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# THE MIRACLES OF JESUS



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Front Cover

*“The Storm on the Sea of Galilee* is a 1633 painting by the Dutch master Rembrandt van Rijn that was in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum prior to being stolen on March 18, 1990. The painting depicts the miracle of Jesus calming the waves on the Sea of Galilee (Palestine) and now known as Israel, as depicted in fourth chapter of the Gospel of Mark in the New Testament of the Christian Bible. It is Rembrandt's only seascape.” [Wikipedia “The Storm on the Sea of Galilee”]

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## ***Introduction***

The Gospel accounts are literally filled with the wonderful and miraculous deeds performed by Jesus. About one-fourth of the recorded events of Jesus' ministry involve a miracle. To deny that Jesus performed miracles, as many do, is to deny the integrity of Scripture and the power of God. Why is it difficult to believe that the Creator of the heavens and earth can also act within that creation in marvelous ways?

Thirty-five (35) specific miracles of Jesus are recorded in the Gospels as well as a few general references to multiple healings or exorcisms. These are given in the adjoining list. Some published listings of the miracles of Jesus may have either fewer or more miracles than those listed here. For instance, could the 'Feeding of the 5000' and the 'Feeding of the 4000' really be the same miracle instead of two different miracles? Or, should Jesus' identification of Nathanael be considered a miracle? One's list will vary depending on how one answers such questions.

The miracles of Jesus are often divided into three groups: (1) Healings, e.g. the healing of the Lame Man, (2) Exorcisms, e.g. the 'healing' of the Wild Men of Gadara, and (3) Nature Miracles, e.g. the calming of the storm or the resurrection of Lazarus. Some would combine exorcisms with healings thinking that the two are intrinsically related. Others would separate the instances of resurrection from the other miracles over nature. All such groupings, however, are superficial. Though useful for some purposes, they do not point to the meaning of the miracles. Hopefully, this will become clear during the course of this study.

Other mighty works associated with Jesus such as the Virgin Birth, the Transfiguration, and the Resurrection are also recorded in the Gospels, but this study will focus only on those deeds performed by Jesus.

Some of the miracles of Jesus are recorded by more than one Gospel and it is instructive to study the similarities and differences in these accounts. One older, but still very useful, tool is A.T. Robertson's *A Harmony of the Gospels* (Harper & Row), 1922. This work prints the multiple accounts in the Gospels in parallel columns to assist in the comparative study of the accounts. Robertson's harmony is based on the Revised Version (a "cousin" of the American Standard Version). More recently, Kurt Aland's *Synopsis of the Four Gospels, English Edition* (United Bible Societies, 1984) is based on the Revised Standard Version and is an excellent tool.

The *English Standard Version* (ESV) will be used as the basis of our study, but other translations will be consulted.

Any study of the Scriptures deserves our very best effort, but that seems especially true when it comes to a study of Jesus. Open, honest study is the only appropriate approach to the Scriptures. Greater understanding at times can only come if we are willing to challenge our current understanding.

May God bless our study.

**The Miracles of Jesus**

	§	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
<b><u>The Beginning of Christ's Public Ministry</u></b>					
1. Water Turned to Wine	29				2:1-11
<i>First Passover John 2:13</i>					
<b><u>The Galilean Ministry</u></b>					
2. Healing of Nobleman's Son	38				4:46-54
3. First Catch of Fish	41	(4:18-22)	(1:16-20)	5:1-11	
4. Healing of Demoniac on Sabbath	42		1:21-28	4:31-37	
5. Healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law	43	8:14-15	1:29-31	4:38-39	
6. Healings and exorcisms	43	8:16-17	1:32-34	4:40-41	
7. Healings and exorcisms	44	4:23-25	1:35-39		
8. Healing of a Leper	45	8:2-4	1:40-45	5:12-16	
9. Healing of a Paralytic	46	9:1-8	2:1-12	5:17-26	
<i>Second Passover (?) John 5:1</i>					
10. Healing of Lame Man at Bethesda	49				5:1-18
11. Healing of Man with Shriveled Hand	51	12:9-14	3:1-6	6:6-11	
12. Healings	52	12:15-21	3:7-12		
13. Healing of Centurion's Servant	55	8:5-13		7:1-10	
14. Raising of Widow's Son	56			7:11-17	
15. Healings and Exorcisms (John the Baptist)	57	(11:2-19)		7:18-35	
16. Healing of Blind, Speechless Demoniac	61	12:22-37	(3:19-30)		
17. Calming of the Storm at Sea	65	8:23-27	4:35-41	8:22-25	
18. Healing of the Wild Men of Gadara	66	8:28-34	5:1-20	8:26-39	
19. Raising of Jairus' Daughter	67	9:18-19; 23-25	5:22-24; 35-43	8:41-42; 49-56	
20. Healing of Woman with Hemorrhage	67	9:20-22	5:25-34	8:43-48	
21. Healing of Two Blind Men	68	9:27-31			
22. Healing of Speechless Demoniac	68	9:32-34			
23. Feeding of 5000 People	72	14:13-21	6:30-44	9:10-17	6:1-13
24. Walking on the Water	73-74	14:22-33	6:45-52		6:14-21
25. Healings in Gennesaret	75	14:34-36	6:53-56		
<i>Third Passover John 6:4</i>					
26. Healing of Syrophenician's Daughter	78	15:21-28	7:24-30		
27. Healing of Deaf, Speechless Man	79		7:31-37		

*The Miracles of Jesus*

28. Healings	79	15:29-31		
29. Feeding of 4000 People	79	15:32-38	8:1-9	
30. Healing of Blind Man at Bethsaida	81		8:22-26	
31. Healing of a Boy with Seizures	87	17:14-20	9:14-29	9:37-43
32. Shekel in the Fish's Mouth	89	17:24-27		

**The Later Judean Ministry**

33. Healing of Man Born Blind	100			9:1-41
34. Healing of Speechless Demoniac	106		11:14-26	
35. Healing of Infirm Woman	110		13:10-17	

*Feast of Dedication (John 10:22)*

**The Later Perea Ministry**

36. Healing of Man with Dropsy	114		14:1-6	
37. Raising of Lazarus	118			11:1-44
38. Healing of Ten Lepers	120		17:11-19	
39. Healing of Blind Bartimaeus	126	20:29-34	10:46-52	18:35-43

**The Last Public Ministry in Jerusalem**

40. Fig Tree Cursed	129,131	21:18-22	11:12-14; 19-25	
41. Healing of Malchus' Ear	153	26:47-54	(11:43-47)	22:50-51 18:2-11

*Fourth Passover (Matthew 26:2//Mark 14:1//Luke 22:1)*

42. Second Catch of Fish	180			21:1-14
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Chronology based on A.T. Robertson's *Harmony of the Gospels* (Harper & Row), 1922.

§ refers to the section number of the harmony where the miracle is recorded.

Note of Robertson's 184 Sections, 39 Sections (or 21%) contain a miracle. If the sections regarding the birth and childhood of Jesus and his arrest, trial, crucifixion and resurrection are omitted, then 28% of the recorded episodes in Jesus' ministry feature a miracle.

**LESSON 1**

**INTRODUCTION**

The early gospel preaching on Jesus highlighted his miraculous deeds as evidence that God was with him. For example, on the day of Pentecost following the ascension, Peter preached (Acts 2:22):

“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—...”

And again, Peter preached to Cornelius (Acts 10:38):

“how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.”

Regardless of our inability to understand how that Jesus, God the Son, became man, these passages clearly affirm that Jesus, while a man, performed mighty acts by the power of God. Peter words suggest three additional facts about these acts:

- 1) The miracles of Jesus were intended to attest to the fact that God was with Jesus. This truth was recognized by Nicodemus: "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." (John 3:2)
- 2) The miracles of Jesus were observable (“did...in your midst, as you yourselves know”) and, therefore, refutable if they did not occur as reported.
- 3) The miracles of Jesus could be described as “doing good.”

Thus, the three goals of this study are (1) to demonstrate that the miracles performed by Jesus give evidence that he was the Son of God (which is a stronger claim than simply that God was with Jesus), (2) to affirm the historicity of the miracles of Jesus, and (3) to see the character of God as revealed in the miracles.

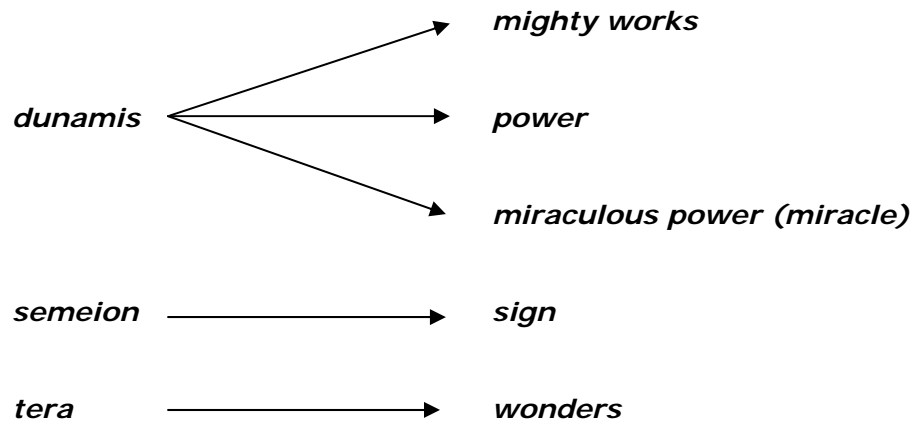
It is interesting to note that the major attacks on the miracles of Jesus have denied one or more of the three facts above affirmed by Peter. The Jews of Jesus day denied both (1) and (3). They would not say that he did “good” (e.g. the controversies regarding Jesus’ miracles on the Sabbath), and they assigned his powers to Beelzebub, not God. But they could not deny (2).

