



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.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

The student will be able to:

- Tell the events of both miracles.
- Explain why the disciples were wrong to be afraid of the storm.
- Explain why the demons were afraid of Jesus.
- Analyze what these two miracles reveal about Jesus' nature.

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.
- Rejoice that God the Son became the Son of Man.
- Devote yourself to pleasing King Jesus.

NEXT WEEK

Jesus Forgives Sin
Matthew 9:2–8

Symbol Key



Craft



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Activity



Q & A



Work Sheet



2 Grade Level

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’s 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 (Matt. 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.



What's Wrong?

Explain to the class demon possession. Discuss with the class what might be some characteristics of a demon-possessed man. Much of these characteristics will be that which are not ordinary (i.e., altered speech, unusual behavior, self-mutilation, etc.). Explain to the class that these characteristics are unusual for a man because someone else is controlling him. To be demon-possessed means to have a demon dwelling with in you, using your body in order to carry out his purposes. Be sure to explain how believers are protected from demon possession. Because God's Spirit lives inside of each person after conversion, Satan and those with his powers are unable to have power over believers.



Demons

Jesus' ministry regularly involved confrontation with and expulsion of demons. This was an undeniable demonstration of His opposition to Satan and His authority and power over him (Matt. 12:25–32). Demons are merely fallen angels who have rebelled with Satan against God (Rev. 12:4; 2 Pet 2:4). They are also regularly called "unclean spirits" as description of their defiling effect (Acts 5:16). Like angels, demons cannot normally be seen but this in no way diminishes the influence and effect they are able to exert on a person, as this weeks lesson indicates. Like Satan, demons have a limited freedom to operate on earth, but will ultimately be cast into the lake of fire (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 19:20).



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.



Natural and Supernatural

In this week's lesson we see that Christ has authority and power over nature and the supernatural. These two realms are not as easy to differentiate and explain as they first appear. The children will most readily understand them simply as referring to what can be seen and what cannot be seen. The Scripture reveals that Christ is continually upholding the universe by the word of His power (Heb. 1:3). That means that Christ is controlling absolutely everything. He controls the objects that we can see and touch and feel; He controls and determines the laws by which those objects interact; He controls all the events of history and even those things which are beyond our physical universe. You could illustrate this by bringing a radio controlled car to class and having a teacher secretly take the remote into another room. First push the car in front of the class and ask them who is controlling the car. Then step back and allow the other teacher to move the car using the



remote. Do they know who is controlling the car now? In today's lesson we will see that we never need to look around and wonder who is controlling things. Even if we can't see it, God is in control of everything.

What Would Your Reaction Be?

Matthew records how both disciples and demons reacted in fear when they realized the authority and power of Jesus. Before class, prepare four children to dramatize a reaction of fear e.g. show fear in their faces, scream, run away, etc. During class hold a book in front of the class so that they cannot see what is inside. Have each of the four children come up in turn, look inside the book and then react in fear. Ask the class how they had responded. What was it that they saw that made them so afraid? In today's lesson we will find out.



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.

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

Passage Outline

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

The Disciples' Fear (8:23–26a)

Jesus' Command (8:26b)

The Disciples' Response (8:27)

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

The Demons' Fear (8:28–31)

Jesus' Command (8:32)

The Peoples' Response (8:33–34)



Introduction

What makes a frog a frog? Is it his warts or beady eyes? Apart from these outside details, we can often tell a frog from other animals by what it can do. That it is able to hop from pad to pad, swim in the water, and croak makes it a frog. When we hear a croaking sound near a pond we immediately think of a frog. In today's lesson we learn a bit of what Jesus was able to do. Matthew records two miracles where Jesus was able to control both nature and demons. That Jesus had such power proves that He was indeed the Son of God. While all those who saw these miracles feared Jesus, not everybody responded to Him correctly. Let us now look into these different responses to see how we should respond to Jesus the King.

Lead-off Questions (LOQs)

LOQ: What are Jesus and His disciples doing at the beginning of today's lesson?

Answer: Jesus and His disciples are in a boat, sailing across a lake.

LOQ: Why did the disciples become afraid?

Answer: The Bible says that a great storm began to cause the waves to sweep over the boat. The disciples were afraid that their boat would be destroyed and that they would drown.

LOQ: What did the disciples find Jesus doing during the storm?

Answer: The disciples found Jesus sleeping on the boat. He was tired after a long day and needed rest. Unlike the disciples, He was not afraid of the storm.

