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Job chapter 38

4“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. **5**Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? **6**On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, **7**when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? **8**“Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb, **9**when I made clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, **10**and prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors, **11**and said, ‘Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed’? **12**“Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place, **13**that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it? **14**It is changed like clay under the seal, and its features stand out like a garment. **15**From the wicked their light is withheld, and their uplifted arm is broken. **16**“Have you entered into the springs of the sea, or walked in the recesses of the deep? **17**Have the gates of death been revealed to you, or have you seen the gates of deep darkness? **18**Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth? Declare, if you know all this.

Psalms chapter 18 **English Standard Version**

1To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, the servant of the LORD, who addressed the words of this song to the LORD on the day when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. He said: I love you, O LORD, my strength. **2**The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my

salvation, my stronghold. **3**I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies. **4**The cords of death encompassed me; the torrents of destruction assailed me; **5**the cords of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me. **6**In my distress I called upon the LORD; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears. **7**Then the earth reeled and rocked; the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked, because he was angry. **8**Smoke went up from his nostrils, and devouring fire from his mouth; glowing coals flamed forth from him. **9**He bowed the heavens and came down; thick darkness was under his feet. **10**He rode on a cherub and flew; he came swiftly on the wings of the wind. **11**He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him, thick clouds dark with water. **12**Out of the brightness before him hailstones and coals of fire broke through his clouds. **13**The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered his voice, hailstones and coals of fire. **14**And he sent out his arrows and scattered them; he flashed forth lightnings and routed them. **15**Then the channels of the sea were seen, and the foundations of the world were laid bare at your rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of your nostrils. **16**He sent from on high, he took me; he drew me out of many waters. **17**He rescued me from my strong enemy and from those who hated me, for they were too mighty for me. **18**They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but the LORD was my support.

Psalm 18:1

ESV

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, the servant of the LORD, who addressed the words of this song to the LORD on the day when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. He said: I love you, O LORD, my strength.

What does Psalm 18:1 mean? The introduction to this psalm credits it to David, who gave the first version of this praise in 2 Samuel chapter 22. David was motivated by God's immense help in rescuing him from Saul and his many other enemies.

In this verse David tells God he loves Him. Deuteronomy 6:5 gives Israel the command to love the Lord with all their heart, soul, and might, and Jesus identified this command as "the great and first commandment" (Matthew 22:37–38). David's love for the Lord honored this commandment. His love for God was

deep. David recognized the Lord as the one who made him victorious over his foes.

After rising from the grave, Jesus met His disciples and asked Peter whether Peter loved Him. Peter had previously denied the Lord three times but now he confessed three times that he loved the Lord as the Lord restored him (John 21:15–17). Like David and restored Peter, we, too, should love the Lord; and we can show our love for Him by keeping His commandments (John 14:15).

Psalm 18:2

ESV

The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

What does Psalm 18:2 mean? David uses five metaphors in this verse to describe God's relationship with him. He views God as his rock, his fortress, his shield, the horn of his salvation, and his stronghold. These metaphors identify David as a warrior. As he fought his enemies, he relied on God for protection.

About twenty times in Psalms the Lord is referred to as a Rock because of the security He provides for those who trust in Him (for example, Psalm 19:14; 28:1; 62:2; 94:22).

As David's fortress, God was his refuge. A fortress is meant to protect against hostile enemies—no fortress built by human hands provided as much protection for David as the fortress that was the Lord.

The Lord was also David's shield (Psalm 3:3). As his shield, the Lord protected David from his foes. He covered David as a shield covers a soldier.

In David's era, horns were symbolic of strength, which is why they are often used as metaphors for kings and rulers (Daniel 7:8; Revelation 17:12). As David's horn of salvation, the Lord empowered and delivered him.

As David's stronghold, God provided protection, much as a high, safe place provides refuge and protection for a soldier. Believers today have the Lord Jesus Christ as our refuge and shield. The apostle Paul referred to our lives as “hidden

Psalm 18:3**ESV**

I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.

What does Psalm 18:3 mean? David attributes his deliverance from his enemies, including Saul (1 Samuel 19:11–12; 2 Samuel 22:1), to the Lord. To be "delivered," in this context, means to be rescued or saved. The Hebrew root word is *yasha'*, which implies someone who brings freedom or enables an escape. Scripture records many instances of the Lord's deliverance, such as:

- The Hebrews from the Egyptian cavalry (Exodus 12:51; 15:19).
- The city of Gibeon from five kings and their forces (Joshua 10:6–11).
- Israel from the oppression of the Midianites (Judges 7:15–25).
- Jerusalem from the Assyrians (Isaiah 37:33–36).
- Daniel from the lions' den (Daniel 6:19–23).
- Peter from prison and execution (Acts 12:6–17).
- Christian believers from sin (Romans 6:17–18), the law of Moses (_____ 7:24–25), "the present evil age" (Galatians 1:4), and "from the wrath to come" (1 Thessalonians 1:10).
- He also delivers us from temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Certainly, given all of that, we ought to agree with David that the Lord is worthy to be praised!

Psalm 18:4**ESV**

The cords of death encompassed me; the torrents of destruction assailed me;

What does Psalm 18:4 mean? In the wilderness, when Saul and his forces pursued David (1 Samuel 23:15), David experienced great distress. At times he felt surrounded with no way to escape. This feeling is symbolized as cords—ropes or strings—that are wrapping around him. In those situations, it seemed death was imminent. Using another analogy, David compares this to the feeling of being caught in a flood or crashing waves. The sense of being overwhelmed and on the verge of death is terrifying. If it were not for God's rescue, David would surely have died.

The book of Job includes comments from three of Job's companions, whose words are mostly unhelpful. Eliphaz, one of these "comforters" (Job 2:11) told Job, "Snares are all around you, and sudden terror overwhelms you, or darkness, so that you cannot see, and a flood of water covers you" (Job 22:10–11). Of course, trouble came like a flood to both Job and David, not because

they were guilty of some horrendous sin. They were both upright in God's sight, but testing caused them to see the Lord more clearly as their rescuer and Redeemer (Job 19:24–25).

Believers may become severely distressed by persecution and/or trials, but the Lord never forsakes His people. Isaiah 43:1–2 promises: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by my name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you" (Isaiah 43:1–2).

