

The Memoirs of Peter
Walk on Water? Jesus' Incomparable Power Over Matter, Time and Space
Mark 6:45-52
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If you've ever been out at sea, I mean on one of the oceans of the world, out of the sight of land, then you know that it is an awe-inspiring experience. Seventy percent of the earth's surface is covered by saltwater oceans, an average depth of 2.3 miles, all over the globe. So, you can certainly understand, if you've ever experienced that, why the sea and water was one of ancient man's greatest fears, because there is in the sea this sort of overwhelming sense of your own smallness, of your own weakness, of your inability to deal with the situation. Only God can control the sea.

In fact, I love what the prophet Jeremiah says, how God speaks through him in Jeremiah 5:22, listen to what the Lord says, "Do you not fear Me?" declares the LORD. "Do you not tremble in My presence? For I have placed the sand as a boundary for the sea, An eternal decree, so it cannot pass over it. Though the waves toss, yet they cannot prevail; Though they roar, yet they cannot cross over it." God says, You should fear Me because I am the only One who can set a boundary for the sea. I am the only One who has the power to control that amazingly strong element.

Well, it's not a surprise that water figures into the next account in Mark's gospel, because it again reveals Jesus' divine nature to us and this time His unique power over water. It is the miracle of Jesus walking across the surface of the lake that we call the Sea of Galilee.

I want to begin by giving you the setting, kind of what was going on. Both Matthew and Mark introduce this account of Jesus walking on the water with the fallout from the feeding of the 5,000. Look back in Mark 6, and notice verse 41, Mark 6:41. Here we have the background, this is what has just transpired:

... He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven He blessed *the food* and [He] broke the loaves and He kept giving *them* to the disciples to set before them; and He divided up the two fish among them all.

They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up twelve full baskets of the broken pieces, and also of the fish. [And] there were five thousand men who ate the loaves.

On the heels of that comes verse 45. “Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida, while He Himself was sending the crowd away.”

Now this is a remarkable turn of events; this huge crowd is gathered. Jesus has just had this miracle that astounded them all, and Jesus immediately dismisses His disciples as well as the crowd. Notice the word, “made”; “... Jesus made His disciples get into the boat.” The Greek word there is a very strong word, it implies that the disciples were hesitant to leave; it also implies Jesus’ inherent personal authority. He immediately made them do two things: get into the boat, probably the boat that is owned by one of the disciples that they’ve been using all along, one of the fisherman disciples, and to go ahead of Him towards Bethsaida.

Towards Bethsaida means they were traveling west. Here’s again just a reminder of the top of the Sea of Galilee. This is the north end of the Sea of Galilee. This is where the miracle of the feeding of 5,000 probably took place on the plains of Bethsaida, just on the eastern side of the town of Bethsaida, and He tells them to go toward Bethsaida. And John adds that their destination was Capernaum, back where they came from earlier that day. Jesus made them leave in the boat, notice, “... while He Himself was sending the crowd away.”

Now, why did Jesus have the disciples leave so quickly? They had just come here earlier in the day, remember, to get some rest from their ministry they’d just returned from. Why did He have to so urgently send the crowds away? Well, certainly, one reason was because it was late in the day, and they didn’t have a place to lodge, that was a valid reason. Another reason was in a moment we’re going to see He was to go pray, so it may have been that. But I think John gives us another reason as well that isn’t as transparently obvious in the text here in Matthew. John writes after that happened, John 6:14,

“Therefore when the people saw the sign....” [This is when they saw the feeding of the 5,000, that He had performed, all 5,000 of them], they said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.

So Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone.”

When they see what’s happened, they immediately say, “This must be the Prophet.” And in popular language of that day, it meant the Prophet Moses had predicted, it meant the Messiah. So, when this happens, when they conclude that He might be the Messiah, and Jesus understands that they’re about to literally take Him by force, these 5,000 Galileans, and to make Him king, then He immediately disbands the crowd, when He realized that they had concluded that He was the Messiah. But their idea of the Messiah was not the biblical idea of the Messiah, at least not with the first coming. They envisioned a warrior king who would dethrone Herod, defeat the Romans, and establish independent rule in Israel. So based on the miracle He’s just done, which is pretty remarkable, they conclude He is the Man, the Prophet that Moses had promised, the Messiah, the One who’s come – “Let’s make Him king.”

