

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

71- Jesus Demonstrates His Absolute Authority- Part 9
What Kind of Man is This?

Church September 24, 2023

Matthew 8:23-34

23 When He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him.

24 And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves; but Jesus Himself was asleep.

25 And they came to Him and woke Him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing!"

26 He said to them, "Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?" Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm.

27 The men were amazed, and said, "What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"

28 When He came to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs. They were so extremely violent that no one could pass by that way.

29 And they cried out, saying, "What business do we have with each other, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"

30 Now there was a herd of many swine feeding at a distance from them.

31 The demons began to entreat Him, saying, "If You are going to cast us out, send us into the herd of swine."

32 And He said to them, "Go!" And they came out and went into the swine, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the waters.

33 The herdsmen ran away, and went to the city and reported everything, including what had happened to the demoniacs.

34 And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they implored Him to leave their region.

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

In 1859, Charles Dickens wrote the book, “*A Tale of Two Cities*”. And in the Preface to that book, Dickens wrote,

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair...”

The Passage that was just read to us from **Matthew 8** is truly the “*Tale of Two People*”. Two different groups of people- who had two different Visions or Understandings of Jesus. In verse 27- the men in the Boat were amazed at Jesus’ Power and absolute Authority over Nature itself- as He spoke to the Wind and the Sea- and they became calm. And those people exclaimed with Amazement:

... What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?

... and they continued to follow Jesus.

But then, in verse 34- in the Gentile “*Country of the Gadarenes*”- as Jesus demonstrated the very *same* absolute Authority- this time over demons- the people were also amazed- but this time Matthew tells us,

... they implored Him to leave their region

... and we hear no more about them.

So, the SAME Lord; the SAME absolute Authority demonstrated; the SAME wonderful Results; and yet we see two very DIFFERENT Responses. In one Response to the full Deity of Christ being displayed- the people who saw it- were drawn *closer* to Him. But in the other Response- when the full Deity of Jesus Christ was put on display- the people wanted Jesus to leave. So, *why* the Difference?

It can’t be Jesus- because He acted in the SAME Way. And it couldn’t be simply the Amazement that the people had at what Jesus did- because BOTH Events were amazing sovereign Acts of God. So, there is only one thing left- the Difference between being attracted to Jesus and wanting Him to leave- lies in how the individual person “sees”; or “understands”; or “comprehends” WHO JESUS IS.

So, why do SOME people see Jesus in His Glory and are *attracted* to Him; while others see the very SAME Display and are *repelled*? Why do SOME people see a Demonstration of Jesus’ full Deity and are drawn TOWARD

Him; while others see the very SAME Display and want Him to leave? This is *part* of what the Bible calls, the “*Mystery of Godliness*”. **1 Timothy 3:16** says,

By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.

... so, six things; six Attributes; six Characteristics. Jesus- as God Almighty in human Flesh was...

1. Revealed in the Flesh
2. Vindicated (Justified) in the Spirit
3. Seen by Angels
4. Proclaimed among the Nations (the Gentile world)
5. Believed on in the World (among both Jews and Gentiles)
6. Taken up in Glory

Paul said *infallibly* that these six Attributes or Characteristics make up what he called, the “*Mystery of Godliness*”. And then the Apostle went on to say that this Mystery was “**great**”; in other words- it was “*all-encompassing*”- because there was NO “*Controversy*” among the Saved- that these six Attributes were and still are part of the “*Common Confession*” of ALL Believers.

So, these six Attributes help us to understand WHO Jesus is. And it is that- “Who Jesus is”- that makes up what the Apostle called, the “*Common Confession*” of the Christian Church.

But WHY do some people believe and others don’t? Why did those in the Boat see a Demonstration of Jesus’ absolute Authority over the Wind and the Sea and became more determined than ever before to know Him and love Him and obey Him- while those in the “Country of the Gadarenes see a Demonstration of Jesus’ absolute Authority over demons- and became determined for Jesus to leave them? Why the two vastly different Responses?

