



Jesus Calms the Storm and Casts out Demons

Matthew 8:23–34



LESSON GOAL

The student will worship the Son of God who has power over both the natural and the supernatural world.

BIBLE TRUTHS

- Jesus has power over everything.
- The disciples did not have faith in Jesus' power.
- The demons were afraid of Jesus.

KEY VERSE

“So the men marveled, saying, ‘Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?’” —*Matthew 8:27*

APPLICATION

- Worship Jesus by obeying Him.
- Praise Jesus for His power.
- Devote yourself to pleasing King Jesus.

NEXT WEEK

Jesus Forgives Sin
Matthew 9:2–8

Symbol Key



Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Center



Activity



Q & A



Age Group

Teacher Planning Sheet

PREPARE

Objectives/Truths to cover this week

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Personal Application

As a result of my study in this passage, God wants me to...

- _____
- _____
- _____

Three ways students need to apply this passage are...

- _____
- _____
- _____

POINT

Choose from various ideas to point them to the coming Bible lesson.

- _____
- _____

PROCLAIM

Choose from various ideas to proclaim the Bible lesson.

Presentation Ideas

- _____
- _____

Praise/Music Ideas

- _____
- _____
- _____

PRACTICE

Choose ideas to help review and apply today's lesson.

- _____
- _____

Materials Needed:

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... you shall teach them to your children.” —Deuteronomy 11:18–19

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here that will aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

Introduction

In Matthew 8:23–34, the apostle records two amazing displays of Jesus’ power. In the first display, Jesus commands the wind and sea. In the second, He commands demons. Both the natural and supernatural world submit to the Son of God. Jesus’ authority over all creation, whether seen or unseen, is proof that He is the promised Messiah, the King of the Jews. These two dramatic miracles should bring every man, woman and child to bow their lives in worship of the Son of God.

Jesus’ Power over Nature (Matt. 8:23–27)

After a busy evening of healing the sick and casting out demons (Matt. 8:16), Jesus planned to cross the Sea of Galilee in order to escape the crowds (8:18). Although Jesus had compassion on the multitudes who continually surrounded Him (9:36), He was tired and needed rest. Even as He prepared to leave, Jesus challenged would-be disciples with what it really meant to follow Him (Matt. 8:19–22). When Jesus finally got into the boat with His disciples, He fell asleep (8:24). Although in His divinity Jesus’ power was without limit, in His humanity Jesus needed to refresh His body by sleeping.

While Jesus slept in the boat, “suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea” (Matt. 8:24). Because of its position nearly 700 feet below sea level, sudden storms are a common occurrence on the Sea of Galilee. The apostle Matthew uses a particularly strong word to describe the storm, a word used elsewhere in the New Testament only to describe earthquakes. The violent water-quake brought waves so high “that the boat was covered with the waves” (8:24). The parallel account in Mark 4:35–41 reveals that the boat was filling with water.

Although four of the disciples were fishermen used to sailing on the Sea of Galilee, the disciples were worried by the intensity of this storm. When the storm did not die down and the boat began to fill with water, the disciples panicked and woke Jesus. They cried out to Him, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!” (Matt. 8:25). The Gospel of Mark also reveals that the disciples desperately asked, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” (Mark 4:38). The disciples rightly perceived the danger of the storm, but wrongly judged the character of their Lord. While they did not doubt Jesus’ ability to rescue them from the storm, they did doubt the Son’s care for His disciples.

Jesus reprimanded the disciples for their fear. He asked them, “Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?” (Matt. 8:26). The disciples had no reason to panic. They had seen Jesus perform so many miracles that they should have known both Jesus’ ability and His compassion. Although the disciples had faith in Jesus’ ability, they did not have faith in His compassion. Their cry was not “Save us if you can!” but “Save us if you care!” They had faith in Jesus to perform miracles, until they needed Him to do one for them. Then they doubted His care.

Jesus majestically revealed both His power and His care. As soon as He “rebuked the winds and the sea,” the wind stopped blowing and the waves stopped rolling (Matt. 8:26). The great calm which followed was not a natural, dying down of the storm but a supernatural, immediate stillness. The sea obeyed Jesus’ command of “Peace, be still” (Mark 4:39). The disciples had never been in danger because Jesus was king over creation.

The disciples who had turned to Jesus in desperation marveled at the extent of Jesus’ power. In shock the men said to one another, “Who can this be, that even the winds and sea obey Him?” (Matt. 8:27). Many of God’s prophets had done miracles but no prophet ever spoke as this man did. Without prayer or consulting with God, Jesus simply commanded nature as only God could. How foolish were they to doubt Jesus’ care for them! The disciples’ failure to trust Jesus was only part of a much larger failure to recognize that Jesus was God become human flesh.

