

"WHO IS THIS MAN?"

Matthew 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25
Yeshua §67

I had trouble with ear infections as a young child. I have memories of waking up in the middle of the night hurting. I didn't know what to do. My first inclination was to go to my mother.

So I'd go to my mom's side of her bed and just stand there. My head was at the same height as my mother's face. I scared her half to death; she woke up to this face staring at her...! But she would always get up and do what she could to ease the pain. She never scolded; she always showed me love and compassion.

That's why I went to my mom. I didn't know what to do to stop the pain. I didn't know for sure my mom knew what to do, but I did know she loved me and she would do something. And there, in the midst of my pain, I found peace and comfort.

As we continue our series, *Yeshua, Messiah King*, we come to the end of one of the most momentous days in all human history; the day of rejection. It was an incredibly intense and exhausting day for Jesus and the disciples. No doubt, when evening came and the crowds began to disperse, Jesus and the disciples looked forward to some peace and quiet.

But that was not to be....

TAKING A BREAK FROM THE CROWDS

MARK 4:35-41 (ESV)

35 On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." 36 And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. 37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. 38 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?" 39 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. 40 He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" 41 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?"

Our passage begins with "On that day, when evening had come...". This was the day of rejection; "On the day of rejection, when evening had come...". Prior to this study, probably none of us realized how much space is given to this day in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke.

Let's remember what took place on the day of rejection.

Jesus cast out a mute demon thereby accomplishing a miracle the Jewish rabbis taught only the Messiah could accomplish. As a result, the crowds asked their spiritual leaders, the scribes and Pharisees, "This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?"

Sent from Jerusalem, the scribes and Pharisees were in Capernaum opposing Jesus. When questioned by the crowd, the scribes and Pharisees attributed Jesus' power to Satan and not the Holy Spirit. In so doing, they officially rejected Jesus, committed the unpardonable sin, and brought down judgment upon that generation.

As a result of being rejected, Jesus' ministry changed significantly. He no longer proclaimed His messiahship nor offered the Messianic Kingdom. He no longer did signs and wonders to authenticate His messianic claims to the crowds. He no longer taught plainly, but taught the crowds using parables.

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On the day of rejection, Jesus inaugurated a new Kingdom program. He taught nine parables that answered the question, "What form will the Kingdom of Heaven take now that this generation of Israel has rejected the Messianic Kingdom?" Remember, the Messianic Kingdom was *delayed*, not *replaced*. The generation of Israel at the end of the seven-year Tribulation will be led by their spiritual leaders to receive Jesus as their Messiah. That will trigger the Second Coming of Jesus and the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom. The Mystery Kingdom or the new Kingdom program Jesus introduced on the day of rejection is the form the kingdom will take between the first and second comings of Jesus. It is called the Mystery Kingdom because it was not revealed to the Hebrew prophets; on the day of rejection, for the first time in history, Jesus revealed the new Kingdom program.

On the day of rejection, not only did the spiritual leaders of Israel reject Jesus; His own family wondered if Jesus was not in His right mind.

What an intense, draining day mentally and emotionally!

Is it any wonder our Lord was absolutely exhausted and fell into a deep sleep on the boat?

This was probably either Peter's or John's boat. These boats were about the length and width of our shuttle bus; One such boat was unearthed by archaeologists from the bottom of the Sea of Galilee. It measures 26.5 feet long by 7.5 feet wide, and 4.5 feet deep, with places for four oars and a mast. It could carry a crew of five, plus ten passengers¹

Jesus went to the back of the boat and fell asleep on a cushion usually reserved for the steersman. After a bit, a fierce storm kicked up that threatened to sink the boat. The Sea of Galilee is located in a depression 700 feet below sea level and it is surrounded by hills and sheer cliffs. Frequently a rush of wind and the right mix of temperatures can cause a storm to come suddenly on the lake. Storms on the Sea of Galilee were known for their suddenness and violence. Peter, Andrew, James and John would all have had experience with these storms, but this one was so fierce even they panicked.

It is amazing Jesus slept through this. The fact Jesus was sleeping while they were bailing didn't sit well with the disciples. They, too, had had an exhausting day. As good disciples, they obeyed Jesus and set out, only to find themselves fighting for their lives while their master slept. Notice again what they said to Jesus:

And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"

Jesus got up and dealt first with the storm and then His disciples.

Verse 39 reads:

³⁹ 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.

Jesus spoke to the wind and the sea almost as if they were human. There is a familiarity here. Jesus rebuked the wind and literally told the sea to be quiet and muzzle itself. And both wind and sea obeyed; the calm was immediate not gradual.

Jesus turned from rebuking the storm and rebuked His disciples for their cowardice and lack of faith. The NET translation better translates verse 40:

MARK 4:40 (NET)

And he said to them, "Why are you cowardly? Do you still not have faith?"

By this time the disciples should have developed the confidence that Jesus cared for them. Such confidence would have affected their response to the storm; instead of panic they would look to the Lord for deliverance in full assurance of faith, not cowardly fear.

After Jesus calmed the storm, the disciples' cowardly fear was replaced by a different kind of fear. Mark uses a different Greek word in verse 41 for "fear". This fear can mean terror, but it also is used of reverential fear, respect and honor. Having watched and heard the way Jesus commanded the wind and the sea, Mark reports in verse 41:

¹ David Abernathy, *An Exegetical Summary of Matthew 1-16*, Exegetical Summaries (Dallas, TX: SIL International, 2013), 298.

MARK 4:41 (ESV)

41 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?"

In the Greek it's a little more emphatic, the disciples "were being terrified with a great terror", not over the storm, but Jesus. Who can command the obedience of nature? Who can speak to wind and water like that and restore the calm?

This is a fitting end to this day.

TWO QUESTIONS

It's interesting to observe that the day of rejection began with a question and ended with a question.

After witnessing the exorcism of the mute demon, the crowds asked, "This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?" (Matt. 12:23)

After witnessing the calming of the storm, the disciples asked, "Who, then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

Both questions center on the key issue, "Who is this man, Jesus of Nazareth?"

The question of the crowds reflected hearts of unbelief despite overwhelming proof that Jesus is the Son of David, the Messiah. They didn't care about truth; they only cared about relief. They swallowed the absurd explanation Jesus is a servant of Satan.

The question of the disciples reflected reverential awe; they were "blown away" as we say today. They knew Jesus is the Messiah, but they are beginning to realize He is so much more.

PEACE IN THE STORM

That night the disciples discovered they could trust Jesus to meet their needs. He does care for them and He will use His divine authority to meet their needs. For a year and a half they have watched Jesus care for others, healing the sick, liberating the demon possessed. But this night He saved them from death.

As they go forward and serve this New Kingdom they will do so with the deep confidence that Jesus cares. This will be their peace in the midst of the persecution and suffering they will encounter.

This, too, is the basis of our peace when we experience the trials of this life. It is the certain knowledge that God cares for us and is with us in the midst of our pain. Our confidence is in His character; that He is good, and righteous and loving in all His ways. His ways are higher than our ways. But God's ways are always for His glory and to carry forward His purposes in the world. And the best place for us to be is in the boat with Him wherever and however He is taking us. Our faith is not in our hoped for outcome. Our faith is in God, in His character. He loves us and He is doing His good work in and through us. Our peace is not in our hoped-for healing, our hoped for new job, whatever the case may be. Our peace is in God Who loves us.