The lost, pagan World (as well as those in the Church, who don’t believe the Bible)- teach that this is because of Man’s so-called, “*Free-will*”; or the “*Self-determination*” of Man.

But based on what Matthew gave us here- we see several indisputable things:

1. The people in the boat- already believed BEFORE they saw the Demonstration over the Wind and the Sea

2. The people of the “Country of the Gadarenes” did NOT already believe before they witnessed the Demonstration over the demons.

... and that confirms what I have taught you before:

The Manifestation of Signs and Wonders; and Miracles; and physical Healings; as well as the Manifestation of the Gifts of the Spirit (in and of themselves) do NOT bring about Salvation in anyone

What these things are for- what their Purpose is- is to bring “*Divine Credibility*” to the radical Theology of Jesus and the Apostles. But what actually converts sinful Souls into Believers is one single thing:

For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. (1Corinthians 1:21)

So, the Signs and Wonders help people to know that the Gospel is *legitimately* from God. But what God uses to actually *convert* people- is the faithful and full “*Heralding*”; or “*Preaching*”; or “*Teaching*” of the Gospel.

And what God does through the faithful and full preaching and teaching of the Gospel- is that He sovereignly “unveils” the mind and heart and eyes of the individual- so they can “see” or “behold” or “understand” or “believe” two things:

1. WHO Jesus is
2. WHAT Jesus has done

And this is something that we *always* need to keep in the forefront of our minds and hearts: We are saved because of what we *believe in*; what we *trust in*; and what we *confess to be true*- ABOUT JESUS AND HIS FINISHED WORK. So, we are NOT saved simply because we have Faith or that we believe in anything. No, we MUST have that Faith; and that Trust; and that Hope; “*centered*” or “*focused*” in the Person of Jesus Christ and in what Jesus (along with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit) has done *for* us; and *to* us; and *in* us.

Generic Faith; generic, “run-of-the-mill” Trust or Hope in anyone or anything else- will NOT forgive a single Sin or save a single Soul. Our Faith MUST be anchored in a single Man- Jesus Christ- who is God in Flesh; and in what that Man did.

So, we are Justified and Adopted into the Family of God; we are Forgiven and made Righteous and made “fit for Heaven” based on that Faith in Jesus and in

His finished Work- but NOT because of anything that we “Do”. All the “Doing” in Christianity comes as a Result of us *already* being born again; justified; and adopted. Our “Doing”; our “Obedience” is simply a human *Response* to the sovereign Work of Grace that God has *already* accomplished *in* us; and *for* us; and *to* us. And that is why our “Doing” doesn’t have to be Sinless or Perfect in order to please God.

You see, if we were Justified because of what we “Do”- like partaking of the Sacraments; or by being baptized; or by fasting; or because we turn away from “riotous and loose Living”- then what we “Do” would HAVE to be done without any Fault or Weakness. In other words, if our “Deeds” or our “Works” earn us the Favor of God- then our “Works” or “Deeds” would HAVE to be spotless and perfect in order to have that kind of Power.

But because we are justified and adopted by *Believing*; by *Trusting*; by *Hoping*; and by *Embracing* two things:

1. WHO Jesus is
2. WHAT Jesus alone has done

... then our Response to that- our Obedience; our Works and Deeds; can be weak and frail and haphazard- and God is still pleased; and God is still glorified!

But in order to have Faith in Jesus; and to trust in Jesus’ spotless Obedience; in order for us to embrace and confess WHO Jesus is and WHAT Jesus has already done- we have to have Knowledge about these two things. We can’t just make stuff up; and invent things; and surmise things; and then trust in that. We have to be exposed to the Divine absolute, immutable, unalterable, objective, and propositional Truth about WHO Jesus is; and WHAT Jesus has done. And there is ONLY one Place in all the world where the correct and full Truth about WHO Jesus is and WHAT Jesus alone has done- is located- and that is the 66 Books of the Holy Bible!

