

The Disciples and the Troubled Sea

The setting for this **midnight** Bible story takes place right after the five thousand men, plus women and children, were fed by the five loaves and two small fishes. We are not going to spend much time on that story only to mention that Jesus was in the process of teaching His disciples lessons on faith from which we all can benefit. Feeding the above mentioned multitude from two small fishes, and five loaves was indeed a great miracle, and teaches us many typical principles about faith. Christ is indeed the sustainer of life, and Jesus said this concerning Himself in JOHN 6:33 *For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. ...35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. ...48 I am that bread of life.* Jesus introduced this teaching by the feeding of the five thousand plus, but He was really referencing spiritual things concerning everlasting life. The five loaves of bread speak to Christ the true bread from heaven, and his provisions of Divine Grace. The two small fishes, having come out of the water, were sufficient testimony of Christ being raised out of the waters of death and judgment to become a feast of resurrection life. Jesus disciples distributed the exceeding abundantly above all provision Christ had provided for this meal, but were really unable to grasp the lessons taught here until after being filled with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost a few short years later. There were some other lessons that His disciples would be taught that very same night, which we will now get to.

All of the gospel records tell of the feeding of the five thousand plus, but only MATTHEW, MARK, and JOHN record the events of that night. We will focus upon the account found in MARK 6, and later note additional points found in MATTHEW 14, and JOHN 6.

MARK 6:45 *And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people. 46 And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray. 47 And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land. 48 And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them. 49 But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out: 50 For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid. 51 And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. 52 For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.*

Note the following important points. Jesus Himself sent His disciples unto the other side of the Sea of Galilee, and He did so knowing full well that it would be a windy night with heavy opposing waves that would hinder their progress. In other words Jesus knew the kind of test He was sending them into. Secondly MARK records Jesus sending them unto Bethsaida. Bethsaida means "house of provision," and speaks to us of His exceeding abundantly above all provision of spiritual blessing that is ours in Christ Jesus. Jesus disciples had already witnessed the exceeding greatness of His power in feeding the multitude hours before, but hadn't yet realized His abundant provision in all things, and that "with God all things are possible." {See MATTHEW 19:26.} Third note that Jesus Himself was not in the ship, but had gone up by Himself into a mountain to pray. Jesus had just taught and fed a multitude, and no doubt he prayed for them all. He also had sent His disciples into a **midnight** time of testing, and He also no doubt was praying for them; praying for their faith to be increased. MARK 6:48 informs us that from His mountain view point Jesus saw them being tested, for as PSALMS 33:18 also tells us: *Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy.* MARK 6:48 also states that it was the fourth watch of the night, meaning between three and six in the morning. And they were all still awake no doubt all troubled by the turbulent sea. Less than twelve hours earlier they were troubled by their lack of food. Jesus had provided their meal, and fed the multitude in the process. Yet we do not read of them discussing this further, or even being thankful for the Lord delivering them from that test. Now they faced another test, the troubled sea within which they were making little or no progress. We do not read of

them crying unto the Lord for help in this situation, yet Jesus saw them toiling in rowing, and verse 48 also states that Jesus was coming unto them. The circumstance of the windy sea was no problem for Jesus, for He full of grace and truth, and the creator of the sea, rose above the circumstance, and walked upon the sea. Five verses tell of Him walking upon the sea: MATTHEW 14:25 & 26, MARK 6:48 & 49, and JOHN 6:19. Five is the number of GRACE, and EPHESIANS 2:8 tells us: *For by grace are ye saved through faith;...* . Jesus disciples were about to experience the reality of this verse. Note the wording of the last part of MARK 6:48 *...he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.* Was Jesus coming unto them to help them out of their **midnight** time of testing, or was He coming unto them to pass them by? Jesus was further testing them to prove another point unto them. Their focus was not upon the Lord that night, nor were they looking for His DELIVERANCE from this test as MARK 6:49 and 50 points out. MARK 6:49 *But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out: 50 For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.* Note that the contrary windy sea did not trouble the disciples, but they were troubled by what they thought they saw, and they had cried out. They didn't cry out unto the Lord either for MATTHEW 14:26 adds: *...and they cried out for fear.*