Those who trust fully in God have a promise to cling to in tough times. Hebrews 13:5 quotes the Lord as saying, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

Psalm 18:5

ESV

the cords of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me.

What does Psalm 18:5 mean? At times, when Saul was pursuing David in the wilderness (1 Samuel 23:15), David felt doomed. Here, he echoes the same imagery used in the prior verse (Psalm 18:4). The feeling of being trapped, tied up, or entangled in ropes parallels David's sense of being helplessly caught by his enemies. The term *Sheol* is derived from an ancient term for "hollowness," but it came to mean "the underworld or the grave, the realm of all the dead." David was so hemmed in by Saul's men that he felt the grave was reaching out for him.

Years later, the prophet Jonah would report a similar feeling of entrapment and terror. He cried out to the Lord from the belly of a great fish and said, "I called out to the LORD, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice" (Jonah 2:2).

For a Christian death poses no ultimate threat. By His death and resurrection Jesus removed the sting of death. When born-again Christians die, they simply pass from life on earth with all its troubles and trials to heaven with all its joys and blessings. The apostle Paul regarded death not as loss, but as gain (Philippians 1:21).

Psalm 18:6**ESV**

In my distress I called upon the LORD; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears.

What does Psalm 18:6 mean? It has been observed that, when you are on your back, you can look up. David faced a crisis in which he felt doomed. Saul's forces had hemmed him in, and he was flat on his back (1 Samuel 23:15). But David looked up. In his distress he prayed. He called out to God for help, and the Lord answered him from heaven.

Jeremiah 33:2–3 holds God's invitation to call on Him and His promise to answer (Matthew 7:7–11). Hannah is a good example of what happens when a person in distress calls to the Lord for help. Ridiculed by her husband's other wife because she was barren, Hannah entered the tabernacle and silently but fervently asked the Lord to give her a son. First Samuel 1:1–20 reveals that Hannah was "deeply distressed" (1 Samuel 1:10) and "troubled in spirit" (1 Samuel 1:15) and prayed out of "great anxiety and vexation" (1 Samuel 1:16). The Lord answered her cry for help, and gave her a son, whom she named Samuel, meaning "asked or heard of God."

For all who feel distressed, God is "a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1).

Psalm 18:7**ESV**

Then the earth reeled and rocked; the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked, because he was angry.

What does Psalm 18:7 mean? So far in this psalm, David has praised God for His help and deliverance (Psalm 18:1–5). He recalled when he had cried out to God for rescue (Psalm 18:6). Now David begins to describe God's response to his cry.

This passage uses dramatic imagery to describe the power of God. In His anger with Saul, the Lord came to David's defense like a massive earthquake. Just as a mighty tremor ruptures and rocks the earth violently, so God's fury targeted Saul and other enemies of David.

After witnessing the Lord's destruction of Pharaoh's cavalry in the Red Sea, Moses and the people of Israel sang to the Lord. In their song of praise, they observed, "Your right hand, O LORD, glorious in power, your right hand, O LORD, shatters the enemy. In the greatness of your majesty you overthrow your adversaries; you send out your fury; it consumes them like stubble" (Exodus 15:6–7). The writer of Hebrews 10:31 warned, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

The Lord knew David was suffering, and He knew Saul was causing the suffering. In a furious display of His anger He judged Saul (1 Samuel 31:1–4).

Psalm 18:8

ESV

Smoke went up from his nostrils, and devouring fire from his mouth; glowing coals flamed forth from him.

What does Psalm 18:8 mean? David continues his description of God's anger against his enemies (Psalm 18:7). The prior verse compared God's powerful response to an earthquake. Volcanic activity is often connected to quakes, and here David suggests imagery related to an erupting volcano. David poetically describes the scene as smoke rising from the Lord's nostrils, with all-consuming flames shooting out of His mouth. The "glowing coals" are probably a description of lava. Just as an erupting volcano's lava flow destroys everything in its path, so the Lord's erupting anger engulfs and destroys the wicked.

About 500 years before David wrote Psalm 18, Moses and the people of Israel sang praises to God for destroying the Egyptian cavalry in the Red Sea. They gave a poetic description of God much like David's description in this verse. They sang: "At the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up; the floods stood up in a heap" (Exodus 15:8). Near the end of his life, Moses warned the Israelites about the consequences of rebelling against the Lord. He quoted the Lord as saying, "For a fire is kindled by my anger, and it burns to the depths of Sheol, devours the earth and its increase, and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains" (Deuteronomy 32:22).

It is frightful to rebel against the Lord as Saul did by seeking to kill David, the Lord's anointed king.

Psalm 18:9**ESV**

He bowed the heavens and came down; thick darkness was under his feet.

What does Psalm 18:9 mean? A poetic description of God's powerful response (Psalm 18:7–8) to David's pleas continues. David portrays the Lord as descending from heaven like a black cloud. The imagery suggests the sky was dropping down to the earth, engulfing it in an ominous darkness. Earlier passages compared God's wrath to an earthquake, and possibly to a volcanic eruption. This verse might follow that pattern, depicting the dust, smoke, and ash of such an event. An alternative image might be that of a massive tornado.

When God judges the wicked in the tribulation, the seven-year period that follows His removal of Christians from the earth (1 Thessalonians 4:13–17), thick darkness will fall upon the earth. Joel 2:2 describes this period as "a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness." Revelation 16:10 prophesies that during the fifth bowl judgment the kingdom of the beast will be plunged into darkness and people will gnaw their tongues in anguish. Whereas the events of Revelation 16:10 are at least partially literal, David's description of God's descending like a black cloud is figurative. Nevertheless, both descriptions provide a terrifying account of God's furious judgment.

Psalm 18:10**ESV**

He rode on a cherub and flew; he came swiftly on the wings of the wind.

What does Psalm 18:10 mean? David depicts his rescue from enemies, thanks to the Lord, as rapid. He pictures the Lord as coming to his defense and riding on a cherub and on the wings of the wind. This portrayal views God as a mighty warrior in a chariot charging the enemy swiftly.

