



# The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V22 N38 October 4, 2020

## KING JESUS

### “The Struggle to Believe”

Mark 6:45-56

#### THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

##### Jesus Christ

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners, and rose from the dead.

*“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.”*

Hebrews 1:3



Who is Jesus—  
really?

In his conversation with the LORD, after God has promised to go with him and the Israelites to the Promised Land (Ex 33:14-17), Moses asks God, “Now show me your glory” (v. 18) and the LORD replies, “I will cause my goodness to *pass in front of you*,” but goes on to explain, “You cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live” (v. 20). A description of the theophany to Moses follows in chapter 34. “The LORD said to Moses, ‘Chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones, and I will write on them the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. Be ready in the morning, and then come up on Mount Sinai . . . So Moses chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones and went up Mount Sinai early in the morning, as the LORD had commanded him; and he carried the two stone tablets in his hands. Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. And he *passed in front of Moses*, proclaiming, ‘The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.’

Moses bowed to the ground at once and worshiped” (vv. 1-2, 4-8).

The description of another Old Testament theophany is found in 1 Kings 19—this time to Elijah. After his experience with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, the prophet hightails it to Horeb after hearing that Jezebel is determined to kill him. You see, King Ahab has told her how Elijah has “killed all the prophets with the sword” (v. 1), and she in turn has sent a messenger to Elijah to say to him: “May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them” (v. 2). God’s prophet is depressed and despondent. In his conversation with the LORD after God comes to him asking the question, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” (v. 9), the

prophet answers: “I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too” (v. 10). With that God tells him, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to *pass by*” (v. 11). And the LORD’s presence is neither “in the wind,” “in the earthquake,” nor “in the fire” but in “a gentle whisper” (vv. 11-12), and when Elijah hears it he pulls “his cloak over his face” so as not to look upon the LORD’s face.

In the Greek Old Testament, these two passages share the use of a common Greek verb, *parerchomai*, translated “to pass by” or “pass in front of.” About that verb, one commentator writes: “The verb *parerchomai* (‘to pass by’), when connected to a divinity, refers to an epiphany [i.e., theophany]. The Old Testament records that God made ‘striking and temporary appearances in the earthly realm to a select individual or group for the purpose of communicating a message’” (David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary: Mark*, 263). The same verb is used in Mark 6:48. In his description of Jesus walking on the lake, he writes, “He meant to pass by them” (ESV), which given the significance of the verb could be translated, “He meant to manifest himself to them.” The use of the verb together with the use of Jesus’ greeting to the disciples, “Take courage. *It is I*. Don’t be afraid,” suggests that this is an *epiphany*, a revelation of the deity of Jesus to the disciples. No doubt, Jesus’ declaration, “It is I,” serves to identify him to his disciples, who have mistaken him for a ghost, but it is also how God identifies himself with the words “I am” (Ex 3:14; Dt 32:39; Isa 41:4; 43:10; 46:4; 51:12; cf. 47:8, 10; 48:12; also Jn 8:58; 18:5-6). Consequently, one commentator concludes: “The Christology of Mark’s readers was far more developed than that of the disciples during Jesus’s ministry. As a result it is quite possible that Mark expected them to see in the ‘I am’ of this verse a reference to Jesus’s divine nature” (Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT, 326).

# 1

## EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

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45 Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. 46 After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

47 Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. 48 He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, 49 but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, 50 because they all saw him and were terrified.

Immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." 51 Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, 52 for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.

53 When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. 54 As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. 55 They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. 56 And wherever he went – into villages, towns or countryside – they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Underline "Immediately" in v. 45 and "later that night" in v. 47.
- Circle "Bethsaida" in v. 45.
- Bracket "about to pass by them" in v. 47.
- Bracket "shortly before dawn" in v. 48.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 49.
- Highlight "It is I" in v. 50.
- Circle "hardened" in v. 52.
- Circle "Gennesaret" in v. 53.
- Circle "touch" in v. 56.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about \_\_\_\_\_."



## DIG DEEPER

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Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Verses 45-46 *set the stage* for the miracle that follows. Explain how.
2. Mark writes, "He *saw* the disciples straining at the oars" (v. 48). But he is "alone on land" and they are in a boat "out on the sea" (ESV). How could he see them?
3. Describe the wind and its effects on them that night.
4. The disciples mistake Jesus walking on the lake for a ghost. Was it a *reasonable* mistake on their part?
5. Some interpret this as *epiphany* or *theophany*. What makes you think it is or isn't?
6. The wind dies down when Jesus climbs into the boat, and the disciples are amazed. Did they get it? Explain.
7. What did the disciples *not understand* about the feeding of the 5,000?
8. Mark writes, "their hearts were *hardened*" (v. 52). How so?
9. Sick people in Gennesaret beg Jesus to let them "touch even the edge of his cloak" (v. 56). What does that indicate about Jesus and about them?
10. **Discussion:** The disciples' hearts are *hardened*. It's possible for us to have hardened hearts as well. Talk about it.

