

v.5:1-6 And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, Who had [his] dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any [man] tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,

Probably in the early morning, Jesus and His disciples arrived on the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Gadara was a small town in this region, and so, the locals are given the name Gadarenes. Along the shore was a region of caves which were used as tombs. It was a rugged shore line where cliffs went right to the edge of the water. Probably narrow passages led from the shore through the hills and into the city.

- a) *The minute Jesus got out of the boat He was confronted by two demon possessed men. (Matt. 8:28) These men in their possessed state were fierce. They terrorized this region not allowing anyone to pass that particular way.*
- b) *These men lived in the tombs where they would scream and cry, driven by the demons to self-mutilation. The locals had obviously tried on many occasions to subdue these individuals. At times they had succeeded in binding them, but even chains could not hold them for long. They exhibited an uncanny strength provided by their demon hosts, so that no man was any match for them.*
- c) *The men were not driven out of the tombs by the demons to worship Jesus. On the contrary, from their vantage point in the tombs, they saw the boat coming while it was still out in the sea. They made their way down with the intent of terrorizing those in the boat.*
- d) *Once again it would seem that these particular demons are taken by surprise. Upon their arrival they recognize Jesus and fall on their knees before Him. They rushed down to do harm, but are now stopped dead in their tracks*

v.5:7-12 And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, [thou] Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. For he said unto him, Come out of the man, [thou] unclean spirit. And he asked him, What [is] thy name? And he answered, saying, My name [is] Legion: for we are many. And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

It seems that Jesus commanded the demons to come out of the men, but the demon did not immediately obey. As we have seen in other demon possession accounts the evil spirit offers a

protest. (Matt. 8:29; Luke 8:28) It was not yet “the time.” They believed they had the right to do what they were doing and Jesus now exercising His authority over them seemed to take them by surprise.

- a) Jesus converses with the demon, asking it its name and finding out that the man/men were inhabited by many demons. Is this a technicality that allowed them not to immediately depart when commanded to do so? At any rate, the spokesman of the group basically asks Jesus to swear an oath that He would not torture them.
- b) The spokesman along with all of the demons beg Him not to send them out of the area or as Luke puts it, “into the deep” which means “into the abyss.” Taking up residence in a man, or as we will see, in an animal was to their advantage. It was a relief from some kind of torment.
- c) A herd of about 2000 pigs were feeding up on the hill and the demons ask Jesus to allow them to enter into or to possess the pigs. He permits them to do so and they leave the men and inhabit the swine.

v.5:13-17 *And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea. And they that fed the swine fled, and told [it] in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. And they that saw [it] told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and [also] concerning the swine. And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts.*

The entire herd rushed down into the sea. They immediately ran right off of the cliff and all were drowned. Did the demons know this would happen? Had demons ever been allowed to possess animals before? This incident is unexplained and raises more questions than provides answers. Some would accuse Jesus of destroying property and men’s livelihood. It was mostly a gentile region, but could the owners have been Jewish?

- a) The men that were in charge of the pigs ran into the city and told everyone they could what had happened. They were afraid in what they had witnessed, but no doubt also concerned that they would be held accountable for the animals in their charge. These men seemed to have a good idea as to what had happened. Were they watching from the hill to see these strangers in the boat fall prey to the demons?

- b) *A crowd arrives to check out the truthfulness of this amazing story. They see these men sitting and talking with Jesus. The men were tame and normal. When they find out the details concerning the pigs and see 2000 carcasses washing up upon the shore they are filled with fear.*
- c) *Whether out of fear or as some commentators believe indignant over their loss, the townspeople ask Jesus and His disciples to leave. It was probably a combination of the fact that Jesus was a Jew, that He had easily handled two individuals that the people could not, and that they had lost a valuable commodity in the pigs.*

v.5:18-20 And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all [men] did marvel.

As Jesus got back into the boat to depart at least one of the men who had been delivered begged Jesus to allow him to go with Him. Jesus tells the man to stay behind and to be a witness of the great things God had accomplished and of the compassion that He had shown

- a) *Jesus left the area as they had requested, but also left them a “missionary” in this man. He was no doubt well known in the region and now would be a curiosity. Everyone he knew and met would hear about the Lord Jesus Christ and of the coming kingdom of God*
- b) *The man not only went home to his friends as Jesus had commanded, but proclaimed the things that Jesus had done for him throughout the entire region. Decapolis was a league of ten cities east of the Jordan River. It was mostly a gentile region, but had a Jewish presence.*
- c) *All who heard the man’s story were amazed. For those who had not known or heard of the man, his story would be easy enough to verify. What else had Jesus told the man as He sat and talked with him at length? He would be a disciple of Jesus in this gentile region.*

v.5:21-24 And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him: and he was nigh unto the sea. And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet, And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: [I pray thee], come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live. And [Jesus] went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him.