The rationalists of early liberalism would not deny (2) or (3), but would deny (1). They imagined naturalistic explanations for all of Jesus’ miracles. Their modern-day heirs continue the quest to explain Biblical miracles with natural events. For example, Colin Humphreys believes he has uncovered the natural explanations for the 10 plagues and other “mighty” works of Moses ([The Miracles of Exodus](#)). Hugh Montefiore explains the miracles of Jesus by appealing to paranormal and psychosomatic explanations ([The Miracles of Jesus](#)).

In recent decades liberals affirm (3) while denying (1) and (2). They agree that Jesus went about doing good (which they think we should imitate), but that the reports concerning his miracles were simply the result of the early church trying to embellish the standing of Jesus. His miracles, therefore, are “mythical”, not historical.

### **New Testament Terms**

There are three Greek words used to describe the miracles of Jesus: *dunamis*, *semeion*, and *teras*. In the ESV, *semeion* and *teras* are always translated by the words *sign(s)* and *wonders*, respectively. However, three English words are used to translate *dunamis*: *mighty works*, *power*, and *miraculous power*. Outside the Gospels, the ESV also translates *dunamis* with the word *miracle*.



In Acts 2:22 quoted above, all three Greek words occur. We are not to understand that some of Jesus' acts are classified as mighty works, others as signs, and still others as wonders. Rather, all three terms apply to the same acts. They just present the act in a different perspective.

These terms seem to convey these meanings:

- 1) "Mighty works" etc. relates to the power of God behind the miracle.
- 2) "Sign" refers to the message/truth that the miracle intended to convey to those who saw it.
- 3) "Wonders" refers to the reaction of those who saw the miracle.

Interestingly, John only uses the word "sign" (*semeion*) in his Gospel and the Greek word *tera* always occurs in the plural and only in conjunction with *semeion*, i.e., "signs and wonders". (Question: Why might the term "wonders" not be used alone?)

### **Miracles and the Acts of God**

From the creation God has acted in the affairs of men. Yet although all miracles are acts of God, not all acts of Gods are miracles. So then, what is the difference? What is a miracle? Hopefully, this will become clear as our study progresses, but a few introductory comments may be helpful.

One dictionary defines "miracle" simply as "a supernatural event." Surely this will not do for it fails in making a distinction between the various acts of God, which is the very thing we seek to do. Another dictionary gives the definition as "a supernatural event regarded as

due to divine action.” The last phrase is clearly redundant and, consequently, no more useful than the first definition.

One popular definition of a miracle is that it is a “violation of the laws of nature.” This is similar to C.S. Lewis’ definition that a miracle is “an interference with nature by supernatural power” (Miracles, 1947). The problem with these definitions is that they assume that somehow “nature” is governed by “laws” independent of God’s continuing power, and that if God wants to act he must do so by overriding nature. Thus, two actors are seen at work – Nature for all the orderly, repetitive events, and God for the unique, miraculous events. But the God who created the universe is the same God who sustains the universe. Thus, it is better to see only one Actor at work that chooses to work in an orderly, repetitive fashion at times and in a unique, miraculous way at times. Thus the distinction between the two types of action has to do with “Why?” not “Who?”

With a similar perspective, others have concluded that a miracle is that which cannot be explained by natural law. Again, nature is seen as an independent actor. But God should not be limited in how he can act. Worse, it constantly narrows the work that God does. God separated the Red Sea “by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land...” (Exodus 14:21). This example further illustrates that not all of God’s miraculous acts are instantaneous as some have argued.

Thus, my definition: A miracle is a wondrous act of God designed to manifest truth. The wondrous nature of Jesus’ miracles is evident – we would marvel and wonder if shown to us today. Our task for this study is to learn the lessons, i.e. the truths, that God would have us know from the miracles that Jesus did.

## **LESSON 2**

## **JESUS REVEALS HIMSELF TO HIS DISCIPLES**

**Introduction** The chronology of Jesus' ministry as recorded in the Gospels is difficult to establish with certainty. Yet, it does seem clear that the first recorded public miracle of Jesus was his turning the water to wine at a wedding feast in Cana. The miraculous catch of fish followed a series of wondrous deeds (if Luke's chronology is accepted), but it seems to have special significance in the calling of some of his disciples.

### **THE FIRST SIGN: WATER TURNED TO WINE: John 2:1-11**

<sup>1</sup>On the third day<sup>a</sup> there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. <sup>2</sup>Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. <sup>3</sup>When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." <sup>4</sup>And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with me?<sup>b</sup> My hour has not yet come." <sup>5</sup>His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

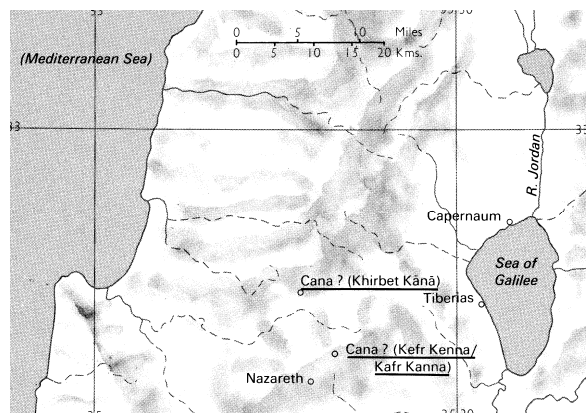
<sup>6</sup>Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons<sup>c</sup>. <sup>7</sup>Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. <sup>8</sup>And he said to them, "Now draw some out<sup>d</sup> and take it to the master of the feast." So they took it. <sup>9</sup>When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom <sup>10</sup>and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now." <sup>11</sup>This, the first<sup>e</sup> of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

#### *Notes*

- a* "On the third day" would normally have the meaning "day after tomorrow"; thus the 6<sup>th</sup> day in John's sequence (cf. 1:29, 35, 43).
- b* Or, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" KJV, ASV  
"O Woman, what have you to do with me?" RSV  
"Dear Woman, why do you involve me? NIV  
"Woman, what concern is that to you and to me?" NRSV, NASU sim., Amplified sim.  
"Woman, how does this concern of yours involve me? NAB
- c* Two or three 'metretes' (Gk. = Heb. *bath*). According to Edersheim, there were three different measures of the Hebrew *bath* in first-century Palestine ranging from 5.25 to 8.5 gallons. (Life and Times, Vol. I, p.358)
- d* The expression "draws out" was usually used, according to Westcott, of drawing water from a well. Hence, he thinks the servants drew water from a well, not the stone jars. This seems like a good example of scholarship getting in the way of common sense!
- e* For the "second" sign see John 4:46-54.

#### ***Background***

"Cana, the home of Nathanael (21:2), has been traditionally identified with Kefr Kenna, 4 miles from Nazareth on the road to the lake. There both Greek and Roman churches claim to mark the site of changing water into wine; the visitor is even given a minuscule drink of wine to commemorate the occasion. But a more probable location is Khirbet Qana, a ruined village some 9 miles north of Nazareth. This is



supported by Josephus's information that Cana, where he had his headquarters when he took up his military command in Galilee in AD 66, lay in the Plain of Asochis, which included Khirbet Qana, but not Kefr Kenna." (Bruce, John, p. 68)

"Our information about the details of **marriage ceremonies**...in first century Jewry is far from complete...We know that marriage was preceded by a betrothal which was a much more serious matter than is an engagement with us, and was so binding that to break it divorce proceedings were necessary. At the conclusion of the betrothal period the marriage took place. According to the Mishnah the wedding would take place on a Wednesday if the bride was a virgin and on a Thursday if she was a widow (*Ket.* 1:1). The bridegroom and his friends made their way in procession to the bride's house. This was often done at night, when there could be a spectacular torchlight procession. There were doubtless speeches and expressions of goodwill before the bride and the groom went in procession to the groom's house, where the wedding banquet was held...The feast was prolonged, and might last as long as a week." (Morris, John, p.178-79)

The Mishnah, the collection of Jewish traditions compiled in the second century AD, suggests that **stone containers** were used because stone was unsusceptible to (ceremonial) uncleanness (m. Besah 2.3).

"To **run out** of supplies (*wine*, cdb) would be a dreadful embarrassment in a 'shame' culture; there is some evidence it could also lay the groom open to a lawsuit from aggrieved relatives of the bride." (Carson, John, p.169)

### **Comments / Questions**

1. Why do you think Mary told Jesus that there was no wine remaining? Was she *expecting* a miracle? Why, or why not?
  
2. Jesus was not showing any disrespect by calling his mother "*Woman*"; it was a common term of respect. Consider the various translations in *Note b* above of Jesus first statement to Mary.
  - a) Assuming any of the translations are technically possible, which translation seems to work best in the context?
  