Jesus knew this, so He dispersed the crowd. Jesus also knew that His disciples were easily influenced by these same ideas. We’re going to see that in the future. And it’s even hinted at here in their hesitancy to leave. Jesus had to make them leave. It’s likely that the disciples saw this wonderful opportunity. Here’s what we’ve wanted. We have embraced Jesus as Messiah. Now these 5,000 people embrace Him as Messiah. They want to make Him king, here we go. It’s near the Passover time. Let’s just march down to Jerusalem and proclaim Him to be Israel’s true king. We’ll amass troops on the way, and we’ll throw the Romans out. We have more than they have in terms of manpower.”

So, Jesus makes His disciples get in a boat and go ahead of Him to Capernaum while He disperses the crowd. Then verse 46 says, “After bidding them farewell, He left for the mountain to pray.” You can almost picture with a sanctified imagination Jesus in His hurry to get His disciples out of that situation where they would be easily influenced by it, He senses what’s

happening. He pushes the boat away from the land, bids them farewell, and then He goes up to the mountain, the hill nearby, to pray.

Now, why did Jesus want to pray at this point, and why did He want to pray all night? You know, it's interesting Mark only records Jesus praying on three occasions: before He chose the twelve, here in this passage, and in Gethsemane. If you look at all three of those occasions, they all three have this in common: they were at night, Jesus was alone, the disciples were again failing to understand His mission, and it came in conjunction with some major life event in the life of Christ. So, what's going on here? Why does Jesus feel compelled in response to this to head to the mountain to pray and to pray most of the night?

Well, it's interesting to note that Satan's three temptations in the wilderness, after Jesus' baptism, weren't the first time Jesus had been tempted, and they certainly weren't the last. Here Satan, I think, uses the crowd to offer Jesus the very same thing he had offered Jesus in the third temptation, which was a way to gain the kingdom without the Cross.

And so, Jesus, seeing what's happening, seeing the direction all of this is going, realizing His ministry is now at a crossroads, wants to get alone, and pour out His heart to the Father. And so Jesus does; He leaves them. He goes and pours out His heart on His own behalf, but also on the behalf of the disciples. Remember, He knew they were on the lake, alone, and He knew that He had sent them there. And He knew that on the way they were probably seriously discussing and wondering why it was that their Master, the Messiah, hadn't accepted the offer of those 5,000 Galileans to let Him be king.

So, Jesus prayed. What a lesson for us, when we come to the turmoils of life, when we come to those major moments, those crossroads in our own lives, to bathe them in prayer as our Lord did. He prayed, for Himself. He also prayed for His disciples. I love the one example we're given during His earthly life. You remember what He told Peter before that fateful night when Peter betrayed Him? He said, "Simon ..." this is in Luke 22, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded *permission* to sift you like wheat; [he wants to destroy you] but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your

brothers.” Notice Jesus didn’t pray that He wouldn’t let Peter go into that situation, but He prayed, instead, that his faith would stand, that he’d be strong, and that he’d come out, even after his failure, able to help others.

Verse 47, “When it was evening, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and He was alone on the land.” Now if you remember back when we talked about the feeding of the 5,000 last week, Matthew told us that the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 was in the evening. Now Mark tells us that a couple of hours later after the meal had been served, after the leftovers had been collected, it was still evening; and that’s because in Jewish reckoning there were two evenings. One being at 3pm and went until sunset, the other began with sunset and lasted until pitch dark.

The feeding of the 5,000 apparently happened between 3pm and sunset, which in the spring about the time of Passover, which John tells us this is when it occurred, sunset would have been about 6pm. So somewhere between 3 and 6pm the feeding of the 5,000 took place, and by dark the crowd was gone. The boat with the disciples was, notice what He says, “... was in the middle of the sea...” John adds that they had rowed about three or four miles.

Now that’s interesting, because by boat the trip from just east of Bethsaida, where I showed you they were, back to Capernaum, their hometown, was only about four miles. They would have stayed close to the shore, rowed those four miles. But now they’ve rowed about three or four miles and instead of being near Capernaum they’re in the middle of the lake.