So, in order to confess *correctly* and *fully* about those two things- we need to be in an *ongoing* and *continual* Examination of what the Holy Scriptures teach about Jesus and all that He did.

And as we do that- we will begin at a Passage in **Matthew 16:13-18**- where the Apostle recorded for us THE *foundational* Confession that we MUST understand and believe about WHO Jesus is:

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

14 And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."

15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

17 And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

18 "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

...so, when Peter confessed,

You are the Christ, the Son of the living God

... he gave us the *large "Rock"*- the *huge, unmovable "Stone"*; the *permanent, steadfast "Bolder"* on which Jesus Christ is building His Church. Jesus is NOT building His Church on the small unreliable "*Pebble*" of Peter- or any other human being. He is building His invincible Church on the everlasting Revelation of WHO Jesus is. And that is why Jesus said,

Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

So, in addition to believing and trusting and confessing the Truth about WHO Jesus is and WHAT Jesus alone has done- we see that God the Father MUST reveal this Revelation to every soul who is saved. And until God does reveal that- NOTHING else will happen! So, Salvation is always initiated by God-sovereignly- alone- and is NOT ever initiated by us.

And so, EVERY single person- in every Nation; and throughout all History, who is saved- is saved, in part, because God the Father has sovereignly revealed to them that Jesus is...

... the Christ, the Son of the living God

But it is important to realize that, back in the 1st Century- when Peter or even Jesus Himself said that God was His "*Father*" or that He was the "*Son of God*"- it meant that Jesus was "of the SAME *Substance*"; or "the SAME *Essence*" or that Jesus had "the very SAME *Nature*" of God Himself!

And what made that so controversial is that the Jews of the 1st Century considered that to be Blasphemy. I mean, who had the audacity to say that they were "*of God*" meaning they WERE God. And this is *why* the Apostle John recorded this Confrontation between Jesus and the Jewish Leaders in **John 5:14-18:**

14 Afterward Jesus found him [the cripple man whom Jesus had healed] in the temple and said to him, "Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you."

15 The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

16 For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath.

17 But He answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working."

18 For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

So, by clearly and repeatedly saying God was His "Father"- Jesus was also saying that He was full and true Deity! And that means that Jesus is God Almighty in human Flesh! And that is why the Apostle Paul said this in **Romans 10:9&10:**

9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

So, not only do we need to *honestly* and *fully* believe in our hearts that God *literally* and *physically* raised Jesus from the Dead- we also **MUST** confess *openly*, *unashamedly*, *publicly*, and *repeatedly* that Jesus is "*Lord*"- which means that no one else is our "*Lord and Master*"- not even Caesar!

You see, back in occupied Palestine in the 1st Century- the Roman Authorities were steeped in Paganism. And the particular kind of Paganism that dominated the Roman Rulers was "*Polytheism*"- the false and Man-made religion that has many, many gods.

And back then- the Nation of Palestine was a "hodge-podge" amalgamation of many different people groups from many different Nations- some Jews along with many Gentiles. And the Roman Rulers could care less who or what you wanted to worship. I mean people were literally carving totem poles on the side of the streets of Jerusalem. And when they finished- they stood these poles up- that were carved with the faces of the gods they worshipped- so they could bow down to them; and offer these false gods their food or even their own children as Sacrifices. This was common practice during the Roman occupation of the Land where Jesus lived and walked.

And those people were tolerated by the Roman Authorities. They were NOT persecuted- by Law. Because as long as you would openly and publicly and clearly and repeatedly confess with your mouth that Caesar was your “*ultimate Authority*”- your “*ultimate Lord*”- you were free to worship a rock if you wanted to.

The Reason that Christians (and some Jews) were so terribly persecuted by the Romans- was NOT because they worshipped the one, true, and living God. That’s NOT true. They were persecuted because they refused to give *ultimate Allegiance* to Caesar! And they refused precisely because of this verse in **Romans 10**.