  - b) To what "hour" is Jesus referring in his statement: "*My hour has not yet come*"? Often in John the term "hour" is used to refer to Jesus' death/glorification: John 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1. Is that Jesus' reference in this passage?

On the other hand, if the hour refers to the start of Jesus' ministry, then why did Jesus immediately proceed to perform the miracle that in many ways kicked off his ministry?

3. Who is the intended audience for this miracle?

4. How did this first sign manifest the glory of Jesus? Did it simply manifest his power, or is there something significant about the abundance of (good) wine?
  
5. So what did the disciples "believe" about Jesus when they saw this miracle?
  
6. Can a *symbolical* interpretation (not uncommon in the Gospel of John) be given to this miracle? Six pots – Pots for purification – Water vs. Wine – Next event: Cleansing of Temple – etc.

**THE FIRST CATCH OF FISH: Luke 5:1-11 ( ? // Matthew 4:18-22 // Mark 1:16-20)**

<sup>1</sup>On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret<sup>a</sup>, <sup>2</sup>and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. <sup>3</sup>Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. <sup>4</sup>And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." <sup>5</sup>And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." <sup>6</sup>And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. <sup>7</sup>They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. <sup>8</sup>But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." <sup>9</sup>For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, <sup>10</sup>and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." <sup>11</sup>And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

*Notes*

a i.e., Sea of Galilee

***Background***

John records an earlier occasion when Jesus first called Peter, Andrew, an unnamed disciple, and Philip (John 1:35ff).

Matthew (4:18-22) and Mark (1:16-20) records an occasion when Jesus calls Peter, Andrew, James, and John while they were either casting their nets (Peter and Andrew) or mending their nets (James and John). That occasion is possibly the same as the one recorded here by Luke. [Robertson thinks they are the same, but by giving priority to Mark's chronology he places this event in Luke 5 prior to the events recorded in Luke 4:31-44. It is equally possible that Luke's chronology is to be preferred.]



### **LESSON 3**

### **JESUS' MIRACLES AND MARK'S NARRATIVE**

**Introduction** Mark, the shortest of the Gospels, places great emphasis upon the miracles of Jesus. The twenty miracle stories recorded by Mark comprise "almost one-third of Mark's Gospel and nearly one-half of the first ten chapters, a proportion greater than in any other Gospel" (Twelftree, p.57). Not only that, for the miracles that Mark records in common with Matthew or Luke, Mark's account is usually the longest.

Opening his Gospel with "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God," Mark quickly summarizes the ministry of John, the baptism of Jesus, and the temptation of Jesus in only 12 verses. His emphasis is clear from the introductory statement to the body of his Gospel: "Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel'" (1:14b-15). Mark wants his readers to know the 'gospel of the kingdom'. Interestingly, Mark does this by recording one miracle after another in the early chapters of his Gospel. Mark's pace is fast and sustained by his constant use of "immediately" as a time marker. [Mark uses the word "immediately" 35 times as compared to Matthew's 14 times and Luke's 12 times. The repetitive use of a term is not generally considered good style, so some modern translations omit many of its occurrences, e.g. NRSV.]

This lesson considers only those recorded in the remainder of the first chapter of Mark with a view to highlighting the central role that miracles play in Mark's narrative.

#### **HEALING OF DEMONIAC: Mark 1:21-28 ( // Luke 4:31-37)**

<sup>21</sup>And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. <sup>22</sup>And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. <sup>23</sup>And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, <sup>24</sup>"What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are--the Holy One of God." <sup>25</sup>But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" <sup>26</sup>And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. <sup>27</sup>And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." <sup>28</sup>And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

#### ***Background***

After Jesus was rejected by his hometown of Nazareth, **Capernaum** became the new home of Jesus and his disciples as he preached throughout Galilee (Matthew 4:13; compare Matthew 9:1 with Mark 2:1). Located on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee (see the map in Lesson 2), many of the miracles of Jesus take place in Capernaum.

#### ***Comments / Questions***

1. What two things about Jesus astonished/amazed those in attendance at the synagogue?
  - 1)
  - 2)
  - a. In both cases, what about Jesus was the source of their astonishment?
  - b. Specifically, how was Jesus' teaching unlike that of the scribes? (cf. Mt.7:28, 29)

- c. In expressing their amazement at Jesus' power to cast out the unclean spirit, the assembly questioned, "What is this? A new teaching with authority?" Why would they refer to the casting out of an unclean spirit as a "new teaching?"

**HEALING OF PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW: Mark 1:29-31 // Luke 4:38-39 ( // Matthew 8:14-15)**

**Mark 1**

<sup>29</sup>And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. <sup>30</sup>Now Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. <sup>31</sup>And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

**Luke 4**

<sup>38</sup>And he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to him on her behalf. <sup>39</sup>And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them.

***Comments / Questions***

1. Why might it be appropriate that Luke said that Jesus "arose" and left the synagogue? (Some translations omit the term "arose", e.g. NRSV.)
2. What detail does Luke give about the fever that Mark does not?

Luke was a physician (Col. 4:14) and many have noted that it is not unusual for Luke to give a fuller description of the illnesses of those healed by Jesus.

3. Further, how does Luke describe Jesus' act of healing?

What is suggested by the expression that Jesus "rebuked the fever"? (cf. Lk.4:35, 41)

4. What might be the significance of Peter's mother-in-law "immediately" serving them?

**HEALINGS AND EXORCISMS: Mark 1:32-39 ( // Matthew 8:16-17; 4:23-25 // Luke 4:40-44)**

<sup>32</sup>That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. <sup>33</sup>And the whole city was gathered together at the door. <sup>34</sup>And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

<sup>35</sup>And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. <sup>36</sup>And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, <sup>37</sup>and they found him and said to him, "Everyone is looking for you." <sup>38</sup>And he said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out." <sup>39</sup>And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

### **Background**

The **Jewish day** went from sunset to sunset, thus when the text says "that evening at sundown" we are to understand Mark simply as saying that the Sabbath day was over.

### **Comments / Questions**

1. What aspect of Jesus' work is evident by the emphasis of this passage?
2. Why would the multitudes wait until after the Sabbath to bring their sick to Jesus?
3. Compare Matthew's account (4:23-25). What did Jesus preach in the synagogues?

How was this related to Jesus' healings and exorcisms? (Note also Matthew 8:16-17)

What was the effect of Jesus' healings and exorcisms?

### **HEALING OF A LEPER: Mark 1:40-45 ( // Matthew 8:2-4 // Luke 5:12-16)**

<sup>40</sup>And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, "If you will, you can make me clean." <sup>41</sup>Moved with pity<sup>a</sup>, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, "I will; be clean." <sup>42</sup>And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. <sup>43</sup>And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once, <sup>44</sup>and said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest<sup>b</sup> and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to them." <sup>45</sup>But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter.

#### *Notes*

*a* Or, "moved to anger" REB (Western text, e.g. D)

*b* cf. Luke 17:14, Jesus gives same instruction to the 10 lepers healed.

### **Background**

"**Leprosy** was a dread disease in the ancient biblical world. The *tuberculoid* type is rather benign and tends to run its course in one to three years and the patients completely recover, often without treatment. Therefore the law was open to the possibility of the natural cleansing of the leper (Lev. 14). The *lepromatous* form of leprosy was far more virulent and generally incurable. Beginning as a white or pink discoloration of the skin somewhere on the face it proliferated into white, scaly patches all over the body. Portions of the eyebrows and hair disappear; tumorlike swellings grow on the face and body. Fingers, toes, and even the nose are gradually eaten away. Internal organs are attacked. The deadening of sensory nerves leads to even greater destruction of the victim's limbs through heat and injury." (Earnhart, The Miracles of Jesus)

### **Comments / Questions**

1. Compare Luke's account. How does Luke describe the man's leprosy?

2. Jesus' motivation in healing the leper was either pity or anger (see *Note a*).
  - a. Do both options fit the context?
  - b. Which do you think is correct? Why?
3. What is the significance of Jesus touching the leper?
4. Why might Jesus have asked the man not to tell others who healed him? (Which was similar to the case above where he did not permit the demons to tell others that he was the Christ?)

Why did the healed man disobey?

#### ***"The Messianic Secret"***

The Gospels record several instances where Jesus commands silence of men or demons as to the truth of his person. The following examples occur in the Gospel of Mark:

1. Commands to silence addressed to the demons which acknowledge his power: 1.34; 3.12.
2. Instructions not to make his healing-miracles public: 1.43-45; 5.43; 7.36; 8.26.
3. Teaching to the disciples in private: 4.34; 7.17-23; 9.28; 8.31; 9.31; 10.32-34; 13.3.
4. Commands to silence addressed to the disciples: 8.30 and 9.9.

Particularly noteworthy is Jesus' charge to his disciples not to tell others that he is the Messiah (Mark 8:27-30). So, why is that?

One of the most well known theories is that of the German scholar William Wrede (*The Messianic Secret*, 1901; English ed., 1971). Discounting the integrity of the Gospel accounts, he hypothesized that Jesus never claimed to be the Messiah and that it was the early church that first proclaimed Jesus the Messiah. To give credibility to their claim, it was necessary to try and show that Jesus himself did in fact claim to be the Messiah, but the reason those claims were not well known was due to Jesus' desire to keep that knowledge secret. In other words, Mark invented the 'Messianic secret' and was followed by Matthew and Luke (assuming the priority of Mark).

