

## Week 8: Jesus' Authority Over All Things

### Hook



**Main Point:** Jesus has authority over all things – nature, the supernatural, even life and death.

**Q: Who is the most powerful person you've met?**

In 2007, Apple was preparing to unveil the first iPhone to the world. Under tremendous pressure, the development team was experiencing issues with the touchscreen, the software and the hardware – the product just wasn't where they wanted it to be. After using a prototype for a few days, Steve Jobs was unhappy with the screen – it was made of plastic and he thought it scratched too easily. Jobs told the team, "I want a glass screen. I don't care how you do it, but get it done." That one call – made just **six weeks before launch** – forced a complete redesign. But it worked. The iPhone was unveiled on time and went on to revolutionize the mobile phone industry.<sup>1</sup>

**Q: If you could have complete authority over a product, business, experience, etc., what would you choose and what changes would you make?**

**Transition:** In today's lesson, we discover that Jesus has authority over nature, the supernatural, even life and death.

**Recap:** In our first lesson, we learned about the author, audience, genre and occasion of the Gospel of Mark. Gospels are not just stories, biographies or history books; they are proclamations of the Gospel, like sermons. Mark's focus on Jesus' action more than His teaching propels us to consider how we will act in response.

In lessons 2 through 4, we saw how every part of Jesus' ministry pointed to His kingship as the Messiah they had been waiting for, but a different kind of kingdom than they expected – a spiritual kingdom that is upside down from the kingdoms of this world. We

saw Jesus' power not only to heal, cast out demons, and perform miracles but even to forgive sin, making Him equivalent to God.

In lessons 5 through 7, we saw Jesus behave differently than the typical religious leaders of His day and flip their social systems upside down. Some people reacted positively to Jesus and some people reacted negatively, especially those who didn't want their world turned upside down, because the status quo worked in their favor. Then, in His teaching about the kingdom of God, He showed us the same thing – people will react differently to the Gospel, but regardless of what human beings do, the kingdom of God will grow in this world until Jesus returns.

In this lesson, we will see Jesus perform three huge, God-sized miracles, showing us He has authority over all of creation, the supernatural, and even life and death. They show us He is not only sent from God; He is God.

## **Week 8: *Jesus' Authority over All Things***

### **Book**

**Main Point:** Jesus has authority over all things – nature, the supernatural, even life and death.

**Mark 4:35–41 [Read]**

**Talking Point 1:** Calming the sea proved that Jesus really was God; only God could do that.

**Q: Why do you think the text used the word “rebuke” for Jesus’ talking to the waves?**

**Q: Why were the disciples terrified? What were they terrified of?**

This next series of miracles shows the unique power of Jesus, a power beyond that of any prophet who had come before Him. Each of these three miracles shows that Jesus has a supernatural power and authority only God can have – authority over nature, authority over the supernatural, and authority over life and death.

First, Mark tells us about Jesus’ calming the storm. This is not the story of Jesus’ walking on water; that happens later (Mark 6). Jesus calmed the sea multiple times. Everything in Mark happens so quickly; this was the same day He had been teaching the parables. Jesus and the disciples got into the boat, and Jesus said to go to the other side of the sea, which wouldn’t have been a quick trip. The Sea of Galilee is sixty-four square miles and thirteen miles long. With only sails and oars to paddle, their travel time would have depended heavily on the wind, from two hours to six hours or more.<sup>2</sup>

Fierce storms scared ancient people and caused them to avoid large bodies of water. Pagan stories depicted the sea as a monstrous beast and a place where Baal battled other gods. In Jesus’ day, Jewish people feared the sea, calling it an abyss and using it as a symbol of chaos and hell. For Jesus to be able to command the sea was a clear sign of His divinity. In Jewish tradition, only God could tame the winds and sea (Job 9:8; Psalm 107:29).<sup>3</sup>

