

*St. Peter Walking on Water*, by Alessandro Allori (1535–1607)

Art selection and commentary by [Heidi J. Hornik](#) and [Mikeal C. Parsons](#)

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Alessandro Allori, a Mannerist painter from Florence, depicts the moment when Jesus rescues Peter from drowning (Matt. 14:22–23). Peter and Jesus are pushed to the foreground of the painting, as is typical in Mannerist painting. The figures are large and the gestures dramatic. The drapery colors are bright, with Christ wearing a rose-colored gown and a blue mantle. Peter wears a similar shade of deep blue with a golden mantle that expands as the wind blows it outward. The sea remains rough from the storm that battered the boat. In the background, the apostles are visibly

terrified, having mistaken Christ on the water for a ghost. Peter, wanting to be certain of Jesus' identity, has requested Jesus to command him to walk to him on the water. Christ bids him to come, and Peter leaves the boat. But frightened by the strong wind, Peter is temporarily distracted (symbolic of his brief loss of faith) and begins to sink. In desperation, he cries out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus rebukes him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"