

Matthew

Chapter Fourteen



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Matthew 14:1

בְּעֵת הַהִיא שָׁמַע הוֹרְדוֹס שְׂרָרְבַּע
הַמְּדִינָה אֵת שְׁמַע יֵשׁוּעַ:

“At that time, Herod the tetrarch heard the report concerning Yeshua,”

Herod the Tetrarch.

Herod Antipas. As described in our commentary on Matthew 11, Herod’s Marriage to Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, was publicly condemned by Yochanan. This criticism reflects a halakhic transgression of *arayot* (forbidden unions), which is discussed in Leviticus 18:16,

“Do not uncover the nakedness of your brother’s wife; it is the nakedness of your brother.” **(Leviticus 18:16, Sefaria.org)**

Yochanan’s rebuke is akin to the role of the *navi tokbechab* (a prophet of rebuke), paralleling Elijah’s confrontation with King Ahab (1 Kings 18:17),

“Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, “*Is that* you, O troubler of Israel?” And he answered, “I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father’s house *have*, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and have followed the Baals.” **(1 Kings 18:17-18, NKJV)**

The report.

Isaiah 53 opens,

מִי הָאֱמִין לְשִׁמְעָתָנוּ

“Who has believed our report?” (Isaiah 53:1)

The word for report is shmu'ah, (שְׁמוּעָה) which Sefaria defines as “report, news, rumor.”

Matthew 14:2

וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-נְעָרָיו זֶה הוּא יוֹחָנָן הַמַּטְבִּיל אֲשֶׁר נִעוֹר
מִן-הַמֵּתִים עַל-כֵּן הַכּוֹחַת פְּעֻלִים בּוֹ:

“and said to his servants, ‘This is Yochanan the Immerser. He has risen from the dead. That is why these powers work in him.’”

He has risen from the dead.

Mark reports additional details,

“Now King Herod heard *of Him*, for His name had become well known. And he said, “John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.” Others said, “It is Elijah.” And others said, “It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets.” But when Herod heard, he said, “This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!” (Mark 6:14-16, NKJV)

Yeshua’s message echoed that of John, and the similarities caused a startled reaction, perhaps from the anxiety of conscience resulting from his evil act. Moreover, this statement may resonate with the idea of the resurrection of Mashiach ben Yosef, and the *Trein Meshichin*, the Twin Messiahs.

Matthew 14:3

כִּי הוֹרְדוֹס תָּפַשׁ אֶת-יוֹחָנָן וַיֹּאסְרֵהוּ וַיִּשְׂיֵמֵהוּ בְּבַיִת
הַסֵּהַר בְּגִלְל הוֹרוּדִיָּה אִשְׁת פִּילְפּוֹס אָחִיו:

“For Herod had laid hold of Yochanan, and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.”

Herodias.

Josephus reports,

“Herodias, their sister, was married to Herod [Philip], the son of Herod the Great...[she] had a daughter, Salome; after whose birth Herodias took upon her to confound the laws of our country, and divorced herself from her husband while he was alive, and was married to Herod [Antipas], her husband's brother by the father's side, he was tetrarch of Galilee...” (Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.5.4)

As we discussed in Matthew 11, she is the *gilgul* of Jezebel, and the prototype of Mystery Babylon (Revelation 17-18).

Matthew 14:4

כִּי אָמַר יוֹחָנָן אֵלָיו אֶסוּרָה הִיא לָךְ:

“For Yochanan said to him, ‘It is not lawful for you to have her.’”

Not lawful.

Mark reports,

“For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. Because John had said to Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.” (Mark 6:17-18, NKJV)

The halacha of this situation is this: The wife of a brother, even if is a half brother, is forbidden to a man, even if he dies, with one exception, that the brother died childless (thus triggering the ceremony of *yibbum*, Levirate marriage). Here, Herod Antipas married his brother's wife while he was still living, as Josephus reports above. Rambam comments on Leviticus 18:16,,

“...the wife of his brother, and the wife of the brother of his father, are considered an *ervah* for him forever, whether after consecration or after marriage, in the lifetime of their husbands or after their deaths, [even] if they were divorced - with the exception of the wife of one's brother who did not leave a son.” **(Mishneh Torah, Forbidden Intercourse 2:1, Sefaria.org)**

Matthew 14:5

וַיִּבְקֹשׁ לְהַרְגוֹ וַיִּירָא אֶת־הַקְּהָמוֹן כִּי לִנְבִיא חָשְׁבֵהוּ:

“When he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.”

They counted him as a prophet.