Christians were taught that, in order to be saved- they HAD to openly, publicly, clearly, and repeatedly confess with their mouths that their *ultimate Authority*; their *ultimate “Lord”* was Jesus Christ and NOT Caesar! And this put Believers into the “crosshairs” of the Roman Authorities.

Now stop and think about this. You are trying to spread the Truth about this new Religion all across the Land. And you want as many people as possible to join your Group. Yet you tell those who are interested in becoming a part of your Religion- that *part* of what it means to be saved is that they MUST purposefully “*pick a Fight*” with the pagan Authorities by *requiring* everyone to openly and publicly confess that Jesus- NOT Caesar- is their *final* and *ultimate Authority*!

And by you doing this- you are *forcing* the Hand of the Government to either go against their own Laws and show you Mercy; or they MUST punish you. So, the God-ordained Leaders of the Church in its infancy- set the Standard as to how all future generations of Believers should handle the correct Confession of WHO Jesus is:

WE MUST BE TOTALLY CONVINCED IN OUR HEART AS TO WHO JESUS IS; AND WE MUST OPENLY AND UNASHAMEDLY CONFESS THAT REALITY CLEARLY AND WITHOUT FEAR- NO MATTER WHAT THE CONSEQUENCES MAY BE.

... and in the 1st Century- that Confession *guaranteed* Persecution.

So, unlike many modern people who are deceived about this- Christians were NOT “*Conscientious Objectors*” in the 1st Century and neither were they “*Pacifists*”. Christians had NO Problem serving in the Government of occupied Palestine or even of Rome itself! They were *commanded* to show Respect and Humility toward governing Authorities- even those who were openly hostile to the Faith.

Christians were told to pray for the Salvation of those who were persecuting them. And they had no Problem swearing Allegiance to their Country; of serving their Country; or of obeying the Laws of the Country in which they lived. In fact, the New Testament Epistles clearly teach that Christians are to *submit* themselves to Rulers and to the Laws of the Country they live in; to obey their Leaders; pay taxes; and to help make their Country better.

Where Christians are told to “*draw the Line*” is when a Law of Man or a Law of some governing Authority seeks to cause Christians to *disobey* God and His Word as revealed in the Bible. And in those cases- Christians are told to *knowingly*; and *deliberately*; and maybe even *publicly*- DISOBEY the Law of Man and/or of the governing Authorities and go ahead and obey God!

And then we are told to receive *whatever* Punishment is dealt out to us by those Authorities- *without* Hesitation; *without* Grumbling; and *without* Complaining. Christians are told repeatedly throughout the New Testament to rejoice when we are persecuted- and to praise God that we had an Opportunity to exalt Jesus Christ in that Situation- *regardless* of what it may have cost us!

Hear me, my beloved, NO Man; NO Group; NO Government; NO Authority; or NO State has the Power or Authority to “*make us*”; or to “*force us*”; or to “*require us*” to blatantly *disobey* God; or *force* us to either “*live*” or to “*do*” *contrary* to the Word of God.

Now we may be punished when we obey God. We may suffer Persecution; be fired or demoted on our Job. We may NOT get that Promotion- even though we deserve it. We may not be able to have a checking account at that Bank; or keep our retirement Plan; or our Insurance. We may be taken to Court; or be sued. And we may even *lose* in Court. We may suffer the Confiscation of all of our worldly Possessions; we may be imprisoned; we may be tortured; and we may even be killed. Believers all over the world go through all of this- and more- all the time. We just don’t see it wholesale in America- yet. But I believe with every fiber of my being that it is Coming.

So, I believe, my friends, that, in the future, Christians in this Country will be treated no differently than they are in almost every other Country on earth. I believe that the Laws of this Country will be changed in the Future; and maybe even the Constitution will be amended to effectively make it against the Law to be a faithful Christian.

But know this- if that happens- God will prove Himself faithful to us- just like He does to Believers all over the world! So, we must trust in what God has said infinitely MORE than we trust what our Leaders may say.