They started here, just east of Bethsaida, they’re headed here to Capernaum, that would have been the route along the seashore they would have taken, staying fairly close, probably within a mile is what was typical in that period of time, but instead now, we find them out in the middle of the lake. Matthew 14 says, “... the boat was already a long distance from the land, battered by the waves; for the wind was contrary.” Literally, the Greek text says there in Matthew 14:24, “... the boat was already many stadia from the land...” That’s a measurement. A stadian was about 600 feet, so many stadia means that they were at least a couple of miles from land, and they had traveled three or four miles from the point they had begun.

The problem, of course, was the waves. They had high waves caused by a hostile wind. John puts it like this: “The sea began to be stirred up because a strong wind...” [Literally in the Greek text he says,] “... a mega wind was blowing.” This can happen on the Sea of Galilee, the lake that we call the Sea of Galilee. The real name by the way, of the Sea of Galilee both in ancient Hebrew and modern Hebrew is Kinneret, which means harp, because if you look at it from a satellite view, it sort of resembles an ancient harp. It was about 13 miles long and seven miles across at the widest points.

Kinneret is especially susceptible both to violent storms and to these major wind events, because of its geography. The lake is the second lowest lake on the planet, 685 feet below sea level. It’s also very shallow; at its deepest point it’s only about 160 to 200 feet deep. And it’s surrounded on three sides by mountains: on the north by Mt. Hermon, on the west by the Cliffs of Arbel, and on the east by the Golan Heights. So, the lake then, is like a bowl if you can picture that. It’s down deep like a bowl. And cut through those mountains on three sides, on the east and west particularly, are deep ravines, so that when the sun heats the air, the hot air rises, and the cooler air from the mountains rushes over the mountains down through those deep ravines, rushing to that lake that’s the bottom point, that’s 685 feet below sea level. And as it rushes through those canyons and caverns, it picks up speed. And when that rushing cool, dry air, collides with the hot, moist air lying over the surface of the lake, it creates violent storms.

But the storms are even outweighed by the winds. Todd Bolen writes,

More violent are the winds that come off the hills of the Golan Heights to the east. Trapped in the basin the winds can be deadly to fishermen. A storm in March of 1992 sent waves ten feet high, crashing into downtown Tiberias, (that’s on the southwest corner of the lake) causing significant damage.

Ten feet high waves on a little, small lake. Without a cloud in the sky, suddenly the winds from the northwest can pick up and become just as deadly as any violent storm can be on the surface of the lake, even while the sky is perfectly clear.

If you've ever lived in Southern California, you understand this. I remember the first time after we moved there, we experienced the Santa Anna winds, when off the desert these winds just come sweeping in, and there're no clouds; there's no storm; it's just violent winds, gale force winds, and sometimes even higher. That's what happened to the disciples. They had just gotten a start on their little, simple, four-mile trip from Bethsaida to Capernaum when the winds began. And those violent winds had blown them out into the middle of the lake. It's dark. It's at night. Jesus was still alone on the land, on the mountain praying, and they were in the middle of the lake.

That prepares us for the first movement really in this story. The Lord walks on the lake. Look at verse 48, "Seeing them straining at the oars, for the wind was against them." – stop there. As I said, it was probably not a storm that involved clouds. It was probably a clear moon-lit night, perhaps nearly a full moon which would be typical around Passover time, so we don't know if Jesus could naturally see them with His human eyes from the mountain where He prayed, and see their plight, or if this is a case of divine omniscience where He sees them as the divine Lord; but regardless, He sees them, and I don't know about you, but that's a great encouragement to me.

Isn't this exactly the opposite of what we feel when we find ourselves in trouble? It feels like God doesn't know, and He doesn't care. But it's not true. Our Lord's response to us in the storm is the same today as it was then. He sees; He knows; He cares; and in His time, He's coming.