As discussed in our commentary on Matthew 3, the situation between John the Immerser and Herod Antipas is mentioned in Josephus, Antiquities 18.5.2:

“Now some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God as a just punishment of what Herod had done against John, who was called the Baptist. For Herod had killed this good man, who had commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, righteousness towards one another and piety towards God. For only thus, in John's opinion, would the baptism he administered be acceptable to God, namely, if they used it to obtain not pardon for some sins but rather the cleansing of their bodies, inasmuch as it was taken for granted that their souls had already been purified by justice. Now many people came in crowds to him, for they were greatly moved by his words. Herod, who feared that the great influence John had over the masses might put them into his power and enable him to raise a rebellion (for they seemed ready to do anything he

should advise), thought it best to put him to death. In this way, he might prevent any mischief John might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it would be too late. Accordingly, John was sent as a prisoner, out of Herod's suspicious temper, to Machaerus, the castle I already mentioned, and was put to death. Now the Jews thought that the destruction of his army was sent as a punishment upon Herod, and a mark of God's displeasure with him.” (Josephus, Antiquities 18.5.2, cited at Livius.org)

Matthew 14:6

וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַלְּדַת הַיּוֹרְדוֹס וַתִּרְקֹד בֵּת-הַיּוֹרְדִיָּה בְּתוֹכָם
וַתִּיטֵב בְּעֵינֵי הַיּוֹרְדוֹס:

“But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced among them and pleased Herod.”

Herod's birthday.

Mark adds,

“Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief *men* of Galilee.” (Mark 6:21, NKJV)

Daughter of Herodias.

Salome, or Shlomit, as Josephus reports,

“...her daughter Salome was married to Philip, the son of Herod, and tetrarch of Trachonitis; and as he died childless, Aristobulus, the son of Herod, the brother of Agrippa, married her; they had three sons, Herod, Agrippa, and Aristobulus...”
(Josephus, Antiquities 18.5.4)

A coin exists with her portrait,



Aristobulus and Salome, credit: [Classical Numismatic Group](#)

Matthew 14:7

וַיִּשָּׁבַע לָהּ וַיֹּאמֶר מִה־תִּשְׁאַל נִפְשִׁי וְאֶתֵּן לָךְ:

“Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatever she should ask.”

To give her whatever she should ask.

Mark reports an additional detail,

“And when Herodias’ daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, “Ask me whatever you want, and I will give *it* to you.” He also swore to her, “Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom.” (Mark 6:22-23, NKJV)

This echoes the vow of Achasverosh,

“What troubles you, Queen Esther?” the king asked her. “And what is your request? Even to half the kingdom, it shall be granted you.” (Esther 5:3, Sefaria.org)

This reveals Salome as an **anti-Esther**, and the gilgul of *Ataliab* (2 Kings 8:16-11:16, 2 Chronicles 22:10-23:15). Esther is a picture of all of Israel, and the Mashiach ben Yosef, as she

is known as the *Ayelet HaShachar*, the Doe of the Dawn (Psalm 22:1). (See our article on Queen Esther, "[The Revelation of the Hidden](#)").

Matthew 14:8

וְאִמָּה שָׁמָּה אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים בְּפִיהָ וַתִּשְׁאַל לֵאמֹר תֵּן־לִי
כִּי פֶה בִקְעָרָה אֶת־רֹאשׁ יוֹחָנָן הַמַּטְבִּיל:

“She, being prompted by her mother, said, ‘Give me here on a platter the head of Yochanan the Immerser.’”

Prompted by her mother.

As mentioned above, Salome is displaying a prototype of an anti-Queen Esther. As Esther HaMalka used her influence to save her people (Esther 7), she used her influence to kill her people, similar to Jezebel who arranged the death of Naboth to secure land for Ahab (1 Kings 21). Mark says,

“So she went out and said to her mother, “What shall I ask?” And she said, “The head of John the Baptist!” Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, “I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.” **(Mark 6:24-25, NKJV)**

As pointed out by D. Thomas Lancaster, Esther Rabbah includes a similar detail,

“He [Memukhan] said to him: ‘My master the king, let the word emerge from your mouth, and I will bring in her head to you on a platter...He issued the decree and brought in her head on a platter.’ **(Esther Rabbah 4:9, [Sefaria.org](#))**

In the year 39, Herod Antipas’s wealth was turned over his nephew, Agrippa and he was sent into exile by Caligula, where he died.

Matthew 14:9

וַיֵּצֵר לְמֶלֶךְ אֵד בְּעֵבוֹר הַשְּׁבוּעָה
וְהַמְּסֻבִּים עִמּוֹ צָוָה לָתֵת לָהּ:

“The king was grieved, but for the sake of his oaths, and of those who sat at the table with him, he commanded it to be given,”

King was grieved.

The verse states that Herod "was sorry" (*λυπήθη, lypēthē*)—a term indicating emotional distress, but not repentance.

For the sake of his oaths.

Herod's justification—his *oath*—directly contradicts halakhic principles. In Jewish law, an oath that leads to sin is invalid and must not be fulfilled. The Mishnah (Nedarim 3:3) teaches that vows made in haste or under inappropriate circumstances may be annulled. This verse presents a tragic irony: Herod chooses to maintain *honor* through an act of *murder*. This recalls the rabbinic critique of Jephthah (Judges 11), who rashly vowed to sacrifice the first thing that came from his house. The Midrash (Tanchuma, Bechukotai 7) criticizes him for not seeking annulment from Phinehas the High Priest. Like Jephthah, Herod could have sought a path of *teshuvah* (repentance) but instead commits a grievous sin under the guise of oath-keeping.