Jesus and the apostles cross back over the Sea of Galilee to His home region of Capernaum. A large crowd immediately gathers, so He speaks to them by the sea.

- a) *Jairus, who was one of the rulers of the local synagogue, makes his way through the crowd and falls at the feet of Jesus. Jairus probably knew Jesus very well for Jesus taught at the synagogue many times and had done great works in the region. Jairus probably had witnessed many healings at the hands of Jesus, and so, when his daughter became seriously ill, he knows it is Jesus who can heal her.*
- b) *Jairus is frantic for his daughter is at the point of death. Time is of the essence in the mind of Jairus. Jesus must come now, and so, he begs Jesus to make the trip. Had his daughter taken ill when Jesus was away? Had Jairus been waiting anxiously by the sea hoping and praying that Jesus would return in time? Now that He had returned would He leave the large crowd and go with Jairus? Would He be able to make it through the crowd? In the seriousness of the situation Jairus' mind is filled with worry.*
- c) *Jesus leaves the safety of the seashore to go with Jairus. The crowd was pressing against them as they made their way to the house of Jairus. Because of the crowd the progress was probably slow.*

v.5:25-29 And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in [her] body that she was healed of that plague.

In this great crowd is an unnamed woman who has been ill for twelve years. She is on a mission, that is, to touch Jesus for a healing. Getting this close to Jesus in such a massive crowd was not an easy task, especially for a woman who no doubt was in a weakened state. Most likely this was not her first attempt.

- a) *She had "an issue of blood." This probably refers to menstrual type bleeding. She had gone to many physicians concerning her problem and had spent all that she had in search of a cure. The treatments she endured only made her condition worse.*
- b) *She was not seeking an audience with Jesus. Her plan was to sneak in, touch Him, and sneak back out. She somehow makes her way through the crowd and touches His garment.*
- c) *Immediately the blood stopped. "She felt in her body" seems to indicate that not only had the bleeding stopped, but its effects were also gone. Matthew says she was made whole. Her fatigue and sickly appearance were probably gone. She was probably taken aback as she received more than she had expected.*

v.5:30-34 And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

Not everyone that was healed had a personal audience with Jesus. It was not unusual for people to get healed simply by touching His clothes or even being in His presence. Healing power went out from Him, by the will of the Father, and touched many. (Luke 6:19)

- a) *Jesus became aware of this particular woman's touch. For some reason she was a special case and Jesus desired to speak with her. He felt her healing, that is, the power or virtue that went out from Himself making her whole.*
- b) *That this was indeed a special case is demonstrated by the reaction of the disciples to Jesus' inquiry as to who had touched Him. One gets the impression that the crowds made the disciples uneasy and irritable. They were being pressed upon from all sides as was always the case, they did not have the sea to retreat to, and now, Jesus wants to know who touched Him! Perhaps they believed the question was directed to them. Thinking the task to identify a specific person, when in fact everyone was touching Him, as being impossible, they sarcastically respond.*
- c) *Jesus, however was not interested in the disciples at this moment. His inquiry was directed toward the woman as He turns around and begins to survey the crowd. Did Jesus' eyes meet hers? She probably perceives that Jesus knows who she is and falls down before Him in fear. She tells Him "all the truth" which probably means she told Him the whole story as He patiently listened.*
- d) *Why was this woman a special case? Why did she want to slip-in and slip-out unnoticed? Why was she so fearful when discovered? The answers probably lie in her condition. With continual menstrual bleeding she was always unclean. For the past twelve years she would have according to the law been ceremonially unclean. She could not attend synagogue or take part in any religious activity. Anyone that came into contact with her would also be considered unclean.*
- e) *This was a bold move on this woman's part. She was breaking the law and defiling everyone she came into contact with. Touching Jesus, technically according to Jewish law, would have defiled Him. Is this why she was immediately healed, the virtue of Jesus immediately cleansing any defilement? It that what made Jesus aware that this touch was different? Being discovered she had plenty to be scared about.*

- f) *Jesus commends her for her faith. She had a pressing need and she knew Jesus could meet it. Her intent was not to break the law or to defile anyone. Once again need seemed to supercede the law. Jesus, who knew her heart and that she came in faith, publicly proclaims her healing.*
- g) *The word “whole” used in connection with faith in verse 34 is “to save from sin,” while the word translated “whole” in verse 34 connected with plague means “to heal physically.” Jesus healed both the woman’s soul and body.*

v.5:35-38 While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's [house certain] which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further? As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.