So, notice, they're straining. Literally, the Greek text says they're tortured at the oars – tortured. Why is that? Well, if you'd ever seen a first century boat, you would understand that; and you get to see one, you've seen it before. I've shown it to you. In 1986 a first century boat from the Sea of Galilee was unearthed; and from that boat a model was built; and this is the model. We know that this was very common in the first century. So, it was a boat very much like this that the disciples were in, probably some 27 feet long, about eight feet wide, about four and a half feet deep. It would have easily held 13 men. The boat moved primarily by four rowers, two on each side; but as you can see it had low sides, because it was used for fishing, and for fishing you

wanted easy access to the water. That meant it wasn't made for high waves. So, in a storm, or in high winds like they're in now, you had to keep the boat perpendicular to the waves, or the waves would come breaking over the sides and quickly swamp the boat and endanger the lives of the men.

So, the disciples then are taking turns, rowing to keep the boat pointed in the right direction, to keep it from being swamped by the huge waves pushed up by the winds; the mega winds as John calls them. Now, of course, they're trying to get out of the middle of the lake and get to land. In the middle of that, verse 48 says, "Seeing them straining at the oars, for the wind was against them, [at] about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea; and He intended to pass ... [them by]."

"About the fourth watch of the night." In the Old Testament if you're confused about this, in the Old Testament the Jews had divided the night into three watches, you can see that even in Judges, but once the Romans captured Israel, they changed their mode and decided to go with four watches, and so the first watch this time of year would have been from 6 to 9pm, you hoped, if you were a soldier, you got that watch. Then there was the second watch, from 9pm to 12am, the third watch from 12am to 3am, and the fourth watch was from 3am to just at sun-up. So, it was somewhere then, between 3am and 6am when Jesus came. Now think about that for a moment. That meant that Jesus had been praying, and the disciples had been struggling for between 8 and 12 hours.

Now, there are a lot of lessons in that to me. When I think about that, I'm reminded of our own lives because here is another example of Jesus not immediately coming to the rescue of His disciples. He had ordered them into the boat, and therefore He had ordered them into the storm. He saw what was happening, but He delayed His coming and His rescue.

You know, I think He does the same thing with us often, and often He does it for the same reason He did it for these disciples, and that is to strengthen their faith, to strengthen our faith.

Now, a very important observation about 48, all three gospels that record this incident tell us the same thing: Jesus was walking on the lake. There is no question about the wording in any of the three gospels. There have been many skeptics who try to explain away this miracle.

Albert Schweitzer, in his book, “The Quest for the Historical Jesus” proposes two very popular ones. One idea is, “Well, what really happened was Jesus was walking on a conveniently located sandbar.” Now that’s ridiculous. These men were fishermen. They had lived on this lake. They knew this lake like the back of their hand. If there were a sandbar, you can bet they knew about it, and this would not have been impressive.

A second proposal he makes is, “Well if not that, then Jesus was walking on the shore next to the lake, or He was walking in shallow water right at the edge of the lake there.” Again, the answer is these men knew this lake. He couldn’t have deceived them in that way, and Mark says they were “... in the middle of the lake ...” when He came and got in the boat. In addition, Matthew says, “they were many stadia away from land.”

The wording of the Greek text in Matthew, Mark and John is crystal clear. Jesus came to His disciples walking on “epi”, upon, on top of the water of the lake. And it wasn’t still, either; remember it’s huge waves, wind, Jesus is unaffected by either. He is walking across the top of the lake. Mark adds, “He intended to pass them by.” That probably doesn’t mean that He was just going to keep on walking, because both Matthew and Mark say He came to them, He intended to come to them. So, the idea here is probably either that He intended to sort of pass them by so they could see who it was and invite Him in, recognize who it was, and see what His true nature was, or it’s also possible that’s simply put from their perspective, to them it looked like He might walk on by, like that was His intention.

So, He comes walking on the water. How would you have responded? Imagine if you’d never heard the story, and you found yourself in their shoes, how would you have responded?

Probably, we would have responded very much as they did.

The second movement in the story is the disciples are terrified by the sight. Verse 49 says, “But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out...”

Now that's a very important point for you to register because it means that the disciples were not hoping Jesus would come to them on the water. They weren't expecting Him to come, and the moment they caught sight, "Oh, there He is!" This isn't wishful thinking on their part, this isn't some kind of a mirage in the desert where you're hoping for water, and you see it. When they see a man walking toward them on the water, their first conclusion is what? It's a ghost. The Greek word is "phantasm", from which we get our word phantom. It's a phantom! And as a result, they screamed in terror; that's what "cried out" means. It's used when the demoniacs scream out. They are horribly frightened with what they see.