Matthew 14:10

וַיִּשְׁלַח וַיִּשְׂא אֶת-רֹאשׁ יוֹחָנָן מֵעֲלֵיו בְּבַיִת הַסֵּהַר:

“and he sent and beheaded Yochanan in the prison.”

Beheaded.

Revelation 19:4 speaks about believers who will be beheaded for their testimony of Yeshua and the word of G-d.

Matthew 14:11

וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶת־רֹאשׁוֹ בַּקָּעָרָה וַיִּתְּנוּ בְיַדִּי
הַנְּעָרָה וַתְּבִיֶּאֱהוּ אֶל־אִמָּהּ:

“His head was brought on a platter, and given to the young lady and she brought it to her mother.”

She brought it to her mother.

Revelation 17 says,

“And on her forehead a name *was* written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Yeshua. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.”
(Revelation 17:5-6, NKJV)

Matthew 14:12

וַיֵּגְשׁוּ תַלְמִידָיו וַיִּשְׂאוּ אֶת־גּוֹיָתוֹ
וַיִּקְבְּרוּהָ וַיֵּלְכוּ וַיַּגִּידוּ לְיֵשׁוּעַ:

“His disciples came, and took the body, and buried it; and they went and told Yeshua.”

Took the body and buried it.

Their action parallels that of righteous individuals in Tanakh who honor prophets or tzaddikim in death. For instance, after the death of King Saul, the men of Jabesh-Gilead risked their lives to recover and bury his body (1 Samuel 31:11–13). The disciples' bravery, in retrieving John's body under Herod's hostile rule, reflects this same courage and reverence for the righteous. In Jewish law, burial is a sacred obligation (Deuteronomy 21:23; Sanhedrin 46b). The Torah explicitly commands that even criminals executed under divine law must be buried by nightfall to avoid desecration. How much more so a righteous prophet!

Matthew 14:13

וַיְהִי כִשְׁמָעוֹ אֶת-זֵאת וַיִּסָּר מִשָּׁם בְּאַנְיָה אֶל-מְקוֹם
חֲרָבָה וְאִין-אִישׁ אֶתּוֹ וַיִּשְׁמָעוּ הַמּוֹן הָעָם וַיֵּלְכוּ אַחֲרָיו
בְּרַגְלֵיהֶם מִן-הָעָרִים:

“Now when Yeshua heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat, to a deserted place apart. When the multitudes heard it, they followed him on foot from the cities.”

He withdrew from there in a boat.

Yeshua’s reaction reflects *avelut* (mourning). The spiritual weight of John’s martyrdom likely prompted Yeshua to seek solitude with God, perhaps to pray, mourn, and prepare for what lies ahead. Elijah fled to the wilderness to hear the still small voice (1 Kings 19).

Matthew 14:14

וַיֵּצֵא יֵשׁוּעַ וַיֵּרָא הַמּוֹן עִם-רַב וַיֵּהֱמוּ מֵעִיו לָהֶם וַיִּרְפָּא
אֶת-הַחֲלָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר בָּהֶם:

“Yeshua went out, and he saw a great multitude. He had compassion on them, and healed their sick.”

He had compassion on them.

This reflects the biblical and rabbinic image of the ideal *ro'eh* (shepherd), who not only guides but cares intimately for the flock. The archetype of Moses as a shepherd-leader is key here. The Midrash (Exodus Rabbah 2:2) teaches that God chose Moses because he cared even for a single lost lamb—symbolizing his deep compassion.

Matthew 14:15

וַיְהִי לַעֲתָר עָרֵב וַיִּגְשׂוּ אֵלָיו תַּלְמִידָיו וַיֹּאמְרוּ הַמָּקוֹם חָרֵב
וְגַם-נֹטָה הַיּוֹם שְׁלַחָה אֶת-הַמּוֹן הָעָם וַיֵּלְכוּ אֶל-הַכְּפָרִים
לְקַנּוֹת לָהֶם אֶכֶל:

“When evening had come, his disciples came to him, saying, ‘This place is deserted, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves food.’”

This place is deserted.

The disciples emphasize that they are in a *desert place* (*erēmos topos* in Greek), evoking the *midbar* (wilderness) motif from the Torah. The wilderness is not merely barren land—it is a space where Israel encountered God, received the Torah, and learned to depend on *manna* from heaven.

Matthew 14:16

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם אֵינָם צְרִיכִים לָלֶכֶת תִּנּוּ-אֲתֶם לָהֶם
לֶאֱכֹל:

“But Yeshua said to them, ‘They don’t need to go away. You give them something to eat.’”