LOQ: Why did the disciples awake Jesus?

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

LOQ: How did Jesus respond to His disciples' request?

Answer: Jesus rebuked them for their lack of faith, and asked them why they were afraid. The fact that they were afraid proved that they did not trust Jesus to care for them. Because He was with them, they had no reason to be afraid. He was God's Son and had all power to control the storm.

LOQ: What did Jesus do after pointing out His disciples' lack of faith?

Answer: The Bible says that He got up and commanded the storm to calm. The sea was immediately obedient to Jesus' command. Jesus had granted his disciples' request for safety by calming the sea.

LOQ: Who did Jesus encounter when reaching the other side of the lake?

Answer: Matthew records that Jesus met two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs. These demon-possessed men were so violent that no one could pass by them.

LOQ: Who did the demons know Jesus to be?

Answer: The Bible says that the demons immediately knew Jesus to be the Son of God. They knew that He had the power to cast them out and torture them.

LOQ: How did the demons respond to the Son of God?

Answer: The demons immediately feared Jesus. They showed concern as to what Jesus was going to do with them. Much of this concern was over whether or not Jesus had come to torture them.

LOQ: What did the demons ask of Jesus?

Answer: Afraid that He would torture them, the demons begged Jesus to cast them into a nearby herd of pigs.

LOQ: What was Jesus' response to the demons' request?

Answer: The Bible says that Jesus granted the demons' request, immediately commanding them to come out of the two men. Jesus had released the demons to go into the herd of pigs.

LOQ: What happened to the herd of pigs?

Answer: When the violent demons entered into the pigs, the entire herd rushed down the hill into the lake where they all drowned.

LOQ: How did the town respond to Jesus' power over the demons?

Answer: After hearing all that had happened to the two demon-possessed men, the town went out to meet Jesus. When they saw Him they begged Him to leave their town.

Summary

After healing many sick people, Jesus was tired and needed rest. So in order to escape the large crowds Jesus and his disciples began to sail across the Sea of Galilee. Matthew records that while they were sailing a large and violent storm began to crash over the boat. The disciples were terribly afraid that they were going to drown in the sea. Meanwhile, Jesus remained asleep. He was the Son of God and had no reason to fear the storm. Because they were afraid, the disciples immediately awoke Jesus and begged for Him to save them. Jesus asked his disciples why they were afraid. Because He was with them they had nothing to fear. Their fear revealed to Jesus that they did not trust Him to care for them. After rebuking the disciples for their lack of faith, Jesus gives the disciples what they had asked for. He commanded the sea to calm and immediately the storm stopped. The disciples had seen that even the waves were obedient to Jesus. His power over creation proved that he was indeed God's Son. After reaching the other side of the lake, Jesus performs another miracle that proves He was the Son of God. Where He first revealed His power over nature, He now reveals His power over the supernatural. Two demon-possessed men met Jesus and His disciples on the way back from the tombs. These demons were so violent that no one could even walk passed them. The demons immediately recognized Jesus to be the Son of God and were terribly afraid. They knew that Jesus had the power to cast them out and torture them. After begging Jesus not to torture them, Jesus commanded the demons to come out of the two men. The demons were immediately obedient to Jesus' command and went into a nearby herd of pigs. Upon entering the pigs, the herd ran down a nearby hill where they jumped into the lake and drowned. When the town heard all of what Jesus had done, they were greatly afraid and asked Jesus to leave.

Application

Jesus' power over both nature and the supernatural clearly shows that he was the Messiah. God had come to earth in the form of a man. Anyone who is to be saved must recognize that Jesus is the Son of God. Because He is the Son of God, He must be worshiped. Just as waves and demons are obedient to Jesus, we too must be obedient to the King.



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.



Making a Storm

This activity is to go over the storm that arose while Jesus and His disciples were in the boat crossing the lake in today's lesson. Turn off the lights and instruct the students to do as you do. Take them through the process of making a storm blow through the class. This process entails the following steps to be done in sequential order:

- begin by blowing softly, ever so increasing the intensity with which you breathe
- Rub the palms of your hands together
- Snap your fingers, increasing the intensity each time you snap
- Pat your knees with your hands, increasing the intensity each time you pat
- After you have begun to pat your knees loudly, stomp your feet on the ground (while still patting your knees with your hands). This is the climax of the storm. For the storm to calm just go backwards through these steps mentioned.



