

Portraits of Jesus

A Study of the Gospel of Mark

by Gary Fisher

Instructions:

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If you have not already done so, save this lesson to your computer using the "save" feature of your browser or PDF reader. Then print out the lesson (or at least open it in your browser or PDF reader **offline** – not on the Internet). Read the lesson and **study in your Bible the passages indicated >>> Scripture <<<**. Following each passage, study each question that has a number enclosed in asterisks (*1*, *2*, etc.), and **write down your answers on paper**. Some questions include more than one number because they have more than one blank to fill in. ("Think" questions should be carefully considered for your own benefit, but your answers will not be submitted to us.) Please take your time, study each passage carefully, answer the questions honestly, and consider the applications to your own life (John 12:48; 2 Tim. 2:15).

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Jesus Does the Impossible

Lesson #4

Jesus Stills the Storm

>>> Read Mark 4:35–41. <<<

Jesus consistently demonstrated His authority by doing things which were totally beyond human capacity. In this case, while the disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee by boat, Jesus fell asleep on a cushion. A great storm arose, and the disciples panicked. In desperation, they awoke Jesus saying: "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" He got up and calmly rebuked the wind and the sea. The storm ceased. He then turned to the disciples and reproved them for their lack of faith. Though they had seen Jesus perform many miracles, they were always amazed by each new one. They said: "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

Note — How well do we sleep? *Considering the things that the disciples had already seen Jesus do, their doubts about His ability to quiet the storm are astonishing. They had seen Him heal multitudes of people, cast out demons and prove Himself equal to any task at hand. Suddenly, they despaired because of a storm on the sea. Obviously, they didn't really think Jesus could solve this problem because they were amazed when He did. How could they have been so slow and so distrustful? What about us? Do we not believe that Jesus can handle any situation, if we trust and obey His will? Have we not seen in the Scriptures how Jesus can solve every problem? How do we react when we confront a fresh crisis in our lives--do we trustingly and confidently turn to Jesus, or do we throw up our hands in despair? How well do we sleep?*

1 What was Jesus doing when the storm arose on the sea? (a) praying, (b) reading Scripture, (c) sleeping, (d) rowing. Answer: _____.

2 How did Jesus calm the storm? Answer: He calmly _____ the wind and the sea.

3 How did the disciples react to this miracle? (a) They ignored it. (b) They were afraid, (c) They were angry. (d) All of the preceding. Answer: _____.

Jesus Casts out a Legion of Demons

>>> Read Mark 5:1–20. <<<

When Jesus got out of the boat, a wild man met Him. The man, inhabited by thousands of demons, could not be subdued by human force, and so he lived as a savage among the tombs. The demons within the man were scared of Jesus. They asked Him not to send them out of the country (to the abyss, Luke 8:31). Instead, they wanted to be able to enter a nearby herd of swine. Evidently, if the demons had been expelled without having permission to go into another being, they would have had to return to Hell. No doubt it was better to inhabit a pig, if necessary, than to be sent back to that awful place. Surprisingly, Jesus granted the demons' request. They left the man and entered the pigs. The herd went berserk because of the presence of the demons within them, ran headlong and plunged off the cliff. The pigs drowned and presumably the demons had to return to the abyss. Perhaps they thought they had outsmarted Jesus when He allowed them to enter the swine, but the truth is, Jesus outsmarted them! In the end they had to return to the abyss—they merely took a roller-coaster ride to get there.

Meanwhile, those who had been tending the hogs went into the city and told the townsfolk about what Jesus had done. What a tremendous opportunity for this small town to have Jesus present! They didn't look at it as an opportunity though; they asked Jesus to leave. The man who had been healed wanted to follow Jesus, but He told him to return to his home and start preaching.

Note — They asked Him to leave! *At first, it may seem incredible that the people of the town didn't want Jesus to stay. But think about what they had just lost: 2000 pigs. Some people owned them; some folks were planning to make money slaughtering, processing and selling them. He had hurt the town's economy. They evidently loved material possessions more than they loved Jesus; because of that, they missed out on the supreme privilege. They asked Him to leave. Do we ever invite the Lord to leave our lives because we love material things more than we love Him?*

Note — Jesus' surprising instructions: *When the man who had been healed wanted to follow Him, Jesus gave him strange orders. He refused to allow the man to accompany Him, but asked him to return and tell about his healing in the city. There are two surprising things about this command: 1) Jesus didn't allow the man to accompany him. Putting myself in the demoniac's place, I can see why he would have wanted to be with the one who cured him; but Jesus said no. Would it not have been a*

wonderful thing to be in Jesus' presence? Certainly. But what Jesus preferred was for the man to testify of His work in the city. Sometimes God may not want us to remain in secure and comfortable surroundings, but rather go to the lost and preach. 2) Jesus normally was telling folks not to tell about their healings (see Mark 1:40–45). Why the sudden change here? Remember where Jesus was. He was on the east side of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus had not wanted to be thronged by spectators in the Capernaum area, west of the Sea, but in this wicked town, He was in no danger of becoming too popular. The people in this place needed someone to report the miracle.

4 What measures had been attempted to subdue the demoniac (v4)? a) psychology, b) shackles and chains, c) shock therapy, d) drugs. Answer: _____.

