

Discovering the Real Jesus (part 5 of 6): Textual Comparisons (III)

Description: Peter's Confessions and Jesus' rejection at Nazareth; some differences between the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of Matthew.

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Peter's Confession (Mark 8: 27-30, Matthew 16: 13-17)

Mark 8: 27-30	Matthew 16: 13-17
<p>²⁷Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?"</p> <p>²⁸They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."</p> <p>²⁹"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"</p> <p>Peter answered, "You are the Christ."</p> <p>³⁰Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.</p>	<p>¹³When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"</p> <p>¹⁴They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."</p> <p>¹⁵"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"</p> <p>¹⁶Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."</p>

What did Peter actually say?

Mark: "You are the Christ".

Matthew: "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God".

Many Bible notes and commentaries acknowledge that here Matthew has added the additional phrase into the mouth of Jesus. (New Jerusalem Bible, pg 34)

Jesus' Rejection at Nazareth (Mark 6: 1-6, Matthew 13: 53-58)

Mark 6: 1-6	Matthew 13: 53-58
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<p>¹Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. ²When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.</p> <p>oeWhere did this man get these things?" they asked. oeWhat's this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles! ³ Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him.</p> <p>⁴Jesus said to them, oeOnly in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor." ⁵He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. ⁶And he was amazed at their lack of faith.</p>	<p>⁵³When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there. ⁵⁴Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. oeWhere did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" they asked. ⁵⁵ oeIsn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? ⁵⁶Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" ⁵⁷ And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, oeOnly in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without honor." ⁵⁸And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.</p>
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As you can see, Mark's version depicts Jesus as being powerless in the face of unbelief and was unable to do any miracles. Matthew changes the Mark's version to eliminate this problem.

Mark: oeHe could not do any mighty work there..."

Matthew: oeHe did not do many miracles there..."

Scholars have also suggested that Matthew wanted to avoid the description of Jesus as a carpenter and therefore changed it, due to the general negative attitudes towards manual labor, which were characteristic among the elite of the Greco-Roman world.

Jesus Heals Many (Mark 1: 32-34, Matthew 8: 16-17)

Mark 1: 32-34	Matthew 8: 16-17
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<p>³²That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. ³³The whole town gathered at the door, ³⁴and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.</p>	<p>¹⁶When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. ¹⁷This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: oeHe took up our infirmities and carried our diseases.”</p>
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In Mark Jesus heals many, but in Matthew he heals all!

Jesus' Mother and Brothers (Mark 3: 31-35, Matthew 12:46-50)

Mark 3: 31-35	Matthew 12:46-50
<p>³¹Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. ³²A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, oeYour mother and brothers are outside looking for you.” ³³oeWho are my mother and my brothers?” he asked. ³⁴Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, oeHere are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother.”</p>	<p>⁴⁶While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. ⁴⁷Someone told him, oeYour mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.” ⁴⁸He replied to him, oeWho is my mother, and who are my brothers?” ⁴⁹Pointing to his disciples, he said, oeHere are my mother and my brothers. ⁵⁰For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”</p>

Here, Matthew changes oeGod” to oeFather” in Jesus' speech in order to support later developing ideas about Jesus and God.

Walking on Water (Mark 6: 45-52, Matthew 14: 22-33)

Mark 6: 45-52	Matthew 14: 22-33
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⁴⁵Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. ⁴⁶After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

⁴⁷When evening came, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. ⁴⁸He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. About the fourth watch of the night he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, ⁴⁹but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, ⁵⁰because they all saw him and were terrified.

Immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." ⁵¹Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, ⁵²for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.

Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. ²³After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴but the boat was already a considerable distance^[a] from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

²⁵During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

²⁷But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

²⁸"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

²⁹"Come," he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, **"Lord, save me!"**

³¹Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

³²And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. ³³

Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Note the following changes and additions made by Matthew from Mark: Firstly, he omitted Bethsaida due to its geographical difficulty. Secondly, Peter in Matthew's gospel

addresses Jesus by the honorific title oeLord". Thirdly, the disciples worship Jesus and finally they all confess that Jesus is the oeSon of God".

Through time, like a snowball, the more the message of Jesus was passed around, the more it got bigger and better. The above passage illustrates how Matthew modified the speech of individuals to produce the result, that Jesus is called oeLord". Now it is true that Lord does not necessarily mean God. But in the later Christian thinking it will mean exactly that. Matthew was inadvertently setting the stage of Jesus' promotion to Godhead.

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