

MATTHEW 14

Herod Beheads John

1 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the news about Jesus 2 and said to his servants:

This is John the Baptist! He has risen from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him.

3 For when Herod had John arrested, he bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. 4 For John had been saying to him:

It is not lawful for you to have her.

5 Although Herod wanted to put him to death, he feared the crowd (ὄχλος) because they regarded John as a prophet (προφήτης). 6 But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod 7 so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. 8 Having been prompted by her mother, she said:

Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist.

9 Although he was grieved, the king commanded it to be given because of his oaths, and because of his dinner guests.¹ 10 He sent and had John beheaded in the prison. 11 And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. 12 His disciples came and took away the body and buried it,² and they went and reported to Jesus.

Jesus Feeds 5000 Believers through the Disciples³

13 Now when Jesus heard [about John's death], he withdrew (ἀναχωρέω) from there [probably Capernaum] in a boat to an isolated place (εἰς ἔρημον τόπον) by himself [with his disciples]. And when the crowd (ὄχλος) heard, they followed (ἀκολουθεῖω) him on foot from the cities.⁴ 14 When he went ashore, he saw a large crowd (πολὸν ὄχλον), felt in his gut (σπλαγχνίζομαι, aor.) for them,⁵ and healed their sick.⁶ 15 When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said:

¹ Herod's hesitation in beheading John foreshadows Pilate's hesitation in crucifying Jesus.

² Just as John's disciples buried him, so Jesus' disciple Joseph buried him (Mt 27:57-58).

³ Jesus' feeding of the 5000 was a very significant event. All four gospels record the event.

⁴ **Mt 11:20** 20 [Jesus] began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles were done, because they [their residents] did not [change their minds].

⁵ **Mt 9:36** 36 Seeing the crowds (ὄχλους), [Jesus] felt in his gut (σπλαγχνίζομαι, aor.) for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.

⁶ Jesus heals because the large crowd believes in him, in contrast to the residents of Nazareth.

This place is isolated (ἔρημος), and the hour is already late. So send the crowds (ὄχλους) away, that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.⁷

16 But Jesus said to them:

They do not need to go away. You (pl.) give them something to eat!⁸

17 They said to him:

We have here only five loaves and two fish.

18 And he said:

Bring them here to me!⁹

19 Ordering the crowds (ὄχλους) [of believers] to sit down on the grass, he took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up into the sky, he blessed them. And breaking the loaves he gave them to the disciples (μαθηταῖς), and the disciples to the crowds (ὄχλοις),¹⁰ 20 and they all ate and were satisfied.¹¹ They picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve full baskets.¹² 21 There were about five thousand men who ate, besides women and children.

⁷ Will Jesus be able to feed the crowd, as Moses was able to? The disciples' solution is for the crowd to feed itself, but this is not Jesus' solution.

⁸ Physical food symbolizes spiritual food. Jesus is teaching the disciples that he wants them to satisfy crowds of believers with biblical teaching. **Ac 6:2** 2 The twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said: It is not desirable for us to neglect [the teaching of] the word of God in order to serve tables.

⁹ Anytime in Matthew when Jesus says "bring them to me," he is teaching the disciples that all life concerns, issues, and problems are to be brought to him. He himself is the solution, not the disciples or their methods.

¹⁰ The food comes from Jesus and is distributed by disciples to believers. This is always the pattern. Disciples are channels for Jesus to satisfy the spiritual needs of believers. They are to open-handed, not closed fist. **Mt 10:8** 8 Freely you received. Freely give. **2 Ti 2:2** 2 The things that you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

¹¹ **Jn 1:16** 16 Of [Jesus'] fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. **Jn 6:35** 35 I [Jesus] am the bread of life. He who comes to me will not hunger, and he who believes in me will never thirst.

¹² The disciples will always have enough for themselves. They need not worry. **2 Co 9:10-11** 10 [God] who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God.