You give them something to eat.

In Mark, their response was,

“And they said to Him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them *something* to eat?” (Mark 6:37, NKJV)

2 Kings says of Elisha,

“Then a man came from Baal Shalisha, and brought the man of G-d bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley bread, and newly ripened grain in his knapsack. And he said, “Give *it* to the people, that they may eat.” But his servant said, “What? Shall I set this before one hundred men?” He said again, “Give it to the people, that they may eat; for thus says the L-RD: ‘They shall eat and have *some* left over.’ ” So he set *it* before them; and they ate and had *some* left over, according to the word of the L-RD.” (2 Kings 4:42-44, NKJV)

Matthew 14:17

וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו אֵין-לָנוּ פֶה כִּי אִם-חֲמִשָּׁת פַּכּוֹת-לֶחֶם
וּשְׁנַי דָּגִים:

“They told him, ‘We only have here five loaves and two fish.’”

We only have.

God wants to add His Divine Fire to the little fire we have. For faith to work, we must give HaShem something to multiply. The Gospel of John reveals it was a little boy who had it,

“There is a boy (נַעַר) here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what are these for so many *people*?” (John 6:9, NASB)

Five loaves

The number five alludes to the *Chamisha Chumsbei Torah*—the Five Books of Moses.

Two fish.

In *Genesis 48:16*, Jacob blesses Ephraim and Manasseh:

“May they multiply like fish in the midst of the earth.”

The number two hints at the “two Mashiachs” in later Jewish eschatology—Mashiach ben Yosef (the suffering servant) and Mashiach ben David (the reigning king).

These 7 elements, the Torah and the two comings of Mashiach, bring life to the world.

Matthew 14:18

וַיֹּאמֶר הַבִּיאוּם אֵלַי הֵנָּה:

“He said, ‘Bring them here to me.’”

Bring them here to me.

This is an echo of:

- Elisha multiplies loaves for 100 men (2 Kings 4:42–44),
- The widow’s oil does not run out (2 Kings 4:1–7),
- Manna falls from heaven to feed a nation (Exodus 16).

Matthew 14:19

וַיִּצוּ אֶת-הָעָם לָשֶׁבֶת עַל-הַדְּשָׁא וַיִּקַּח אֶת-חֲמִשָּׁת
כֶּכָרוֹת-הַלֶּחֶם וְאֶת-שְׁנֵי הַדָּגִים וַיִּשָּׂא עֵינָיו הַשָּׁמַיְמָה
וַיְבָרֵךְ וַיִּפְרֹס וַיִּתֵּן אֶת-הַלֶּחֶם לְתַלְמִידָיו וְהַתְּלַמִּידִים
נָתְנוּ לָעָם:

“He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass, and he took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, broke and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples gave to the multitudes.”

Sit down on the grass.

Psalm 23 says,

“The L-RD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in [b]green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.” **(Psalm 23:1-3, NKJV)**

Rashi comments,

“in green pasture. In grassy pastures. Since he commences to compare his sustenance to the pasture of an animal by saying, “The Lord is my shepherd,” “green pastures” is appropriate for the expression, “the Lord is my shepherd.” David recited this psalm in the forest of Hereth (I Sam. 22:5). Why was it called Hereth? Because it was as dry as a potsherd (חרס) and the Holy One, blessed be He, moistened it with the good of the world to come (Mid. Ps. 23:6).” **(Rashi on Psalm 23:2, Sefaria.org)**

He blessed.

He said *HaMotzi*,

“Baruch Atah HaShem, Elokeinu Melech HaOlam, hamotzi lechem min ha’aretz.”
“Blessed are You, HaShem, King of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.”
(Berachot 35a)

Matthew 14:20

וַיֹּאכְלוּ כֻלָּם וַיִּשְׂבְּעוּ וַיִּשְׂאוּ מִן־הַפֶּתוּתִים הַנּוֹתָרִים שְׁנַיִם
עָשָׂר סֵלִים מִלֵּאִים:

“They all ate and were filled. They took up twelve baskets full of that which remained left over from the broken pieces.”

Twelve baskets.

The motif of 12 baskets remaining echoes the 12 tribes, suggesting spiritual nourishment for the full collective of Israel. This reflects the Zohar’s teaching in Zohar II:146b that the

sustenance of the Shekhinah (Divine Presence) is distributed through twelve channels of divine light, correlating with the tribes.

Left over from the broken pieces.

Echoing 2 Kings 4:42, cited above. Additionally, this may reflect that they tithed the bread, tearing off a piece before eating.

Matthew 14:21

וְהָאֹכְלִים כְּחַמֶּשֶׁת אֲלָפִים אִישׁ מִלֶּבֶד הַנָּשִׁים וְהַטָּף:

“Those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.”

Five thousand men.