In Scripture, cherubim—the plural term for a cherub—are angels that guard God's holiness. Modern culture tends to use terms like "angel" and "cherub" to describe something wholesome or cute. Angels like cherubim, however, are spiritual beings of incredible power. God appointed cherubim to guard the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:24), making it impossible for our first parents to return to the tree of life.

Ezekiel 10:8–14 describes the cherubim as having hands like human hands, wings, and four faces. Ezekiel 10:15 calls them, "living creatures." This identification seems to identify them as the living creatures the apostle John saw around God's throne and heard saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" (Revelation 4:6–8). Two golden cherubim were mounted on top of the ark of the covenant with their faces looking down on the mercy seat and their wings spread over its top (Exodus 25:17–22). Hebrews 9:5 refers to them as "the cherubim of glory." Cherubim were also woven into the curtain of the tabernacle and the veil (Exodus 26:1, 31).

Psalm 18:11

ESV

He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him, thick clouds dark with water.

What does Psalm 18:11 mean? Adding to his description of how the Lord delivered him from enemies such as Saul, David writes that the Lord covered Himself with darkness like thick rain clouds. Invisible to the human eye, the Lord was working out His purpose to rescue David. We cannot see God, but the eye of faith perceives that He has a purpose for our lives. Romans 8:28 assures us that all things, including hard trials, work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose.

Joseph, a major figure in the Old Testament, is a classic example of how God works behind the scenes. God's purpose for Joseph was to put him in high command in Egypt so he would save the lives of God's chosen people. When a severe famine struck that part of the world (Genesis 41:53–54), Joseph had already counseled the Egyptians to store grain in the years of bountiful harvest so it would be available in the lean years (Genesis 41:46–49). His wise plan kept the descendants of Jacob alive when they came to Egypt in search of grain (Genesis 42:1–3). Later Joseph reflected on his brothers' malicious treatment of him that had taken him from Canaan to Egypt (Genesis 37:23–28). Joseph remarked, "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today" (Genesis 50:20). The Lord works in secret, mysterious ways, but His ways always lead to the right conclusion.

Psalm 18:12**ESV**

Out of the brightness before him hailstones and coals of fire broke through his clouds.

What does Psalm 18:12 mean? According to David's poetic description of how the Lord rescued him, brightness went before the Lord and hailstones and coals of fire broke through the clouds. The biblical account of David's battles with Saul, or his other enemies, don't refer to literal earthquakes or fire (Psalm 18:7–8), nor hail, nor pulling David out of the water (Psalm 18:16). This is part of David's continuing imagery about the power God expressed in rescuing David. Coals of fire breaking through the clouds might be a depiction of bolts of lightning or even a meteorite shower.

Hail is rare in that area of the world, but the Bible mentions hail occurring in connection with God's judgment. The Lord sent heavy hail onto the land of Egypt as the seventh plague (Exodus 9:18–19). He also sent hailstones on the five kings of the Amorites and their forces who came against Joshua and Gibeon (Joshua 10:11). Haggai 2:17 attributes a judgment of hail to the Lord to persuade His backslidden people to return to Him, but they did not turn to Him. Revelation 16:21 reports that under the seventh bowl judgment in the tribulation hailstones weighing about one hundred pounds each fall from heaven upon the wicked.

Psalm 18:13**ESV**

The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered his voice, hailstones and coals of fire.

What does Psalm 18:13 mean? David continues his poetic description of how the Lord rescued him from Saul, and all of David's other enemies (2 Samuel 22:1). This extends the symbolic message David has used so far, including earthquakes, smoke, fire, darkness, and so forth (Psalm 18:7–12).

In his speech to Job, Elihu referred to the Lord's voice as sounding like thunder and rumbling accompanied by lightning (Job 37:2–5). Psalm 29:3–5 states "the God of glory thunders...The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty...[it] breaks the cedars." These descriptive statements show how awesome and powerful God is.

Unbelievers have every reason to fear the Lord's voice when He pronounces judgment on them, but believers cherish the voice of the Lord. He speaks comforting and assuring words to believers (2 Peter 1:3–4).

Psalm 18:14

ESV

And he sent out his arrows and scattered them; he flashed forth lightnings and routed them.

What does Psalm 18:14 mean? Looking back on how God rescued him from his enemies (2 Samuel 22:1), David continues to poetically describe the power of God (Psalm 18:7–13). Here he evokes the frightening aspect of lightning. The sudden burst of light, heat, noise, and destruction makes lightning a useful symbol of God's unstoppable power.

When Elihu addressed Job, he said, "Behold, [God] scatters his lightning about him" (Job 36:30). He added that the Lord "covers his hands with the lightning and commands it to strike its mark. Its crashing declares his presence" (Job 36:32–33). Fear of lightning may cause people to take shelter, but the Lord owns the lightning and wears it like a glove. The victory David obtained over his enemies was like a fierce display of God's anger and power, as if it were lightning aimed at the enemy.

Of course, we should not think every lightning storm is aimed at those who oppose God, and people are not wrong to seek shelter in a lightning storm. However, lightning should remind us that God possesses awesome power and merits our praise.

Psalm 18:15

ESV

Then the channels of the sea were seen, and the foundations of the world were laid bare at your rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of your nostrils.

What does Psalm 18:15 mean? In this passage, David has used dramatic metaphors to explain the awesome power of God (Psalm 18:7–14). This is part of David's song of praise, thanking the Lord for victory over David's enemies (2 Samuel 22:1).

The imagery given here implies God's rebuke. His breath can blast the waters of sea apart to the point that the sea floor is exposed. This connects to the description of Israel's miraculous rescue at the Red Sea, where God exposed the land, allowing the people to walk across (Exodus 14:15, 22). That was accomplished, in part, by a blast of wind (Exodus 14:21).

Psalm 29 indicates that God's voice breaks the strong cedars of Lebanon, causes Lebanon to skip like a calf, shakes the wilderness, and strips the forests bare. This description agrees with David's description of the powerful changes to sea and land that occur at the Lord's rebuke and at the blast of His nostrils. Heaven and earth serve God's purposes, and He has complete authority and control over them.

The judgments described in Revelation include those that involve the Lord's use of the sea, rivers, springs, wind, crops, sun, and moon, as the Lord releases His wrath on the wicked (Revelation 6).

Psalm 18:16

ESV

He sent from on high, he took me; he drew me out of many waters.

