previous sleepless and pain-filled night, Jesse told me that he learned the meaning of faith. He looked me straight in the eye and said, “Pastor, faith is stepping out there where there ain’t nothing but God.” That pastoral visit took place more than forty years ago, but I remember it like it was yesterday.

The Spirit of God had given Jesse the courage he needed to face his illness. His experience prepared him to trust God for the future challenges he would face in his life. In today’s session, Peter learned that he must not focus on the troubles around him but had to keep his eyes on Jesus. The account of Jesus walking on the water reveals several truths about the greatness of His power and authority available to His followers. At first Peter thought he had mustered enough courage to leave the boat and walk out toward Jesus. However, he only took an abbreviated walk on the water. When Peter took his eyes away from Jesus, and instead looked at the raging waves surrounding him, he sank beneath the storm in fear.

This study of how Peter and the other disciples reacted to Jesus’s demonstration of authority over the storm can serve to encourage us whenever we go through the storms of life. We can trust Jesus to walk with us and come to our aid when we become overwhelmed.

**UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT**

Matthew 14:1-36

Matthew 14 opens with a flashback to the beheading of John the Baptist at the hands of Herod Antipas (14:1-12). John had dared to call into question Herod's relationship with Herodias, his brother's wife. This led to a twisted series of events involving the daughter of Herodias dancing at Herod's birthday celebration. This pleased Herod, so he offered to give her whatever she wanted. Herodias told her daughter to ask for John the Baptist's head on a platter. With regret, Herod ordered John's execution.

Having learned about John's execution, Jesus withdrew to a remote area (v. 13) because He likely wanted to avoid any confrontation at this point in His ministry. As Jesus left by boat, the crowds saw Him leave and followed by running along the shore of Galilee, arriving ahead of Him (vv. 13-14). Although He and His disciples needed rest (Mark 6:31), the sight of the great multitudes of people in need of healing moved Him with compassion, and He healed them (Matt. 14:14).

One of Jesus's most famous miracles, the feeding of the five thousand (vv. 15-21), demonstrated Jesus's mighty power. The disciples wanted Jesus to send the people away so that they could buy food for themselves, but He told His disciples to "give them something to eat" (v. 16). But all they could find was "five loaves and two fish" (v. 17). Jesus used this situation as an opportunity to teach His disciples about the need to rely on what only Jesus could provide. After He prayed, He distributed the loaves and the fish to the disciples, who in turn distributed to everyone in the crowd. The enormity of the miracle was seen as the disciples collected more food than they had at the beginning.

**EXPLORE THE TEXT**

Jesus's Presence (Matt. 14:22-27)

Of the four Gospel writers, only Luke did not include the striking story of Jesus walking on the water. After He dismissed the crowds and ordered His disciples to go ahead and cross the Sea of Galilee without Him, Jesus went up a mountain to pray. During the night, a sudden storm churned the lake into a frightening, dangerous situation. Jesus approached His disciples, walking on the water.

VERSE 22

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.

Jesus responded quickly to the crowd's enthusiastic response to the miracle of the loaves and fish. John reported that they declared Jesus as "the Prophet who is to come into the world" and desired to make Him king (John 6:14-15). Jesus wanted to no part of their forced attempt to make Him king. Always in control, Jesus **dismissed the crowds** and **made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side**. The Greek verb for *made*, which means "forced" or "compelled," is a strong term which suggests Jesus wanted to avoid the crisis due to the crowd's intentions of a messianic revolt by insisting His disciples leave the area immediately.

Matthew did not identify the precise destination of the disciples' evening excursion, but the phrase *go ahead of him* suggests wherever they were going Jesus would join them later. Mark reported that the disciples went ahead of Jesus "to the other side, to Bethsaida" (Mark 6:45), but both Matthew and Mark detail that Gennesaret (a fertile valley on the northwest side of the lake) was the boat's final destination (Matt. 14:34; Mark 6:53).

VERSE 23

After dismissing the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. Well into the night, he was there alone.

After Jesus finished sending the people away, He remained and **went up on the mountain by himself to pray**. He likely intended to spend time in prayer after receiving the news about John the Baptist (v. 13), but the crowds had hindered Him. Jesus found solitude *on the mountain* where He could be *by himself* to pray, knowing His time of suffering was drawing closer (see 16:21). He needed the strengthening that His Father could provide so that He could focus on the mission of the cross.

Jesus had dismissed the crowds, and the disciples had left by boat before sunset. **Well into the night** echoes the phrase "when evening came" (14:15). Matthew may have used the phrase to note the lateness of the hour, a time when most people would have settled down for the evening.

Getting away to the mountains or some quiet place away from people can provide us with opportunities for solitude and escape from the busyness of daily life. Jesus needed this time of refreshing with His

Father for spiritual strengthening and to seek wisdom for the trials He would face.

VERSE 24

Meanwhile, the boat was already some distance from land, battered by the waves, because the wind was against them.

Under normal conditions, the disciples could have easily crossed the Sea of Galilee. **Some distance from land** (“in the midst of the sea,” KJV) translates the Greek words meaning “many stadia away from land.” One *stadion* equals about 600 feet. John indicated they rowed about three or four miles (lit. twenty-five to thirty stadia; John 6:19) at that point. The Sea of Galilee is about thirteen miles long (north to south) and eight miles wide at its widest east to west point.