“Even in a more inhabited region (cf. 14:13), an abundance of countryside villages could not have provided for a crowd of perhaps ten thousand people (cf. 14:20); even the largest villages rarely held more than three thousand residents.” (Keener, Craig S.. **The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament (IVP Bible Background Commentary Set) (p. 83). (Function). Kindle Edition.**)

Matthew 14:22

וַיֵּאָזַר יֵשׁוּעַ בְּתַלְמִידָיו לָרֶדֶת בַּאֲנִיָּה לְעֵבֶר לְפָנָיו
אֶל־עֵבֶר הַיָּם עַד אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׁלַח אֶת־הָעָם:

“Immediately Yeshua made the disciples get into the boat, and to go ahead of him to the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.”

Get into the boat.

The Greek verb ἀνέγκασεν (*anēnkasen*, “constrained”) implies more than a simple instruction—it suggests a sense of urgency, possibly even resistance on the part of the disciples.

He sent the multitudes away.

Yeshua does not delegate the dismissal of the crowd; he does it himself. This reflects *bachmasat orchim* (hospitality): just as Abraham personally escorted his guests (Genesis 18:16), so too Yeshua ensures a proper and respectful departure.

Matthew 14:23

וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת־הָעָם וַיַּעַל הַהָרָה בְּדָד לְהִתְפַּלֵּל וַיְהִי־עָרֶב
וְהוּא לְבַדּוֹ שָׁמָּה:

“After he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into the mountain by himself to pray. When evening had come, he was there alone.”

By himself to pray.

Hitbodedut (secluded meditation or communion with God).

Matthew 14:24

וְהָאֲנִיָּה בָּאָה עַד חֲצִי הַיָּם וְהַגַּלִּים
יִטְרֹפֶהּ כִּי הָרוּחַ לְנִגְדָּהּ:

“But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, distressed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.”

In the middle of the sea.

The Sea of Galilee is approximately 13 miles long, and 8 miles wide. At its fullest, its maximum depth is approximately 141ft deep (Wikipedia.org).

Distressed by the waves.

Xus Casal writes,

“These are the spiritual forces of the Other Side, which are in constant opposition against the children of light, causing them to doubt, to stumble and fall. The Sea of the Other Side is this materialistic selfish world, which uses our ego and our doubts to drown our spirituality. “Doubt,” ספק safeq, has the gematria of Amaleq עמלק, hence it is written, “Hashem is at war with Amaleq from generation to generation” (Exodus 17:20).” (**Xus Casal on Matthew 14:24, Mattai**)

Matthew 14:25

וַיְהִי בַּאֲשֶׁמֶרֶת הָרְבִיעִית וַיָּבֹא אֵלֵיהֶם
יֵשׁוּעַ וְהוּא מְהַלֵּךְ עַל-פְּנֵי הַיָּם:

“In the fourth watch of the night, Yeshua came to them, walking on the sea.”

Fourth watch.

Josephus refers to the fourth watch in Antiquities 5.6.5. The Talmud, in Berachot, discusses whether there are three or four watches (mishmarot) of the night. The *Abraham Cohen Footnotes to the English Translation of Masechet Berakhot 3b* says,

“If by rising “at midnight” David forestalled “night-watches” (the plural signifying two), there must be four watches in the night.” (**Sefaria.org**)

Since “night” is a code for exile, it means that the Mashiach will rescue Israel (symbolized by Kefa) at the very end.

Walking on the sea.

This episode echoes Genesis,

“The Spirit of G-d was hovering over the surface of the waters.” (**Genesis 1:2**)

Rashi, R' Shlomo Yitzhaki, comments,

“The Throne of Glory was suspended in the air and hovered over the face of the water with the breath of the mouth of the Holy One, blessed be He and with His word, like a dove, which hovers over the nest . . .” (**Rashi, cited at Chabad.org**)

Rashi connects the Spirit of God to a dove. Genesis Rabbah says,

“AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD HOVERED: this alludes to the spirit of Messiah, as you read, And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him (Isaiah 11:2). In the merit of what will [this spirit] eventually come? [For the sake of that which] HOVERED OVER THE FACE OF THE WATERS, i.e. in the merit of repentance which is likened to water, as it is written, Pour out your heart like water (Lamentations 2:19).” (**Genesis Rabbah 2:4, Soncino Press Edition**)

Job says,

“He alone stretches out the heavens and walks on the waves of the sea. He makes the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades, and the rooms of the south. He does great things past finding out; yes, marvelous things without number.” (**Job 9:8-10**)

The Septuagint translation of this passage reads,

“He alone has stretched out the heavens and walks on the sea as if on firm ground.” (**Job 9:8, LXX**)

This seems to echo the Crossing of the Red Sea,

“The children of Israel went into the midst of the *sea on the dry ground*, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand, and on their left.” (**Exodus 14:22**)

Matthew 14:26

וְהַתְּלַמִּידִים רָאוּ אֹתוֹ מְהַלֵּךְ עַל-פְּנֵי הַיָּם וַיִּבְהֻלוּ
וַיֹּאמְרוּ מִרְאֵה-רוּחַ הוּא וַיִּצְעֲקוּ מִפֶּחַד:

“When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, ‘It’s a ghost!’ and they cried out for fear.”