Now don't miss Mark's next point in verse 50, "... for they all saw Him and were terrified." They all saw Him and were terrified. Twelve men all saw whatever this was. Now that's important because it means it wasn't a fabrication of a couple of guys. As the Law had said, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses a matter is established." Here are 12 men, fishermen, who could testify in a court (many of them fishermen) to what had happened, and they all concluded that there was no normal explanation for what's going on. Their only explanation was that something supernatural was happening. They were all, without exception, in terror.

That brings us to the third movement, the ghost is revealed as Jesus. Look at the second half of verse 50. "... But immediately He spoke with them and said to them, 'Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid.'" I love that. Isn't that just like our Lord? He was concerned about them, so He came to them in the middle of their trial, walking across the water, and then, when He sees that they're frightened by Him, He immediately speaks comfort to them. He identifies Himself, "It's your Lord. Take courage. Stop being afraid."

By the way that little expression, "It is I," Jesus may have meant more than simply to identify Himself because what He said was "Ego eimi." That means, "I Am." – I Am. It's possible that He was in those words, cryptically identifying Himself as Yahweh of the Old Testament. You remember in Exodus 3, when Moses says, "What is Your name?" He says, "Tell them I AM has sent you." Here Jesus identifies Himself as, "I Am." We can't be sure, but in the end, it doesn't really matter because He's in the process of proving who He is in this very incident. Look at verse 51, "Then He got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped ..." Jesus gets into the boat, and immediately the violent wind just stopped.

The fourth movement in this wonderful account is the disciples fail to understand – they just don't get it. Verse 51,

... they were utterly astonished. [Literally they were continuing to be utterly out-of-their-mind, astonished, overwhelmed. Why?] Verse 52, ... for they had not gained any insight from the *incident of the loaves*, but their heart was hardened.

The reason they were terrified by all of this, is that they had failed to seriously reflect on what the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 really said about Jesus. That's what Mark intends to communicate. And remember, who's helping Mark write this gospel? It's Peter. Peter's indicting himself. Peter's saying, "We didn't get it, and the problem was, our hearts were hardened, we weren't thinking. We weren't contemplating what we had seen."

William Hendrickson, the great commentator writes about this:

The obtuseness of the 12, their thickness, their inability to see things through, their inability to draw the necessary conclusions from the miracles of Jesus, was the result of sinful neglect to ponder and meditate on these marvelous works and on the nature of the One who performed them.

What an indictment for us. How often does God do the amazing in our lives, and we fail to contemplate what it means about Him and who He is?

Apparently, soon after Jesus gets into the boat, the truth begins to dawn on these men; because notice Matthew records this, in Matthew 14:33, "And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, 'You are certainly God's Son.'" I'm not sure that we can say they fully understood the full ramifications of that. There were varying ideas about the nature of God's Son in the first century, but it's possible they did. Regardless, we can say this, dawn is beginning to break on marble head. He's not one of them. He's not the same as they are. He is unique. They're beginning to recognize that reality.

Now, the story itself is fairly straightforward; the question is, why does Mark include this story? Why does he include the details he includes? The primary reason is this: to emphasize again the true identity of Christ. These men, most of them, would have been trained in Jewish homes where they would have been taught the Old Testament; and these men would have known that in the Old Testament, Yahweh, the God of Israel, describes Himself in just these terms. Listen to Job 9:8, speaking of God,

Who alone stretches out the heavens
And tramples down the waves of the sea ...
Who does great things, unfathomable,
And wondrous works without number.
“Were He to pass by me, I would not see Him;
Were He to move past *me*, I would
not perceive Him.”

James Edwards writes about this passage in Job.

The Job quotation summarizes a passage that begins by recounting the awesome separation between God and humanity. God can do what we cannot do and can never conceive of doing. His wisdom is beyond compare. He moves mountains; He shakes the earth; He obscures the sun; He arrays the heavens in splendor, and He treads upon the waves of the sea. This God cannot be conceived of in human categories, and any natural explanation of His acts is foolish and pointless. The God described by Job is holy God, holy other, and can never be confused with human beings.” [While that may be true, in Jesus’ case, He’s both; holy and entirely God, and holy and entirely man.]

