

JESUS AMAZES

Matthew 8:23-27, Mark 4:35-41, Luke 8:22-25; Matthew 14:13-22, Mark 6:31-46, Luke 9:10-17, John 6:1-13; Matthew 14:22-36, Mark 6:45-56, John 6:16-24

After a busy day of teaching, when it came to evening Jesus spoke to his disciples, 'Let's go over to the other side of Lake Galilee.'

Leaving the crowds behind they got into a boat and set off.

The trip across the lake was around 13 miles (21 km) and would take them to the region of Gerasenes.

The weather was calm when they set off and Jesus was very tired. He lay down to sleep on a cushion in the back of the boat.

Galilee is surrounded by very high hills and strong winds can descend off these down into the lake causing violent storms. A furious squall suddenly blew up and big waves broke over the boat.

Water flooded into the boat faster than they could bail it out. Although many on board were experienced fishermen they became very afraid. The boat was swamped and it wouldn't be long before they would sink.

Jesus was still fast asleep on a cushion in the rear of the boat. The disciples shook him awake. 'Teacher, don't you care if we drown!' Jesus replied, 'You of little faith, why are you so afraid?'

Jesus stood up in the violently rocking boat and gave orders to the wind and the waves, 'Quiet! Be still!'

The wind died down and it was completely calm. 'Why were you so afraid?' Jesus asked his disciples. 'Where is your faith?'

The disciples were terrified and amazed at the power of Jesus. 'Who is this?' they asked each other. 'Even the wind and waves obey him!'

Sometime later, the disciples returned from going around villages preaching and healing the sick. They had also heard the news that John the Baptist had been executed by Herod Antipas. Jesus and His disciples got in a boat and sailed to a remote place.

A large crowd, many of them pilgrims on their way to the Passover feast in Jerusalem, watched the boat and followed it around the coast on foot to meet Jesus.

Jesus went up into the hills and taught them. He spent time healing the sick. There were around 5,000 men in the crowd plus women and children.

Late in the afternoon the disciples urged Jesus to send the crowd away to nearby farms and villages to find food and lodgings. 'There is nothing to eat here in this deserted spot,' they said.

Jesus replied, 'You feed them!'

Turning to Philip He asked, 'Philip, where can we buy bread to feed all these people?' Philip replied, 'It would take a fortune to feed this many!'

Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up. 'There's a young boy here with five barley loaves and a couple of fish! But what good is that with all these mouths to feed?'

'Tell everyone to sit down in groups of around fifty,' Jesus ordered.

Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up into the sky, and gave thanks. Then He broke off pieces for His disciples to set before the crowd.

The disciples gave out the bread and fish and everyone ate until they were no longer hungry.

The disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. And then Jesus sent the crowds away.

Later that evening, Jesus told his disciples to get in a boat and row back to Capernaum. He would join them later.

After dismissing the crowds, Jesus climbed up the side of a mountain to pray.

As it got dark Jesus, Jesus could see the disciples had rowed 3-4 miles (5-6 km). They were straining at the oars as the wind was against them and waves were buffeting the boat.

Shortly before dawn Jesus finished praying and started walking the quickest way back to Capernaum – across the sea.

He was going to walk past the boat but the disciples spotted Him. 'It's a ghost!' they cried out in terror.

'Be brave,' shouted Jesus, 'Don't be scared. It's me.'

'Lord, if it is you,' Peter asked. 'Tell me to walk on the water to you.' 'Come,' Jesus answered.

Peter got out of the boat and started to walk towards Jesus. But as he heard the sound of the wind and saw the waves he started to doubt he could stay afloat.

Immediately he began to sink. 'Lord, save me!' he cried.

Jesus reached out his hand and caught Peter. 'You have so little faith,' Jesus told him. 'Why did you doubt?' Jesus lifted Peter into the boat and climbed aboard to join the disciples.

The disciples were utterly amazed and worshipped Jesus. 'You really are the Son of God,' they exclaimed. Almost immediately the boat reached the shore.

As they got off the boat people recognised Jesus and started bringing those who were sick to him. All those who touched the edge of his clothes were healed.

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