While a nervous and impatient Jairus is watching the interaction between Jesus and the woman, individuals from Jairus’ house show-up on the scene and inform him that his daughter had died. Their plan was sound, but it seemed that their only obstacle, that being time itself, had won. All hope was lost as they tell Jairus there was no need for the Master.

- a) *The attention of Jesus now shifts to Jairus. With the news he is filled with sorrow and fear. Jesus reassures Jairus not to fear, but to believe. Matthew records that Jairus proclaimed his belief saying, “but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.” Against all of his knowledge and experience he accepts Jesus’ challenge to believe and proclaims his faith.*
- b) *Jesus tells the crowd not to follow Him and they obey. This in itself was a miraculous happening. One can see the crowd part with the authority of His command and Him simply walking away. He takes with Him Peter, James, John, and of course, Jairus.*
- c) *When Jesus arrives the scene is one of chaos. Jairus was an important man and his little girl had died. There was a crowd of mourners who were weeping and wailing. Most of this was probably genuine, but professional mourners were also the custom of the day. Matthew tells us that minstrels were present.*

The customs were very different than they are today with funeral homes and viewings that can last for days. Burial took place after death so the mourning of all involved was sudden, intense and short. Chaos reigned.

v.5:39-43 And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all

out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was [of the age] of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

Jesus walks into this chaotic situation and asks them why they are all carrying on in such a manner. He proclaims that the girl is not dead, but simply asleep. With this, the mood of those in the house changes instantly as they turn on Jesus.

- a) *They laughed Him to scorn or as Hendriksen puts it, "laughed in His face." How much sincerity was present in these individuals. Had most of them come simply because of the position of Jairus in the synagogue? Had all of the hypocrites in the group gathered in the house to put on a show? This does not mean the entire crowd turned on Jesus, but even if they did not laugh His comment must have disturbed them.*
- b) *With an authority we can only imagine Jesus throws them all out of the house except for the parents and the apostles that accompanied Him. They enter into the girl's room where Jesus takes the girl by the hand and commands her to rise.*
- c) *Words that brought one back from the dead Mark writes in the original language and provides the interpretation. The girl immediately gets up and walks around showing that she was completely and instantly restored. She became as she was before the illness.*
- d) *"Astonished with a great astonishment." As strong a statement as could be made to try to capture the mood in that room. A girl was dead, now she was alive. The apostles in rapid order observed the power of Jesus over the physical, over the spiritual, and now His authority over death itself! (Luke 8:55)*
- e) *Jesus charged those in the room straightly or solemnly forbid them to tell anyone what had happened. Let those outside of the room draw their own conclusions, but they were to tell no one what they observed. He gave the same command to the leper who disobeyed and it infringed upon Jesus' ministry. (v.1:40-45) If this became common knowledge wouldn't the people not only bring the sick to Him, but also the dead?*
- f) *The command to give her something to eat is curious. Was it to prove this ordeal did not change her mortality? Did the girl not eat for several days because of the illness and in all the excitement Jesus reminded them to feed her knowing her need?*

v.6:1-6 And he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him. And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing [him] were astonished, saying, From whence hath this [man] these things? and what wisdom [is] this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed [them]. And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

Sometime after the healing of Jairus' daughter and after being reunited with the rest of His apostles, Jesus left the city of Capernaum and went into His own country or into His hometown which we know to be Nazareth.