### Commentary On The Text

The narrative about the feeding of the 5,000 (Mk 6:30-44) and the one about Jesus walking on the water (vv. 45-56) are closely related *chronologically*. The first miracle occurred “late in the day” (v. 35), sometime after 3:00 P.M., and the second occurred “shortly before dawn” (v. 48), sometime before 6:00 A.M. the next morning. What’s more, the two are closely related *interpretively*. Mark *explains* that the disciples are “amazed” (v. 51) when Jesus climbs into their boat and the wind dies down *because* “they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened” (v. 52). In this case, their amazement apparently leaves something to be desired.

The meaning of this narrative hinges largely on the significance of two passing remarks that can easily be missed: “He was about to pass by them” (v. 48) or “He meant to pass them by” (ESV) and “It is I” (v. 50). According to one writer, commentators have offered nine different interpretations of the first and two different interpretations of the second (David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary: Mark*, 262-65). But before examining these remarks, let’s survey the narrative found in Mark 6:45-56.

Verses 45-46 set the stage for the miracle that follows. They explain why the disciples find themselves in a boat out on the lake later that night, the night after the feeding of the 5,000, and they explain why Jesus is not with them. Mark writes that after dismissing the crowd, “*Immediately*, Jesus *made* his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida” (v. 45), and that after sending them away, he “went up on a mountain to pray” (v. 46). Mark frequently uses “*immediately*” (v. 45). Sometimes it connotes a *sense of urgency*; sometimes it simply joins one account to the preceding one. It likely conveys a sense of urgency here (Robert A. Guelich, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 34A, *Mark 1-8:26*, 347; contra Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT, 321), because John explains in his Gospel that Jesus dismissed the crowd and withdrew to a mountain by himself because the people who witnessed the feeding of the 5,000 “intended to come and make him king by force” (6:15) and because “*made*” connotes that Jesus compelled his disciples to squelch a potential messianic uprising.

Verses 47-52 describe the miracle itself. Hours after setting off for Bethsaida, Jesus sees “the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them” (v. 48). While Mark does not explain how Jesus is able to see the disciples’ plight, if the miracle is, in fact, a theophany, a manifestation of Jesus’ deity, it likely connotes Jesus’ “miraculous ‘telescopic’ vision” (Robert A. Guelich, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 34A, *Mark 1-8:26*, 350).

The disciples have been rowing throughout the night to no avail. A strong headwind hinders their progress at first, then ultimately blows them so far off course that

instead of landing in Bethsaida, their intended destination, they land in Gennesaret on the other side of the lake. Jesus goes out to them when they are far from shore, but they mistake him for a ghost. After all, walking on water is something people can’t do, but weightless ghosts can! It’s also something God can do, but Jesus’ deity never crosses the disciples’ minds. In spite of all they have seen him do, they have yet to satisfactorily answer their earlier question, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!” (4:41). One commentator writes: “The wind poses no obstacle to Jesus and the waves provide firm footing as he marches across the sea. Treading the waves, however, is something that only God can do (Job 9:8; Isa. 43:16; 51:10; Sir. 24:5-6). When Jesus comes strolling across the waters, he shares in the unlimited power of the Creator” (Garland, 262).

He goes out to them, but according to Mark, “He meant to pass them by” (ESV), which makes little sense unless the words he uses point to a theophany and are better translated, “He meant to manifest himself to them.” What’s more, the words Jesus uses to identify himself, “It is I,” are the same words God uses in the Old Testament to identify himself, “I am” (see p. 1 and notes on v. 47 and v. 50). Then, when Jesus climbs into the boat, the wind miraculously dies down, leaving its occupants “completely amazed” (v. 51). But their response falls short; amazement is not enough. They ought to have recognized the deity of Jesus, but they did not, because they did not understand “about the loaves,” a reference to his previous miracle. In their presence, Jesus has calmed a storm (4:35-41), cast out evil spirits (5:1-20), healed a hemorrhaging woman and raised a dead girl (5:21-43), fed 5,000 men with five barley loaves and two fish, and even now after he has walked on the lake, they remain *only* amazed. The disciples refuse to go where the evidence points, namely, to the conclusion that Jesus is God’s divine Son—a failure of both *wit* and *will* on their part.

Verses 53-57 describe Jesus’ reception in Gennesaret. He is welcomed like a rock star. People run throughout the whole region to collect sick people and bring them to Jesus. And wherever he goes throughout the region, people place people in marketplaces and beg Jesus to let them touch “even the edge of his cloak” (v. 56), indicating both his power to heal and their confidence in him. “All who touched it were healed,” Mark says (v. 56).

