

## Lord, Save Me

Matthew 24:22-23

By [Dr. Thomas J. Nettles](#)

*This article originally appeared on the website of Founders Ministries. You can find it [here](#), along with other works by Dr. Nettles, as well as many other theologians of interest.*

Jesus gave vital preparation for an understanding of the gospel in His manifestation of divine power and knowledge even in His humble state of mingling with sinners.

### **I. The context of Herod's cowardly treachery.**

A. The parallel synoptic accounts are found in Mark 6:14–29 and Luke 9:7–9.

Mark gives this event more detail than Matthew while Luke only states the historical fact and Herod's quizzicalness.

B. All the synoptics place Jesus' attempt to find retirement with His disciples in the context of Herod's execution of John the Baptist, but Matthew gives a sense of causal connection —“Now when Jesus heard about John” (Matthew 14:13 NASB).

The special preaching/healing mission of the disciples was under way, therefore, sometime within the framework of the beheading of the courageous forerunner.

C. After the disciples reported the events of their mission (Mark 6:30; Luke 9:10), For their rest and His need for reflection on the looming purpose of His incarnation, they took a boat together to go to a “secluded place” (13 NASB), or “a desert place apart” (KJV).

### **II. The needy multitudes followed Him and poured out of nearby towns, and when He and His disciples arrived the crowd was there (14 — “When He went ashore, He saw a large crowd.”**

Mark 6:33 (KJV) says the crowd “out went them.”

A. The text indicates absolutely no frustration on the part of Jesus, but “He felt compassion for them and healed their sick” (14).

Mark says, “He had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd, and He began to teach them many things” (Mark 6:34). As the great Shepherd of the sheep who came to give His life for the sheep, Jesus could see them preeminently through their need of a merciful redemption which He came to accomplish. Luke combines the teaching and the healing in writing, “He welcomed them, and spake to them of the kingdom of God, and them that had need of healing He healed” (Luke 9:11).

B. The evening came and the crowd lingered.

By now, the disciples were wanting their intended rest, so they asked Jesus to send the crowd away for the time for the evening meal had arrived. We discover a bit of impatience on their part concerning the number of people, the inconvenience of the place, the time of day, and the lack of food. Had they not come to rest; and had they rested? “Send them into the towns and let them fend for themselves, you have done enough.”

C. As John records this event (John 6:1–13), Jesus from the first intended to use it to demonstrate both His power and His compassion.

Not only had He welcomed the crowd and taught them, now He would feed them in a display of creative power. “He Himself knew what He would do” (John 6:6). In acts of compassion, creative power, spiritual sovereignty, granting forgiveness of sin, manifesting control of the physical world, showing lordship over the forces of nature, Jesus was laying a foundation of evidence for who He was that could point to only one conclusion—Jesus is God in the flesh.

D. Jesus told the disciples to feed them (Mark 6:37).

Wages for half a year would not feed this group! (Mark 6:37; John 6:7). The crowd surely must leave. Again, in a revelation of intention, Jesus said, “They have no need to go away” (16). Jesus told the disciples to feed the crowd. They should go into the multitude and find some bread. They found five loaves of bread and two fish that a young boy had brought (John 6:9). Jesus asked that the food be given to Him and that the crowd sit down in groups of fifty and one hundred (Mark 6:40).

E. Jesus took the food, looked up to heaven and gave thanks.

At every moment Jesus depended on the sustaining power of His Father’s love. Both in His being and in His mission, Jesus reflected the thorough and essential goodness of the Father. After blessing and giving thanks even for these meager provisions, Jesus broke bread and fish, giving it to the disciples who distributed

to the crowd until “they were filled.” Though minimal in variety, there was no skimpiness in amount. About 5000 men, in addition to some women and children were thus fed.

F. Jesus showed His deity in spontaneous creation using the existent material of bread and fish.

He spoke the world into existence from non-existence (*ex nihilo*), took dust and made a man, He took a man’s bone and made a woman, He took water and made wine, He commanded fish into a net, and He now feeds more than 5000 people from the meager lunch of a young boy. He is the Creator and He is filled with mercy and compassion for His image bearers.

