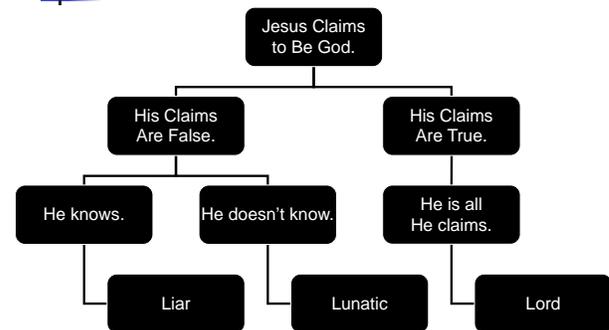


Jesus: Liar, Lunatic, or Lord?

Mark 3:20-35

Three Basic Alternatives



The Long Day

- The healing of a demon possessed man.
- Teaching in a home in Capernaum.
- The accusation by the Pharisees that He is in league with Satan.
- Teaching all the parables of Matthew 13, and explaining several privately to His disciples.
- A trip across the Sea of Galilee during which He falls asleep.
- A storm comes up, and He calms the storm.
- He and the disciples arrive on the other side, He heals the demoniacs in the area of the Gerasenes, including the one called Legion, the demons go into the pigs, which rush into the sea and drown.

Turning Points

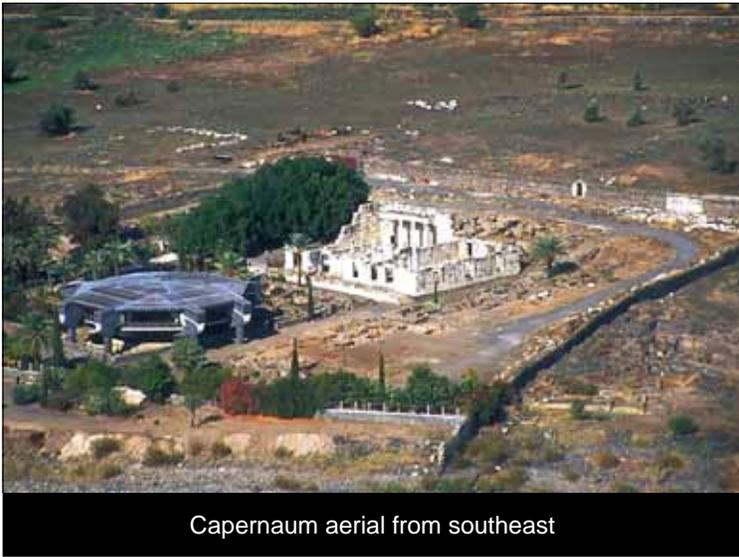
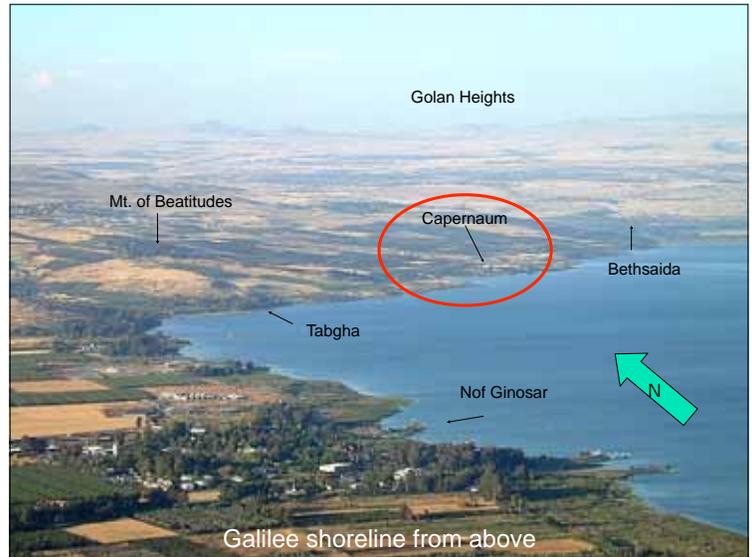
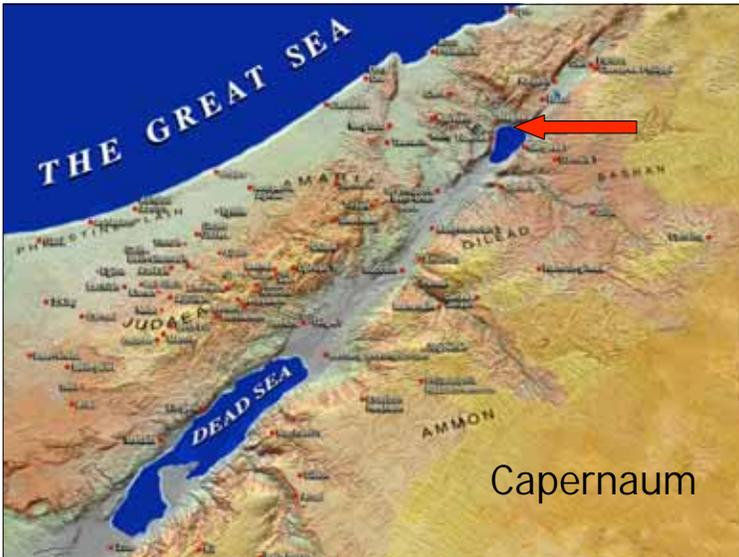
- Jesus healed a demon-possessed man, and the response of Israel's leaders to it marked a huge turning point.
 - Matt. 12:22-24
- In addition, Jesus' family members show their true perspective on His claims.
 - Mark 3:20-21