The *upper story* of this epiphany narrative reveals the deity of Jesus. He is as Mark writes in his opening, “the Messiah, the Son of God” (1:1). The *lower story* warns his disciples against hardheartedness, a kind of stubborn failure of *wit* and *will*, to recognize who Jesus is, really, and live accordingly.

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## Word Studies/Notes

v. 45 *Bethsaida* “Bethsaida was a town on the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee; Gennesaret was a densely populated plain on the northwest side of the sea, between Tiberias and Capernaum . . . Gundry (*Mark*, 346) argues that before Jesus joins the disciples, they have been blown off course too far to make landing in Bethsaida practicable or desirable” (David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary: Mark*, 265; for more details see Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Mark*, TNTC, 155; and Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT, 322). “Evidently Jesus sent His disciples to ‘Bethsaida,’ by boat, but they ended up at Gennesaret, near Capernaum (v. 53; cf. John 6:17). Peter, Andrew, and Philip were from Bethsaida (cf. John 1:44; 12:21-22), but Peter and Andrew’s home was in Capernaum (Mark 1:29)” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Mark,” 2020 ed., 148, [planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/mark.pdf](http://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/mark.pdf)).

v. 47 *about to pass by them* Cf., “He meant to pass by them” (ESV). “The NIV adopts the view that the verb *thelo* (‘to wish, will’) functions as an auxiliary verb like *mello* (‘to be about to’): ‘he was about to pass by them.’ The evidence for this use of the verb is too slim to make this interpretation likely” (Garland, 262). “To ‘pass by them’ [*parelthein autous*] most probably has its significance in the similar language used in an epiphany of God to Moses (Exod 33:19-23; 34:6) and Elijah (1 Kgs 19:11) as the One who ‘passed by them’ in a moment of self-revelation (Lohmeyer, 133-34; Kremer, *BibLeb* 10 [1969] 226-28; Pesch, 1:361). Therefore, instead of a story about Jesus’ rescue of his disciples who are distressed but not in danger (cf. 4:35-41), this is an epiphany story about Jesus’ self-revelation to his own followers” (Robert A. Guelich, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 34A, *Mark 1-8:26*, 350). “The verb [*parerchomai*] is ‘almost a technical term for a divine epiphany in the Septuagint’ [the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament]” (Stein, 324).

v. 48 *shortly before dawn* Cf., “as the night was ending” (NET); lit., “about the fourth watch of the night” (ESV). “Unlike the Jewish reckoning of time, which involved three watches, the Roman reckoning of time involved four watches (Josephus, *Ant.* 5.6.5 §223; 18.9.6 §356), and the fourth watch would be 3 a.m. to 6 a.m. This lends support to the traditional view that Mark was written for the church in Rome (cf. 13:35)” (Stein, 323-24).

v. 50 *It is I* Gk. *ego eimi*. “At the level of the reader/hearer Jesus’ coming to the disciples from prayer on the mountain and his miraculous walking on the sea to ‘pass by’ makes [*ego eimi*] an echo of the OT revelation formula of God (Exod 3:14; Isa 41:4; 43:10-11) and sets this story off from the post-Easter appearance stories (cf. Luke 24:37; Gn 1:270)” (Guelich, 351).

v. 52 *hardened* “By implication, had they understood the point of Jesus’ ‘teaching’ by word and deed, they would have grasped the significance of his self-disclosure in 6:50 and understood the quieting of the wind. But their ‘heart was hardened’ [*ēn autōn ē kardia pepōrōmenē*], a description given Jesus’ opponents in 3:15 and repeated again with reference to the disciples in 8:17. This explanation accents the disciples’ failure to understand, a motif which first appeared in 4:13 (see comment of 4:13) and comes to a head in 8:17-21 (see comment on 8:17-21)” (Guelich, 352-53). “Here is the reason the disciples reacted as they did in this series of miracles. Mark alone recorded it, probably as a result of Peter’s preaching. The disciples had ‘not’ learned (‘gained any insight’) from the feeding of the 5,000 (‘the loaves’) — that Jesus was God. Their collective mind was not open to this possibility” (Constable, 151). The disciples refuse to go where the evidence points, namely, to the conclusion that Jesus is God’s divine Son — a failure of both *wit* and *will* on their part.

v. 53 *Gennesaret* I.e., “the fertile, densely populated, three-by-one-mile plain along the western shore of the Sea of Galilee between Tiberias and Capernaum” (Guelich, 356). After Jesus joined them and the wind, which had blown them off course, died down, they redirected the boat to Gennesaret (see Stein, 331).

v. 56 *touch* “Read in the context of 3:10, where the sick sought to touch Jesus, 3:27-28, where the woman sought to touch his clothes, the desire here to touch only the extremity of his clothing represents an intensification or progression not so much in Jesus’ power to heal as the faith of those seeking his help. One has to read this summary of the miracle collection in view of the woman’s healing and its explication based on her faith (5:25-34) that lies at the core of that miracle cycle. And one must read this also in view of Jesus’ limited healing ministry at Nazareth (6:5-6) because of lack of faith. All three account point the reader to the posture of the people involved more than to Jesus’ ‘power’ (see comment on 5:30)” (Guelich, 357; see contra Stein, 332).