You know this event is far more profound than it appears on the surface. I mean it’s pretty striking in and of itself, but there’s a deeper lesson here; because, in reality, Jesus performed three miracles that night, and we’re supposed to see all of them. The first and most obvious one is the walking on the water; and that is impressive.

But there’s a second miracle, we saw it in verse 51, when He got in the boat; immediately, the mega wind that had been sending huge waves, these fishermen couldn’t deal with, stopped.

But there's a third miracle that isn't quite as obvious. It's in John's gospel, and that is, transporting the boat and its passengers from the middle of the sea, the middle of the lake, to land. Listen to what John says in John 6:21, "So they were willing to receive Him into the boat..." So, they're out in the middle, He gets into the boat, "... and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going." Jesus miraculously and in an instant, transported that boat and its supplies, 13 people, from many stadia away from land, or several miles, to the land. One moment you're in the middle of the sea, the sea has just gone calm, the next moment your little boat is sitting next to the land and your destination.

Now, think about this for a moment; put on your scientific hats with me. Matter, as we know it, exists in three states. It exists as a solid, that is, with a fixed volume and shape. It exists as a liquid, a fixed volume, but it adapts to the shape of its container, and it exists as a gas to expand to fit whatever volume is available. That night, Jesus showed His power over all three. Think about it.

The solid, He transported a boat and His disciples in a moment's time to land. A liquid, He walked across the surface of the Sea of Galilee, in a storm. Gas, He immediately quieted the wind, and it was calm.

He was the Lord of matter, but what He did even goes beyond proving that He's sovereign over matter. He also proves Himself to be the Lord of matter, space and time, because by transporting that boatload of people several miles in an instant of time, He identified Himself as the One who controls matter, and time, and space. He is the Sovereign over all creation.

Shouldn't surprise us, should it? Because we know, the Scripture tells us Jesus Christ made it all. On Genesis 1, the first day of creation, God spoke into existence, time, space, and matter. And John tells us in John 1:3 that that happened through Jesus Christ, speaking of the Word, the Son. He says, "All things [that came into being] came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being." John 1:10, "... the world was made through Him..." First Corinthians 8:6, ... there is "... one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all

things....” Hebrews 1:2, God “... has spoken to us ... [through] His Son ... through whom also He made the world.”

Folks, look around you, open your eyes in the morning until the sun sets in the evening. Everything you see, every piece of matter, all time, all space was created by Jesus Christ our Lord.

It’s even more astounding when you consider what God says in the Old Testament. I want you to turn to just a couple of passages with me. Look back in Isaiah. It really emphasizes who Jesus Christ is, when you hear the God of Israel, Yahweh, talk about His own creative work. Look at Isaiah 42:5. “Thus says God ...” and when you see the word “LORD” remember in all caps like that in our Bible, it is the translation of the Hebrew personal name for God, those four Hebrew letters that we pronounce Yahweh; when God says it, it’s “I AM”, when we say it, Yahweh, it’s “He is.” This is God’s personal name. So, when you see the word LORD, it’s the personal name of the God who created everything, who is the God of Israel, “Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread out the earth and its offspring, Who gives breath to the people on it And spirit to those who walk in it.” Yahweh did all of this.

Look over in 44:24. “Thus says Yahweh ...” There it is again, God’s personal name, “... your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, ‘I, Yahweh, am the maker of all things, Stretching out the heavens by Myself And spreading out the earth all alone.’” “I did it by Myself,” God says. Chapter 45:11,

Thus says Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker: “Ask Me about the things to come concerning My sons, And you shall commit to Me the work of My hands. It is I who made the earth, and created man upon it. I stretched out the heavens with My hands And I ordained all their host.” [God said, “I did it. Yahweh, I did it.]”

Verse 18, “For thus says Yahweh, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it *and* did not create it a waste place, *but* formed it to be inhabited), ‘I am Yahweh, and there is none else.’”

