

Swept off your Feet

Beyond Worship-as-Usual

Connecting with God for a Strong Finish

CHAPTER 16

Worship and Jesus' Disciples

Before His Resurrection

The only biblical record of the Disciples worshiping Jesus before His resurrection involves a terrifying experience at sea. After walking on the Sea of Galilee, Jesus returned to a boatful of disciples who worshiped Him saying essentially what demons said when they fell on their face before Him. The unclean spirits shouted, *"You are the Son of God!"*¹ Jesus' disciples said, *"You are certainly God's Son!"*²



Sometime later, Jesus appeared transfigured before Peter, James, and John on a mountain. After hearing an audible voice from their Heavenly Father, the disciples fell facedown, overcome with terror. Exposed directly to the truth about God, three of Jesus' closest followers could not stand on their feet until He instructed them to arise and abandon their fearful pose. Overtones of reverence may or may not have accompanied their response during this encounter; the text does

¹ Mark 3:11 NAS

² Matthew 14:33 NAS

not say. Nonetheless, terror rather than veneration clearly motivated their conduct as they fell down.

In each case, a supernatural appearance triggered a spontaneous response, once at sea and once on a mountain. Primed with fearful emotions, veteran disciples connected with the truth about Jesus in both situations. In one incident, they responded on the sea with stated worship. In the other, they reacted high atop a mountain with facedown fear.

*When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were **terrified** [tarasso means disturbed, agitated, or troubled], and said, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in **fear** [phobos]. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." ...And those who were in the boat **worshipped Him, saying, "You are certainly God's Son!"**³*

*When the disciples heard this [on the mountain], they **fell** [pipto] **facedown** to the ground and were **terrified** [phobeo]. And Jesus came to them and **touched** [hapto] them and said, "**Get up**, and do not be **afraid** [phobeo]."⁴*

On the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus did more than reach out and touch Peter, James, and John to comfort them. The word "touched" implies more than casual, physical contact. Translated from the Greek word *hapto*, it means to fasten or adhere to someone. Jesus' touch activated a divine connection. *Hapto* also means to fasten fire to something or to kindle and set on fire.⁵ When Jesus touched Peter, James, and John, He forged a fiery bond with them.

Worshipping Jesus after His Resurrection

After Jesus rose from the dead, the Bible describes Mary Magdalene, another Mary, and various disciples worshipping Him in three biblical ac-

³ Matthew 14:26-27, 33 NAS

⁴ Matthew 17:6-7 NAS

⁵ <http://bible.crosswalk.com/Lexicons/Greek>

counts. One report occurred shortly after the resurrection and two coincide with His ascension.

DISCIPLES Worshiping Jesus BEFORE and AFTER His Resurrection				
Worshippers	Times	Greek	Response	NAS Verse
The Disciples in a boat on the Sea of Galilee	1	Proskuneo	Worshiped Jesus the Son of God	Mat 14:33
Man healed of blindness not mentioned as disciple	1	Proskuneo	Worshiped Jesus the Son of Man	John 9:38
Mary Magdalene and Mary mother of James	1	Proskuneo	Worshiped the Resurrected Christ	Mat 28:9
Eleven Disciples	1	Proskuneo	Worshiped the Resurrected Christ before Ascension	Mat 28:17
Eleven Disciples with others	1	Proskuneo		Luke 24:52

Worship before the Resurrection

1. Only one account mentions any disciples worshiping Jesus before His resurrection. After watching Jesus walk on the water, they worshiped Him in a boat at sea.

*And those who were in the boat **worshiped** [proskuneo] Him, saying, "You are certainly God's Son!" (Matthew 14:33 NAS)*

2. A blind man whom Jesus healed (not identified as a disciple)

*And he [Jesus] said, "Lord, I believe." And he **worshiped** [proskuneo] Him [as the Son of Man]. (John 9:38 NAS)*

Worship after the Resurrection

3. Mary Magdalene and another Mary worshiped Jesus as they hurried away from the tomb.

*And behold, Jesus met them [shortly after His resurrection] and greeted them. And they came up and **took hold of His feet and worshiped** [proskuneo] Him. (Matthew 28:9 NAS)*

Without mentioning any reference to worship, Mark 16:1 identifies Mary as the mother of James and includes Salome while Luke 24:10

identifies Mary as the mother of James, mentions Joanna, and includes a reference to other women.

4. Eleven unnamed Disciples worshiped Jesus just prior to His ascension into heaven. Others may have been present on this unidentified mountain near Galilee (Matthew 28:16)

*When they saw Him, they **worshiped** [proskuneo] Him; but some were doubtful. (Matthew 28:17 NAS)*

5. After receiving a blessing, Eleven Disciples with others, including Cleopas and his companion from the road to Emmaus, worshiped in response to Christ's ascension.

*And they, after **worshiping** [proskuneo] Him [resurrected Christ], returned to Jerusalem with great joy, (Luke 24:52 NAS)*