Jesus’ Power over the Supernatural (Matt. 8:28–34)

While the disciples had a difficult time recognizing what kind of man Jesus was, the demons identified Him immediately as the Son of God. After Jesus and the disciples landed on the other side of the Sea of Galilee in a predominantly Gentile area, Jesus was met by two demon-possessed men. The demon-possessed men, who lived among desolate tombs, are described as “exceedingly fierce” (Matt. 8:28). Although Matthew doesn’t give many details, Mark reveals that the men (although specifically mentioning only one) were supernaturally strong and unable to be bound (Mark 5:4). They could pull apart chains and break shackles. At least one of the men went about without clothes (Luke 7:27) and spent both day and night “crying out and cutting himself with stones” (Mark 5:5).

When the demon-possessed men saw Jesus, they cried out, “What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?” (Matt. 8:29). The terrified demons ran to Jesus as soon as they saw Him, worshiped Him, and fell down before Him (Mark 5:6; Luke 8:28). Although Jesus’ arrival was unwanted and unexpected, the demons realized that they were in the presence of God’s Son who would one day judge them and cast them into the abyss (Luke 8:31). The demons resented Jesus’ interference in their torture of men and feared that their time of terror had ended with Jesus’ arrival.

Mark and Luke tell how after Jesus commanded the demons to come out, the demons begged Jesus not to make them leave that area and go into the abyss (Mark 5:8 and Luke 8:29). The demons pleaded with Jesus: “If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine” (Matt. 8:31). (“If you cast us out” does not reveal that the demons doubted they were leaving; the idea is similar to “since you’ve cast us out.”) The demons could not resist Jesus’ command but they could still ask permission from God the Son to enter the herd of two thousand pigs feeding nearby (Matt. 8:30; Mark 5:11–13). Although its mysterious why the demons wanted to go into the herd of pigs or why Jesus allowed them to go, when Jesus gave them permission to go, the legion of demons entered into the pigs (Matt. 8:31–32; Mark 5:13; Luke 8:32–33). After being possessed, the “whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water” (Matt. 8:32). (It is unclear whether the drowning was the demons’ desire.) Even though the Gospels do not answer all the questions surrounding this event, Jesus’ authority over the demons is unmistakable. The disciples had just seen Jesus’ power over nature and now they saw his power over the supernatural. The demons were terrified by the presence of God’s Son whom they knew they would have to obey.

When those in the city nearby heard from the pigs’ keepers what had happened, they came out to meet Jesus (Matt. 8:33). After seeing the man who had been

demon-possessed “sitting and clothed and in his right mind” and hearing how Jesus had cast out his demons (Mark 5:15–16), the people who saw Jesus were afraid and begged Him to leave (Matt. 8:34). The people did not want to be in the presence of the Son of God. (Matthew chooses to leave out of his narrative that at least one of the demon-possessed men desired to follow Jesus but was sent away by Jesus to return home to proclaim the great things that God had done (Mark 5:18–20; Luke 8:38–39). Matthew finishes his narrative on a negative note emphasizing the response of many who were afraid of the presence of the Son of God. Those who hide from God’s presence seek to retain control of their lives, stifle their conscience, and enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.)

Conclusion

Matthew’s presentation of Jesus’ power over both nature and the supernatural are clear testimony that Jesus is indeed the Messiah, the Son of God. Because He is the Son of God, He must be worshiped. For a time, the disciples followed Jesus but did not worship Him as the Son of God. The demons acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God but had no love or willing obedience to Him. The people in the city resented and feared the presence of the Son of God. Anyone who would be saved must embrace the reality that Jesus is the Son of God. Man’s only hope is to have their sin revealed by the perfect Son of God, to have their judgment taken by the merciful Son of God, and to have their lives submitted to the all-powerful Son of God. Did Jesus calm the storm? Did He cast out demons? Then do not presume to disobey the one whom both squall and spirit, tempest and tempter obey.

POINT TO THE TRUTH

*“Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth.”
—Psalm 78:1*

This section includes questions to review last week’s lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week’s lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



Review Questions

Who is this man that came to Jesus?

He was a centurion soldier, a high official of the Roman army. He was also a Gentile and not a Jew.

Why did the centurion visit with Jesus?

The Bible says that the centurion came to Jesus asking for help. His servant was at home sick in bed, paralyzed and suffering great pain (8:5–6).

What did the centurion ask of Jesus?

He asked that Jesus would just say the word and his servant would be healed (8:8).

How did Jesus respond to the centurion’s faith.

The Bible says that Jesus was astonished at the man’s faith. He had not found so much faith in all of Israel.

What was the result of the centurion’s visit?

Jesus healed the centurion’s servant because he had come in great faith.



Calming the Storm

Bring a tub or bucket of water with a toy boat inside and little people figures inside the boat. Swirl the water around to make a storm. Tell the children how dangerous storms were on the Sea of Galilee. If enough water got inside the boat, or a large wave came on the boat, or the wind blew too hard, the boat would overturn and sink. The people inside the boat could die in the water. Show how long it takes for even this small amount of water to stop moving when the swirling stops.