What does Psalm 18:16 mean? This continues David's praise for God's rescue during hard times (2 Samuel 22:1). As surely as the Lord drew Moses out of the waters of the Nile (Exodus 2:10), so the Lord drew David out of many waters. David was surrounded by his enemies and felt as doomed as a drowning man, but the Lord pulled him to safety. Earlier in this passage (Psalm 18:4–6), David compared his hardships to torrents of destruction and death. In those moments, he cried out for help and God answered his prayer.

Now David testifies to the fact that God delivered him from "many waters." This continues the theme implied by the word "deliver," translated from a Hebrew term which implies rescue (Psalm 18:2).

Matthew 8:23–27 tells the story about Jesus' terrified disciples and how He rescued them. They were all in a boat on the Sea of Galilee when a powerful storm suddenly whipped up the sea and sent waves crashing into the boat. Fearing for their lives, the disciples woke Jesus and asked Him to save them. They believed they were perishing. Jesus rebuked them for their lack of faith, arose, and, with just a word, calmed the wind and the sea. His power over

nature caused the disciples to ask, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?"

We may find ourselves drowning in a sea of disappointments and/or difficulties, but the Lord is able to deliver us. We need to trust Him.

Psalm 18:17

ESV

He rescued me from my strong enemy and from those who hated me, for they were too mighty for me.

What does Psalm 18:17 mean? David continues his testimony of the Lord's intervention on his behalf. He describes his enemy as strong and hateful. Further, he admits they were too mighty for him, but they were not too mighty for the Lord. He rescued David from his enemy. David had spent ten years as a fugitive in the wilderness when Saul sought to kill him, but the Lord brought those years to a happy conclusion (2 Samuel 22:1). After David became king he still fought enemies. Later in his reign that even included fleeing from his own son, Absalom, who had conspired to overthrow his father (2 Samuel 15–19; Psalm 3).

Regardless of how desperate our circumstances seem, we can wait patiently on the Lord and He will bring everything to a happy conclusion. Our enemy, the Devil, is too mighty for us, so we dare not try to defeat him in our own strength. The apostle Paul told Timothy to be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 2:1). And he told the Ephesians to "be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might" (Ephesians 6:10). Further, he exhorted them to "put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11). The apostle John assured us that He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4).

Psalm 18:18

ESV

They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but the LORD was my support.

What does Psalm 18:18 mean? The overall context of these verses is David's rescue from his enemies, for which he credits God's deliverance (2 Samuel 22:1). David's foes confronted him when he felt that his situation was desperate.

He confesses that the Lord was his support, so his enemies were unable to kill him. Obviously, David maintained a close, trusting relationship with the Lord throughout his ordeal in the wilderness when a fugitive from Saul, and in other situations against different enemies, and the Lord honored that relationship.

If we depend upon our own wisdom and strength to defeat our enemy, the Devil, we will fail, but if we depend on the Lord for victory, we will enjoy a successful outcome.

We can derive an important lesson on this subject from the life of Samson. When the Spirit of the Lord empowered him, he experienced victory over his enemies. For example, in the power of the Spirit he killed 1,000 Philistines with a donkey's jawbone (Judges 15:15). Soon after the victory, he addressed the Lord and said, "You have granted this great salvation by the hand of your servant" (Judges 15:18).

However, Samson failed to protect his relationship with the Lord. He allowed Delilah, a pagan woman, to deceive him, causing him to place his confidence in himself instead of in the Lord (Judges 16:15–19). When Samson heard the Philistines had gathered in Delilah's home to seize him, he said, "I will go out as at other times and shake myself free," however, "he did not know that the LORD had left him" (Judges 16:20); therefore his enemies captured and humiliated him (Judges 16:21). When we stop depending on God, and start taking pride in our own security, we risk dire consequences.

Romans chapter 10

5For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them. **6**But the righteousness based on faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) **7**"or 'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). **8**But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); **9**because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **10**For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. **11**For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." **12**For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. **13**For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

14How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? **15**And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” **16**But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” **17**So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Romans 10:5

ESV

For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them.

What does Romans 10:5 mean? Paul has just written that Jesus Christ, by becoming the "end of the law" —keeping the law perfectly and fulfilling it— provides righteousness to everyone who believes in Him. This is the only way to become righteous in God's eyes.

Now Paul refers to a teaching from Moses, found in Leviticus 18:1–5. This describes a path to righteousness for those who keep the law, who live by the commandments of the law. In the context of the old covenant, this was a means for Israel to honor their relationship with God, and to obtain His earthly blessings (Deuteronomy 30:15–18).

However, this teaching was also meant to demonstrate that when it came to sin, salvation, and God's eternal standards, nobody can possibly maintain this obedience (Galatians 3:24). Not perfectly, and not nearly well enough to earn eternal salvation (Romans 3:10). That's why nobody can be made righteous by keeping the law. Everybody breaks the law. Everybody sins (Romans 3:23).

James put it very simply, "For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it" (James 2:10). Those who seek to be justified before God based on their actions are doomed to failure (Romans 3:20). This is why God promised, even before Christ, to establish a new covenant to resolve those flaws (Jeremiah 31:31–34).

Romans 10:6**ESV**

But the righteousness based on faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down)

What does Romans 10:6 mean? Moses wrote about a righteousness based on keeping the law (Leviticus 18:1–5). That's what Paul wrote in the previous verse. The problem with trying to achieve that righteousness is that nobody can keep the law. As fallible people, we're bound to sin and fall short of God's standard of perfection (Romans 3:10; 3:23). Those who try to earn salvation based on good deeds or following the law, are doomed (Romans 3:20).

Now Paul describes a righteousness that is based on faith. Specifically, those with faith in Christ can achieve, through Christ's life and death on their behalf, a state of permanent righteousness before God. Now Paul explains this righteousness as if it were speaking in some way. It is offering a warning to Israel, and Paul quotes from Israel's own Scriptures to make the point.

First, Paul quotes the opening words of Deuteronomy 9:4–6: "Do not say in your heart." Though he doesn't quote the rest of the passage, Paul's Jewish readers would likely have understood the context. God was repeatedly telling Israel not to deceive themselves: they were not taking possession of the promised land because of their own righteousness. God called them a stubborn people. Instead, they would succeed in taking the land because it served God's purpose of judging the wicked nations of the region.