Mark's Technique

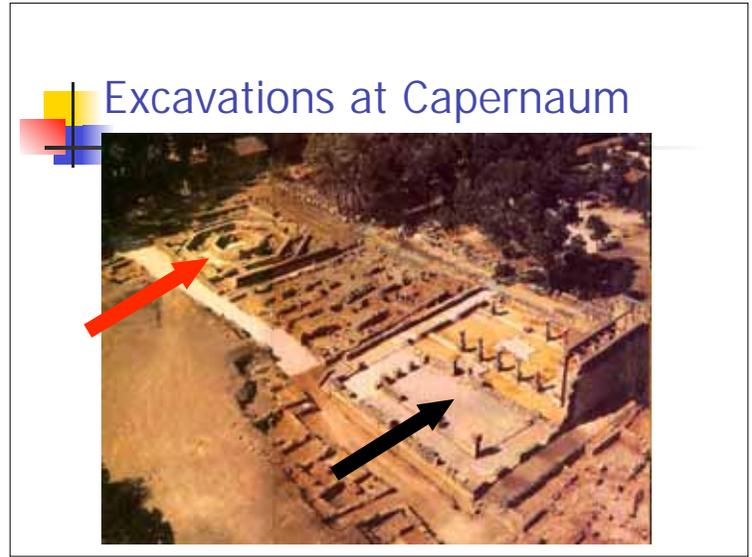
- 20-21 – Jesus' family leaves to come to Capernaum.
- 22-30 – the Pharisees attack Jesus.
- 31-35 – Jesus' family arrives at the house where He's teaching.

The First Response: I. A Deluded Lunatic (20-21)

- 20 – "And He came home, and the crowd gathered again, to such an extent that they could not even eat a meal.



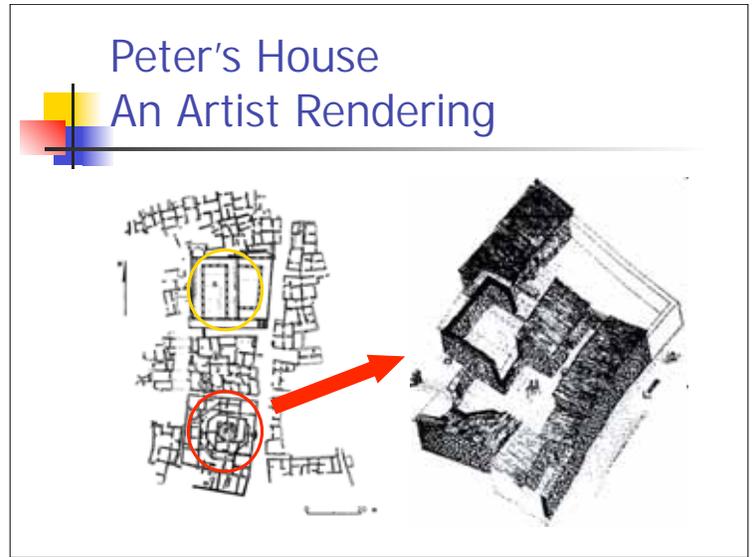
Capernaum aerial from southeast



Excavations at Capernaum



Capernaum Peter's house



Peter's House An Artist Rendering

The First Response: I. A Deluded Lunatic (20-21)

- 20 – “And He came home, and the crowd gathered again, to such an extent that they could not even eat a meal.”
 - A normal occurrence for Jesus and the 12.
 - 6:31 – He said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while.” (For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.)
 - 21 – When His own people heard of this.

Who are “His Own People”?