The seasoned fishermen within the group of disciples had plenty of nighttime experience on the water. However, the boat rocked violently, being battered by the waves because **the wind was against them**. The Sea of Galilee is surrounded by hills and mountains which funnel the winds down onto the surface of the lake, resulting in sudden and violent storms that even the most seasoned of fishermen would find challenging.

VERSE 25

Jesus came toward them walking on the sea very early in the morning.

Jesus had spent a considerable amount of time in prayer, since He walked on the water toward the disciples’ boat **very early in the morning**, literally, “in the fourth watch of the night,” which was between three and six in the morning. Jesus may have come to His disciples near dawn after they had fought the storm for most of the night.

VERSE 26

When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost!” they said, and they cried out in fear.

Matthew noted that with the approach of Jesus walking on the sea, the disciples were **terrified**. The Greek term for *terrified* means to disturb, unsettle, or throw into confusion. Underscoring the disciples’ sense of terror, Matthew noted that they said, **“It’s a ghost!”** and **cried out in fear**. The Greek term for *fear* means terror. “The only thing they can deduce is that they are seeing a disembodied spirit of some

kind. ‘Ghost’ . . . refers to a specter or apparition from the realm of the dead.”¹

VERSE 27

Immediately Jesus spoke to them. “Have courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

Jesus gave them the assurance of His presence, **“Have courage, It is I. Don’t be afraid.”** Scared and needing reassurance, the disciples needed to know right away that they had not seen a ghost. Jesus’s words also echo God’s revelation of Himself to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM” (Ex. 3:14). In addition to identifying Himself and assuring His disciples He was not a ghost, Jesus may also have been revealing Himself as deity.



Explore Further

Read the article “Galilee, Sea of” on pages 610–611 in the *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Revised and Expanded*. What facts about the lake provided you with a fuller understanding of the conditions that the disciples would have encountered during the storm?

Jesus’s Invitation (Matt. 14:28-30)

At this point, Peter asked Jesus if he could leave the boat and walk on the water toward Him. Jesus agreed, but as Peter started walking on the water, the winds and waves caused him to fear. As he began to sink, Peter called out to Jesus for help.

VERSE 28

“Lord, if it’s you,” Peter answered him, “command me to come to you on the water.”

While three of the Gospels include accounts of Jesus walking on water (Matt. 14:22-33; Mark 6:45-52; John 6:16-21), only Matthew included Peter walking on the water. Upon hearing the Lord speak, Peter replied, **“Lord, if it’s you,”** a statement filled with deep meaning. Matthew probably intended his readers to understand *Lord* in the strongest sense,

equivalent to “*Yahweh*,” whether or not Peter understood the connection at this point.² “*If it’s you*,” a first-class condition, has the presumption of truth so that “since it’s you” captures the intent of Peter’s request. The Greek for *it’s you* (lit. “you are”) echoes Jesus’s “It is I” (Matt. 14:27).

Jesus’s presence walking on the turbulent waters stirred Peter to exercise enough faith to ask, “**command me to come to you on the water.**” He asked Jesus to *command* him, a verb in agreement with his address of Jesus as *Lord*. Peter responded to Jesus’s revelation of Himself up to this point. He believed that Jesus could enable him to walk on the water and come out to the Lord.

VERSE 29

He said, “Come.” And climbing out of the boat, Peter started walking on the water and came toward Jesus.

Jesus did as Peter had requested, giving him a one-word command, “**Come.**” He did not merely give Peter permission to come, rather Jesus ordered him to start coming toward Him. Peter climbed over the side of the boat and started **walking on the water** and **came toward Jesus**. Not until he lifted his second leg over the side of the boat did he exercise faith in Jesus necessary to walk on the water toward Jesus. Nothing in the text indicates how far Peter walked on the water, but Matthew did suggest that Peter managed to get close as he came toward Jesus. As long as Peter kept his eyes on Jesus, he experienced the miracle of walking on the water. Whenever we face trials and difficult times in our lives, we can draw upon the strength and power of our Lord so that we can walk through these challenges. However, when we take our focus away from God, we will sink like a rock into the depths.

VERSE 30

But when he saw the strength of the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me!”

Peter sank into the waves because he became distracted by **the strength of the wind**. Peter saw the strength of the wind and—although not stated—the effect the wind had on the waves. When he looked away from Jesus and focused on the storm, his faith weakened. He became **afraid** and began **to sink** into the sea. Then he cried out like he and the other disciples had done (v. 26), but this time he did not cry out simply as an expression of fear. This time Peter cried out, “**Lord, save me!**” because he wanted Jesus to rescue him from drowning.



Explore Further

Read Matthew 8:23-27; Mark 4:36-41; and Luke 8:22-25. These passages show Jesus calming an earlier storm on the Sea of Galilee, teaching His disciples about His divine power and that their faith should replace fear. The lesson in Matthew 14:28-30 focused more on personal faith. What personal faith lesson does Matthew 14:28-30 teach you?