Paul's message to the Israel of his day is clear. They were seeking to achieve a righteousness of their own, which is a futile attempt for sinful human beings. That's the wrong attitude, and the wrong way to approach our relationship to God.

Next, Paul begins to quote from Deuteronomy 30:12. He applies what God says to Israel, about receiving and obeying His commands, to their need now to put their faith in Christ. In Deuteronomy 30:11–14, God said the command He had given to Israel was not—is not—too hard for them. They should not ask "who will ascend into heaven" to find out this information. They already have the command in their mouths and hearts (Deuteronomy 30:14).

Now Paul applies this idea to Christ. Israel should not think that faith in Christ is too hard for them. They ought not expect some new person to go to heaven to find the Messiah. Paul writes in his context that this would be a futile attempt to

bring Christ down when He has already come down and walked among them (Romans 10:8).

Romans 10:7

ESV

“or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

What does Romans 10:7 mean? Paul has written in the previous verse that Israel should not attempt to bring the Messiah down from heaven when that has already happened. Christ has already come down! Paul is applying what God said to Israel about obeying His commands (Deuteronomy 30:11–14) to the idea of having faith in Christ.

Israel, in Paul's context, should not look for someone to ascend into heaven to bring the Messiah down or, now, to descend into the abyss to bring the Messiah up, as if from the dead. Christ has already come to them in the form of Jesus and walked among them. He descended to the earth, died on the cross, descended into the abyss, and then ascended back to earth before ascending to heaven.

In other words, Christ has already been near to Paul's Jewish readers. They should not continue looking for the Messiah to come down or come up. Instead, they should understand that He has been near them and that the Word of God, and faith, is right in front of them ready to be believed. This "word of faith" is a reference to the gospel: the message of God's intended plan for our salvation.

Romans 10:8

ESV

But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim);

What does Romans 10:8 mean? Paul concludes his quote of Deuteronomy 30:11–14 with this verse. That passage describes God saying to Israel that they should not deceive themselves into believing that God's commands are hard to understand or obey. They shouldn't ask who will go up to heaven or down to the abyss to get the command for them. They already have God's command in their mouths and hearts. It is near them.

Paul has applied that idea to faith in Christ. The Israel of his day should also not keep looking for the Messiah or expecting knowledge of Christ to suddenly come down or come up to them. The Messiah has already come in the person and body of Jesus. He has already been near to them. Faith in Christ is still right next to the people of Israel, ready to be believed in their hearts and spoken with their mouths. They don't have to wait. They can believe right now and be declared righteous by God, given credit for Jesus' righteous life and forgiven for their sin by the payment of Jesus' death on the cross.

Romans 10:9

ESV

because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

What does Romans 10:9 mean? Romans 10:9–10 are two of the great salvation-related verses in the entire Bible. It's important to understand their context in this chapter.

Paul has just concluded quoting from Deuteronomy 30:11–14. There, God says to Israel that His command for them is not hidden or far away; it is already in their mouths and hearts. Paul has written that this is true, as well, for the "word of faith" in Christ. This "word of faith" is a reference to the gospel: the message of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. This message is near Israel's mouths and hearts.

Now Paul clarifies what this word of faith is; he explicitly describes what the Jewish people of his day should welcome into their mouths and hearts. He writes that instead of seeking to become righteous by following the law, they should confess with their mouths that Jesus is Lord. He is the Messiah. Also, they should believe in their hearts that God raised Jesus from the dead. If they do those things, they will be saved, Paul writes.

We should not necessarily take these two conditions as Paul's final statement on the plan of salvation or how to become a Christian. He has been clear that faith in Christ, including Christ's place on the cross as our substitute in the payment of our sin, is the key to being declared righteous by God. These two conditions—belief in Christ's resurrection from the dead and a verbal confession of His place as Lord of all—appear to serve as evidence that our faith is in Christ. Anyone who trusts in Christ for his or her salvation is sure to agree that

Christ is Lord and that He was raised from the dead. That person will be saved, Paul writes.

Romans 10:10

ESV

For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

What does Romans 10:10 mean? Paul continues his comparison of God's words to Israel in Deuteronomy 30:11–14. That passage was about obeying the commandments, which Paul aligns with believing in the gospel for the Israelites of his day. God told Israel that the command was already in their mouths and hearts. Paul wrote in the previous verse that both the mouth and heart are also involved in salvation by faith alone in Christ alone.

Now Paul restates the concept he taught in the previous verse. With the heart a person believes and is justified—they are declared righteous by God, cleared of all the charges against them. Paul's statement is clear: The faith in Christ that leads to salvation is personal and internal (Jeremiah 31:31–34). The mouth, then, becomes the means by which someone *expresses* their faith in Christ. Only saved believers can truthfully say with their mouths what has happened in their hearts: they have placed their faith in Jesus.

Romans 10:11

ESV

For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame."

What does Romans 10:11 mean? As he has done in the previous chapter (Romans 9:33), Paul quotes from Isaiah 28:16. Once again, he translates the verse to read that whomever believes in "Him" will not be put to shame. By Him, Paul means that Christ is the precious cornerstone God has laid in Zion. All who trust in this cornerstone, this sure foundation, will be vindicated. The foundation will hold. They will find themselves standing on the Rock.

In quoting this verse once more, Paul is supporting a crucial idea from verse four which began this train of thought: "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." Belief, not keeping the law, is the necessary

ingredient to be declared righteous by God and welcomed into His family. In fact, as Paul will spell out in the following verses, there is no other criteria besides belief, including whether a person has been born physically into Israel or not.

Romans 10:12

ESV

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.

What does Romans 10:12 mean? Paul has made clear throughout Romans that the only way to be declared righteous by God is through belief—through faith in Christ. He has written so again in the previous verse, quoting Isaiah 28:16 to show that everyone who believes in Christ will not be put to shame. That is, all believers in Jesus will be vindicated in the end. Paul noted that the Scriptures clearly stated that *everyone* who believed would be so protected.