Now, how do you reconcile all of those passages that are on the screen with those verses I just read? There’s only one way to reconcile them, and it’s the way the New Testament reconciles them, and that is that Jesus is One in essence with the Father. He made it all.

Not only did Jesus make it all, He sustains it all. Acts 17:28, “... in Him we live and move and exist...” speaking of God. But notice 1 Corinthians 8:6 puts it more personally of Christ, there is “... one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things [He created everything], and we *exist* through Him.” [He sustains our lives.] He sustains everything Colossians 1:17 says, “... in Him all things hold together.”

If you’ve studied the amazing reality of the minute world out of which everything is made, all of matter is made, down to the atoms, and all of the parts, you know that there is more space there than there is solid, more space than substance. What holds that together and makes it work, makes it solid? Jesus says, “I do.” Hebrews 1:3, “... and He upholds all things by the word of His power.” Listen, Jesus Christ made everything you see; He made you. He is the Maker of everything your eyes fall upon, or He made what it’s made of, and He sustains it. It’s only by the act of His will that this world continues in its orbit flying, hurling through space at thousands of miles an hour. It all works, because He wills it to work.

More than that, not only did He make it all, does He sustain it all, but it all exists for Him. Colossians 1:16 puts it like this, “For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities...” It doesn’t matter what you can name, He made it, “... and all things have been created through Him ...” [there’s His creative responsibility] “... and for Him.”

This universe exists for the glory of Jesus Christ. But let’s make it more personal. You exist for the glory of Jesus Christ. He is the One who made you. He is the One who sustains your life

this very moment. Your heart beats because Jesus Christ wills it to beat. Your lungs continue to process oxygen because He wills for your lungs to continue to process oxygen. Your life is dependent on Him every moment, and you exist to bring Him glory.

Jesus Christ proved His deity that night beyond all question, which is why His enemies hate this passage so much. You know, when I think about Jesus' absolute sovereign power over matter, space and time, over all of creation, it reminds me how weak our faith is. How often do we become afraid of something that's created? Another person, disease, cancer, finances, what are we going to eat; what are we going to drink; what are we going to wear; storms, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, and the list goes on and on.

Whatever it is we fear, our Lord is sovereign over all of that. He may leave you in the storm for a while, like He did the disciples, but He sees, He knows, and He cares. And He will seek you out in that trial, just as He came to be with His disciples, and He will deliver you in His own time, and in His own way. It may not even be in this life. It may be like Paul at the very end of his life in 2 Timothy when he says, "I know God will deliver me when He's just said I'm going to die." What did he mean? He meant. He may not deliver me from this jail cell, but He will deliver me.

That's how Christians in previous centuries could go to their death in courage and bravery because they knew there wasn't anything around them that their Lord wasn't sovereign over, that He was in control. He may have them in the storm, but He saw; He knew, and in His time and in His way, He would deliver them. May God give us the courage to trust our Lord like that.

Let's pray together.

Father, thank You for this amazing record of our Lord's great miracle. Forgive us, Father, for thinking so lightly of Your Son, the One who is eternally co-equal with You, eternally existent with You, who is Your beloved Son. Thank You Father, for allowing us to just get a glimpse of who He really is.

I pray Father, for the person here tonight who has never submitted their will to Jesus Christ, who's never acknowledged Him to be the sovereign Lord that He is, have lived as rebels against His will and purpose. Father, help them to see that they can either bow the knee today and receive His mercy and grace, or someday they will bow the knee and receive His justice and His wrath. But He is the Sovereign over all of creation, and nothing can change it. Father, may this be the night when they go home and cast themselves upon their knees in Your presence and plead for Your mercy, that Your Son would become their Lord, would change their hearts even as we heard in the testimonies in baptism tonight; make them new. Father, thank You, that the One who could perform these miracles can change us at the most basic level.

Father, for those of us who are in Christ, remind us of who it is we worship, who it is we serve, who it is we love and follow. That He is the sovereign One, over all of matter, over all of space and over all of time, and that His will is and will be done. And Lord knowing that, help us to face with courage the storms, knowing that He sees; He knows; and He will come and comfort. And in His time and in His way, He will deliver us. Thank You for such a great Savior.

In Jesus' name, Amen.