- a) *Nazareth was about a twenty mile journey. Did the crowds follow Him or did He go secretly? Was this His first trip back to Nazareth since His ministry began? Luke gives a detailed account of Jesus preaching in Nazareth, but puts the account at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. (Luke 4:16-30) Is this the same story that Mark is now telling? If so, then Luke has it out of order and if not, Mark is telling us about a return trip.*
- b) *At any rate, Jesus goes into the synagogue on the Sabbath to preach. They hear His words and are astonished or greatly impressed. The content of His preaching is not given, but He most likely was proclaiming the kingdom of God by interpreting the law and the prophets. (v.1:15)*
- c) *They had watched Jesus grow up. He was a carpenter, one of the members of a local family. Not formally trained in the things of religion, where did He come up with the things that He taught? Where did this power to perform miracles come from?*
- d) *His teaching was new and not sanctioned by the leadership. The leadership, in fact, accused Him of being of the devil. His words at first sounded good. He spoke with authority, but was His teaching heresy or even blasphemy? Because they knew Him and His background it was harder for them to accept the things He said and did as truth.*
- e) *Did they question Him to His face or behind His back as they sought Him to perform miracles? Whatever the case, Jesus responds to them in what may have been a proverbial saying of that day. He acknowledged the fact that a prophet does not receive honor in his own area, from his relatives, or even from his family. (John 7:5)*
- f) *Jesus knowing their hearts chose not to perform any miracles among this unbelieving and antagonistic crowd. He did heal a few individuals, probably those who came to Him in true faith.*

- g) Jesus “marvels” at their unbelief. Although the word occurs 30 times in the gospels it refers to Jesus on only two occasions. Jesus marveled at the faith of the Roman centurion and here at the lack of faith displayed by those of His hometown.

v.6:7-13 And he called [unto him] the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits; And commanded them that they should take nothing for [their] journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in [their] purse: But [be] shod with sandals; and not put on two coats. And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city. And they went out, and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed [them].

Leaving Nazareth, Jesus stayed in the Galilean region teaching in the towns and villages. Calling the twelve apostles, Jesus sent them out in groups of two. We are not told where they went or how long they were gone, but their instructions are specific as they embark on what can be called a missionary journey to those of Israel.

- a) *They were told to preach or to be heralds; to prepare the way as did John the Baptist. In all probability they were sent out beyond the Galilean region, where Jesus had been ministering almost exclusively, possibly even into Judea.*
- b) *They preached repentance. The original word is defined by Hendriksen as, “to undergo a radical change of heart and life, a complete turnabout of life.” The reason being that the kingdom of God was at hand. Jesus Himself would soon venture out of the Galilean region, and so, Jesus sent them out before Him.*
- c) *To back-up their message Jesus gave them the power to cast out demons and to heal the sick. He gave them this authority in view of the work He would accomplish. These men lacked understanding. They had egos as well as tempers, and yet, Jesus conferred graces upon them that allowed them to share in the work!*
- d) *They were commanded to take nothing with them. They could carry a walking stick, wear sandals on their feet and the clothes on their back. They were not to take a script (traveling bag), money, or food with them. They were not to take extra clothes.*
- e) *The reasons for these instructions are not given. Possibly it was to show them that they were to be men of faith. They were to trust in God and seek His provision. Possibly it was to show others that they were not worldly men, but brought the message as humble servants of God as did John the Baptist. Not exercising their powers for gain, but to the glory of God.*

- f) *They were to depend upon the hospitality of those who heard them for food and shelter. They were to remain in the home of the one who had first offered them lodging as long as they stayed in the town. This seems to say that if what was first offered to them was not to their liking they were not at liberty to “shop around” for a better offer. Again, a lesson in humility and contentment.*
- g) *Those places that would not receive them or hear them they were to leave. The shaking the dust from their feet was a way of declaring that particular place as being unclean. After traveling through heathen country the Jew before re-entering the holy land would clean his feet in this way, and so, the symbolic gesture.*
- h) *Jesus declares it to be a solemn truth that Sodom and Gomorrah would fare better in the day of judgment than these places. Exactly what this means we do not know, but it places the act of rejecting the gospel as bringing down the greatest of consequences.*
- i) *Obviously it is directed against the inhabitants of that particular city of that particular time. Sodom and Gomorrah represented God’s judgment. The fire that rained down on the cities was physical and temporary, while the judgment against those who rejected the gospel is spiritual and everlasting.*

v.6:14-16 *And king Herod heard [of him]; (for his name was spread abroad:) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets. But when Herod heard [thereof], he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead.*

Mark leaves his narrative and relates to his readers the story of the death of John the Baptist at the hands of king Herod. The story seems to be tied to the missionary activity of the apostles. It can be inferred that through the efforts of the apostles the full impact of the ministry of Jesus reached the ears of Herod.