Jesus and Peter Walk on the Sea of Galilee

22 Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead to the other side, while he sent the crowds (ὄχλους) away.¹³ 23 After he had sent the crowds (ὄχλους) away, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. And when it was evening, he was there alone. 24 But the boat was already a long distance from the land, battered by the waves, for the wind was contrary. 25 And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them,¹⁴ walking on the sea.¹⁵ 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified and said:

It is a ghost (φάντασμα)!

And they cried out (κράζω) in fear. 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them saying:

Take courage (θαρσέω, pres.).¹⁶ I Am (ἐγώ εἰμι).¹⁷ Do not be afraid (φοβέω, pres.).

28 Peter said to him:

Lord (κύριε), if it is you, command me to come (ἔρχομαι) to you on the water.

29 And he said:

Come (ἔρχομαι)!

So Peter got out of the boat, walked on the water, and came (ἔρχομαι) toward Jesus. 30 But seeing the wind, he became frightened (φοβέω), and beginning to sink, he cried out (κράζω):

Lord (κύριε), save (σώζω, aor.) me!¹⁸

31 Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand, took hold of him,¹⁹ and said to him:

¹³ It's time for another lesson in discipleship.

¹⁴ **Mt 28:20** 20 Look, I [Jesus] am with you [disciples] always, even to the end of the age.

¹⁵ **Ps 77:19** 19 Your way was in the sea, your paths in the mighty waters, and your footprints may not be known.

¹⁶ “[T]o be firm or resolute in the face of danger or adverse circumstances, *be enheartened, be courageous*” (BDAG, 444).

¹⁷ καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸς Μωϋσῆν Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν, καὶ εἶπεν Οὕτως ἐρεῖς τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ Ὁ ὢν ἀπέσταλκέν με πρὸς ὑμᾶς (Ex 3:14, LXX).

¹⁸ **2 Sa 22:5-7** 5 The waves of death encompassed me [David]. The torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. 6 The cords of Sheol surrounded me. The snares of death confronted me. 7 In my distress I called upon Yahweh. Yes, I cried to my God. And from his temple he heard my voice, and my cry for help came into his ears. **Ps 69:1-2** 1 Save me, God, for the waters have threatened my life. 2 I have sunk in deep mire, and there is no foothold. I have come into deep waters, and a flood overflows me.

¹⁹ **2 Sa 22:17-20** 17 [Yahweh] sent from on high. He took me [David]. He drew me out of many waters. 18 He delivered me from my strong enemy, from those who hated me, for they were too strong for me. 19 They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but Yahweh was my support. 20 He also brought me forth into a broad place. He rescued me, because he delighted in me.

Little faith (ὀλιγόπιστε), for what reason did you doubt (διστάζω, aor.)?²⁰

32 When they got into the boat, the wind stopped (κοπάζω, aor.). 33 And those who were in the boat [disciples] worshiped (προσκυνέω, aor.) him saying:

Truly of God you are a Son (ἀληθῶς θεοῦ υἱὸς εἶ)!

Jesus Heals the Sick of Gennesaret

34 When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret [a Jewish region]. 35 And when the men (ἄνδρες) of that place recognized (ἐπιγινώσκω, aor.) him, they sent into all that surrounding district and brought to him all who were sick.²¹ 36 And they implored (παρακαλέω, imperf.) him that they might just touch (ἅπτω) the fringe of his cloak, and as many as touched (ἅπτω) were delivered (διασώζω).²²

²⁰ διστάζω: doubt, hesitate, waver. **Mt 28:17** 17 When [the disciples] saw [Jesus], they worshiped. But some doubted (διστάζω).

²¹ Recognizing Jesus and bringing people to him is the believer's primary mission in life.

²² This crowd believes in Jesus, and they are primarily Jews.