Now Paul clarifies that by "everyone," he truly does mean everyone. For Israelites, the world was ever and always divided into two categories: Jews and Gentiles. Those on the "inside" with God, and those on the "outside." Paul has expressed his profound grief that so many Israelites still cling to this false idea (Romans 9:1), applying it in ways which God never intended. Paul has declared his ongoing prayer that his own people the Jews will be saved (Romans 10:1).

Now he writes forcefully once more that there remains absolutely no distinction between Jews and Gentiles—using the term "Greeks" here—when it comes to being declared righteous by God through faith in Christ. After all, the same Lord is Lord of all people. By Lord, Paul is referring to Jesus, the Christ. He rules over all people, both Jews and Gentiles. In fact, the Lord gives His riches to all who call on Him. Paul wrote something similar in Romans 3:29–30.

Implied in Paul's statement is the idea that Christ is listening, that He will receive anyone who calls on Him in faith, no matter their nation or the circumstances of their birth. He is not reserving salvation only for those who are part of a certain heritage.

Romans 10:13**ESV**

For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

What does Romans 10:13 mean? Paul quotes from the prophet Joel in this verse, declaring that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Joel 2:32). In doing so, Paul accomplishes two things. First, he connects this truth to His statement in the previous verse that Christ, the Lord of all, gives His riches to all who call on Him, both Jews and Gentiles.

The idea of "calling on the name of the Lord," in this context, means those who turn to Christ in faith seeking salvation. While not literally a description of a "sinner's prayer," Paul is referring to those who express the sentiment that a "sinner's prayer" contains. This is the act of placing one's faith in Christ. This is crucially different from those Jesus described in Matthew 7:21–23, as those who *use* His name, but have no actual *faith* in Him.

Paul makes a second connection, as well, showing that Christ the Lord is in fact Israel's Yahweh from the Old Testament. They are one in the same. All who call on Him in faith, both Jew and Gentile, will be saved from God's wrath against sin and will share in God's glory forever.

Romans 10:14**ESV**

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

What does Romans 10:14 mean? Paul has just quoted the prophet Joel in saying that all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved (Joel 2:32). In doing so, Paul is showing that Jesus Christ is the Lord that all must call on to be saved from sin and to become God's children and inherit the riches of His glory. In this context, to "call on" Jesus means to express faith, not merely to invoke His name (Matthew 7:21–23).

Now, though, Paul begins a series of questions aimed at what is required to bring someone to the point of calling on Jesus' name to be saved. He seems to have the people of his own nation, Israel, in mind.

First, Paul asks how anyone can call on Christ if they don't believe in Him. Again, Paul insists that it is belief in Christ that initiates salvation and leads someone to call on Him. But how can anyone come to belief in Christ if they have never heard of Him, if they don't know who He is? This leads to Paul's next question: How will anyone hear about Christ unless someone preaches about Christ to them?

In asking this series of questions, Paul is showing, in part, how necessary his work in preaching about Jesus really is.

Romans 10:14

ESV

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

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Romans 10:15**ESV**

And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

What does Romans 10:15 mean? Beginning with his statement in verse 13, that all who call on the name of Jesus will be saved, Paul has been asking a series of leading questions. How will anyone call on Jesus—express saving faith in Him—unless they first believe in Him? And how will they believe in Him if they never hear about Him? And how will they hear about Him if nobody preaches the gospel to them?

Now Paul continues with the next logical question: How will anyone preach the gospel of Jesus unless they are sent by someone to do so? Paul's question shows that preaching is not the first step in the chain that leads to faith in Christ and calling on His name. Instead, *sending* is that first step.

Who does the sending? In the case of Paul and the other apostles who had been preaching the gospel around the world, it was Christ Himself who had sent them out. They had been commissioned by Jesus to preach the good news to the world (Matthew 28:18–20; Acts 9:15).

Paul next quotes from Isaiah 52:7 to make the case that this sending of the preachers with this specific good news about Jesus was prophesied long ago: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

Romans 10:16**ESV**

But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?"

What does Romans 10:16 mean? Paul, writing in the previous verse, quoted Isaiah 52:7 and seemingly applied it to himself and the other apostles commissioned by Jesus to preach the gospel of faith in Christ to the world. That verse says, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

Now Paul seems to say that everything needed has been given to Israel to bring them to salvation. Each required step from the previous two verses has been fulfilled. Christ sent preachers. The apostles preached. The Jewish people

heard. The problem, Paul now insists, is that the Jewish people did not believe. More specifically, Paul writes that they did not "obey" the gospel.

For Paul, failure to believe in Christ amounts to more than just an inability to accept the truth of the gospel. Paul calls it disobedience, a stubborn refusal to receive the Messiah and believe in Jesus. This is consistent with the Bible's general teaching, which is that a person's willingness to believe—or not—is always more influential than knowledge or arguments (John 5:39–40; 7:17).

This time, Paul quotes from Isaiah 53:1 to support his case to his Jewish readers. In that verse, the prophet asks the Lord, "Who has believed what he has heard from us?" Paul is showing that Israel's tendency to disobey, specifically by *refusing* to believe, goes all the way back to the days of the prophets.

Romans 10:17

ESV

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

What does Romans 10:17 mean? This famous verse builds on Paul's quote of Isaiah in the previous verse. There Isaiah asks the Lord "who has believed what he has heard from us?" (Isaiah 53:1). Paul was showing that a refusal to believe what God says amounts to disobedience. That, according to Scripture, is the root problem when people hear the gospel and do not accept it (John 5:39–40; 7:17). Those who disbelieve do so because, on some level, they *do not want to believe*.

Now, though, Paul writes that when believing happens, it is through hearing what the Lord says "through the word of Christ." Paul seems to be referring to his prior chain of steps which must occur to bring a person to the point of calling on the Lord. Christ sends out His representatives to preach the gospel. Those who hear it have the opportunity to believe. Those who believe call on Christ. And all who call on the name of Christ will be saved (Romans 10:13).

Matthew chapter 14

22Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. **23**And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, **24**but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. **25**And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. **26**But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear. **27**But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."

28And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." **29**He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. **30**But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." **31**Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" **32**And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. **33**And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Matthew 14:22

ESV

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.

What does Matthew 14:22 mean? Jesus has just performed the astounding miracle of feeding five thousand men plus women and children from five loaves of bread and two fish (Matthew 14:13–21). John's telling of that event ends with Jesus realizing the people "were about to come and take him by force to make him king" (John 6:15). That's likely why this verse begins with the word "immediately." Jesus knew He had not come to take the earthly throne of Israel at this time, so He acts quickly to send the disciples away and send the crowds home.

