

## **Three Tall Tales**

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### **TALE 1: Jesus Sits on Water (Mark 4:1)**

**J**esus is famous for walking on water (see next section), but hardly anyone knows that he sat on water. According to Mark 4:1, Jesus „got into a boat and sat on the lake" (literally translated). And then he taught the large crowd on the land many things in parables (Mark 4:2). Needless to say, teaching while sitting on water is quite a feat! It's almost laughable. It must have been a miracle. It's amazing how modern translators twist the text to avoid this wonder: he „sat in it [the boat] on the sea" (Revised Standard Version); „he had to sit in a boat out on the lake" (Contemporary English Version). We must give the translators of the King James Version of 1611 credit for translating the verse „like it is": „he entered into a ship, and sat on the sea." That „rock of biblical honesty," the American Standard Version of 1901, also says that Jesus "sat in the sea." Since the Greek word *en* can mean either „in" or "on," we may say that Jesus sat on (or in) the water. Either way, it's an astonishing assertion.

This stunt of Jesus could, however, be nothing more than the result of Mark's imprecise writing. The parallel passage in Matthew 13:2 reads, „he got into a boat and sat down." But if we do have here a blunder on Mark's part, then we must admit that God did not inspire every word of the Scriptures. We can no longer maintain that the Bible is perfect and pure, without a particle of folly. And if one word or one expression is uninspired, how many other words and expressions may be the result of human error? The best answer to questions like this is to admit that the Bible is a man-made book from cover to cover. We may smile at Mark's statement that Jesus sat on water, but in reality it is no laughing matter for Bible believers when we find even one flaw in their sacred Scriptures.

### **Tale 2: Jesus Walks on Water (Matthew 14:25; Mark 6:48; John 6:19)**

One of the most marvelous of all miracles is the act of walking on water. And what an eye-popping act it is. According to the Gospels, it is not the case that the disciples mistakenly believed that Jesus was walking on water when in fact he was walking on the seashore or on unseen stepping stones. Jesus himself thought he was a water walker. Adding impossible miracle to impossible miracle, Jesus, while walking on water, empowered Peter to do the same (Matthew 14:28-31). When Peter started to sink, Jesus reached out his hand, caught Peter, and reprimanded Peter for his puny faith. Jesus was convinced that Peter could have kept on walking on water, if only Peter had had more faith.

It should not surprise us that later on Jesus told his disciples that if they had faith no larger than a mustard seed, they could command a mountain to move from here to there, and it would (Matthew 17:20). Again Jesus promised his followers that if they had faith unmixed with doubt they could tell a mountain „to get up and jump into the sea" (Contemporary English Version), and it would do so (Matthew 21:21; Mark 11:23). Jumping Jehoshaphat! Fantastic faith in faith. Was Jesus a deluded fool or what?

Note, too, that Jesus was not the only person credited with walking on water. These include Indra of Tibet (crucified 725 BC/BCE), Buddha, and Poseidon. Can any rational human being believe any of these tall tales?

### **Tale 3: Jesus Rides on Clouds (Matthew 26:64)**

According to Psalm 68:4, God „rides on the clouds." Not many people believe that. And probably nobody believes that Baal, a Canaanite god, rides on the clouds in his chariot (Ugaritic literature, fourteenth century BC/BCE). Yet multitudes of Christians take at face value the words Jesus spoke to the high priest, „You will see the Son of Man [Jesus] seated at the right hand of Power [God All-Powerful], and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matthew 26:64). Thus God, Baal, and Jesus are pictured as cloudriders. If we deny that God and Baal are cloudriders, why should we affirm that Jesus will be one when he supposedly returns at the end of the world? Moreover, strict believers expect Jesus to return personally in a literal, visible, physical body (Matthew 24:30; Acts 1:11; Revelation 1:7) on literal clouds (Matthew 26:64). Yet we now know that clouds consist of water vapor and could not support the weight of Jesus' body, weighing 150 pounds, more or less. How, then, could Jesus ride on clouds? As co-creator of all things (John 1:3), Jesus would have known that a cloud is not a substantial

platform to ride on.

But according to Matthew 26:64, Jesus saw no problem with his being a cloudrider. Therefore we must conclude that Jesus was not co-creator of the universe. He was a mere fallible man. And as a fallible man with a primitive concept of a small, earth-centered universe, he was untroubled by the prospect of traveling untold light years to „heaven" (presumably out there somewhere in the far reaches of space) and then making the return trip to planet earth. Jesus was oblivious to the hazards of space travel and to the problems associated with re-entering the earth's atmosphere, as evidenced recently (February 1, 2003) by the explosion of the space shuttle Columbia. This whole scenario is utterly absurd.

### **Conclusion**

What a Jesus the Gospels give us: Jesus the Water Sitter, Jesus the Water Walker, and Jesus the Cloudrider! Three tall tales. Implausible. Inconceivable. Incredible.

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