

How Did Jesus Demonstrate His Authority? Mark 1:21-45

²¹ And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. ²² And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. ²³ And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, ²⁴ "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God." ²⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" ²⁶ And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷ And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." ²⁸ And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

²⁹ And immediately, he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ³⁰ Now Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. ³¹ And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

³² That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. ³³ And the whole city was gathered together at the door. ³⁴ And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

³⁵ And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. ³⁶ And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, ³⁷ and they found him and said to him, "Everyone is looking for you." ³⁸ And he said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out." ³⁹ And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

⁴⁰ And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, "If you will, you can make me clean." ⁴¹ Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, "I will; be clean." ⁴² And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. ⁴³ And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once, ⁴⁴ and said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to them." ⁴⁵ But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter.

- Mark 1:21-45, ESV

How do we know that Jesus is the Messiah, the Holy One of God? When Jesus came, He did not just tell people who He was and then say, "Trust me, I'm telling the truth. Really." Many religious leaders have done that. Mohammed and Joseph Smith, the founders of Islam and Mormonism, both made claims to be prophets who received revelation from God, and yet they did nothing to publicly substantiate their claims, to clearly demonstrate their authority.

So, what did Jesus do? He revealed His authority and the nature of His kingdom by His teaching and His miracles.

When He taught, He spoke with the authority of the author of the Scriptures and the ruler of the kingdom of God. He spoke clearly, boldly, with authority, power and wisdom. He did not need to rely on the handed-down traditions of the rabbis and He was not trained in rabbinical schools. When the people heard Him teach, they were astonished. They heard His authority, and Jesus' words are remembered and are still astonishing people to this day.

Then, when Jesus was finished teaching, He would demonstrate that His authority was not just a matter of clever words or compelling speech. He showed the people that He was their long-awaited king, publicly and repeatedly. His miracles showed there was no limit to His authority: demons, illnesses, chronic medical conditions, forces of nature, disabilities, and even death itself all submitted to His rule.

We can gain two things from Jesus' clear and public demonstration of His authority: confidence and comfort. We can gain confidence as we understand better that Jesus really is unique in the history of the world. No other religious leader has done the kinds of things Jesus did in such a public manner. Thus, we can know that His authority is unique and ultimate.

We also gain comfort. Jesus still rules with the full authority He demonstrated when He was on earth. This means that nothing can stand against Him or overrule His sovereign care for us, His subjects. In fact, He uses all things for His purposes. He is not lacking in power, wisdom or love in any of His actions toward us. We can rest in the loving arms of our High King and His royal authority!