Matthew uses a forceful Greek word here, *ēnankasen*, which can be literally translated as "compelled" or even "forced," translated by the ESV as "made." This is a commanding order: Jesus urgently sent the disciples away in the boat with apparent instructions to meet Him on the other side. One reason is that He wanted time alone, truly by Himself, to go up on a nearby mountain to spend time in prayer.

Context Summary

Matthew 14:22–33 contains the miracle of Jesus walking on the water. Immediately after feeding thousands of people from a single small portion, Jesus goes up to a mountain to pray. The disciples spend a long night rowing against a strong wind. Jesus walks across the lake to meet them. Peter walks on the water with Jesus briefly before becoming afraid of the wind and waves and beginning to sink. Jesus saves Peter and asks why he doubted. The wind stops when Jesus gets in the boat, and the disciples worship Him as the Son of God.

Matthew 14:23

ESV

And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone,

What does Matthew 14:23 mean? After performing an astonishing miracle, Jesus immediately sent the crowds of people away on foot. He ordered the disciples away by boat (Matthew 14:13–22). He is eager for some time alone on the high hills near Bethsaida (John 6:15). More specifically, Jesus wanted time alone with His Father in prayer. Matthew doesn't tell us what Jesus prayed about, but the fact that Jesus was aware of His need for prayer, even as the Son of God, should motivate those who follow Him to seek out time to pray, as well.

Jesus was still alone "when evening came." The period known as "evening" in this era began in late afternoon and lasted through sunset. Evening had already started when the disciples first brought up the issue of food for the people (Matthew 14:15), so Matthew probably means this was nearing dusk. It was late in the evening as Jesus prayed alone on the mountain. By this time, the disciples were stuck rowing on a rough sea against a strong wind as they worked their way across the Sea of Galilee.

Matthew 14:24

ESV

but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them.

What does Matthew 14:24 mean? After putting the disciples in the boat, Jesus went up onto a mountain to pray by Himself. He prayed late into the evening

(Matthew 14:22–23). By the time He finished, the disciples were a long way from land and making slow progress against a strong wind. The rough waves were pushing against them.

It is unclear how the disciples expected Jesus to meet them on the other side of the lake or where specifically they intended to land. They eventually arrive in Gennesaret on the northwest shore of the lake (Matthew 14:34). For now, though, they find themselves somewhere in the middle of the lake battling against the wind.

It's important to note that the struggle these men are experiencing is not the result of their disobedience. On the contrary, they are facing resistance *because* they obeyed Christ's direct command. Not all moments in a Christian's life are "smooth sailing," and not all hardships are the result of poor choices.

Matthew 14:25

ESV

And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea.

What does Matthew 14:25 mean? In the Roman world, night watches were divided into four periods, with the final one being between the hours we now call 3 and 6 a.m. This means the disciples have been in the boat, battling a strong wind, for most of the night. They are somewhere in the middle of the Sea of Galilee and likely exhausted. This condition is not their fault, in the sense that they've made some kind of mistake. They're here because Jesus explicitly ordered them to take the boat across the lake at that time (Matthew 14:22).

Suddenly, Jesus approaches the disciples in the boat on foot. He is walking on top of the water. John's telling of this moment includes the detail that the disciples had rowed three or four miles by this point (John 6:19). That's a long way from shore. This incident was not an illusion or some easy trick. Jesus walked on water—standing on top of a liquid surface—for miles.

Matthew 14:26

ESV

But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear.

What does Matthew 14:26 mean? The disciples had been in their boat for hours, rowing across the Sea of Galilee because the wind was against them. They had left Jesus behind in Bethsaida, where He spent time praying alone on a mountain. It's unclear how the disciples expected Jesus to get to the other side of the lake to meet them. All they know is that He specifically instructed them to take the boat across the water (Matthew 14:22). Perhaps they assumed He would walk around the north end of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus chose a more direct route.

We know from John's telling of this event that the disciples were two or three miles out from the shore. Matthew has said that it is between 3 and 6 a.m. Suddenly, a figure emerges from the darkness of the lake walking toward them. Matthew, who was there, says that they were terrified, which seems like a reasonable reaction. One can only imagine what it would have been like to catch a glimpse of a figure out on the water, only to see that it really is a person approaching by walking on the waves.

As one would expect, the men cried out in fear. Someone said the figure approaching them was a ghost. Jewish theology mostly did not allow for ghosts, but many people in the ancient world believed in them. They certainly did not have another explanation for a figure walking toward them on the water—until Jesus spoke to them (Matthew 14:27).

Matthew 14:27

ESV

But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."

What does Matthew 14:27 mean? The disciples are exhausted and terrified. They have been rowing on rough seas against a strong wind for hours (Matthew 14:22). It is between 3 and 6 a.m., they are a few miles from land, and have just noticed a figure walking toward them on the water. They cry out in fear, and someone says that the figure is a ghost. Considering their situation, that's not an unexpected reaction, and it was probably a terrifying sight, at first.

As it turns out, the figure is Jesus. He has walked from the place they left Him behind earlier in the evening to catch up with them in the boat. As He approaches, He reassures them. He wants them to take heart and not be afraid. This miracle must be the most surprising and unexpected thing they have seen

Jesus do up to this point. Peter's reaction to seeing Jesus do this is almost equally as surprising (Matthew 14:28–29).

Matthew 14:28

ESV

And Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.”

What does Matthew 14:28 mean? Peter, Matthew, and the other disciples are in a boat working their way very slowly across the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 14:22). A strong wind against them has created rough seas and forced them to row well into the night (Matthew 14:24). Their exhaustion turns to terror when they see a figure emerging from the darkness, on foot somehow, and approaching their boat by walking on waves (Matthew 14:25–26). Finally, Jesus says that it is Him and tells them not to be afraid (Matthew 14:27).

Peter's response is dramatic and would have been totally unexpected from any other person. Given Peter's impulsive nature, though, it's very much in his nature. He calls out to the figure on the water, asking that if it really is Jesus, He would command Peter to come to Him on the water. He seems to be testing the figure's identity by asking Him to let Peter walk on water, too.