Keeping it Calm

Much to His disciple's astonishment, Jesus immediately calmed the storm with a simple word. The difficulty of doing this is immediately apparent when one considers the nature of water, it's almost impossible to keep it still! Fill a see-through container with water and place a toy boat on the water. Then set a fan blowing over the container or bump it with your hand to show the children how the boat gets tossed about. Here's a challenge, can any of them stop the boat from moving without touching it? Can any of them get the water to stop moving? After a number have tried, you can tell them that there is someone who can and the Bible tells us who that is.



5

Legion of Demons

The Legion of Demons in Matthew 8:28–34 were apparently appealing to Jesus not to cast them pre-maturely into hell. It is sufficient for the children to know that demons exist, that they cannot be seen, but that, if God permits, they can control the behavior of people to varying degrees. A true Christian cannot be indwelt by a demon because he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9–11). Illustrate this concept to the children by showing them various physical illnesses which are caused by germs which we cannot see and yet can make us very ill. If we have the right kind of anti-bodies they can prevent us from getting overrun by the germs. In the same way if we have God's Spirit in us then He prevents evil spirits from gaining making us ill. You may also bring a balloon into class and blow it up. You can explain that although we can't see the air it is causing the balloon to become big and round. In the same way, demons affect people even though we can't see them.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

"Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done." —Psalm 78:4

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students' understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use alongside the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done right from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

Large crowds of people followed Jesus around, hoping to hear more of His teaching and see Him perform miracles. Many sick people came to Jesus hoping to be healed. Jesus cared very much for all of the people, but He became tired and needed to get some sleep. Even though Jesus was God, He was still limited by the fact that He was human. Humans need to eat, to drink, to rest, and to sleep, and Jesus was no different. There were so many people following Him, though, that He decided the best place to go to get away for some rest was on a boat.

Jesus and His disciples took a boat out into the Sea of Galilee. While they were on their way to the other side of the sea, a great, big storm came up very suddenly. The waves were huge, and started crashing down onto the boat. The disciples were scared that they would die in the storm. The boat could tip over and then they would drown. They knew that Jesus could perform miracles, but He was not helping them or doing anything about it. Finally, they found Him on the boat, and He was asleep! He must have been terribly tired to sleep through such a storm.

"Lord, save us! We are perishing!" they cried (8:25).

Jesus said to them, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" (8:26)

Jesus got up and told the winds to stop blowing, and immediately the storm stopped and the water was perfectly calm. The disciples were amazed at Jesus' ability to stop a storm. They knew that Jesus was powerful, but they were stunned by His power over nature.

The disciples were foolish to have doubted Jesus. He had performed many miracles in front of them, but they were not sure that Jesus would do anything to save them. They were still learning that Jesus was in fact God in human flesh.

The demons, however, knew exactly who Jesus was. After they had reached the other side of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus and the disciples got off the boat and began traveling to the country of the Gergesenes. Along the way, they ran into a group of very violent, demon-possessed men. Everyone who lived in the area knew about these men and were afraid of them. People did not go anywhere near them, but Jesus was not afraid. When He came near them, the demons spoke through the men, and yelled out to Jesus, "What have we to do with you, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?" (8:29)

The demons knew that Jesus was God, and that He had authority over them. They knew that they would have to obey Jesus. They also knew that Jesus would likely cast them out of the men that they were possessing. They begged Him, "If you cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine." (8:31) And so Jesus did. There were about 2,000 pigs, and when the demons possessed them, they went crazy and ran down a steep hill, and fell off a cliff and into the sea. The pigs all died in the water.



The keepers of the pigs saw all of this and were amazed. They ran into the city and told everybody what they had seen. The men who had been possessed looked different. They were properly dressed, and were not acting crazy anymore. Jesus had demonstrated that He had power over demons, who are supernatural beings.

In both of these incidents, Jesus demonstrated how powerful He is. He has power over natural things, the things of the earth, like the storm that He commanded to go away. He also has power over supernatural things, the things of the spiritual world, like demons. Only God could have such power. By calming the storm and casting out demons Jesus was demonstrating that He is God.

Lesson Questions

Why did the disciples become afraid when sailing across the lake?

The Bible says that a great storm began to cause the waves to sweep over the boat.

What did the disciples find Jesus doing during the storm?

The disciples found Jesus sleeping on the boat.

Why did the disciples awake Jesus?

The disciples awoke Jesus because they knew He had the power to save them. Because they were afraid of dying in the great storm they asked Jesus for help.

What did Jesus do next?

He commanded the storm to be calm.

Who did Jesus see on the other side of the lake?

Jesus met two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs.

What did the demons ask Jesus?

The demons begged Jesus to cast them into a herd of pigs and they went off a cliff into the water.

Presentation Ideas



A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards®

Use appropriate A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards® with the lesson.



Betty Lukens Flannel Graph

Use appropriate flannel graph pieces with the lesson.