The Possessed Man's Story

Have a guest come in who pretends to be one of the men healed of demon possession in today's lesson. Have him tell the story, speaking as one who had first hand knowledge. This allows the students to learn the lesson from the perspective of one who was actually there.

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.



“Anxiety Boat”

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 anxiety to Jesus by praying. For students who do not write, go around the room and write down 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, paper fasteners

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.



“Jesus displays His power”

Use this worksheet to reinforce the key truths of today’s lesson. The worksheet is located at the back of the lesson.

Coloring Pages

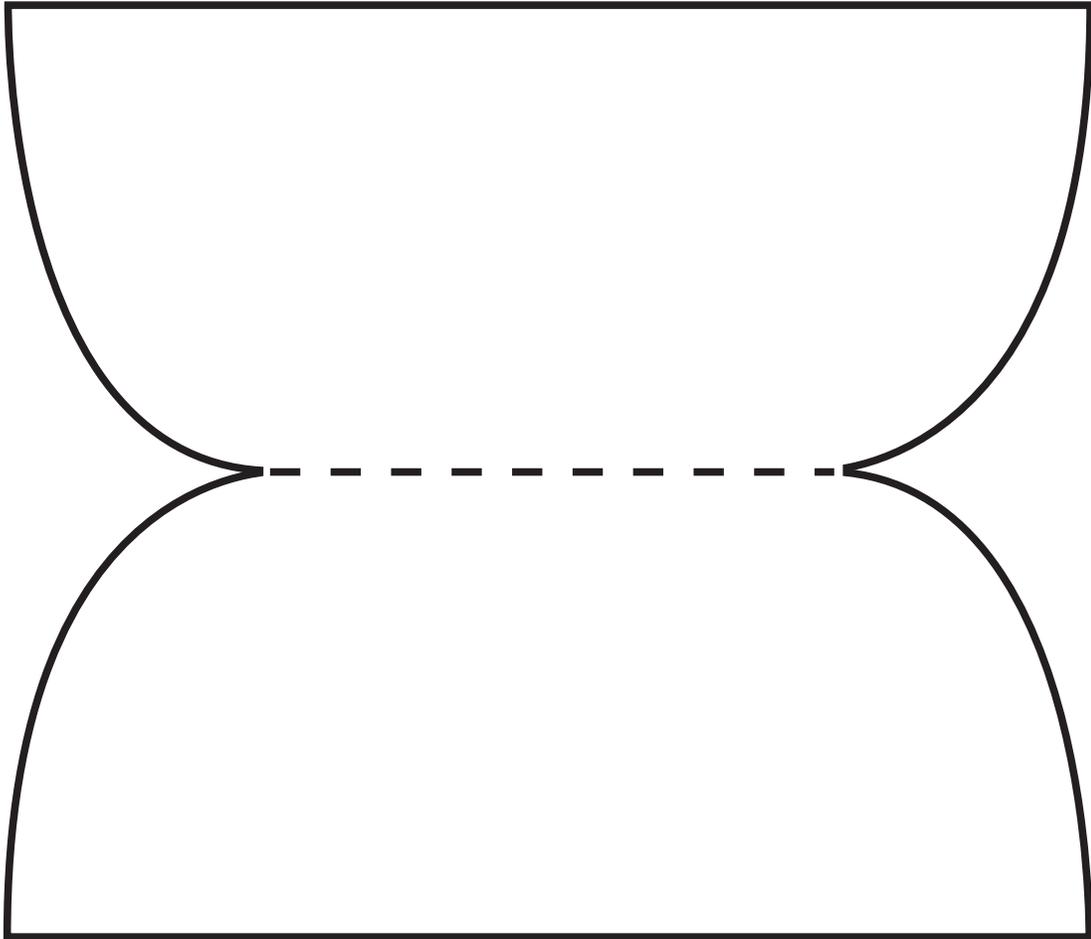
Give each student a copy of the coloring pages at the back of the lesson. He or she can color the pages in class or take them home to color.



