

# Matthew 8 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

[Matthew 8:1](#)

[Matthew 8:2](#)

[Matthew 8:3](#)

[Matthew 8:4](#)

[Matthew 8:5](#)

[Matthew 8:6](#)

[Matthew 8:7](#)

[Matthew 8:8](#)

[Matthew 8:9](#)

[Matthew 8:10](#)

[Matthew 8:11](#)

[Matthew 8:12](#)

[Matthew 8:13](#)

[Matthew 8:14](#)

[Matthew 8:15](#)

[Matthew 8:16](#)

[Matthew 8:17](#)

[Matthew 8:18](#)

[Matthew 8:19](#)

[Matthew 8:20](#)

[Matthew 8:21](#)

[Matthew 8:22](#)

[Matthew 8:23](#)

[Matthew 8:24](#)

[Matthew 8:25](#)

[Matthew 8:26](#)

[Matthew 8:27](#)

[Matthew 8:28](#)

[Matthew 8:29](#)

[Matthew 8:30](#)

[Matthew 8:31](#)

[Matthew 8:32](#)

[Matthew 8:33](#)

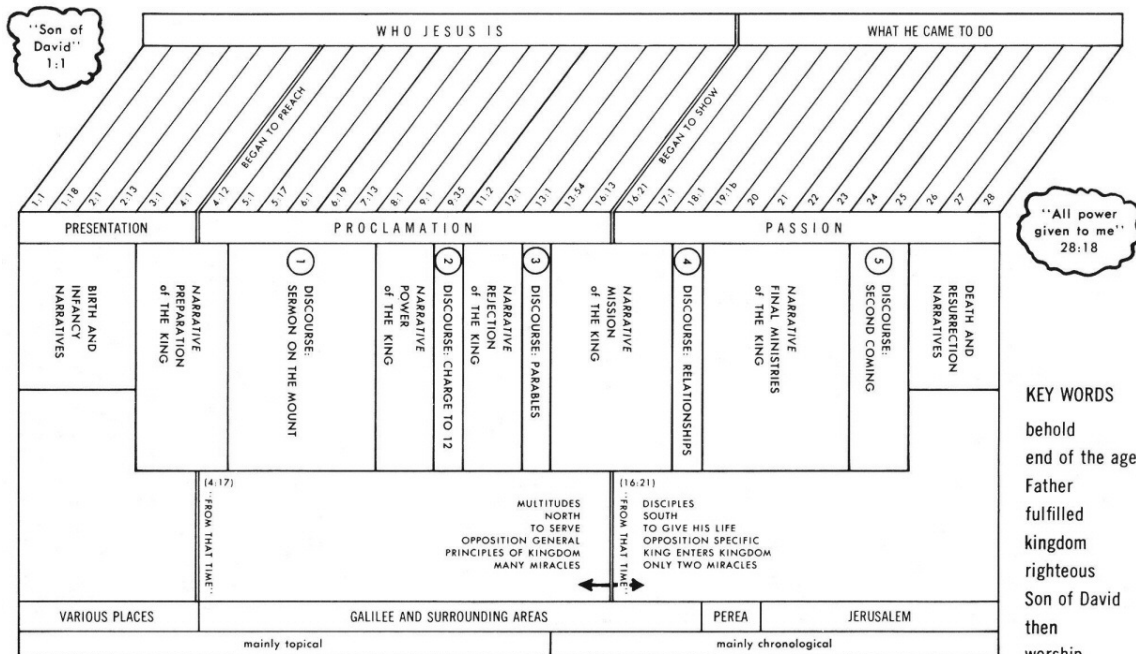
[Matthew 8:34](#)

---

MATTHEW CONTAINS  
15 PARABLES  
20 MIRACLES

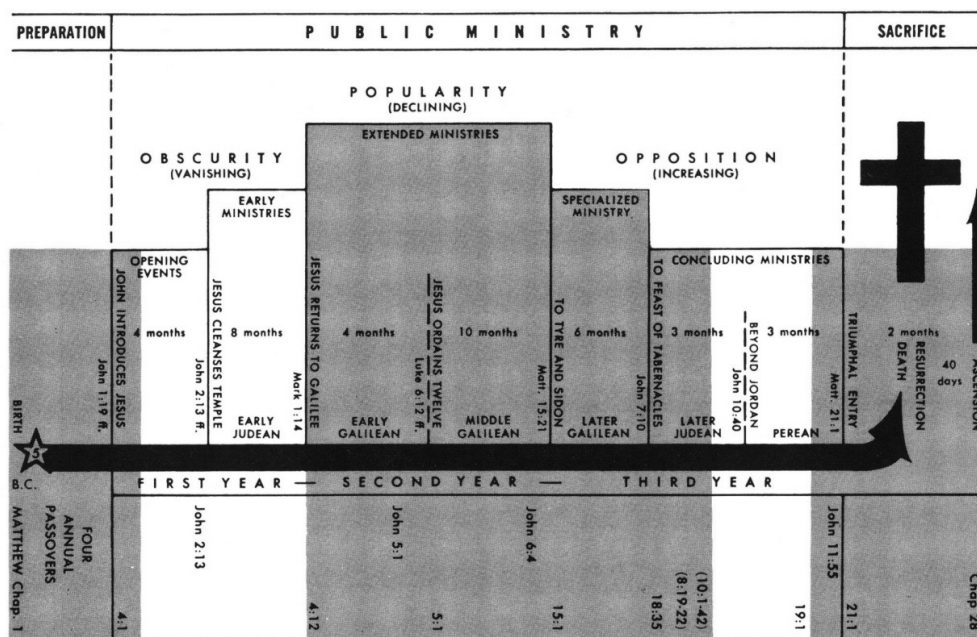
KEY VERSES: 1:1 "The book of the generation of  
Jesus Christ, the son of David, the  
son of Abraham."

2:2 "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?  
for we have seen his star in the east, and are  
come to worship him."

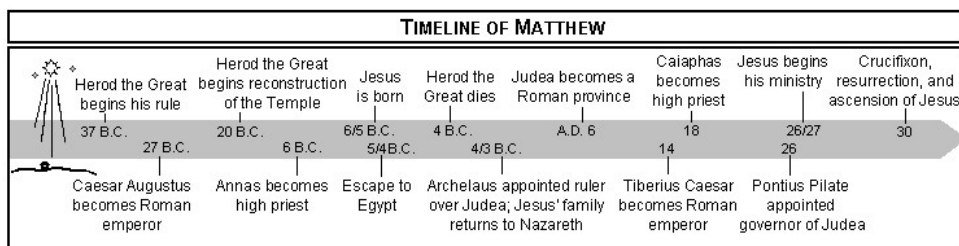


Click chart to enlarge  
Charts from Jensen's Survey of the NT - used by permission  
Another Chart from Swindoll

## THE LIFE OF JESUS AS COVERED BY MATTHEW (shaded area)



Click chart to enlarge



Source: Ryrie Study Bible

Matthew 8:1 When Jesus came down from the mountain, large crowds followed Him.

NET After he came down from the mountain, large crowds followed him.

GNT Καταβντος δ α το π το ρους κολο θησαν ατ χλοι πολλο .

NLT Large crowds followed Jesus as he came down the mountainside.

KJV When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.

ESV When he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him.

NIV When he came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him.

- **came** - Mt 5:1
- **large** - Mt 8:18 4:25 12:15 15:30 19:2 20:29 Mk 3:7 Lu 5:15 14:25-27

---

## John MacArthur's Outline of Matthew 8-15

1. The King's Divine Authority—Attesting Miracles ([Matthew 8-9](#))
  2. The King's Apostles—Their Commissioning (Matthew 10)
  3. The King's Audience—Their Responses (Matthew 11-12)
  4. The King's Announcement—The Mystery of His Church/Parables of the Kingdom (Matthew 13)
  5. The King's Audience—More Responses and Miracles ([Matthew 14-15](#)) ([MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#), – Matthew)
- 

John Hannah has a more detailed outline of Jesus' Ministry in this section:

### The proofs of the King's claims (8:1-11:1)

- A. Authority over sickness (Mt 8:1-17)
  1. The leper (Mt 8:1-4)
  2. The paralytic (Mt 8:5-13)
  3. The fever (Mt 8:14-15)
  4. Summary: all diseases (Mt 8:16-17)
- B. Authority over men (Mt 8:18-22)
- C. Authority over nature (Mt 8:23-27)
- D. Authority over demons (Mt 8:28-34)
- E. Authority to forgive sin (Mt 9:1-8)
- F. Authority over men (Mt 9:9)
- G. Authority to meet spiritual needs (Mt 9:10-13)
- H. Authority over tradition (Mt 9:14-17)
  - I. Authority over death (Mt 9:18-26)
- J. Authority over blindness (Mt 9:27-31)
- K. Authority over speechlessness (Mt 9:32-34)
- L. Authority to command men (Mt 9:35-11:1)
  1. The King's compassion (Mt 9:35-38)
  2. The King's summons (Mt 10:1-4)
    - a. The delegation of authority (Mt 10:1)
    - b. The list of apostles (Mt 10:2-4)
  3. The King's instructions (Mt 10:5-11:1)
    - a. The direction of their ministry (Mt 10:5-14)
      1. Recipients of their ministry (Mt 10:5-6)
      2. Message of their ministry (Mt 10:7)
      3. Indication of their ministry (Mt 10:8)
      4. Support in the ministry (Mt 10:9-10)
      5. Treatment in the ministry (Mt 10:11-14)
    - b. The danger in the ministry (Mt 10:15-23)
    - c. The comfort in the ministry (Mt 10:24-33)
    - d. The priorities of the ministry (Mt 10:34-39)
    - e. The rewards of the ministry (Mt 10:40-11:1)

Notice in the chart above by Irving Jensen that he classifies the section from Matthew 4:12 through Matthew 15:21 as Jesus' time of popularity which was beginning to decline.

**Thomas Constable** introduces Matthew 8-9 - Matthew described Jesus' ministry as consisting of teaching, preaching, and healing in Mt 4:23. Chapters 5-7 record what He taught His disciples. We have the essence of His preaching ministry in Mt 4:17. Now in Mt 8:1-9:34 we see His healing ministry. He demonstrated authority over disease, demons, and nature. Matthew showed that Jesus' ability proves that He is the divine Messiah. The King authenticated His claims by performing messianic signs. In view of this the Jews should have acknowledged Him as the Messiah. (Expository Notes)

**J Vernon McGee** - Matthew is not attempting to give us a biography of the Lord Jesus, nor is he attempting to put in chronological order the series of events that took place in His ministry. Rather, he is giving us a movement, which we must not miss. The King went to the mountain, enunciated His manifesto, the law of the Kingdom; now He comes down from the mount, and we see twelve miracles (some say 10, some 9) that He performs. This demonstrates that when He rules on this earth, He will have the dynamic to enforce the laws of His Kingdom. (Thru The Bible)

**Louis Barbieri** adds that this next section gives the "Credentials of the King (Mt 8:1-11:1). By word and deed Jesus Christ had authenticated Himself as the Messiah (Matthew 3-4). In a long sermon He announced the **standards for entrance into His kingdom** and clearly presented the way of access to it (Matthew 5-7). But the Jews still had questions on their minds. Could this One be the Messiah? If so, could He bring about the changes necessary to institute the kingdom? Did He have the power to bring about change? Matthew therefore presented a number of miracles to authenticate the King to Israel and to prove that He is able to perform His Word. These miracles demonstrated various realms in which Christ has authority. (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

**When Jesus came down from the mountain** - Matthew is simply picking up and reversing Jesus' direction from Matthew 5:1 "When Jesus saw the crowds, **He went up on the mountain**; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him." There is almost an ironic twist in this statement that Jesus came down, because during this next phase of His ministry, while He still had a degree of popularity, Jesus popularity would progressively continue to come down!

**Large crowds followed Him** - The word **followed** is [akolouthéo](#), the same verb used in Mt 4:20, 22+ of His first disciples leaving their occupations and their relatives and following Him. In Mt 4:25 "large crowds **followed** ([akolouthéo](#)) Him from Galilee and the [Decapolis](#) and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan (east of the Jordan River)." But sadly most were following Him because of His miracles more than because of His message! That said, Luke describes at least 3 (or 4) groups associated with Jesus in Lk 6:17+ recording that "Jesus came down (from all night prayer vigil on the mountain) with them (two groups - disciples in general and the 12 selected out to be apostles - Lk 6:13+ and stood on a level place; and there was a large crowd of His disciples (FOLLOWED MORE CLOSELY THAN CROWDS - SAW HIM AS THEIR "TEACHER" LIKE JOHN THE BAPTIST AND PHARISEES WHO ALSO HAD "DISCIPLES" - THESE DISCIPLES INCLUDED THE 12 APOSTLES), and a great throng of people from all Judea and Jerusalem (THIRD GROUP - THEY WERE NOT DISCIPLES) and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon (GENTILE TERRITORY)."

Israel had been introduced to the Person of the King in Matthew 1-4, the principles of the King in Matthew 5-7 and now would witness the power of the King beginning in Matthew 8. Matthew 8-9 record 10 miracles (some say 9) by Jesus to authenticate His "royal power," "the first group of miracles involves healings (Mt 8:1-17), the second, demonstrations of power (Mt 8:23-9:8), and the third, acts of restoration (Mt 9:18-34)." (Constable). Why did He do miracles or signs? Because as Paul would later write "indeed Jews ask for signs." (1 Cor 1:22) But remember that signs by themselves are not proof that Jesus is the long expected Messiah because as Paul says (in describing the Antichrist) "the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders." (2 Th 2:9). Sadly even the signs by Jesus were not enough to convince most of the populace that He was the Messiah. For example even after He had performed five of these miracles at Capernaum (not to mention all the healings and casting out of demons - Mark 1:33-34+ where "whole city" = Capernaum, Lk 4:40-41+), the city still rejected Him, Jesus Himself declaring "And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day." (Mt. 11:23). As **Warren Wiersbe** explains "Like the judgments against Egypt in Moses' day, the miracles of the Lord were judgments in Israel; for the people had to face facts and make decisions. The religious leaders decided that Jesus was working for Satan (Mt. 9:31-34; 12:24)." (BEC)

Also keep in mind that these miracles recorded in Matthew 8-9 are **not in chronological order**. Hendriksen writes "Matthew's arrangement, accordingly, is topical rather than chronological. Room must be left for the possibility that while Mt 8:2-4; 8:14-17; and Mt 9:2-13 refer to events that preceded the Sermon on the Mount, Mt 8:5-13; Mt 8:18-19ff; and Mt 9:14ff. record what happened afterward. (Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew)

---

**Followed** (190) **akolouthéo** from **α** = expresses union with, likeness + **keleuthos** = a road, way) means to walk the same road (Ponder that simple definition dear believer - Am I willing to walk the same road as Jesus?) Literally to follow (like the crowds followed Jesus) and in a figurative sense to follow Jesus as a disciple. To follow (closely) and was used of soldiers, servants and pupils. To go after someone or something (not as a true disciple however as we see with the crowds who physically followed Jesus, following however without a willingness to commit wholly to Him! cf John 6:60-65, 66) Early in the history of the Greek language **akolouthéo** came to mean to imitate or follow someone's example. This dual meaning colored the New Testament use of our word **akolouthéo**. Note that most of the uses of **akolouthéo** are in the Gospels and thus this verb is firmly linked with the life of Jesus, for He is the One to follow.

**Matthew 8:2 And (behold) a leper came to Him and bowed down before Him, and said, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."**

NET And a leper approached, and bowed low before him, saying, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

GNT καὶ ὁ λεπρὸς προσελθὼν προσεκύνει αὐτὸν λέγων, ὦ κύριε, ἐν θείᾳ δυνάμει καθαρώσαι.

NLT Suddenly, a man with leprosy approached him and knelt before him. "Lord," the man said, "if you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean."

KJV And, **behold**, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

ESV And **behold**, a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean."

NIV A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

- **behold** - Mk 1:40-45 Lu 5:12-16
- **a leper** - Mt 10:8 26:6 Lev 13:44-46 Nu 5:2,3 12:10 De 24:8,9 2Sa 3:39 2Ki 5:1,27 7:3,4 15:5 2Ch 26:19-21 Lu 4:27 17:12-19
- **bowed down** - Mt 2:11 4:9 14:33 15:25 18:26 28:9,17 Mk 1:40 5:6,7 Lu 5:12 Joh 9:38 1Co 14:25 Rev 19:10 22:8,9
- **if you are willing** - Mt 9:28,29 13:58 Mk 9:22-24
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **DRAWING NEAR TO GOD BY GRACE**

**Pastor Brian Bell** entitled his sermon on this section "SEE SPOT RUN!"

**Warren Wiersbe** entitles Matthew 8:1-22 "Grace to the Outcasts" noting that "Lepers, Gentiles, and women were considered outcasts by many Jewish people, especially the Pharisees. Many Pharisees would pray each morning, "I give thanks that I am a man and not a woman, a Jew and not a Gentile, a freeman and not a slave." (Bible Exposition Commentary)

**McGee** - He was up in Capernaum, where his headquarters were. And I am confident that the following miracle occurred there. Of course, this raises the question of where He had been when He gave the Sermon on the Mount. I have read many different theories, but I do not think the location is important for us to know. We are told that when He came down from the mountain, great crowds followed Him. Is the King who is able to enunciate the ethic also able to move with power among humanity? That is an important question. (Thru The Bible)

**And (behold)** - The 1995 revision of the NASB for some reason fails to translate the demonstrative particle **idou** which is actually included in the 1977 version of the NASB. In my opinion that is too bad because **behold** is first of all a command in the **aurist imperative** emphasizing "Do it now! Don't delay!" As **Spurgeon** reminds us "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

**Parallel Passages:**



Mark 1:40+ And a leper came to Jesus, beseeching Him and falling on his knees before Him, and saying, "If You are willing, You can make me clean."

Luke 5:12+ While He was in one of the cities, **behold**, there was a man covered with leprosy; and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

**A leper came to Him** - First note that in Jesus' day leprosy was not necessarily the same disease we call leprosy today (see [Hansen's Disease](#)). In other words while it included true medical leprosy, people were still regarded as leprous if they a number of skin conditions including psoriasis, elephantiasis, vitiligo (depigmentation of skin), etc. A leper was totally ostracized from society until he was declared cured. The verb **came to** is [proserchomai](#) which literally means to come or go to and so to approach, but it also has the figurative sense of drawing near to or coming before God (read Heb 4:16<sup>+</sup>, Heb 7:25<sup>+</sup>, Heb 11:6<sup>+</sup>, Heb 10:22<sup>+</sup>). This was the verb used to describe the Jews "who **draw near**" through their Temple sacrifices, coming through the Law rather than coming by grace (read Heb 10:1<sup>+</sup>). The leper probably did not understand what he was doing but in effect he was drawing near to the throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace to help in the time of need (Heb 4:16<sup>+</sup>) for Jesus was God! And it is notable that in that regard, the leper calls Him "**Lord**" and "**bowed down**"! **McGee** points out that "Jesus came from the heights (SERMON ON THE MOUNT) to the very depths. Leprosy, symbolic of sin in the Bible, was considered incurable; leprosy was the most loathsome disease." (Ibid)

"As for the leper who has the infection, his clothes shall be torn, and the hair of his head shall be uncovered, and he shall cover his mustache and cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!' "He shall remain unclean all the days during which he has the infection; he is unclean. He shall live alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp. (Lev 13:45-46+)

**THOUGHT** - Jesus was surrounded by a large crowd and yet the "untouchable" one was able to draw near. None of the Gospel writers tell us but if he were acting according to Leviticus, then he was crying out "Unclean! Unclean!" which would quickly have cleared a path for him to draw near to Jesus!

**Leper (3015)**(**lepros** from **lepo** = to scale, peel or **lepis** = a scale as of a fish - see [picture of scaly rash](#)) originally meant scaly or scabby and then was used to describe one afflicted with leprosy. It was was used to refer to an uneven surface of any kind (e.g., a road), but usually denotes a leprous condition of the skin, a serious skin disorder secondary to various etiologies, not always infection with the [Mycobacterium leprae \(pix\)](#), the cause of [Hansen's Disease](#). Leper - 9x - Matt. 8:2; Matt. 10:8; Matt. 11:5; Matt. 26:6; Mk. 1:40; Mk. 14:3; Lk. 4:27; Lk. 7:22; Lk. 17:12. **Lepros** in the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) - Lev. 13:44; Lev. 13:45; Lev. 14:2; Lev. 14:3; Nu 5:2; 2 Sa 3:29; 2 Ki. 5:11; 2 Ki. 7:3; 2 Ki. 7:8; 2 Chr 26:20; 2 Chr. 26:21; 2 Chr. 26:23.

**William Barclay** - "In Palestine there were two kinds of leprosy. There was one which was rather like a very bad skin disease, and it was the less serious of the two. There was the one in which the disease, starting from a small spot, ate away the flesh until the wretched sufferer was left with only the stump of a hand or a leg. **It was literally a living death.**"

**Hughes on lepers** - Lepers were typically beggars because there was no way they could support themselves. Sometimes their families deposited food in remote places. They customarily lived in bands— fellow outcasts (cf. 2 Kings 7:3; Luke 17:12). (Preaching the Word – Luke, Volume I: That You May Know the Truth)

**Guzik on leprosy** - The Jews thought two things about a leper: (1) you are the walking dead and (2) you deserve this because this is the punishment of God against you. Jewish custom said that you should not even greet a leper. Custom said you had to stay six feet (two meters) from a leper. If the wind blew toward a person from a leper, they had to keep 150 feet (45 meters) away. One Rabbi bragged that he would not even buy an egg on a street where he saw a leper, and another boasted that he threw rocks at lepers to keep them far from him. One other Rabbi didn't even allow a leper to wash his face. The only thing more defiling than contact with a leper was contact with a dead body. For these reasons leprosy was considered a picture of sin and its effects. It was a contagious, debilitating disease that corrupts its victim and makes him essentially dead while alive. Therefore society and religious people scorned lepers. Rabbis especially despised them (Enduring Word Bible Commentary)

**Warren Wiersbe** - Leprosy is an illustration of sin (Isa. 1:5-6). The instructions given to the priests in Leviticus 13 help us understand the nature of sin: Sin is deeper than the skin (Lev. 13:3); it spreads (Lev. 13:8); it defiles and isolates (Lev. 13:45-46); and it is fit only for the fire (Lev. 13:52, 57). (BEC)

**Draw Near (4334)**([proserchomai](#) from **prós** = facing + **erchomai** = come) means to come facing toward. To approach, come near, visit, figuratively to worship, draw near, go near to.

Why is this so strange that a leper drew near and that Jesus allowed him to do so? The **Law of Moses** recorded "As for the leper who has the infection, his clothes shall be torn, and the hair of his head shall be uncovered, and he shall cover his mustache and cry, '**Unclean! Unclean!**' "He shall remain unclean all the days during which he has the infection; he is unclean. He shall live alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp. (Leviticus 13:45, 46+ cf Nu 5:2-4, 12:14, 15, 2 Ki 7:3) Guzik adds that "the leper came to Jesus by himself and despite many discouragements. He knew how terrible his problem was. He knew most everyone thought his condition was hopeless. He had no one who would or could take him to Jesus. He had no previous example of Jesus healing a leper to give him hope. He had no promise that Jesus would heal him. He had no invitation from Jesus or the disciples. He must have felt ashamed and alone in the crowd. (Enduring Word Bible Commentary)

**Comment:** A person with leprosy, apart from the telltale malignant raw flesh and white hair, was to be otherwise identified by torn clothes, announcement of "unclean" when in the streets and was to live isolated from the community. Jesus knew the Law of Moses and yet He does not chastise this man for (1) approaching Him (recall the 10 lepers "**stood at a distance**" - Lk 17:12) and (2) not crying out "Unclean! Unclean!" Jesus saw the man's heart and his intent, not his scaly disgusting rash! And Jesus looks at you and I that same way -- at our heart, always looking for a heart of loving obedience (empowered by the Spirit) (cf 1 Sa 15:22).

The law of Moses had specific instructions for anyone who had leprosy:

Leviticus 13:45, 46+ (cf Nu 5:2-4, 12:14, 15, 2 Ki 7:3) "As for the leper who has the infection, his clothes shall be torn, and the hair of his head shall be uncovered (let his hair be unkempt, uncombed), and he shall cover his mustache and cry, '**Unclean! Unclean!**' "He shall remain unclean all the days during which he has the infection; he is unclean. He shall live alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp.

**Comment:** A person with leprosy, apart from the telltale malignant raw flesh and white hair, was to be otherwise identified by torn clothes, announcement of "unclean" when in the streets and was to live isolated from the community. Jesus knew the Law of Moses and yet He does not chastise this man for (1) approaching Him (recall the 10 lepers "**stood at a distance**" - Lk 17:12) and (2) for not crying out "Unclean! Unclean!" **Jesus saw the man's heart and his intent, not his scaly disgusting rash!** And Jesus looks at you and I that same way -- at our heart, ever looking for a heart of Spirit empowered loving obedience (cf 1 Sa 15:22).

**NET Note** - Tearing one's clothing, allowing the hair to hang loose rather than bound up in a turban, and covering the mustache on the upper lip are all ways of expressing shame, grief, or distress (cf., e.g., Lev 10:6 and Micah 3:7).

**Hughes** adds "We can hardly imagine the humiliation and isolation of this leper's life. He was ostracized from society because it was thought at that time that leprosy was highly contagious (which it is not). He had to assume a disheveled appearance and cry, "Unclean! Unclean!" whenever he came in range of the normal population. Think about how you would feel shouting this while entering a grocery store or a mall —the pervasive sense of worthlessness and despair." (Preaching the Word)

**And bowed down** (NAS marginal note "worshiped") **before Him** - Mark 1:40+ has **falling on his knees before Him**. Luke 5:12+ has **he fell on his face**. He was now face to face with Jesus or more accurately "face to foot!" This is fascinating. An unclean person (1) approaching Jesus and (2) kneeling down, falling on his face, bowing down, where the verb translated bowing down is translated elsewhere **worship** some 49 times! The first use of [proskuneo](#) in the NT is of the magi who asking King Herod "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to **worship** ([proskuneo](#)) Him." (Mt 2:2+, cf the magi in Mt 2:8, 11+)

**Bowed down** (4352) ([proskuneo](#) from **pros** = before + **kuneo** = kiss or adore) means to prostrate oneself in homage before another in the full sense of worship, not mere reverence or courtesy. When Jesus Christ was born into this world, He was attended and worshipped by angels. (Lu 2:13f). This is the very verb Satan used in his temptation of Jesus promising "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and **worship** ([proskuneo](#)) me." (Mt 4:9+) Jesus replied "Go, Satan! For it is written, '**YOU SHALL WORSHIP** ([proskuneo](#)) **THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.**'" (Mt 4:10+) . **Proskuneo** represents the most common Near Eastern act of adoration and reverence and also carries the idea of profound awe and respect, attitudes that this leper definitely manifests. Some believe that the root word **kuneo** may be related to **kuon** which is the Greek word for dog and which then could be picturing a dog licking his master's hand. In summary, the

word [proskuneo](#) literally means to kiss toward someone, to throw a kiss in token of respect or homage, to prostrate oneself in homage, to do reverence to, to adore and so to worship and show respect. In the ancient Oriental (especially Persia) the mode of salutation between persons of equal rank was to kiss each other on the lips. When the difference of rank was slight, they kissed each other on the cheek. When one was much inferior, he fell upon his knees touched his forehead to the ground or prostrated himself, and as he was bowing down he would be throwing kisses toward the superior. It is this latter mode of salutation that is intended by the Greek writers in the use of the verb [proskuneo](#) and this was the posture taken by this unclean leper!

**And said, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."** - Said is in the [present tense](#) indicating that he repeated this statement. And don't miss this "poignant picture—the leper, still prostrate, repeating in the hoarse voice typical of those with advanced leprosy." (Hughes) The same phrase is used also by Mark and Luke, also voiced from a position of humility and neediness. He was a perfect picture of Matthew 5:3+ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The leper knew Jesus could cleanse, but his question was would He cleanse? Obviously the leper recognized there was something about Jesus because he called Him "[kurios](#)", the first place He is called **Lord** in the Gospel of Matthew. And remember that this was the Greek word used to translated the Hebrew word Jehovah or Yahweh in the Old Testament. So the Jews who heard him address Jesus this way would surely have wondered about this association. While kurios could also mean something like our respectable "Sir," it is almost certain the leper meant it as more than "Sir," for not only did he call Jesus **Lord** but he approached Him as **Lord**. As **Spurgeon** said "Those who call Jesus **Lord**,' and do not worship Him, are more diseased than the leper was." I One can only imagine what those in the large crowd were thinking. Here is an unclean person approaching Jesus. What would He do? If He is the Messiah (they might reason), surely He would tell this "unclean" one to leave His presence! But of course the crowd the not comprehend His divine compassion for humanity. The phrase "if you are willing" is a third class condition which indicates the leper was not making presumptuous request for Jesus to heal him. In other words the third class is something that is undetermined, but which has the prospect of being determined, and thus was a hopeful doubt (so to speak) for this leper. **Robertson** adds "The leper knew that Jesus had the power to heal him. His doubt was about his willingness. "Men more easily believe in miraculous power than in miraculous love" (Bruce)." The leper's manner of approach expresses his humility instead of a prideful "You have the power, so heal me!"

**Kent Hughes** on the leper's addressing Jesus as **Lord** - notice the first word out of his mouth, "Lord." You can call Jesus "Lord" without having saving faith in him. Jesus teaches that at the end of the Sermon on the Mount. However, consistently throughout Matthew's Gospel this title is only found on the lips of Jesus' disciples or those who, like this leper, are sick and in desperate need of him. (Preaching the Word – Matthew: All Authority in Heaven and on Earth)

**THOUGHT** - The leper illustrates the words of Jesus' half brother James that "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." (James 4:6+) Oh, to have the humble heart of this leper as we approach (draw near = same verb [proserchomai](#) used of leper drawing near to Jesus) the throne of grace (Heb 4:16+), for even though we are saved by grace, we are daily prone to become "leprous" with the stain of sin (cf James 1:28b+), and thus we become unclean (in the experiential sense, although positionally we are clean forever in Christ) in the presence of the Holy One of Israel. This reminds me of God's call to Israel "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless, Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool." (Isaiah 1:16-18+) "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses ([katharizo](#) in the [present tense](#) = continually because we continually have need!) us from all sin." (1 Jn 1:6-7+)

**If you are willing** - As described in verse 3, Jesus accepted the leper's challenge with the answer "**I am willing**." "I know You can, but will You?" That is, is it according to Your will?

**Willing** (2309) ([thelo](#)) primarily refers to exercising of one's will with the underlying sense of being willing, desiring or wanting to do something. Jesus desires to heal those who desire healing!

---

**Holman Bible Commentary** note on **Leprosy** - A generic term applied to a variety of skin disorders from psoriasis to true leprosy. Its symptoms ranged from white patches on the skin to running sores to the loss of digits on the fingers and toes. For the Hebrews it was a dreaded malady which rendered its victims ceremonially unclean—that is, unfit to worship God (Leviticus 13:3). Anyone who came in contact with a leper was also considered unclean. Therefore, lepers were isolated from the rest of the community so that the members of the community could maintain their status as worshipers. Other physical disorders or the flow of certain bodily fluids also rendered one unclean (see Leviticus 12:1-14:32; Leviticus 15:1-33). Even houses and garments could have "leprosy" and, thus,



be unclean (Leviticus 14:33-57). Jesus did not consider this distinction between clean and unclean valid. A person's outward condition did not make one unclean; rather that which proceeds from the heart determines one's standing before God (Mark 7:1-23; compare Acts 10:9-16). Therefore, Jesus did not hesitate about touching lepers (Mark 1:40-45) and even commanded His disciples to cleanse lepers (Matthew 10:8). Jesus even made a leper the hero of one of His parables (Luke 16:19-31). ([Leprosy](#))

---

**R Kent Hughes** - What is important to note is that leprosy, or Hansen's disease as it is better known today (after the man who diagnosed its cause), is not a rotting infection as is commonly thought, nor are its horrible outward physical deformities imposed by the disease ([See picture](#)). In recent years, the research of Dr. Paul Brand and others has proven that the disfigurement associated with Hansen's disease comes solely because the body's warning system of pain is destroyed. The disease acts as an anesthetic, bringing numbness to the extremities as well as to the ears, eyes, and nose. The devastation that follows comes from such incidents as reaching one's hand into a charcoal fire to retrieve a dropped potato, or washing one's face with scalding water, or gripping a tool so tightly that the hands become traumatized and eventually stumplike. In Third-World countries, vermin sometimes chew on sleeping lepers. Thus, Dr. Brand, after performing corrective surgery on a leper, would send a cat home with him as normal post-operative procedure. Dr. Brand calls the disease a "painless hell," and indeed it is. The poor man in our story had not been able to feel for years, and his body was *full* of leprosy, mutilated from head to foot, rotten, stinking, repulsive. (Preaching the Word – Mark, Volume I: Jesus, Servant and Savior.)

