

## BIBLE LESSON

Abridged from Peloubets' Notes.

Third Quarter.

JESUS WALKING ON THE SEA.

Lesson 1. July 1. Matt. 14:22-33.

Compare Mark 6:45-56; John 6:15-21.  
Commit Verses 25, 27.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Of a truth thou art the Son of God.—  
Matt. 14:33.

EXPLANATORY.

I. JESUS SPENDS A NIGHT OF PRAYER ALONE IN THE MOUNTAINS.—Vs. 22, 23. 22. AND STRAIGHTWAY. As soon as he had sent away the five thousand men besides women and children, whom he had fed with the five loaves and two fishes (see Lesson XII. of last quarter). JESUS CON-  
STRAINED. Urged, compelled by his authority and influence, contrary to their own natural desires. The disciples were reluctant to go away and leave their teacher in this desert place at night. It seemed like disloyalty and desertion. TO GET INTO A SHIP. Better as in R. V. to enter the boat, the one they had come in; not very large for it could be propelled by oars. AND TO GO BEFORE HIM UNTO THE OTHER SIDE. Mark: "to Bethsaida;" John: "toward Capernaum," this being the ultimate point to be reached.

23. APART. Privately, by himself alone. TO PRAY, as his disciples must pray if they would be like their Master. "And as he prayed, the faithful stars in the heavens shone out." AND WHEN THE EVENING WAS COME. The second or late evening, beginning with sunset. The darkness had now descended upon the whole scene. HE WAS THERE ALONE. This season of prayer alone with God lasted several hours, for it began in the evening after sunset; and he does not come to his disciples till the fourth watch, or between 3 and 6 o'clock the next morning (v. 25).

II. CONTRARY WINDS: THE DISCIPLES IN A STORM AT SEA.—V. 24. BUT THE SHIP (the fishing boat) WAS NOW IN THE MIDST OF THE SEA, which was here only about five miles across. The Sea of Galilee is peculiarly liable to these sudden storms. It lies in a long, deep valley, six hundred feet below the level of the Mediterranean, and heated by the fierce tropical sun this valley acts like a gigantic funnel, through which sweep with great fury the winds from the snowy Lebanon Mountains on the north. FOR THE WIND WAS CONTRARY. From the north or northeast. From any point on the eastern shore, the disciples would require to steer northward in order to reach Bethsaida. But a contrary wind, blowing strongly from the northeast, drove them back far into the sea; so that the real direction in which they went was westerly, toward Capernaum.

III. JESUS APPEARS TO THEM WALKING ON THE WATER.—Vs. 25-27. Although they seem alone, yet the eye of Jesus is watching them (Mark). 25. AND IN THE FOURTH WATCH OF THE NIGHT. Between 3 and 6 o'clock in the morning. The night was divided by the Romans into four watches of about three hours each from sunset to sunrise. JESUS WENT UNTO THEM, WALKING ON THE SEA. In the extremity of their danger, exhaustion and despondency, Jesus came to his disciples by his supernatural power over nature. He was and is Lord of every element and force of nature, and could control and wield them at his will.

26. THEY WERE TROUBLED, SAYING, IT IS A SPIRIT. The word in the Greek is not the usual one for "spirit." It was

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rather an apparition, a ghost, a phantom, a specter, and hence to them a sign of disaster or death. "He would appear to them at first like a dark moving speck upon the waters; then as a human figure."

BUT THEY CRIED OUT FOR FEAR (the apparition was worse than the storm), and therefore (v. 27) STRAIGHTWAY JESUS SPAKE UNTO THEM. They could recognize the familiar tones of his voice. BE OF GOOD CHEER; IT IS I. Your Master; I, who a few months ago bade the storm cease by my "Peace, be still;" I, who have wrought so many miracles in your presence; I, who am the Son of God!

IV. PETER'S STRANGE EXPERIENCE.—Vs. 28-33. 28. LORD, IF IT BE THOU. Rather, "since it is thou;" not expressing a doubt, or at most but the lingering echo of doubts driven away by Christ's assuring words. BID ME COME UNTO THEE ON THE WATER. Or waters. Not "let me," but "give me the word of command,"—"command," or "order me to come unto thee upon the waters."

29. AND HE SAID COME. Make a trial of your faith. Jesus knew that by permitting him to make the trial, Peter would learn some very important lessons he needed much. HE WALKED ON THE WATER. Not necessarily very far; and yet so long as he thus walked, it was through supernatural aid from Christ, which could operate upon him only so long as he had faith.

30. BUT WHEN HE SAW THE WIND BOISTEROUS, i. e., the high waves, impelled by the wild rushing against him. As long as Peter looked to Jesus only, he rose by faith over the elements of nature; but as soon as he looked away from Jesus to the boisterous waves, he began to doubt, to despond, and to sink. "The impurities in Peter's faith began to tell." HE CRIED, SAYING, LORD, SAVE ME. Peter had sense enough and faith enough to do the one sensible thing. Here was an example of genuine prayer, short, earnest, to the point, prompted by a sense of need, looking to Jesus, answered. How earnestly every sinner should offer this prayer!

31. AND IMMEDIATELY. Mark the immediately Jesus did not delay. JESUS STRETCHED FORTH HIS HAND AND CAUGHT HIM. He answers to Peter's faith in him, although that faith was small. O THOU OF LITTLE FAITH. Real faith, but too little of it. WHEREFORE DIDST THOU DOUBT? Why could not you, who have witnessed my power so many times, hold on a little longer, and against seeming difficulties? Peter had courage and faith, but both were imperfect.

32. THE WIND CEASED. A beautiful word in the Greek; the wind grew weary, sank away like one who is weary with his fierce struggles and lies down to rest.

33. THEY THAT WERE IN THE SHIP. R. V. "boat." Others besides the disciples—Meyer, Schaff, Trench. CAME AND WORSHIPED HIM. Reverently bowing

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and making the following confession. OF A TRUTH THOU ART THE SON OF GOD. This new display of power had convinced them. It was not so marvellous as the miracle of the loaves, but was more striking in form.

V. LESSONS FROM JESUS IN THE STORM.—1. The storm on Galilee was a symbol of the storms of life which overtake every individual at times. Our life is a voyage. We are not like a ship safely anchored in the harbor, but like one plowing its way over an ocean, battling with storms, exposed to a thousand dangers, seeking a harbor in a better land. 2. The disciples are in this boat toiling and laboring anxiously to take the boat to the place where the Lord commanded. 3. Their Lord Jesus Christ is watching them in all their struggles and dangers. 4. The tempest represents the storms of persecution, of opposition, of worldliness, of false doctrine, and every opposing force which the great enemy of good can excite against the people of God. 5. "A ship in the sea is safe so long as the sea is not in the ship. The church is safe in the world so long as the world is not in the church." 6. Our hope lies not in the absence of danger, but in the presence of Christ, who is able to control the storm. No church with Christ in it can be wicked or lost. More of the living Christ, more of his love, more of his teaching, more faith in him, more prayer to him, more of his Holy Spirit, more of his holy life—these are the salvation and hope of the church.

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