MEMORY VERSE

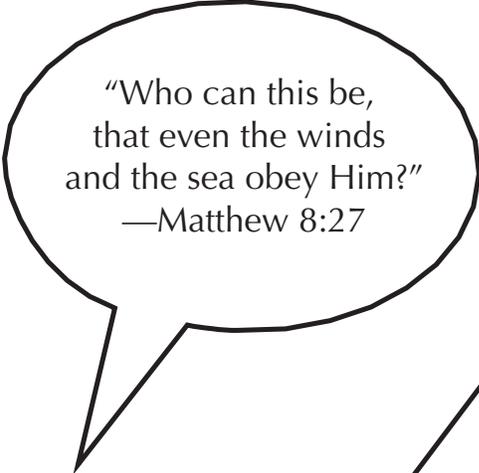
“So the men marveled, saying, “Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?” —*Matthew 8:27*

Anxiety Boat

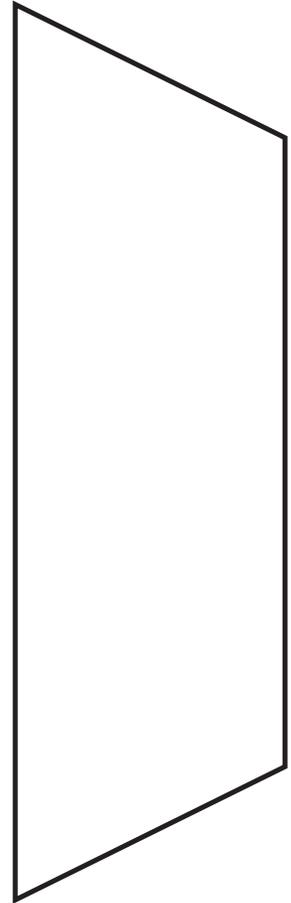
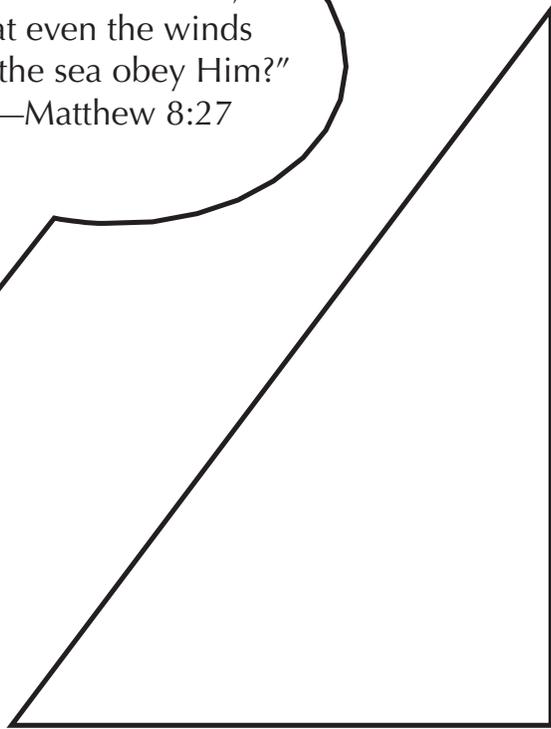


“Casting all your
anxieties upon
[Jesus] because He
cares for you.”
—1 Peter 5:7

Who Can This Be?