- a) *Herod was not a true king, but was appointed by the Romans as tetrarch over Galilee and Perea. He was the son of the king Herod who had put the babies to death based on the information given to him by the Maji. He is also known as Herod Antipas.*
- b) *The name of Jesus was now well known throughout all of Israel as well as the surrounding areas. Being unlike anyone they had ever seen or heard speculation as to who exactly this “miracle man” was abounded. We have already seen that many believed that He was a prophet of God, just like one of the prophets of old that they had read about in the scriptures. We saw that some of the Jewish leaders on the other hand believed Him to be of the devil.*

- c) *Added here is that some believed Jesus to be a specific prophet, namely, Elijah. (Mal. 4:5) We know this scripture to be fulfilled in John the Baptist who was a “present day” Elijah who prepared the way for Jesus.*
- d) *Herod, however, was convinced that Jesus was John the Baptist raised from the dead. He believed that the works attributed to Jesus could only be done by one raised from the dead and ten somehow more than human. Herod had put John to death and the act obviously haunted him, weighing heavy on his mind. Luke makes us privy to his reasonings, while Mark here gives us his conclusions. (Luke 9:7-9)*

v.6:17-20 *For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her. For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not: For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.*

Herod divorced or separated from his wife and married his brother's wife. John openly challenged this incestuous and adulterous relationship. Herodias, his wife, wanted John killed for his insolence, but Herod would not do it. Implied is that he had John imprisoned only to try to appease his wife.

- a) *Herod feared the people who knew John to be a prophet, but also himself feared and admired the Baptist. Herod watched him and listened to John concluding that he was a holy and just man. John the Baptist had an impact on Herod. “He did many things,” that is, much of what John said Herod believed and incorporated into his life, but was not willing to give up Herodias in repentance.*
- b) *One gets the impression that Herodias viewed the Baptist as a threat to her. She probably felt that someday John's preaching would reach her husband and that he would repent of the relationship.*

v.6:21-25 *And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief [estates] of Galilee; And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give [it] thee. And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give [it] thee, unto the half of my kingdom. And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist. And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist.*

On his birthday Herod had a banquet inviting high civil officials (his lords), military commanders (high captains) and prominent individuals of the Galilean region. It was on this day that Herodias was given an opportunity to get rid of John the Baptist.

- a) The daughter of Herodias entered the banquet and danced for Herod and his guests. Her dancing was pleasing to them and being caught up in the moment, Herod tells the girl he will give her anything she desires. He goes as far as to swear an oath before all of his guests that he will give her anything up to half of his wealth or possessions.
- b) The girl is not the daughter of Herod, who in reality is her uncle, so her allegiance is not to him, but to her mother. She puts Herod off and leaves to go consult with her mother. Did Herodias plan this or did it just fall into her lap? She couldn't have known that her husband would make such an impulsive and reckless oath in front of all of his guests.
- c) The degree of Herodias' hatred for John becomes apparent when she instructs her daughter to ask for the head of the Baptist. The influence of Herodias upon her daughter becomes apparent as she immediately complies with her mother's wishes. She asks for the head of John the Baptist on a platter.

v.6:26-29 *And the king was exceedingly sorry; [yet] for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her. And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison, And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother. And when his disciples heard [of it], they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.*

One gets the impression that Herod didn't see this one coming. He's making merry on his birthday with his leaders and friends. He's probably drunk and possibly even now having designs on his niece. In front of everyone he makes his oath and now must give in to his niece's demand.

- a) He was exceedingly sorry. He did not want to do it, and yet, he would commit murder to save face. He was duped. He was tricked, but he gives the order. His wife outsmarted him and would now have her way.
- b) The executioner is sent, John is beheaded, and his head is brought to the girl who in turn gives it to her mother. John's disciples are allowed to take the body and give it a proper burial. Matthew tells us John's disciples went to Jesus, who hearing of John's death, grieved. (Matt. 14:12-13)

History tells us that Aretas, the father of Herod's rejected wife, waged war against Herod and destroyed his armies. Herod went to Rome with Herodias and was eventually exiled by Caligula to Lyons in Gaul.

v.6:30-33 And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately. And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him.

Mark returns to his narrative. He picks up the story with the apostles returning from their missionary journeys. Returning to Capernaum they find Jesus teaching and ministering to a large crowd. Did they all come back on the same day or filter in over a period of days?