A Day On the Sea

Make a boat for the children to sit inside during the lesson. Use tape to form the outline of a boat on the floor or use butcher paper to create the walls of the boat. Bring props such as, oars, a bucket to bail out water, blue paper to be shaken (and confetti tossed) for the storm, and a spray bottle of water. During the second part of the story, have the students get out of the boat and sit in the “land” area of the classroom. Decorate the land area by putting paper pigs on the wall or by using stuffed animals.



The Storm Was Silent

Refer back to the water demonstration using a bucket of stirred water to illustrate how Jesus commanded the sea and how it immediately calmed both the water and the wind. (Variation) Have the boat sail from one end of the tub to the other (Country of the Gergesenes) and create a storm during its crossing.



Jesus Casts Out the Demons

Using hand puppets of Jesus, two demon-possessed men, and a few swine, tell the story of Jesus coming to the shore and of Jesus healing the men (with swine falling into tub of water).

Praise and Worship

The Lord Is My Light

Crown Him with Many Crowns

Rejoice the Lord Is King

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

“That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments.” —Psalm 78:7

Choose ideas from this section that review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



Casting All Our Cares On Him

Materials: copies of “Anxiety Boat” craft page, craft sticks, scissors, tape or glue, blank strips of paper

Directions: Have the students cut out the boat pieces and piece them together to make a sailboat. The boat should be folded on the dotted line and attached along the left and right edges forming a pocket. Attach the sail using a craft stick. Give each student three strips of blank paper. Have them write down or draw pictures of things that frighten them. Then have them put their strips inside their boat. As they put the strips in the boat, talk about casting our cares on Jesus by praying and remembering His promises in the Bible. For students who cannot yet write, go around the room and write down some of their fears for them.



Who Can This Be?

Materials: copies of “Who Can This Be?” craft page, construction paper (blue, brown, and white), glue, and scissors

Directions: Fold a piece of white construction paper in half. Cut out the shapes from the craft page and glue them on the front of the card to form a ship. (Optional: use the shapes as a template to cut out similar shapes from construction paper.) Glue the Matthew 8:27 verse near the ship toward the top of the page. To create a calm sea, cut a 1-inch strip out of blue construction paper and glue it to the bottom of the page. Open the card and glue the verse Colossians 1:15–17. Talk with the students about why Jesus could make the winds and seas obey Him.



“Calming the Storm”

Materials: copies of “Calming the Storm” craft pages, construction paper, scissors, glue, brads

Directions: Glue a 3-inch thick strip of blue construction paper to the bottom of a blank sheet of white construction paper. The paper should be landscape. This will represent the storm after Jesus calmed it. Cut out both pieces of the boat and glue them together. Attach the boat to the right side of the page using a paper fastener. The boat should be able to rock back and forth. Glue the Matthew 8:26 verse to the page. Next, fold the left third of the paper in. Glue the waves to the fold so that they cover the calm sea. Glue the Matthew 8:24 verse to the waves. Students can pull back the waves to reveal a calm sea.



Stormy Sea in a Bottle

Materials: 1 pt. or similar size water bottles, water, vegetable oil, glitter, blue food coloring

Directions: Before the class collect enough small plastic water bottles for each student. Fill a bottle about halfway with water. Next add a few drops of blue food coloring to make it look like the sea. Fill the rest of the bottle with vegetable oil. Add some glitter to the oil. Finally, replace the cap and have the students shake the bottle to create a storm at sea.