Jesus's Response (Matt. 14:31-33)

In the moment of Peter's crisis, Jesus reached out and caught hold of him. Jesus saved Peter but rebuked his faltering faith. As soon as Jesus and Peter climbed into the boat, the storm stopped. On the previous occasion when Jesus calmed a furious storm merely through His words (8:26), the disciples wondered in amazement (v. 27). But this time, they worshiped Jesus and recognized Him as the Son of God.

VERSE 31

Immediately Jesus reached out his hand, caught hold of him, and said to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"

Jesus responded to Peter's desperate cry **immediately**. Like Mark, Matthew used *immediately* many times in his Gospel, using it eleven of the thirty-three times the word appears of the New Testament. This indicates that Jesus did not delay but acted promptly to rescue Peter. The Lord had not challenged Peter to come to Him only to let His disciple drown when he failed.

Jesus's immediate rescue showed Peter, as well as the other disciples, that in a time of testing He would not leave them to flounder helplessly on their own. Rather, **Jesus reached out his hand** which showed how close Peter had come to Jesus. Jesus could have saved Peter by simply speaking the word, but He **caught hold of him**. Likely Jesus caught hold of one of Peter's hands and thereby kept him from completely sinking under the water.

One can imagine the sight of Jesus and Peter walking hand in hand on the turbulent waters back to the boat. Now that Jesus had secured Peter against the immediate threat of sinking beneath the waves, He posed the challenging question, **"You of little faith, why did you doubt?"**

Only here did Matthew use the phrase *you of little faith* of an individual, and surprisingly he used it in reference to Peter who had just taken gigantic steps of faith by walking out on the water toward Jesus. He had placed his full confidence in Jesus to work in him and make it possible for him to walk on water.

However, **doubt** had caused Peter to fail. The Greek verb translated *doubt* suggests the idea of attempting to go in two different directions or serving two masters at the same time. Peter's problem came not so much from his conviction about Jesus but from the conflict between what he experienced outside the boat and his desire to walk toward his Lord. That Peter called out to Jesus to save him underscored the fact that he still had faith enough to call out to Jesus when he needed Him the most.

Many believers can identify with Peter's experience. Just as he wanted to join Christ in what seemed exciting and adventuresome, we might also call out to Him in order to walk closer to Him. However, during a moment of crisis or in a moment of fear, when we lose our focus, we resort to crying out to Jesus, "Lord, save us! We cannot make it without You!" Then just like Jesus did not allow Peter to sink into a watery grave, He will reach out and catch hold of us just when we need Him the most.

VERSE 32

When they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

Although the disciples on board the boat had previously thought they had seen a ghost walking on the water, John reported, "They were willing to take him on board" (John 6:21). This showed that they no longer believed Jesus to be an apparition.

When they got into the boat suggests that the turbulent storm raged the whole time Peter and Jesus remained outside the boat. As they climbed back into the boat, **the wind ceased** without Jesus saying a word as He had done on a previous occasion where He rebuked the winds and the sea bringing about "a great calm" (Matt. 8:26). However, Jesus may have been the reason the winds ceased in this instance as well. John added another miraculous aspect of the calming of the sea. The boat that had been storm-tossed in the middle of the lake came immediately on shore where they were headed (John 6:21).

Jesus demonstrated His messiahship, adding proof upon proof to His disciples. He brought calmness and peace to the sea that had rocked their lives. They needed to learn that they could depend on His presence to help them no matter the severity of the trial.

VERSE 33

Then those in the boat worshiped him and said, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

The climax of the episode of Jesus walking on the water and calming the sea came as the disciples in the boat **worshiped Him**. This contrasted greatly from the ending of the similar story of when Jesus calmed the sea (8:27). In that instance, His disciples merely marveled, “What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the sea obey him!” Now they *worshiped* Jesus. They had moved quickly from fearing the storm to revering Jesus. Considering the power Jesus showed by walking on the water and the love He demonstrated in taking care of their sinking companion, their reaction made perfect sense.

Up until this point, the proclamations of who Jesus was came from God the Father (3:17), the devil (4:3,6), and two demons (8:29). While Peter’s great confession at Caesarea Philippi—“You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (16:16)—was yet to come, the disciples’ worship and affirmation of Christ’s deity indicate they had grown in their understand of who Jesus is. While they still had much to learn about Jesus, their response of worship demonstrates a deepening of their faith, despite their earlier fear and doubt.



Explore Further

When we face life’s difficulties, we can become overwhelmed by fear and lose sight of Jesus. In these moments of doubt, we need to recognize how easily we struggle with our wavering faith. But Jesus stands ready to rescue us when we call out to Him. Our personal trials, failures, and doubts can propel us toward opportunities for spiritual growth if we allow Jesus to work through them. Reflect on your own moments when you may have sunk into despair and how Jesus pulled you through that low time. Did He use these experiences to deepen your trust in Him? How do you tend to respond to Jesus’s power when you experience it? This passage invites us to worship Jesus and to trust Him more even when our faith wavers. Let these moments deepen our relationship with Him.

1. Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, vol. 22, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 234.
2. *Ibid.*, 235.