Such a loose handling of the Gospel texts invariably leads to inconsistencies, thus Wrede's reconstruction is not as popular now as it once was. (Of course, that has not kept many others from formulating their own equally, misconceived theories.)

Nevertheless, the question remains: Why did Jesus command others not to reveal his identity? Any ideas?

**LESSON 4**

**JESUS CONFRONTS THE JEWISH LEADERS**

**Introduction** It was on the occasion of Jesus healing the paralytic that we have the first recorded confrontation of Jesus by the Jewish leaders. The confrontation is subtle; the Jewish leaders are not recorded as *saying* anything. Yet Jesus knows their thoughts. Mark follows this account with four other occasions where the Pharisees question Jesus' actions.

**HEALING OF A PARALYTIC: Mark 2:1-12 // Luke 5:17-26 ( // Matthew 9:1-8)**

**Mark 2**

<sup>1</sup>And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home.

<sup>2</sup>And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them.

<sup>3</sup>And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. <sup>4</sup>And when they could not get near him because of the crowd,

they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. <sup>5</sup>And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

<sup>6</sup>Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, <sup>7</sup>"Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" <sup>8</sup>And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question these things in your hearts? <sup>9</sup>Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'? <sup>10</sup>But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"--he said to the paralytic-- <sup>11</sup>"I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home."

<sup>12</sup>And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

**Luke 5**

<sup>17</sup>On one of those days, as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with him to heal.

<sup>18</sup>And behold, some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they were seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus, <sup>19</sup>but finding no way to bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus. <sup>20</sup>And when he saw their faith, he said, "Man, your sins are forgiven you."

<sup>21</sup>And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" <sup>22</sup>When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them,

"Why do you question in your hearts? <sup>23</sup>Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'?"

<sup>24</sup>But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"--he said to the man who was paralyzed--"I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home."

<sup>25</sup>And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God. <sup>26</sup>And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, "We have seen extraordinary things today."

### **Background**

A typical Palestinian home in the first century would have a 'family room' for gathering. The size might vary from 9 feet x 12 feet to 12 feet x 15 feet (Edersheim, Life and Times, Vol. I, p.502). Traditional Palestinian roofs would consist of widely spaced timbers covered with thatch, mud, and brick or stone. Mark does not mention the type of roof construction; however, Luke mentions "tiles" as a component to the roof which some say is more representative of Hellenistic houses, but could have been used in Palestine by this time (Marshall, p.213). Access to the roof would be by a set of stairs on the outside, and also possibly from the inside. Some houses were built around a courtyard with adjoining galleries that would have lighter roof framing.

### **Comments / Questions**

1. Luke, more than any other Gospel writer, notes that Jesus was empowered by God. Review the following examples: Luke 2:40; 3:22; 4:1, 14, 18; 5:17 (above); Acts 2:22; 10:38.
  
2. What classes of Jewish leaders were present on this occasion?
  
3. This is the first healing miracle recorded by the Synoptics where faith is an element in the healing.
  - a. Whose faith did Jesus "see"?
  
  - b. What was it that Jesus saw?
  
  - c. Was their faith an essential part of the healing?
  
4. Were the Jews correct? Can only God forgive sins? [Interestingly, the Jews never thought of the Messiah as having the ability to forgive sins.]
  
5. It was commonplace among the Jews to believe that an individual's sickness was the result of his sin. Consequently, the rabbis taught that forgiveness of sin must precede healing (cf. the view of Job's friends; Ps.103:3).
  - a. Review other passages that reflect an association between sin and sickness:  
  
Luke 13:1-5  
  
John 5:14  
  
John 9:2-3  
  
Acts 28:4  
  
1 Corinthians 11:30

- b. By first forgiving the paralytic's sin, is Jesus' action consistent with this belief?
  
- c. Thus, does Jesus action give support to this view? If so, why? If not, then what is Jesus' purpose?
  
- d. Which of the following statements best represent the truth about the relationship between sin and sickness?
  - (1) Sickness is always the result of sin.
  - (2) Sickness is sometimes the result of sin.
  - (3) Sickness is never the result of sin.
  
- 6. Answer Jesus' question. Which is easier to say – 'your sins are forgiven' or 'rise and walk'?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 7. What was Jesus' stated purpose in healing the paralytic?

Does this simply mean that healing miracle shows that Jesus had divine power and thus had the right to forgive sins? Or, is there something about a healing miracle that in itself teaches us?

- 8. What was the crowd's reaction? Compare all the Synoptics.

\_\_\_\_\_ ***Matthew*** \_\_\_\_\_ ***Mark*** \_\_\_\_\_ ***Luke*** \_\_\_\_\_

- 9. Why the emphasis in Jesus' statement (v.11): "I say to you..."

**LESSON 5**

**JESUS AND NOBLES**

**Introduction** People in need were attracted to Jesus and it was not only those of low position and power. The wealthy also had need of what Jesus could provide. Sickness, then as now, does not only come to the poor and lowly.

**HEALING OF NOBLEMAN'S SON: John 4:46-54**

<sup>46</sup>So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill. <sup>47</sup>When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. <sup>48</sup>So Jesus said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe." <sup>49</sup>The official said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." <sup>50</sup>Jesus said to him, "Go; your son will live." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way. <sup>51</sup>As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was recovering. <sup>52</sup>So he asked them the hour when he began to get better, and they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." <sup>53</sup>The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." And he himself believed, and all his household. <sup>54</sup>This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee.

**Background**

The distance from Cana, where the official met Jesus, and Capernaum, where the official's son was sick, is about 20 miles.

'Official' (Gk. *basilikos*; NKJV "nobleman") signifies a "royal official" (NRSV). Either the man was associated with Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, and popularly called 'king' (cf. Mark 6:14), or, less likely, he was in the service of the emperor.

The '**seventh hour**' is *approximately* 1:00 pm. The Jews divided the daylight period (i.e. from sunrise to sunset) into 12 'hours', thus the length of each 'hour' varied throughout the year.

**Comments / Questions**

1. Is the official a Jew or a Gentile?
2. To whom is Jesus addressing his statement in verse 48? Is Jesus being critical of the official, to any others present, or to both? (Both instances of the Greek word "you" in this verse is plural; hence the NKJV "Unless you *people* see signs...")

In either case, what is the point of Jesus' criticism?

3. What is the significance of the official believing Jesus when Jesus said "Your son lives"? Had he not already 'believed' by coming to Jesus in the first place?
4. John says this is "the second sign that Jesus did..." Is this just the second miracle that Jesus performed? Or, that John has recorded? Or, what?

**HEALING OF CENTURION'S SERVANT: Matthew 8:5-13 // Luke 7:1-10**

**Matthew 8**

<sup>5</sup>When he entered Capernaum,  
a centurion came forward to him,

appealing to him, <sup>6</sup>"Lord, my servant<sup>a</sup> is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly."

<sup>7</sup>And he said to him, "I will come and heal him."

<sup>8</sup>But the centurion replied, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof,

but only say the word, and my servant will be healed.

<sup>9</sup>For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

<sup>10</sup>When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, "Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. <sup>11</sup>I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, <sup>12</sup>while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." <sup>13</sup>And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; let it be done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed at that very moment.

*Notes*

*a* Greek term *pais* can mean 'servant' or 'child'.

*b* Greek term *doulos* means 'slave'.

**Luke 7**

<sup>1</sup>After he had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum.

<sup>2</sup>Now a centurion had a servant who was sick and at the point of death, who was highly valued by him. <sup>3</sup>When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his servant<sup>b</sup>. <sup>4</sup>And when they came to Jesus, they pleaded with him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy to have you do this for him, <sup>5</sup>for he loves our nation, and he is the one who built us our synagogue."

<sup>6</sup>And Jesus went with them.

When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. <sup>7</sup>Therefore I did not presume to come to you.

But say the word, and let my servant<sup>a</sup> be healed.

<sup>8</sup>For I too am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me: and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

<sup>9</sup>When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith."

<sup>10</sup>And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant well.

### Background

A **centurion** was a military officer in charge of 100 men. Since no Roman troops were stationed in Galilee prior to AD 44, he would have been a member of Herod Antipas' army. Undoubtedly a Gentile, he may have been a proselyte, but nothing in the text demands this (and maybe even excludes this possibility. How so?).

The "**elders of the Jews**" are civic leaders, not religious, although they may have had some role in the synagogue (Marshall, Luke, p.280).

### Comments / Questions

1. There are enough similarities between the accounts of Matthew and Luke that we are confident that they are referring to the same incident. But there are also differences. Note them.

**Matthew**

**Luke**

Do the differences cast any doubts upon the reliability of these accounts?

What do you make of the differences?

[Any study of the Gospels must give consideration to the differences between them. Many have tried to undermine the credibility of the Gospels by highlighting the differences. Thus, differences must be explained, harmonized, or in some way reconciled, not simply ignored.]

2. Why did the centurion think himself unworthy to have Jesus come into his house?
3. In what way did the centurion see his authority as comparable to Jesus' authority?
4. What was it about the centurion's faith that justifies Jesus' assessment that he had not "found such faith" in Israel?
5. Matthew seems to make it clear that Jesus' statement about the centurion's faith was also intended as a criticism of his Jewish brothers. Why is it Matthew and not Luke who makes that connection?