Coloring Pages

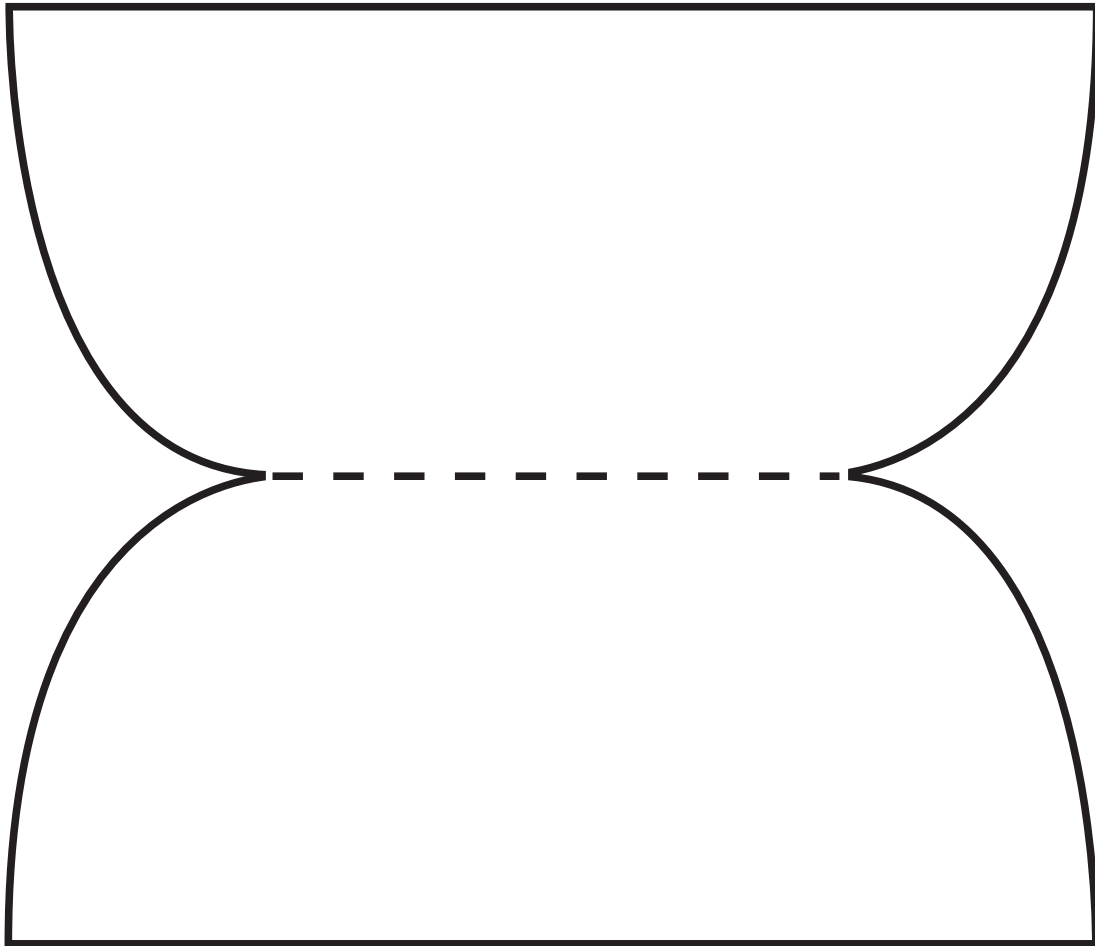
Give each child a copy of the coloring sheets at the back of the lesson. He or she can color the pages in class or take them home to color.



MEMORY VERSE

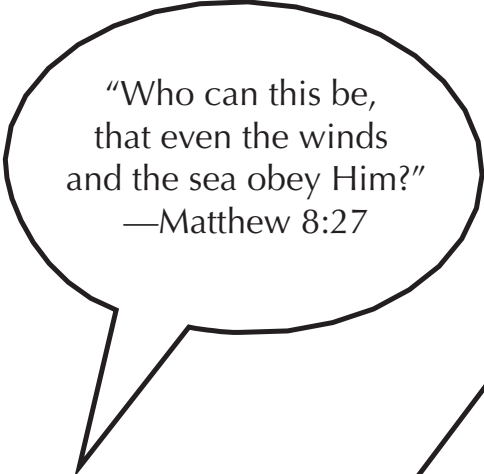
“So the men marveled, saying, “Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?” —*Matthew 8:27*

Anxiety Boat

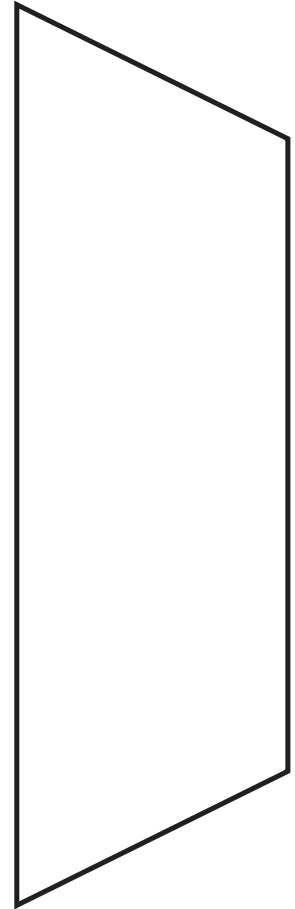
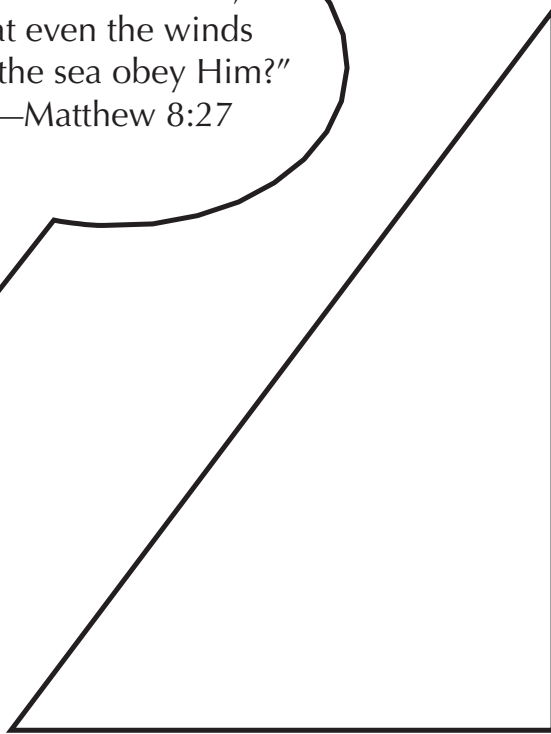


“Casting all your
anxieties upon
[Jesus] because He
cares for you.”
—1 Peter 5:7

Who Can This Be?