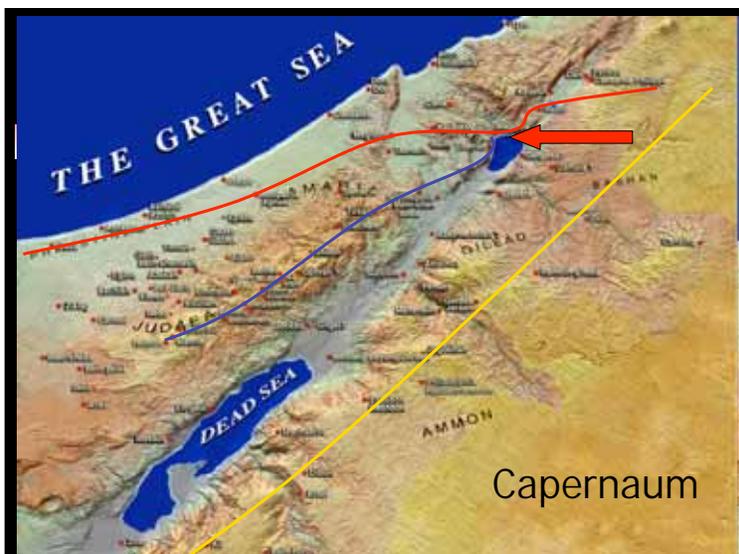
- In the papyri
 - agents or representatives
 - friends or associates
 - family (kinsmen or household)
- Whoever they are, they are leaving to go get Jesus (21).
- On that same long day, Jesus’ mother and brothers arrive looking for him (31-32).
- So the most likely meaning of “His own people” in verse 21 is Jesus’ immediate family.
- So this passage is about Jesus’ mother, Mary, and His brothers.

Jesus’ Immediate Family

- Mark 6:3 (cf. Matt. 13:55) – “Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?” And they took offense at Him.
 - Four brothers
 - At least two sisters (plural)
 - A family of at least 7 siblings (perhaps more if he had more than two sisters)
- Jesus, as the oldest man in the home, would have been responsible to teach his younger siblings the Scripture.
- His responsibility is outlined in Deut. 6:6-9.

The First Response: I. A Deluded Lunatic (20-21)

- 20 – “And He came home, and the crowd gathered again, to such an extent that they could not even eat a meal.”
- 21 – “When His own people heard of this, they went out to take custody of Him.”



The First Response: I. A Deluded Lunatic (20-21)

- 20 – “And He came home, and the crowd gathered again, to such an extent that they could not even eat a meal.”
- 21 – “When His own people heard of this, they went out to take custody of Him.”
 - Take custody – to arrest someone (6:17; 12:12; 14:1, 44, 46, 51)
- Why?
 - 21 – “for they were saying, “He has lost His senses.”

Why Did They Think Jesus was Delusional?

- 1) His becoming a rabbi without any formal training and gathering so many disciples around Him.
- 2) His constant opposition to the religious leaders of the nation.
- 3) His authoritative teaching.
- 4) His audacious personal claims.
 - E.g., His claim to forgive sin as if He were God Himself (2:7).
- 5) His choice of companions and associates.
 - He hangs around tax collectors and sinners (2:15-16).
 - He chooses a ragtag, odd assortment of fishermen, political zealots, and tax collectors to be His students.

Why Did They Think Jesus Was Delusional?

- 6) Jesus' actions and teaching often confused even those closest to Him.
 - Luke 9:45 - they did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they would not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement.
 - Luke 18:34 - the disciples understood none of these things, and the meaning of this statement was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said.
 - John 12:16 - These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him.

Why Did They Think Jesus Was Delusional?

- 7) The primary reason is here in the context (21): "when His own people heard of this, they went out to take custody of Him."
 - His religious zeal had crossed the line and become fanaticism.
 - 6 months before his crucifixion: [John 7:1-9](#).
 - Cf. [John 10:20](#)

The Implications

- 1) As Jesus' followers, we too will often be thought of as nuts, delusional, lunatics, part of the lunatic fringe.
 - The 1st century.
 - Acts 26:24
 - 2 Cor. 5:13
 - Throughout church history.
 - Athanasius, "contra mundum"
 - Luther
 - Today.

The Implications

- 2) If you are serious about your faith, if you try to live by the Bible, even unbelieving family and friends will come to the conclusion as Jesus' family did with Him, you're taking this Bible stuff too far.
- 3) This is one of the most common rejections of Jesus Christ and His claims.
 - This is the person who says Jesus was good man, with an extraordinary life.
 - Incredible dedication and extreme devotion to what He believed.
 - And He meant well, but He had simply come to wrong conclusions about Himself and His mission.

The Quest for the Historical Jesus

- Albert Schweitzer: "There is silence all around. The Baptist appears, and cries, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Soon after that comes Jesus and in the knowledge that He is the coming Son of Man lays hold of the wheel of the world to set it moving on that last revolution which is to bring all ordinary history to a close. It refuses to turn, and He throws Himself upon it. Then it does turn; and crushes Him. Instead of bringing them eschatological conditions, he has destroyed them. The wheel rolls onward, and the mangled body of the one immeasurably great Man, who was strong enough to think of Himself as the spiritual ruler of mankind and to bend history to His purpose, is hanging upon it still. That is His victory and His reign."



The Implications

- 4) This tragic episode also teaches us the power of God, confirms Jesus' claims, and reinforces the reality of His resurrection.
 - 1 Cor. 15:7 - He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;
 - [Acts 1:13-14](#)
 - 1 Cor. 9:5 – Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?
 - James – leader of the Jerusalem church; writes the first NT book.
 - Judas – writes the NT letter that bears his name, Jude.
 - [Jam. 1:1](#); [Jude 1](#)
 - How did they come to faith?
 - Cf. [Jam. 1:18](#)