Walking on the sea.

In the Tanakh, the sea (*yam*) is often a metaphor for chaos, danger, and the forces of the unknown. In creation, God brings order from *tobu vavobu*—the primordial deep (Genesis 1:2). To walk on water is to walk above chaos, fear, and uncertainty—just as God hovered over the waters in Psalm 77,

“Your path was through the sea, your way through the mighty waters, though your footprints were not seen.” (Psalm 77:19)

It’s a ghost!

The disciples’ immediate response—believing Yeshua to be a *spirit* (*phantasma*, φάντασμα)—reflects the Jewish understanding of supernatural beings (*shedim*, *ruchot*, and *mazikin*). Their misinterpretation is significant. In the midst of chaos and darkness, we may have trouble seeing clearly who the Messiah is.

Matthew 14:27

וַיִּמַּהַר יֵשׁוּעַ וַיְדַבֵּר אֲלֵיהֶם לֵאמֹר
חִזְקוּ כִּי-אֲנִי הוּא אֶל-תִּירְאוּ:

“But immediately Yeshua spoke to them, saying, ‘Cheer up! It is I! Do not be afraid.’”

Cheer up!

Chizku! Be strong!

It is I.

Mashiach will reveal himself to all Israel.

Do not be afraid.

- **HaShem** says in this in Genesis 15:1, Deuteronomy 20:1,3, Isaiah 44:8, Jeremiah 1:8, 10:5, 42:11, Ezekiel 2:6
- **Yosef** says this to his brothers three times in Genesis 43:23, Genesis 50:19 and Genesis 50:21.
- **Moshe** says it to the people in Exodus 14:13, prior to the Crossing of the Red Sea and in Deuteronomy 1:29.
- **Joshua** says this to Israel in Joshua 1:9, 10:25, 11:6
- **Yahaziel** said this in 2 Chronicles 20:15
- **Nehemiah** said this in Nehemiah 4:14
- **The Angel of the L-rd** said this in 2 Kings 1:15, Matthew 28:5
- Yeshua says this in Matthew 14:27, 17:7, 28:10, Mark 5:36, 6:50, Revelation 1:17

Matthew 14:28

וַיַּעַן פֶּטְרוֹס וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֱ-ס־אֶתָּה הוּא אֲדֹנָי צִוֵּה-נָא
וְאָבָא אֵלַיךָ עַל-הַמַּיִם:

“Peter answered him and said, ‘Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the waters.’”

If it is you, command me to come to you.

Peter’s request is extraordinary. He doesn’t merely want proof, he wants to test the waters, literally!

Matthew 14:29

וַיֹּאמֶר בּוֹא וַיֵּרֵד פֶּטְרוֹס מִן־הַאֲנִיָּה
וַיִּהְיֶה עַל־פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם לָבוֹא אֶל־יֵשׁוּעַ:

“He said, ‘Come!’ Peter stepped down from the boat, and walked on the waters to come to Yeshua.”

Come!

The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come!”

Peter...walked on the waters.

When a righteous person cleaves to the supernal world, the natural order does not govern him. R’ Pinson writes,

“**First**, one needs to turn away from their negative story, whatever it may be. Do not view the current situation of constriction or confinement as fixed or permanent. • **Second**, one needs to believe in the possibility of change, accept the possibility of a miracle, and generate faith in their ability to become part of that miracle. • **Third**, one should visualize their new reality and imagine how it will feel to be in that new state. • **Fourth**, one must take initiative, make that first move, and plunge into positive action. Take a step forward into the sea. . . Even when faced with an obstacle that seems insurmountable, take that step towards your destination. The ‘waters’ will part; the doors will open, and the path towards your freedom will be paved for you.” (Pinson, **Dovber. Awakenings: Drawing Life from the Weekly Torah Reading (p. 162). Kindle Edition.**)

Rebbe Nachman says,

“The waters of the sea stand before us, threatening to engulf us. Evil thoughts abound, threatening to overwhelm us. But the Jews who had faith and trust in God went into the waters—they faced those thoughts, doubts and confusions head-on, and the waters

split for them. In the same way, the "waters" will open for anyone who wishes to draw close to God (Likutey Halakhot V, p. 131a-262-132a).” **(REBBE NACHMAN'S TORAH: EXODUS-LEVITICUS - Breslov Insights into the Weekly Torah Reading. Kindle Edition.)**

Matthew 14:30

וַיְהִי כִּי רָאָתוֹ אֶת־הַרוּחַ כִּי חֲזָקָה הָיָא וַיִּירָא וַיִּחַל לִטְבֹּעַ
וַיִּצְעַק וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי:

“But when he saw that the wind was strong, he was afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, Master, save me!”