---

**Barclay on Leprosy** - "Leprosy might begin with the loss of all sensation in some part of the body; the nerve trunks are affected; the muscles waste away; the tendons contract until the hands are like claws. There follows ulceration of the hands and feet. Then comes the progressive loss of fingers and toes, until in the end a whole hand or a whole foot may drop off. The duration of that kind of leprosy is anything from twenty to thirty years. It is a kind of terrible progressive death in which a man dies by inches....In the middle ages, if a man became a leper, the priest donned his stole and took his crucifix, and brought the man into the church, and read the burial service over him. For all human purposes the man was dead."

---

#### SEED THOUGHTS A CURE FOR THE UNCLEAN

Matthew 8:1–4

I. Who He Was. "A leper." (1) Diseased, not sound; (2) Unclean, polluting; (3) Separated, shut out from fellowship and privilege; (4) Incurable, beyond all human skill and hope.

II. What He Did. (1) He came to Jesus, the fountain of living waters; (2) he came in the presence of the crowd, not ashamed; (3) he came worshipping Him, in deep, unfeigned reverence; (4) he came confessing his need, "Make me clean;" he acknowledged his real condition; (5) he came believing, "If Thou wilt, Thou canst."

III. What He Received. (1) The touch of Jesus, identification; (2) The word of Jesus, illumination; (3) The power of Jesus, salvation. (James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose)

---

**McGee paints the picture of what this leper's life must have been like** - Have you ever stopped to think that this man not only had the physical disease of leprosy but that he had a psychological hang-up that was terrible? I do not know this man's background, but I imagine that one day he noticed a breaking out on his hand. Perhaps he had been out plowing, came in, showed his wife, and she put some ointment on it. The next morning it was just as red as it could be, and he went out and plowed again. This went on for about a week, and his wife started getting uneasy. She suggested he visit the priest. He went to the priest who isolated him for fourteen days. At the end of this period of time the disease had spread. The priest told him he had leprosy.

The man asked the priest if he could go and tell his wife and children and say good-bye. The priest said, "I'm sorry, you cannot tell them good-bye. You cannot put your arm around your wife again or hold your children in your arms anymore. When anyone comes near you, you must cry out, 'Unclean, unclean.'" He saw his children grow up from a distance. They would leave food in a certain place, and he would come and get it after they withdrew. He could not touch them. In fact, he had been able to touch no one, and no one had been able to touch him. Then one day he came to Jesus and said, "Lord, if You will, You can make me clean." And what did the Lord Jesus do? He touched him. May I say to you that the touch of Jesus was one of the most wonderful things that ever had happened to the man. It not only cleansed his leprosy, but it brought him back into the family of mankind and into the family of God. "Immediately his leprosy was cleansed." (Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee)

---

**Fruchtenbaum** expounds on the significance of **leprosy** in the Jewish community - This is the account of the healing of a Jewish leper. How do we know he was Jewish? Because Jesus ordered him to go to the priests and observe the offerings that Moses commanded. Jesus had performed a number of miracles up until this time, but this is the **FIRST** instance of a Jew being healed of leprosy. **We need to realize that this sign was very special and unique. From the time of the giving of the Mosaic Covenant**

**there is no record of any Jew being healed of leprosy.** The case of Miriam was before the completion of the giving of the Law. In the case of Naaman, he was Syrian, not Jewish. Leviticus 13-14 are devoted to dealing with leprosy, more than 100 verses. The priesthood was given detailed and specific instructions regarding leprosy. Only the priest had the authority to declare someone a leper. Once someone was declared a leper he would tear his garment. He would have to move out of his or her community and into a quarantined area for lepers. While this sounds cruel, notice how the Law protected society from the spread of disease before anyone understood the nature of microbes and germs. He would be excluded from Jewish society, and reviled. He would have to wear a face covering below the eyes. He would never be able to enter the Tabernacle or Temple compound. He had to announce himself "unclean, unclean," when encountering someone on the road. Anyone touching him would also become unclean. A person with leprosy was viewed as having been judged by God. (Life of Messiah)

#### Related Resources:

- Medical Article - [Biblical Leprosy- A Suggested Interpretation \(In depth - 25 page article\)](#)
- [Why is leprosy talked about so much in the Bible?](#)
- Torrey Topical Textbook [Leprosy](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Leprosy](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Leprosy](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Leprosy](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Leprosy](#)
- Smith Bible Dictionary [Leper, Leprosy](#)
- Vines' Expository Dictionary [Leprosy](#)
- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Leprosy](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Leper; Leprosy](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Leprosy](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Leprosy](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Leprosy](#)
- [WHO - Leprosy](#)
- [Leprosy - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)
- [Leprosy- Medline Plus Medical Encyclopedia](#)
- [Hansen's Disease \(Leprosy\) - CDC](#)

**Matthew 8:3 Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.**

NET He stretched out his hand and touched him saying, "I am willing. Be clean!" Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

GNT κα κτε νας τ ν χε ρα ψατο α το λ γων, Θ λω, καθαρ σθητι· κα ε θ ως καθαρ σθη α το λ πρα.

NLT Jesus reached out and touched him. "I am willing," he said. "Be healed!" And instantly the leprosy disappeared.

KJV And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

ESV And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

NIV Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cured of his leprosy.

- **Jesus stretched out His hand** - 2 Ki 5:11
- **I am willing** - Ge 1:3 Ps 33:9 Mk 1:41 4:39 5:41 7:34 9:25 Lu 5:13 7:14 Joh 5:21 11:43 15:24
- **immediately** - Mt 11:4,5 2Ki 5:14 Lu 17:14,15
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**JUST ONE TOUCH**

## FROM JESUS

### Parallel Passages:

Mark 1:41+ Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed."

Luke 5:13+ While He was in one of the cities, **behold**, there was a man covered with leprosy; and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

The cleansing or healing of leprosy involved religious, physiological, and sociological implications. Since leprosy was regarded as a defilement and hence made a person ritually unacceptable, it also meant excommunication from normal social life. The removal of leprosy was regarded as an important religious matter, and the healing had to be verified by the priests before an individual was regarded as ritually cleansed.

**Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him** - The leper had come to Jesus imploring Jesus to help him and now Jesus reaches out His hand and touches him which must have sent a grasp and a "buzz" through the crowd of Jewish onlookers who would never even consider touching a leper! So don't miss the point that just one touch of a leper would have rendered Jesus ceremonially unclean (cf Lev 14:46; see also the [Mishnah, Nega'im 3.1; 11.1; 12.1; 13.6-12](#) where the word "**Nega'im**" describes the various forms of [tzaraath](#), a [leprosy](#)-like disease described in the [Parshiyot](#) of [Tazria](#) and [Metzora](#) in the [Torah](#), which affected people, [clothing](#), and homes. The tractate describes the different types of blemishes symptomatic of the disease, and the various rituals involved in purifying someone who has been affected by it." (Wikipedia) According to Leviticus 5:3, Jesus became unclean the moment he touched the leper. In fact, Jesus did not become unclean, but in fact cleanses the unclean! As D A Carson says "at Jesus' touch nothing remains defiled."

**Hughes** applies Jesus' touch of the leper - by touching this leper Jesus is showing us that he is willing to take on his impurities and is foreshadowing his taking all of ours as well (2 Corinthians 5:21<sup>+</sup>). Put differently, his mission is the cross. (Ibid)

**Stretched** (1614) (**ekteino** from **ek** = out + **teino** = to stretch) means stretch out literally, as a gesture with one's hand stretched out. Jesus' stretched His hands out "toward His disciples" (Mt 12:49), to Peter drowning (Mt 14:31), to the leper (Mk 1:41, Mt 8:3, Lk 5:13, cf healing in Acts 4:30). **Ekteino** is used of the stretching out of Paul's hand as he prepared to offer his verbal defense (Acts 26:1). **Ekteino** refers to Jesus telling the lame man to stretch out his hand (Mt 12:13, Mk 3:5, Lk 6:10). **Ekteino** can mean stretching out one's hands with a hostile intent to lay hands on or arrest (Lk 22:53). As a euphemistic figure of speech referring to one's hands stretched out in crucifixion (Jn 21:18). In Mt 26:51 when they came to arrest Jesus Peter "extending his hand, drew out his sword, and struck." In Acts 27:30 **ekteino** refers to the sailors pretending to "to lay out (stretch out the) anchors from the bow, (Act 27:30). In the Septuagint in Exodus 7:5 **ekteino** is used of God stretching out His hand over Egypt and deliver Israel (cf Ps 138:7) frequently of Moses telling Aaron to stretch out his hand and staff (Ex. 7:19; 8:5-6,16-17), and of Moses stretching out his hand to bring plagues (Ex 9:22-23; 10:12,21-22) Paul alludes to the Lord stretching out His hand to the nation of Israel - But as for Israel He says, "ALL THE DAY LONG I HAVE STRETCHED OUT MY HANDS TO A DISOBEDIENT AND OBSTINATE PEOPLE." (Ro 10:21-[note](#))

**Touched** (681) ([hapto/haptomai](#) where **haptomai** is the [middle voice](#) which constitutes the majority of uses) means to grasp, to lay hold of with the basic meaning of touching for the purpose of manipulating. **Hapto** conveys the sense handling of an object as to exert a modifying influence upon it or upon oneself. The majority of the 39 uses are in the Gospels and are associated with Jesus touching someone (or someone touching Him) usually with a beneficial effect as here with the healing of the leper and in Mt 8:15 with the curing of the fever of Peter's mother-in-law.

**THOUGHT - H A Ironside** - Have you felt a touch of His healing hand? Has His voice rebuked the fever of sin that once raged in your very being? Is it your delight now to serve Him? Are you among those who are glad not only to avail themselves of His delivering power, but are now concerned about giving Him the service of a grateful heart? Are you putting yourself out for the blessing of other people? This is the test of real conversion. You can tell a person who has experienced the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ by the manifestation of a desire to please Him, a desire to do His will, to glorify Him, to make Him known to others, and to bring them into contact with Him. Every time the Lord wrought a work of power like this upon the body of some dear needy soul, the word of it went abroad to encourage others to come to Him. It is the same today. When the Lord Jesus works in great grace, saving one from the life of sin, bringing him to know God and giving him the power to live a new life to His glory, how it appeals to other people! I do not think there is anything that has

such a tendency to draw folks to any place where the Word of God is preached as the word going forth that people are being saved, that men and women are being delivered from their sins, that God is working miracles among them. Oh, that we might see more of that here—the saving power of our Lord Jesus thus manifested! (Expository Commentary)

**THOUGHT** - "When Jesus touched the leper, He contracted the leper's defilement; *but He also conveyed His health!* Is this not what He did for us on the cross when He was made sin for us? (2 Cor. 5:2<sup>1</sup>) (Wiersbe)

**Saying, "I am willing; be cleansed"** - Ready and willing is our Jesus. **Be cleansed** was command in the [aorist imperative](#) to the leper to be cleansed and do it now! Now ponder that a moment. Could the leper even obey this in his own power? Of course not. He did not have the power. This command was evidence of Jesus' supernatural power, which the leper gladly received. Jesus' command was actually given (in a sense) to the leper's leprosy which reminds us of His commands to other natural phenomena such as the great storm of wind (Mk 4:37KJV) which immediately ceased when He commanded "**Hush, be still**" (Mk 4:39+) or when "He rebuked the fever and it left" Peter's mother-in-law (Lk 4:39+).

Jesus is always willing to heal and cleanse the sinful soul who seeks salvation from Him! He turns no broken and contrite spirit away empty handed! Someone should make a T-shirt with the logo "JESUS IS WILLING!" It would prompt spectators to ask "Willing to do what?" And then "cleansed lepers" would have an opportunity to give a witness even as Jesus commanded this cleansed leper to do!

**I am willing** (2309) [thelo](#) in [present tense](#) = continually. Indeed Jesus is ever willing and able to heal any humble soul who has been crippled by Adam's fall.

**Be cleansed** (2511) [katharizo](#) in the [aorist imperative](#) (Do this now!) and [passive voice](#) indicating the cleansing came from an outside source (Jesus' omnipotence to heal). **Katharizo** is frequent in the Gospels - Matt. 8:2-3; 10:8; 11:5; 23:25-26; Mk. 1:40-42; 7:19; Lk. 4:27; 5:12-13; 7:22; 11:39; 17:14,17. Luke also uses **katharizo** in Acts (Acts 10:15; 11:9; 15:9). **Katharizo** is used 4 times in the story of Naaman (2 Ki 5:10, 12, 13, 14).

**And immediately his leprosy was cleansed** ([katharizo](#)) - As with His other miracles, this one was instantaneous. No incantations. Just a word from Jesus. Jesus the **Creator** Who in Genesis 1:3 spoke and said "Let there be light"; and there was light," (cf Heb 11:3<sup>+</sup>, Heb 1:3<sup>+</sup>) spoke here as [Jehovah Rapha](#), the **Healer**, commanding "Be cleansed" and he was cleansed!

**Leprosy** (3014) ([lepra](#) from [lepis](#) = a scale) is used only 4x in the NT (Matt. 8:3; Mk. 1:42; Lk. 5:12; Lk. 5:13) and always means leprosy. **Bock** adds that "lepra appears to be a broad term for a whole series of skin diseases, rather than referring just to [Hansen's Disease](#) ([Mycobacterium leprae](#) [pix](#)), as it came to be known in the nineteenth century." One misconception is that leprosy is highly contagious (Kent Hughes - "leprosy is a contagious disease") but in fact it is NOT highly contagious.

**Bill Gaither** wrote the words of the famous song [He touched Me](#) in 1963 being inspired by Jesus' touch healing the leper (in Mark 1:41).

### [He touched Me](#)

Shackled by a heavy burden  
'Neath a load of guilt and shame  
Then the hand of Jesus touched me  
And now I am no longer the same.

He touched, oh, he touched me  
And oh the joy that floods my soul!  
Something happened, and now I know  
He touched me, and made me whole.

Since i've met this blessed savior  
Since he's cleansed and made me whole  
I will never cease to praise him  
I'll shout it while eternity rolls.

Oh! he touched me! Oh! he touched me!  
He touched me! And Oh the joy that floods my soul!  
Something happened, and now I know  
He touched me, and made me whole.

---

**Kent Hughes** - We learn valuable lessons from the healing of this leper. Anyone wanting Christ's spiritual healing must put these lessons to work in his or her own life.

We must come to Christ with a deep *awareness of sin*. Do we acknowledge that we are sinners and that we have nothing in ourselves to commend us to God? Do we mourn our sins? If so, we are ready for Christ's healing touch.

We must bow before him in *humble reverence*—submit to him as our only hope and tell God that if he does not save us, we will be lost.

We must believe he can make us clean. Do you believe? "He himself bore (your name)'s sins on the tree, so that (your name) might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds (your name) has been healed" (1 Peter 2:24). (Ibid)

---

### **Spurgeon - "I will; be thou clean."—Mark 1:41**

Primeval darkness heard the Almighty fiat, "light be," and straightway light was, and the word of the Lord Jesus is equal in majesty to that ancient word of power. Redemption like Creation has its word of might. Jesus speaks and it is done. Leprosy yielded to no human remedies, but it fled at once at the Lord's "I will." The disease exhibited no hopeful signs or tokens of recovery, nature contributed nothing to its own healing, but the unaided word effected the entire work on the spot and for ever. The sinner is in a plight more miserable than the leper; let him imitate his example and go to Jesus, "beseeching him and kneeling down to him." Let him exercise what little faith he has, even though it should go no further than "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean"; and there need be no doubt as to the result of the application. Jesus heals all who come, and casts out none. In reading the narrative in which our morning's text occurs, it is worthy of devout notice that Jesus touched the leper. This unclean person had broken through the regulations of the ceremonial law and pressed into the house, but Jesus so far from chiding him broke through the law himself in order to meet him. He made an interchange with the leper, for while he cleansed him, he contracted by that touch a Levitical defilement. Even so Jesus Christ was made sin for us, although in himself he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. O that poor sinners would go to Jesus, believing in the power of his blessed substitutionary work, and they would soon learn the power of his gracious touch. That hand which multiplied the loaves, which saved sinking Peter, which upholds afflicted saints, which crowns believers, that same hand will touch every seeking sinner, and in a moment make him clean. The love of Jesus is the source of salvation. He loves, he looks, he touches us, WE LIVE.

---

### **Just a Touch**

Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. Matthew 8:3

Today's Scripture & Insight: Matthew 8:1–4

Kiley leaped at the chance to go to a remote area of East Africa to assist a medical mission, yet she felt uneasy. She didn't have any medical experience. Still, she could provide basic care.

While there, she met a woman with a horrible but treatable disease. The woman's distorted leg repulsed her, but Kiley knew she had to do something. As she cleaned and bandaged the leg, her patient began crying. Concerned, Kiley asked if she was hurting her. "No," she replied. "It's the first time anyone has touched me in nine years."

Leprosy is another disease that can render its victims repulsive to others, and ancient Jewish culture had strict guidelines to prevent its spread: "They must live alone," the law declared. "They must live outside the camp" (Lev. 13:46).

That's why it's so remarkable that a leper approached Jesus to say, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean" (Matt. 8:2). "Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!' " (v. 3).

In touching a lonely woman's diseased leg, Kiley began to show the fearless, bridge-building love of Jesus. A single touch made a difference.

By: Tim Gustafson

Reflect & Pray

Lord, we want to show the fearless love You showed when You walked this earth.

What difference might we make if we overcome our fears and trust God to use us? [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

---



## The Untouchables

Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him. — Mark 1:41

Today's Scripture: Mark 1:40-45

Of all diseases, leprosy is the only one singled out by the law of Moses and linked with sin. It's not that having leprosy was sinful, nor was it the result of sin. Rather, the disease was seen as a graphic symbol of sin. If we could see sin, it would look something like leprosy.

In Mark 1 we read about a leper who fell on his knees before Jesus and made his request: "If You are willing, You can make me clean" (v.40). It's the first instance in the Gospels of a plain request for healing—touching and profound in its simplicity.

Jesus was "moved with compassion" (v.41). People normally felt sympathy for the sick and troubled, but not for lepers. Because they were considered in those days as "unclean" both ceremonially and physically (Leviticus 13:45; 22:4), they were repulsive in every way to most people, who stayed as far away from them as possible. Nevertheless, Jesus was "willing" to reach out to this desperate, disease-ridden man and actually touch him! At that very moment the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.

Why did Jesus touch this man? He could have healed him just by saying, "Be cleansed." But His touch illustrated His great compassion.

Jesus loves sinners. Do we? By: David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Reflect & Pray

Jesus taught when He lived on this earth  
How to show love to the lost;  
So don't be afraid to give a kind touch,  
No matter how much it may cost. —Carbaugh

To love sinners is to be like Jesus.

---

**Global Prayer Digest** - The [Dalits of India](#) are the modern day equivalent of this untouchable leper ([another article on the Dalits](#)). Snippets related to the Dalits

To be **untouchable**, according to Indian-Hindu tradition, is to be undesirable, or unworthy of any sort of consideration or provision by society. This translates into frequent joblessness, lack of education and lifelong poverty.

The Hindu caste system is very rigid, and there is no hope of ever escaping the caste into which one is born.

In India, the dalits are approximately 300 million people who are deemed "untouchable" and comprise the lowest rung of the Hindu caste system. Since the origin of this system 3,000 years ago, the Dalits have lived in bondage to the code of caste. They have been unable to escape their fate and are deprived of even the most basic liberties and privileges, including the freedom to decide where to live, work and worship.

Omika finished her street sweeping early so she could begin her date with destiny. She joined three other scheduled caste women in a protest. As "untouchable" **Dalits**, the Haddi people are banned from Hindu temples. How can they worship their gods? How can they "gain favor" to reincarnate to a higher status? If they cannot appease the gods, their spirits are doomed to remain untouchable forever. So these four untouchable women trooped into a Hindu temple in a village of Orissa. When the upper caste villagers saw their offense, they joined with Hindu priests to beat the women. The priests shouted filthy language at them. The temple council demanded 1,000 rupees to purify the temple. That money, about \$20 US, equals a full month's income for these Haddi families.

Christianity has been and still is seen by most Indians as the religion of the poor, and the "untouchable" **Dalits**. That's because when missionaries from William Carey's day came in contact with the outcastes, and they felt the love and the care of the missionaries, they were the first people to respond.

Evangelists and church planters working in all parts of the world have discovered a common factor in reaching the unreached people in their target areas: usually those most receptive to the gospel are those who are the poorest. In all provinces in India the **dalits** (the "untouchable" communities) have been the most responsive

people group when they hear the good news. For those who have nothing to lose, it's easy to see that change is probably going to be a good thing. They know that they are needy.

---

## Power of Touch

**Dr. Paul Brand, twentieth-century pioneer medical missionary to India, saw firsthand the stigma associated with leprosy. During an appointment, he touched a patient to reassure him treatment was possible. Tears began to stream down the man's face. An attendant explained the tears to Dr. Brand, saying, "You touched him and no one has done that for years. They are tears of joy."**

Early in His ministry, Jesus was approached by a man with leprosy, an ancient label for all types of infectious skin diseases. Because of his disease the man was required by the Old Testament law to live outside his community. If the sick man accidentally found himself in close proximity to healthy people, he had to call out, "Unclean! Unclean!" so they could avoid him (Leviticus 13:45–46). As a result, the man may have gone months or years without human contact.

Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man. Jesus had the power and authority to heal people with just a word (Mark 2:11–12). But as Jesus encountered a man whose physical illness left him feeling isolated and rejected, His touch assured the man that he was not alone but accepted.

As God gives us opportunities, we can extend grace and show compassion with a gentle touch that conveys dignity and value. The simple, healing power of human touch goes a long way to remind hurting people of our care and concern. By: Lisa M. Samra ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Reflect & Pray

Lord Jesus, thank You for the personal way You reached out to care for hurting people. Help me to follow Your example and extend compassion in my actions.

Caring for others may include a compassionate touch.

---

## Okello's Story, Our Story

Read: Luke 5:12-16

[Jesus] put out His hand and touched [the leper]. —Luke 5:13

My friend Roxanne has had some impressive jobs in her life. She has covered the Olympics as a reporter. She has worked in Washington, DC, for noted people and companies. For years, she has written articles about top Christian athletes. But none of those jobs can compare with what she is doing now: giving the love of Jesus to children in Uganda.

What are her days like? Consider the rainy Thursday when she walked the muddy pathway to a cancer ward. Once inside, she scooped up little Okello, whose arms bore sores from poor IV care and whose body raged with a high fever. She carried him to the office of the only cancer doctor in the building and stayed with him until he got help and his condition stabilized.

Jesus, our example, spent His entire ministry among the suffering, healing them and bringing them the good news of God's love (Luke 7:21-22).

How significant are the jobs we do? Sure, it's vital to make a living to support ourselves and our families. But is there something we can do to help relieve the suffering in our world of pain? We may not be able to move to Uganda like Roxanne, but we can all find ways to assist someone. In whose life will you make a difference? By Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God uses us to show His love  
To people caught in life's despair;  
Our deeds of kindness open doors  
To talk of God and His great care. —Sper

One measure of our likeness to Christ is our sensitivity to the suffering of others.

---

## Someone to Touch

Read: Luke 5:12–16

Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. Luke 5:13

Commuters on a Canadian Metro train witnessed a heart-moving conclusion to a tense moment. They watched as a 70-year old woman gently reached out and offered her hand to a young man whose loud voice and disturbing words were scaring other passengers. The lady's kindness calmed the man who sank to the floor of the train with tears in his eyes. He said, "Thanks, Grandma," stood up, and walked away. The woman later admitted to being afraid. But she said, "I'm a mother and he needed someone to touch." While better judgment might have given her reason to keep her distance, she took a risk of love.

Jesus understands such compassion. He didn't side with the fears of unnerved onlookers when a desperate man, full of leprosy, showed up begging to be healed. Neither was He helpless as other religious leaders were—men who could only have condemned the man for bringing his leprosy into the village (Lev. 13:45–46). Instead, Jesus reached out to someone who probably hadn't been touched by anyone for years, and healed him.

Please help us to see ourselves in the merciful eyes of Your Son.

Thankfully, for that man and for us, Jesus came to offer what no law could ever offer—the touch of His hand and heart.

Father in heaven, please help us to see ourselves and one another in that desperate man—and in the merciful eyes of Your Son who reached out and touched him. By Mart DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

No one is too troubled or unclean to be touched by Jesus.

INSIGHT: The healing of this leper would have had great significance to the people. Leprosy was a major problem in first-century Israel, with clear processes outlined for diagnosis and response to the disease (Lev. 13:38–39). It would be reasonable to ask: Why did the person go to the priest instead of going to a doctor? To the people of Israel, leprosy was not simply a fatal physical illness. Leprosy was seen as divine judgment for sin—a physical disease with spiritual roots. Since the cause of the disease was considered spiritual, the priest diagnosed the illness and, if the person was stricken with leprosy, prescribed the appropriate verdict: Isolation from family, home, community, and the corporate religious life of the nation. Not only did the Rabbi from Nazareth cleanse the man of his disease, but also by touching him He welcomed him back into the community.

Jesus still welcomes outcasts today. Whom can you welcome in today?

---

## Seeing Upside Down

Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. —Matthew 9:12

Today's Scripture & Insight: Matthew 8:1-4; 9:9-12

**In India I worshiped among leprosy patients. Most of the medical advances in the treatment of leprosy came about as a result of missionary doctors, who were willing to live among patients and risk exposure to the dreaded disease. As a result, churches thrive in most major leprosy centers.** In Myanmar I visited homes for AIDS orphans, where Christian volunteers try to replace parental affection the disease has stolen away. The most rousing church services I have attended took place in Chile and Peru, in the bowels of a federal prison. Among the lowly, the wretched, the downtrodden—the rejected of this world—God's kingdom takes root.

Taking God's assignment seriously means that we must learn to look at the world upside down, as Jesus did. Instead of seeking out people with resources who can do us favors, we look for people with few resources. Instead of the strong, we find the weak; instead of the healthy, the sick. Instead of the spiritual, the sinful. Is not this how God reconciles the world to Himself? "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. . . . I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Matt. 9:12-13 niv). By: Philip Yancey ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

To gain a new perspective, look at the world upside down as Jesus did.

Reflect & Pray

We know, Jesus, that You sought the lowly ones who were rejected by others. We want to be like You. Open our eyes and show us how. We long to be used by You to bless others.

Do you see a needy world through the eyes of Jesus?

---

**F B Meyer - He stretched forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean.**

This leper, as the physician-evangelist remarks, was full of leprosy. It was a very aggravated case. He lay in the dust before Jesus. What a contrast! Loathsomeness and Divine beauty; disease and health; humanity at its worst and best; sinner and Savior; one of Satan's most miserable victims, and the Almighty Deliverer. So, my reader, if thou art conscious of a heart and life which are full of sin, I would have thee meet thy Savior now. There is no if about his power — even the leper recognized that. The only doubt was about the Savior's will: there is, however, no doubt on this score now, since He has healed myriads, and promises healing to all who come. Throw thyself, then, at his feet, and ask for cleansing. **"He stretched forth his hand, and touched him."** No one else would have dared to do as much. To touch that flesh, according to the Levitical code, would induce uncleanness. But Jesus shrank not. On the one hand, He knew that the ceremonial restrictions were abolished in Himself: on the other, He desired to teach that sin cannot defile the Divine holiness of the Savior. Whatever be the stories of sin that are breathed into his ear; whatever the open bruises and putrefying sores which are opened to his touch; whatever the sights and scenes with which He has to cope — none of these can leave a taint of evil in his sinless heart. It would be as impossible for sin to soil Christ as for a plague to contaminate flame. And He will heal thee. Dare to claim it.

Break up the heavens, O Lord, and far  
Through all yon starlight keen  
Draw me, thy bride — a glittering star  
In raiment white and clean.

**Matthew 8:4 And Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest and present the offering that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."**

NET Then Jesus said to him, "See that you do not speak to anyone, but go, show yourself to a priest, and bring the offering that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

GNT κα λ γει α τ η σο ς, ρ α μηθεν ε π ς, λ λ παγε σεαυ τ δε ξον τ ερε κα προσ νεγκον τ δ ρον προσ τα ξεν Μωϋσ ς, ε ς μαρτ ριον α το ς.

NLT Then Jesus said to him, "Don't tell anyone about this. Instead, go to the priest and let him examine you. Take along the offering required in the law of Moses for those who have been healed of leprosy. This will be a public testimony that you have been cleansed."

KJV And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

ESV And Jesus said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to them."

NIV Then Jesus said to him, "See that you don't tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

- **See** - Mt 6:1 9:30 12:16-19 16:20 17:9 Mk 1:43,44 5:43 7:36 Lu 5:14 Joh 5:41 7:18 8:50
- **show** - Mt 3:15 5:17 Lev 13:2-46 14:2-32 Isa 42:21 Lu 17:14
- **present an offering**: Lev 14:4,10,21,22
- **for a testimony** - Mt 10:18 2Ki 5:7,8 Mk 1:44 6:11 13:9 Lu 5:14 21:13 Joh 10:37,38

**GO AND SHOW  
WITNESS TO THE PRIEST  
BUT NOT THE PEOPLE!**

#### Parallel Passages:

Mark 1:44+ and He said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

Luke 5:14+ And He ordered him to tell no one, "But go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing, just as Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

**See that you tell no one:** **See** ([horaao](#)) is in the [present imperative](#) calling for him to continually keep quiet about his healing. Publicity over such miracles might hinder Christ's mission and divert public attention from His message. Mark records that this is

precisely what happened. In this man's exuberance over the miracle, he disobeyed; as a result, Christ had to move His ministry away from the city and into the desert regions (Mark 1:45+). As **Bruner** wrote "Jesus will not storm Israel with his messianic claim"; instead he will "knock quietly at its door, leper by leper, little by little." ([Matthew: A Commentary. The Christbook](#))

**Wiersbe** writes that "One thing is certain: Jesus did not perform miracles to "get a crowd." He usually avoided the crowd. Time after time, Jesus instructed those whom He had healed not to talk too much (Mt. 8:4, 18; Mt 9:30; Lk 8:56+). He did not want people trusting Him simply on the basis of spectacular deeds (see John 4:46–54). Faith must be based on His Word (Ro 10:17). (Bible Exposition Commentary)

**Darrell Bock** lists 6 reasons that have been suggested for Jesus' command of silence (Plummer 1896: 149–50):

1. Jesus wants him to be silent until he is officially declared to be clean (Schürmann 1969: 277; Marshall 1978: 209; Wiefel 1988: 117).
2. Jesus wishes to prevent the leper from becoming proud. However, there is no hint of such a concern in the account.
3. Jesus wishes to prevent the priests from hearing about the healing early and thus stopping the leper's return to society. However, up to this point in Luke's Gospel, there is no hint of official opposition.
4. Jesus wishes to prevent excessive popular excitement as a result of his healing ministry (so Marshall 1978: 209, with view 1). This point is quite possible, as the following verse suggests.
5. It shows Jesus' humility. This idea is not developed in relationship to miracles anywhere else.
6. Jesus wants to avoid having to offer himself to be ritually cleansed for touching a leper. This motive, too, seems unlikely. When Jesus did not follow tradition, he did not hide his actions. It is also probable that since Jesus is a prophet he has the freedom to touch these people, as the Elisha example suggests. The most likely explanations are that the silence was appropriate until the leper went to the priest (view 1) and that such silence also would prevent undue popular excitement over Jesus' miraculous work (view 4). The account vividly shows how Jesus downplays his miraculous work. Often he tries to restrict the spreading of a message about miracles (Luke 4:35, 41; 8:56; Matt. 9:30; 12:16; Mark 1:34; 3:12; 5:43; 7:36; 8:26; Plummer 1896: 150 (Baker Expository Commentary NT - Luke)

#### Related Resources:

- [Why did Jesus command people to not tell others of the miracles He performed?](#)
- Daniel Akin on the "Messianic Secret" - why Jesus was prohibiting speaking

**But go, show yourself to the priest:** The problem was that there was no cure for leprosy in those days, so as far as we know these laws were never implemented. Naaman was miraculously healed (2 Kings 5:1-19), but he was not an Israelite, so did not follow the prescribed procedures for cleansing (see [Who was Naaman?](#)). So far as the record goes, this incident in all 3 synoptic Gospels is the first time that a cleansed leper would have gone to the priest in the manner prescribed by Moses, with the one possible exception of Miriam (Nu 12:10-15). Imagine the shock of the priests! If that would not shake them out of their spiritual lethargy, even a dead man rising for the dead would not awaken their consciences and pierce their hearts (cf Lk 16:31+). Jesus full of mercy would give the priests another chance and this time would send not one healed leper but ten cleansed lepers to the priests (Read Lk 17:12-19+) Surely this would break through their hardness of heart! But it was not to be!