# 4

## APPLY THE TEXT

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### CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Recognizing the true deity of Jesus, God the Son, disciples should guard against becoming indifferent to who he is and becoming indifferent to living accordingly.

### CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



### 3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



## FAMILY TALK

My husband grew up in Rhode Island and hunkered down through quite a few hurricanes as a child. His family had a hurricane plan that included filling their tub with water and buying a lifetime supply of bread and milk. Living in North Texas we have tornados, which are a little less predictable, but still require a safety plan. I have a sweet picture of my kids taken during a tornado warning. They were sheltered in the pantry and the floor was covered with all the essentials - blankets, pillows, a kazillion stuffed animals, flashlights, bottled water and every imaginable snack. In the photo, the kids are grinning ear-to-ear, living their best life watching a movie on the iPad. I'm sure they were concerned with the storm, but because Daddy was in charge, they took comfort in knowing all would be well. What a beautiful picture of how God the Father takes care of us in the middle of our storms. The past few months have certainly challenged all of us. Like the disciples, our boat has been rocking and we've fought against the waves trying to navigate a global pandemic. But the thing is, God is still in control. Our storms seem crazy big, like a giant to an ant. But no matter how huge our storm is, God is bigger. What is your family storm plan for tornados? What about for the trials of life? Do you have a verse you run to? What helps you stay focused on God? The storm will pass; it might not be fun, but it isn't meant to last forever. God is.

### What Does The Bible Say?

Read Mark 6:45-56.

1. Where did Jesus go and why?
2. What did the disciples think about Jesus walking on water?
3. How did Jesus respond to the disciples? The crowd?

### What Do You Think?

Imagine you're on the boat and see Jesus walking on water. Honestly, how do you think you'd react? What about Jesus amazes you?

### What Do You Do?

Divide your paper in two columns. On one column, write down all the storms in life that cause you to be afraid. In the other, write what you know about God that takes away these storms. Work on your memory verse!

### CORE COMPETENCY: Jesus Christ

I believe Jesus Christ is fully God/fully man and died for my sins.

### MEMORY VERSE: Hebrews 12:2

*Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.*

### KidPIXCOUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: [kids@wearecentral.org](mailto:kids@wearecentral.org)

- \_\_\_\_\_ I completed my Bible Study
- \_\_\_\_\_ I memorized this week's verse
- \_\_\_\_\_ I brought my Bible to church
- \_\_\_\_\_ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE PARENT SIGNATURE

# OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

## CENTRAL BELIEFS

**Authority of the Bible** (2 Timothy 3:16-17)  
*I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.*

**Church** (Ephesians 4:15-16)

*I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.*

**Eternity** (John 14:1-4)

*I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.*

**The Holy Spirit** (Romans 8:9)

*I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.*

**Humanity** (John 3:16)

*I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.*

**Identity in Christ** (John 1:12)

*I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.*

**Jesus Christ** (Hebrews 1:1-4)

*I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.*

**Life Purpose** (Acts 20:24)

*I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.*

**Personal God** (Psalm 121:1-2)

*I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.*

**Salvation by Grace** (Ephesians 2:8-9)

*I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.*



## CENTRAL VIRTUES

**Love** (1 John 4:10-12)

*I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.*

**Joy** (John 15:11)

*I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.*

**Peace** (Philippians 4:6-7)

*I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.*

**Patience** (Proverbs 14:29)

*I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.*

**Kindness/Goodness** (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

*I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others*

**Faithfulness** (Proverbs 3:3-4)

*I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.*

**Gentleness** (Philippians 4:5)

*I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.*

**Self-Control** (Titus 2:11-13)

*I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.*

**Grace** (Colossians 3:13)

*I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.*

**Hope** (1 Peter 1:3-5)

*I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.*

**Humility** (Philippians 2:3-4)

*I choose to esteem others above myself.*



## CENTRAL PRACTICES

**Bible Study** (Hebrews 4:12)

*I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Biblical Community** (Acts 2:44-47)

*I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.*

**Compassion** (Psalm 82:3-4)

*I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.*

**Disciple-Making** (2 Timothy 2:2)

*I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.*

**Evangelism** (Acts 1:8)

*I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.*

**Generosity** (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

*I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.*

**Prayer** (Psalm 66:16-20)

*I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Single-Mindedness** (Matthew 6:33)

*I focus on God and His priorities for my life.*

**Spiritual Gifts** (Romans 12:4-6)

*I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.*

**Worship** (Psalm 95:1-7)

*I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.*

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