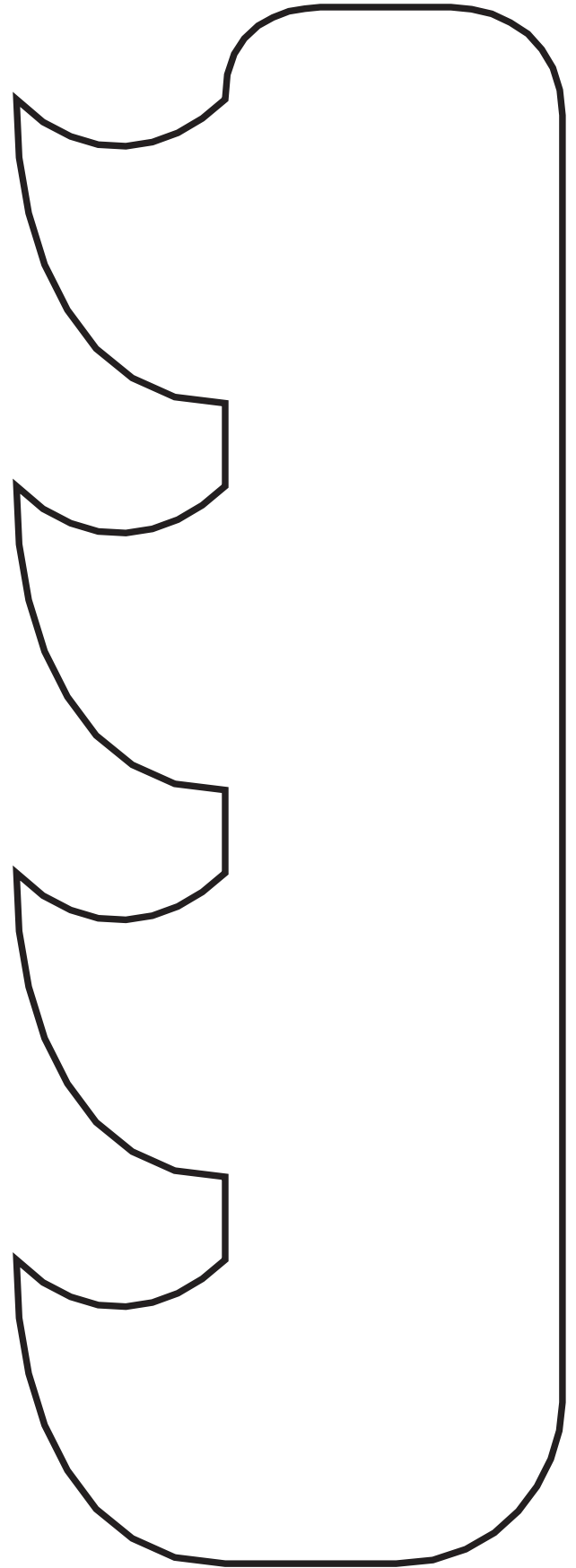
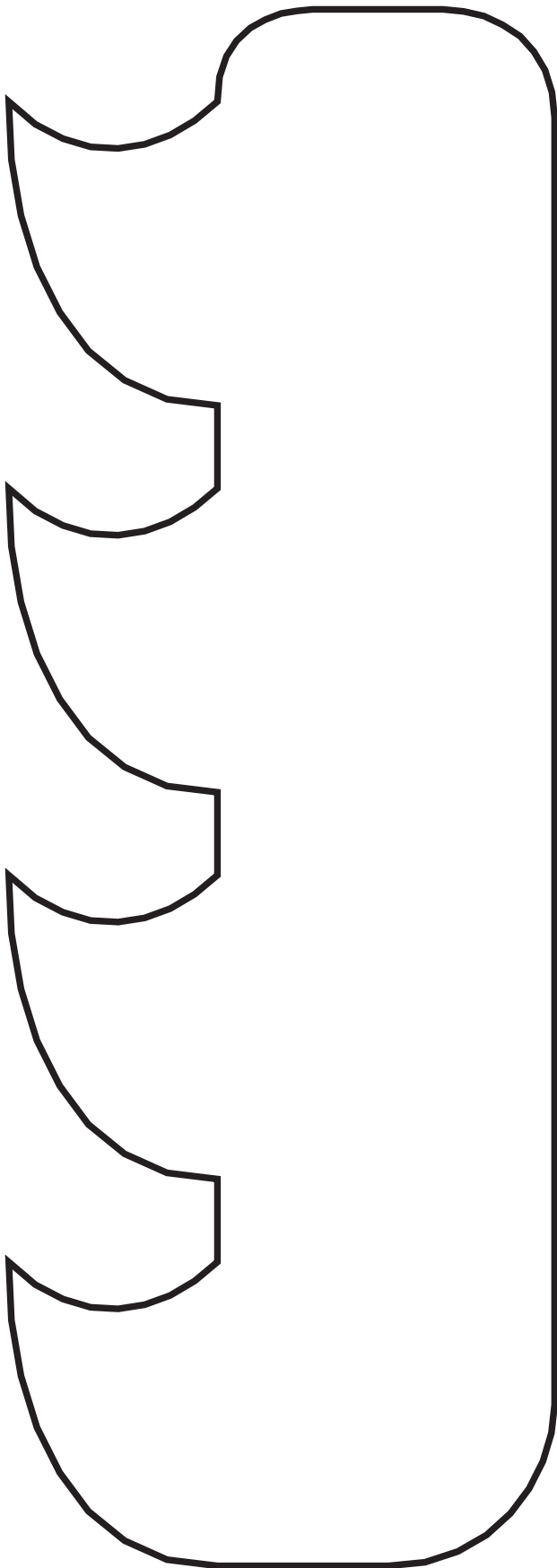