- a) *At any rate, the returning apostles are excited to tell Jesus everything that had happened and the things they had experienced. We are not told any of the stories, but the fact that they returned with such excitement indicates that they had met with success.*
- b) *They probably departed reluctantly for they were raw recruits who were totally dependent upon the Master, but now they return in confidence having exercised the powers given to them and experiencing the authority their message carried.*
- c) *The picture painted is that of the apostles trying to speak to Jesus, but are hindered by the demanding crowd. They didn't have time to eat let alone to talk. Jesus sees their need to talk about their experiences and invites them to go away with Him, away from the crowd where they could be alone.*
- d) *Jesus and the apostles get into a boat and go to a deserted location. Luke tells us it was near the city of Bethsaida. The people see them get into the boat and knowing where He is going start out on foot to His destination. It seems as though the crowd increases as people from the cities along the way join in.*
- e) *It was about a four mile journey across the water, but estimated to be a ten mile journey by land. The other gospels tell us that Jesus arrived first and did indeed spend time in a mountain with the apostles as the crowd arrives. (John 6:1-5)*

v.6:34-36 And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things. And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time [is] far passed: Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat.

The private time with His apostles is cut short. Jesus, seeing that a crowd had gathered, steps out from His place of seclusion and surveys the crowd. He was not angry that His time with the apostles had been interrupted, but on the contrary, is filled with compassion.

- a) *In His eyes they were as sheep without a shepherd, that is, they were lost, helpless and in danger in a spiritual sense. Their leaders did not provide guidance or provide spiritual nourishment. They themselves had lost their way. They were fumbling around in a state of spiritual darkness.*

“No animal is as dependent as the sheep. Without someone to guide it, it wanders, is lost, becomes food for wolves, etc. Without someone to graze it, it starves. Jesus knows that the people are like that; their leaders fail to give them reliable guidance. They do not supply their souls with nourishing food. The minds of the would-be guides are too occupied with the legalistic niceties about Sabbath restrictions, fasts, phylacteries, tassels, etc., to be concerned about souls.” William Hendriksen

- b) *So Jesus ministered to them. He taught them many things. Luke specifies that He preached to them about the kingdom of God and that He healed all of the sick, (Luke 9:11)*
- c) *From the gospel of John it appears that Jesus had presented the problem of feeding the crowd of people even before He had stepped out to address them. (John 6:5-7) The subject is then dropped while Jesus ministers among the people. The apostles, or at least Phillip, was to solve the food problem.*
- d) *The apostles must have been thinking about this throughout the day for when it starts getting late they bring up the subject of food. Their solution is to send the people away into the surrounding towns while they can still buy bread. It's almost as if they are reminding Jesus of His previous concern as if He had forgotten.*

v.6:37-40 He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat? He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes. And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties.

The suggestion of the apostles is unsatisfactory, so Jesus simply tells them to feed the crowd. The apostles themselves tired and hungry, their time of rest with Jesus cut short, and once again given a task that they perceive as being impossible, respond sarcastically to Jesus.

- a) *Buying 200 pennyworth of bread had already been dismissed by Phillip as not being nearly enough. Two hundred pennyworth must have been all the money they had because now they basically ask Jesus, “So you want us to go buy the 200 pennyworth of bread?” Implied is,*

“what good will that do?” (see Matt. 15:23; Mark 10:13; Mark 5:31)

- b) *Jesus ignores their sarcasm and tells them to go and see how much food is available. They find a boy who has five loaves and two fish. The other gospels capture the despair of the apostles as they give Jesus the information He requested. (John 6:8-9)*
- c) *Jesus tells the apostles to make the people sit down in groups of hundreds and fifties. They comply and about 5000 people sit on the green hillside near the Sea of Galilee.*

v.6:41-44 And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave [them] to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all. And they did all eat, and were filled. And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes. And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

Jesus takes the bread and the fish. He blesses it, which is synonymous with giving thanks. He then gives it to His disciples for distribution to the crowd. The crowd, which numbered about 5000 ate and were full.

- a) *Very little information is given to us as to the particulars of this miracle, in fact, that a miracle was taking place is not even stated, but is implied in the fact that 5000 men ate and were full. Did the food multiply at the hands of Jesus? Did it multiply in the baskets or as it was passed around? Furthermore, twelve baskets of leftover pieces were collected by the apostles. Everyone had eaten their fill and they ended up with more food than they started with!*

“This miracle was significant, and shows that Christ came into the world, to be the great feeder as well as the great healer; not only to restore, but to preserve and nourish, spiritual life; and in him there is enough for all that come to him, enough to fill the soul, to fill the treasures; none are sent empty away from Christ, but those that come to him full of themselves.” Matthew Henry

v.6:45-47 And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people. And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray. And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land.

