



SESSION 27 | JOHN 6:16-25

JOHN 6:16-25 | JESUS WALKS ON WATER

- Verses 16-17 –
 - Since Jesus was alone on the mountain (v. 15), the disciples decided to go on without him. They got into **a ship** (a small vessel with a sail, using the English word).
 - Whether this was a fishing boat that belonged to one of them (or their family), or a commercial boat for hire, we cannot know.
- Verse 18 –
 - Because the mountains around the Sea of Galilee are about 700 feet above sea level, and the sea itself is 700 feet below sea level, sudden windstorms arise on the Sea of Galilee when warm air comes off the Mediterranean Sea, up the mountains around the Sea of Galilee, then suddenly swoops down on the sea.
- Verse 19 –
 - To get 25-30 **furlongs** from any point would put the boat either halfway to the destination or in the middle of the sea.
 - They could have gone along the coastline from Bethsaida to Capernaum, but Mark 6:47 states that **the ship was in the midst of the sea**. Whether they were there due to the wind or if that was their route is unknown.
 - A furlong is a from the Greek σταδιον [stadion], from which we get *stadium*, and is basically equivalent to standard running track from the farthest point of the curve.
 - In this precarious spot, **they see Jesus walking on the sea...and they were afraid**.
 - Some have tried to make this a “non-miracle” based on the use of the same Greek words (“επι της θαλασσης”) in John 21:1.
 - Here the words are translated **on the sea**, and in John 21:1 they are translated **at the sea**.
 - The skeptics argument is that the ship sailed along the coastline, and the disciples saw Jesus walking along the seashore.
 - Such a sight would not explain why **they were afraid**, without conjecturing some disciplinary issue which they feared.
 - But even that doesn’t hold up when Matthew’s account is considered, where the disciples **cried out for fear** and were saying **It is a spirit**.
 - Furthermore, in the context of this Gospel, with its clear testimony of eight miracles to prove Jesus as Messiah, there is no reason to take this as anything less than a miracle.

- Verses 20-21 –
 - The phrase **It is I; be not afraid** is more significant that we recognize in English. Consider the following passage where the same Greek is used:
 - John 4:26
 - John 6:35, 41, 48, 51
 - John 8:24, 28, 58
 - John 9:9
 - John 10:7, 9, 11, 14
 - John 11:25
 - John 13:19
 - John 14:6
 - John 15:1, 5
 - John 18:5-6
 - The phrase appears to be Messianic in tone when used by John (though is not required to be so inherently).
 - When Jesus got into the boat, the other Gospels mention that the winds ceased. Only John says that **immediately the ship as at the land whither they went**.
 - The word **immediately** is εὐθέως [eutheos], which is translated both *immediately* and *straightway* in the KJV, thus the word could imply *quickly without further delay*.
 - If this was an additional miracle, we would expect the other Gospels to share it as such.
- Verses 22-24 –
 - The **people which stood on the other side of the sea** were the people who had been with Jesus for the feeding of the 5,000. These people were **on the other side** from which Jesus was *now* located, after the journey.
 - The wording of verses 22-24 can be unnecessarily complicated in our minds. The words communicate that the previous day there was only one boat, and into this boat **his disciples were entered...and were gone away alone**, without Jesus (v. 22). Now, **Jesus was not there** (v. 24), and the assumption was that He had gone to the other side, though they were uncertain how He got there. In the meantime, **there came other boats from Tiberius** (v. 23) and the people **took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus** (v. 24).
- Verse 25 –
 - The crowd was eager to see and be with Jesus, even having desired to make Him their King (v. 15).
 - Though some, like Westcott, consider the desire to make Jesus King to be, “the mistaken expectations of the multitude”¹, this was actually the *desired* and *expected* outcome of what Jesus had done to this point. Thus the crowd to whom Jesus speaks beginning in verse 26 is a crowd that is *ready* to have Jesus as their Messiah.

¹ Brooke Foss Westcott and Arthur Westcott, eds., *The Gospel according to St. John Introduction and Notes on the Authorized Version*, Classic Commentaries on the Greek New Testament (London: J. Murray, 1908), 99.