“Who can this be,
that even the winds
and the sea obey Him?”
—Matthew 8:27



“He is the image of the invisible God,
the firstborn over all creation. For by Him
all things were created...All things were
created through Him and for Him.
And He is before all things, and
in Him all things consist.”
—Colossians 1:15–17

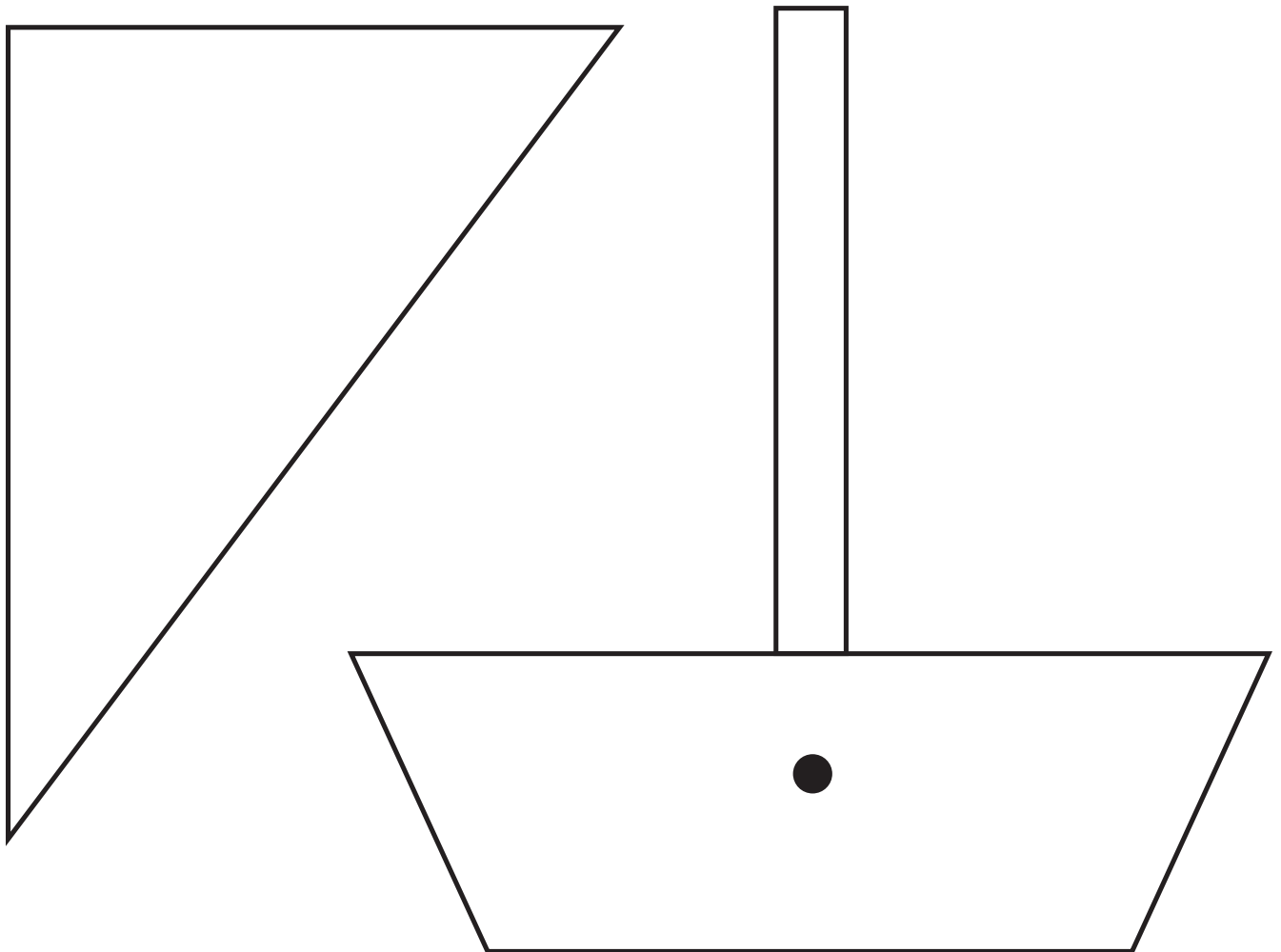
Calming the Storm



Calming the Storm

“And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But [Jesus] was asleep.” —Matthew 8:24