After the crowds had eaten, Jesus “straightway constrained” or ordered the apostles to immediately get into the ship and go to Bethsaida leaving Him behind. There were in fact two towns called Bethsaida. The one where they were currently was on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, while their destination was Bethsaida on the western shore of the sea, which was near Capernaum.

- a) John in his gospel explains this strange and urgent command by Jesus to His apostles. Jesus perceived that the crowd influenced by the miracle had designs on physically ushering Him to Jerusalem to make Him king. (John 6:14-15) Jesus did not want His apostles to get caught up in this for they also did not understand the spiritual nature of Jesus' kingdom. (Acts 1:6) So perceiving the crowds mindset, He quickly sends the apostles away so as not to be influenced by the crowd.
- b) Jesus sends the crowd away and goes up into the mountain to pray. The apostles are in the ship making their way to Capernaum. Evening had come; darkness had set in and Jesus is on the mountain overlooking the sea watching the ship containing His apostles making its way across the water. The ship is probably a speck of light upon the dark water.

v.6:48-50 *And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them. But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out: For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.*

They had a strong headwind and as a result were not making good progress. According to the data provided by John, they had progressed about three miles, the total journey estimated to be about five miles. The fourth watch was between three and six A.M., so they had been rowing for several hours.

- a) Jesus, who had been watching them, sets out on foot walking on the water and coming towards them. The phrase "would have passed them by" demonstrates that Jesus was totally unaffected by the waves and the wind. A normal walking pace was faster than the boat was traveling.
- b) Did Jesus carry a torch to light His way? Did the apostles see this light coming toward them at first thinking it to be another boat until they distinguished the figure of a man? Did He simply get close enough for the light from their ship to make His form visible upon the water?
- c) Another extra-ordinary experience for the apostles! The wind was blowing, the waves are breaking, they have been laboring for hours probably at the point of exhaustion, and now a human figure is walking beside them on the sea.
- d) The first thought is that He is a spirit or a ghost. Being troubled and afraid to cry out. Jesus mercifully puts an immediate end to all of their fears and speculates as He identifies Himself to them. "Be of good cheer; It is I; be not afraid."

It is at this point that Peter makes his request to go out upon the water and to meet Jesus. This story is recorded only in Matthew. (Matt. 14:27-32)

v.6:51-53 And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. For they considered not [the miracle] of the loaves: for their heart was hardened. And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore.

Jesus (and Peter) get into the boat and the wind stops. They are “sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondering.” In modern language they are once again “totally blown away.” They don’t know exactly what to make of this latest experience and are once again filled with wonder.

a) *It seems that the disciples viewed the miracles of Jesus as separate happenings, therefore, every new thing that Jesus did astounded them. Their hearts were hardened, that is, they didn’t have the ability to put all these events together and to recognize their significance. They saw the five thousand fed, but they looked at the miracle instead of the One who worked it.*

“When Mark says that the hearts of these disciples were ‘hardened,’ this probably means that the obtuseness of the twelve, their inability to draw the necessary conclusions from the miracles of Jesus, was the result of sinful neglect to ponder and meditate on the marvelous works and on the nature of the One who performed them.” William Hendriksen

b) *The boat landed on the shore by the plains of Genesaret, which is a little south of Capernaum and also near Bethsaida. These three places are all close to each other and represent the same destination coming from the other side of the sea.*

c) *John’s gospel implies a miraculous arrival while Mark’s account implies that they arrived in the normal way. The wording used in both accounts is vague enough not to totally dismiss the other. (John 6:21) While Peter was walking on the water it is hard to believe that the other apostles continued to row. The boat was probably pushed back by the waves so that by the time Jesus entered the boat and the wind ceased they were grossly off course. The ship was probably miraculously taken to the waters off Capernaum and the apostles rowed it in.*

v.6:54-56 And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew him, And ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was. And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.

As soon as the boat landed Jesus was recognized. Word quickly spread throughout the region that Jesus had returned. They carried individuals who were bedridden to Him. Mark again paints the picture of Jesus the great healer. He makes a general statement saying that wherever Jesus went crowds sought Him out for healings and were not denied. Power went out from Him so that even those who touched the border of His clothes were healed.