**Show** (1166) (**deiknuo**) means to show and has the sense of to draw attention to or exhibit something, in this case primarily by visual means so that the priest could apprehend with their senses what had occurred. The idea of this verb was to show so as to prove something is true or to make clear by evidence. In short the leper's skin free of the ugly spots was to be a visual demonstration of a dramatic miracle!

**Priest** (2409) (**hiereus** from **hieros** = consecrated to God and as a noun = temple) is **consecrated** person who serves God and in Jesus' day, were the Jewish men who offered Temple sacrifices and carried out other sacred rites associated with the Temple (cp Heb 8:4).

- Torrey Topical Textbook [Priests](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Priest](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Priest](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Priest](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Priest](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Priest](#)

**And present the offering that Moses commanded:** Mk 1:44; Lu 5:14 add **for your cleansing** "**katharismos**." Here is what **Moses**



commanded...

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 **"This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing** (Lxx = [katharizo](#)) Now he shall be brought to the priest, 3 and the priest shall go out to the outside of the camp. Thus the priest shall look, and if the infection of leprosy has been healed in the leper, 4 then the priest shall give orders to take two live clean birds and cedar wood and a scarlet string and hyssop for the one who is to be cleansed. 5 "The priest shall also give orders to slay the one bird in an earthenware vessel over running water. 6 "As for the live bird, he shall take it together with the cedar wood and the scarlet string and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the live bird in the blood of the bird that was slain over the running water. 7 "He shall then sprinkle seven times the one who is to be cleansed from the leprosy and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the live bird go free over the open field. (Lev 14:1-7+).

**Warren Wiersbe** - This ceremony is described in Leviticus 14 and is another beautiful picture of Christ's work for sinners. The bird slain pictures the death of Christ; the bird released pictures His resurrection. Putting the bird into the jar pictures the Incarnation, when Christ took a human body that He might die for us. The application of the blood to the ear, thumb, and toe illustrates the need for personal faith in His death. The oil on the blood reminds us of the Spirit of God, who enters the person when he trusts the Saviour. (Bible Exposition Commentary)

**Adam Clarke** on the **offering** - This gift was two living, clean birds, some cedar wood, with scarlet and hyssop, Leviticus 14:4, which were to be brought for his cleansing; and, when clean, two he lambs, one ewe lamb, three tenth deals of flour, and one log of oil, Leviticus 14:10; but if the person was poor, then he was to bring one lamb, one tenth deal of flour, one log of oil and two turtle doves, or young pigeons, Leviticus 14:21, 22."

**As a testimony to them:** **Guzik** makes an interesting point that "The elements used in the Levitical ceremony for the cleansing of a leper (cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet) are the same elements used in cleansing someone who was defiled by a dead body (Numbers 19:6, 19:13, 19:18 and Leviticus 14:4-7). Since lepers were never healed, these priests had never conducted this ceremony. When they had to look up the procedure for this ceremony and had to carry it out for the first time, it would be a strong witness that the Messiah was among them." **Arnold Fruchtenbaum** writes that "Although the priesthood had all these detailed instructions as to how they were to respond in the case of a healed leper, they never had the opportunity to put these instructions into effect, because from the time the Mosaic Law was given, no Jew was ever healed of leprosy. As a result, it was taught by the rabbis that only the Messiah would be able to heal a Jewish leper." (Read [The Three Messianic Miracles](#)) Indeed, to the rabbis the cure of a leper was as difficult as raising a person from the dead.

Notice **priest** above is singular, but here Jesus says **them** which is plural, which most think refers to the other religious leaders in the Temple, that is the Jewish priests. Imagine their shock at seeing a healed leper! Each of these miracles was like a divine sign like a giant blinking neon sign on the highway intended to point the witnesses (whether they be the Jewish crowds or the religious leaders) to Jesus as the divine One, the Redeemer, Whose desire was for them to be spiritually healed. No wonder, in view of the hypocritical unbelief so prevalent in the priesthood, that Jesus said this would be **"for a testimony to them."** What a WITNESS this would present to the RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY. In view of the rejection of Jesus as Messiah by most of the religious leaders (Nicodemus was an exception, et al Jn 3:1ff+) given such a startlingly bright divine light, we can begin to grasp the depth of their hatred of God and hardness of heart. Religion can be a deadly thing and take you straight to the Lake of fire! God desires relationship grounded on humility, not religion founded on hubris. As David says Ps 51:17+ "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, you will not despise." In Isaiah we read "For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place, And also with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite." (Isa 57:15)

**Testimony** (3142) ([marturion/martyrion](#) source of English "[martyr](#)") means the healed leper would be walking living proof that a miracle had been performed. And for the leper it was to be a declaration of facts which confirmed he was now clean, sort of like an emancipation proclamation for this man who had been enslaved (so to speak), bound by his leprosy undoubtedly for many years. The cleansed leper showing himself would be a visual testimony that he had no more skin spots and was cleansed. Did the priests ask who performed this miracle? The Gospel writers do not say but based on their asking about who healed the blind man in John 9:1-7, (see Jn 9:13-15), it is almost a given that they asked who performed this miracle. So the blind man knew it was "the Man who is called Jesus" (Jn 9:11), just as did the leper who addressed Jesus as "Lord."

---

**Arnold Fruchtenbaum** has an interesting note on leprosy in his fascinating article entitled [The Three Messianic Miracles](#)....

Some time prior to the coming of Yeshua (Jesus), the ancient rabbis separated miracles into two categories.

First were those miracles anyone would be able to perform if they were empowered by the Spirit of God to do so. The second category of miracles were called "messianic miracles," which were miracles only the Messiah would be able to perform. Yeshua did miracles in both categories: general miracles and also messianic miracles. So because of the rabbinic teaching that certain miracles would be reserved only for the Messiah to do, whenever He performed a messianic miracle it created a different type of reaction than when He performed other types of miracles.

The first messianic miracle was the healing of a leper....From the time the Mosaic Law was completed, there was no record of any Jew who had been healed of leprosy. While Miriam was healed of leprosy, this was before the completion of the Law. Naaman was healed of leprosy, but he was a Syrian Gentile, not a Jew. From the time the Mosaic Law was completed, there was never a case of any Jew being healed of leprosy.

Leprosy was the one disease that was left out of rabbinic cures; there was no cure for leprosy whatsoever. Yet Leviticus 13-14 gave the Levitical Priesthood detailed instructions as to what they were to do in case a leper was healed. On the day that a leper approached the priesthood and said, "I was a leper but now I have been healed," the priesthood was to give an initial offering of two birds. For the next seven days, they were to investigate intensively the situation to determine three things. First, was the person really a leper? Second, if he was a real leper, was he really cured of his leprosy? Third, if he was truly cured of his leprosy, what were the circumstances of the healing? If after seven days of investigation they were firmly convinced that the man had been a leper, had been healed of his leprosy, and the circumstances were proper, then, on the eighth day there would be a lengthy series of offerings. All together, there were four different offerings. First, there was a trespass-offering; second, a sin-offering; third, a burnt-offering; and fourth, a meal-offering. Then came the application of the blood of the trespass-offering upon the healed leper followed by the application of the blood of the sin-offering upon the healed leper. The ceremony would then end with the anointing of oil upon the healed leper. ([The Three Messianic Miracles](#))

---

**Charles Ryrie** on Leprosy and the Law of Moses - "Those things which Moses commanded" are recorded in Leviticus 14. Briefly, the ritual of cleansing was as follows: two clean living birds, a cedar rod, scarlet, and hyssop were taken; one bird was then killed in an earthen vessel over running water; the hyssop was then tied to the rod with the scarlet band and it and the living bird were dipped in the blood of the dead bird; next the blood on the rod was sprinkled over the leper seven times, and the living bird was loosed. At this point the leper was pronounced clean, but more was still required of him. He had to wash his clothes, shave, bathe, stay away from his house for seven days, repeat the ablutions and shaving, and finally on the eighth day offer at the temple a sin offering, a trespass offering, a meal offering, and a burnt offering. It is evident that the law was very detailed about this procedure, and doubtless, because it had seldom if ever been used, there would have been a lot of scratching of priestly heads had the leper obeyed the Lord and gone to them. Instead, he chose to disobey and publish his miracle abroad so that it actually hindered his benefactor's ministry.

**The power of the law.** Certain important doctrinal facts about the relation of the Savior, the sinner, and the Mosaic law are illustrated in this miracle. The first is that **the Mosaic law was powerless to cleanse**. It could after a length of time pronounce as true the fact that a man was cleansed, but it could not perform the cleansing itself. The nature of the law has not changed; it still cannot cleanse the sinner no matter how admirably he may try to keep its commands. "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight" (Rom 3:20). It was never given as a means of spiritual salvation, and great is the error of those who so use it today.

**The purpose of the law.** The Lord's reason for commanding this leper to go to the priests was that the Mosaic law might be used as a testimony to them. In the process of performing the ritual of the law they might have been led to the Savior. Such is a legitimate purpose of the preaching of the law today. It may be used to lead a man to Christ. It is for the unrighteous (1 Ti 1:9), to shut him up to faith in Christ (Gal 3:23-24). Our Lord used it this way (Luke 10:25-37) and so may we.

Although the law may be used to show a sinner his hopeless condition, only Christ can save. What then is the place of the law in the life of the redeemed? Being saved does not exempt one from lawful living, but the law involved is no longer the law of Moses but the law of Christ. So it was for the cleansed leper (Mark 1:44), and so it is for the cleansed sinner in this age (1 Cor 9:21). He is no longer under any part of the Mosaic law (including the Ten Commandments, 2 Cor 3:7-11), but he is to live by the commandments of Christ under grace. But, someone will say, Are not many of the requirements of the law (and especially the principles of the Ten Commandments) repeated substantially in the teachings of grace? The answer is obviously yes. Then, one will say, Why insist that the Christian is not under the Mosaic law (including the Ten Commandments)? We insist on it for the evident reason that the Scripture says so (2 Cor 3:7-11; Rom 10:4; Heb 7:11-12), and for the very practical reason that even though some of the standards may be similar under law and grace, no one will ever possibly reach any of those standards in his life if he tries to do so by keeping the law. The law can only motivate to sin (Rom 7) and never to sanctification. Legalism is the greatest enemy of sanctification; thus

to connect the believer's sanctification with the law is to defeat him before he starts. Love is the only workable motive for sanctification, but love does not mean license. No doubt, the leper was so overpowered with love for his deliverance and his deliverer that he thought he was doing right by telling everyone else of Jesus. But that was not real love, for if he had had genuine, thoughtful love he would have obeyed. The law of Christ is tailor-made and perfect in every detail. The love of Christ brings perfect obedience to each and all of those details. May, the lessons of this miracle be practiced in a life of obedience motivated by the love of the one who loved us and gave Himself for us. (Dr Ryrie's Articles)

## Matthew 8:5 And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, imploring Him,

NET Matthew 8:5 When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him asking for help:

GNT Matthew 8:5 Ε σελθ ντος δ α το ε ς Καφαρναο μ προσ λθεν α τ κατ νταρχος παρακαλ ν α τ ν

NLT Matthew 8:5 When Jesus returned to Capernaum, a Roman officer came and pleaded with him,

KJV Matthew 8:5 And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,

ESV Matthew 8:5 When he had entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, appealing to him,

NIV Matthew 8:5 When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help.

ASV Matthew 8:5 And when he was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,

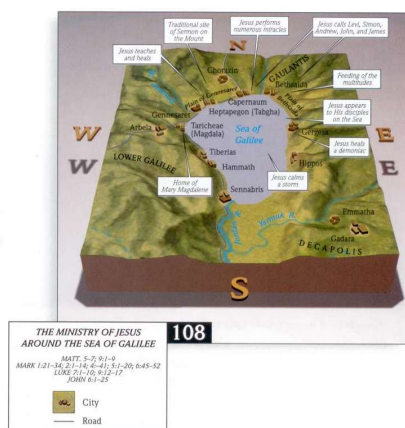
CSB Matthew 8:5 When He entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him,

NKJ Matthew 8:5 Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him,

NRS Matthew 8:5 When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, appealing to him

YLT Matthew 8:5 And Jesus having entered into Capernaum, there came to him a centurion calling upon him,

- **entered** - Mt 4:13 9:1 11:23 Mk 2:1 Lu 7:1
- **a centurion** - This was a Roman military title; and therefore this officer may be concluded to have been a Gentile. Mt 27:54 Mk 15:39 Lu 7:2-10 Ac 10:1-33 22:25 23:17,23 27:13,31,43
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Click to enlarge - from Holman Bible Atlas (purchase [digital book](#) or [Hardcover](#))  
 © 1998 B&H Publishing Group,  
 Used by permission, all rights reserved.  
 This is one of the best resources for Bible maps.  
 Please do not reproduce this map on any other webpage.

## Parallel Passage -

Luke 7:1-5+ When He had completed all His discourse (the sermon in Lk 6:20-49) in the hearing of the people, He went to Capernaum. 2 And a centurion's slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die. 3 When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders asking Him to come and save the life of his slave. 4 When they came to Jesus, they earnestly implored Him, saying, "He is worthy for You to grant this to him; 5 for he loves our nation and it was he who built us our synagogue."

## CHRIST'S CROSS-CULTURAL ENCOUNTER WITH A CENTURION IN CAPERNAUM

**Hendriksen** introduces this miracle pointing out that "It should not be confused with the event reported in John 4:46–54. That story has to do with a royal officer's son; this one with a centurion's servant. John 4:46–54 places Jesus in Cana; in Matt. 8:5 ff. he is entering Capernaum. The supplicant mentioned in the former could not immediately conceive of Jesus' power to heal at a distance; the centurion himself took the initiative in declaring that Jesus had this power. (BNTC-Matthew)

**Carson** has an interesting comment that "Conceivably it was the earlier healing of an official's son (John 4) that strengthened the centurion's faith in this instance."

**And when Jesus entered Capernaum** - Jesus had left Nazareth, His home town, after preaching a message resulting in the people running Him out of the city and trying to throw Him off of a hill (Lk 4:29+) and had settled in Capernaum (Mt 4:13+) which became His "base of operations" during His early Galilean ministry.

**Capernaum** ([See location on NW side of Sea of Galilee](#)) (2746) ([Kapharnaoum](#) of Hebrew origin - **kaphar** - a village + **Nachum** = Nahum) is literally the village of Nahum that was located on the NW shore of Sea of Galilee Matthew recording that Jesus left "Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali" and this village served as His headquarters during His ministry in Galilee (Mt 4:13; 9:1; Mk 2:1). **Capernaum** must have been a sizable town because Matthew was a tax collector there when he was called by Jesus (Mk 2:14). In addition a high officer of the king (Herod Antipas) had his residence there and built a synagogue for the people (Mt 8:5-13; Lu 7:1-10). The Lord performed many striking miracles there, healing of the centurion's palsied servant (Mt 8:5-13), a man sick of the palsy borne to Jesus by four friends (Mk 2:3-12), and the nobleman's son (Jn 4:46-54). In spite of Jesus' miraculous works and teachings, the people did not repent and Jesus predicted the judgment of the town "And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you." (Mt 11:23, 24; cf Lu 10:15). **Capernaum** - 16x in 16v - Mt. 4:13; Mt. 8:5; Mt. 11:23; Mt. 17:24; Mk. 1:21; Mk. 2:1; Mk. 9:33; Lk. 4:23; Lk. 4:31; Lk. 7:1; Lk. 10:15; Jn. 2:12; Jn. 4:46; Jn. 6:17; Jn. 6:24; Jn. 6:59

**A centurion came to Him, imploring Him** - Luke's version tells us that when the **centurion** "heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders asking Him to come and save the life of his slave." (Lk 7:3+) Luke goes on to add that "When they came to Jesus, they earnestly implored Him, saying, "He is worthy for You to grant this to him; for he loves our nation and it was he who built us our synagogue." (Lk 7:4-5+) There is no contradiction, for Luke simply gives more details explaining that it was through the Jewish elders that the centurion's pleas was made to Jesus. **Hendriksen** adds the important note that "according to Luke's account (Lk 7:4, 5) the elders were more than mere transmitters of a message. As, through them, the centurion was interceding for his "boy," (pais) so **the elders, in turn were interceding for the centurion** They said, "He is worthy to receive this favor from you, for he loves our nation, and he built the synagogue for us."" (Ibid)

**Spurgeon** notes that the centurion "seeks a cure, but does not prescribe to the Lord how or where he shall work it; in fact, he does not put his request into words, but pleads the case, and lets the sorrow speak."

**Craig Blomberg** helps us understand the differences between the accounts in Matthew and Luke - The Lukan parallel describes two other groups of individuals who speak with Jesus on behalf of the centurion (Luke 7:3–6). Luke is probably more literal at this point and Matthew more dramatic (cf. his additions in vv. 11–12). Both renderings are legitimate and draw attention to the centurion's faith rather than his personal presence. We too often use similar literary devices. A news report declares, "The President announced today" when in fact only his press secretary ever spoke to anyone. (NAC-Matthew)

**Robertson** adds that "What one does through others he does himself as Pilate "scourged Jesus" (had him scourged)."

Remember that to the Jews, the Gentiles were unclean and this was especially true of the Romans who were their oppressors. That Jesus would let a Roman centurion approach Him would surprise, probably even shock many of His fellow Jews. They had yet to understand that the Jewish Jesus had come to be the Savior of both Jews and Gentiles! Incidents such as this one began to teach His disciples this important truth.

**Centurion** (1543) ([Hekatontarches](#) from **hekaton** = one hundred + **archo** = to command) means a commander of a hundred soldiers. They were noncommissioned officers who had worked his way up through the ranks. These veteran soldiers maintained discipline and commanded great respect, and were paid 15 times an ordinary soldier's wage. They were highly motivated, competent soldiers, and generally decent

persons. **Polybius** says "that the **centurions** were chosen by merit, and so were men remarkable not so much for their daring courage as for their deliberation, constancy, and strength of mind." They were chosen as good leaders, of steady and prudent mind, not prone to take the offensive to start fighting wantonly, but able when overwhelmed and hard-pressed to stand fast and die at their posts. Most of the **centurions** in the NT are presented in a favorable light - Matt. 8:5; Matt. 8:8; Matt. 8:13; Matt. 27:54; Lk. 7:2; Lk. 7:6; Lk. 23:47; Acts 10:1; Acts 10:22; Acts 21:32; Acts 22:25; Acts 22:26; Acts 23:17; Acts 23:23; Acts 24:23; Acts 27:1; Acts 27:6; Acts 27:11; Acts 27:31; Acts 27:43. **MacArthur** writes that "Along with the centurion in charge of Jesus' crucifixion, and Cornelius (Acts 10:44–48), he (THE CENTURION IN OUR PRESENT PASSAGE) became a believer in Jesus Christ."

**Imploring** (present tense) (3870) (**parakaleo** from **para** = beside + **kaleo** = call) means literally to call one alongside, to call someone to oneself, to call for, to summon in the present context with the primary sense of urging Jesus to take some action. The centurion was appealing to Jesus in supplication, begging Him, asking Him earnestly. This same verb is used to describe the appeal of the Jewish elders in Lk 7:4, Luke adding the adverb *spoudaios* which means earnestly, zealously, with haste. The need was urgent.

#### Related Resource

- J C Ryle's excellent summary of the Centurion's character - (1) His kindness, (2) His humility and (3) His faith
- [What was a Roman centurion? What was a Roman legion?](#)
- [Multiple Sermons related to the Centurion](#)

---

**MacDuff** - We, in this age of the church, are in the position of that sick servant at Capernaum. To the eye of sense we are separated from the Saviour. We see Him not—we can touch Him not—the hand cannot steal amid the crowd to catch His garment hem—we cannot hear His loved footsteps as of old on our threshold; but faith penetrates the invisible; the messenger—prayer—meets Him in the streets of the New Jerusalem; and faith and prayer together, the twin delegates from His church below, He has never yet sent empty away.

### Thy Word Suffices Me Sermon Notes Charles Haddon Spurgeon

- And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. Matthew 8:7
- Say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. —Luke 7:7

THE centurion who cared for the religious welfare of the people, and built them a synagogue, had also a heart of compassion for the sick.

It is well when public generosity is sustained by domestic kindness.

This servant was his boy, and perhaps his slave; but he was dear to him. A good master makes a good servant.

It is well when all ranks are united in sympathy: captain and page are here united in affection.

The master showed his affection by seeking help. Heart and hand should go together. Let us not love in word only.

It is well that the followers of Jesus should be ready to help all sick folk; and that healing should be still associated with prayer to Jesus.

Mark the growing manifest faith of the centurion, and the growing manifestation of Jesus.

Centurion sends elders with request to "come and heal. " Jesus will come and heal.

Centurion comes himself asking for "a word. " Jesus gives the word, and the deed is done.

We see in this passage a miracle in the physical world, and are thereby taught what our Lord Jesus can do in the spiritual world.

Let us imitate the centurion in seeking to Jesus about others. We learn from the narrative:

#### I. THE PERFECT READINESS OF CHRIST.



1. He did not debate with the elders of the Jews, and show the weakness of their plea: "He was worthy" (Luke 7:4-5).
2. He cheerfully granted their request, although it was needless for him to come. "Then Jesus went with them" (Luke 7:6).
3. He did not raise a question about the change which the centurion proposed, although he was already on the road (Luke 7:6).
4. He did not suspect the good man's motive, as some might have done. He read his heart, and saw his true humility.
5. He did not demur to the comparison of himself to a petty officer. Our Lord is never captious; but takes our meaning.
6. He promptly accepted the prayer and the faith of the centurion, save the boon, and gave it as desired.

Our Lord's love to sinners, his forgetfulness of self, his willingness to please us, and his eagerness to fulfill his own mission, should encourage us in prayer to him for ourselves and others.

## II. THE CONSCIOUS ABILITY OF CHRIST.

1. He is not puzzled with the case. It was singular for the servant to be at once paralyzed and tormented; but whatever the disease may be, the Lord says, "I will come and heal him."
  2. He is not put in doubt by the extreme danger of the servant. No, he will come to him, though he hears that he is stricken down. and is utterly prostrate.
  3. He speaks of healing as a matter of course. His coming will ensure the cure: "come and heal."
  4. He treats the method of procedure as of no consequence.
- He will come or he will not come, but will "say in a word"; yet the result will be the same.
5. He wonders more at the centurion's faith than at the cure.

Omnipotent grace moves with majestic ease.  
We are worried and fretted, but the Lord is not.  
Let us thus be encouraged to hope.

## III. THE ABIDING METHOD OF CHRIST.

He is accustomed to heal by his Word through faith; Signs and wonders are temporary, and answer a purpose for an occasion; but both faith and the Word of the Lord are matters for all time.

Our Lord did not in the case before us put in a personal appearance, but spoke, and it was done; and this he does in our own day.

1. This is coming back to the original form of working in creation.
- It is apparently a greater miracle than working by visible presence; at any rate, the means are less seen.
2. This method suits true humility. We do not demand signs and wonders; the Word is enough for us (Luke 7:7).
  3. This pleases great faith; for the Word is faith's chosen manifestation of God. It rejoices more in the Word than in all things visible (Ps. 119:162).
  4. This is perfectly reasonable. Should not a word of command from God be enough? Mark the centurion's reasoning (Matt. 8:9).
  5. This is sure to succeed. Who can resist the divine fiat? In our own case, all we need is a word from the, Lord.
  6. This must be confidently relied on for others. Let us use the Word, and pray the Lord to make it his own word.

Henceforth, let us go forward in his name, relying upon his Word!

### Insertions

Had the centurion's roof been heaven itself, it could not have been worthy to be come under of him whose word was almighty, and who was the Almighty Word of his Father. Such is Christ confessed to be by him that says, "only say the word." None but a divine power is unlimited: neither has faith any other bounds than God himself. There needs no footing to remove mountains, or devils, but a word. Do but say the word, O Savior, my sin shall be remitted, my soul shall be healed, my body shall be raised from dust, and both soul and body shall

be glorified. —Bishop Hall

"I have been informed," says Hervey, "that when the Elector of Hanover was declared by the Parliament of Great Britain successor to the vacant throne, several persons of distinction waited upon his Highness, to make timely application for valuable preferments. Several requests of this nature were granted, and confirmed by a kind of promissory note. One gentleman solicited the Mastership of the Rolls. Being indulged in his desire, he was offered the same confirmation which had been vouchsafed to other successful petitioners; upon which he seemed to be overcome by grateful confusion and surprise, and begged that he might not put the royal donor to such unnecessary trouble, protesting that he looked upon His Highness's word as the best ratification of his suit. With this compliment the Elector was not a little pleased. 'This gentleman,' he said, 'treats me like a king; and, whoever is disappointed, he shall certainly be gratified.'"

Our Lord can cure either by coming or by speaking. Let us not dictate to him the way in which he shall bless us. If we were permitted a choice, we ought not to select that method which makes most show, but that in which there is least to be seen and heard, yet most to be admired. Comparatively, signs and wonders show less of him than his bare Word, which he has magnified above all his name. Marvels dazzle, but the Word enlightens. That faith which sees least, sees most, and that which has no eyes at all for the visible has a thousand eyes for the invisible. Lord, come in thy glory, and bless me, if such be thy will; but if thou wilt stay where thou art, and bless me only through thy will and Word, I will be as well content, and even more so if this method the more honors thee! —C. H. S.

---

## **Little Faith and Great Faith - Charles Woods**

### **Matthew 8:5–13; Matthew 15:21–28**

**Introduction:** "You can get anything you want from God if you have enough faith." The opposite of this is the idea that when you wanted something and didn't get it, you didn't have enough faith. "If we only had great faith—reserved for a certain few—we could really see things happen." Christ did commend great faith and condemn little faith, but there's more to the story.

#### **I. Basic Truth**

- A. Can we really "get anything we want from God"?
- B. Two passages appear to indicate that we can (Matt. 17:20; Luke 17:6)
- C. Actually, however, they teach how little faith is necessary to achieve
  - 1. The emphasis is on the amount necessary for great things
  - 2. Both statements are in the form of a rebuke
  - 3. They don't really teach what is claimed

#### **II. The Demonstration of Great Faith**

- A. It is not something all that special
  - 1. The two commended for it were both non-Jews
  - 2. Neither was anything special spiritually
- B. What's notable about the centurion?
  - 1. He recognized Christ's authority
  - 2. He recognized Christ's ability
- C. What's notable about the woman?
  - 1. She persevered—would not take "no" for an answer
  - 2. She banked on His willingness
- D. What's notable about the two together
  - 1. Both asked for something He was obviously doing
  - 2. Both thus showed a commitment to the will of God

#### **III. The Nature of Great Faith**

- A. Faith is operating on fact
  - 1. Both people went on the facts they had
  - 2. The greater the commitment to act on fact, the greater the faith
- B. Confirmed by people condemned for little faith
  - 1. Matthew 8:26
  - 2. Matthew 14:31
  - 3. Matthew 16:8

#### IV. The Contents of Great Faith

- A. It recognizes who God is
- B. It accepts His absolute authority
- C. It accepts His complete ability
- D. It persists in its mission
- E. It stays serious about what it desires
- F. It is totally committed to the will of God

Conclusion: Surely more can be accomplished than we see, and more accomplished than others do. It is just a matter of accepting the facts and acting on them.

---

#### POWERFUL FAITH - Croft Pentz

Matthew 8:5–13

Someone has said, "Faith is believing God and asking no questions." Real faith believes before it sees—Hebrews 11:1. It is necessary to have faith in order to please God—Hebrews 11:6. The same faith that brings salvation will also produce miracles. This same faith will keep you.

- 1. THE PROBLEM—Mt 8:5–6
- 2. THE PROMISE—Mt 8:7–9
- 3. THE POWER—Mt 8:10–12
- 4. THE PERFECTION—Mt 8:13

Put your faith into action. Do not be afraid to step out in faith. All the great men of God were men of faith. Read Hebrews 11, and see how these great men did the impossible because of faith.

#### Matthew 8:6 and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented."

NET Matthew 8:6 "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible anguish."

GNT Matthew 8:6 καὶ λέγων, Ὁ κύριε, ὁ παῖς μου βλητὰ ἐν τῷ κρεβάτι· φοβερῶς βασανιζόμενος.

NLT Matthew 8:6 "Lord, my young servant lies in bed, paralyzed and in terrible pain."

KJV Matthew 8:6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

ESV Matthew 8:6 "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly."

NIV Matthew 8:6 "Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed and in terrible suffering."

ASV Matthew 8:6 and saying, Lord, my servant lieth in the house sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

CSB Matthew 8:6 "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible agony!"

NKJ Matthew 8:6 saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented."

NRS Matthew 8:6 and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible distress."

YLT Matthew 8:6 and saying, 'Sir, my young man hath been laid in the house a paralytic, fearfully afflicted,'

- **my** - Job 31:13,14 Ac 10:7 Col 3:11 4:1 1Ti 6:2 Phm 1:16
- **paralyzed** - Mt 4:24 9:2 Mk 2:3-12 Ac 8:7 9:33
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Parallel Passage -

Luke 7:2+ And a centurion's slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die.

**And saying, "Lord, my servant** - Notice he addresses Jesus as **Lord** (master, owner). Luke 7:2+ calls the **servant** (pais) while Matthew uses **slave** ([doulos](#)) describing one whose will is completely subjected to the will of their master. Lk 7:2+ also says the servant "**was highly regarded by him**" (entimos) a word meaning that he was highly esteemed (e.g., entimos in Php 2:29 was used of Epaphroditus) and indicates that the centurion did not just see his **servant** as a "tool" but was genuinely concerned for him. **Mattoon** comments that the centurion's attitude "of love and concern of this soldier was quite unusual for under Roman law, a

slave was defined as a living tool who had no rights. In fact, a master could abuse him and even kill him if he chose to do so. A Roman writer on estate management recommended the farmer to examine his implements every year and to throw out those which were old and broken, and to do the same with his own slaves! Normally when a slave was past his ability to work, he was thrown out to die. The attitude of this centurion, however, was not like this at all." **Bishop Hall** adds the interesting observation that a "Great variety of visitors resorted to Christ. One comes to Him for a **son**; another for a **daughter**; a third for **himself**. I see none come to Him for his **servant** but this one Centurion."

Here is some cultural context describing a slave's status in the Roman world to help us understand the heart of this centurion - **Gaius** noted that it was universally accepted that masters possessed the power of life and death over their slaves (Institutes, 1.52). The Roman writer Varro insisted that the only difference between a slave, an animal, and a cart was that the slave talked (Agriculture, 1.17). Slaves were often abused, young boys in particular, since pedophilia was not uncommon.

**Lord** (master, owner) (2962) (**kurios** from **kuros** = might or power, related to **kuroo** = to give authority) primarily means the possessor, owner, master, the supreme one, one who is sovereign and who possesses absolute authority, absolute ownership and uncontested power, all perfect descriptions of Jesus! And even though the Roman centurion did not fully comprehend Who Jesus was, he was definitely on the right path referring to Him as Lord. How sad to see Christians today debating amongst themselves of whether we should recognize Him as Lord! We need to take a lesson from this centurion and eat some "[humble pie](#)" so to speak!