MATTHEW's account also inserts the following: *27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. 28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. 29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.* Peter's walking upon the water is part of this **midnight** Bible story not told by MARK or JOHN. Peter was the only one in the ship willing to step out of the ship, and walk to Jesus, not giving it a second thought what he was asking. And MATTHEW 14:29 tells us that *...when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.* While Peter's focus was upon Jesus he was able to do the impossible, and walk on water. And Peter did a good job of walking on the water until he took his eyes off Jesus. MATTHEW 14:30 and 31 finishes Peter's walking on water story. MATTHEW 14:30 *But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. 31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?* I suppose we could all answer Jesus question to Peter, for unbelief we learned in HEBREWS 12:1 is something that the full overcomer must conquer. Here is a thought taken from that study. Brother Copley wrote: "Unbelief is the powerful sin that besets and upsets racers." The word "unbelief" is found seventeen times in scripture. Our unbelief must be conquered, and we find in ROMANS 8:37 that *...in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.* The very fact that "unbelief" is found seventeen times in scripture is our clue that "unbelief" can be conquered. Seventeen is the number associated with VICTORY IN CHRIST JESUS, and we just read that *...we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.* Him that loved us is Christ Jesus, *Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:...* GALATIANS 1:4. Jesus said in LUKE 24:49 *And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued (enduo {en-doo'-o}) with power from on high.* That power is the dunamis power of the Holy Ghost who enables us to be *...more than conquerors through him that loved us.* The New Testament full overcomers conquer unbelief with the enabling power of the Holy Ghost. Without the dunamis power of the Holy Ghost we Saint's of the church age stand no chance of being a full overcomer! Back to Peter here in MATTHEW 14:30, we do not read of him answering Jesus question of *...O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?* Nor was Peter yet filled with the Holy Ghost when Jesus asked him this question in our **midnight** Bible story. However no doubt Peter, and the other disciples long pondered Jesus question of *...O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*

Brother Hill wrote the following note in the margin of his Bible as he pondered this **midnight** Bible story. "Faith is always the secret of buoyancy, and we can plant our foot steps in the sea when our faith rests in the Lord. Sister Booth when departing said "the waters are rising, but I am not

sinking.” When Honest reached the river he found that in the Lord its destructiveness had been broken, and went through shouting “grace reigns.” So are all the seas and rivers; through faith we walk above them. And so a believer is to be distinguished by their buoyancy. We may confront the stormy sea, always on top of the circumstances. Paul said “always confident,” and what a time to display such buoyancy. What an opportunity to witness to the Lord’s power.” {End of quoting Brother Hill’s note.}

MARK 6:51 & 52 finishes this **midnight** Bible story, and explains the point of why they were given this **midnight** test on a stormy sea. MARK 6:51 *And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. 52 For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.* MATTHEW 14:32 & 33 ends this **midnight** Bible story stating: *And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. 33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.* JOHN 6:21 concludes this **midnight** Bible story saying: *Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.* When Jesus entered their ship, their test was immediately over, and *...immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.*

So as we finish this **midnight** Bible story we must ask ourselves “as I journey life’s trouble sea, who is there in the ship with me?” Remember what we learned in HEBREWS 12:2 it is Jesus who is the *...the author and finisher of our faith...* so it is Jesus who ordained the obstacle race course we are to run upon. It is also Jesus who ordered the stormy sea, who also holds the winds in his fist. He is the solution to all of our problems, a theme repeated over and over again throughout scripture. Thus we are to be continually *...Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.*

Rahab and the Two Spies

One of the **midnight** Bible stories concerns Rahab and the two spies. These three, Rahab and the two spies, share in a most profound **midnight** Bible story told in JOSHUA 2. Remember as we go through this that the darkest of times brought forth the hero’s of faith, and JOSHUA 2 tells one such **midnight** Bible story. Rahab’s testimony is found in this chapter as well as the testimony of the two spies. Their encounter on that particular **midnight** left us many lesson about the grace of God. One of these lessons is found in 2 PETER 3:9 *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* This is just one fact highlighted in our **midnight** Bible story found in JOSHUA 2.

In JOSHUA 2 we are introduced to Rahab, who is mentioned by name eight times in scripture. Before we look at her **midnight** Bible story note the following important points concerning her, of which there are several. The very first time we read of Rahab is in JOSHUA 2:1 *And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there.* The first thing that we are told of Rahab in scripture is that she was a harlot, and no effort is made to conceal this fact. The Apostle Paul in his mention of her in HEBREWS 11:31 calls her *...the harlot Rahab...* . James in JAMES 2:25 calls her *...Rahab the harlot...* . Five of the eight times in scripture that we read of Rahab’s name we find mentioned that she was a harlot. By now you should know that five is the number of GRACE, and that *...by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God...* {EPHESIANS 2:8}. Rahab is also one of five women mentioned in the lineage of Christ in MATTHEW 1, thus underlining some facts concerning grace. The Bible student who studies the background of the five women mentioned in the lineage of Christ will certainly come away from that study with a greater appreciation of just what the grace of God is. In ROMANS 3:23 we read: *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;* and in ROMANS 5:12 we find a similar statement: *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* Rahab certainly knew that she was a sinner, but God, who is no respecter of persons, knew her heart, and that in her heart she believed in the living