What two realms does Jesus refer to in his criticism of the Jews? (cf. Luke 13:28-30)

[The 'kingdom of heaven' often refers to the *rule of God*, but here it clearly refers to a realm.]

6. Was the centurion's faith an *essential* element in the healing of his servant? Is that to be expected?

## **LESSON 6**

## **JESUS' MIRACLES AND THE SABBATH**

**Introduction** Many of the controversies that Jesus had with the religious leaders centered around his activities on the Sabbath. On a previous Sabbath, Jesus had healed a demoniac and Peter's mother-in-law (see Lesson 3). On that occasion, Jesus was not criticized for healing on the Sabbath. However, with Jesus' healing of the lame man at Bethesda (the third miracle of Jesus that John records), the Jewish leaders begin their persecution of Jesus.

### **HEALING OF LAME MAN AT BETHESDA: John 5:1-18**

<sup>1</sup>After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup>Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. <sup>3</sup>In these lay a multitude of invalids--blind, lame, and paralyzed<sup>a</sup> <sup>5</sup>One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. <sup>6</sup>When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?" <sup>7</sup>The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me." <sup>8</sup>Jesus said to him, "Get up, take up your bed, and walk." <sup>9</sup>And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.

Now that day was the Sabbath. <sup>10</sup>So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed." <sup>11</sup>But he answered them, "The man who healed me, that man said to me, 'Take up your bed, and walk.'" <sup>12</sup>They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk?'" <sup>13</sup>Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. <sup>14</sup>Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you." <sup>15</sup>The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. <sup>16</sup>And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. <sup>17</sup>But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working."

<sup>18</sup>This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

#### *Notes*

*a* The end of verse 3 and all of verse 4 are omitted in the earliest manuscripts: *waiting for the moving of the water; <sup>4</sup>for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and stirred the water: whoever stepped in first after the stirring of the water was healed of whatever disease he had* (ESV margin). It is commonly agreed that it represents the popular belief during the time of Jesus. Josephus reports about several healing springs of that day (see Loos, *Miracles of Jesus*, p.452f).

#### **Background**

The **feast** is not identified, but every possible feast has been suggested. Some manuscripts have "the feast" instead of "a feast", which, if true, might suggest either Passover or the Feast of Tabernacles. The assumption that it is Passover is the basis of the view that Jesus' ministry lasted three years.

In the Greek, only the adjective "**Sheep**" is given in verse 2; the noun has to be supplied. The text could allow the following word "pool" being the appropriate noun, hence "the Sheep pool" (Vulgate, JB, NEB, NAB), or reference may be to "the Sheep market"

(KJV), but in light of Nehemiah's reference to "the Sheep gate" (Nehemiah 3:1,32; 12:39) most translations supply the noun "gate" (NASU, NIV, REB, NRSV) .

The **name of the pool** is variously given in the Greek manuscripts as Bethesda, Bethzatha (RSV, JB, NRSV), Belzetha, and Bethsaida. Most English translations use Bethesda.

"The Old Testament had forbidden **work** on the Sabbath. But what is 'work'? ... [J]udging by Mishnah [Shabbath 7:2; 10:5, cb] ... dominant rabbinic opinion had analyzed the prohibition into thirty-nine classes of work, including taking or carrying anything from one domain to another (except for cases of compassion, such as carrying a paralytic)" (Carson, John, p.244).

### ***Comments / Questions***

1. Did the OT "law" forbid the carrying of one's bed on the Sabbath? (cf: Exodus 20:10; Deut. 5:12-15; Numbers 15:32-36; Jeremiah 17:21-27)
2. Does the faith of the lame man play a part in this miracle? Had the lame man heard of Jesus' ability to perform miracles?

In most of the healing miracles recorded, the sick person approaches Jesus in faith that he can heal them. There are some others, like the man in this miracle, that Jesus heals without their request, or any indication that they had faith. For example, note the following miracles:

Matt. 12:9-14//Mark 3:1-6//Luke 6:6-11 (see next page)

Luke 13:10-17

Luke 14:1-6

John 9:1-41

So, if it was not to highlight the importance of faith, why did Jesus perform these miracles? In other words, what is the common denominator in all these miracles?

3. Does verse 14 teach that there was a connection between the physical infirmity of this man and his sin?

In any case, it certainly makes a connection between sin and "something worse". What is the "something worse" that is to be dreaded?

4. The Jews held the view that once God completed his creative works in six days that the rest he entered on the 7<sup>th</sup> day was still continuing. Yet, clearly God still worked – providence, etc. – without breaking the Sabbath. How did Jesus use this to justify his healing on the Sabbath?

5. What two reasons are given by John for the Jews trying to kill Jesus?
  - 1)
  - 2)
6. So, what are the lessons to be learned from this miracle?

**HEALING OF MAN WITH SHRIVELED HAND: Matthew 12:9-14 // Mark 3:1-6 // Luke 6:6-11**

**Matthew 12**

<sup>9</sup>He went on from there and entered their synagogue. <sup>10</sup>And a man was there with a withered hand.

And they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"--so that they might accuse him.

<sup>11</sup>He said to them, "Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out? <sup>12</sup>Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

<sup>13</sup>Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And the man stretched it out, and it was restored, healthy like the other.

<sup>14</sup>But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.

**Mark 3**

<sup>1</sup>Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand.

<sup>2</sup>And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him.

<sup>3</sup>And he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come here." <sup>4</sup>And he said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent.

<sup>5</sup>And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

<sup>6</sup>The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

**Luke 6**

<sup>6</sup>On another Sabbath, he entered the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was withered.

<sup>7</sup>And the scribes and the Pharisees watched him, to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath, so that they might find a reason to accuse him.

<sup>8</sup>But he knew their thoughts, and he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come and stand here." And he rose and stood there. <sup>9</sup>And Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?"

<sup>10</sup>And after looking around at them all he said to him,

"Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored.

<sup>11</sup>But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

## **Background**

**Pharisaic Sabbath restrictions** included the withholding of medical help except in the case where life was endangered. Midwifery and circumcision were also permitted. (Marshall, Luke, p.235)

The **Herodians** are simply mentioned at the close of this incident for having the same desire as the Pharisees to destroy Jesus. Near the end of Jesus' life they join the Pharisees in trying to trap Jesus with the question about whether it is lawful to pay taxes (Matthew 22:15f // Mark 12:13f). That incident may suggest that they were nationalists in support of the Herodian dynasty and not of Caesar.

## **Comments / Questions**

1. What other Sabbath incident is recorded by all three Synoptics immediately prior to the account of the healing of the man with the shriveled hand?

In that incident, what arguments did Jesus give to justify his disciples act on the Sabbath?

2. Matthew records Jesus asking his opponents the question *"Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out?"* What is the implied answer?

Jesus brings out the strength of this question by contrasting the worth of a man to a sheep.

3. Mark and Luke record Jesus asking the question *"Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?"* Note that the contrast is not between doing good or doing nothing. Rather, doing nothing is tantamount to doing harm. Does this statement of the question make it more difficult for the Pharisees to respond?

4. Is the statement "It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath" essentially the same as the previous statement Jesus made "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27)?

Thus, how is Jesus' principle of it being lawful to do good on the Sabbath consistent with the spirit of the Sabbath?

5. In all three Synoptic Gospels, this is the first occasion recorded where the Jewish leaders began their plot against Jesus to kill him. What motivated them to do this? Righteous indignation? Jealousy?

6. What lessons can be learned from this miracle?

**LESSON 7**

**JESUS' MIRACLES AND FEAR**

**Introduction** Truths can be taught by various means. Jesus often used parables to teach great lessons. We can also learn great truths by seeing the mighty deeds of Jesus. Those deeds could also cause fear.

**RAISING OF WIDOW'S SON: Luke 7:11-17**

<sup>11</sup>Soon afterward he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. <sup>12</sup>As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her. <sup>13</sup>And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." <sup>14</sup>Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." <sup>15</sup>And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. <sup>16</sup>Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!" <sup>17</sup>And this report about him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country.

**Background**

**Nain** is most likely to be identified with the modern city of Nain in the Plain of Jezreel, 6 miles southeast of Nazareth on the north edge of Little Hermon. "The only difficulty about this identification is the lack of a gate to the town, but the fact that none has so far been discovered may be due simply to the inadequate archaeological investigation of the site...Burials took place outside of towns, and graves have been found to the SE of Nain" (Marshall, Luke, p.284).

**Open coffins** were part of Jewish custom.

**Comments / Questions**

1. Categorizing the miracles of Jesus is rather artificial. Nevertheless, would you call this miracle a "nature" miracle or a "healing" miracle?
2. Why was this woman particularly worthy of Jesus' compassion?
3. The raising of the widow's dead son is somewhat reminiscent of Elijah bringing back to life the widow's son recorded in 1 Kings 17:17f and Elisha restoring to life the son of the Shunammite woman recorded in 2 Kings 4:8f. That event occurred in Shunem which is located about 2 miles southwest of Nain. Are these OT examples relevant in explaining the reaction of the crowds?

But what are the significant differences between what Elijah and Elisha did and what Jesus did?