**Servant** (child, boy, girl) (3816) (**pais** English - **pedo-** as in pediatrics, [pedobaptism](#)) is translated most often as **servant** (Lk 1:54, 69; Lk 15:26; Mt. 14:2) but can also refer to young children. **BDAG** adds this word describes "one who is committed in total obedience to another." The **NET** Note says that **pais** is "often used of a slave who was regarded with some degree of affection, possibly a personal servant" As noted above Luke's version uses [doulos](#). It is possible that Matthew's use of the specific word **pais** is a clue that the **servant** was a young boy. Slaves in the ancient world, though they may be highly skilled craftsmen or even physicians existed to serve their masters alone. They had no rights as persons, and their lives had little value to society. Cicero once apologized for having a twinge of regret when a slave of his suffered a painful death. **IVP Background Commentary** gives us an interesting context - "During their twenty or so years of service in the Roman army, soldiers were not permitted to marry. Many had illegal local concubines, an arrangement that the army overlooked and the concubines found profitable. But centurions, who could be moved around more frequently, would be less likely than ordinary soldiers to have such relationships; they often married only after retirement. By ancient definitions, however, a household could include servants, and household servants and masters sometimes grew very close—especially if they made up the entire family unit."

**Is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented-** **Fearfully** ([deinos](#)) means to an extreme degree and modifying the verb **tormented** ([present tense](#) - continually tormented) gives us a vivid picture of the servant's horrible physical/mental condition! In fact Doctor Luke even says he was "**sick and about to die**." (Lk 7:2+). In English [torment](#) speaks of great physical pain and/or mental anguish, probably both in the case of the servant.

**Paralyzed** (3885) ([paralutikos](#) from **pará** = from + **lúō** = to loose) means he was lame, crippled, disabled or weak of limb, usually in the feet or legs and unable to walk. Only found in the Gospels Matt. 4:24; Matt. 8:6; Matt. 9:2; Matt. 9:6; Mk. 2:3; Mk. 2:4; Mk. 2:5; Mk. 2:9; Mk. 2:10. Not found in Septuagint.

**Tormented** (928) ([basanizo](#)) means literally to rub on the touchstone ([Basanos](#)) or to test by means of the touchstone and then to test or make proof of anything. Figuratively as in the present passage, **basanizo** refers to severe distress, and includes the ideas of being afflicted, harassed, vexed, tormented. To give some idea of the intensity of this word it is notable that **Basanizo** is used to describe the torment of the eternal condition of unbelievers in Revelation 14:10+ and of the devil in Revelation 20:10+.

---

### **Norman Geisler - Is there a mistake in the accounts concerning Jesus and the centurion?**

**PROBLEM:** Matthew seems to present the centurion as the one who seeks the help of Jesus (Matt. 8:5); but, Luke seems to say that the centurion sent elders to see Jesus (Luke 7:3). Also, Matthew appears to say that the centurion himself comes to talk with Jesus. However, in Luke, the Bible says only the centurion's representatives saw Jesus.

**SOLUTION:** Both Matthew and Luke are correct. In the 1st century, it was understood that when a representative was sent to speak for his master, it was as if the master was speaking himself. Even in our day this is still the case. When the Secretary of State meets individuals from other countries, he goes out in the name of the president of the United States. In other words, what he says, the president says. Therefore, Matthew states that a centurion came entreating Jesus about his sick slave, when in fact the centurion sent others on his behalf. So, when Matthew declares that the centurion was speaking, this was true, even though he was (as Luke

indicated) speaking through his official representative. (When Critics Ask)

**Rod Mattoon adds** - When you compare Matthew's account of the healing of the centurion's servant with Luke's account of the same miracle, an apparent discrepancy quickly arrests the reader's attention. Matthew's account says the centurion himself came to Christ on behalf of his sick servant, but Luke's account says the centurion sent some "elders of the Jews" to speak with Christ about the sick servant and then later, sent some of his "friends" to Christ to tell Christ that He did not need to come to the centurion's house, but only needed to speak the word for the healing. The best solution to this problem of whether the centurion went himself to Christ or sent others to Him, is to remember that sometimes we speak of a person doing something when he actually did it through someone else. Scripture says Solomon built the Temple in 1 Kings 6:14, but we know that he did not actually build the Temple himself but ordered the Temple built and provided for the material and financial needs. Qualified craftsmen and builders built the Temple. Pilate is said to have scourged Jesus in Matthew 27:26, but it was Roman soldiers who did the actual scourging. They simply did it at Pilate's orders. And in our text, the centurion is said to have built the Jews a synagogue, when we know he did not actually build the building himself, but simply provided the finances to make it possible. Matthew's account of the miracle is simply an abbreviation of Luke's account and so it says that the centurion himself communicated with Christ. It is acceptable language which is commonly used even in our day.

#### Matthew 8:7 Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

NET Matthew 8:7 Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

GNT Matthew 8:7 καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ, ὁ θεὸς ἔρχεσθαι καὶ ἰατῆραι.

NLT Matthew 8:7 Jesus said, "I will come and heal him."

KJV Matthew 8:7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

ESV Matthew 8:7 And he said to him, "I will come and heal him."

NIV Matthew 8:7 Jesus said to him, "I will go and heal him."

ASV Matthew 8:7 And he saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

CSB Matthew 8:7 "I will come and heal him," He told him.

NKJ Matthew 8:7 And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

NRS Matthew 8:7 And he said to him, "I will come and cure him."

YLT Matthew 8:7 and Jesus saith to him, 'I, having come, will heal him.'

- **I will** - Mt 9:18,19 Mk 5:23,24 Lu 7:6
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Parallel Passage -

Luke 7:6+ Now Jesus started on His way with them (THE JEWISH ELDERS); and when He was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not worthy for You to come under my roof; 7 for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed.

### JESUS' RESPONSE IS UNEQUIVOCALLY AFFIRMATIVE

**Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him"** - The word "I" (ego) is emphatic, as if He is saying "I myself," "I a Jewish man," will come. Jesus gives a promise with certainty! He shows no hesitation to go to the house of the centurion, which flies in the face of Jewish practices of the day which would be completely against a Jew going into a Gentile's house. Jesus' willingness to respond to a Gentile request would have been a significant teaching point to His Jewish disciples who had grown up not thinking too highly of Gentiles, especially those who were soldiers to whom they were subject. And so once again we see Jesus challenging the traditions and customs of the Jews, for unlike the Jewish "laws," God's laws had no prohibition of a Jew going to the house of a Gentile.



**Heal** (cure) ([2323](#)) ([therapeuo](#) from **therapon** = an attendant, servant) means primarily to care for, to wait upon, to minister to and in this context means to heal or restore to health. Compare uses of miraculous healing in Mt. 4:23, 24; Mt 10:1, 8; Acts 4:14. Note that in the centurion's response in Mt 8:9, he uses (according to Robertson), "the more definite word for healing ([iaomai](#))) as Matthew does in Mt 8:13,:

**Matthew 8:8 But the centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed.**

NET Matthew 8:8 But the centurion replied, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. Instead, just say the word and my servant will be healed.

GNT Matthew 8:8 καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ κενταurio φησὶ, ὁ κύριε, ὁ κενταurio οὐκ ἔστιν ἰκανὸς ἵνα ἔλθῃς ὑπὸ τὸν στέγαν μου, ἀλλὰ μόνον ἐπὶ λέγῃ, καὶ ἰαθήσεται ὁ παῖς μου.

NLT Matthew 8:8 But the officer said, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come into my home. Just say the word from where you are, and my servant will be healed.

KJV Matthew 8:8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

ESV Matthew 8:8 But the centurion replied, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed.

NIV Matthew 8:8 The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed.

ASV Matthew 8:8 And the centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed.

CSB Matthew 8:8 "Lord," the centurion replied, "I am not worthy to have You come under my roof. But only say the word, and my servant will be cured.

NKJ Matthew 8:8 The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed.

NRS Matthew 8:8 The centurion answered, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed.

YLT Matthew 8:8 And the centurion answering said, 'Sir, I am not worthy that thou mayest enter under my roof, but only say a word, and my servant shall be healed;

- **I am** - Mt 3:11,14 15:26,27 Ge 32:10 Ps 10:17 Lu 5:8 7:6,7 15:19,21 Joh 1:27 13:6-8
- **but** - Mt 8:3 Nu 20:8 Ps 33:9 107:20 Mk 1:25-27 Lu 7:7
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Parallel Passage -

Luke 7:6-7+ Now Jesus started on His way with them (JEWISH ELDERS); and when He was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not **worthy** ([hikanos](#)) for You to come under my roof; 7 for this reason I did not even consider myself **worthy** ([axioo](#)) to come to You, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed.

**But** - Term of contrast. A very interesting contrast in this situation, but it will result in Jesus not going to the centurion's house, but healing his servant with a word demonstrating the great faith of the centurion in Jesus' authority to heal!

**The centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy ([hikanos](#)) for You to come under my roof** - Observe the admission by the centurion **I am not worthy** ("I do not deserve") which is identical to the Greek phrase used by John the Baptist in Mt 3:11+ when he declared "**I am not fit** ([hikanos](#))," which is intriguing for of course we know Jesus said about John the Baptist! (see Lk 7:28+). Of course the centurion was not speaking of social status for he was more highly placed in society than Jesus. Note that this is the second time the centurion addresses Jesus as **Lord** ([kurios](#))(Mt 8:6, 8). Jesus had already heard the Jewish elders' assessment of this centurion declaring "**He is worthy** ([axios](#)) **for You to grant this to him.**"(Lk 7:4+). In one sense this is the centurion recognizing the greatness of Jesus. The centurion himself is overwhelmed by Jesus' readiness to come and heal and expresses his sense of

unworthiness to be a recipient of such gracious compassion. Somehow this Gentile man has gotten a sense of the majestic authority and power and love of this Jewish Man Jesus Who without hesitation "leaps over" the cultural obstacles that stood between most of the Jews and the Gentiles and was willing come to a Gentile's home. The centurion could have simply said "**I am not worthy**," but he specifically adds the phrase for Jesus **to come under my roof**. Why did he add that phrase? What is he saying? I agree with several commentators who feel that the centurion wanted to spare Jesus the social awkwardness of a Jewish Man entering a Gentile home. **Hendriksen** says it this way "Who is he (CENTURION) to cause this kind Master to commit an act that would put him in conflict with the time-honored custom of His own people, according to which a Jew does not enter the house of a Gentile lest he be defiled (John 18:28; Acts 10:28; 11:2, 3)? Let Jesus therefore not enter the house nor even approach too closely but let him simply speak the word of healing. That is all that will be necessary to bring about a complete cure." As **Guzik** says "In his concern for both his servant and for Jesus, this centurion was an others-centered person."

"God sends none away empty  
but those who are full of themselves!"

**Worthy** (2425) (**hikanos** from the root **hik-** = to attain, hence, adequate) refers to that which reaches or arrives at a certain standard and in the present context **hikanos** means worthy or sufficient for an honor, a place or a position. It means to be adequate for something, in this case for Jesus to come to his house, which as discussed above could refer to the centurion's awareness that Jesus coming to his home would not be an acceptable practice for a Jew. More literally it could be read "**I am not fit** (which is the meaning of **hikanos**)". This recalls the line below from Joseph Hart's "**Come Ye Sinners**" which speaks of our "**fitness**" for Jesus to come to our house -- truth be told, **NONE** of us are "worthy" for Him to come! And so are not our words those of the centurion "Lord I am not worthy?" And yet just as Jesus healed the centurion's servant with a **WORD**, He has healed our "sin sick" souls with His **WORD** of the Gospel! This truth should cause us all to bow with hearts filled with overwhelming gratitude for healing us! Thank YOU LORD JESUS!!!

Let not conscience make you linger,  
Nor of **fitness** fondly dream;  
All the **fitness** he requireth  
Is to feel your need of him.  
This he gives you, this he gives you;  
'Tis the Spirit's glimmering beam.

**Augustine** commented that "By saying that he was unworthy, he showed himself worthy of Christ's entering, not within his walls, but within his heart." It is clear that the centurion's heart was tender toward the Lord. He was unlike so many today who feel they deserve to go to Heaven. Beloved, we don't deserve Heaven, but we do deserve Hell, for the wages of our continual sin against God is eternal death (cf Ro 6:23+). No one is good enough or righteous enough to get to Heaven on their own merit, for as Paul writes "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE." (Ro 3:10+) Isaiah said "all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; and all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away." (Isa 64:6)

The centurion reminds us of Peter's humility "But when Simon Peter saw that (THE MIRACULOUS CATCH OF FISH - Lk 5:7), he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!" (Luke 5:8+)

**But just say the word, and my servant will be healed** - "Speak it!" "Just command it!" Now don't miss this -- the centurion is not asking for Jesus to pray that his servant be healed but asking for healing by a word from Jesus! Amazing! Such healing from a distance is unprecedented in Matthew to this point! This Gentile had faith in Jesus to the point that all Jesus had to do was speak and his servant would be healed. He belief that Jesus can heal by merely uttering a word implies his belief in (even if he did not fully understand who Jesus was) divine omnipotence on the part of Jesus. This is amazing faith indeed, especially coming from a man who was a Gentile! " Luke 7:3 says "When he (CENTURION) heard about Jesus" so clearly the centurion had heard about the miraculous healings of Jesus, and even though he most likely did not understand His identity as the God-Man, he knew or heard enough to believe that God's power worked through Him!

**Geldenhuis** wrote that "He believes that, just as he, a man with authority, is obeyed by his subordinates, just so surely will the authoritative utterance of Christ be fulfilled even though He is not present where the sick person is."

**THOUGHT** - We can never deserve His blessings, but we can ask for them in faith. We should all come to Christ like this man: With a **Confession of Humility** "I am not worthy" and with a **Confession of Faith** "Say the Word." We are not speaking about "**Name It-Claim It**" which is a horrible, destructive false teaching!

Israel experienced **God's healing Word** (this might refer to the affliction and healing in Nu 21:4-9)

Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble; He saved them out of their distresses. 20 He sent His **WORD** and healed ([rapha/rophe](#); Lxx = [iaomai](#)) them, And delivered them from their destructions. (Ps 107:19-20)

**Wiersbe** comments that "It would seem that everything about this man would prevent him from coming to Jesus. He was a professional soldier, and Jesus was a Man of peace. He was a Gentile, and Jesus was a Jew. But this soldier had one thing working for him: he was a man of great faith. This centurion understood that Jesus, like himself, was under authority. All Christ had to do was speak the word and the disease would obey Him the way a soldier obeyed his officer. It is worth noting that only those who are under authority have the right to exercise authority." (BEC)

**Healed** (cured) ([2390](#))([iaomai](#)) means to cure, to heal, to restore. **iaomai** is used literally of deliverance from physical diseases and afflictions and so to make whole, restore to bodily health or heal. To cause someone to achieve health after having been sick. In the passive it means to be healed or cured. Figuratively, **iaomai** speaks of deliverance from sin and its evil consequences and thus to restore (to spiritual good health), make whole, renew (Mt 13.15). In the passive, **iaomai** figuratively means to be restored, to recover or to be healed as in 1Pe 2.24<sup>+</sup>.

**Rod Mattoon** - The officer had so much confidence or faith in Christ's power and ability that he told Jesus, "Just say the word and he will be healed. Just as I have authority to command others and they obey, you have authority to command and it will come to pass." This was the sentiment of the centurion. He had risen above the need of an outward sign, such as a touch or even the sound of a living voice. He needed no contact with the fringe of the Master's garment, asked for no handkerchief or an apron that had touched His person. The word the Master would speak would be enough. He totally delegated the problem and the need of his servant to the Lord Jesus and was confident that Christ would take care of the matter. Do you have that kind of confidence?

**J C Ryle** - The Portuguese Commentator, Barradius, has some striking remarks on this expression of the Centurion's. He says, "This is a peculiar attribute of God's, to be able to do all things by a word and a command. 'He spake and they were made;' 'He commanded and they were created.' ([Psalm 148:5](#).) Read the book of Genesis. You will see the world created by the word of God: 'God said, Let there be light, and there was light.' 'God said, Let there be a firmament,' and a firmament was made," &c. He then shows by a quotation from Augustine, how all the created beings in existence, whether kings, or angels, or seraphims, cannot create so much as an ant. But when God says, "Let the world be made," as once, it is made by a word. And he concludes, "Well therefore does the Centurion say, 'say in a word only, and my servant shall be healed.' "

**Matthew 8:9** "For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."

NET Matthew 8:9 For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I say to this one, 'Go' and he goes, and to another 'Come' and he comes, and to my slave 'Do this' and he does it."

GNT Matthew 8:9 καὶ ἔγωγε ὑπὸ ἀρχῇ εἰμι πᾶσι τοῖς στρατιώταις, καὶ λέγω τῷ ἑνὶ, Πορεύθητι, καὶ πορεύεται, καὶ ἑνὶ ἄλλῳ, ἔρχου, καὶ ἔρχεται, καὶ τῷ δούλῳ μου, Ποίησον τοῦτο, καὶ ποιεῖ.

NLT Matthew 8:9 I know this because I am under the authority of my superior officers, and I have authority over my soldiers. I only need to say, 'Go,' and they go, or 'Come,' and they come. And if I say to my slaves, 'Do this,' they do it."

KJV Matthew 8:9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

ESV Matthew 8:9 For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

NIV Matthew 8:9 For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

ASV Matthew 8:9 For I also am a man under authority, having under myself soldiers: and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

CSB Matthew 8:9 For I too am a man under authority, having soldiers under my command. I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes; and to another, 'Come!' and he comes; and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."

NKJ Matthew 8:9 "For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

NRS Matthew 8:9 For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and the slave does it."

YLT Matthew 8:9 for I also am a man under authority, having under myself soldiers, and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth, and to another, Be coming, and he cometh, and to my servant, Do this, and he doth it.'

- **Go** - Job 38:34,35 Ps 107:25-29 119:91 148:8 Jer 47:6,7 Eze 14:17-21 Mk 4:39-41 Lk 4:35,36,39 Lk 7:8
- **Do** - Eph 6:5,6 Col 3:22 Titus 2:9
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Parallel Passage -

Luke 7:1-10+ 8 "For I also am a man placed under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it." 9 Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following Him, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith." 10 When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.

### THE CENTURION UNDERSTOOD AUTHORITY

**For** - The centurion (in Luke 7:6-8 through his friends sent as messengers) is explaining why he believes Jesus can just say the word and his servant will be healed. In a word it was because of Jesus' sovereign authority.

**I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me** - Notice the phrase **man under authority** which speaks of the centurion's humility and willingness to submit to greater authority, which makes him a perfect candidate in this scenario, for now he humbly submits to the One Who has the greatest authority in the Universe! The centurion understood authority for when he commanded his men they obeyed, Roman soldiers being well known for their discipline and unhesitating obedience. So he knew that Jesus as the authority could command anything in creation (including illness) and it would in essence "obey" Him (cf wind and water = Lk 8:25+, Mk 4:41+, unclean spirits = Lk 4:36+). We would all do well to take a moment and marvel at this man's great faith and ask God to increase our faith even praying as did the apostles in Lk 17:5+ (cf Mk 9:24).

**Meyer** has an interesting statement - As the authority of the Caesars flowed through his own yielded life, so the authority of God over diseases, demons, and all else would flow through Christ's. (IT DID THEN AND IT STILL DOES!)

**Authority** (1849)(**exousia** from **éxesti** = it is permitted, it is lawful) means the power to do something and was a technical term used in the law courts, of a legal right. "**Authority** or right is the dominant meaning (of exousia) in the New Testament." (Vincent) **Exousia** refers to delegated **authority** and combines the idea of the "right and the might", these attributes having been granted to someone. **Exousia** is an important term in the Gospels for many conflicts in Jesus' life and ministry turn on debates about **authority** or the idea that Jesus taught with an unparalleled **authority** (Mt 7:29; 8:9; 9:6, 8; 21:23-27; 28:18; Mk 1:22, 27; 2:10; 3:15; 11:28-33; Lk 4:32, 36; 5:24; 7:8; 20:2-8).

**And I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it** - The verbs in **red** are **commands**. His **commands** were immediately obeyed. The centurion's reasoning is in a sense from the lesser to the greater, so that if he as a lesser official could authoritatively give orders that were promptly obeyed, certainly Christ the possessor of greatest authority could do the same. "The thought is: "If I, a subaltern, am able to have my will done by a mere word spoken by me, **how much more** thou, Jesus, who art the ruler himself. If even a man under authority, in service to the king, and thus with soldiers under him is able to have his mere command executed at will, how much more Jesus in whom all authority resides, who has all powers and agencies at his command!" (Lenski) Perhaps the centurion had either personally heard or heard about Jesus giving commands to demons who obeyed without hesitation. In any event, he obviously recognized the greater authority of Jesus or he would never have ask Him to heal his servant with just a word!

**NET Note** adds "The illustrations highlight the view of authority the soldier sees in the word of One Who has authority. Since the centurion was a commander of a hundred soldiers, he understood what it was both to command others and to be obeyed."

**Robertson** adds "As a military man he had learned obedience to his superiors and so expected obedience to his commands, instant obedience (aorist imperatives and aoristic present indicatives). Hence his faith in Christ's power over the illness of the boy even without coming. Jesus had only to speak with a word (Mt 8:8), say the word, and it would be done."

---

**F B Meyer** - The centurion's faith set Christ marveling. First, because it was found in such an unlikely place. Here was a Gentile who had come from the West, and was sitting down with Abraham in the Kingdom of God. Secondly, because of its greatness: "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

This Roman officer applied to our Lord principles with which he was cognizant through his connection with the army, he knew that he had no power over other men in his individual capacity, or apart from his organic connection with the machinery of government. If he said to one man Come; to another Go; to his servant Do this, and his command was immediately obeyed — it was entirely due to his own obedience, in turn, to the authority which was over himself. So long as he obeyed that authority, he represented it; and it passed through him to compel obedience to his commands. This is the principle he applied to our Lord.

He recognized that Jesus of Nazareth was always acting under the authority of his Heavenly Father, and he inferred, therefore, that He could wield the power of God as he could that of Rome. As the authority of the Caesars flowed through his own yielded life, so the authority of God over diseases, demons, and all else, would flow through Christ's.

What a profound principle is here! Learn to obey, and you shall rule. Yield yourself absolutely to God, and God's power shall pass through your heart and life. Be under Divine authority, and you shall be able to say, Go, come, do this. All things serve the man who serves Jesus Christ. Absolute consecration to God, as a soldier is surrendered to his country, is the condition of power. (Our Daily Homily)

---

**Gene Brooks - APPLICATION:** Do you want **Spiritual Authority**? Then cultivate in your life the virtue of humility. Paul tells us in Romans 12:3, "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you." But **humility** is not weakness. It is strength. There is a boldness in **humility**. Proverbs 28:1 says, "The wicked flee when no one pursues, But the righteous are bold as a lion." Proverbs 22:4: "By **humility** and the fear of the LORD Are riches and honor and life." Proverbs 15:33: "The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom, And before honor is **humility**." Pride is the source of most all other failures of sin in your life. By asking the Holy Spirit to replace personal pride with **humility**, you will gain spiritual authority and Christ-likeness. (Ed: Also James 4:6- But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "GOD IS **OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE**.")

---

**Steven Cole** on the **Centurion's humility** - On one occasion the well-known preacher, Harry Ironside, felt that he was not humble enough. So he asked an older friend what he could do about it. The friend replied, "Make a sandwich board with the plan of salvation in Scripture on it and wear it as you walk through downtown Chicago for a day." Ironside followed his friend's advice. It was a humiliating experience. As he returned home and took off the sandwich board, he caught himself thinking, "There's not another person in Chicago who would be willing to do a thing like that!"

How do we grow in humility? True humility stems from seeing my insufficiency and Christ's all-sufficiency. The centurion's servant was about to die (Lk 7:2). He was helpless to deal with this irreversible illness and imminent death. What a picture of the human race, impotent to deal with the ravages of sin and its ultimate result, spiritual death! The centurion saw his own insufficiency to deal with the problem, but he also saw Christ's all-sufficiency. So he said to Jesus, "Just say the word, and my servant will be healed" (Luke 7:7). False humility says, "I can do nothing" and stops there. True humility adds, "But I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13) and cries out to Him to work. It's a lesson we keep learning all our lives. I often experience it in preparing messages. I come to a point where I cannot get the flow of the passage. The message isn't gelling. And I'm under time constraints! I don't have time for it not to come together! Then I realize afresh that I can't put sermons together. I can't adequately communicate God's truth. Only He can. And so I call to Him out of my weakness, and He answers.

One of my spiritual heroes is **George Muller**, who trusted God to support over 2,000 orphans in Bristol, England, in the last century. His biographer observes, "Nothing is more marked in George Muller, to the very day of his death, than this, that he so looked to God and leaned on God that he felt himself to be nothing, and God everything" ([A. T. Pierson, George Muller p. 112](#)). That's the proper focus of a servant of Christ....

**The Lord is looking for servants like this centurion:**

- \*Who have an exalted view of Christ-He is the sovereign Lord of authority, and thus they trust Him for the impossible.
- \*Who have a lowly view of themselves-they are unworthy and insufficient, but they know Christ as gracious and all-sufficient.
- \*Who have a caring view of others-they are helpless, and thus need compassion. Christ's authority and grace extend to those whom society may despise.

**Hudson Taylor**, the great pioneer missionary to China, used to say, "All God's giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on God being with them." May that same powerful God do great things through us as we trust Him in

our weakness! ([Luke 7:1-10 An Effective Servant](#))

The Apostle Paul was a perfect example of a man who grew in humility as he grew spiritually...He the more he became like Christ, the more humble he became!

Paul's Progress in Humility: Christ Increasing - Self Decreasing	
Approximate date	Paul's Self Assessment
55 AD	1Cor 15:9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.
61 AD	Eph 3:8 To me, the very least of all saints (literally = "less than the least of all saints"), this grace was given (Why was it given? What was Paul to do?), to preach (= The purpose of God's gift of grace) to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ,
63-66 AD	1Ti 1:15 It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save <b>sinners</b> , among whom I am (Note: not "was" but "am" foremost!) <b>foremost</b> of all.

**William Barclay - THE central character is a Roman centurion; and he was no ordinary man.**

**(i) The mere fact that he was a centurion meant he was no ordinary man.**

A centurion was the equivalent of a regimental sergeant-major; and the centurions were the backbone of the Roman army. Wherever they are spoken of in the New Testament they are spoken of well (cp. Luke 23:47; Acts 10:22; 22:26; 23:17, 23, 24; 24:23; 27:43). Polybius, the historian, describes their qualifications. They must be not so much "seekers after danger as men who can command, steady in action, and reliable; they ought not to be over anxious to rush into the fight; but when hard pressed they must be ready to hold their ground and die at their posts." The centurion must have been a man amongst men or he would never have held the post which was his.

**(ii) He had a completely unusual attitude to his slave**

He loved this slave and would go to any trouble to save him. In Roman law a slave was defined as a living tool; he had no rights; a master could ill-treat him and even kill him if he chose. A Roman writer on estate management recommends the farmer to examine his implements every year and to throw out those which are old and broken, and to do the same with his slaves. Normally when a slave was past his work he was thrown out to die. The attitude of this centurion to his slave was quite unusual.

**(iii) He was clearly a deeply religious man.**

man needs to be more than superficially interested before he will go the length of building a synagogue. It is true that the Romans encouraged religion from the cynical motive that it kept people in order. They regarded it as the opiate of the people. Augustus recommended the building of synagogues for that very reason. As Gibbon said in a famous sentence, "The various modes of religion which prevailed in the Roman world were all considered by the people as equally true; by the philosopher as equally false; and by the magistrate as equally useful." But this centurion was no administrative cynic; he was a sincerely religious man.

**(iv) He had an extremely unusual attitude to the Jews.**

If the Jews despised the gentiles, the gentiles hated the Jews. Antisemitism is not a new thing. The Romans called the Jews a filthy race; they spoke of Judaism as a barbarous superstition; they spoke of the Jewish hatred of mankind; they accused the Jews of worshipping an ass's head and annually sacrificing a gentile



stranger to their God. True, many of the gentiles, weary of the many gods and loose morals of paganism, had accepted the Jewish doctrine of the one God and the austere Jewish ethic. But the whole atmosphere of this story implies a close bond of friendship between this centurion and the Jews.

**(v) He was a humble man.**

He knew quite well that a strict Jew was forbidden by the law to enter the house of a gentile (Acts 10:28); just as he was forbidden to allow a gentile into his house or have any communication with him. He would not even come to Jesus himself. He persuaded his Jewish friends to approach him. This man who was accustomed to command had an amazing humility in the presence of true greatness.

**(vi) He was a man of faith.**

His faith is based on the soundest argument. He argued from the here and now to the there and then. He argued from his own experience to God. If his authority produced the results it did, how much more must that of Jesus? He came with that perfect confidence which looks up and says, "Lord, I know you can do this." If only we had a faith like that, for us too the miracle would happen and life become new. ([Luke 7](#))

---

**I Am Not Worthy      Luke 7:6**

The centurion of Capernaum appears upon the page of the holy Gospel as an example of great faith. Although he did not belong to the people of the Lord, he obtained the Messiah's witness, which expressed surprise, yes, even admiration: "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." What besides many other features in him appeals to us, is his heart touching humility, which is always the mark of grace. This humbleness appeared already when he sent the elders of the Jews to Jesus, to ask Him to come and cure his dying servant, just like amongst us only the humble of heart feel the need for the intercession of others, whom they esteem more excellent than themselves. Added to this was that he, once Jesus was not far from his house, sent for the second time some friends to say unto him: "Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof!" The elders of the Jews had declared with a remembrance of the love of the centurion for the people of the Lord: "That he was worthy for whom he should do this," but he declared himself to be unworthy to receive the Messiah under his roof: "Lord, trouble not thyself!"

A great faith reveals itself always in a great humility, in a sense of our own unworthiness, in a awareness of the infinite distance that exists between the Lord's majesty and the heart of a sinful man. This does not mean that the conviction of our own insignificance must keep us far removed from Christ; but even if we seek with our whole soul and with all our strength His blessing, it shall always take place in the notion that all grace has been forfeited and all mercy has been absolutely unmerited; it shall always take place with the unuttered or expressed thought: "Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof!"

Do we sense that distance between this I and this Thou?

I, a sinful son of man,—and Thou, the Holiness of God.

I, a frail mortal being,—and Thou, the Eternal One.

I without glory,—and Thou clothed with majesty and with honour!

It shall be well with us, if behind our back the elders of the Jews may confess in truth before God that we love His people and help to build His Kingdom, but if we whisper while begging the Lord's mercy: "Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof!" To such small ones the Lord reaches His hand, into such humble ones He enters, and upon such meek ones He bestows His blessing. He enters under their roof, into their house, at their table, yes, even into their heart! (The Loins Girded)

**Matthew 8:10 Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those who were following, "Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.**

NET Matthew 8:10 When Jesus heard this he was amazed and said to those who followed him, "I tell you the truth, I have not found such faith in anyone in Israel!"

GNT Matthew 8:10 κο σας δ ήσο ς θα μασεν κα ε πεν το ς κολουθο σιν, μ ν λ γω μ ν, παρ ο δεν τοσα την πι σιν ν τ σρα λ ε ρον.

NLT Matthew 8:10 When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. Turning to those who were following him, he said, "I tell you the truth, I haven't seen faith like this in all Israel!"

KJV Matthew 8:10 When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

ESV Matthew 8:10 When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, "Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith.

NIV Matthew 8:10 When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.

ASV Matthew 8:10 And when Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

CSB Matthew 8:10 Hearing this, Jesus was amazed and said to those following Him, "I assure you: I have not found anyone in Israel with so great a faith!

NKJ Matthew 8:10 When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!

NRS Matthew 8:10 When Jesus heard him, he was amazed and said to those who followed him, "Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith.

YLT Matthew 8:10 And Jesus having heard, did wonder, and said to those following, 'Verily I say to you, not even in Israel so great faith have I found;

- **marveled** - Mk 6:6+ Lu 7:9
- **I have** - Mt 15:28+ Lu 5:20 Lk 7:50
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Parallel Passage -

Luke 7:9-10+ Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following Him, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith." 10 When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.

**Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those who were following** - Who are those **who were following**? This had to include His disciples, but also probably some of the "brood of vipers," who were now "hot on His trail" and would not give up their hunt until they killed Him! **Following** is [akolouthéo](#) the word often used to describe "followers" or disciples, in this case a mixed group and not just the 12 disciples (cf "large crowds followed Him." = Mt 8:1). However, there is no doubt that Jesus as the Master Teacher was using the Roman centurion as a teaching point to His disciples ("learners")!

