

ARTIST'S REFLECTIONS

Jesus Heals the Gerasene Demoniac
Mark 5:1-20

The setting begins among the tombs along the shores of the Sea of Galilee. I use warm, even hot, aggressive colors (reds, oranges, yellows, browns) for most of this scene to give an emotional feel of tension, fear, and dis-ease. The man with the demons appears. A boat lands on the shore down the hill. Jesus steps out. I intentionally have the extension of Jesus' leg out of the boat and onto the land as a focus for a moment in the video due to the significance of this move. Jesus makes himself "unclean" by stepping onto the land of the Gentiles. This distant Jesus figure is painted over as an image of Jesus then appears in the foreground, grasping the demoniac by the wrist. I have Jesus touching the demon-possessed man to emphasize this, another action, which would have made Jesus ritually unclean.

Once the story is underway, my intent is to create a feel of violent movement and chaos in everything within and around the man possessed with the demons. The Jesus figure appears calm and unmoved in the midst of the chaos. Much of this was accomplished with the way in which brushstrokes were applied — either quickly, aggressively, and chaotically, or gently and directly.

The pigs in the foreground take on the hot colors of the demons (reds, oranges) as they are sent off into the Sea.

Once the demons have been cast out, I soften the chaos both with my brushstrokes, color use (cooler colors - grays, blues, greens), and simplification of larger shapes.

As the story resolves, I bring rays and touches of light into the scene.

Paul Oman

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Jesus Heals a Woman and Raises Jairus' Daughter Mark 5:21-43

This painting begins by setting the stage for two incidents that are about to take place: Jairus coming to Jesus begging for help, and a woman with a flow of blood needing to be healed. Jesus is in a crowd. You the viewer are an onlooker with a perspective from within the crowd watching the drama unfold.

Jairus is painted at Jesus' feet. Then the woman appears also at Jesus' feet. Jairus disappears. Jesus' head turns from Jairus toward the woman. Since the story of the healing of the woman is sandwiched between the initial encounter with Jairus, and the resolve the story with the raising of Jairus' daughter. I paint streams of light coming in over the shoulders of Jesus and onto the woman as Jesus brings her situation to a resolve.

The upper body of the Jesus figure remains in the same location throughout the entire painting process. With a nearly complete transition of the entire painting, the scene moves to the interior of Jairus' home. The colors are mostly dark for awhile, yet filled with subtle vibrancy and minimal value shifts within the shadows.

Light is continuously added to the final scene until figures emerge from the darkness. Light appears from lamps lit in the room, and then from the doorway and window. Jairus' daughter's clothes reflect this light, symbolic of hope.

Paul Oman

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Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand and the Four Thousand
Mark 6:30-44; Mark 8:1-13

This painting begins with restful neutral colors as Jesus takes the disciples away to a place to rest. They are crossing the Sea of Galilee in a small boat. This gives physical context to this event. As they approach the shore, colors are added to indicate that this may not be as restful as they had hoped.

The first scene transitions from the boat on the shore to the next scene, which is the hillside above the Sea of Galilee where the miracle will take place. A confrontation is painted in place as the disciples stand immediately in front of Jesus as he looks out over the crowds.

This painting merges together elements of the feeding of the five-thousand from each of the gospels. One aspect of this is seen with the inclusion of the young boy in the upper left for a portion of the painting process. Only the lower half of the boy's body is visible, with the fish and loaves painted at his feet in the foreground. The young boy is only heard of in the Gospel of John's version of this story.

The placement of the disciples move one by one into the crowd as they are unable to fulfill Jesus' challenge to feed the crowds. Jesus himself becomes the central "actor" and figure in the story and in the painting. Jesus' raises his arms. Bread appears in his hands. Streams of light descend to touch the bread, Jesus, the loaves and fish, and eventually to the entire scene.

The direction Jesus is facing is reversed as his face appears on what was the back of his head. He now observes the twelve leftover baskets which appear over the formerly small amount of food in the five loaves and two fish. The crowds are content. The colors, primarily blues and greens among the crowds, represent contentment.

Paul Oman

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Jesus Heals the Man Born Blind John 9:1-41

This painting begins with images of various facial expressions, emotions, and body postures of the Pharisees, indicating their academic and accusing contemplation in the Law. Who was at fault for this man's condition? Someone had to be responsible.

While their futile debate is going on, the blind man appears as a dark silhouette. Back and top lighting will illuminate his location as the painting process progresses. The dark, undefined silhouette representing the blind man is also intended to symbolize his *physical* blindness, contrasting with the *spiritual* blindness of the clarity of the images of the Pharisees in the foreground. The colors of the blind man and his surroundings are cool blues and grays, while the colors in the foreground are warm and more aggressive.

Thick, brown paint is used as mud when Jesus washes his eyes. This is diluted with water and light blue paint, running downward with each addition of the diluted mix.

A simple scrubbing of this area with a rag brings light into the face and torso of the man, indicating he can see. Repositioning of his left arm gives emphasis to this healing that has been enacted upon him by Jesus.

Take note of the second Pharisee from the left as the progression takes place. An accusing hand/finger appears, pointing directly at the blind man. He is blamed. He is the problem, according to the Pharisees. The colors in the garments of the Pharisees increase in vibrancy as they piously seek to make their conclusions.

The figure of Jesus is painted in, facing the blind man. With sight restored, both arms are now raised. Light streams in from above onto the blind man and Jesus, while the Pharisees remain in the dark. This is an artistic reversal revealing the theological reversal in this story: The blind can see, and those who say they can see remain blind.

Paul Oman

ARTIST'S REFLECTIONS

Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead John 11:1-44

The scene begins on the outskirts of Lazarus' village of Bethany, seen in the background. The colors are warm and advancing as a confrontation filled with emotion is about to take place. A pathway leads the viewer into the scene. People are gathering in the village.

Jesus appears on the path looking ahead to where he was going. His disciples are following him. You as the viewer are walking with the disciples, behind Jesus, about to witness what is going to take place.

Martha appears to Jesus, upset, with arms outstretched in despair. Then Mary joins the scene, kneeling at Jesus' feet, perhaps reminding us of the story where Jesus comes to the home of Mary and Martha. In that story, Mary is allowed to sit at Jesus' feet while Martha is busy preparing the meal (Luke 10:38-42).

By painting over part of Jesus' head so it appears to tilt downward, the posture of Jesus' disposition changes as he weeps. Then his head raises again as he continues forward with his mission.

The Lazarus figure first appears as the space around him is painted. The darkness of the opening into Lazarus' tomb is carved out of and over the path that was leading them to Bethany. This placement is intentional. Death will not be the end, but rather a pathway to resurrection and eternal life.

The scene continues to brighten with vibrant colors in order to point to the hope the Jesus gives us, and to create a sense of divine possibility when the Lord shows up.

Lazarus is emerging into the light as he comes forth from the tomb. The light is touching the lower part of his bindings, which are beginning to unwrap. Light streams in from above, touching Jesus, Lazarus, and all in the scene.

Paul Oman