When the storm came up, Jesus was asleep. Though the waves were crashing over the side of the boat, He didn’t wake up. The elevated stern was the only place in the boat one could have slept without getting wet.<sup>4</sup> Jesus’ sleeping connects this story to that of the runaway prophet Jonah, who had also slept deeply on a ship during a sudden storm (Jonah 1:5). But Jonah was running away from his calling to preach repentance to those who were far from God, and Jesus embraced that calling. Jesus’ deep sleep amid a

violent storm shows complete trust in God's sovereign hand, a huge contrast to the disciples' fear.<sup>5</sup>

When the disciples woke Him, what they said – “Don’t you care if we drown?” – was strange. They didn’t scream, “Help us!” or “Do something!” or even “How could you sleep through this?” The question was about Jesus’ concern for them. This is a relational question. It captures not only a physical fear but a spiritual fear – our human tendency to doubt the care and presence of God in times of crisis. When things are raging out of control in our world, we often ask ourselves *where is God?* Is He sleeping on the job? Does He even care about me? But even in their fear, they went to the right person. They were scared, but they knew they needed Jesus.

Jesus immediately got up and rebuked the wind, saying, “Quiet! Be still!” The word “rebuke” is interesting, like a father rebuking his child. It’s the same language Scripture uses for Him casting out demons. That’s the kind of authority Jesus has over both the natural and the supernatural. Jesus’ action was quick and simple, seemingly effortless, a huge contrast to the disciples’ fear. Jesus asked them why they were so afraid. How could they still not have faith even after all the miracles they had seen?

Now the disciples responded with even greater fear; they were “terrified.” Not of the storm, but of Jesus – “Who is this?” They knew only God could control the wind and waves. This wasn’t a magician doing a trick or even a prophet doing a miracle with the power of God. This was Jesus Himself controlling nature. This made Him God. Why would they be afraid of that? Because any time a human being sees God, there is a holy fear. Not scared in a bad way, but in awe of Jesus, that He was so much more than they even imagined. He is God Himself.

**Q: How does knowing the omnipotence of Jesus affect your response to the storms of life?**

**Q: Describe a time it felt like God was distant or didn’t care about your suffering. How did He remind you He was there?**

**Q: How can we remind ourselves to trust God when things feel out of control?**

**Mark 5:1–20 [Read]**

**Talking Point 2:** Jesus even has authority over the demonic; they are no match for Him.

**Q: Why would the people beg Jesus to leave their region?**

They arrived on the other side of the sea, the region of the Gerasenes, an area with a mixture of Jews and Gentiles. This was part of the Decapolis, a group of 10 Hellenistic cities on the eastern frontier of the Roman Empire in Judea and Syria. The Decapolis was a center of Hellenistic culture in a region otherwise populated by Jews. By going there to heal someone, Jesus could show His disciples that His ministry was for the whole world, not just the Jews, without having to leave the area. The fact that there was a herd of pigs nearby tells us this was certainly a Gentile area; Jews were not allowed to raise or eat pigs.

Tombs were unclean for Jews. Going there would have made Jesus and the disciples unclean, but the man came out to meet them. Tombs were also believed to be a hotbed of demonic activity. Both self-mutilation and superhuman strength were typical of demonic possession. Many pagan religions involve cutting oneself in worship. This man was so strong because of the demons possessing him that no one could bind him; he broke every chain. But this man immediately ran to Jesus and fell on his knees before Him. Even the strongest demon was no match for Jesus. The demon knew Jesus was the Son of God, and this wasn't the first time a demon had called Him that (Mark 1:24; 3:11). The demon called God the "Most High." There is no doubt who had the authority here.

A standard part of ancient exorcism was to identify the spirit's name, but this is the only recorded time Jesus asked for a demon's name, though He didn't need to use it to cast them out. A "legion" was the largest unit of the Roman army – 4,000 to 6,000 troops. This was a large group of demons, the biggest "challenge" imaginable, and yet it was nothing to Jesus. They were terrified of Him. They *begged* Him to *let* them go into the herd of pigs. As John later said, there is no reason for believers to fear the demonic because "he who is in you is greater than He who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). Jesus gave them permission; again, there was no doubt who was in complete control here.