**Marveled** (2296)([thaumazo](#) from **thauma** = wonder, admiration) means to wonder, marvel, be struck with admiration or astonishment. Jesus expresses His surprise by the unexpected faith of a Gentile soldier. **Thaumazo** is found most frequently in the Gospels (33 times), where it expresses the wonder and amazement caused by Jesus' miracles but in this passage it is Jesus who is in wonder and amazement at this man's great faith! It is notable that only twice does Scripture record Jesus as marvelling at people, here in Capernaum at the centurion's **great faith** and in an antithetical setting in Nazareth at the **unbelief** of the Jewish people even in His hometown (Mark 6:6+)!

**Truly** is [amen](#) (verily, indeed it is true) and so here Jesus puts His **"Amen"** on the demonstration of this centurion's faith! **NIV** has "I tell you the truth." **GWT** renders it "I can guarantee this truth."

**I say to you** - This is a very common way Jesus would begin a statement used some 55 times in Matthew's Gospel.

Matt. 3:9; Matt. 5:18; Matt. 5:20; Matt. 5:22; Matt. 5:26; Matt. 5:28; Matt. 5:32; Matt. 5:34; Matt. 5:39; Matt. 5:44; Matt. 6:2; Matt. 6:5; Matt. 6:16; Matt. 6:25; Matt. 6:29; Matt. 8:10; Matt. 8:11; Matt. 10:15; Matt. 10:23; Matt. 10:42; Matt. 11:11; Matt. 11:22; Matt. 11:24; Matt. 12:6; Matt. 12:31; Matt. 13:17; Matt. 16:28; Matt. 17:12; Matt. 17:20; Matt. 18:3; Matt. 18:10; Matt. 18:13; Matt. 18:18; Matt. 18:19; Matt. 19:9; Matt. 19:23; Matt. 19:24; Matt. 19:28; Matt. 21:21; Matt. 21:31; Matt. 21:43; Matt. 23:36; Matt. 23:39; Matt. 24:2; Matt. 24:34; Matt. 24:47; Matt. 25:12; Matt. 25:40; Matt. 25:45; Matt. 26:13; Matt. 26:21; Matt. 26:29; Matt. 26:34;

**I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel** - **Anyone** is the pronoun [oudeis](#) which literally means absolutely and objectively "not even one!" the phrase **anyone in Israel** would be a reference to those indigenous to Israel, specifically the Jews. Is this not sad that such **great faith** would not be found in even one Jew in the Land of Israel. After all the Jews had access to the Old Testament and the hundreds of prophecies that spoke about Jesus. The rabbis had done a good job at obscuring the truth of God's

holy Word by adding all of them humanistic rules and regulations!

Only twice in the gospels does Christ commend a person for **great faith**—the Syrophenician woman (Mt. 15:28), and this Roman centurion. Both are Gentiles; one is a woman, the other a man. It is as if the Lord is saying, "The way of faith is open to people of all nationalities, whether Jew or Gentile, male or female." (cf Col 3:11+) The faith that pleases God is not an exclusive thing reserved for the religious crowd. Any and all can lay hold of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by grace through faith, "the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." (Eph 2:8-9+)

**Spurgeon** - He had marveled at men's unbelief; now he marvels at their faith, so that the thing which touches the wonder of God is man's unbelief and man's faith.

**Found** (2147) (**heurisko**) means to come upon, to happen to find, to find after seeking and searching and thus to discover something, in this case **great faith** in a most unlikely location, the heart of Roman centurion! The verb even pictures Jesus walking throughout the land of Israel for 3 years, seeking for those who had tender, open hearts that would believe in His Word and in His Person and upon finding such a one shouting something like "Eureka!" "Amen!" I say "**Eureka**" for **heurisko** gives us this English word which is used to express triumph upon finding or discovering something. Indeed the primary purpose for the incarnation of Jesus is expressed in His own words "the Son of Man has come to **SEEK** and to **SAVE** that which was lost." (Lk 19:10+).

**Faith** (4102) (**pistis**) is synonymous with trust or belief and is the conviction of the truth of anything, but in Scripture usually speaks of belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it. Uses of **pistis** in Matthew (relatively few compared to uses in the Pauline epistles) - Matt. 8:10; Matt. 9:2; Matt. 9:22; Matt. 9:29; Matt. 15:28; Matt. 17:20; Matt. 21:21; Matt. 23:23

**R C H Lenski** explains why Jesus said he had **great faith** - **(1)** The greatness of the centurion's faith is evident in its humility. The man, although he is a high military officer and a great benefactor of the Jews, deems himself utterly unworthy. **(2)** In the second place this man's faith centers in the word of Jesus, the very experience Jesus had so much difficulty in attaining among the Jews. On his own accord, merely from what this man had heard about Jesus, without further experience and teaching he shows absolute trust in Jesus' word; compare the court officer mentioned in John 4:50 for an example of a man who slowly arrives at faith in Jesus' word. A word is sufficient, Jesus does not need to come in person. **(3)** Thirdly, and as the basis of this humble confidence in the mere word, the centurion has a proper conception of the exalted person of Jesus. His word, spoken at a distance, works with omnipotence to save from death. It is an ill comment on Jesus' estimate of the centurion's faith to suggest that he had some pagan conception as to how the power of Jesus would work the healing, yet that this did not affect the nature and the value of his faith. Any pagan conception would vastly reduce, if it did not make void, this Gentile's faith. The remarkable feature of the man's faith was that it accorded so fully with the truest Israelite teaching and was wholly free from pagan conceptions.

---

## Faith Works

Read: Luke 7:1-10

According to your faith let it be to you. —Matthew 9:29+

Not all Christians exercise the same degree of faith. Some people seem to think their problem is too big for God to solve. Others are sure that God is all-powerful, but they're not confident that He will do what is best for them. Still others affirm, "I know what God can do, and I'll trust Him to do what He has promised." These various attitudes range from a weak and tentative faith to a firm confidence that takes God at His word and believes He is good.

**As we study the ministry of Jesus, we see varying degrees of faith in those who came to Him** He cast out a mute spirit from a son whose father wavered between faith and doubt (Mk. 9:17-24). He healed a leper who knew He could but was not sure He would (Mk. 1:40-45+). And He healed the servant of a centurion who was so sure of the outcome that he asked Jesus merely to speak the word from afar (Lk. 7:1-10+).

These examples don't teach that God always answers according to the strength of our faith. Rather, in His wisdom He responds to any degree of faith. His ultimate goal is to lead us to trust Him completely, so that we may know the fullness of His fellowship. Because of who Jesus is, He can turn the weakest faith into strong faith. By Dennis J. DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O for the peace of a perfect trust,  
My loving God, in You—  
Unwavering faith that never doubts

The good You choose to do.

—Anon.

Our faith in God grows greater as we recognize the greatness of our God.

**Matthew 8:11 "I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven;**

NET Matthew 8:11 I tell you, many will come from the east and west to share the banquet with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven,

GNT Matthew 8:11 λ γω δ μ ν π πολλο π νατολ ν κα δυσμ ν ξουσιν κα νακλιθ σονται μετ βρα μ κα σα κ κα ακ β ν τ βασιλε τ ν ο ραν ν,

NLT Matthew 8:11 And I tell you this, that many Gentiles will come from all over the world-- from east and west-- and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the feast in the Kingdom of Heaven.

KJV Matthew 8:11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

ESV Matthew 8:11 I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven,

NIV Matthew 8:11 I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

ASV Matthew 8:11 And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven:

CSB Matthew 8:11 I tell you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

NKJ Matthew 8:11 "And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

NRS Matthew 8:11 I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven,

YLT Matthew 8:11 and I say to you, that many from east and west shall come and recline (at meat) with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the reign of the heavens,

- **That many** - Mt 24:31 Ge 12:3 Ge 22:18 Ge 28:14 Ge 49:10 Ps 22:27 98:3 Isa 2:2,3 11:10 Isa 49:6 52:10 60:1-6 Jer 16:19 Da 2:44 Mic 4:1,2 Zec 8:20-23 Mal 1:11 Lu 13:29 14:23,24 Acts 10:45 Acts 11:18 Acts 14:27 Ro 15:9-13 Ga 3:28,29 Eph 2:11-14 3:6 Col 3:11 Rev 7:6
- **recline** Lk 12:37 Lk 13:29 Lk 16:22 Rev 3:20,21
- **in the kingdom of heaven**- Mt 3:2 Lu 13:28 Ac 14:22 1Co 6:9 15:20 2Th 1:5
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **JEWS AND GENTILES DINING TOGETHER!**

**I say to you that many will come from east and west**- So here was another miracle in Capernaum! Probably no city in Israel saw as many miracles which probably accounts for Jesus words of warning in Matthew 11:23 in which He declared "And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day." And not only that but because of the "greater light" in Capernaum Jesus added there would be a greater degree of punishment declaring ""Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you." (Mt 11:24)

In the context of the centurion, a Gentile who displayed great faith, the **many** obviously will include Gentiles as well as Jews. The **many** are "His elect (JEW AND GENTILE) from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other." (Mt 24:31) Indeed Micah's prophecy declares that "it will come about [in the last days](#) that the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains (SPEAKING OF ISRAEL AND THE HOLY CITY, THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING). It will be raised above the

hills, and the peoples will stream to it. **Many nations** (GENTILES) will come and say, "Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD And to the house of the God of Jacob, That He may teach us about His ways And that we may walk in His paths." For from Zion (THE HOLY CITY) will go forth the law, Even the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." (Micah 4:1-2+, cf Isaiah 2:1-2+)

**East** (395) (**anatole** from **ana** = up, again + **tello** = to make to rise) means rising (as of a star or the sun). In some context anatole refer to the rising of the sun or "breaking of the dawn" which means East or Orient (used with this meaning especially in the Lxx - Ge 2:8, 10:30, 11:2, 12:8; used of the Magi from the **east** who saw the star in the **east** - Mt 2:1, 2, 9+, those who come into God's kingdom will be from "**east** and west" = Mt 8:11, Lk 13:29+, "lightning comes from the **east**" = Mt 24:27). Here Luke is using **anatole** to refer to the coming of Christ. John uses anatole to describe the "angel ascending from the **rising** of the sun." (Rev 7:2+), to describe "kings from the **east**" as they assemble at Armageddon (Rev 16:12+), and lastly to describe the "three gates on the east" of the holy city of Jerusalem that will come down out of heaven from God (Rev 21:13+). **Anatole** - 11x in 11v - Mt. 2:1; Mt. 2:2; Mt. 2:9; Mt. 8:11; Mt. 24:27; Mk. 16:8; Lk. 1:78; Lk. 13:29; Rev. 7:2; Rev. 16:12; Rev. 21:13

**And recline at the table** - **Recline at the table** is a phrase reflects standard Jewish image of future banquet in God's kingdom. Although the Bible declared that it was for all peoples (Isa 25:6). People were seated at banquets according to rank. They "sat" at regular meals but "reclined" at feasts; table fellowship signified intimacy, so fellowship with the great patriarchs was thought to represent a future hope for the Jewish people, not for Gentiles, with whom Jewish people did not eat. Recline at table on couches as Jews and Romans did. Hence Leonardo da Vinci's famous picture of the Last Supper is an anachronism with all seated at table in modern style. The Jews were accustomed to speak to the delights of the Messiah's kingdom as a feast with the patriarchs. The language implies intimate domestic intercourse and fellowship.

**NET Note** on recline at the table - as 1st century middle eastern meals were not eaten while sitting at a table, but while reclining on one's side on the floor with the head closest to the low table and the feet farthest away. The word "banquet" has been supplied (Mt 8:11NET) to clarify for the modern reader the festive nature of the imagery. The banquet imagery is a way to describe the fellowship and celebration of being among the people of God at the end. (**ED**: If this does not generate a "Glory! Hallelujah!" from deep in your being, I don't know what will!)

Luke refers to this future reclining at the table

"Blessed are those slaves whom the master will find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them **recline at the table**, and will come up and wait on them.(Lk 12:37+)

**COMMENT** - This is an amazing verse. Who is the one who will gird himself? This speaks of the Messiah.

And they will come from east and west and from north and south, and **will recline at the table** in the kingdom of God.(Lk 13:29+)

**With Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven in the kingdom of heaven**- Gentiles reclining at the table with Jews! And not just with any Jews but with the great patriarchs **Abraham, Isaac and Jacob**! This would border on almost blasphemous to ears of Jewish hearers! Indeed, Jesus' words to those Capernaum Jews were startling in the extreme. What He said utterly contradicted everything taught by their rabbis. The twenty-ninth chapter of the apocryphal book of Second Baruch pictures what Jews believed would be the great heavenly feast at which all Jews were going to sit down and eat behemoth, the elephant, and leviathan, the giant sea monster, or whale-symbolic of an unlimited amount of food. In the eyes of many Jews, one of the most significant and appealing things about the feast was that it would be totally free of Gentiles. How deceived and misconceived they were! And sadly still are for the most part.

---

David Guzik has some excellent thoughts on this section -

i. This was a radical idea to many of the Jewish people in Jesus' day; they assumed that this great Messianic Banquet would have no Gentiles, and that all Jews would be there. Jesus corrected both mistaken ideas.

ii. These few words of Jesus tell us a little something of what heaven is like.

- It is a place of rest; we **sit down** in heaven.
- It is a place of good company to sit with; we enjoy the friendship of **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob** in heaven.
- It is a place with **many** people; Jesus said that **many** will come into heaven.
- It is a place with people from all over the earth; **from east and west** they will come to heaven.

- It is a certain place; Jesus said **many will come**, and when Jesus says it **will** happen, it will happen.

iii. "But ye shall hear those loved voices again; ye shall hear those sweet voices once more, ye shall yet know that those whom ye loved have been loved by God. Would not that be a dreary heaven for us to inhabit, where we should be alike unknowing and unknown? I would not care to go to such a heaven as that. I believe that heaven is a fellowship of the saints, and that we shall know one another there." (Spurgeon) ([Matthew 8 Commentary](#))

---

**Alfred Edersheim** (Messianic Jewish author) gives us some background on Jesus' insertion of this illustration of a great feast which is not found in the parallel account in the more "Gentile oriented" Gospel of Luke -

For the fuller understanding of the words of Christ, the Jewish modes of thought, which He used in illustration, require to be briefly explained. It was a common belief, **that in the day of the Messiah redeemed Israel would be gathered to a great feast, together with the patriarchs and heroes of the Jewish faith.** This notion, which was but a coarsely literal application of such prophetic figures as in Is. 25:6, had perhaps yet another and deeper meaning. As each weekly Sabbath was to be honoured by a feast, in which the best which the family could procure was to be placed on the board, so would the world's great Sabbath be marked by a feast in which the Great Householder, Israel's King, would entertain His household and guests. Into the painfully, and, from the notions of the times, grossly realistic description of this feast, it is needless here to enter. One thing, however, was clear: Gentiles could have no part in that feast. In fact, the shame and anger of 'these' foes on seeing the 'table spread' for this Jewish feast was among the points specially noticed as fulfilling the predictions of Ps. 23:5. On this point, then, the words of Jesus in reference to the believing Centurion formed the most marked contrast to Jewish teaching.

In another respect also we mark similar contrariety. When our Lord consigned the unbelieving to 'outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth,' he once more used Jewish language, only with opposite application of it. Gehinnom—of which the entrance, marked by ever-ascending smoke, was in the valley of Hinnom, between two palm trees—lay beyond 'the mountains of darkness.'<sup>c</sup> It was a place of darkness, to which, in the day of the Lord,<sup>e</sup> the Gentiles would be consigned. On the other hand, the merit of circumcision would in the day of the Messiah deliver Jewish sinners from Gehinnom.<sup>g</sup> It seems a moot question, whether the expression 'outer darkness' <sup>2</sup> may not have been intended to designate—besides the darkness outside the lighted house of the Father, and even beyond the darkness of Gehinnom—a place of hopeless, endless night. Associated with it is 'the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.' In Rabbinic thought the former was connected with sorrow,<sup>4</sup> the latter almost always with anger—not, as generally supposed, with anguish.

To complete our apprehension of the contrast between the views of the Jews and the teaching of Jesus, we must bear in mind that, as the Gentiles could not possibly share in the feast of the Messiah, so Israel had claim and title to it. To use Rabbinic terms, the former were 'children of Gehinnom,' but Israel 'children of the Kingdom,' or, in strictly Rabbinic language, 'royal children,'<sup>b</sup> 'children of God,' 'of heaven,' 'children of the upper chamber' (the Aliyah) and 'of the world to come.'<sup>e</sup> In fact, in their view, God had first sat down on His throne as King, when the hymn of deliverance (Ex. 15:1) was raised by Israel—the people which took upon itself that yoke of the Law which all other nations of the world had rejected.

Never, surely, could the Judaism of His hearers have received more rude shock than by this inversion of all their cherished beliefs. There was a feast of Messianic fellowship, a recognition on the part of the King of all His faithful subjects, a joyous festive gathering with the fathers of the faith. But this fellowship was not of outward, but of spiritual kinship. There were 'children of the Kingdom,' and there was an 'outer darkness' with its anguish and despair. But this childship was of the Kingdom, such as He had opened it to all believers; and that outer darkness theirs, who had only outward claims to present. And so this history of the believing Centurion is at the same time an application of the 'Sermon on the Mount'—in this also aptly following the order of its record—and a further carrying out of its teaching. Negatively, it differentiated the Kingdom from Israel; while, positively, it placed the hope of Israel, and fellowship with its promises, within reach of all faith, whether of Jew or Gentile. He Who taught such new and strange truth could never be called a mere reformer of Judaism. There cannot be 'reform,' where all the fundamental principles are different. Surely He was the Son of God, the Messiah of men, Who, in such surrounding, could so speak to Jew and Gentile of God and His Kingdom. And surely also, He, Who could so bring spiritual life to the dead, could have no difficulty by the same word, 'in the self-same hour,' to restore life and health to the servant of him, whose faith had inherited the Kingdom. The first grafted tree of heathendom that had so blossomed could not shake off unripe fruit. If the



teaching of Christ was new and was true, so must His work have been. And in this lies the highest vindication of this miracle,—that He is the Miracle. ([Life and Times of the Messiah](#))

---

#### MARRIAGE CUSTOM IN BIBLE TIMES:

- 1). The father chose the bride for his son (Eph 1:4).
- 2). A binding wedding agreement, the bethrothal, was made before the marriage was consummated. (2 Cor 11:2,3,4). To break that covenant, a bill of divorcement was required. If impurity (any unfaithfulness was considered adultery) was found in the bride, then the bride could be put to death.
- 3). At the appointed time for the marriage, the ceremonies began with the wedding procession, which usually took place near midnight. (2 Thes 4:13,14-18).
- 4). The BRIDEGROOM and his friends went to the bride's home to get her and her attendants and take them to his home. (Mt 25:1-13). Bride is taken to the father's home, led to a canopy and beside her husband spoke the wedding vows. (Rev 19:7-8).
- 6). THE MARRIAGE SUPPER followed (Mt 22:1-14) usually at the home of the groom and lasted from 3-7 days, the last day being the most elaborate. The MARRIAGE SUPPER was the "bringing home" of an already accredited bride to her covenanted husband, to which guests were invited. Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev 19:9). Abraham, Isaac & Jacob probably are "those who are invited" (Mt 8:10,11,12). Possibly all who enter the 1000 year reign of Christ are guest.

**Matthew 8:12 but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."**

- **the sons** - Mt 3:9,10 7:22,23 21:43 Ac 3:25 Ro 9:4
- **be cast** - Mt 13:42,50 22:12,13 24:51 25:30 Lu 13:28 2Pe 2:4,17 Jude 1:13
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### THE DREADFUL DOOM FOR ALL SELF-RIGHTEOUS SOULS

**France** rightly remarks "There could hardly be a more radical statement of the change in God's plan of salvation inaugurated by the mission of Jesus."

**But the sons of the kingdom** - Jesus has just commended the great faith of the Roman centurion, a Gentile, who came seeking healing for his servant. The **sons of the kingdom**, in context, refers to UNREPENTANT JEWS who thought that their ancestry automatically entitled them to the kingdom of God (see John 8:31-59+). Jesus is using the term **sons of the kingdom** to describe what their (THE JEWS) "potential destiny" could have been had they chosen to believe in the King of that **Kingdom**! In reality, however, they were not genuine children of the King or His Kingdom, John explaining that "He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." (Jn 1:11-13+, cf Mt 7:21-23+; Mt 13:38+; Luke 13:22-30+) Those who come **from the east and west** (Mt 8:11) is a reference to those Gentiles who exercise personal faith in Jesus Christ. The Jews thought that they were assured of special favor by God, but the Lord reminded them that they could be "**last**" in the kingdom of God while those who thought themselves "**last**," such as publicans and prostitutes (AND EVEN THIS ROMAN CENTURION WHO CONSIDERED HIMSELF NOT "WORTHY!"), would be "**first**" if they exercised faith in Him for Jesus declared "Truly I say to you (SPEAKING TO JEWISH RELIGIOUS LEADERS - Mt 21:23) that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the **kingdom of God** before you." (Mt 21:31). Furthermore, the UNREPENTANT JEWS would be **cast out** because of their hypocritical claim that they were the children and followers of Abraham declaring to Jesus "Abraham is our father." To which Jesus responded "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham. (Jn 8:39+) Abraham was the father of the faithful, those who had faith (cf Ge 15:6+) and demonstrated they had saving faith by doing the deeds of Abraham, but the Jews while physical descended from Abraham were not part of Abraham's family of those who had faith in Jesus.

**Spurgeon** - There are some ministers who never mention anything about hell. I heard of a minister who once said to his congregation — '*If you do not love the Lord Jesus Christ you will be sent to that place which it is not polite to mention.*' He ought not to have been allowed to preach again, I am sure, if he could not use plain words!"

**Will be cast out into the outer darkness** - Jesus was unafraid to speak of hell, and did so more than any other in the Bible (11/12

uses of [geenna](#) are from lips of Jesus!). The frightening phrase **OUTER DARKNESS** occurs three times in the Bible (Mt 8:12; Mt 22:13; Mt 25:30) and is always preceded by the definite article ("**the**") in Greek, which serves to identify it as a specific, real, literal entity! It seems to have denoted an area outside a well-illuminated banquet hall where there was **darkness** (cf parable of the wedding feast in Mt 22:1-14). In Jesus' parable, the one who managed to sneak into the banquet hall without the proper garment was cast into **outer darkness**, separated from the feast. In the first two uses, **outer darkness** refers to the place of suffering for the unbelievers and is in contrast to the light where the believers dwell (1 Jn 1:5-7<sup>+</sup>, cf Ps 56:13, Ps 89:15). Ps 104:1-2 says "Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very great; You are clothed with splendor and majesty, **Covering Yourself with LIGHT** as with a cloak, Stretching out heaven like a tent curtain." Ps 44:3 speaks of "the **LIGHT** of Thy presence." Jesus Himself says "'I am the **LIGHT** of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the **LIGHT** of life (IN CONTRAST TO THE 'DARKNESS' OF DEATH!)." (Jn 8:12) In Psalm 49:19 we read "He (DESCRIBING A RICH UNBELIEVER) shall go to the generation of his fathers; **They will never see the LIGHT.**" This truth accords with what Paul wrote regarding the tragic fate of all who reject the Gospel stating that "These (DESCRIBED IN 2 Th 1:8+) will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power (WHICH INCLUDES HIS **LIGHT** see Rev 22:5<sup>+</sup>)" (2 Th 1:9+). Unbelievers will be thrown into the furnace of fire, whereas believers will shine as the sun in the kingdom of the Father (Mt 13:42, 43+ Da 12:3+). The **outer darkness** in Mt 8:12 and Mt 22:13 is obviously a description of **Géhenna** ([geenna](#)), the "place of burning" (Mt 5:22, 29, 30<sup>+</sup>; Mt 10:28<sup>+</sup>; Mt 18:9).

**Trapp** on **outer darkness**: "Into a darkness beyond a darkness; into a dungeon beyond and beneath the prison."

**Vance Havner** adds that "In the simple faith of this centurion our Lord saw a prophetic type of Gentiles being saved while the unbelieving Jews would be cast out (Matt. 8:10-12). How true that is in this present church-age is evident to us all."

**In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth** - Notice that this is not a [term of comparison](#). In other words Jesus does not say it will be **LIKE** ([A SIMILE](#)) "weeping and gnashing of teeth." The verb **will be** (estai) is the future tense and [middle voice](#), a voice which is reflexive and could be rendered "they themselves!" They will begin to weep and experience the emotion of **weeping** themselves (FOREVER!) A literal reading of Jesus' somber words would strongly suggest that their **eternal place of doom** would be accompanied by eternal torment to the point that they are continually weeping!

**THOUGHT** - Let us not debate Jesus' clear words about the horror of Hell! Instead, may the eternal horror **motivate** us, enabled by the Spirit, to be bold in our witness (cf Acts 4:31b+) to all in our sphere of influence who do not know Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Today is the acceptable time for us to do this (in Heaven it will be too late) (2Co 6:2+). Today could be the day of salvation for someone with whom you boldly, lovingly, winsomely (cf Col 4:5-6+) share the Good News that Jesus died in time for them on a Cross so they do not have to die eternally in torment. Lord by Thy Spirit and Word make us all bold witnesses while today is still called today for the night cometh when no man can work (Jn 9:4+). In Jesus' mighty saving Name. Amen.

**D A Carson** adds "The definite articles with '**weeping**' and '**gnashing**' (cf. Greek) emphasize the horror of the scene: **the** weeping and **the** gnashing...**Weeping** suggests suffering and **gnashing** of teeth despair." ([Matthew](#))

**Spurgeon** - "What is it that the lost are doing? They are '**weeping** and **gnashing their teeth.**' Do you gnash your teeth now? You would not do it except you were in pain and agony. Well, in hell there is *always* **gnashing of teeth.**" (WHAT A HORRIBLE THOUGHT!!! MAY THIS TRUTH MOTIVATE US TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH A SENSE OF URGENCY!!!)

**J S Lang** comments that Jesus' piercing phrase expresses "the agony of eternal torment (and)...perhaps more than any images of fire and brimstone, **the weeping and gnashing of teeth** suggests pain, regret, and eternal sorrow of an earthly life wasted. (Lang, J. S., 1,001 Things You Always Wanted to Know About Angels, Demons, and the Afterlife. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers) In one sense in Luke 13:24+, Jesus is commanding those who have ears to hear His warning to '**agonize**' (**Strive** - [agonizomai](#) in [present imperative](#)) temporally to enter the door, lest they suffer **agony** eternally because they fail to enter the door!

**Robert Morey** commenting on Jesus' description **weeping and gnashing of teeth** writes that "The rabbinic picture used by Christ of people '**weeping and gnashing their teeth**' in the excruciating pain caused by the fires of [Gehenna](#) cannot be ignored or downplayed (Mt13:42, 50). In Re 14:10<sup>+</sup>, Re 14:11<sup>+</sup>, we are explicitly told that they will be tormented by sulfuric fire...for all eternity...without rest day or night. The words of the Apostle could not be clearer or plainer. The text says "*tormented*," not annihilated. (Morey, R. A. BORROW [Death and the Afterlife](#). Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany House)

**Steven Cole** says that Jesus' fearful description of hell should serve to remind all procrastinators that "Salvation requires our careful self-examination (cf 2 Cor 13:5<sup>+</sup>) because of the horrible consequences of making a mistake. **Weeping and gnashing of teeth** doesn't sound like a fun experience, especially when it continues throughout eternity! Think of it as *an eternal root canal without anesthesia!* (THAT'S FUNNY BUT IT'S NOT!) The Jews had assumed that they would be included in the kingdom of God, for after all they were "righteous" (self-righteous) Jews, not "filthy" Gentiles. They were related to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by blood

line but not by the lifeline of faith in the Lion of the Tribe of Judah! And so now they find themselves shut out and, of all things, those "dirty" Gentiles from **east and west** and north and south are inside, dining with the patriarchs and prophets! Contrary to popular modern views, **HELL** will not be a wild party for all the wicked. And, contrary to most popular thinking, **HELL** will not be just for the worst of the worst—the Hitlers of this world. The Jewish men were religious Jews who thought they were deserving of heaven. But they would not submit to Jesus and so they faced the horrible eternal consequence of being in that place of **weeping and gnashing of teeth**. Because there will be many *religious* people in hell, all of us who attend church should examine ourselves (cf 2 Cor 13:5+) to make sure that we are not cast into that place of **weeping and gnashing of teeth**. ([Luke 13:22-30 - The Narrow Door](#))

**Teeth Provided!** - An old-fashioned, hell-and damnation preacher was scolding his congregation for their terrible misdeeds. "Remember what it says in the Bible," he thundered. "Jesus told us that for those who do evil there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." [Matthew 22:13] At this point the preacher saw a very old parishioner grinning up at him, unconcerned, toothless. He accepted the challenge and pointed at the grinning gums, "Don't worry, James Lippincott. Teeth will be provided!" (Streiker, L. D. - Nelson's Big Book of Laughter)

**Cast out** (thrown, driven) ([1544](#))([ekballō](#) from **ek** = out + **bállō** = to cast, throw, drive) means to cast, throw out often with the idea of force (Mt. 8:12; 15:17; 25:30; Acts 16:37, 27:38; Lxx - Lev. 14:40). To throw out of an area or object, throw out, jettison (Mt 21:39 Acts 27:18). Frequently used of casting out demons (Mt 7:22, Mt 8:16, 31,9:34, 10:1, etc). In the present context ekballo describes the casting of unbelievers into the outer darkness! O horrible day! Let our hearts be broken by the things that break the heart of God, for He does not wish "for **ANY** to perish ([apollumi](#) - NOT **ANNIHILATION** BUT ETERNAL LOSS OF PURPOSE FOR WHICH ONE WAS CREATED!) but for all to come to repentance." (2 Pe 3:9+), for God our Savior (1 T 2:3) "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Ti 2:4)

**Darkness** ([4655](#))([skotos](#) from **skia** = shadow thrown by an object. Skia it can assume the meaning of skotos and indicate the sphere of darkness) is literally that sphere in which light is absent. The phrase "*the outer darkness*" refers to the place of punishment or exclusion from God Who is light!

**Weeping** ([2805](#))([klauthmos](#) from [klaio](#) = to weep or bewail) is a noun which describes a strong inner emotion which is evoked in weeping, crying, lamentation (cries of grief, the act of bewailing as an expression of sorrow). Do not miss the tragic truth that Hell is a place of conscious sorrow for the unconscious would not weep!

**Gnashing** ([1030](#)) ([brugmos](#)) describes striking, grinding or biting of teeth together. In the context of the NT uses brugmos is a manifestation or picture of the extreme anguish and utter despair of those consigned to eternal torment in hell. It is notable that Luke uses the root verb [bruchō](#) in Acts 7:54 to describe the Jews who were "cut to the quick" by Stephen's sermon and began "gnashing their teeth at him", clearly a manifestation of intense anger. What a tragic "play on words" for because they "gnashed their teeth" in life at the messenger's Good News of salvation in the Messiah, they will eternally be **be weeping and gnashing their teeth**. Webster says **gnash** means to strike the teeth together as in anger or pain, both emotions probably in play (existing) in the fires of hell. The [Free Dictionary describes gnashing of teeth](#) as a very vocal display of anger, irritation, contempt, complaint.

---

## MATTHEW 8:12—Is hell a place of darkness, or is there light there?

**PROBLEM:** Jesus described hell as a place of "outer darkness" (Matt. 8:12; cf. 22:13 and 25:30). By contrast, the Bible says hell is a place of "fire" (Rev. 20:14) and "unquenchable flames" (Mark 9:48). But, fire and flames give off light. How can hell be utterly dark when there is light there?

**SOLUTION:** Both "fire" and "darkness" are powerful figures of speech which appropriately describe the unthinkable reality of hell. It is like fire because it is a place of destruction and torment. Yet, it is like outer darkness because people are lost there forever. While hell is a literal place, not every description of it should be taken literally. Some powerful figures of speech are used to portray this literal place. Its horrible reality, wherein body and soul will suffer forever, goes far beyond any mere figure of speech that may be used to describe it. But, it is a serious mistake to take a figure of speech literally. By doing so, one can conclude that God has feathers, since He is described as having wings (Ps. 91:4)! There are other figures of speech used to describe the eternal destiny of the lost that, if taken literally, contradict each other. For example, hell is depicted as an eternal garbage dump (Mark 9:43–48), which has a bottom. But, it is also portrayed as a bottomless pit (Rev. 20:3). Each is a vivid depiction of a place of everlasting punishment. (Norman Geisler - [When Critics Ask](#))

---

## QUESTION - [What does hell look like? How hot is hell?](#)

**ANSWER** - We cannot know exactly what hell looks like or how hot it will be. But Scripture does use some descriptive language of hell, and that gives us an idea of what hell will be like. It is sure to be a place of torment, which the Bible often pictures as fiery. For the purposes of this article, the terms [hell](#) and [lake of fire](#) are used interchangeably.