He saw the wind/was afraid/began to sink.

“If someone truly wants to perform a mitzvah, he will certainly face obstacles. Yet he can overcome them all if he truly desires. For example, let's say he decides to travel to the Holy Land. If he arrives at the port and there is no ship, or if he has no money left to pay his fare, nevertheless, if he truly desires, he will see miracles happen that allow him to complete the mitzvah and make the trip. In certain ways, these miracles are as great as those that accompanied the Splitting of the Sea. Though that miracle was very great, it lasted only for a short time. If a person opens his eyes to the Divine Providence that brought him to where he is today, he will clearly see God's guiding hand every week and even every day! (Likutey Halakhot I, p. 142a-284).” **(REBBE NACHMAN'S TORAH: EXODUS-LEVITICUS - Breslov Insights into the Weekly Torah Reading (Kindle Locations 2523-2529). Breslov Research Institute. Kindle Edition.)**

Master, save me!

Adoni, hoshieini!

Matthew 14:31

וַיִּמָּהַר יֵשׁוּעַ וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת-יָדוֹ וַיַּחֲזֶק-בּוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו קָטָן
אֱמוּנָה מֵהַלֵּךְ כִּי חָלַק לְבָבְךָ:

“Immediately Yeshua stretched out his hand, took hold of him, and said to him, ‘You of little faith, why did you doubt?’”

You of little faith.

Habakkuk says,

“...the righteous will live by his faith.” (**Habakkuk 2:4**)

R' Daniel Kretzman expounds this verse,

“Another hint to Yosef HaTzaddik’s personification of emunah (faith) is the pasuk in Chabakuk (2:4): “Tzaddik B’Emunato Yichyeh” “A Tzaddik will live in his faith,” the central characteristic of the Tzaddik, Yosef, is faith. For every negative spiritual force that G-d brings into the world, there is a counter force from the side of holiness, with the potential to overcome it. . . Amalek, the extension of Eisav, is confronted and fought by Mashiach ben Yosef, the extension of Yosef HaTzaddik.” (**R’ Daniel Krentzman, Moshiach ben Yosef & Yehoshua**)

Stretched out his hand.

Psalm 18 says,

“He reached down from on high, He took me; He drew me out of the mighty waters” (**Psalm 18:17, Sefaria.org, cf. Psalm 144:7**)

Rebbe Nachman says,

“We must spread faith through the entire body so that it reaches even the extremities – i.e., the hands. Then, when a person elevates his hands in prayer, he lifts up his prayers. One who prays properly can invoke the power of salvation, such as that associated with Mashiach.” (**Rebbe Nachman’s Torah, Parashat Beshalach, Breslov Research Institute, pg. 136**)

Why did you doubt?

Doubt (ספק) is equivalent in Gematria to Amalek (עמלק). It also equals:

- מר, bitterness
- לפני גוג ומגוג, before Gog and Magog.

Matthew 14:32

הֵם עָלוּ אֶל-הָאֲנִיָּה וְהַרוּחַ שָׁכָחָה:

“When they got up into the boat, the wind ceased.”

The wind ceased.

Psalm 107 says,

“He makes the storm calm, so that the waves thereof are still.” (Psalm 107:29)

The stilling of the storm also carries messianic overtones. In Isaiah 9:5–6, the Messiah is called *Sar Shalom* (Prince of Peace), a figure who brings order, justice, and tranquility. The calming of the sea can be read as a foretaste of the messianic age, when even nature will respond to the presence of the Redeemer, echoing Isaiah 11:6–9.

Matthew 14:33

וַאֲנָשֵׁי הַאֲנִיָּה נִגְּשׁוּ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ-לוֹ
וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲבֹל בֶּן-אֱלֹהִים אַתָּה:

“Those who were in the boat came and bowed to him, saying, ‘You are truly the Son of God!’”

Truly are the Son of God.

The one spoken of in Psalm 2:7 and the ultimate fulfillment of 2 Samuel 7:14. I.e. he really is the Mashiach, the one who hovers over the waters!

Matthew 14:34

וַיַּעֲבְרוּ אֶת-הַיָּם וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶרֶץ גִּנְיָסָר:

“When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret.”

Land of Gennesaret.

In 1986, two fishermen named Moshe and Yuval Lufan from Kibbutz Ginnosar discovered a two thousand year old fishing boat, on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee when it receded. Known as the Ancient Galilee boat or Jesus Boat that matches the description of the boat used by the disciples in the Gospels. While there is conclusive evidence that this is the boat of Yeshua, it nevertheless underscores the historicity of the Gospels.



There are numerous references to Ginosar in Rabbinic literature (Berachot 44a), which describes this area as a place where the fruits are so sweet you have to salt them. Genesis Rabbah 99 says of this area,

“Naphtali is a doe let loose, who provides pleasant sayings” (Genesis 49:21).