Now I may be wrong about what will happen to Believers in this Country in the Future. I hope I *am* wrong. But I don’t think I’m wrong. I think I’m right

about this. But I certainly don't want this- this is NOT something I look forward to. I simply understand people and I am a student of both the Bible and History. So, I think the Judgment of God is rushing toward this Country like a freight train going at 300 miles an hour! And I can hear the sound of the rumbling in the Distance.

But hear this- even then- we will ALWAYS be able to obey God! No matter what the pagan world may do to us- we can ALWAYS obey God. Now we may suffer ALL of that or even more because we disobeyed Man and obeyed God. We may be jailed; beaten; tortured; or even killed for obeying God. Many, many sweet, precious, and faithful bond-slaves of Jesus have suffered those things- since the Resurrection. But hear this: You can ALWAYS obey God! And you can ALWAYS remain faithful to Scripture!

So, do NOT ever say, "*Well, they won't let me- and I can't obey God and I HAVE TO obey Man and be disobedient to God!*" What? "They" won't LET you obey God? Please don't ever say that- because you can ALWAYS obey God!

So, know this- if you bow your knee to Man; and you *disobey* God in order to keep your Job; if you *compromise* with Sin in order to get that Promotion; if you *rationalize* why you're doing something in opposition to the Word of God- so you can keep your Status in this Life- then know this: You now qualify as being a "Coward"; and a Traitor to the Faith. You are now "ashamed" of Jesus. And you are NOT "worthy" of Him. Look what Jesus Himself said in **Matthew 10:28- 39:**

28 "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

29 "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.

30 "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

31 "So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.

32 "Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven.

33 "But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.

34 "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.

35 "For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW;

36 and A MAN'S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD.

37 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

38 "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

39 "He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.

... all of these very serious and important Issues are wrapped up in the simple, but profound Command:

... confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord ...

Let me say this another Way. Many thousands; maybe *tens* of thousands; perhaps even *hundreds* of thousands of people all over the world- both throughout History; as well as in our present Day- have suffered *horrendous* things; *unjust* things; *illegal* things; and even have been killed- because they said these words, "*Jesus is Lord; Jesus alone is my ultimate Authority!*"

"*But Brother Blair, these are just Words!*" That's what the world says.. "*They're only Words!*" Those people suffered *unmercifully* because they spoke Words! They didn't actually "*Do*" *anything!* They simply spoke certain Words; while *refusing* to speak other Words! So, *why* is this so important to God? Because God the Holy Spirit "*moved*" on the Apostle Paul to say we **MUST**

... confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord...

... in order to be saved!

The Holy Bible says that making this Confession absolutely has that kind of Power! And if that is true- if our **CORRECT** Confession about Jesus has the Power to save us- then the **DENIAL** of that Confession (*especially* out of Fear for our Lives); or making a **WRONG** Confession- has the Power to damn us! And that is why Jesus said this in **Mark 8:34b-38**:

34 ... If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.

35 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.

36 "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?

37 "For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

38 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

... what kind of Man is this?

I remember several years ago when a Fox News correspondent- Steve Centanni, was kidnapped by an Islamic terrorist Group. He was held for two weeks- as the "higher ups" at Fox News worked feverishly with our State Department to arrange his release.

And after two weeks- he was let go. And he was interviewed by several other reporters, who wanted to know what it was like to be held by those savages. And Mr. Centanni told everyone that he was NOT tortured- but was required to *verbally* denounce Jesus as Lord and had to say out loud, "*There is no god, but Allah and Muhammed is his prophet!*"

And then I remember Mr. Centanni saying, "*They didn't hurt me at all. All I had to do was repeat certain words that have no meaning.*" And at the time- I remember saying on the Radio- "*No, they hurt you very badly, Mr. Centanni- they helped you to publicly deny Jesus as Lord and they caused you to be ashamed of Him- so, now Jesus is ashamed of you!*"

"O, Brother Blair- quit being so sanctimonious! This man was scared; he was threatened with Death! And besides that- those words don't mean anything! What would you do if you were faced with that?" Well, first of all- I pray I would NOT recant my Confession about WHO Jesus is. And secondly, those WORDS; that simple but profound Confession of Who Jesus is- absolutely DOES mean something very Serious and very Powerful!