Some interpreters take the Bible's descriptions of hell to be symbolic, because some of the descriptions are difficult to reconcile with each other. For example, picturing hell as both fire (Matthew 25:41) and outer darkness (Matthew 8:12) seems paradoxical. Of course, the God of the impossible can do anything, including make dark fire. So, the descriptions could be literal. Even if the language describing hell is symbolic, the place itself is real—and the reality will no doubt be worse than the symbols.

The scriptural descriptions of hell are meant to emphasize the torment and suffering that will be experienced by those sent there. The "fire" may picture the wrath of God that is experienced by unbelievers in hell, whereas the "outer darkness" may picture the alienation from God's love, mercy, and grace. Whether the vivid language is symbolic or literal, we can be assured that hell is a terrible, terrifying place. Possibly the most terrifying aspect of hell is its duration. The suffering is eternal. It has no end. For us, here and now, the concept of hell should drive us to the cross of Christ. It is only by repentance and faith in Christ that we can be saved from the wrath to come.

Here are some of the passages that describe hell:

Matthew 25:41, "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

Matthew 8:12, "But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

2 Thessalonians 1:6–9, "God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might."

Revelation 20:10, 15, "And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. . . . Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire."

Romans 2:8, "But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger."

Matthew 25:30, "And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Hell, although we do not know exactly what it will look like, will be a place of unending suffering and torment from which there will be no escape. Therefore, now is the day of salvation. Now is the day for all to repent and believe the gospel. Now is the day for us to proclaim the good news that Christ has come to save sinners who trust in Him for forgiveness. Those who look to Christ now will be saved from the wrath to come (1 Thessalonians 1:9–10). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

#### Related Resources:

- Eternal punishment
- [What does the Bible mean when it refers to the gnashing of teeth?](#)
- [What is the outer darkness in Matthew 22:13?](#)
- [Will there be tears in heaven?](#)
- [What does hell look like? How hot is hell?](#)
- [Questions about Heaven, Hell, and Eternity](#)
- [Is hell literally a place of fire and brimstone?](#)
- [Why is the idea of eternal damnation so repulsive to many people?](#)
- [Is annihilationism biblical?](#)

**Matthew 8:13 And Jesus said to the centurion, 'Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed.' And the servant was healed that very moment.**

- **Go** - Mt 8:4 Ec 9:7 Mk 7:29 John 4:50
- **for you as you have believed** - Mt 9:29,30 15:28 17:20 Mk 9:23
- **And the servant** - John 4:52,53
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**And Jesus said to the centurion, "Go** ([hupago](#) command in [present imperative](#)) - Jesus the Commander in Chief orders the

Roman officer to depart on his way. He would send him on his way with the following final encouraging words.

**It shall be done for you as you have believed** - What had the centurion believed? He had believed that Jesus could heal with a word and he has just heard himself that "word" in the phrase **it shall be done**.

**You have believed** (4100)(**pisteuo**) means the centurion heard Jesus' promise, considered it to be true and therefore worthy of his complete, unhesitating trust. He accepted Jesus' words as true and was firmly convicted as to the goodness, efficacy, and ability to accomplish what He had promised! O, to have the faith of this Roman centurion! His belief was not just an intellectual assent, but a response from his heart! And what joy it must have brought to his heart!

**Spurgeon** wrote "Your faith will not murder your humility, your humility will not stab at your faith; but the two will go hand in hand to heaven like a brave brother and a fair sister, the one bold as a lion the other meek as a dove, the one rejoicing in Jesus the other blushing at self."

**Vance Havner** on **as you have believed** - Jesus commanded the centurion, "Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." It reminds us of His statement to the blind men: "According to your faith be it unto you" (Mt 9:29). Our faith is the measure of our blessing. As we believe, we receive. How naturally follows the conclusion here: "And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour." We blame many things for our meager, pale and tasteless lives today, but we simply do not believe His word enough to go our way. **We must see before believing, whereas these believed and then went forth to see the wonder wrought**

**And the servant was healed** (**iaomai**) **that very moment** (**hora** - usually translated "hour") - A what moment? The moment Jesus spoke the **word**.

**THOUGHT** - I love this picture for it reminds me of the awesome power of our Lord Jesus as described in Hebrews 11:3<sup>+</sup> recording that "By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the WORD of God (BY THE "WORD" OF HE WHO IS "THE WORD OF GOD"! John 1:1-3<sup>+</sup>), so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible." Earlier the writer of Hebrews declared that "through (JESUS CHRIST) also He (FATHER) made the world. 3 And He (JESUS) is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the WORD OF HIS POWER. (SO JESUS MADE ALL THINGS WITH HIS WORD AND ALL THINGS HOLD TOGETHER BY HIS WORD - Col 1:16-17<sup>+</sup>) When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Hebrews 1:2-3<sup>+</sup>). Why do we so often doubt His Word?!!! Lord, forgive us, in Jesus' Name. Amen!

**THOUGHT** - The servant's physical healing is an illustration of Jesus' present power to save souls from a far more deadly illness of "infection" with the "sin virus," for unless this "infection" is cured by the Great Physician, the soul will die not only temporally and also eternally! And just as with the healing in this story, Jesus is absent in the flesh, but His Word still has the power to bring about a miraculous cure from sin! Jesus Who spoke the world into existence (Heb 11:3) needs only to speak a word and we are made whole in Him. Hallelujah! Thank You Jesus. Amen.

**Toussaint** has an intriguing comment - "Some see great significance in Matthew's deliberate rearrangement of these miracles. Since Matthew did not follow the chronological order, it seems he intended to illustrate the plan of his Gospel. Accordingly, the first miracle shows Christ ministering to the Jews. His mighty works bore testimony to His person, but His testimony was rejected. Consequently, He turns to the Gentiles, who manifest great faith in Him. Later, He returns to the Jews, represented by the mother-in-law of the apostle to the Jews. He heals her and all who come to Him. This third picture is that of the millennium, when the King restores Israel and blesses all the nations."

---

**Was healed** (2390)(**iaomai**) means the centurion's servant was immediately cured and restored to health. **iaomai** is used literally of deliverance from physical diseases and afflictions and so to make whole, restore to bodily health or heal. To cause someone to achieve health after having been sick. In the passive it means to be healed or cured. Figuratively, **iaomai** speaks of deliverance from sin and its evil consequences and thus to restore (to spiritual good health), make whole, renew (Mt 13:15). In the passive, **iaomai** figuratively means to be restored, to recover or to be healed as in 1Pe 2:24. **iaomai** refers primarily to physical healing in the NT (although clearly there is overlap because some of these instances involved demonic oppression - Lk 9:42), and much less commonly to spiritual healing or healing (saving) from "moral illnesses" and the consequences of sin. When used in this sense **iaomai** has much the same meaning as **sozo**, to save, make whole, restore to spiritual health. Here are the uses of **iaomai** used with a spiritual meaning = Mt 13:15, John 12:40, Acts 28:27 - preceding quotes from Isa 6:10, 1Pe 2:24 = quote from Isa 53:5. All the uses in Matthew - Matt. 8:8; Matt. 8:13; Matt. 13:15; Matt. 15:28



## Matthew 8:14 When Jesus came into Peter's home, He saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever.

- **into** - Mt 8:20 17:25 Mk 1:29-31 Lu 4:38,39
- **mother-in-law lying sick**- 1Co 9:5 1Ti 3:2 4:3 Heb 13:4
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Click to Enlarge for Labels

Ruins of Home in Capernaum  
Purported to be Peter's Home

### Parallel Passages -

Mark 1:29-31+ And immediately after they came out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30 Now Simon's mother-in-law was lying sick with a fever; and immediately they spoke to Jesus about her. 31 And He came to her and raised her up, taking her by the hand, and the fever left her, and she waited on them.

Luke 4:38-39+ Then He got up and left the synagogue, and entered Simon's home. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Him to help her. And standing over her, He rebuked the fever, and it left her; and she immediately got up and waited on them.

**When Jesus came into Peter's home**- Matthew does not record Jesus' coming **out of the synagogue** (Mk 1:29). The service probably ended around noon.

**THOUGHT** - All our homes at some time or another become homes of grief. But if Jesus is a guest, how richly He pays for His entertainment! For when we tell Him, somehow or other the burden is lifted. Not that the sickness, or whatever be the particular cause of anxiety, is at once removed, but the pain and grief are assuaged, and a blessed peace fills the soul. How can the effect be better expressed than in the words the evangelist uses about Peter's wife's mother—"the fever left her"? That is exactly it! In the midst of our troubles and grief, when we feel the healing, cooling touch of Christ, the fever—the ache, the pain—passes out of our souls. ([J D Jones](#))

**He saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever** - Matthew does not mention the disciples asking Jesus to help her (Lk 4:38+, Mk 1:30+). Lying sick is the verb [ballo](#) which means putting someone somewhere (in this case in bed) and in the [perfect tense](#) which speaks of her having become sick in the past and is still ill. So this does not suggest a short time illness. Note that **purezzo** is in the [present tense](#) which also implies this was an ongoing problem. She was "burning up with fever" as we might say today.

**Mother-in-law** ([3994](#))(**penthera**) means a wife's mother, the mother of one's spouse. 5x in NT - Matt. 8:14; Matt. 10:35; Mk. 1:30; Lk. 4:38; Lk. 12:53 12x in [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) most often of Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi - Deut. 27:23; Ruth 1:14; Ruth 2:11; Ruth 2:18; Ruth 2:19; Ruth 2:21; Ruth 2:23; Ruth 3:1; Ruth 3:6; Ruth 3:16; Ruth 3:17; Mic. 7:6;

**Fever** ([4445](#))(**purezzo** from **puretós** = fiery heat, fever from **púr** = fire) means to "be on fire," to be ill of a fever. Only used here and Mt 8:14 = "When Jesus came into Peter's home, He saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever." Thayer says Greek word for fire, pur, is from Sanskrit word pu = "to purify."

## Matthew 8:15 He touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she got up and waited on Him.

- **touched** - Mt 8:3 9:20,29 14:36 20:34 2Ki 13:21 Isa 6:7 Mk 1:41 Lu 8:54 Ac 19:11-13
- **and waited on Him** - Lu 4:38,39 Joh 12:1-3
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**HEALED BY THE  
TOUCH OF JESUS!**

How many of us could echo those words! Every one of us who have been touched by Jesus and healed from the otherwise eternally fatal affliction of the "sin virus!"



**He touched her hand, and the fever left her** - Mark says Jesus **came to her and raised her up, taking her by the hand, and the fever left her** (1:31+). Of course to raise her up, He would have had to touch her. Luke adds that Jesus stood **over her** and **"rebuked ([epitimao](#)) the fever and it left her."** (Lk 4:39+).

**And she got up and waited on Him** - Matthew adds a subtle change compared to both Mark and Luke who record she **waited on them**. Matthew by contrast states she **waited on HIM!** Jesus Alone is worthy! Earlier after His temptation in the wilderness, **behold, angels came and began to minister to Him**. (Mt 4:11+, Mark 1:13+) **Wuest** notes that waited on "is in the [imperfect tense](#), showing progressive action. She went to serving them. It took some time to prepare the meal." The idea of [diakoneo](#) is literally to "wait on tables" to give you a picture of her willingness to be "[servile](#)" in waiting on Jesus.

**Lowell Johnson** - She didn't have to tell anyone she was healed. It was obvious by the way she conducted herself. There was no better way this woman could prove her healing than by serving Christ. So it is with our spiritual healing. When the Lord Jesus cleanses our hearts from sin, our service to Him is the best way we can show the world the dynamic difference He has made in our lives. We are saved to serve. Sadly, many Christians don't know how to spell service. They spell it "Serve us." (The Healing Of Peter's Mother-In-Law)

**THOUGHT** - One commentator suggests that the serving on the part of Simon's wife's mother is the proof of the reality and completeness of the healing. If service is the proof evidence of healing, how does it stand with us? Are we serving? If not, is it certain that we have been healed? "We know," says St John, "that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14, R.V.). ([J D Jones](#))

**THOUGHT** - The statement that she got up and waited on Him implies that she served Him immediately: Have you ever recovered quickly after a fever? It generally takes some recuperation time, doesn't it? Your bones ache, you feel weak and all you want to do is sleep. Especially for us men. Have you heard about the "**Man Flu**"? It's an illness that causes the male to be helpless and sicker than any other family member. In females it's called a cold. But for Peter's mother-in-law she was completely helpless and sicker than any other family member. And yet, she needed no recuperation time. She was healed and went right into helper mode. Anytime you encounter Jesus the natural response should be to serve Him!

We have been saved to serve,  
healed to help and  
touched so that we touch others.

**Daniel Akin** addresses a question which will be discussed more in Mt 8:17 below, and that question is this "Is there healing in the atonement? Isaiah 53:5 says "with his stripes we are healed." Matthew 8:17, in the parallel account of these events, even adds a quote from Isaiah 53:4 saying, "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted." The answer is Yes! There is healing in the atonement! For some it is immediate but temporary. All still die. For all who trust Jesus as Savior and Lord it is eternal and permanent. We find this wonderful truth made plain in Rev 21:4-5, "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." ([Sermon](#))

---

**Touched** (681) ([hapto/haptomai](#) where **haptomai** is the [middle voice](#) which constitutes the majority of uses) means to grasp, to lay hold of with the basic meaning of touching for the purpose of manipulating most used describing Jesus touching someone (or someone touching Him) with a beneficial effect as here with the removal of the fever and earlier with the healing of the leper in Mt 8:3+.

**Fever** (4446) ([puretos](#) from **pur** = fire) means fever, high temperature, feverish or "fiery" heat, burning heat. 6x in NT - Mt 8:15; Mk 1:31; Lk 4:38; Lk 4:39; Jn 4:52; Acts 28:8

**Left** (863) ([aphiemi](#) from **apo** = prefix speaks of separation, putting some distance between + **hiemi** = put in motion, send) conveys the basic idea of an action which causes separation and means to send from one's self. **Aphiemi** is the same verb used to forgive sins (send them away like the Scapegoat in the wilderness in Lev 16:10+ [Lxx uses aphiemi] on the day of atonement) as when Jesus forgave sins (e.g., Mt 9:2). One gets a picture of Jesus "sending" the fever away (so to speak)! Jesus again demonstrates His authority over natural forces.

**Waited on** (1247) ([diakoneo](#) - derivation uncertain - cp **diakon** = in the dust laboring or running through the dust or possibly **diako** = to run on errands; see also study of related noun - [diakonia](#); gives us our word "deacon") means to minister by way of rendering service in any form or to take care of by rendering humble service. It is the word Martha uses when she informs the Lord that Mary has let her down, leaving her to serve alone (Lk 10:40+ = "left me to **do** all the **serving** alone." In Mt 20:28 Jesus

declares "the Son of Man did not come to be **served** ([diakoneo](#)), but to **serve** ([diakoneo](#)), and to give His life a ransom for many." At His crucifixion "Many women were there looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee while **ministering** ([diakoneo](#)) to Him."

**Matthew 8:16 When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill.**

- **When evening came** - Mk 1:32-34 Lu 4:40
- **they brought** - Mt 4:24 9:2 Mk 2:3 Ac 5:15
- **He cast out the spirits** - Mt 12:22 Mk 1:25-27,34 5:8 9:25 Ac 19:13-16
- **healed all who were ill** - Mt 14:14 Ex 15:26
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **SUN SET ON SABBATH STIMULATES STREAMING OF SICK**

### **Parallel Passages:**

Mark 1:32-34+ When evening came, after the sun had set, they began bringing to Him all who were ill and those who were demon-possessed. 33 And the whole city had gathered at the door. 34 And He healed many who were ill with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He was not permitting the demons to speak, because they knew who He was.

Luke 4:40+ While the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and laying His hands on each one of them, He was healing ([imperfect tense](#)) them.

**When evening came** - What day is this? From the context and comparing with parallel passages, this is the Sabbath. [Sabbath](#) started at sundown on Friday and ended at sundown on Saturday. Actually, they had to wait until the first three stars were clearly visible in the sky. Matthew's statement that **evening came** marks the end of the Sabbath, and now healings were rabbinically legal, so the people of Capernaum could now travel any distance they needed to in order to reach Jesus and/or carry those who were not able to come in their own strength (the legalistic Jewish leaders and oppressive laws restricted the length one could travel on Sabbath and did not allow bearing burdens -- even sick people -- on that day because that was considered work and healing itself was also considered work - cf Mk 3:1-5+). We can glean from this episode a simple principle that LEGALISM blunts or restricts the work of GRACE! (Jesus' healing was certainly a manifestation of divine grace!) (See also "[Sabbath's Day Journey](#)") It should also be noted that Jesus had already "broken the Sabbath" (e.g., Mk 1:21-28+) and would do so several more times (Mk 3:14+, et al).

**Began bringing** is in the [imperfect tense](#) ("KEPT BRINGING") picturing people streaming one after another bringing the ill and demon-possessed. Frankly I am surprised they were able to bring the demon-possessed people as surely the demons knew what was awaiting them and could have caused a convulsion or some other hindrance to keep them from being brought to Jesus. Personally, I think this is another evidence of the power of divine over demoniacal.

**They brought to Him many who were demon-possessed** - The fact that they "brought" them indicates they were not able to come to Jesus themselves, a statement which would certainly be true of a demon-possessed individual. That they were even able to bring such a person to Jesus without overwhelming opposition is amazing and speaks of God's sovereign supernatural superintendence over these events.

**Brought** (4374)([prosphero](#) from **prós** = to, toward, denotes motion toward a place + **phéro** = bring) means to carry or bring something into the presence of someone usually implying a transfer of something to that person carry to. Prosphero was used by Matthew in Mt 2:11+ to describe the wise men who **presented** ([prosphero](#)) to Him (BABY JESUS) gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh." Mt 4:24+ records "The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they **brought** ([prosphero](#)) to Him (JESUS) all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them." Earlier in this chapter Jesus instructed the healed leper "present ([prophero](#)) the offering that Moses commanded, as a testimony" to the Jewish priests. Of course the greatest offering in eternity was Christ's offering of Himself as the sacrifice (Heb 9:14<sup>+</sup>, Heb 9:25<sup>+</sup>, Heb 9:28<sup>+</sup>, Heb 10:12<sup>+</sup>).

**Demon-possessed** (1139)([daimonizomai](#) from [daimonion](#) = demon) means to be possessed by a demon, to be under the power of a demon, to act under the control of a demon, without regard to the kind or degree of control. In this passage in note the striking contrast between Jesus a Man under the control of the Spirit,

empowered by the Spirit (Lk 4:14+, Acts 10:37-38+), exerting authority over those souls who were under the control of evil spirits. Once again Jesus wins in the cosmic confrontation between the two kingdoms of this world - the **kingdom of light** and the **kingdom of darkness** (cf Col 1:13+, Acts 26:18+). This verb is only found in the Gospels - Matt. 4:24; Matt. 8:16; Matt. 8:28; Matt. 8:33; Matt. 9:32; Matt. 12:22; Matt. 15:22; Mk. 1:32+; Mk. 5:15+; Mk. 5:16; Mk. 5:18; Lk. 8:36+; Jn. 10:21. **Daimonizomai** is in the [present tense](#) indicating the demons were continually in control of the entire personality these poor victims. What a tormented life that must have been. **MacArthur** points out that "Although its accounts of demonized people reflect many different conditions and degrees of control, Scripture does not clearly distinguish between being possessed, obsessed, or oppressed by demons. Demonization may be defined as a condition in which one or more demons inhabit and gains control over a human being. Demons can attack men spiritually, mentally, and physically. In the spiritual realm they promote false religions, demon worship, the occult, and innumerable kinds of immorality, including murder (Rev. 9:20–21; 18:23–24). In the intellectual and psychological realm they promote such things as false doctrines; insanity and masochism, as in this demon-possessed man, who gashed himself with stones (Mark 5:5); and inability to speak and suicidal mania (see Mark 9:17–22)....It is significant that Jesus never blamed a person for being either diseased or demon controlled. He recognized them as victims of powers beyond their own control and as in need of deliverance, not exhortation or condemnation." (MNTC-Mt)

**And He cast out the spirits with a word** - The Word ([logos](#) Jn 1:1) used **a word** ([logos](#)) to cleanse the people from unclean spirits. **A word** is not an incantation or a magic formula, but **a word**, as Matthew 4:10ESV when Jesus commanded the devil "**Begone** (one word in Greek - [hupago](#) in [present imperative](#)), Satan!" There is no supernatural struggle when Jesus casted out the demons, once again clearly demonstrating His authority over the invisible world (and healing demonstrated His authority over the visible world).

**Cast out** (1544)([ekballō](#) From **ek** = out + **bállō** = to cast, throw, drive) means to cast, throw out often with the idea of force, in this case supernatural power (cf similar contexts in Mt 8:31, Mt 9:33, 34, 10:1, 10:8, 12:26, 27, 28, 17:19)! In Mt. 21:12 "Jesus entered the temple and **drove out** ([ekballo](#)) all those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves. **Ekballo** was used earlier Jesus declaring that "the sons of the kingdom **will be cast out** into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Mt 8:12+, a solemn warning repeated in Mt 22:13, Mt 25:30) In short, Jesus casts out evil spirits and evil men!

**And healed all who were ill** - Notice the word **ALL** indicating that this was unconditional. Some were not turned away because they were not worthy to be healed. Beloved, none of us is worthy to be healed by Jesus, physically or spiritually! This is another manifestation of our receipt of what John referred to as "grace upon grace!" (NET = "one gracious gift after another") (Jn 1:16+). In Mark's parallel passage (Mk 1:34), he records that Jesus healed many who were ill which is not a discrepancy for Grassmick points out this is a "Hebrew idiom meaning "all who were brought" (cf Mk 1:32, Mk 10:45, Mt 8:15). " (BKC)

**PRINCIPLE** - Do not miss the fact that Matthew clearly distinguishes demon-possessed from all who were ill. The point is that while in one sense all disease and sickness is the result of sin, not all disease is the result of demonic activity (yes some demon possessed people were had illness, but they were a minority). Stated another way Satan and His demons may inflict physical affliction (cf Lk 13:10-17+), but clearly not all physical affliction is demonic in origin. AND FROM MY EXPERIENCE AS A MEDICAL DOCTOR I STRONGLY BELIEVE **MOST** ILLNESS IS NOT DEMONIC.

**Healed** (cured)(2323)([therapeuo](#) from **therapon** = an attendant, servant) means primarily to care for, to wait upon, minister to.. It has two main senses in the NT, one speaking of rendering service (Acts 17:25+) and the more common use as in the present context describing healing of the ill (Mt. 4:23, 24; Mt 8:7, Mt 9:5, Mt 10:1, etc). **Therapeúō** in this context obviously means to heal miraculously or supernaturally.

The parallel passage in Luke 4:40+ uses the same verb ([therapeuo](#)) for **healing** but in the [imperfect tense](#) which gives us the dramatic picture is of Jesus continually healing -- one sick person would either be brought to Him or come on their own power (if able) and He would heal him, then a lame person would come and He would heal him, then a deaf person would come and He would heal him. The [imperfect tense](#) helps us to see the scene in our mind's eye, so to speak. And quite a scene it was. We don't know how long this scene lasted, but we do know the **whole city** was there (Mk 1:33+) and it was evening (Mk 1:32). So depending on how many were sick, this scene could have lasted well into the night.

**THOUGHT** - While we do not know how long "JESUS' ER" lasted, we need to remember that Jesus was carrying these healings out in His capacity as fully Man, and at the end of a long day He must have been "fully exhausted!" How could a man, even Jesus Who was fully Man carry on such strenuous labors? Remember that Luke 4:14+ described Jesus functioning "**in the power of the Spirit**" (cf similar description by Peter in Acts 10:38+) While a Spirit filled Man is performing spiritual work, he is supernaturally energized. It was the

famous missionary Hudson Taylor who said "Depend on it. God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply." **Can we not see our desperate need to be continually in the will of God("God's way") and continually filled and empowered by the Spirit?** (Eph 5:18<sup>+</sup>, cf Eph 3:16<sup>+</sup>, Acts 1:8+) **Could this be why so many Christian workers reach a point of burnout (just wondering!)?** Did you notice a difference in the description of Peter's healed mother-in-law and all these others who were healed of various diseases? None of the synoptic writers say once healed they went about serving others. Interesting! One other thought is that Jesus never went looking for sick people to heal. Healings were never to overshadow His primary ministry of preaching and teaching the Word. Any ministry today that puts major emphasis on the miraculous at the expense of the proclamation of the Word is suspect at the very least and completely counterfeit at very worst (sadly most are in this latter category, especially if they are on television!)

#### Related Resources:

- [The Demonic \(unclean spirits\) in the NT](#) - Bob Utley
- [The Demonic in the OT](#) - Bob Utley
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Demon](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Demons](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Demon](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Demon](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Demon Possession](#) [Possession, Demon](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Demon](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Demon](#)
- Smith Bible Dictionary [Demon](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Demon](#)
- The Nuttall Encyclopedia [Demon](#)

**Matthew 8:17 This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "HE HIMSELF TOOK OUR INFIRMITIES AND CARRIED AWAY OUR DISEASES."**

- **This was to fulfill-** Mt 1:22 2:15,23
- **Himself** - Isa 53:4 1Pe 2:24
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "HE HIMSELF TOOK OUR INFIRMITIES AND CARRIED AWAY OUR DISEASES."**

It is interesting that most of the NT quotations come from the Greek Septuagint (Lxx) translation rather than the Hebrew original, although some NT writers resorted to the Hebrew text on occasion as Matthew does here in [Mt8:17]. If Matthew had quoted the Lxx of (Isa 53:4) it might have been falsely suggested that Jesus actually bore sins during His earthly ministry, not only on the Cross. Therefore Matthew made use of the Hebrew text which has "sicknesses" rather than the Lxx text which has "our sins." (tas hamartias hemon) The context of Mt 8:17 is clearly Jesus' healing activity during His earthly ministry so that this prophecy in Isa 53:4 was fulfilled, according to this passage, before the atoning and propitiatory work of Christ on the cross. The corollary is that physical healing is not inherent in the atoning work of Christ. This is an important distinction as false teachers come along and say we should be physically healed because of Christ's work on the Cross & if we are not healed of our infirmity it is because we lack the faith necessary to invoke God's healing power. In essence they make "faith" the end all, not Christ. On the other hand one should note that when we die our bodies are delivered from the power of sickness, pain and death in this present life, and from the very presence of disease in the future resurrection life. Furthermore God can and still does heal physical maladies but this is because He is a God of great lovingkindness & mercy & it is His sovereign pleasure to choose to heal or not to heal. He alone is God. The general fact is still undisputed, that the frequent use of the Lxx in the NT quotations shows its dominant position in the early church and the high regard in which it was held. On the other hand the presence of a number of NT quotations agreeing neither with the Hebrew nor with the Lxx constitutes an unresolved enigma. For this we will probably have to wait until we are in His presence before we understand. [1Co 13:12]

---

**D A Carson's note on this passage** -- On the fulfillment formulas, see on Mt 1:23; 2:5, 15, 23; 4:14; Introduction, section 11.b.) This quotation is Isaiah 53:4. Matthew's rendering does not follow [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) or Targum, both of which spiritualize the Hebrew. Most likely Mt 8:17 is Matthew's own translation of the Hebrew (Stendahl, School, pp. 106f.). Because Isaiah 52:13–53:12+, the

fourth “Servant Song,” pictures the Servant suffering vicariously for others, whereas, on the face of it, Matthew renders the Hebrew in such a way as to speak of “taking” and “carrying” physical infirmities and physical diseases but not in terms of suffering vicariously for sin, many detect in this passage strong evidence that Matthew cites the OT in an indefensible and idiosyncratic fashion. McConnell (p. 120) sees this as another instance of Matthew’s using an OT passage out of context for his own ends (cf. also Rothfuchs, pp. 70–72). McNeile suggests Isaiah 53:4 had already become detached from its context when Matthew used it.

There are, however, better ways of interpreting this passage:

1. It is generally understood since the work of C.H. Dodd (According to the Scriptures [London: Nisbet, 1952]) that when the NT quotes a brief OT passage, it often refers implicitly to the entire context of the quotation. This is very likely here for Matthew has a profound understanding of the OT. Moreover, Isaiah 53:7 is probably alluded to in Matthew 27:12, Isaiah 53:9 in Matthew 27:57, and Isaiah 53:10–12 in Matthew 20:28, the latter in a context affirming vicarious atonement theology. Any interpretation of v. 17 that does not take into account the thrust of the entire Servant Song is therefore dubious.
2. Both Scripture and Jewish tradition understand that all sickness is caused, directly or indirectly, by sin (see on 4:24; cf. Gundry, *Use of OT*, pp. 230f.). This encourages us to look for a deeper connection between 8:17 and Isaiah 53:4.
3. Isaiah is thinking of the servant’s “taking the diseases of others upon himself through his suffering and death for their sin” (Gundry, *Use of OT*, p. 230). The two verbs he uses are *nasaʿ* (“took up [our infirmities]”) and *seʿ* (*alam* “carried [our sorrows]”), which do not themselves necessarily have the force of substitution, though they can be interpreted that way. The LXX spiritualizes “infirmities” to “sins”; and in this sense the verse is referred to in 1 Peter 2:24 in defense of substitutionary atonement. That interpretation of the verse is legitimate because the flow of the Servant Song supports it. But strictly speaking Isaiah 53:4 simply speaks of the Servant’s bearing infirmities and carrying sicknesses; and it is only the context, plus the connection between sickness and sin, that shows that the way he bears the sickness of others is through his suffering and death.
4. Isaiah 53, as we have seen, is important among NT writers for understanding the significance of Jesus’ death (e.g., Acts 8:32–33; 1 Peter 2:24); but when Matthew here cites Isaiah 53:4, at first glance he applies it only to Jesus’ healing ministry, not to his death. But in the light of the three preceding points, the discrepancy is resolved if Matthew holds that Jesus’ healing ministry is itself a function of his substitutionary death, by which he lays the foundation for destroying sickness. Matthew’s two verbs, contrary to some opinion, exactly render the Hebrew: the Servant “took up” (*elaben*) our infirmities and “carried” (*ebastasen*) our diseases (Gundry, *Use of OT*, pp. 109, 111). Matthew could not have used the LXX and still referred to physical disease. Yet his own rendering of the Hebrew, far from wrenching Isaiah 53:4 out of context, indicates his profound grasp of the theological connection between Jesus’ healing ministry and the Cross.
5. That connection is supported by various collateral arguments. The prologue insists Jesus came to save his people from their sin, and this within the context of the coming of the kingdom. When Jesus began his ministry, he not only proclaimed the kingdom but healed the sick (see on 4:24). Healing and forgiveness are tied together, not only in a pericope like 9:1–8, but by the fact that the consummated kingdom, in which there is no sickness, is made possible by Jesus’ death and the new covenant that his death enacted (26:27–29). Thus the healings during Jesus’ ministry can be understood not only as the foretaste of the kingdom but also as the fruit of Jesus’ death. It could be that Matthew also judges Isaiah 53:4 appropriate because it seems to form a transition from the Servant’s being despised to his suffering and death. Certainly at least some rabbinic tradition understood Isaiah 53:4 to refer to physical disease (cf. SBK, 1:481–82).
6. This means that for Matthew, Jesus’ healing miracles pointed beyond themselves to the Cross. In this he is like the evangelist John, whose “signs” similarly point beyond themselves.
7. But even here there is a deeper connection than first meets the eye. These miracles (ch. 8) have been framed to emphasize Jesus’ authority. This authority was never used to satisfy himself (cf. 4:1–10). He healed the despised leper (8:1–4), a Gentile centurion’s servant who was hopelessly ill (vv. 5–13), other sick (vv. 14–15), no matter how many (vv. 16–17). Thus when he gave his life a ransom for many (20:28), it was nothing less than an extension of the same authority directed toward the good of others (cf. Hill, “Son and Servant,” pp. 9, 11, who also points out how reductionistic Kingsbury’s “Son of God” christology is in light of such intertwining themes). Jesus’ death reflected the intermingling of authority and servanthood already noted (e.g., 3:17) and now progressively developed. After all, following the momentous miracles of 8:1–17, the Son of Man had nowhere to lay his head (v. 20).