The spirits went into the pigs, rushed down the bank, and drowned in the lake. Instead of being thankful that Jesus had gotten rid of the demons, the people begged Him to leave because of the great economic loss of about 2,000 pigs and because they were afraid of His power. Again, the theme is fear, not faith. But the man who had been healed wanted to go with Him. Jesus told him instead to tell everyone what God had done for him, the opposite of keeping it a secret, which He had told many people in the Jewish region to do. Because the Jews would have misconceptions about His identity as the Messiah, but these Gentiles would hear of His power over the demonic and be amazed.

In Exodus, when God sent Moses and Aaron to ask Pharaoh to let His people go, He gave them supernatural power to do miracles to show they were sent by Him. Pharaoh's magicians were able to match their first demonstrations of power by their "secret arts," the power of their "gods," which were really demons. But when God sent the plague of gnats, it was beyond anything a human could do, and Pharaoh's magicians said, "This is the finger of God!" (Exodus 8:19). This is the level of power with which Jesus did His miracles, showing again that He was not just a prophet; He was God Himself.

**Q: In what ways have you experienced spiritual warfare? What impact does it make to know that Jesus has such effortless power over evil?**

**Q: How can you share the message of the power of Jesus over evil?**

**Q: What would prevent us, who've been set free and transformed by Jesus, from telling others about Him?**

**Mark 5:21–43 [Read]**

**Talking Point 3:** Jesus has ultimate power over sickness, life and death.

**Q: Compare and contrast the sick woman and the dying girl.**

**Q: Why do you think the woman didn't ask Jesus to heal her?**

Now that Mark has shown Jesus' power over the natural world and the supernatural realm, he shows us His power over life and death. Jesus and the disciples came back across the sea to their original ministry area in Galilee. Again, a large crowd gathered, with one of the synagogue leaders among them. He was a religious leader and likely a Pharisee, though a local leader, not one from Jerusalem. Yet he showed Jesus both submission and worship by falling at His feet. For this prominent religious leader to humble himself before Jesus in this way constituted a major public recognition of Jesus' authority. Because many of the Pharisees opposed Jesus, it was a risky thing for him to do, but he truly believed Jesus could heal his daughter. Jairus called her "my little" daughter, though the age of maturity for Jewish girls was 12; she was precious to him.<sup>6</sup>

By healing Jairus' daughter and the woman in this story, Jesus also showed He cared deeply about those whom society didn't necessarily view as people of great importance. Because of her bleeding, the sick woman would have been considered continually unclean. Her joining the crowd was also a great risk, because anyone she touched would be made ritually unclean as well. The number 12 links these two women as parallel cases. The number of the tribes of Israel, 12 symbolizes God's power and authority and the leadership on which He built His kingdom. Jesus was about to show His power and

authority over life and death, and He is the cornerstone on which God builds His kingdom, with the foundation of the 12 apostles.

This woman had such great faith that she thought that all she had to do to be healed was just to touch His cloak. Jesus' asking who touched His clothes was incredible considering everyone pressing around Him. But He felt the power go out from Him. The woman also fell at His feet, just as Jairus had done, but trembling with fear of what may happen. Instead of punishing her, Jesus commended her faith and even called her daughter, another parallel. She was as precious to Jesus as Jairus's daughter was to him. The incredible faith of this "worthless," unclean woman stands in stark contrast to the lack of faith of the male disciples in the last story.

In the meantime, Jairus's daughter had died, but Jesus told him not to be afraid, just believe. Again, the focus is on faith over fear. When Jesus said she was only asleep, they laughed at Him, indicating that, biologically, she really was dead. But Jesus brought her back to life with His words. A real miracle that showed His authority over life and death. As with Lazarus, this foreshadowed His own Resurrection and how He would conquer death for all of us, so all of us will rise again to eternal life.

Though it made Him ritually unclean, Jesus touched Jairus's daughter, just as the sick woman's touching of His cloak made Him unclean. But Jesus healed them both, proving that He overcomes all sin and uncleanness – not just intentional acts of wrongdoing but our entire sinful nature. Jesus has the power to heal every broken thing and make us completely new. These three stories all show us the unparalleled power and authority of Jesus. This was a prophet like no other. He was even greater than what they expected in Messiah. He was not only sent from God, He *was* God. This made the kingdom He was preaching about something completely different than they imagined.