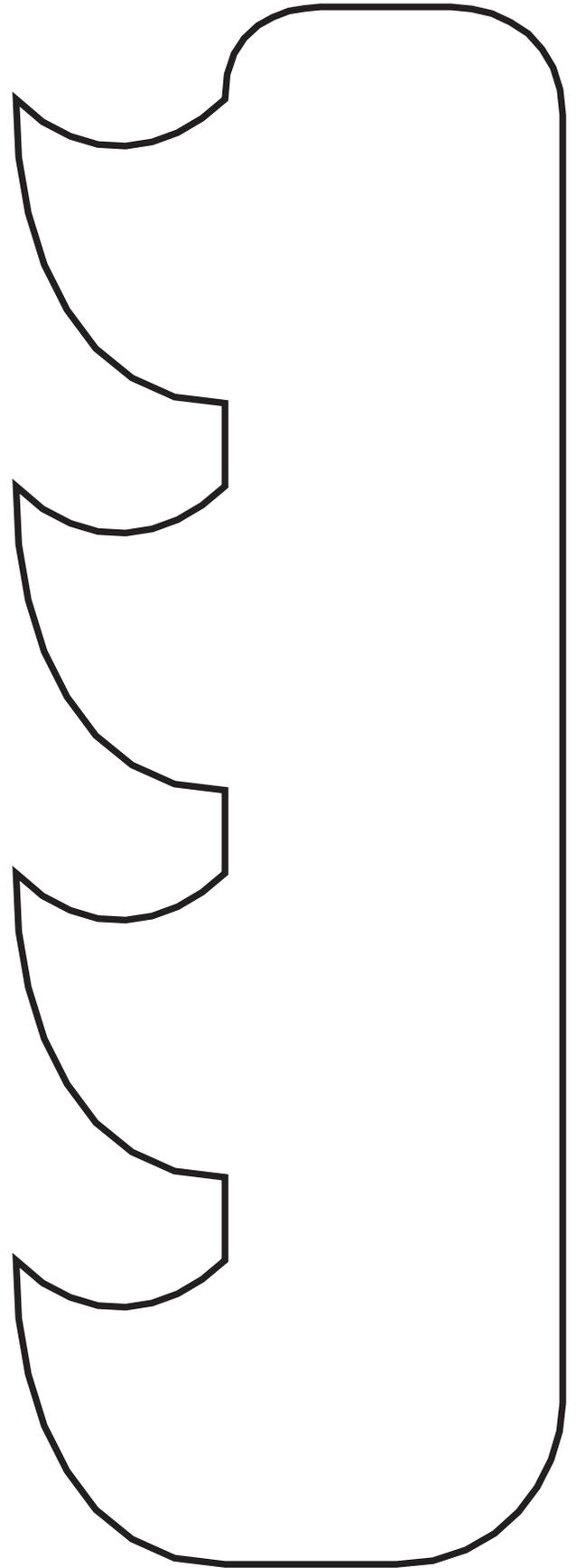
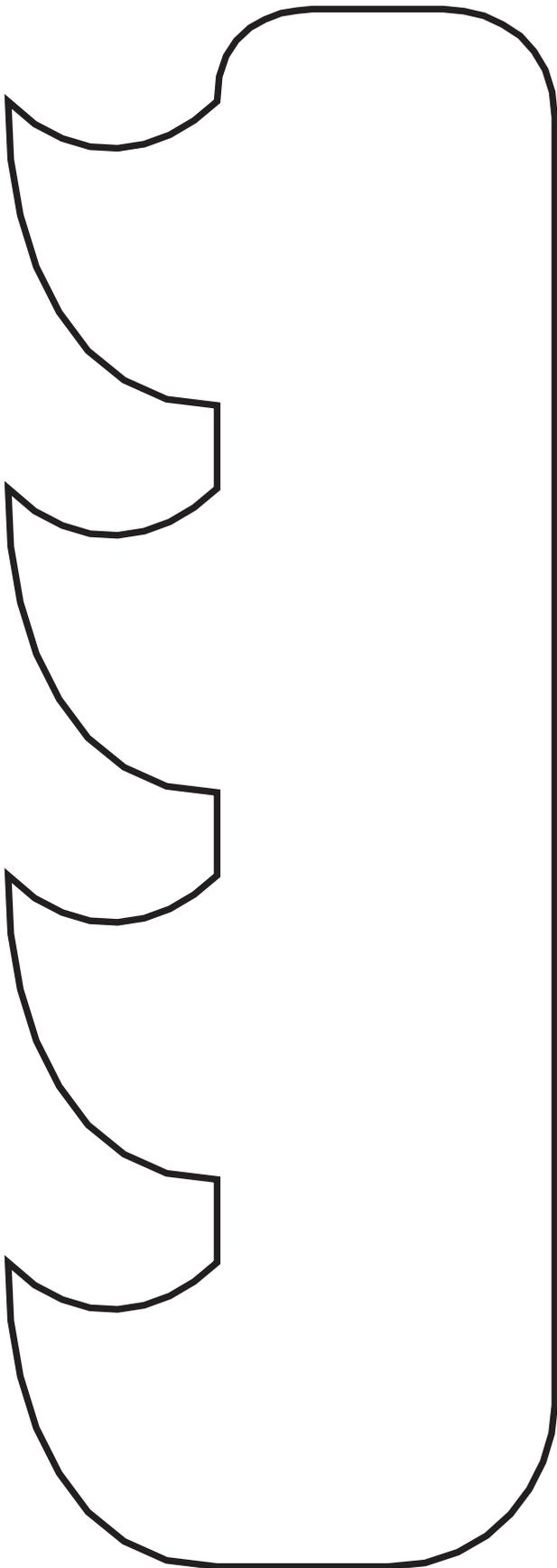


