

How Am I Interpreting God? (Part 1)

By Mary Bernice

The following study started with the following question: Lord, Am I coming to you recognizing you as God Almighty? Or, Am I making you who I can imagine you are? Which tends to come in a lot short of who You say You are. Permit me to share with you the results of my asking these questions.

In Mark 4:37-38 one reads: “And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he (Jesus) was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, ‘Master, carest thou not that we perish?’”

Another instance of a storm at sea is recorded in Matthew 14:24-25. The verse reads: “But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.” If that is not enough, although the storm was all around Jesus, He invited Peter to come out there with Him. So, Peter came out of the boat and walked on the boisterous waters to Jesus. Then having reached Jesus, Matthew 14:30 recorded, “But when he saw the wind boisterous, he (Peter) was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me”.

In the first example above of a storm, Mark 4:39-40 exposes some of Jesus’ thought process: “And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, ‘Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?’” (In Matthew 8:26 this verse reads little faith instead of no faith. One Greek rendering of this “little faith” used of this story is: “‘Little-faith’ (3640 /oligó pistos) describes someone dull to hearing the Lord’s voice...” [<https://biblehub.com/greek/3640.htm>]) Considering that after the Lord calmed this storm at sea, and asked the disciples why they were fearful and how was it that they had no faith, it might make one wonder is there a relationship between fear and faith (i.e. fear first = no faith; faith first = no fear?). Moving right along.

In the second example above, when Peter was afraid and began to sink, Jesus responded to his plea for help: “And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” (Matthew 14:31)

Fear is mentioned in each event. One group was fearful and had no faith. The other instance, with Peter being afraid, he had faith but when Peter had accomplished what he had believed for, he looked around. At that moment, he saw the still raging sea and became afraid of the same sea that he had just successfully walked on to go to Jesus. In Psalm 23:4, David expresses his faith by stating "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me;" Jesus was still with Peter out there on the sea. So then what happened? Peter's faith had been applied and brought victory. Once that victory was accomplished, the natural thinking then filled in the freshly produced gap for making a choice.

In these two reports of Jesus with storms, two statements to note from Jesus' response: No-Faith, in Mark, versus Little-Faith, in Matthew. It would appear that from the first storm recorded in Mark, Peter must have learned something, when he witnessed Jesus calming it. According to Mark 4:41, those with Jesus at the end of that first storm incident were amazed "And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" It would seem that Peter took a lesson from this and then in Matthew when Jesus came walking on the boisterous sea to the boat, Jesus having earlier, in the previous storm, demonstrated who He is, Peter seized this opportunity to join Him on the sea.

Peter had faith but Jesus pointed out to him that it was short-sighted, little. His faith got him out to Jesus, but Peter did not further use his faith to get him back to the boat. Sort of a one-way-ticket faith. The size of his faith was not the topic, since we know that faith the size of a mustard seed would move a mountain (Matthew 17:20), but rather it was his use of his faith, or the lack of use. Peter used it a little when he could have used it for more.

So going back to the opening question: Lord, Am I coming to you recognizing you as you being God Almighty? Or, Am I making you (attaining to the knowledge of You) as who I can imagine (to my greatest natural ascension) you are? Which comes in a lot short of who You say You are or have been recorded as being. Little Faith? Have I like Peter, been using my faith to get me out of the boat and walking on the stormy sea, but not seeing You as Alpha AND Omega, the beginning and the end. I must not stop short of the round-trip in any and every area of faith.

Saved, Yes! Healed? Yes! Delivered? Yes! Prosperous? Yes! Forgiven? Yes! Loved? Yes! In Peace? Yes! In Covenant? Yes!!

Do you see how Jesus' invitation to Peter to join Him in the storm seems like Jesus was oblivious to there being a storm? Jesus was not ignoring the storm, but He was aware of His authority over it. Jesus' faith was not subject to the stormy seas. I would say that He knew that God created the seas and that there is nothing impossible for Him. Genesis 1:1&9 "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth...And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so." For in the beginning was the Word (Jesus), John 1:1. Then in John 1: 12 we read "But as many as received him (Jesus), to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:"

---To be continued in the July article.---