

He Reigns Over All by Ramon Mayo

For most of my life I've lived near the Pacific Ocean and have visited it numerous times. When I was young I would walk out from the shore and watch, as the water would come up to my neck and then allow it to pull me back to the shore. Many times looking out over the vast expanse of the ocean the greatness of God confronted me. Escaping was not an option. Here, I was compelled to think about God. He was Creator of all things; seen and unseen; above and below the water; beyond the great horizon. Today the ocean still pulls me in like a steel rod to a magnet. The waters of the oceans and seas have always been a mystery to man. Even now explorers and oceanographers plumb their depths and find new discoveries. More and more scientists are finding new creatures at the bottom of the ocean floor. About 75% of the world is covered by water. It is no wonder we have spent centuries in awe of it. The vast expanse of water that surrounds our planet is enough to make us realize how vast and great God is.

The sea not only represents chaos and mystery, but the awesome power of God. This can be seen in the pages of Scripture as the first couple of lines in Genesis state, "the earth was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1: 2, KJV). In the midst of chaos and the mystery of the waters, the Spirit hovers poised to break into the chaos, at the ready to display God's power. One of the greatest miracles recorded in the Bible is Israel's crossing of the Red Sea. It is another testimony to the awesome power of God as He takes control of something that men fear—the raging sea. He does what He wants with the sea, showing that He is sovereign over all creation. He is not like the gods of the Egyptians and Canaanites. He is not restricted to land, but can do whatever He pleases even with the waters of the sea.

Even in our baptism as believers in Christ we face the terror of water in a symbolic way. We are buried with Christ, as the waters overtake us, and we rise again to new life. The hands and arms that hold us are more than just those of the pastor or minister. They represent the power of God as He is in control of our life and decides to give us a new one. Going down into the water self-sufficient and coming up with the help of Another is a powerful lesson. We realize He is the only one who can do it. Because He is sovereign over all, we are forced to let go and trust Him.

Nowhere is this seen more clearly than when Jesus walks on water. The disciples' minds are blown after seeing Jesus hovering over the sea of Galilee. It is here we find the disciples bowing down and worshiping Him as the Son of God (Matthew 14: 22–33). They are dumbfounded when they see the One who created and set the boundaries for the seas walk over those same seas. It is a case of the artist entering into his own masterpiece, still able to shape and paint it as He wills. Peter is invited to walk toward Jesus and succeeds in his attempt. Suddenly he sinks, as he focuses on the water and not Jesus. It is this reality that unravels their perception of Him. They know that they are not dealing with the ordinary.

In the story of Jesus and the calming of the seas, the Lord and the disciples are heading to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. In the midst of their nautical journey, a storm arises. The boat reels back and forth as the wind kicks up waves. Water laps over the sides of the boat. The disciples are panicked and terrified. They think that this will be the end for them. On the other hand, Jesus is asleep. He is asleep because the storm does not faze Him. He created it: wind, water, and all. In Colossians 1, Scripture says that He created the world and in Him all things hold together (see Colossians 1: 16– 17). The disciples were unaware that the One who holds all things together was not going to come apart because of a mere storm. Jesus gets up and rebukes the disciples. They have no faith. The reason they have no faith is that they don't know who is in the boat with them. With an authoritative word He orders the storm to cease and the waves and winds to be still. And they do. This is the power of God at work. The disciples bow down and worship Him. Their exact words: "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him!" (Matthew 8: 27, KJV). Exactly. He was no mere man. Overwhelming us when they threaten our lives. Our task is to keep our eyes on Him. The water is not sovereign, God is.

Realizing that He is sovereign should cause us to worship Him with our every breath. The fiber of our being needs to be marshaled into praising and extolling God not just for what He has done but also for who He is. His greatness is unmatched. We can no longer go through life down and out about our situation because we have faith in a God who is faithful, loving, all-knowing, and all-powerful. This is the kind of God we serve. The winds and the waves obey Him. He is able to defy gravity and the natural laws He put into existence. This provokes us to worship and obey Him. The disciples saw what He did when He calmed the sea and realized that Jesus was no ordinary man. They had moved beyond ordinary. They were in the presence of the One who reigns over all.

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