4. What two conclusions did the crowd make after witnessing this miracle?
  - 1)
  - 2)

5. What does it mean that "God has visited his people"?
6. What type of 'fear' seized the people?
7. What lessons can be learned from this miracle? What was Jesus' motivation?

**JESUS' RESPONSE TO JOHN'S DISCIPLES: Matthew 11:2-6//Luke 7:18-23**

***Matthew 11***

<sup>2</sup>Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup>and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?"

<sup>4</sup>And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup>the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. <sup>6</sup>And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

***Luke 7***

<sup>18</sup>The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John, <sup>19</sup>calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?"

<sup>20</sup>And when the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, 'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'"

<sup>21</sup>In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. <sup>22</sup>And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. <sup>23</sup>And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

***Background***

John was put in **prison** by Herod Antipas.

***Comments / Questions***

1. Luke places this exchange between Jesus and John's disciples after recording two significant miracle stories: the healing of the centurion's servant and the raising of the widow's son. This incident is very important in that it tells us Jesus' own understanding of the significance of the mighty deeds that he performed.
2. It is difficult to understand why John would ask this question of Jesus. Some think John may have done so just for the benefit of his disciples. Others have suggested that John may really have had doubts about Jesus being the Messiah. Any thoughts?

3. John's question was rather straightforward and could be answered with a simple 'Yes' or 'No'. Why then does Jesus give the answer that he does? Consider Isaiah 35:5-10; 61:1-3; Luke 4:16b-21.

**CALMING OF THE STORM: Matthew 8:23-27 // Mark 4:35-41 // Luke 8:22-25**

**Matthew 8**

**Mark 4**

**Luke 8**

	<sup>35</sup> On that day, when evening had come,	<sup>22</sup> One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and
<sup>23</sup> And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him.	he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." <sup>36</sup> And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him.	he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." So they set out,
<sup>24</sup> And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. <sup>25</sup> And they went and woke him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing."	<sup>37</sup> And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. <sup>38</sup> But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"	<sup>23</sup> and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger. <sup>24</sup> And they went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!"
<sup>26</sup> And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.	<sup>39</sup> And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. <sup>40</sup> He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?"	And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm. <sup>25</sup> He said to them, "Where is your faith?"
<sup>27</sup> And the men marveled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?"	<sup>41</sup> And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"	And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?"

**Background**

"The **Sea of Galilee**, surrounded by high mountains, is like a basin. Sudden violent storms on the sea are well known. Violent winds from the southwest enter the basin from the southern cleft and create a situation in which storm and calm succeed one another rapidly. Since the wind is nearly always stronger in the afternoon than in the morning or evening, fishing was done at night. But when a storm arises in the evening, it is all the more dangerous" (Lane, Mark, p.175).

**Comments / Questions**

1. Mark points out this event occurred on "that day". What had already taken place on this day in the ministry of Jesus?
2. The magnitude of the storm is evidenced by the fright of his disciples (some of whom were experienced boatmen) and the fact that the boat was filling with water.
3. Note the differences in the Gospels' account of the phrase used by the disciples when they awakened Jesus. What implications might be drawn from each account?

*Matthew:* "Save us, Lord; we are perishing!"

*Mark:* "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"

*Luke:* "Master, Master, we are perishing!"

4. Note also the differences in Jesus' response. Any significance?

*Matthew:* "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?"

*Mark:* "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?"

*Luke:* "Where is your faith?"

5. In what way exactly was the disciples' faith deficient? Why were they fearful *after* the storm was over? [Notice particularly Mark's language: "great storm...great calm...great fear".]
6. What lessons can be learned from this miracle?

**LESSON 8**

**JESUS AND DEMONS**

**Introduction** Outside the Gospels demons are rarely mentioned. But one thing that is clear in the Gospels is that during Jesus' earthly ministry demons were quite active and powerful. Yet Jesus, as the Son of God, had controlling power over all demons.

**HEALING OF THE WILD MEN OF GADARA: Mark 5:1-20 ( // Matthew 8:28-34 // Luke 8:26-39)**

<sup>1</sup>They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. <sup>2</sup>And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. <sup>3</sup>He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, <sup>4</sup>for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. <sup>5</sup>Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones. <sup>6</sup>And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. <sup>7</sup>And crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." <sup>8</sup>For he was saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" <sup>9</sup>And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many." <sup>10</sup>And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. <sup>11</sup>Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, <sup>12</sup>and they begged him, saying, "Send us to the pigs; let us enter them." <sup>13</sup>So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out, and entered the pigs, and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and were drowned in the sea.

<sup>14</sup>The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened. <sup>15</sup>And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. <sup>16</sup>And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs. <sup>17</sup>And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region. <sup>18</sup>As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. <sup>19</sup>And he did not permit him but said to him, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." <sup>20</sup>And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.

**Background**

The precise location of this episode is uncertain. The preferred text of Mark and Luke reads "**the country of the Gerasenes**" which early readers of these Gospels thought had reference to the city of Gerasa, but this city is located 30 miles southeast of the lake and is obviously not appropriate for the recorded incident. Thus, modern scholars see "most probably [a] reference to a town whose name is preserved in the modern Kersa... At the site of Kersa the shore is level, and there are no tombs. But about a mile further south there is a fairly steep slope within forty yards from the shore, and about two miles from there cavern tombs are found which appear to have been used for dwellings" (Lane, Mark, p. 181). Kersa is located on the eastern shore of the lake. However, the textual evidence is unclear since the preferred text of Matthew and other texts of Mark and Luke reads "the country of the Gadarenes". Gadara was located about six miles from the lake and southeast of Kersa. It was the capital of a district (toparchy), which may have included the town of Kersa. If so, it would be reasonable that the capital of the district was used instead of the particular town. But that is not the end of the story, because some texts of all three Gospels

have the reading "country of the Gergesenes" which appears to be due to influence of Origen who was seeking to find a more appropriate town than Gerasa or Gadara. Gergesa was located on the eastern shore of the lake.

In any case, this was the region of Decapolis which was primarily a Gentile area, which may explain the large herd of swine.

***Comments / Questions***

1. When demons possessed an individual what was the usual result? In other words, what evidence was there that the individual was possessed? Consider the following cases:

Matthew 9:32-34

Matthew 17:14-21 // Mark 9:14-29

Mark 1:23-26

Luke 11:14

2. How severe was the possession in the case of the men of Gadara?
3. Jesus himself was accused of possessing a demon. Why did they think so? (John 7:20; 8:48, 52; 10:20-21)
4. What other instance of multiple demon possession do we know of? (Luke 8:2; Mark 16:9; cf Luke 11:24-26)
5. What do the demons understand about Jesus as evidenced by the recorded cases where the demons speak to Jesus?

Mark 1:23-26

Mark 1:34 // Luke 4:40-41

Mark 3:11-12

6. Where did the demons not want to be sent? Compare Mark's and Luke's (8: 31) account?
  
7. Many have sought to accuse Jesus of unethical behavior since Jesus' action in this case resulted in the loss of 2000 swine. One of two approaches are taken: the "animal-rights" approach which places value upon the lives of the swine themselves, or the "capitalist" approach which bemoans the loss of property for the owner of the swine. How would you address such a charge?

### **DEMONS AND JEWISH OPPOSITION**

Just as Jesus' healing on the Sabbath gave rise to opposition by the Jewish leaders, his casting out demons also became a source of conflict. Consider the following three incidents.

**Matthew 12:22-37** (// Mark 3:20-30) Then a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw. <sup>23</sup>And all the people were amazed, and said, "Can this be the Son of David?" <sup>24</sup>But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons." <sup>25</sup>Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. <sup>26</sup>And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? <sup>27</sup>And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. <sup>28</sup>But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. <sup>29</sup>Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house. <sup>30</sup>Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. <sup>31</sup>Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. <sup>32</sup>And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come. <sup>33</sup>"Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. <sup>34</sup>You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. <sup>35</sup>The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. <sup>36</sup>I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, <sup>37</sup>for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

**Matthew 9:32-34** As they were going away, behold, a demon-possessed man who was mute was brought to him. <sup>33</sup>And when the demon had been cast out, the mute man spoke. And the crowds marveled, saying, "Never was anything like this seen in Israel." <sup>34</sup>But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the prince of demons."

**Luke 11:14-26** Now he was casting out a demon that was mute. When the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke, and the people marveled. <sup>15</sup>But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons," <sup>16</sup>while others, to test him, kept seeking from him a sign from heaven. <sup>17</sup>But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a divided household falls. <sup>18</sup>And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. <sup>19</sup>And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. <sup>20</sup>But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. <sup>21</sup>When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are safe; <sup>22</sup>but when one stronger than he attacks him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his spoil. <sup>23</sup>Whoever is not with

me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. <sup>24</sup>"When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and finding none it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' <sup>25</sup>And when it comes, it finds the house swept and put in order. <sup>26</sup>Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there. And the last state of that person is worse than the first."

1. How did Jesus' opponents explain Jesus' ability to cast out demons? (also, Matt.10:25)

What was the obvious inconsistency with their assertion?

