



© Standard Publishing

# JESUS: GOD'S POWER IN ACTION

## Putting Faith in Jesus Alone

Bible School Lesson for May 11\*

By Lanny Hemmings

Back in North Carolina, where I grew up, I used to watch shows with cowboys like Hopalong Cassidy, Roy Rogers, and “Wild Bill” Hickok. My favorite Western cowboy series was *The Lone Ranger*. Every Saturday I would spend a great part of the day reenacting the drama. “High ‘o Silver . . . away!” Man, I had some great times. Even if I had to play by myself, it was thrilling.

I remembered those cowboy cliffhangers as I read the passage from today’s lesson. Jesus is the hero of the account, but, like my favorite TV hero, He was a stranger to many around Him. What did Jesus mean when He asked, “Who do people say that I am?” Did He not already know that some were trying to determine what and who He was? Didn’t He see the amazement on the faces of the people and the apostles as they ministered to many with compassion and miracles? When He fed 5,000 once and 4,000 later, walked on water, healed the sick and blind, and delivered the possessed, can’t you imagine the drama of it all and the look on each of the faces of His closest followers?

“Who do people say I am? And who do you say I am?”  
“You are the Christ,” Peter said.

### Jesus as a ‘Stranger’

The Saturday Westerns made clear that people will always make mistakes. The Saturday-morning characters were always running into trouble, running out of water, or running into Indians. They just continued to make bad choices about hard times in the West and life in general. Perhaps the script of each cowboy epic was overdramatized for the purpose of entertainment, but I don’t think so.

“Some say you’re John the Baptist, or Elijah, or one of the other prophets.”

Sure, Caesarea Philippi was uncharted territory for the good news about Jesus. It was like the “Wild West” where strong winds blew around all types of doctrine. Some people carried on with the same traditions of the past and would not even recognize the one, true, better way or even the “stranger” representing it. Some folks were ignorant, but others were just arrogant in how they treated or handled the truth about Jesus.

Jesus must have thought by this time He had become much more to them than a stranger. The realization and research had been completed and actual witnesses of remarkable miracles had been logged. A gathering of followers was in process and Jesus would have certainly thought, *They must know me by now*.

But many didn’t. And many today still see Him as a stranger.

### Jesus as a ‘Ranger’

His men had already seen His power, but Jesus was wondering, *Are they with me? Do they get it? Do they actually know who I am?* Could they recognize more than a weathered face at night around the campfire? Were they catching on, or did the guys remain clueless?

“But what about you?” Jesus asked. “Who do you say [not think, but say] that I am?”

It was hard back then. Sometimes you had to run for your life or spend time in harm’s way with this man. But, like the Lone Ranger, Jesus had come to their rescue.

Did the men even know who was bunking with them as He cared for others and taught them? Could they even see beyond the pride of one day being in charge of things? Did they have what it took to keep the gospel movin’?

Maybe after Jesus asked the second question there should have been a pause and a station break:

### Home Daily Bible Readings

- May 5.....Mark 8:27-33
- May 6.....Mark 8:34-9:1
- May 7.....Mark 9:2-8
- May 8.....John 6:60-69
- May 9.....Luke 19:1-10
- May 10.....Philippians 2:5-11
- May 11.....Romans 10:5-13

“We’ll be back to our story after these words from our sponsor.” But not in this narrative. Jesus wanted to know and before anyone else could get a word out, Peter answered.

“You are the Christ.”

The Christ. Son of the living God. The Messiah. The Anointed One.

If Jesus ever wanted to shout something like “High ‘o Silver,” it was now, but He didn’t.

We all know that we cannot put our faith in people, because they don’t always trot off in the right direction. We must look to Jesus. Do we—the closest followers of Him, those who talk about Him and sing about Him—truly know Him? Do we have the courage and vigilance to study to be approved? Are we being led by the critics, by unbelievers, or by the Holy Spirit?

Jesus is still asking those same questions as He did in the Gospel of Mark. Do we know Him as Master, Lord, and Savior and the hero of this dramatic but realistic

epic? Are we, His closest followers, staying true to the truth about “the Christ, the Son of the living God”?

He is more than the Lone Ranger, a masked man with an obscure plan. He came to our rescue and then rode off into the sunset as the King of kings and the Lord of lords. “High ‘o Silver . . . away!”

## THE LESSON WRITER

**Lanny Hemmings** ministers with Rain-tree Christian Church in Lubbock, Texas. He and his wife, Janie, have three children: Hannah Drake (finishing at Lincoln [Illinois] Christian College), Barrett Hemmings (freshman at Dallas [Texas] Christian College), and Emily (a 12-year-old who wants to be a professional ballerina and a missionary).



**Lesson text:** Mark 8:27-9:8. **Printed text:** Mark 8:27-36; 9:2-8. **Memory text:** Mark 8:29.

\*Lesson based on International Sunday School Lessons, ©2000 by the Lesson Committee.