**Q: If Jesus really does have ultimate power and authority over all things, what does this tell us about trusting Him with our lives? What does it tell us about how we should pray?**

**Q: How have you experienced the power of Jesus in your life?**

**Q: Is there brokenness in your life or family that can only be restored by Jesus? And will you trust Him to do what only He can do?**

## **Week 8: Jesus' Authority Over All Things**

### **Took**

**Main Point: Jesus has authority over all things – nature, the supernatural, even life and death.**

Jesus has authority over all things – what an encouragement to believers! There is nothing beyond His grasp or too complex for His intervention. At times, He answers prayers by rewriting what seems to be possible, totally changing our circumstances. In other situations, he moves within us instead of the external elements – changing us, bringing hope, holding us together through a storm.

Christian worship singer and songwriter Don Moen wrote the song *God Will Make a Way* in 1990 during a tragedy; his sister-in-law and her family were involved in a terrible car accident, losing a son. As he sat on a plane headed to the young man's funeral, Moen was reading from the book of Isaiah, wondering what words the Lord might provide for him to comfort His family. On a legal pad, he wrote these words<sup>7</sup>:

*God will make a way  
Where there seems to be no way  
He works in ways we cannot see  
He will make a way for me*

*He will be my guide  
Hold me closely to His side  
With love and strength for each new day  
He will make a way; He will make a way<sup>8</sup>*

In what ways do you need God to make a way for you? Perhaps you need a miracle – in your health, relationships, finances. Perhaps you, too, are struggling with profound loss, and you need the Lord's help to make it through the rest of today. Teacher, provide a time of prayer at the end of your lesson. Provide an outlet for people to submit prayer requests, areas in which they need a miracle. You might break your LifeGroup into smaller groups to share needs and pray for one another. Or you may invite members to text or e-mail you their prayer request and you promise to pray for them. Whatever you choose to do, end class with a prayer of hope and a reminder that as we wait on the Lord, we will do so *together* as a LifeGroup, lifting one another up in encouragement.



## CHALLENGES

**THINK:** Imagine what it would have been like to be one of the disciples walking with Jesus every day, witnessing these incredible acts of power. How would you feel? How would you react? What questions would you have? What would you think about who He was and why He came? What would you expect of your own role as one of His disciples? What would you expect Him to do about the local earthly authorities like the religious, political, and the military leaders? How would it make you feel about your own safety in following Him? How would you feel about putting your trust in Him?

**PRAY** for those who need the power of Jesus in their lives. Maybe people who need physical miracles such as healing, reconciliation in a relationship, or financial help or provision. Or those who need spiritual help in some kind of battle against evil in their life, maybe self-destructive behavior or spiritual attack. Pray for those who need to experience the power of the Gospel in their lives – the reconciliation Jesus brings and being made a new creation in Him. Pray for God to send His power to all who need it.

**ACT:** Serve someone in need. There are so many stories of ways God uses His people to impact those around us in ways we never imagined. Reflect on those you know who may be in need, suffering or hurting. Ask God to show you someone you can help and do something to be a difference maker for that person this week.

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Isaacson, “Steve Jobs” (2011), Chapter 32; interviews with Apple engineers.

<sup>2</sup> Adam Hamilton, *The Way: Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus* (Abingdon Press, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993).

<sup>4</sup> Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993).

<sup>5</sup> Benjamin L. Gladd, “Sleep Like a King: Why Jesus Slept before Calming the Storm,” *The Gospel Coalition*, Aug 16, 2024 - <https://www.theGospelcoalition.org/article/jesus-slept-calming-storm/>

<sup>6</sup> The *Talmud* says boys are legal adults at thirteen and girls at twelve.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.staugustine.com/story/lifestyle/faith/2015/08/06/story-behind-song-god-will-make-way/16268332007/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/donmoen/godwillmakeaway.html>