Now you may think me a Fool. You may think I am being ridiculous and blowing this up way out of proportion. But I will reply to you that for over 2,000 years- many, many Believers- all over the world have believed; and they have taught EXACTLY what I have just said about this. Some of the greatest heroes of our Faith from Justin Martyr to Augustine to Jonathan Edwards to Charles Spurgeon to William Carey to great and wonderful men of God who live and teach today- have ALL taught the very SAME thing I have spoken to you this Morning.

And precious saints of God (whom the world was NOT worthy)- have been tortured; and were arrested; and they met their Deaths at the hands of evil Men- all because they would NOT recant that simple but profound Confession of Who Jesus is!

So, it isn't just WORDS! It is the "*Common Confession*" of the Christian Church! It is the "*Mystery of Godliness!*" We believe and we teach that Jesus is "*the Christ- the Son of the living God!*" We believe and teach that Jesus is "*the ultimate and final Lord!*" We believe and teach that Jesus is the "*long-awaited*

Messiah"; He is *"Immanuel"*; and the *"fulfillment of the Old Covenant!"* We believe and teach that Jesus is the *"Lilly of the Valley"*; the *"Bright and Morning Star"*; the *"beautiful Rose of Sharon"*; and the *"fairest of 10,000 to our souls!"*

We believe and teach that Jesus is the *"End-all"* and the *"Be- all!"*; the One Who has the *"Preeminence in all things to the Church!"*; Jesus is the *"Alpha and the Omega"*; the *"Beginning and the End"*; the *"First and the Last!"* We believe and teach that Jesus is the *"One, Who was alive; and Who died; and Who rose again!"*

We believe and teach that Jesus *"Always was; and Always will be."* That He was *"with God in the Beginning"* and He *"is God"*. So, Jesus was *"Noah's Ark"*; and *"Aaron's Rod that budded"*; and *"David's Tabernacle"*; and *"Moses' Staff"*. Jesus was the *"Bush that burned but was not consumed"*; He was the *"Rock that followed them along"*; and the *"Ark of the Covenant"*. And Jesus was the *"Angel"* that Moses foretold; the *"Sabbath"* that he taught about; and the *"Temple"* that he built.

We believe and teach that Jesus was the *"Ram"* that God gave to Abraham that allowed him to NOT kill his only son. Jesus was *"Melchisedek"*, the King of Peace; the Priest of the most high God; who met Abraham; received his tithe; and blessed him.

Jesus is the *final* and the *only* *"Prophet, Priest, and King"* in one; the *embodiment* of ALL of the *"moral Aspects of the Law"*; and the *"Truth; the Life; and the ONLY Way to God!"*

We believe and teach that demons cry out to Jesus; that satan fears Him; and Angels worship Him. And we believe and teach that Jesus is *absolutely* Fearless; *absolutely* Invincible; *absolutely* Victorious over Hell; Death; and the Grave; and that He has the very SAME absolute Authority- over all things- that God the Father has!

When the men in the boat that Day saw Jesus rebuke the Wind and the Sea- and then they saw that both the Wind and the Sea *immediately* obeyed His Voice- they asked the Question,

"What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"

... because they began to understand that knowing Who Jesus is- believing and hoping and trusting in WHO Jesus is and in WHAT Jesus does- will make them Safe; it will bring them to Shore! It will pardon their Guilt! And it will give them the Honor and the Privilege to worship the King of the Universe; and the Treasure of Heaven!

But the men of the *"Country of the Gadarenes"* saw the Power of God demonstrated right before their eyes, too. They witnessed Jesus displaying the absolute Authority over demons that ONLY God has. But instead of being

humbled; instead of being convicted; instead of asking the Question that would ignite a world-wide Movement that is now entering its third Millenia- the Bible says,

... the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they implored Him to leave their region.