### **III. Jesus quickly took action to prevent a political power move (John 6:15) and remained in His purpose of establishing a kingdom based on redemption.**

A. He quickly constrained His disciples to take the boat and go to the other side of the lake.

He dismissed the crowd and went farther up the mountain to be alone and pray. Resisting the immediacy of seeking an earthly kingdom (one of the original temptations – Matthew 4:8–10), Jesus continued His fellowship through prayer with the Father in order to stay on course with His eternal covenantal commitment and assignment to suffer once for all, the just for the unjust, to bring them to God (1 Peter 2:23, 24; 3:18). The crowd eventually would tire of Jesus’ resistance to political messiahship and would turn on Him. Rather than “Crown Him King,” they would cry “Crucify Him.”

B. He prayed while His disciples rowed.

He found refreshment and peace while they encountered a sudden storm that threatened their lives. Jesus looked and saw their fearful toil and walked to them on the water in the midst of waves and wind. Again, He manifests His complete control of nature, for He is its Creator and Sustainer (Colossians 1:16, 17; Hebrews 1:2, 3; John 1:3). He came between 3 and 6 AM.

C. In addition to the fight with the waves and wind, now the disciples had a sudden flash of fear from seeing the form of a person coming through the storm on the water.

They thought it was an apparition (26), some visible spirit from the grave, perhaps a more powerful danger than the physical contest with the elements. Jesus immediately relieved their fearful consternation with the words, “Take courage, It is I. Do not be afraid” (27).

D. Only Matthew records this next event.

Peter asked for a command from Jesus to come to Him to show that indeed their Teacher and Master was walking on water. Jesus responded to Peter's request with the simple command, "Come." Peter responded and walked, supported by his faith in Jesus' power to uphold him. He moved toward his beloved Master, the one whom he soon would confess to be "The Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Matthew 16:16).

E. The life-threatening natural forces around him moved Peter's attention from Jesus to the danger.

He began to sink but still had the conviction that Jesus could rescue him even now, out of the boat, in the threatening, deadly elements. He cried to Jesus for saving rescue and Jesus reached out His hand and brought Peter up and then into the boat.

F. Jesus used the occasion not only to show His absolute power, but the place of faith in His operations among men: "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" (31).

Only the power, wisdom, provision, and grace of the Christ can save. But those who are saved will hear, believe, confess, and trust in the reality of the saving work of Christ (Romans 10:6–13; Ephesians 2:4–10; Galatians 3:1–9).

G. Jesus took Peter into the boat (32) and the storm stopped.

Mark says that they were amazed because they did not understand about the loaves. They had not drawn the compelling conclusion from the multiplication of the loaves in feeding the crowd. Jesus is God. He is to be trusted for life and to be worshipped. But now, Matthew records that those in the boat "worshipped Him, saying, 'You are certainly God's Son'" (33).

H. Before one can grasp the inconceivable power and necessity of effectual grace in the redemptive work of Christ, he must know that Jesus is the eternal Son of God.

No less worthiness and no less holy righteousness was requisite for an effectual substitute for sinners. That is who the confession, "Jesus is Lord" is a vital element of the saving work of God. The liberals—who denied the deity of Christ and the substitutionary atonement and thought they were producing a more faithful and pure view of the person and work of Christ—were subtle purveyors of death both for those to whom they preached and to themselves.

POEM:

The Forerunner now was dead.  
Herod the king took his head.  
Royal coward, vicious lust  
Drove him to this act unjust.  
Breaking all of God's commands,  
Prophet's blood dripped from his hands.

Solace in a private place,  
Jesus sought His Father's face.  
The crowd sought Him to heal disease.  
Compassion moved Him for their needs.  
Five-thousand hungry; "Where is bread?"  
Five loaves, two fish, and all were fed.

Seeking time alone to pray,  
Jesus sent the crowd away.  
Constrained disciples to the oars  
Rowing to the other shore.  
At last in meditative prayer  
Submit to death and Father's care.

He saw through the storm and wind  
Men unnerved and at wit's end;  
Walked to them through troubled waves,  
As they faced death, Jesus saves.  
Lord, come to us, take our hand,  
In your goodness, let us stand.

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