“Naphtali is a doe let loose” – this is the Ginosar valley, which is as quick as a doe, in ripening produce. “Who provides pleasant sayings” – as his land is blessed, as it is stated: “Naphtali, his desire is satisfied, [and he is full with the blessing of the Lord]” (Deuteronomy 33:23). They produce first fruits for kings and speak fair words to them, and if [the kings] were displeased with them, they would become reconciled to them.” **(Bereshit Rabbah 99:12, Sefaria.org)**

Rashi commenting on Genesis 49:21 says of Ginosar,

“אילה שלחה is symbolical of the valley of Gennesareth which ripens its fruits very

quickly, just as a hind runs rapidly (Genesis Rabbah 99:12). אֵילָה שְׁלַחָה means A HIND LET LOOSE that it may run where it pleases.” (Rashi on Genesis 49:21, Sefaria.org)

Ramban explains,

“The analogy is that *Naphtali is satisfied with favor, and full* with all good things, and from him tidings will come forth to all Israel that his land has produced fruits abundantly, even as our Rabbis have mentioned concerning the fruits of Genothar.” (Ramban on Genesis 49:21, Sefaria.org)

Matthew 14:35

וַיִּכְּיְרוּ אֹתוֹ אַנְשֵׁי הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ
אֶל-כָּל-סְבִיבוֹתֵיהֶם וַיָּבִיאוּ אֵלָיו אֶת כָּל-הַחֹלִים:

“When the people of that place recognized him, they sent into all that surrounding region, and brought to him all who were sick,”

Recognized him.

Kol HaTor says,

“Yosef recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him – This is one of the traits of Yosef not only in his own generation, but in every generation, i.e., that Mashiach ben Yosef recognizes his brothers, but they do not recognize him. This is the work of Satan, who hides the characteristics of Mashiach ben Yosef so that the footsteps of the Mashiach are not recognized and are even belittled because of our many sins. (See below 103). Otherwise, our troubles would already have ended. Were Israel to recognize Yosef, that is, the footsteps of ben Yosef the Mashiach which is the ingathering of the exiles etc., then we would already have been redeemed with a complete redemption.” (Kol HaTor 2:39, translated by R’ Yechiel Bar Lev and K. Skaist, pg. 37)

Brought him all who were sick.

Matthew 14:36

וַיִּבְקְשׁוּ מִמֶּנּוּ רַק לִנְגַע בְּכַנֵּף בְּגָדוֹ וְכָל-הַנִּגְעִים נוֹשְׁעוּ:

“and they begged him that they might just touch the fringe of his garment. As many as touched it were made whole.”

The fringe of his garment.

As mentioned in our commentary on Matthew 9, the Greek manuscripts of the Gospels, the word for “fringe” is the word *κρασπεδον* (*kraspedon*). This is the same word that the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek translation of the Torah, uses in Numbers 15:38 to translate the Hebrew word *כַּנָּף* (*kanaph*.) The word *kanaph* means corner, wing, edge, or extremity. In terms of clothing, the *kanaph*, or corner of the garment is the place where one is to put *tzitzit*, “tassels”. These are to be worn in order to raise the awareness of the importance of Torah in a world of temptation and distraction. The book of Numbers says,

דִּבֶּר אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם וְעָשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצֵת עַל-כַּנְּפֵי
בְּגָדֵיהֶם לְדֹרֹתָם וְנָתַנּוּ עַל-צִיצֵת הַכַּנָּף פְּתִיל תְּכֵלֶת:

“...HaShem spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels (*tzitzit*) on the corners of their garments (*kanfei bigdeihem*) throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners.”(Numbers 15:38, cf. Devarim 22:12)

The prophet Malachi makes an interesting prophecy connecting the corners, or wings, with healing,

וְזָרְחָה לָכֶם יְרֵאִי שְׁמִי שְׁמֵשׁ צְדָקָה וּמְרַפָּא בְּכַנְּפֵיהָ

“...to you who fear My Name, the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in her wings.” (**Malachi 4:2**)

The word for wings in this prophecy is “k’nafeyah”, the same word as “corner”, the place where the *tzitzit* are to be placed. The Sun of Righteousness (*Shemesh Tzedaka*), may also allude to the title “Servant of Righteousness” (Shammash Tzedaka). In fact, the Midrash Rabbah interprets this prophecy as messianic,

“Moses asked: ‘shall they remain in pledge forever?’ G-d replied: ‘No, only until the sun appears’, that is, till the coming of the Messiah, for it says, “But unto you that fear My name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings.” (**Exodus Rabbah 31:10, Soncino Press Edition**)

R’ Yitzhak Ginsburgh comments,

“... according to many great tzadikim, the Mashiach’s special mitzvah—the one through which he shines the most and his concealed essence becomes revealed—is the mitzvah of tzitzit.” (**R’ Yitzhak Ginsburgh, The Tzitzit, Gal Einai**)