

THE GREATEST

A FEW GOOD MEN

Our study has only covered part of chapter 1, but Mark has covered a lot of ground—John's introduction, Jesus' Baptism, the Spirit's descent, the Father's affirmation, Satan's temptation, and Jesus' proclamation. He doesn't waste any time in his story telling!

The verses we're skipping (although only a few) cover Jesus' calling of his disciples. Specifically, he called Simon (later named Peter), Andrew, James & John. *They were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men"* (Mark 1:16–17).

Jesus could have drafted *anyone* to his team. However, he didn't call the smartest, strongest, or most capable people in the world at that time. There was no fame or fortune to speak of in his ragtag crew. The God of the Universe took on flesh, came to live among men, and drafted a team of nobodies.

This should be a great comfort to us. Some of us may be strong, fast, or charismatic, but God doesn't need any of that to use us. In fact, it seems like the highest value for God to use a person is humility. Jesus could have been born in a castle, but he selected a manger. He could have called emperors and kings, but he chose fishermen. From birth, Jesus had the right to take the throne of the universe as a Just Judge, but instead came to die so that sinners may share in the glory only he deserves (Romans 8:18).

MARK 1:21–28

²¹ And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. ²² And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. ²³ And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, ²⁴ "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." ²⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" ²⁶ And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. 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." ²⁸ And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Logically Jesus must be Lord, liar, or lunatic. However, there could be a fourth option—legend. What if Jesus didn't really say and do what the gospels record? What if the story of Jesus changed over time? Can we really trust the Bible as it was recorded? The simple answer is a resounding, "YES!" There are many ways to answer this challenge (and many videos). Scan the QR code for one of my long-time favorites.



DISCUSSION

Is your natural response to authority rejection or submission? Can you give an example?

1. When did this scene occur? Where? What did Jesus do? (21)

2. How did the people react? Why? (22)

3. What happened next and what did Jesus do? (23-26)

4. What does Jesus' interaction with the demon reveal and why did they respond as they did? (24-28)

5. Why do you think so many people fail to recognize Jesus' authority and surrender to it? (What would it mean for them if they did?)

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

In Malachi 1:11 God says, "My name will be great among the nations." How are you doing spreading the fame of Jesus' name? If you need help, talk to your Coach today!

THE GREATEST

STUDY NOTES

WHO IS THIS GUY?

Famed theologian and all-around smart guy, C.S. Lewis, attacked the statement that Jesus was a “good moral teacher” as a foolish notion. Instead, Jesus must fit into one of three categories—“Lord, liar, or lunatic.”

If Jesus believed that he was God, but he really wasn't, there's only two options. He may have been a liar telling the world something about himself that he knew to be untrue. In that case, he certainly could not have been a “good moral teacher.” On the other hand, if Jesus believed that he was God and *only thought* he was telling the truth, he'd be a lunatic. So, the only two options if Jesus wasn't really God and nothing that he did was from God, he's either an incredible liar or he was one fry short of a Happy Meal.

The only other option, then, is that Jesus *was* who he claimed to be! If Jesus was telling the truth, then that means *he is Lord*. That also means that we must respond to his lordship. We cannot ride the proverbial fence. If Jesus is Lord, then humanity must heed his warning, the warning of Scripture, that we're all sinners destined for an eternity in Hell. However, in humility, Jesus surrendered himself to death on the Cross that humanity may be rescued from certain destruction. That gift is available, but must be received by faith.

Unfortunately, many people alive today haven't considered Lewis' argument. They foolishly consider Jesus a “good moral teacher.” They've completely failed to recognize his authority.

In our passage today, Mark continues Jesus' introduction. Although many people had not yet recognized Jesus' true identity, his enemy knew him well. In fact, as Jesus encounters a possessed man, his power and authority are on full display.

JESUS IS GREATER THAN DEMONS & SICKNESS

Now that Jesus had his team, *they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching*. Notice the crowd was *astonished at his teaching*. Not because it was good, nor because it was moral, but because *he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes*. Jesus wasn't just *quoting* the Word, he was the Word in the flesh (see John 1).

While there, *immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, “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.”*

Again, Mark 1 is trying to introduce the reader to who Jesus is. Jesus has been recognized a few different ways so far—John probably had a good idea, God tore the sky open to see his baby boy get baptized, and Satan certainly knew. However, the other people surrounding Jesus hadn't quite figured it out yet. In fact, we'll soon see that all the religious leaders (the people who should have recognized Jesus for who he is) completely failed to recognize Jesus' power and authority. Instead, the most complete statement regarding Jesus' power and authority came from a demon possessed man.

Notice the demon's response to Jesus: first, *“have you come to destroy us?”* The demons rightly understood Jesus' power over life and death. At another time Jesus warned his disciples, *“do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell”* (Matthew 10:28). This demon clearly understood, not only this warning, but that Jesus is One who holds such power.

Second, Jesus held such great power because he is *“the Holy One of God.”* Notice that Jesus didn't correct this statement. He didn't say, “you got the wrong guy.” No, instead **Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!”**

Elsewhere in Scripture, angelic beings refuse worship. They never allow people to worship them. What would be the proper response if Jesus was just a “good moral teacher” to this situation? First and foremost, Jesus should have corrected the misunderstanding. Second, he certainly wouldn't have had the power to remove the demon from the possessed man. At Jesus' rebuke, **the unclean spirit, convulsing [the man] and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him.**

DEMONS KNOW JESUS AND SUBMIT TO HIM

The crowd witnessing these events *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.”*

So, what do you think? Is Jesus just a “good moral teacher” or is he Lord? If Jesus is Lord, that means you cannot ignore him. You can hate him, you can love him, but you can't ignore him. For healing a demon possessed man, Jesus' **fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.**

One day all of creation will bow before Jesus' throne—his fame will be complete. If you'll bow then, why not bow now?