2. So, what is the "big" lesson to be learned by Jesus' casting out demons (and that the Jewish leaders could not see)? (Matthew 12:28; Luke 19:20)
3. As an *easy* final question, are demons active today? (Consider 1 Timothy 4:1; 1 Peter 5:8)

**LESSON 9**

**JESUS AND BOTH ENDS OF JEWISH SOCIETY**

**Introduction** Jesus' encountered all levels of Jewish society during his ministry. Jesus refused none on the basis of their rank.

**RAISING OF JAIRUS' DAUGHTER: Mark 5:21-24a; 35-43 ( // Matthew 9:18-19; 23-25 // Luke 8:41-42; 49-56)**

<sup>21</sup>And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him, and he was beside the sea. <sup>22</sup>Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him, he fell at his feet <sup>23</sup>and implored him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live." <sup>24</sup>And he went with him.

<sup>35</sup>While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" <sup>36</sup>But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." <sup>37</sup>And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. <sup>38</sup>They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. <sup>39</sup>And when he had entered, he said to them, "Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping." <sup>40</sup>And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was. <sup>41</sup>Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Talitha cumi," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." <sup>42</sup>And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement. <sup>43</sup>And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

**Background**

Jairus was a **ruler of the synagogue**, which means that he was responsible for the supervision of the building and the arranging of the service (compare Luke 13:14; Acts 13:15; 18:8, 17).

It was common for **women mourners** to be hired to display grief as loudly as possible and they were usually accompanied by flutists as noted by Matthew (Matthew 9:23; cf Matthew 11:17)

**Comments / Questions**

1. What interesting irony is presented in verse 22? What does this highlight about Jairus' character?
2. What additional facts does Luke tell us about the daughter?
3. What was Jairus' belief concerning what Jesus must do in order to heal his daughter?

Thus, time was of the essence. Yet, Jesus takes time to speak with the woman with a hemorrhage. What does this imply about Jesus' concern for the time?

It is interesting that the text says: "While He was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" Doesn't it seem that Mark intentionally records this time-delaying incident with the woman to highlight the fact that time was of no concern to Jesus?

On the other hand, in Matthew's abbreviated account Jairus notes that his daughter had just died when he first asked Jesus to come and lay his hand on her (Matthew 9:18).

4. Peter, James, and John were permitted access to Jesus' raising of Jairus' daughter. On what other occasions did they accompany Jesus when the other apostles did not?
  
5. Mark records the Aramaic expression spoken by Jesus, but then translates the expression (which is very characteristic of Mark: 3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34; 14:36; 15:22; 34). What does this suggest about Mark's readers?
  
6. On what other occasions (already studied or otherwise) did Jesus command silence of those who were recipients of his miracles?

How could this miracle be kept secret since so many mourners who were confident of the girl's death were present?

7. And, what was the point of telling the parents to give the girl something to eat?

**HEALING OF WOMAN WITH HEMORRHAGE: Mark 5:24b-34 ( // Matthew 9:20-22 // Luke 8:43-48)**

And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him. <sup>25</sup>Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, <sup>26</sup>and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. <sup>27</sup>When she heard about

Jesus, she came behind *Him* in the crowd and touched His garment. <sup>28</sup>For she said, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well." <sup>29</sup>Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of the affliction. <sup>30</sup>And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?" <sup>31</sup>But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'" <sup>32</sup>And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. <sup>33</sup>But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. <sup>34</sup>And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

### ***Background***

The exact cause or source of the woman's **hemorrhaging** is unknown. In any case for 12 years she had suffered not only from her affliction, but from the treatments of her physicians (Luke 8:43). The Talmud records various treatments used for afflictions such as hers: "One remedy consisted of drinking a goblet of wine containing a powder compounded from rubber, alum and garden crocuses. Another treatment consisted of a dose of Persian onions cooked in wine administered with the summons, 'Arise out of your flow of blood!' Other physicians prescribed shock, or the carrying of the ash of an ostrich's egg in a certain cloth" (Lane, Mark, p.192, n.46).

### ***Comments / Questions***

1. What was one religious consequence suffered by this woman having a constant flow of blood? (Leviticus 15:25-30)

So, what significance is there to her touching Jesus?

2. She hoped not to touch the person of Jesus, but was content to touch his clothes. What might this indicate?
3. Does Jesus ask the question "Who touched me?" because he didn't know, or simply to draw attention to the fact that someone had touched him?
4. When was the woman healed? At the point of touching Jesus' garment (Mark, Luke) or after Jesus spoke to her (Matthew)?

Note: "Instantly" in Matthew 9:22 (ESV) could be literally translated "from that hour" (KJV, ASV, NKJV), but France notes this Hebrew expression was an idiom for 'instantly' (Matthew, p.304, n.14).

5. Obviously, not everyone who touched Jesus was blessed with healing. What was different about this woman's touch?

**LESSON 10**

**JESUS EXPOSES THE HEARTS**

**Introduction** Both Jesus' disciples and the multitudes had important lessons to learn over a two-day period. The miraculous feeding of the 5000 is the only miracle recorded in all four gospels.

**FEEDING OF THE 5000: Mark 6:30-44 // John 6:1-13 ( // Matthew 14:13-21 // Luke 9:10-17)**

**Mark 6**

<sup>30</sup>The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. <sup>31</sup>And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. <sup>32</sup>And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. <sup>33</sup>Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. <sup>34</sup>When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things. <sup>35</sup>And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. <sup>36</sup>Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." <sup>37</sup>But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." And they said to him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?"

<sup>38</sup>And he said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." And when they had found out, they said, "Five, and two fish." <sup>39</sup>Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass. <sup>40</sup>So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. <sup>41</sup>And taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all.

<sup>42</sup>And they all ate and were satisfied. <sup>43</sup>And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. <sup>44</sup>And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.

**John 6**

<sup>1</sup>After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. <sup>2</sup>And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. <sup>3</sup>Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. <sup>4</sup>Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. <sup>5</sup>Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" <sup>6</sup>He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. <sup>7</sup>Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little."

<sup>8</sup>One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, <sup>9</sup>"There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?" <sup>10</sup>Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. <sup>11</sup>Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted.

<sup>12</sup>And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost." <sup>13</sup>So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten.

### **Background**

"The 'sea of Galilee'...came to be known as **Lake Tiberias** from the city which Herod founded on its west shore about AD 20 and named in honor of the Emperor Tiberius" (Bruce, John, p. 142).

This miracle appears to take place near **Bethsaida** (Luke 9:10), the home of Peter, Andrew, and Philip (John 1:44; 12:21) [but Mark 1:45 says Peter's and Andrew's home was next door to the synagogue in Capernaum – a second home?]. However, following this miracle, Jesus sends his disciples ahead of him by boat to Bethsaida (Mark 6:45)! On this basis, some have postulated two Bethsaidas – one on the east bank of the Jordan river (Bethsaida Julius – so named in honor of Tiberius' mother) a little over one mile above where it enters the north side of the Sea of Galilee, and the other west of there near Capernaum ('Bethsaida of Galilee', John 12:21). Others have suggested that a variant reading of Mark 6:45 removes the difficulty (Lane, Mark, p.233).

A **denarius** is about the amount of money a laborer would earn for one's day work (cf. Matthew 20:2). Thus, 200 denarii would be about "eight months' wages" (NIV).

### **Comments / Questions**

1. Where did this event take place? (Compare Matt. 14:13, Mark 6:32, Luke 9:10, John 6:2-3)
2. John is careful to tell us that this took place shortly before the Passover. So how close are we to the end of Jesus' ministry?
3. Why did the multitudes follow Jesus?
4. What was Jesus' motivation for feeding the multitude?
5. Any significance of there being twelve (12) baskets of food left over?
6. What conclusion did the multitudes draw when they saw this miracle? (John 6:14)

This has reference to a prophecy of Moses concerning another Prophet like Moses (Deut.18: 15-19). Why would this prophecy come to mind?

7. On another occasion, Jesus fed over 4000. What was the motivation for Jesus' miracle? With what did Jesus feed such a large number? How many baskets were left over? (Mark 8: 1-9 // Matthew 15: 32-38).

8. Both occasions of Jesus feeding the multitudes are recalled when the disciples again display a lack of understanding. Read Matthew 16:5-12 (// Mark 8:13-21). What lesson should the disciples had learned from Jesus' ability to feed the multitudes?
9. What lessons are we to learn from this miracle?

**WALKING ON THE WATER: Matthew 14:22-33 // Mark 6:45-52 ( // John 6:14-21)**

**Matthew 14**

<sup>22</sup>Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. <sup>23</sup>And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, <sup>24</sup>but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them.

<sup>25</sup>And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. <sup>26</sup>But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear. <sup>27</sup>But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." <sup>28</sup>And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." <sup>29</sup>He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. <sup>30</sup>But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." <sup>31</sup>Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

<sup>32</sup>And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. <sup>33</sup>And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

**Mark 6**

<sup>45</sup>Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. <sup>46</sup>And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. <sup>47</sup>And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. <sup>48</sup>And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them.

And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them, <sup>49</sup>but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, <sup>50</sup>for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."

<sup>51</sup>And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, <sup>52</sup>for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.

**Background**

John says that the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water to them when they had rowed about "**three or four miles**" (Gk. *twenty-five or thirty stadia*). From Bethsaida to Capernaum is about 5 miles, thus they were in the "middle of the sea" (Mt.14:24, NKJV).