Despite the stupendous signs of kingdom advance, the royal King and Suffering Servant faced increasingly bitter opposition. The Father had committed everything to him, but he was gentle and humble in heart (11:27, 29). This moving theme needs to be traced out inductively (cf. B. Gerhardsson, "Gottes Sohn als Diener Gottes: Messias, Agape und Himmelherrschaft nach dem Matthäusevangelium," ST 27 [1973]: 73–106). If the Davidic Messiah of Jewish expectation (Ps Sol 17:6) purifies his people by annihilating sinners, Matthew's Davidic Messiah-Suffering Servant purifies his people with his death, takes on himself their diseases, and opens fellowship to sinners (cf. Hummel, pp. 124–25).

This discussion does not resolve two related questions.

1. Did Jews in Jesus' day understand Isaiah 53 messianically? Most scholars say no. Jeremias answers more cautiously—viz., many Jews did so interpret Isaiah's "Servant" but ignored references to his suffering (cf. Jeremias and Zimmerli).
2. Did Jesus interpret his own ministry in terms of the Suffering Servant? Matthew 8:17 does not help us because it gives us no more than Matthew's understanding of the significance of Jesus' healing miracles. (See further on 20:28; cf. Hooker, Jesus and the Servant; T.W. Manson, The Servant Messiah [Cambridge: University Press, 1953], pp. 57–58, 73.)

It should be stated that this discussion cannot be used to justify healing on demand. This text and others clearly teach that there is healing in the Atonement; but similarly there is the promise of a resurrection body in the Atonement, even if believers do not inherit it until the Parousia. From the perspective of the NT writers, the Cross is the basis for all the benefits that accrue to believers, but this does not mean that all such benefits can be secured at the present time on demand, any more than we have the right and power to demand our resurrection bodies. The availability of any specific blessing can be determined only by appealing to the overall teaching of Scripture. Modern Christians should avoid the principal danger of Corinth, viz., an over-realized eschatology (cf. A.C. Thistleton, "Realized Eschatology at Corinth," NTS 24 [1977]: 510–26), which demands blessings that may not be ours till the end of the age. (Expositor's Bible Commentary)

#### **Matthew 8:18 Now when Jesus saw a crowd around Him, He gave orders to depart to the other side of the sea.**

- **Jesus saw a crowd** - Mt 8:1 Mk 1:35-38 Lu 4:42,43 Joh 6:15
- **to the other side of the sea** - Mt 14:22 Mk 4:35 5:21 6:45 8:13 Lu 8:22
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Now when Jesus saw a crowd around Him** - Jesus was still popular at this time and so attracted crowds of "would-be" disciples. He was a like a modern day rock star who attracted "groupies." NET has "Now when Jesus saw a large crowd around him." Thus it seems the **large crowd** prompted Jesus' order and as we learn in the following passages it provided a chance for Jesus to get some very needed rest.

**He gave orders to depart to the other side of the sea** - The fact that Jesus **gave orders** is indicative of His authority. Mark has "On that day, when evening came, He said to them, "Let us go over to the other side." (Mark 4:35). So they would leave from the shores of **Capernaum** (Mt 8:5) and disembark in **the country of the Gadarenes** (Mt 8:28).

**Gave orders** (Commanded ([2753](#))([keleuo](#)) means to set in motion, urge on. In the NT, used generally with the meaning of to command, order something to be done.

**John Broadus** - Mark's phrase (Mk 4:35), 'when the even was come' (comp. Matt. 8:16), might include the late afternoon (see on Mt 14:15). It is thus not certain, though probable, that the stormy passage was after night-fall.

#### **Matthew 8:19 Then a scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go."**

- **Then a scribe came** - Ezr 7:6 Mk 12:32-34 Lu 9:57,58 1Co 1:20
- **I will follow You wherever You go** - Lu 14:25-27,33 22:33,34 Joh 13:36-38
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Parallel Passage:**

Lk 9:57+ "As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "I will follow You wherever You go.



## A SCRIBES BOLD PROFESSIONS

Jesus was still popular and clearly was attracting disciple "wannabes" and so Jesus gives a short treatise on the cost of discipleship in Mt 8:19-22 before they crossed the lake..

**MacArthur** adds - From Mark we learn that some of the crowd got into other boats in order to go across the lake with Jesus (Mk 4:36), but three men (a third is mentioned in Luke 9) obviously did not want to leave and they approached Jesus just before He departed.

**Then a scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go."** - Luke's version says "**someone**," but Matthew tells us it was a **scribe**, which would have been a Jewish scholar, well-schooled in the OT and the teachings of Moses. **NET** refers to him as "an expert in the law" and **NLT** has "one of the teachers of religious law." For this **scribe** to address Jesus as **Teacher** is fascinating considering the scribes were themselves considered teachers! This scribe's manner of addressing Jesus could reflect a touch of humility (and genuine respect) or a subtle form of flattery! Either way this is quite a profession from a **scribe**! He had doubtless witnessed and/or heard about the miracles Jesus performed and desired to be part of Jesus' entourage.

So in light of his bold claim, but Jesus would give the qualifying conditions! This man's good intentions led to Jesus' radical description of the cost of those intentions!

**Wherever You go** sounds fairly all inclusive. It reminds me of many professions I hear from sadly so many who say they will follow Jesus and over time they fall by the wayside, proving their professions to be false (Mt. 13:5–6+, Mt 13:20–21+ cf Titus 1:16+, Mt 7:21-23+).

**R. C. H. Lenski** observes, such a person "sees the soldiers on parade, the fine uniforms, and the glittering arms and is eager to join, forgetting the exhausting marches, the bloody battles, the graves, perhaps unmarked." (Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel)

**Spurgeon** - I wonder if this man thought, 'Well, now, I am **ascribe**. If I join that company, I shall be a leader. I perceive that they are only fishermen, the bulk of them; and if I come in amongst them, I shall be a great acquisition to that little band. I shall no doubt be the secretary.' Perhaps he may have thought that there was something to be made out of such a position; there was one who thought so (Judas Iscariot)."

**D. A. Carson** observes, "Little has done more to harm the witness of the Christian church than the practice of filling its ranks with every volunteer who is willing to make a little profession, talk fluently of experience, but display little of perseverance." (EBC)

**John MacArthur**- Impressive words of affirmation are easy to make, especially when one does not know the cost of commitment involved. The Lord knew that the initial declared faith of many of His followers was shallow and superficial. When Jesus was in Jerusalem during the first Passover after He began His ministry, "many believed in His name, beholding His signs which He was doing." Yet, John goes on to say, "Jesus on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to bear witness concerning man for He Himself knew what was in man" (John 2:23–25). The Lord had no faith in their faith because He knew it was not genuine. Those people were only committed to the wonder and excitement that accompanied His work, not to Him as Lord or to the work of the gospel itself. Jesus repeatedly refused to take advantage of temporary popularity, which He knew would soon turn to permanent rejection. (MNTC-Mt)

**Teacher** (1320)(**didaskalos** from **didasko** - teach) was one taught in such a way that it would shape will of one being taught by the content of what was taught. 41 of 58 NT uses of **didaskalos** refer to Jesus as the **Teacher**.

**Scribe** (1122)(**grammateus** from **grapho** = to write) were not just "professional copyists" but were esteemed (in Jewish society) men skilled in Jewish law and theology (Mt 2.4+). This man was also very likely a Pharisee for **John MacArthur** notes that while "Not all **Pharisees** were **scribes**, the **scribes** were primarily **Pharisees**, who were interpreters and teachers of the law of Moses and the traditional rabbinic writings. Their teaching provided the theological framework for the Pharisees' legalistic system of works-righteousness."

**Follow** (190) see **akoloutheo**

**Matthew 8:20** Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

- **the Son** - Ps 40:17 69:29 109:22 Isa 53:2,3 Lu 2:7,12,16 8:3 2Co 8:9
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP THE COST OF FOLLOWING JESUS

Jesus now tests the scribe's sincerity and the level of his commitment.

**Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head** - Notice that Jesus did not say "No, you cannot follow Me," or "No, I know already you will never hang with Me but will fall away." Instead, Jesus took some of the glitz and glamour off of following Him! We know that Jesus stayed in Peter's home in Capernaum, but Jesus' point is that He was a Man on mission, and was frequently on the move from one place to another. He had no fixed habitation. Jesus is not speaking as much of poverty, but of priority. Accommodations were not a high priority and there were no "luxury suites" reserved for Him and His entourage! Proclamation of His message to people was His priority. As He said in Luke 19:10+ "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

**MacArthur** - He was saying, in proverbial form, that in spite of His divine authority and miracle-working power, self-indulgence was not in His plan, and He had fewer physical comforts than many animals. **Foxes have holes** they can call their own, and **birds of the air have nests** to which they can return and rest.

This scribe (Mt 8:19) who was a disciple wannabe was now confronted with the reality of following Jesus! No sleeping in rich men's houses or king's palaces. What a contrast Jesus is to many of the Name it Claim prosperity preachers in our day who promise their followers wealth and riches! What slithering shysters!

**John Broadus** adds that "frequently journeying far and wide over the country, even as now he was about to cross the lake into a wild, inhospitable region, his life was one of peculiar trial and self-denying toil, and if the Scribe proposed to follow him wherever he went, he must make up his mind to follow a homeless wanderer, and so to endure many hardships....We see from this incident how careful our Lord was to warn men beforehand what they were to expect in entering upon his service as in Luke 14 (below). And although it is not now the duty of all his followers to spend their lives in wandering labors, it is still the duty of every one to "renounce himself, and take up his cross," and in the highest sense to "follow" Jesus. We are not informed whether the Scribe determined, notwithstanding the warning he had received, that he would still follow the Teacher one would hope that he did, and would rather infer so from the Evangelist's silence, seeing that on other occasions (e. g., 19:22; John 6:66) the turning back of various apparent disciples is distinctly recorded; also from the association with the person next mentioned. Expositors have perhaps been severe in their judgment, in taking it for granted that the Scribe's motives were mercenary, and that he turned back at once. He was over confident, and the kind Teacher warned him to count the cost.

Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, 26 "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. 27 "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. "For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? 29 "Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' 31 "Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? 32 "Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. 33 "So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions. 34 "Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? 35 "It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear." (Luke 14:25-35+)

**THOUGHT** - If you have time Pastor Steve Lawson gives 3 pithy, poignant sermons (all Mp3's) on the Cost of Discipleship - (1) [The Cost of Discipleship - Luke 14:25-35, Part 1](#) (2) [The Cost of Discipleship - Luke 14:25-35, Part 2](#) (3) [The Cost of Discipleship - Luke 14:25-35, Part 3](#)

**David Guzik** - Jesus was not afraid to discourage potential disciples. Unlike many modern evangelists, He was interested more in quality than in quantity. "Nothing has done more harm to Christianity than the practice of filling the ranks of Christ's army with every volunteer who is willing to make a little profession, and to talk fluently of experience." (Ryle, cited in Carson)

**John Broadus** - Various Fathers wildly allegorize the **foxes** and the **birds** (see Aquinas, Cat. Aur.).

**The Son of Man** - First use in Matthew' Gospel, drawn from Daniel 7:13+ where Daniel declared "behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a **Son of Man** was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days (GOD THE FATHER) And was presented before Him."

And so **Son of Man** was clearly a [Messianic Title](#) which Jesus does not hesitate to apply to Himself. The Jews who had ears to hear, would have known immediately what Jesus was claiming! He was claiming He was the long expected [Messiah](#)! To paraphrase C S Lewis Jesus is either Lord, liar or lunatic, but He cannot just be a good Teacher! This is the name Jesus used for Himself more than any other. It is used 83 times in the Gospels, always by Jesus Himself. Son of man is Jesus' Name emphasizing His identity as the representative Man, the "**last Adam**" (cf 1Co 15:45-47). Son of David was His Jewish Name, and Son of God His divine Name.

**Son of Man** -Matt. 8:20; Matt. 9:6; Matt. 10:23; Matt. 11:19; Matt. 12:8; Matt. 12:32; Matt. 12:40; Matt. 13:37; Matt. 13:41; Matt. 16:13; Matt. 16:27; Matt. 16:28; Matt. 17:9; Matt. 17:12; Matt. 17:22; Matt. 18:11; Matt. 19:28; Matt. 20:18; Matt. 20:28; Matt. 24:27; Matt. 24:30; Matt. 24:37; Matt. 24:39; Matt. 24:44; Matt. 25:31; Matt. 26:2; Matt. 26:24; Matt. 26:45; Matt. 26:64; Mk. 2:10; Mk. 2:28; Mk. 8:31; Mk. 8:38; Mk. 9:9; Mk. 9:12; Mk. 9:31; Mk. 10:33; Mk. 10:45; Mk. 13:26; Mk. 14:21; Mk. 14:41; Mk. 14:62; Lk. 5:24; Lk. 6:5; Lk. 6:22; Lk. 7:34; Lk. 9:22; Lk. 9:26; Lk. 9:44; Lk. 9:56; Lk. 9:58; Lk. 11:30; Lk. 12:8; Lk. 12:10; Lk. 12:40; Lk. 17:22; Lk. 17:24; Lk. 17:26; Lk. 17:30; Lk. 18:8; Lk. 18:31; Lk. 19:10; Lk. 21:27; Lk. 21:36; Lk. 22:22; Lk. 22:48; Lk. 22:69; Lk. 24:7; Jn. 1:51; Jn. 3:13; Jn. 3:14; Jn. 5:27; Jn. 6:27; Jn. 6:53; Jn. 6:62; Jn. 8:28; Jn. 9:35; Jn. 12:23; Jn. 12:34; Jn. 13:31; Acts 7:56; Heb. 2:6; Rev. 1:13; Rev. 14:14

**More detail on the Son of Man** - Our Lord constantly uses this term as implying that His mission (Mt 11:19; Lu 19:10), His death and resurrection (Mt 12:40; 20:18; 26:2), and His second coming (Mt 24:37-44; Lu 12:40) transcend in scope and result all merely Jewish limitations. When Nathanael confesses Him as "King of Israel," our Lord's answer is, "You shall see greater things . . . the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man" (Jn 1:50,51). When His messengers are cast out by the Jews, His thought leaps forward to the time when the Son of Man comes again to the human race (cp. Mt 10:5,6 with Mt 10:23). Son of Man is the Name by which He referred to Himself when He explained that universal judgment was committed to Him by God the Father (Jn 5:22,27). Who better to judge men than the Son of Man? Son of Man is also a name indicating that in Him is fulfilled the OT foreview of blessing through a coming man (see Ge 1:26, 3:15; 12:3; Ps 8:4; 80:17; Isa 7:14; 9:6,7; 32:2).

---

**Question:** [What does it mean that Jesus is the Son of Man?](#)

**Answer:** Jesus is referred to as the "Son of Man" 88 times in the New Testament. A first meaning of the phrase "Son of Man" is as a reference to the prophecy of Daniel 7:13-14, "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed." The description "Son of Man" was a Messianic title. Jesus is the One who was given dominion and glory and a kingdom. When Jesus used this phrase, He was assigning the Son of Man prophecy to Himself. The Jews of that era would have been intimately familiar with the phrase and to whom it referred. Jesus was proclaiming Himself as the Messiah.

A second meaning of the phrase "Son of Man" is that Jesus was truly a human being. God called the prophet Ezekiel "son of man" 93 times. God was simply calling Ezekiel a human being. A son of a man is a man. Jesus was fully God (John 1:1), but He was also a human being (John 1:14). First John 4:2 tells us, "This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God." Yes, Jesus was the Son of God—He was in His essence God. Yes, Jesus was also the Son of Man—He was in His essence a human being. In summary, the phrase "Son of Man" indicates that Jesus is the Messiah and that He is truly a human being.

---

**MATTHEW 8:20 (cf. Matt. 20:18; 24:30; etc.)—If Jesus was the Son of God, why did He call Himself the Son of Man?**

**PROBLEM:** Jesus referred to Himself most often as the Son of Man. This seems to point to His humanity more than His deity. If He was really the Messiah, the Son of God, why did He use the self-description, "Son of Man"?

**SOLUTION:** First of all, even if the phrase "Son of Man" is a reference to Jesus' humanity, it is not a denial of His deity. By becoming man, Jesus did not cease being God. The Incarnation of Christ did not involve the subtraction of deity, but the addition of humanity. Jesus clearly claimed to be God on many occasions (Matt. 16:16–17; John 8:58; 10:30). But, in addition to being divine, He was also human. He had two natures conjoined in one person.

Furthermore, Jesus was not denying His deity by referring to Himself as the Son of Man. The term "Son of Man" is used to describe Christ's deity as well. The Bible says that only God can forgive sins (Isa. 43:25; Mark 2:7). But, as the "Son of Man," Jesus had the power to forgive sins (Mark 2:10). Likewise, Christ will return to earth as the "Son of Man" in clouds of glory to reign on earth (Matt.

26:63–64). In this passage, Jesus is citing Daniel 7:13 where the Messiah is described as the “Ancient of Days,” a phrase used to indicate His deity (cf. Dan. 7:9).

Further, when Jesus was asked by the high priest whether He was the “Son of God” (Matt. 26:63), He responded affirmatively, declaring that He was the “Son of Man” who would come in power and great glory (v. 64). This indicated that Jesus Himself used the phrase “Son of Man” to indicate His deity as the Son of God.

Finally, the phrase “Son of Man” emphasizes who Jesus is in relation to His Incarnation and His work of salvation. In the OT (see Lev. 25:25–26, 48–49; Ruth 2:20), the kinsman redeemer was a close relative of someone who was in need of redemption. So Jesus, as our Kinsman Redeemer, was identifying Himself with humankind as its Savior and Redeemer. Those who knew the OT truth about Messiah being the Son of Man understood Jesus’ implicit claims to deity. Those who did not, would not so recognize this. Jesus often said things in this way so as to test His audience and separate believers from unbelievers (cf. Matt. 13:10–17). (When Critics Ask - Norman Geisler)

#### Matthew 8:21 Another of the disciples said to Him, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father."

- **another** - Lu 9:59-62
- **permit** - Mt 19:29 Lev 21:11,12 Nu 6:6,7 De 33:9,10 1Ki 19:20,21 Hag 1:2 2Co 5:16
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Parallel Passages:

Luke 9:59-62+ And He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.” 60 But He said to him, “Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.” 61 Another also said, “I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home.” 62 But Jesus said to him, “No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

### FORGO RELIGIOUS DUTY FOR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS

**Another of the disciples said to Him, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father"** - In Luke 9:59+ Jesus first gave the command " **Follow** Me." But he said, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." It is interesting that Matthew refers to these interrogators as **disciples**. We know from Luke 10:1+ that "the Lord appointed seventy others and sent the two and two ahead of Him." So it is possible that this disciple was one of the seventy and also possible he heeded Jesus called to discipleship. We will discover the answer in Heaven. We do know that many disciples were only loosely connected to Jesus and were not willing to count the cost, John recording after some difficult teaching on Jesus being the Bread of Life that " As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore." (Jn 6:66). And so we see that **physical following** and **spiritual following** are worlds apart (pun intended) and that is what Jesus is teaching.

Some say that permission to first bury his father was a figure of speech or idiomatic way of saying that he had to wait until his father died. This also suggest that he may have had interest in something besides Jesus, because he may have been in line to receive the inheritance when his father died.

**Spurgeon** has an interesting note that "Much of the concerns of politics, party tactics, committee meetings, social reforms, innocent amusements, and so forth, may be very fitly described as burying the dead. Much of this is very needful, proper, and commendable work; but still only such a form of business as unregenerate men can do as well as disciples of Jesus. Let them do it; but if we are called to preach the Gospel, let us give ourselves wholly to our sacred calling."

**Disciples** (3101) (**mathetes** from **manthano** = to learn which Vine says is "from a root *math*, indicating thought accompanied by endeavor". Gives us our English = "*mathematics*" - see [matheteuo](#)) describes a person who learns from another by instruction, whether formal or informal. Discipleship includes the idea of one who intentionally learns by inquiry and observation (cf [inductive Bible study](#)) and thus **mathetes** is more than a mere pupil. A **mathetes** describes an adherent of a teacher. **Mathetes** itself does not necessarily convey a spiritual association, and thus was used to describe superficial followers of Jesus (Jn 6:66).

**Lord** (2962) (**kurios** from **kuros** = might or power, related to **kuroo** = to give authority) primarily means the possessor, owner, master, the supreme one, one who is sovereign possessing absolute authority, absolute

ownership and uncontested power. Kurios is used of the one to whom a person or thing belonged, over which he has the power of deciding, the one who is the master or disposer of a thing (Mk 7:28)

**Permit** ([aorist imperative](#)) (2010) ([epitrepo](#) from **epi** = upon + **trepo** = to turn) means to turn to, entrust, hence to permit. In Mark 5:13, John 19:38, and Acts 21:39 it carries the sense of release from restraint in order to have freedom of choice. For example, in Mark 5:13 Legion gained freedom from being sent away, and instead was permitted to enter a herd of swine (Mark 5:8-13).

**Matthew 8:22 But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and allow the dead to bury their own dead."**

- **follow** - Mt 4:18-22 Mt 9:9 Joh 1:43
- **and** - Lu 15:32 Eph 2:1,5 5:14 Col 2:13 1Ti 5:6
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### A PRIORITY CHECK-UP

Jesus' reply means no disrespect for the man's father. He is simply telling the potential disciple that he must make following Him his highest priority.

**But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me and allow the dead to bury their own dead"** - Jesus gives 2 commands, **follow** in the [present imperative](#), indicating this is to be one's lifestyle (same command is given to all believers today and is only possible by the depending on the enabling power of [the Holy Spirit](#)). The second command is **allow** ([aphiemi](#)) in the [aorist imperative](#) meaning to do this without delay. **Allow** is a somewhat "mild". The ESV rendering is better - **'leave** the dead to bury their own dead." **Follow** is the same command Jesus gave to His original disciples "And He said to them, **"Follow** ([deute](#)) Me, and I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed ([akoloutheo](#)) Him." (Mt 4:19-20+) Some will "drop their nets" when Jesus calls, but others will choose not to drop and follow. As **D A Carson** said "If the scribe was too quick in promising, this 'disciple' was too slow in performing."

**Jesus is not looking for excuses but for total trust.**

The meaning of **"dead"** is the spiritually dead. Paul writes to the saints at Ephesus "And you were **dead** in your trespasses and sins, (Ephesians 2:1+). The young man was actually proposing to wait and follow Jesus after his father died, whenever that might be. As an aside there is a popular television show called **"The Walking Dead."** It strikes me that we actually do not need to watch the show, for the more realistic version of "The Walking Dead" is the majority of people we meet each day! They are **spiritually dead** and sadly headed straight for eternal punishment!

In many ways, this young man's excuse was quite legitimate, but Jesus' point was that excuses to delay heeding His call are not valid. Period! Hell will be filled with many who procrastinated and made excuses for why they could not follow Jesus and they will have all eternity to ponder their tragic personal choice!

**Follow** (190) see [akoloutheo](#)

**Allow** (863) ([aphiemi](#)) from **apo** = prefix speaks of separation, putting some distance between + **hiemi** = put in motion, send) conveys the basic idea of an action which causes separation. More than 1/3 of the 133 NT uses convey the idea of **forgive**, which pictures "sending the debt" away from a person. This is exactly what God did when He place the sins of the world on the Sacrificial Lamb of God (Jn 1:29+), foreshadowed beautifully by the scapegoat in the Day of Atonement because the scapegoat was sent into the wilderness symbolically depicting the sending of Israel's sins away! (see Lev 16:21, 22+, cf Micah 7:18, 19+ - did you read the last part of Mic 7:19?)

**The person who truly wants to follow Christ must be totally committed to Him.**

**John Broadus** on **allow the dead to bury their own dead** - This cannot mean let the dead bury each other, i. e., let them remain unburied, for that is a forced explanation and an idea unworthy of our Lord. We must understand the dead spiritually and the dead literally, as in Rev. 3:1. (Comp. John 11:25 f.) Such a play upon words is natural and pleasing to the Oriental mind, and different forms of it occur frequently in Scripture, including many passages where it cannot be preserved in translation. (Comp. on 16:25.) The idea here is that there were enough of those who were spiritually dead to perform all the offices of affection to the dead, and so Christ's followers were at liberty to devote themselves to their own far higher work. (Comp. 10:37.) In Luke's account (9:60, Bib. Un. Ver.), we have the, addition, 'but go thou and announce the kingdom of God.' It does not follow that Jesus would require all his followers, under all circumstances, to neglect the burial of their dead, in order that they might work exclusively at spreading the



gospel; any more than he extends to every one the command laid upon the rich young ruler, to sell all he had and give to the poor. (19:21.) But we can easily conceive of circumstances now, in which it would be proper to hold in abeyance the strongest promptings of natural affection, in order to do our duty to Jesus; just as a soldier may see his brother fall at his side in a charge, and yet sometimes cannot pause to care for him, but must rush on.

**A T Robertson** - The spiritually dead are always on hand to bury the physically dead, if one's real duty is with Jesus. Chrysostom says that, while it is a good deed to bury the dead, it is a better one to preach Christ. (Word Pictures in the New Testament)

Luke adds a third condition - Luke 9:60+ - But He said to him, **Allow** ([aorist imperative](#)) the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God."

Like this young man 2000 years ago, there are those today who would aspire to follow Jesus as His disciple but are not willing to count the cost. To all in this category Jesus gave a serious, sobering warning

"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. "He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it. (Mt 10:37-39+)

**THOUGHTS - Oswald Chambers** said "If you abandon to Jesus, and come when He says "Come," He will continue to say "Come" through you; you will go out into life reproducing the echo of Christ's "Come." That is the result in every soul who has abandoned and come to Jesus. Have I come to Jesus? Will I come *now*?" **Dietrich Bonhoeffer** once said "When Christ calls a man He bids him come and die." " See this online version of his modern classic on discipleship entitled [The Cost of Discipleship](#).

**Oswald Chambers** - Are you prepared to let God take you into union with Himself, and pay no more attention to what you call the "great things"? Are you prepared to abandon entirely and let go? **The test of abandonment is in refusing to say — "Well, what about this?"** Beware of [suppositions](#). Immediately you allow — "What about this?" it means you have not abandoned, you do not really trust God. Immediately you do abandon, you think no more about what God is going to do. **Abandon** means to refuse yourself the luxury of asking any questions. If you abandon entirely to God, He says at once, "Thy life will I give thee for a prey." The reason people are tired of life is because God has not given them anything, they have not got their life as a prey. The way to get out of that state is to abandon to God. When you do get through to abandonment to God, you will be the most surprised and delighted creature on earth; God has got you absolutely and has given you your life. If you are not there, it is either because of disobedience or a refusal to be simple enough.

Want more Oswald Chambers thoughts on Abandon? [Click here](#)

---

**NET Note** - There are several options for the meaning of Jesus' reply Leave the dead to bury their own dead:

- (1) Recent research suggests that burial customs in the vicinity of Jerusalem from about 20 B.C. to A.D. 70 involved a reinterment of the bones a year after the initial burial, once the flesh had rotted away. At that point the son would have placed his father's bones in a special box known as an ossuary to be set into the wall of the tomb. Thus Jesus could well be rebuking the man for wanting to wait around for as much as a year before making a commitment to follow him. In 1st century Jewish culture, to have followed Jesus rather than burying one's father would have seriously dishonored one's father (cf. Tobit 4:3–4).
- (2) The remark is an idiom (possibly a proverbial saying) that means, "The matter in question is not the real issue," in which case Jesus was making a wordplay on the wording of the man's (literal) request (see L&N 33.137).
- (3) This remark could be a figurative reference to various kinds of people, meaning, "Let the spiritually dead bury the dead."
- (4) It could also be literal and designed to shock the hearer by the surprise of the contrast.

**Whichever option is preferred, it is clear that the most important priority is to follow Jesus.**

---

**MATTHEW 8:22 (cf. Luke 9:60)—Wasn't it absurd for Jesus to tell the dead to bury their own dead?**

**PROBLEM:** A man wanted to follow Jesus but first asked Jesus if he could go and bury his father. Jesus responded, "let the dead



bury their own dead.” But the dead can’t bury anyone. This doesn’t seem to make any sense.

**SOLUTION:** Jesus was not speaking of those who were physically dead, but of those who are spiritually dead (cf. Eph. 2:1). Jesus requested that the man follow Him (Luke 9:59). The man responded saying he wished to take care of his family first. So the issue is, who comes first—one’s family or Jesus Christ. The answer Jesus gives indicates the spiritual state of this man’s family. They were apparently not believers, and the Bible says that those who are not Christians are “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1, 5). Jesus was telling the man that his spiritually dead family should take care of the burial. Jesus wanted this man to follow Him. Christian discipleship calls for high commitment. (When Critics Ask - Norman Geisler)

---

**Oswald Chambers** devotional on Mk 10:28 is relevant to this section of the cost of discipleship...

Our Lord replies in effect, that abandonment is for Himself, and not for what the disciples themselves will get from it. Beware of an abandonment which has the commercial spirit in it – “I am going to give myself to God because I want to be delivered from sin, because I want to be made holy.” All that is the result of being right with God, but that spirit is not of the essential nature of Christianity. Abandonment is not for anything at all. We have got so commercialized that we only go to God for something from Him, and not for Himself. It is like saying – “No, Lord, I don’t want Thee, I want myself; but I want myself clean and filled with the Holy Ghost; I want to be put in Thy show room and be able to say – ‘This is what God has done for me.’ ” If we only give up something to God because we want more back, there is nothing of the Holy Spirit in our abandonment; it is miserable commercial self-interest. That we gain heaven, that we are delivered from sin, that we are made useful to God – these things never enter as considerations into real abandonment, which is a personal sovereign preference for Jesus Christ Himself.

When we come up against the barriers of natural relationship, where is Jesus Christ? Most of us desert Him – “Yes, Lord, I did hear Thy call; but my mother is in the road, my wife, my self-interest, and I can go no further.” “Then,” Jesus says, “you cannot be My disciple.”

The test of abandonment is always over the neck of natural devotion. Go over it, and God’s own abandonment will embrace all those you had to hurt in abandoning. Beware of stopping short of abandonment to God. Most of us know abandonment in vision only.

#### **Matthew 8:23 When He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him.**

- Mt 9:1 Mk 4:36 Lu 7:22
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Parallel Passages - Matt. 8:23–27; Mark 4:35–41; and Luke 8:22–25**

Mark 4:35-36+ On that day, when evening came, He \*said to them, “Let us go over to the other side.” 36 Leaving the crowd, they \*took Him along with them in the boat, just as He was; and other boats were with Him.

Luke 8:22+ Now on one of those days Jesus and His disciples got into a boat, and He said to them, “Let us go over to the other side of the lake.” So they launched out.

[Click to Enlarge for Labels](#)

### **A CRUISE WITH CHRIST**

I love Warren Wiersbe's heading of Mt 8:23-9:17 "Peace to the Disturbed," first bring peace in a storm (Mt 8:23-27), then peace in a community oppressed by demoniacs (Mt 8:28-34) and finally peace in the conscience (Mt 9:1-8).

**When He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him-** Note the picture above which is remnant of the town of Capernaum and on the right side of the picture is the shoreline of the Sea of Galilee. While **a crowd** (Mt 8:18) was following Jesus, obviously the phrase **His disciples** refers to the 12 select men, and even then it would have required a fairly sizable boat to accommodate all 13 men. Mark gives some more detail - **they took Him along with them in the boat, just as He was; and other boats were with Him.** Neither Matthew or Luke mention the other boats. It is interesting that in Mt 4:20+ Simon and Andrew (Mt 4:18+) "left their nets

and **followed**" Jesus and here they follow Him into the fishing boat. And given the fact that there were other boats, there must have been others who were following Jesus as "disciples." (cf Jn 6:66)

**Boat** (4143)(**ploion** from **pleo** = to sail) can refer to a rather large seagoing craft (Acts 20:13, 38; Acts 21:2f, 6; 27 Jas 3:4; Rev 8:9; Rev 18:19) or a small fishing craft boat as used on the Sea of Galilee (Mt 4:21f; Mt 9:1; Mk 1:19f; Mk 6:51, 54; Jn 6:19, 21f; Jn 21:3). See [Wikipedia description of the "Jesus Boat"](#) discovered in 1986.