While this seems like an odd way to establish that the person is really Jesus, it's not as bizarre as it may sound. Some scholars suggest that Peter's real meaning was not "if," as in "should it happen to be true," but as in "since it's you, let me come to you on the water." It helps to remember that Peter and the other disciples had already been sent out and had performed some of the same miracles that Jesus had done (Matthew 10:1).

Thanks to some combination of fear, faith, and impulse, Peter is willing to attempt to walk on water, himself, so long as he knows it's Christ giving him the command.

Matthew 14:29

ESV

He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus.

What does Matthew 14:29 mean? This section of Matthew 14 is full of unexpected events. First, Jesus shows up walking on the water in the middle of the Sea of Galilee. This is in the very early hours of the morning after the disciples have been rowing against a rough wind all night long. They believe Jesus to be a ghost until He speaks and identifies Himself. Peter, apparently convinced, has asked Jesus to command him to come out to Him and walk on the water, too (Matthew 14:22–28).

On the one hand, Peter's request shows great faith in God's power and great enthusiasm to participate with Jesus in this exciting moment. His response to a chaotic moment is to declare his confidence that Christ will grant the power to do anything Christ commands. That's very much in keeping with the miracle these men have recently witnessed (Matthew 14:13–21), as well as those Jesus empowered them to perform earlier (Matthew 10:1).

Jesus grants Peter's request. He says, simply, "Come." Amazingly, Peter comes. He climbs out of the boat and does not immediately fall through the water. He really, truly walks on the water, as Jesus had been doing. He does the impossible by the power of God. Just as an "unachievable" task of feeding thousands was accomplished through obedience, Peter does what should be hopelessly ridiculous by following the commands of Jesus.

On the other hand, Peter's impulsive faith is subject to impulsive doubts, nearly resulting in disaster (Matthew 14:30).

Matthew 14:30

ESV

But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me."

What does Matthew 14:30 mean? Peter walked on the water. When he realized it was Jesus walking toward the disciples' boat (Matthew 14:22–27), Peter wanted to do what Jesus was doing. He believed it was possible, and asked Jesus to tell him to get out of the boat and walk on the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 14:28–29). Peter, after all, had been sent by Jesus to do other miracles with Jesus' power and under Jesus' authority (Matthew 10:1). He'd helped to feed thousands of people with a tiny portion of bread and fish (Matthew 14:13–21). In Peter's mind, there was no reason he couldn't do this, as well, so long as Christ was the One making it happen.

When Jesus said, "Come," Peter climbed over the side of the boat and walked on water. Aside from Jesus, no other person in human history had ever done such a thing—not even the greatest of Israel's prophets.

That moment of victory didn't last long, though. At some point between leaving the boat and making it to Jesus' side, Peter's human doubt seems to catch up with his enthusiastic faith. He suddenly notices the ferocious wind and the size of the waves it was driving up. Fear takes over his faith, and when you're trying to walk on water, there's no margin of error. Peter begins to sink, crying out to Jesus to save him.

It's essential to notice that Peter's total confidence in the power of Jesus allowed Him to walk on the water, as Jesus did. It was fear replacing confidence which caused him to sink.

Matthew 14:31

ESV

Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

What does Matthew 14:31 mean? Several things are happening in this short verse.

First, Jesus saves Peter, making the miracle of walking on the water even more impressive (Matthew 14:24–25). Peter was sinking (Matthew 14:28–30), and Jesus was able to take hold of him without sinking into the water himself. To do this, Jesus must have been firmly planted on top of the water. It must have been an amazing thing to witness.

Second, Jesus once again counters our normal human expectations. He does not respond to Peter the way we might assume. Peter had just walked on water. We're not told how far he walked, but he did it. He put his full confidence in Jesus' power to work through him and make it possible for him to walk on water, too. No other person who was not the Son of God had ever done such a thing. It was remarkable.

We might expect Jesus to say, "Well done." Or even, "Well done, but..." Instead, Jesus offers no praise. After saving Peter from drowning, He says famously, "O you of little faith." He rebukes Peter's lack of faith instead of praising the faith with which he began. Jesus adds, "Why did you doubt?"

As readers, we may be impressed by Peter's initial faith, but Jesus is more concerned about what stopped Peter from continuing to trust Him. Peter walked on water in the power of God! What could have possibly made him think that he could not walk on water in the power of God once he had already begun to do it? The previous verse provides the answer: Peter's fear took over his faith. Fear was the point of weakness that kept him from continuing to trust Jesus to give him the power to do the impossible.

Jesus' response may seem harsh, but it pointed a bright light on what Peter needed to recognize: Faith in Jesus makes anything possible, but fear kills faith.

Matthew 14:32

ESV

And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased

What does Matthew 14:32 mean? The disciples had seen Jesus shut down a dangerous storm at least once before (Matthew 8:23–27). That storm was so bad they all feared for their lives while Jesus napped. When He woke up, Jesus rebuked the winds and the sea and suddenly there was great calm. He said they were men of little faith. They asked each other "what kind of man is this?"

Now something similar happens. As soon as Jesus and Peter climb into the boat (Matthew 14:26–31), the wind stops dead. The disciples had rowed against that wind into the early hours of the morning trying to get to the other side of the Galilee. This was at Jesus' command (Matthew 14:22). As soon as Jesus entered their boat, the wind stopped. Peace was restored. Their response to these displays of God's power in Jesus will be different than asking who He is. Now they know.

Matthew 14:33

ESV

And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

What does Matthew 14:33 mean? On a previous occasion, the disciples asked each other what kind of man Jesus was after seeing Him rebuke a wild storm into calm submission (Matthew 8:23–27). Now they know who He is, and they respond to His display of God's power in an entirely different way.

The disciples have just seen Jesus walk on top of the water of the Sea of Galilee during a raging windstorm. They know He had to have walked two or three miles to reach them. At His call, Peter was also able to walk on water (Matthew 14:27–31). Then, as soon as Christ climbed into their boat, the wind they had been battling all night instantly stopped. This time, the men responded in the only way that made sense. They worshiped Jesus. They told Him, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Worship is still the most rational response to recognizing God's power at work in our world. Worship still involves simply saying to God who He is.