5 What name did the demons wear (v9)? Answer: _____.

6 Where did the demons say they wanted to go? Answer: They wanted to go into a herd of _____.

7 What happened to the swine when the demons entered them? Answer: They ran off a cliff and drowned in the _____.

8 What did the townspeople ask Jesus to do? Answer: They asked Jesus to _____.

9 What did Jesus tell the demoniac to do after he had been healed? a) Tell no one what had happened, b) Lie about what happened, c) Tell everyone what happened, d) Commit himself to an asylum. Answer: _____.

Jesus Heals Woman with Hemorrhage

>>> Read Mark 5:21–34. <<<

A synagogue official named Jairus requested Jesus to come and heal his daughter who was dying. As Jesus was journeying to his house, a desperate woman in the multitude touched the Lord. She had been bleeding for 12 years, had gone to many doctors, and spent all of her money, but had only worsened. She thought that by touching Jesus she could be healed. Sure enough, when she touched Jesus' coat, she could sense that the flow of blood immediately dried up and she was well. Suddenly, Jesus asked who had touched Him. The disciples thought it was a strange question since there was a huge crowd thronging Jesus. Many had "touched" Him. But the woman knew what Jesus meant. Terrified, she came forward and confessed. Jesus reassured her saying that her faith had made her well.

Note -- Why did Jesus embarrass her? Obviously, the woman with the bleeding was hoping to avoid publicity. She didn't make her presence known, but silently touched Jesus' clothes and was healed. Then Jesus put her on the spot by asking who touched Him. She was trembling as she admitted what she had done. Why did He draw attention to this shy lady? Perhaps there are two reasons: 1) If He had not, the woman would have believed that she had been healed by some sort of magic associated with Jesus' clothes. He wanted her to know that He had consciously healed her. Many touched His clothes and were not healed; she was healed by the will of the Lord. 2) If Jesus had allowed her to leave thinking she had "stolen" the healing, her conscience might later trouble her. By publicly identifying her, He was able to comfort and encourage her, telling her to go in peace.

10 How long had the woman had her problem of bleeding? Answer: _____ years.

11 How had she tried to get well previously? Answer: She had spent all her money on _____.

12 When was the woman with the bleeding healed? a) she was not healed; b) when she believed on Jesus; c) when she asked Him to heal her; d) when she touched Jesus' clothes. Answer: _____.

13 How did the rest of the multitude find out about Jesus' miracle? Answer: He asked who had _____ Him, and the woman confessed.

Jesus Heals Jairus' Daughter

>>> Read Mark 5:35–43. <<<

During the delay caused by the healing of the woman, people came to tell Jairus not to bother Jesus any longer because his daughter had died. Jesus told them to believe and He continued on to the house. There, the mourners laughed when Jesus told them that the girl was "sleeping." He wasn't denying the reality of her death, but was affirming that He would soon raise her; therefore, her death was more like sleep. He took only three disciples and the girl's parents, went into her room, and told her to get up. She did. The witnesses were astounded.

Please notice the theme that runs through the stories in this section of Mark: Jesus can do what is humanly impossible. First, the storm. The disciples were desperate, but Jesus calmed it with a mere word. Then, the demoniac. Though many had tried, no one had been able to bind nor subdue him. Jesus expelled the demons with a word and the man returned to normal. Then, the woman. No physician had been able to heal her though she had spent all her money in the effort. With one touch, she was completely cured. Finally, the daughter of Jairus. When one dies, all attempts to cure the sickness end, because everyone knows you can't raise the dead. Jesus did. Four times in this part of Mark, Jesus entered situations that were humanly impossible and emerged victorious.

14 Why did people suggest that Jairus not bother Jesus any more? Answer: Because the girl had _____.

15 Who was in the room when Jesus raised the daughter (v37,40)? a) Jesus, b) the girl, c) the girl's parents, d) Peter, James, and John, e) all the preceding but no one else. Answer: _____.

16 What does the Bible account say that assures us the girl was really alive again? Answer: She arose and _____.

(Thought question: Considering the nature and purpose of these miracles, who alive on earth today can do such things as these? What can we learn as a result?)

Rejection at Nazareth

>>> Read Mark 6:1–6. <<<

Jesus returned to His hometown of Nazareth. Despite convincing proofs that He was the Son of God, His own townspeople rejected Him. They knew His family and His background and they refused to believe that someone they viewed as a peer could be greater than they. Because the people didn't have enough faith to bring their sick to Him, Jesus healed few. The people in Nazareth forfeited an ideal opportunity to have the Lord with them.

Note -- Great opportunities: *It is tragic to see people discarding the fantastic opportunity to be blessed by Jesus. In the country of the Gadarenes, they simply asked Jesus to leave (5:1–20). Here in Nazareth, they refused to believe and therefore didn't even bring their sick for Jesus to heal. As a result, they missed out on the opportunities that others, like Jairus and the woman with the bleeding,*

benefited from. What about us? Do we take advantage of the opportunity to know Jesus and to be blessed by Him?

17 What had been Jesus' profession before He began His ministry (v3)? Answer: He had been a _____.

18 Which of Jesus' family members did the people of Nazareth know (v3)? a) His mother Mary, b) His brothers, c) His sisters, d) all the preceding. Answer: _____.

(Thought question: What does this tell you about Mary?)

19 How did the people of Jesus' hometown (Nazareth) react to Him? a) They rejected Him, b) They believed in Him, c) They made a hero of Him, d) all of the preceding. Answer: _____.

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