The Romans divided the night into four watches of approximately 3 hours each. Thus, the **fourth watch** would be about 3 am to 6 am, i.e. shortly before dawn.

**Comments / Questions**

1. What was one motivation for sending the multitudes away? (John 6:15)
2. What was the point of Jesus going to the disciples by walking on the water? Was it because the storm threatened their lives? If so, why does Mark say that Jesus "would have passed them by"?
3. Matthew teaches another lesson by including the incident involving Peter. What is this lesson?
4. But, Peter is not the only one of little faith. Note Mark's account of the disciples' reaction to seeing Jesus walking on the water (6:51-52). What did they not understand about "the loaves"?

And, how is this consistent with their (along with the people's) acclamation that Jesus was "the Prophet who is to come into the world" (John 6:14).

**Postscript**

It was in Capernaum on the day following the night Jesus walked on the sea that Jesus gave his discourse on him being the "bread of life". The multitudes were disillusioned with his teaching, and even many of his disciples "went back, and walked no more with him" (John 6:66).

Read Jesus' discourse on the "bread of life" in John 6:22-71. What was the spiritual lesson that they should have learned from his feeding the 5000?

Is this what Jesus refers to when he says "you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves." (John 6:26)?

**LESSON 11**

**JESUS AND THE BLIND**

**Introduction** On five occasions Jesus heals the blind: two blind men who pleaded for mercy (Matthew 9:27-31); the blind, mute demoniac (Matthew 12:22); the blind man at Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-26); the man born blind (John 9); and blind Bartimaeus (and his companion) (Matthew 20:29-34//Mark 10:46-52//Luke 18:35-43). The case of the healing of the man born blind is the most extensive account.

**HEALING OF THE MAN BORN BLIND: John 9:1-41**

<sup>1</sup>As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup>And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. <sup>4</sup>We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup>As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." <sup>6</sup>Having said these things, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud <sup>7</sup>and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

<sup>8</sup>The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" <sup>9</sup>Some said, "It is he." Others said, "No, but he is like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." <sup>10</sup>So they said to him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" <sup>11</sup>He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed and received my sight." <sup>12</sup>They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

<sup>13</sup>They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. <sup>14</sup>Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. <sup>15</sup>So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, "He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see." <sup>16</sup>Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them. <sup>17</sup>So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."

<sup>18</sup>The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight <sup>19</sup>and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" <sup>20</sup>His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. <sup>21</sup>But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." <sup>22</sup>(His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.) <sup>23</sup>Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

<sup>24</sup>So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner." <sup>25</sup>He answered, "Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." <sup>26</sup>They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" <sup>27</sup>He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" <sup>28</sup>And they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. <sup>29</sup>We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." <sup>30</sup>The man answered, "Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. <sup>31</sup>We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. <sup>32</sup>Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. <sup>33</sup>If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." <sup>34</sup>They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out.

<sup>35</sup>Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" <sup>36</sup>He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" <sup>37</sup>Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you." <sup>38</sup>He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped

him. <sup>39</sup>Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind." <sup>40</sup>Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, "Are we also blind?" <sup>41</sup>Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains.

### ***Background***

The **Pool of Siloam**, located in the southern portion of Jerusalem, is supplied with water by a tunnel constructed by Hezekiah from the Gihon spring located on the eastern side of Jerusalem. Prior to cutting the tunnel, the inhabitants of the city had to go outside the city walls to secure water which, obviously, placed them at a disadvantage during times of war. The tunnel is about 1,750 feet through bedrock and was constructed by workers excavating from both ends and meeting in the middle.

### ***Comments / Questions***

1. Again, the question arises as to the relationship between sin and suffering (one which continues to be asked to this day). What is Jesus' response?
2. Just as John presented the spiritual lesson that Jesus is the "bread of life" following his feeding the 5000, he now draws a spiritual lesson in this simple healing of the blind man. What is the spiritual lesson suggested by this narrative?
3. Usually Jesus effected his healing with only the spoken word. On this occasion he applies a mixture of clay and saliva to the man eyes and has him wash himself in the pool of Siloam. For what purpose do you think he did this?
4. On another occasion, Jesus applied spit on the eyes of a blind man. The man first only saw partially ("I see men, but they look like trees, walking"), but after Jesus lays his hands on him the second time, he saw everything clearly. See Mark 8:22-30. Why the partial healing? Consider the context.
5. What is the obvious response to the Pharisees claim that Jesus could not be from God since he violated the Sabbath? (v.16)
6. The man who was blind enters into a theological dialogue with the Pharisees. What do you think of the conclusions that the man draws in verse 30? Is he correct?

What does he mean when he says "that God does not hear sinners"?

7. What does it mean when it says that Pharisees "cast out" the man who had been blind?
  
8. How does the faith of the blind man grow throughout this story?
  
9. In this story, is faith the basis (i.e. the reason for) or the result of the healing?
  
10. When it is all said and done, who are the really blind ones on this occasion?
  
11. What was one of the purposes of Jesus performing this miracle? Think carefully about v.39.

What other significant passages in the Gospels does this bring to mind? Consider Matthew 13:14-15 and John 12:37-41 and their quotation of Isaiah 6:9-10 carefully. Also, Isaiah 32:1-4.

**Review Lesson 1**

**THE MESSAGE OF THE MIRACLES**

The miracles of Jesus convey multiple messages that, I believe, can be divided into four aspects.

***Evidential Aspect***

Miracles, by their wondrous nature, point to a greater power. Nicodemus correctly said to Jesus "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him" (John 3:2). And the man who was blind from birth discerned that "Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing" (John 9:32-33). This was the very truth that Jesus desired all to understand. Once in a confrontation with unbelieving Jews who sought to kill him, Jesus argued "If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father" (John 10:37-38). Thus, there is an *evidential* aspect of the miracles of Jesus. They point the observer to the truth that Jesus, the worker of the miracle, is empowered by God.

***Confirmatory Aspect***

A miracle, as a wondrous act, is limited in its evidential value. For example, a miracle may conclusively demonstrate that the miracle worker is from God, but it cannot, by itself, reveal the precise relationship between the miracle worker and God. Moses did mighty deeds, as mighty as those performed by Jesus, but it would be incorrect to conclude that Moses too was the "Son of God". Why? Because Moses never claimed to be the "Son of God". Jesus did, however, and the miracles gave evidence of the truthfulness of his claims. Thus, miracles also have a *confirmatory* aspect. It is in this sense, that Mark concludes his gospel with the statement: "And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs." (Mark 16:20). Similarly, the witness of the Holy Spirit along with the witness of the apostles takes on the role of confirmation (Acts 5:32).

This distinction can be seen in the case of the man born blind who was healed by Jesus in John 9. This man apparently did not know of Jesus until the occasion when Jesus healed him. After he was healed, he rightly concludes that Jesus is from God. But it is only after Jesus claims to be the Son of God does the man confess his belief in that fact.

***Evangelistic Aspect***

Miracles not only point to truths outside themselves, they present truths contained within the miracle themselves. Thus, just like the teaching of Jesus, the miracles have an *evangelistic* aspect. This is again most easily seen in John. Of the seven miracles recorded by John in the body of his Gospel, three of the miracles are integrally tied to the message

that Jesus was teaching. When Jesus fed the 5000 by multiplying the loaves and fishes, he taught them "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35). When he healed the man born blind, he taught, "I am the light of the world" (John 9:5). And when he raised Lazarus from the dead, he taught "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). In each case, the miracle illustrated the lesson Jesus taught.

Other miracles of Jesus may not be as obvious on the surface, but they too convey spiritual truths. Note the connection between the teaching of Jesus and his miracles in the first chapter of Mark. Mark 1:14-15 "Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.'" Mark 1:21-22 "And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes." Mark 1:27 "And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, 'What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.'" Mark 1:39 "And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons." Both the teaching and his miracle working brought amazement because both were done with authority.

Consider the types of miracles Jesus did. Predominantly they were either acts of healing, or casting out of demons. At one level, these acts tell us something about the nature of God. God is a God of mercy and loving-kindness, thus it is only natural that such a God would want to alleviate the physical suffering of mankind. Even when Jesus calmed the storm, it could be said that it was an act to comfort his disciples, or when he feed the multitudes, it was due to his compassion.

But at another level, the healing miracles and the casting out of demons convey a deeper spiritual truth. Just as Jesus can heal the physical body, he can heal the spiritual body. That is the truth Jesus told the scribes before healing the paralytic: "[B]ut that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins... I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house" (Mark 2:10-11). Hence, just like faith is essential for the restoration of spiritual health, it is not surprising to see Jesus make statements like "your faith has made you well" (Mark 5:34).

In casting out demons, Jesus not only showed that his power was greater than the demons, but that his power was greater than the ruler of the demons. In overcoming demonic rule, Jesus showed that the rule of God (i.e. the kingdom of God) had come and was present in Jesus (Matthew 12:29; Luke 11:20).

### ***Separative Aspect***

The miracles of Jesus demand a response. They will divide all mankind into one of two groups, thus they inherently have a *separative* aspect. Either, one will respond in faith and proclaim Jesus as Lord, or one will dismiss both Jesus and the miracle. As unbelievable as it may seem, some love darkness more than light (John 3:19). John reports, "Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him..." (John 12:37).

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