

Title: UP THE MOUNTAIN, ON THE WATER, IN THE BOAT, MATTHEW 14:22-33  
(Chatham, NJ; 08/10/14, AM) [Pc – Narrative Analysis, Inductive Conclusions]

Theme: Jesus prays on a mountain, walks on water, and evokes worship from the disciples in the boat.

Purpose: To travel with Jesus as he proceeds from place to place, and to understand his reasons for doing these things along with the disciples' reactions to them.

Introduction:

1. Only Matthew gives this much detail, especially about Peter walking on the water.
2. Mark uses this story to describe the hardness of the disciples' hearts.
3. John makes very little of the event; he mentions it almost as an aside.
4. Luke does not record it.
5. Think of ourselves journeying with Christ up the mountain, on the water, and in the boat.
6. We will do the best we can to understand Jesus as he goes from place to place.

#### I. Up the Mountain, 22-23

- A. He dismisses the crowd and the disciples, 22
  1. John adds some intriguing details
  2. After feeding the 5,000, people believed he was "the prophet"
  3. They wanted to "take him by force to make him king"
  4. Some believed they needed a leader of an army to bring about the Kingdom
  5. As the potential leader Jesus solved one major problem every army faces: feeding itself
  6. Jesus makes a quick exit though Matthew makes no mention of this detail
- B. What is Jesus thinking here?
  1. He goes up the mountain to pray
  2. Why now?
  3. What might he have prayed about this night?
  4. Was he tempted to succumb to being a mighty ruler, as many expected of the Son of Man?
  5. We know he often went to solitary places to pray
  6. Perhaps this was just his normal habit
  7. Note two similar details: he was "by himself" and "alone"
  8. "Up on the mountain" was Jesus' way of going into a room and closing the door so that he could pray with God one-on-one

#### II. On the Water, 24-31

- A. Why does Jesus walk on the water?
  1. In Mark 6:48, Mark says, "He meant to pass them by."
  2. Other than to get to the other side of the lake where he would meet up with them, did this serve some useful purpose?
  3. Was it just the quickest way from point A to point B?
  4. Was he just having a little fun?
  5. I don't pretend to know Jesus' exact motivation for this.
- B. The first round of dialogue
  1. The disciples see him: "It's a ghost" (hair on neck stood up)
  2. "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."
  3. Don't get excited; it's just me.
- C. Second round

1. Peter says, "If it is you . . ."
2. Jesus says, "Come on in. The water's fine." (Actually he says, "Come.")
3. Peter sinks and says, "Lord, save me."
4. "Why did you doubt?"
5. So, Peter, what were you worried about?
6. Peter probably said or thought, "Drowning."

### III. In the Boat, 32-33

- A previous event in the boat prompted them to ask, "Who is this?"
- They move a step beyond this to the last part of the dialogue, "Truly, you are the Son of God."
- Matthew records no more dialogue
- This occurred before Peter's confession in the next chapter
- How do we account for this?
- Was this strictly impulsive?
- Did they retain this belief?
- Did they know what they were saying?
- Why does Jesus ask them later?
- Perhaps what they utter with their lips will still take time to reside in their hearts.
- Matthew says they "worshipped him."

#### Conclusions:

1. Mountain: Prayer was extremely important to Jesus, and he prayed by himself.
2. Water: Peter focused on the storm rather than Jesus.
3. We need to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, Hebrews 12:1-2.
4. Athletes block out focusing on the pain so they can accomplish their goal.
5. Boat: The conclusion to this episode that Matthew portrays for us is still true even if we don't fully grasp how it fits with the rest of the story.