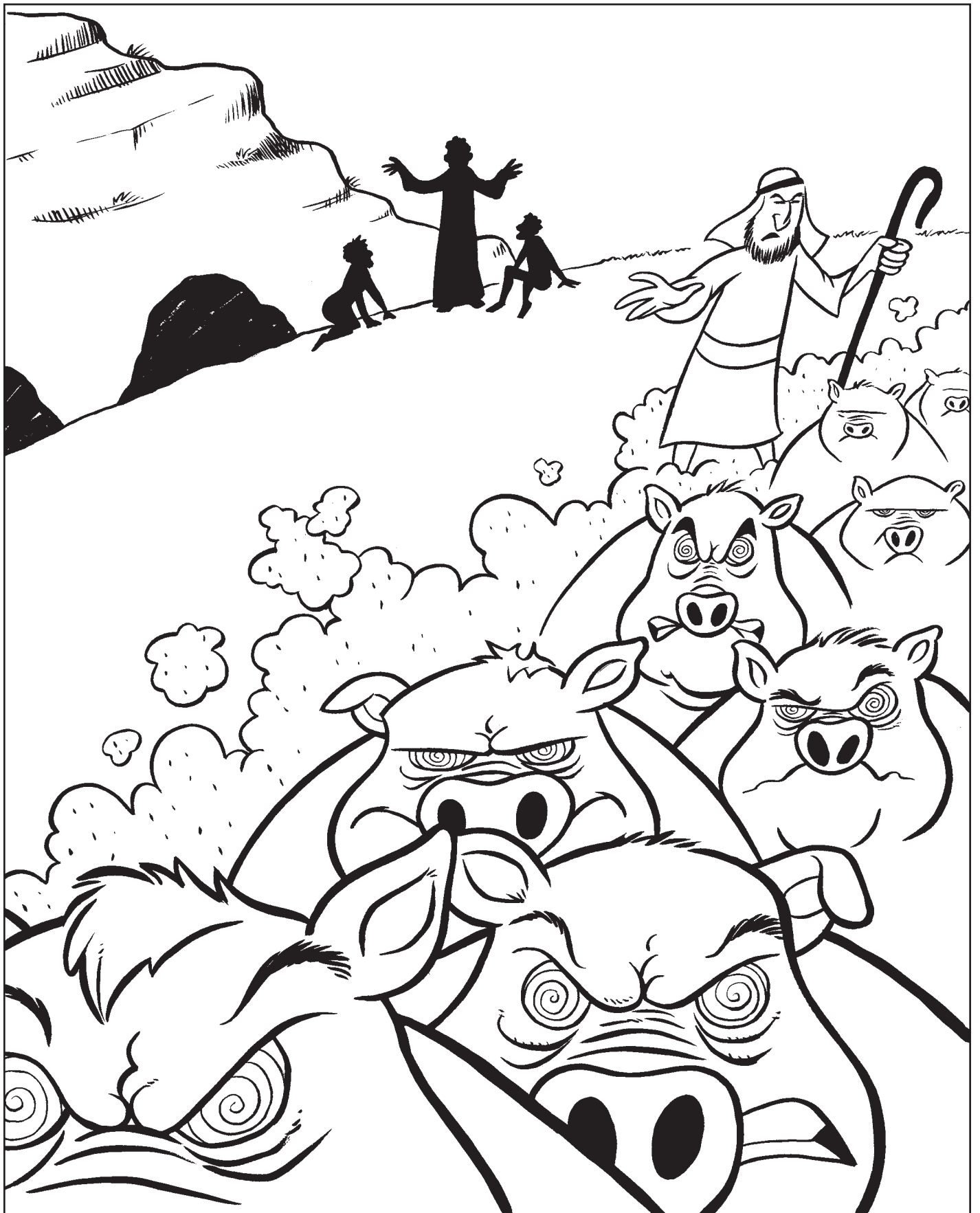
“...Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.”
—Matthew 8:26





“But He said to them, ‘Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?’ Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.”

—Matthew 8:26



“And suddenly [the demons] cried out, saying, ‘What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God?’... And He said to them, ‘Go.’ So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine.” —Matthew 8:29a, 32a