Biblical Theology

1. Messianology.

- a. Jesus is Yahweh of the Old Testament. He is the great “I Am.” He is God himself (Mt 14:27).
- b. Jesus, the God-man, possesses all authority. He is able to do anything he wants to do (Mt 14:25, 32, 36).
- c. In circumstances of danger, Jesus is always calm and composed. He is never afraid (Mt 14:25; 8:24; 27:14, 54).

2. Soteriology.

- a. The job of believers, once they recognize Jesus, is to bring unbelievers to him (Mt 14:35; 4:24; 8:16; 9:2; 9:32; 12:22; 15:30; 17:14-18).
- b. Jesus’ touch heals people from emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual sickness (Mt 14:36; 8:3, 15; 9:20-21, 29; 20:34).

3. Sanctification.

- a. The job of disciples is to get spiritual food from Jesus and hand it out to believers.
- b. The training of disciples sometimes requires sending the crowds of believers away (Mt 14:22-23).
- c. Disciple-makers need to time to refresh away from both believers and disciples (Mt 14:23).
- d. The disciple-maker’s source of strength is his or her prayer life (Mt 14:23).
- e. Jesus orchestrates tests of faith for his disciples, during which he seems to be absent (14:22-24).
- f. Disciples often face “dark nights of the soul” immediately after spiritual victories (Mt 14:20-21, 24).
- g. Jesus is present in the dark periods of our lives, though he may be hard to recognize (Mt 14:25-26).
- h. It is belief in Jesus’ authority and presence that gets disciples through dark periods (Mt 14:27; 28:18-20).
- i. Jesus is looking for disciples who want to take bold steps of faith (Mt 14:28-29).
- j. Disciples who want to take bold steps of faith are to ask for Jesus’ permission (Mt 14:28).
- k. Jesus rewards disciples who take bold steps of faith (Mt 16:16; 17:1; Lk 22:31-32; Ac 2:14).
- l. Disciples who stay in the boat are not to criticize disciples who get out of the boat.
 - (1) “It is not the critic who counts: not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes up short again and again, because there is no effort without error or shortcoming, but who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, who spends himself for a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows, in the end, the triumph of high achievement, and who, at the

worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who knew neither victory nor defeat.”²³

- m. Disciples begin to sink when they forget that Jesus is greater than their circumstances (Mt 14:30; Ps 69:1-2, 14-15).
- n. Disciples never stop needing the immediate presence of Jesus (14:27, 31; 28:20 Ps 23:4).
- o. Jesus cares very much about the development of his disciples’ faith (Mt 14:31).
- p. The dark periods of disciples’ lives don’t last forever. Jesus will cause them to stop (Mt 14:32; 8:26; 1 Co 10:13).
- q. Disciples are to develop an ever-increasing awareness of Jesus’ unique personhood (Mt 8:27; 14:33; 16:16).

²³ U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt (d. 1919).

Comparison of Matthew's Galilee Storm Episodes

Jesus Calms the Storm Mt 8:18-9:1	Jesus Walks on Water Mt 14:22-33
Happens before Israel's rejection of Jesus.	Happens after Israel's rejection of Jesus.
Jesus separates from the crowds of believers (8:18).	Jesus separates from the crowds of believers (14:22-23).
Only disciples are allowed to go with him (8:18-23)	Only the disciples are allowed to go (8:22).
Jesus and the disciples get in a boat (8:23).	The disciples get into a boat (14:22).
Jesus and the disciples head to the other side of the Sea of Galilee to Gedara, a Gentile region (8:28).	The disciples head to the other side of the Sea of Galilee by themselves to Gennesaret, a Jewish region (14:22, 34).
A great storm arises on the sea (8:24).	A storm arises on the sea (14:24).
Jesus is alone, asleep in the boat. He is calm and composed (8:24).	Jesus comes to the disciples, walking on the sea. He is calm and composed (14:25).
The disciples are afraid and cry out for Jesus to save them (8:24).	The disciples cry out in fear (14:26). Peter cries out in fear (14:30).
	Jesus tells the disciples to take courage because he is there (14:27).
	Peter also walks on water, but then he begins to sink (14:29-30).
Jesus calls the disciples "little-faiths" (8:26).	Jesus calls Peter a "little-faith" (14:31).
Jesus causes the storm to stop (8:26).	The wind suddenly stopped when Jesus and Peter got into the boat (14:32).
The disciples wonder who Jesus is (8:27).	The disciples believe Jesus is God's Son and worship him (14:33).
The demons call Jesus the Son of God (8:29).	The disciples call Jesus the Son of God (14:33).
Jesus performs a miracle at Gedara in the presence of the disciples (8:28-32).	Jesus heals many in the presence of the disciples (14:36).
Herdsmen report about Jesus (8:33).	Men recognize Jesus and report to all the surrounding district (14:35).
The residents of Gedara urge Jesus to leave (8:34).	The residents of Gennesaret bring their sick to Jesus and beg to touch his cloak (14:35-36).
	Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem confront Jesus (15:1).
Jesus and the disciples cross back to Capernaum, a Jewish city (9:1).	Jesus depart for Tyre and Sidon, a Gentile region (15:21).