The Demonstration of absolute Authority brought one Group of men low; it staggard their minds; and made them want to know MORE; to find out MORE; to draw near; and to love MORE. But it caused the other Group to want Jesus to leave; to depart; to go away!

So how will *we* answer the Question, "**What kind of a man is this...?**" The Bible tells us in no uncertain terms WHO Jesus is. But WHO is Jesus to *us*? It is crystal clear WHO God the Father says Jesus is- but WHO do *we* say Jesus is? Is He merely a "*Prophet*"- somebody that can tell us about the Future? Is He simply a "*Teacher*"- someone who can instruct us and give us Wisdom and Knowledge?

Jesus is *objectively* and *propositionally* WHO the sacred Scriptures declare Him to be- but WHO is Jesus to *us*? Is He an "*Example*"- that we are to live like He did? Is He a "*political Anarchist*"- who simply "bucked the System"? Is Jesus a "*Good Man*" like many other "*Good Men*"? Is He one of several different "*Ways*" to get to God; or is He even the "*BEST Way*" to God; or is He the "*ONLY Way*" to God?

Is Jesus the "*moral Image*" of what we can be on our Way to becoming Deity ourselves- as the Mormons teach? Is Jesus WHO the Jehovah's Witnesses teach? Or is He WHO the Muslims teach? Or maybe He is WHO the Christian Science folks teach. Over five hundred years *before* Jesus was born- the Prophet said this in **Jeremiah 9:23&24:**

23 Thus says the Lord, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; 24 but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the Lord.

Whoever boasts should boast that he "knows" God; that he UNDERSTANDS and KNOWS God! So, we should NEVER boast in our own Wisdom or our own Might or our own Riches- even though those are the things that are seen as being valuable enough and important enough- to boast about. But here- God says DO NOT boast in those things!

So, is God against ALL Boasting? No! God *wants*; He *desires*; He truly *rejoices* that- *because of what He alone does for us*- we can come to know what is truly *worth* boasting about! And what is truly *worth* boasting about- what is truly Valuable and Important enough to shout across the Heavens- is that in; by; and through WHO Jesus is; and WHAT Jesus has done- We- wicked Sinners; that We- evil Rebels; that We- fallen creatures of the Dust- can KNOW; we can come to UNDERSTAND the Father!

Because it is Jesus Who reveals the Father to us! Jesus shows us the Father! Jesus IS the Glory of God! Jesus IS the Image of God! And it is WHO Jesus is and WHAT Jesus has done that will reconcile us back to God!

God used the terrible and frightening Storm that Day to show those men that Jesus had absolute Authority over Nature itself! That even the Wind and the Sea will *instantly* obey Him- without Question or Hesitation! And as they beheld that supernatural Manifestation of absolute Authority- they blurted out the Question, **"What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"**

And it was IN that Question that Day- and IN the Struggle to genuinely understand WHO Jesus is- that caused something to be birthed in those men- that brought about- not only their *own* Salvation- but IN that Question; and IN the *Answer* to that Question- those who will make up the "*stars of the Heavens- too numerous to count*"- the chosen of God; the Elect from every Tribe and Tongue and Nation- who have been called to receive the greatest Gift that anyone could ever have: We will KNOW God! And we will UNDERSTAND God! And we will be *NEAR* to God!

But for those who see Jesus in His Authority and yet who want Jesus to leave them alone- they will NEVER know God. They will NEVER know the Joy of being able to worship God! And they will scream in Agony throughout Eternity!

So, I plead with you today- BE RECONCILED TO GOD! Cry out to Him for a Mercy that you don't deserve! And let us be the kind of people who boast in KNOWING God- through the Lord Jesus Christ! And let us always, always be amazed at WHO Jesus is and in WHAT Jesus does so, we may be the kind of people who love Him; and worship Him; and obey Him- with Joy!
Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.