“Who can this be,
that even the winds
and the sea obey Him?”
—Matthew 8:27



“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

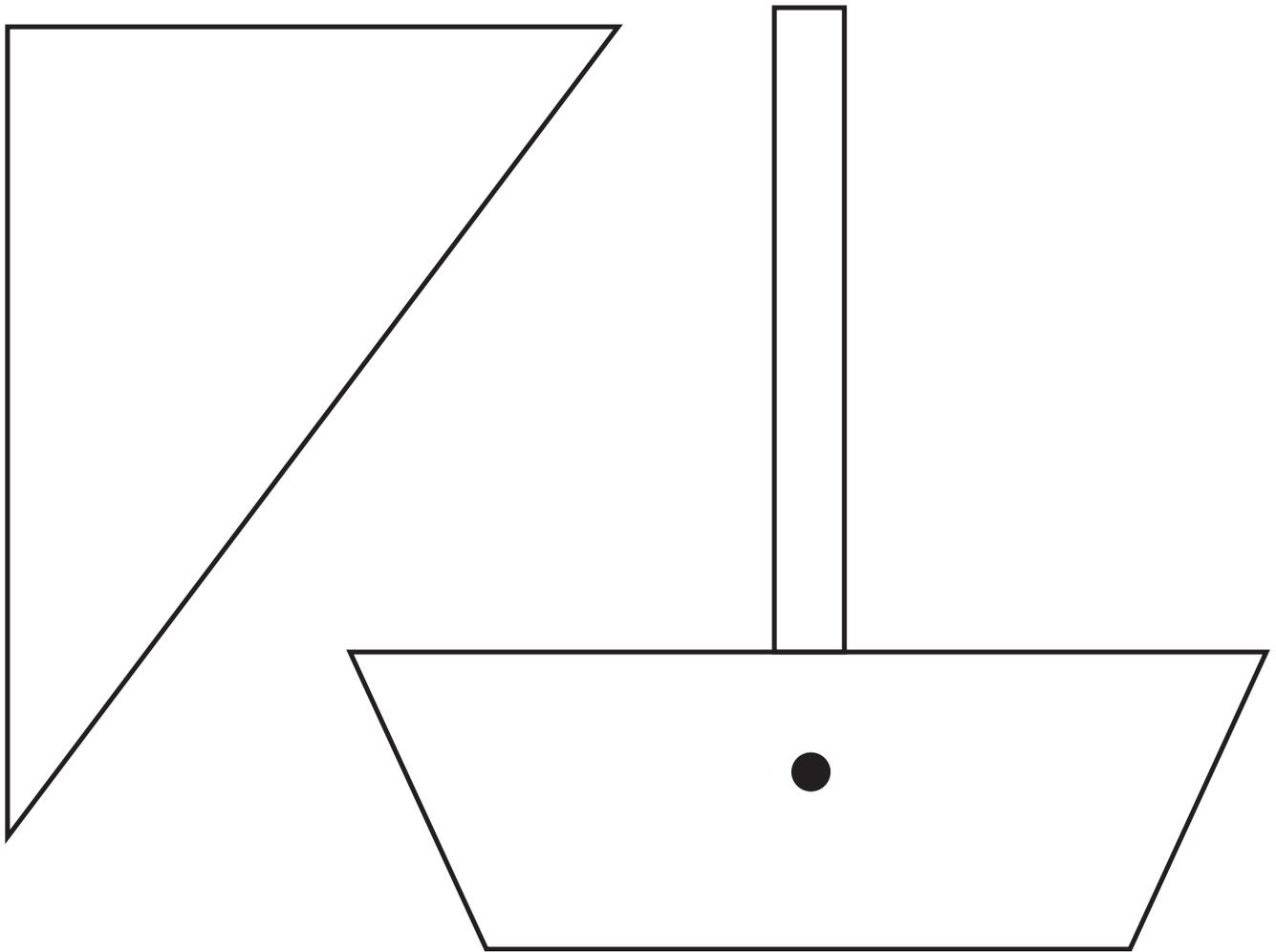
Calming the Storm



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



Jesus

displays
His **power**



Matthew 8:23-34

Name _____

1. What was Jesus doing when the storm hit? _____
2. The disciples asked Jesus to save them because they feared they would _____.
3. Jesus told the disciples that they had _____.
4. What happened when Jesus rebuked the winds and the sea? _____

5. Two _____ men met Jesus in the country of Gergesenes.
6. The demons begged Jesus to cast them into _____.
7. The whole herd of swine ran down a steep place into the sea and _____.
8. The people of the city begged Jesus to _____ from them.



“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