Notes

Ps 88:13–18 13 But I, O Lord, have cried out to You for help, And in the morning my prayer comes before You. 14 O Lord, why do You reject my soul? *Why* do You hide Your face from me? 15 I was afflicted and about to die from my youth on; I suffer Your terrors; I am overcome. 16 Your burning anger has passed over me; Your terrors have destroyed me. 17 They have surrounded me like water all day long; They have encompassed me altogether. 18 You have removed lover and friend far from me; My acquaintances are *in* darkness.

Ps 89:8–9 8 O Lord God of hosts, who is like You, O mighty Lord? Your faithfulness also surrounds You. 9 You rule the swelling of the sea; When its waves rise, You still them.

Ps 93:3–4 3 The floods have lifted up, O Lord, The floods have lifted up their voice, The floods lift up their pounding waves. 4 More than the sounds of many waters, *Than* the mighty breakers of the sea, The Lord on high is mighty.

Eze 34:11-16 11 For thus says Lord Yahweh: Look, I myself will search for my sheep and seek them out. 12 As a shepherd cares for his herd in the day when he is among his scattered sheep, so I will care for my sheep and will deliver them from all the places to which they were scattered on a cloudy and gloomy day. 13 I will bring them out from the peoples, gather them from the countries, and bring them to their own land, and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the streams, and in all the inhabited places of the land. 14 I will feed them in a good pasture, and their grazing ground will be on the mountain heights of Israel. There they will lie down on good grazing ground and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. 15 I will feed my flock, and I will lead them to rest, declares Lord Yahweh. 16 I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bind up the broken, and strengthen the sick, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with judgment.

Ps 107:23–30 23 Those who go down to the sea in ships, Who do business on great waters; 24 They have seen the works of the Lord, And His wonders in the deep. 25 For He spoke and raised up a stormy wind, Which lifted up the waves of the sea. 26 They rose up to the heavens, they went down to the depths; Their soul melted away in *their* misery. 27 They reeled and staggered like a drunken man, And were at their wits' end. 28 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, And He brought them out of their distresses. 29 He caused the storm to be still, So that the waves of the sea were hushed. 30 Then they were glad because they were quiet, So He guided them to their desired haven.

Eze 34:11-16 11 Thus says Yahweh God: Look, I myself will search for my sheep and seek them out. 12 As a shepherd cares for his herd in the day when he is among his scattered sheep, so I will care for my sheep and will deliver them from all the places to which they were scattered on a cloudy and gloomy day. 13 I will bring them out from the nations, gather them from the countries, and bring them to their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the streams, and in all the inhabited places of the land. 14 I will feed them in a good pasture, and their grazing ground will be on the mountain heights of Israel. There they will lie down on good grazing ground and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. 15 I will feed My flock, and I will lead them to rest, declares Yahweh God. 16 I will



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