

Who Is This?

☞ **Amazing Teacher** (vv.21-22)

✠ **Awesome Commander** (vv.23-28)

In the Name of Jesus, our shining Epiphany Savior and Redeemer, dearly beloved of God:

Have you noticed how every year the Super Bowl proves the shallowness of human glory? Is that a weird way to look at it? Whether you love sports or consider them modern idolatry, this is really true of every human venture. Players, actors, politicians all want name recognition. Who wants to be forgotten? Yet the top two teams in American football would be relatively unknown off the field. One team will lose and armchair quarterbacks will criticize them mercilessly. Champions join a long list of Super Bowl ringers most of us cannot recall. The lights will go out, the flowers will fall and like the grass, so is every man: *“The wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.”* (Psalm 103:15f NIV84)

So why do we still remember a travelling teacher who owned nothing but the clothes on His back and never travelled more than a few hundred miles from the place of His birth? Our children know. We stake our soul on this solid Rock for time and eternity. Is Jesus of Nazareth truly your...?

☞ **Amazing Teacher** (vv.21-22)

If you look back at your school days – And you kids only have to look back to last Friday! – what makes some teachers “the bestest”? Little kids will usually say, “My teacher is fun / funny.” Older folks out of school and working in the real world remember their best teachers were really tough. The hard ones help you remember best. And sometimes the lessons you learn through tears are the richest of all.

That special Sabbath Day at the Capernaum synagogue Jesus stood out as an **Amazing Teacher** partly because the others were so bad. Some were so high up in clouds no one could understand them. Some didn’t know what they were talking about and seemed to follow the dictum: “If you can’t convince ‘em, confuse ‘em.” They kept quoting this rabbi and that until no one was sure what was right.

But Jesus taught with authority and not as their experts in the law. Jesus got His authority from God who promised through Moses 1500 years earlier: *“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.”* (Deuteronomy 18:15 NIV84)

One example of this most **Amazing Teacher** is the way Jesus taught with parables, earthly stories with heavenly meanings that still communicate to us today. Even if you’ve never planted a vineyard or herded sheep or broadcast seed like the sower, you still remember what Jesus taught in His parables. Our Lord used these same parables to hide the truth from the wise and learned. Self-righteous scholars could not humble themselves before that **Teacher** from Galilee even if they admitted He was **Amazing**.

What about us? Do you and I treasure His lessons? Even His enemies had to admit Jesus was an **Amazing Teacher**. The real question is this: Is Jesus *your* **Amazing Teacher**? How can I say that when I so quickly get droopy eyed and sleepy in the middle of His lessons? What is my attitude toward this **Amazing Teacher** if I keep forgetting what He has taught me and need to learn the same lessons over and over again? How well do I value His teaching if I don’t feel the need to learn more? If I am afraid or embarrassed to share His truth with others? How important is He in my heart of hearts, if I’m content to let relatives and neighbors live in ignorance and die in unbelief? What do I deserve from my heavenly Father for all the times I’ve failed to live the lessons of this **Amazing Teacher** in my every day life?

✠ Awesome Commander (vv.23-28)

Who Is This? What really sets Him above every other **Teacher** is the power of His Word. Imagine being in church when a man starts shouting: *“What do we have to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: the Holy One of God!”* (v.24 W.P.)¹ Jesus doesn’t flinch. He calmly commands the demon possessing the poor man, *“Be quiet! Come out of him!”* The demon has no choice; he has to obey the Word of this **Awesome Commander**.

Have you ever wondered why Jesus commanded the evil spirit to *“Be quiet!”*? The demon knew Jesus is *“the Holy One of God!”* Why not just let him say so?

Think of it this way. What if a terrorist opened up on the Super Bowl crowd, killing and injuring hundreds of people? What if he was caught and allowed to speak on camera? And what if he started talking about you – by name! – saying what a great person you are? What a super family you’re from? Wouldn’t you just want to crawl under a rock? Or storm the TV and make him stop?

There are no worse terrorists than the ones from hell. They have tempted more teenagers, destroyed more hearts and homes than all earth’s tyrants combined. Everything good they hate. Everything of God they crucify. He earned his title as the devil-“Liar” and Satan-“Enemy.” Did you see how the demon could not even come out of the man without screaming and throwing him into convulsions? And yet all this misery caused by demons cannot spare them one moment of eternal torment in hell. God keeps them from stealing from us the enjoyment of His blessings because God gives us life.

And you know what? You and I don’t need to be afraid at all. Not unless you’re relying on yourself. That would be like a little kid lining up against a massive football player. Trust our **Awesome Commander** who could just say the word, *“Be quiet! Come out of him!”* – and the demon had to obey. Our **Awesome Commander**, Jesus Christ, proved by His miracles that He is both God and Man. Our **Awesome Commander** gives us this assurance: *“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”* (James 4:7)

Be amazed. His *“new teaching”* is so *“new”* that it renews and invigorates every sorrowing soul. Stop relying on your own strength. Jesus *“even commands the unclean spirits and they obey him!”* No wonder *“the news about him spread quickly through all the region around Galilee.”*

It’s not enough to admit with Jesus’ enemies that He is the most **Amazing Teacher** and **Awesome Commander**. That’s like what James says, *“You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.”* (James 2:19 NIV84) Saving faith first confesses sin to God because, *“Whoever covers his sins will not prosper: but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.”* (Proverbs 28:13 TPA) Saving faith trusts that Jesus is *my Amazing Teacher, my Awesome Commander*.

His *“new teaching”* has a wonderful surprise for us when the “Big Game” of life is done. Instead of lights going out and grass withering, everything will be brighter than a million suns in His *“new heavens and new earth.”* My Savior and my Redeemer says, *“Look! I am making everything new!”* (Revelation 21:5 TPA) What comfort for every sad heart disappointed in love, every broken home shattered by strife, every estranged family where parents and children prove our crying need for the Savior. Our **Amazing Teacher** and **Awesome Commander** died and rose again for you. He conquered sin, death and hell for you. By His power He can fulfill His promise to renovate all things. He has loved you by name from all eternity. Brought you to faith by the goodness of His grace. *“I will never leave you or forsake you,”* he promises. *“As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.”* Soon it will be “Sorrow forgot, love’s purest joys restored.” “Be Still, My Soul!” (CW 415:4) He says, *“Yes, I am coming soon.” “Amen, Come, Lord Jesus.”* (Revelation 22:20) Amen.

¹ W.P. ~ Wartburg Project – Matthew popular review (w/o footnotes) the Bible text unless stated otherwise. [M.C. 1/11/2015]
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