**Followed** (190)(**akoloutho** from **a** = expresses union with, likeness + **keleuthos** = a road, way) means to walk the same road. All the uses in Matthew - Matt. 4:20; Matt. 4:22; Matt. 4:25; Matt. 8:1; Matt. 8:10; Matt. 8:19; Matt. 8:22; Matt. 8:23; Matt. 9:9; Matt. 9:19; Matt. 9:27; Matt. 10:38; Matt. 12:15; Matt. 14:13; Matt. 16:24; Matt. 19:2; Matt. 19:21; Matt. 19:27; Matt. 19:28; Matt. 20:29; Matt. 20:34; Matt. 21:9; Matt. 26:58; Matt. 27:55.

---

## In The Same Boat

When He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. —Matthew 8:23

Today's Scripture & Insight: Matthew 8:23-27

When the cruise ship pulled into port, the passengers got off as quickly as possible. They had spent the last few days enduring an outbreak of a virus, and hundreds of people had been sickened. One passenger, interviewed as he disembarked, said: "Well, I don't mean to complain so much. I mean I know everybody was in the same boat." His seemingly unintentional pun made the reporter smile.

In Matthew 8, we read about another trip on the water (vv.23-27). Jesus got into the boat and the disciples followed Him (v.23). Then a terrible storm arose, and Jesus' disciples feared for their lives. They awakened a sleeping Jesus, who they assumed was unaware of the crisis.

While Jesus was literally in the same boat as His followers, He was unconcerned about the weather. As the all-powerful Creator, He had no fear of a storm. "He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm" (v.26).

But we are not all-powerful, and we are oh-so-prone to fear. So what are we to do when the storms of life rage around us? Whether they quickly blow over or last for a long time, we can be confident in this: We are in the same boat with the One whom even the winds and the sea obey. By: Cindy Hess Kasper ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Heavenly Father, this life is full of uncertainty. But You have promised us Your unfailing presence. May we see You today—especially when we are tempted to panic or to do things in our own strength.

No danger can come so near the Christian that God is not nearer.

**Matthew 8:24 And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves; but Jesus Himself was asleep.**

- **there** - Ps 107:23-27 Isa 54:11 Jon 1:4,5 Mk 4:37,38 Ac 27:14-38 2Co 11:25,26
- **but** - Lu 8:23 Joh 6:17,18 11:5,6,15
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## Parallel Passages

Mark 4:37-38+ And there arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up. 38 Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"

Luke 8:23+ But as they were sailing along He fell asleep; and a fierce gale of wind descended on the lake, and they began to be swamped and to be in danger.

## SAVIOR ASLEEP IN THE STERN

Only Mark gives this detail about where Jesus slept in the storm. The **stern** is the back or aft-most part of a ship or boat. (Mk 4: 38+)

**And behold there arose a great storm on the sea** - Only Matthew calls special attention to this storm story by using the [interjection behold](#). God in His perfect [providence](#), He sent a storm not meant to destroy but to test the faith of the disciples. As noted below the word **storm** is [seismos](#) which denotes a shaking or shock and is usually applied to earthquakes. A small storm might not have had much impact on experienced fishermen but this one was **great** ([megas](#)) implying it was unlike any they had previously experienced. Mark says **fierce** ([megas](#)) **gale** (hurricane) **of wind** (Mk 4:37+)

Sudden storms on Galilee were not unusual. Once again we see the providential hand of God, for Jesus almost surely knew this storm was coming and would use it as a "test case" to assess the faith of His disciples (more for them to see their faith than for Him). Earlier in this chapter Matthew described a Gentile centurion with great faith and now presents a dramatic contrast of Jesus Jewish disciples who manifested little faith!

**A T Robertson** - These sudden squalls come down from the summit of Hermon with terrific force (seismos megas) like an earthquake. Mark (Mark 4:37) and Luke (Luke 8:23) term it a whirlwind (lailaps) in furious gusts. (Word Pictures in the New Testament)

**Vincent** quotes a Mr. Macgregor: "On the Sea of Galilee the wind has a singular force and suddenness; and this is no doubt because that sea is so deep in the world that the sun rarefies the air in it enormously, and the wind speeding swiftly above a long and level plateau, gathers much force as it sweeps through flat deserts, until suddenly it meets this huge gap in the way, and it tumbles down here irresistible."

**Brian Bell** - Crisis! {comes from the Greek krisis "decisive moment"} [1] dangerous or worrying time: a situation or period in which things are very uncertain, difficult, or painful, especially a time when action must be taken to avoid complete disaster or breakdown. [2] critical moment: a time when something very important for the future happens or is decided. **Crisis** is a good thing...it helps people change! God knows that, and lovingly provides those times of **crisis** for us! They can come in countless of forms: disaster; catastrophe; emergency (Corona Virus - 2020!); calamity; predicament; job loss; spouse loss; child loss; etc. Issac Newton said in his First Law of Motion "Everything continues in a state of rest unless it is compelled to change by forces impressed upon it." No one is willing to do **real change** until **real Crisis** comes! **Some people will change when they see the light; Others change only when they feel the heat!**

**THOUGHT** - Problems occur in every area of life. The disciples needed rest, but they encountered a terrible storm. The Christian life may have more stormy weather than calm seas. As Christ's follower, be prepared for the storms that will surely come. Do not surrender to the stress, but remain resilient and recover from setbacks. With faith in Christ, you can pray, trust, and move ahead. When a squall approaches, lean into the wind and trust God. The disciples lived with Jesus, but they underestimated him. They did not see that his power applied to their very own situation. Jesus has been with his people for 20 centuries, and yet we, like the disciples, underestimate his power to handle crises in our lives. The disciples did not yet know enough about Jesus. We cannot make the same excuse. (Life Application Study Bible)

**Behold** (2400) ([idou](#) is the second person singular aorist middle imperative of eidon which means to see, perceive, look at. In the NT [idou](#) is used as a demonstrative particle that draws attention to what follows. [Idou](#) in the [middle voice](#) means "you yourself look, see, perceive!" The [aorist imperative](#) is a command emphasizing "Do it now! Don't delay!" **Spurgeon** reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

**Storm** (4578) ([seismos](#) from [seio](#) = to shake) means an agitation or shaking as a series of violent movements, usually of the earth, but once of a storm or tempest at sea (Mt 8:24). One can picture the height of the huge waves in this supernatural seismos! No wonder the disciples thought they were perishing (Mt 8:25)! Matt. 8:24; Matt. 24:7; Matt. 27:54; Matt. 28:2; Mk. 13:8; Lk. 21:11; Acts 16:26; Rev. 6:12; Rev. 8:5; Rev. 11:13; Rev. 11:19; Rev. 16:18

**Wiersbe** comments that "The storm came because they obeyed the Lord, and not because (like Jonah) they disobeyed Him." (BEC)

Whether the wrath of the storm-tossed sea,  
Or demons, or men, or whatever it be,  
No water can swallow the ship where lies  
The Master of ocean and earth and skies.  
—Baker

**So that the boat was being covered with the waves**- Luke 8:23+ adds that the boat **began to be swamped** ([sumpleroo](#)) and to **be in danger** ([kinduneuo](#)). Mark adds **the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up**. This is a dramatic picture of the waves covering the boat, breaking in on it and obviously beginning to fill it with water which would result in sinking.

**Being covered** ([present tense](#))([2572](#))([kalupto](#)) means to cause something to be covered over in some physical way (lamp, Lk 8:16, dirt, Lk 23:30, water of waves, Mt 8:24). **Kalupto** in the Septuagint describes destruction of Pharaoh's army for "The waters (OF THE RED SEA) returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen, even Pharaoh's entire army that had gone into the sea after them; not even one of them remained." (Ex 14:28)

**Waves** ([2949](#))([kuma](#) from **kuo** - to swell, be pregnant, stretched, expanded) describes one of a series of ridges or swells moving on the surface of a body of water. The surging surface of the sea. In Jude 1:13+ **kuma** is used figuratively "as a figure of the inconstancy and stormy confusion of dissident teachers" (BDAG) (Jude 1:4+ = [certain persons have crept in unnoticed] who are like] wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever. )(Jude 1:13+)

**NT-4x** - Matt. 8:24; Matt. 14:24; Mk. 4:37; Jude 1:13+.

**Liddell-Scott** - anything swollen (as if pregnant):-hence, I. the swell of the sea, a wave, billow, Hom., etc.; collectively, when the swell abated, Hdt. b. metaphorically of a flood of men, Aesch II. the foetus in the womb, embryo, Aesch.; of the earth, Id.

**Septuagint** - Ex. 15:8; Job 6:15; Job 11:16; Job 38:11; Ps. 42:7; Ps. 65:7; Ps. 89:9; Ps. 107:25; Ps. 107:29; Isa. 48:18; Isa. 51:15; Jer. 5:22; Jer. 31:35; Jer. 51:42; Ezek. 26:3; Jon. 2:3; Zech. 10:11. Here are uses of **kuma** that show God's sovereign control over the sea...

Ps 42:7 Deep calls to deep at the sound of Your waterfalls; All Your breakers and Your **waves** have rolled over me. (figurative use).

Ps 65:7 Who stills the roaring of the seas, The roaring of their **waves**, And the tumult of the peoples.

Ps 89:9 You rule the swelling of the sea; When its **waves** rise, You still them.

Psa 107:25 For He spoke and raised up a stormy wind, Which lifted up the **waves** of the sea.

Ps 107:29 He caused the storm to be still, So that the **waves** of the sea were hushed.

Isa 51:15 "For I am the LORD your God, who stirs up the sea and its **waves** roar (the LORD of hosts is His name).

**But** - Some terms of contrast are more dramatic than others. This one is striking - Jesus sleeping, storm raging, disciples panicking!

**Jesus Himself was asleep** - Crashing waves, rocking boat and still Jesus was sound asleep, indicating He must have been exhausted! Don't miss that Jesus was fully human and clearly was tired from the pace of His ministry and in need of sleep. But how could He be asleep in such a storm? He was not caught off guard for He always did what His Father said and knew that even at this terrifying time He was in the center of His Father's will. **Robertson** on **was asleep** - "[Imperfect tense](#), was sleeping. Picturesque scene."

**Asleep** ([2518](#))([katheudo](#) from **katá** = an intensive + **heúdō** = to sleep) means literally to sleep, fall asleep or be fast asleep, and is chiefly used of natural sleep. With reference to death *katheudo* is found in the Lord's remark concerning Jairus' daughter, Matt. 9:24; Mark 5:39; Luke 8:52.

**Ryle** applies this to Jesus' Humanity - We see, firstly, in these verses, that our Lord Jesus Christ was really man as well as God. We read that as he sailed over the Lake of Gennesaret in a ship with his disciples, "he fell asleep." Sleep, we must be all aware, is one of the conditions of our natural constitution as human beings. Angels and spirits require neither food nor refreshment. But flesh and blood, to keep up a healthy existence, must eat, and drink, and sleep. If the Lord Jesus could be weary, and need rest, He must have had two natures in one person—a human nature as well as a divine.

Thou art the Lord who slept upon the pillow,  
Thou art the Lord who soothed the furious sea,

What matter beating wind and tossing billow,  
If only we are in the boat with Thee?  
—Amy Carmichael

**Matthew 8:25 And they came to Him and woke Him, saying, 'Save us, Lord; we are perishing!'**

- **and woke** - Ps 10:1 44:22,23 Isa 51:9,10 Mk 4:38,39 Lu 8:24
- **save us** - 2 Ch 14:11 20:12 Jon 1:6
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Parallel Passages

Mark 4:38b+ Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"

Luke 8:24a+ They came to Jesus and woke Him up, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And He got up and rebuked the wind and the surging waves, and they stopped, and it became calm.

### A GOOD CRY TO CRY... SAVE US LORD!

Another subtitle might be S.O.S. - SAVE US SAVIOR! Would it be true of every soul of men when faced with fearful storms of life that they would echo this cry, not just for physical salvation but more importantly for spiritual salvation, so that they would not perish eternally.

**And they came to Him and woke Him, saying** - Mark tells us the disciples even "accused" (that may a bit strong) Jesus of not caring - "'Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" (Mk 4:38+). Of course Jesus cared. These men were to be the foundation of His Church, so of course He cared what happened to them. And that also applies to you dear reader for you have great purpose in His plan of redemption, whoever and wherever you are, for you "are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that (you) would walk in them." (Eph 2:10+).

**They came to** (4334)([proserchomai](#) from **prós** = facing + **erchomai** = come) means to come facing toward. To approach, come near, visit, figuratively to worship, draw near, go near to. This is the same verb used by the writer of Hebrews to describe **drawing near to Him** in prayer, worship, devotion of heart and life (cf Heb 4:16+, cf Heb 10:22+, Heb 7:25+, Heb 11:6+).

**Woke** (1453)([egeiro](#)) means to rise (stand up) from a sitting or lying position (Mt 8:26, 9:5), to awaken from sleep (Mt 8:25), figuratively to "awaken" from death (rise up) Figuratively egeiro is used in Ro 4:24+, **egeiro** to describe bringing Jesus back from the dead, causing Him to rise from the dead. The idea of wake up from death is conveyed by **egeiro** because sleep was used as metaphor of death for believers (1 Cor 11:30 - but there is no such thing as [soul sleep](#)).

**Warren Wiersbe** wisely wrote that "faith must be tested before it can be trusted. It is one thing to learn a new spiritual truth, but quite something else to practice that truth in the everyday experiences of life....The disciples failed this test of faith because they did not lay hold of His word that **He was going to the other side**. It has well been said that faith is not believing in spite of circumstances; it is obeying in spite of feelings and consequences. The disciples looked around and saw danger, and looked within and saw fear; but they failed to look up by faith and see God. Faith and fear cannot dwell together in the same heart. A woman said to D.L. Moody, "I have found a wonderful promise!" and she quoted Psalm 56:3, "*What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.*" "Let me give you a better one," said Moody; and he quoted Isaiah 12:2, "*Behold God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid*" (BEC)

**Trials and difficulties are divine appointments to increase and strengthen our faith.**

-- Daniel Akin

**Save us, Lord; we are perishing** - **Save** is an [aorist imperative](#), a plea for Jesus to do this quickly! Keep in mind many of these men were seasoned fishermen and they had undoubtedly been in some fierces storms, but their reaction in this case suggest this storm was of a magnitude that they had never experienced. They did not try to save themselves by bailing water, but ran to Jesus, which indicates they had some element of trust (albeit apparently "little") that prompted them. One can fault their faith, but to Whom did they come when the storm came? Matthew, Mark and Luke have "**Lord** ([kurios](#) - Mt 8:25+)," "**Teacher**" ([didaskalos](#) - Mk 4:38+) and "**Master**," ([epistates](#) - Lk 8:24a+) respectively. Are you in a storm? Run to Jesus! Cry out to Him!

**Save** (4982)(sozo) has the basic meaning of rescuing one from great peril. Physical salvation (Mt 8:25; Mt 14:30; Lk 23:35; Acts 27:20, 27:31) More often **sozo** refers to **salvation** in a spiritual sense to rescue or preserve from eternal death, from judgment, sin, bring salvation, bring to salvation (active sense = Mt 18:11; Lk 7:50; Jn 12:47; Ro 11:14; 1 Cor 1:21; 7:16; Titus 3:5; Hb 7:25; Jas 4:12; 5:20; 1 Pet 3:21 or passive sense = be rescued or saved, attain salvation = Mt 24:13; Mk 10:26; Lk 13:23; 18:26; Jn 3:17; Jn 5:34; Acts 11:14; 15:1, 11; Ro 8:24; 11:26; 1 Cor. 3:15; 5:5; Eph 2:5, 8; 1 Ti 2:4). Jesus' very Name speaks of His primary purpose to save men from their sin - "She (Mary) will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will **save** (sozo) His people from their sins." (Mt 1:21+)

**Lord** (2962)(kurios from kuros = might or power, related to kuroo = to give authority) primarily means the possessor, owner, master, the supreme one, one who is sovereign possessing absolute authority, absolute ownership and uncontested power. Kurios is used of the one to whom a person or thing belonged, over which he has the power of deciding, the one who is the master or disposer of a thing (Mk 7:28)

**We are perishing** (622)(apollumi from apo = away from or wholly + olethros = state of utter ruin) means to destroy utterly but not to cause one to cease to exist. **Apollumi** has the basic meaning of describing that which is ruined and is no longer usable for its intended purpose. If the disciples drowned they would certainly no longer be of use as Jesus' disciples. **Apollumi** is used to describe Jesus purpose for coming to earth "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which **was lost** (apollumi)." (Luke 19:10+) **Apollumi** speaks of rewards "And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose (apollumi) his reward." (Matt. 10:42+) Jesus paradoxically declaring that "He who has found his life will **lose** (apollumi) it, and he who has **lost** (apollumi) his life for My sake will find it." (Mt 10:39+) **Apollumi** speaks of eternal punishment Jesus declaring **'Do not fear** those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to **destroy** (apollumi) both soul and body in hell." (Mt 10:28+). In one of the most famous verses in the Bible John writes "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish (apollumi), but have eternal life." (John 3:16). All uses in Matthew - Matt. 2:13; Matt. 5:29; Matt. 8:25; Matt. 9:17; Matt. 10:6; Matt. 10:28; Matt. 10:39; Matt. 10:42; Matt. 12:14; Matt. 15:24; Matt. 16:25; Matt. 18:11; Matt. 18:14; Matt. 21:41; Matt. 22:7; Matt. 26:52; Matt. 27:20;

Jesus it the God of Psalm 107:23 Those who go down to the sea in ships, Who do business on great waters; 24 They have seen the works of the LORD, And His wonders in the deep. 25 For **He spoke and raised up a stormy wind, Which lifted up the waves of the sea.** 26 They rose up to the heavens, they went down to the depths; Their soul melted away in their misery. 27 They reeled and staggered like a drunken man, And were at their wits' end. 28 **Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, And He brought them out of their distresses.** 29**He caused the storm to be still, So that the waves of the sea were hushed.** 30 Then they were glad because they were quiet, So He guided them to their desired haven. 31 Let them give thanks to the LORD for His lovingkindness, And for His wonders to the sons of men!

## STORMS OF LIFE

### Steven Cole

#### (1) Storms hit suddenly and without warning.

When we lived in California, we woke up to a news station. Sometimes their morning traffic report would mention a fatal accident and I would think, "That guy left home this morning to go to work, never thinking that he had just minutes to live. His family perhaps said a perfunctory good-bye, never imagining that they would never talk to him again." Life's storms are like that: Right now everything is smooth sailing. In a matter of hours, without warning, you're in the middle of a crisis. Such a storm not only tests and develops your character; it reveals it. Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, was talking to a young missionary who was about to start work in China. "Look at this," he said. He pounded his fist on the table. The tea cups jumped, and the tea spilled. While the startled young man was wondering what was going on, Taylor said, "When you begin your work, you will be buffeted in numerous ways. The trials will be like blows. Remember, these blows will bring out only what is in you." So the time to develop resources to face the sudden storms that inevitably will strike is before they hit. If you don't spend time with the Lord in the calm of life, you won't know how to trust Him in the storms.



## (2) Storms hit believers.

This storm hit those with Christ in their boat as well as those without Christ in their boat. Mk 4:36 records that other boats were with them. If this were a fairy tale, we might read that when the storm arose, the other boats were swamped, but the boat with Christ in it sailed as smooth as glass. The fact is, Christians are not magically exempted from the storms of life. Just because you're in Jesus' boat doesn't mean that it's going to be smooth sailing. Christians are not exempt from trials. Some think, "Yes, that's true. But I'm *serving* Christ." They think that being committed earns them special protection from storms. But observe:

## (3) Storms hit obedient believers who are serving Christ

In fact, this storm did not hit the disciples because they had been disobedient but, rather, because they had been obedient! Jesus said, "Let's go over to the other side" (Lu 8:22). These men, who had committed their lives to serve Christ, obeyed. And He led them straight into a storm! And in the same way, obediently serving Christ may place you smack-dab in the middle of storms you would have avoided if you had stayed on the shore. I have often found that the most severe times of testing have come right after I have taken a new step of obedience. Just after Marla and I returned to Dallas so that I could complete my seminary training, we were mugged at gunpoint and I had to get four stitches in my hand. While my hand was still bandaged, I slipped in the mud and cut my other hand on a thermos I was carrying. We also encountered several other trials around the same time. Shortly after we moved to California to begin in the pastorate, our six-month-old daughter, Christa, had to be hospitalized with a congenital hip problem that meant being in a body cast for two months and wearing a leg brace for several years. The very day we decided to move to Flagstaff, we learned about a major problem with our house that entailed months of difficulties. Shortly after I began here I had to deal with some major problems in the church that resulted in a lot of turmoil. The point is, being obedient to the Lord does not exempt you from storms; it often leads you right into storms! Not only did the Lord lead the disciples into this storm. ([What to do When Life Gets Stormy](#))

**Matthew 8:26 He said to them, "Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?" Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm.**

- **Why** - Mt 6:30 14:30,31 16:8 Isa 41:10-14 Mk 4:40 Lu 8:25 Ro 4:20
- **and rebuked** - Mt 8:27 Job 38:8-11 Ps 65:7 89:9 93:3,4 104:6-9 107:28-30 114:3-7 Pr 8:28,29 Isa 50:2-4 63:12 Na 1:4 Hab 3:8 Mk 4:39,41 6:48-51 Lu 8:24,25 Rev 10:2
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Parallel Passages** - Matt. 8:23–27; Mark 4:35–41; and Luke 8:22–25

Mark 4:39+ And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Hush, be still." And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm. 40 And He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

Luke 8:24-25a+ They came to Jesus and woke Him up, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And He got up and rebuked the wind and the surging waves, and they stopped, and it became calm. 25 And He said to them, "Where is your faith?" They were fearful and amazed, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?"

## FEAR VERSUS FAITH

The text on which God chose to save the great Puritan preacher John Owen in the 1600's (who lost 10 children in infancy and outlived his one daughter who lived to adulthood) as he listened to a substitute preacher bc the well-known preacher did not show up...God used a nobody, a man whose name we do not know. The same was true in [the conversion of Charles Spurgeon](#)...a layman reading (Isa 44:22).

**He said to them, "Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?"** - Here we see the greater storm was not on the seas but in the souls of the disciples! Notice the order (different in Mark's version). First Jesus addresses His disciples and not in a harsh, critical or condemning manner. Notice also the association of fear and faith. They are polar opposites, fear going hand in hand with unbelief. Faith in God and His sovereign control of the situation would have been the "antidote" for the disciples, but that was not to be! In Mark Jesus says **"Do you still have no faith"** the idea being do you not yet have faith. Clearly they had "some" faith but it was little.

To realize the worth of the anchor,  
we need to feel the stress of the storm.

Why would Jesus ask about their faith. What had they seen already? Without a doubt they had seen more miracles than even those recorded in the Gospels (cf Jn 20:30). As **MacArthur** says "The lesson for the disciples was clear: they were to trust the Lord even in the most severe and threatening circumstances."

As **G. Campbell Morgan** says "The storm couldn't disturb Him, but the unbelief of His disciples did!"

**Little Faith** (3640) (**oligopistos** from **oligos** = little + **pistis** = faith) of one who does not believe or trust, not strong in trusting; a person not trusting firmly. Vine says this word is used only by the Lord, and as a tender rebuke, for anxiety.

NT uses - little faith(5), men of little faith(3).

Matt. 6:30 "But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith!;

Matt. 8:26; He \*said to them, "Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?" Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm.

Matt. 14:31 ( Immediately Jesus stretched out His [Peter's] hand and took hold of him, and \*said to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?");

Matt. 16:8 (But Jesus, aware of this, said, "You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread?);

Lk. 12:28 But if God so clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you? You men of little faith!

**Spurgeon** quips He spoke to the men first, for they were the most difficult to deal with: wind and sea could be rebuked afterwards."

**Corrie Ten Boom**, author of *The Hiding Place* and survivor of the German concentration camps, said that people often came up to her and said, "Corrie, my, what a great faith you have." She would smile and respond, "No, it's what a great God I have." Our faith in trials should point people toward our great God.

**David Guzik** makes a great point that "They actually had many reasons to have faith, even great faith. (1) They had just seen Jesus do significant miracles, showing great power and authority. (2) They had seen an example of great faith with the centurion who trusted Jesus to heal his servant.(3) They had Jesus with them in the boat. And, they saw Jesus sleep; His peace should have given them peace." (Enduring Word Commentary)

**Afraid** (1169) (**deilos** from **deídō** = to fear) means to be cowardly, timid, fearful (Mt 8:26; Mk 4:40); of persons showing fear in a shameful way coward (Rev 21:8+)

**Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea**- Mark 4:39+ has Jesus "said to the sea "**Hush, be still.**" Earlier in this chapter we saw the Roman centurion affirm that (1) Jesus was a Man of authority and (2) He was able to command with the **Word** (Mt 8:8) his servant's illness would be healed. Here we see another manifestation of the authority of Jesus over the Creation. In so doing He was teaching His disciples what the Gentile centurion seemed to understand better than Jewish these men following closely behind Jesus.

**Got up** (1326) (**diegeiro** from **dia** = through and verb used in previous verse = **egeiro** = awaken, rouse) in the active voice means to cause to wake up or to awaken (Mt 1:24+) and in the passive voice to become awake (Mk 4:39+). It is interesting that this same verb **diegeiro** is used figuratively in Jn 6:18 to describe the sea "began to be stirred up because a strong wind was blowing." And so in the present context, Jesus was stirred awake and quieted the stirred up sea.

**Rebuked** (2008) (**epitimao** from **epi** = upon + **timao** = to honor) means literally to put honor upon, then to mete out due measure and then to find fault with, to censure severely, this last sense of course being the meaning in this passage. This verb is used in all 3 synoptic accounts (Matt. 8:26+, Mk 4:39+ and Lk 8:24+). In a somewhat similar use in the **Septuagint (Lxx)**, **epitimao** is used in Ps 106:9 "Thus He rebuked (Lxx - **epitimao**) the Red Sea and it dried up, and He led them through the deeps, as through the wilderness." **Epitimao** is used in God's addressing Satan in Zech 3:2 where "The LORD said to Satan 'The LORD rebuke (Lxx - **epitimao**) you, Satan," and again in Jude 1:9+ "Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The

Lord **rebuke** ([epitimaō](#)) you!" However, these latter two uses in the rebuke of Satan should not be taken as evidence that Satan was the instigator of the storm of the wind and the waves in the present context. "In classical Greek the verb **epitimaō** can mean both "to honor" and "to censure or penalize." The positive and negative meanings are similar to those carried by the English word citation." (Gilbrant)

**Winds** ([417](#))([anemos](#)) as rapidly moving air or "a blowing atmospheric phenomenon." (BDAG) "Anemos included different kinds of winds such as gales, breezes, directional winds, and even the breath of a person blowing. The qualities of wind as invisible yet strong, effective but uncontrollable, often made it a suitable metaphor." (Gilbrant)

**And it became perfectly calm** - The creation obeys its Creator! Notice this is a "double miracle" of stilling the wind above the sea, but also the current below the sea. "The winds and the waves were synchronized into solemn silence." (Bill) What the Creator created, He controls! God is behind the scenes and controls the scenes He is behind.

This scene recalls the proverb "Who has ascended into heaven and descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has wrapped the waters in His garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name or His Son's name? Surely you know!" (Proverbs 30:4)

**Calm** ([1055](#))([galene](#)) is a tranquility, quietness or stillness of the sea, "an unruffled surface on a body of water," (BDAG), or that which is calm and is used often to describe the weather. In NT it is used only to describe sea as calm - Mt 8:26, Mk 4:39, Lk 8:24. In Classic Greek it is used metaphorically to describe the spirit of serenest calm, Aesch.; in calm, Soph.

### God is in Control

Twila Paris

This is no time for fear  
This is a time for faith and determination  
Don't lose the vision here  
Carried away by the motion  
Hold on to all that you hide in your heart  
There is one thing that has always been true  
It holds the world together

God is in control  
We believe that His children will not be forsaken  
God is in control  
We will choose to remember and never be shaken  
There is no power above or beside Him, we know  
God is in control

History marches on  
There is a bottom line drawn across the ages  
Culture can make its plan  
Oh, but the line never changes  
No matter how the deception may fly  
There is one thing that has always been true  
It will be true forever

He has never let you down  
Why start to worry now? (2x)  
He is still the Lord of all we see  
And He is still the loving Father  
Watching over you and me

---

### **Terror Or Trust?**

Read: Mark 4:35-41

In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me. —Psalm 56:4

A sudden squall swept down with almost hurricane force through the funnel-like ravines above the lake of Tiberias, 682 feet below sea level. Huge waves washed into the little boat, threatening to sink it.

Terrified, the disciples of Jesus wakened Him. How could He sleep through the shrieking winds and ship-tossing tempest? (Jesus was sleeping because He was exhausted after a day of strenuous ministry.) “Do You not care that we are perishing?” they shouted (Mk. 4:38).

Calmly Jesus arose and commanded the raging storm to cease. Then, amid the calm and the darkness, He asked two questions of His awe-stricken disciples: “Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?” (v.40).

As we voyage through the sea of life, terrifying gales may threaten to overwhelm us. Illness, loss, and danger may pummel us without relief. In our anxiety we may cry out to our seemingly indifferent Lord, “Don’t You care about our problems?” And Christ, completely in control of every circumstance, gently and lovingly rebukes us for failing to exercise faith. He urges us to trust His almighty and all-wise sovereignty. When God is with us, we are safe for time and eternity. By Vernon Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Whether the wrath of the storm-tossed sea,  
Or demons, or men, or whatever it be,  
No water can swallow the ship where lies  
The Master of ocean and earth and skies.  
—Baker

Better to go through the storm with Christ than to have smooth sailing without Him.

---

### **Life’s Storm-Tossed Sea**

Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. —1 Peter 5:7

Today’s Scripture: Mark 4:35-41

Emilie, wife of 19th-century German pastor Christoph Blumhardt, envied his ability to pray for his parishioners and then effortlessly fall asleep. So one night she pleaded, “Tell me your secret!”

He answered, “Is God so powerless that my worrying would help the well-being of our parish?” Then he added, “There comes a moment each day when we must simply drop what weighs on us and hand it over to God.”

One evening Jesus and His disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee. Weary after a long day of ministry, He fell asleep in the stern of the boat. A fierce squall suddenly arose—so fierce that even the Lord’s fishermen-turned-disciples were terrified. But Jesus continued to sleep serenely until His frightened followers woke Him, crying out, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?” (Mark 4:38). You see, Jesus was in the habit of entrusting Himself to His heavenly Father. Having made that commitment, He could sleep through the turbulent squall.

When worries begin to gnaw at our mind, let’s surrender them to the Lord and not take them back again (1 Peter 5:7). That’s the secret of soul-serenity when we’re on life’s storm-tossed sea. By: Vernon Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Jesus knows the pain you feel,  
He can save and He can heal—  
Take your burden to the Lord  
And leave it there.  
—Tindley

Drop what weighs you down by giving it to God.

---

### **Risky Business**

He said to them, “Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?” Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. —Matthew 8:26

Today’s Scripture: Matthew 8:23-27

Denis Boyles knew it would be challenging to interview a man on a roller coaster—especially when the interview took place during an attempt to set a world's record for continuous riding. After several times around the track, Denis was so overcome with fear he could hardly talk.

Then the man showed him how to use his body and feet to lean into the loops, twists, and turns. Writing in AARP Magazine, Boyles explained how that took away the terror. It also taught him a lesson about risk and fear. The roller coaster felt risky though it was quite safe. But driving his car to the amusement park posed a far greater risk of injury. Risk and fear are easily confused.

As Jesus and His disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee, a storm came up and waves swept over their boat. Incredibly, Jesus was asleep. The disciples woke Him and said, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" (Matt. 8:25). In a gentle rebuke, Jesus asked, "'Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?' Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm" (v.26).

Like the disciples, the more we learn about Jesus, the more we trust Him. Our greatest risk is failing to depend on Him when life seems out of control. By: David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

But we see Jesus! Oh, what peace!  
What balm for troubled heart!  
His very name brings rest and calm  
And bids the fears depart!  
—Adams

Keep your eyes on Jesus and you'll soon lose sight of your fears.

---

### Thunderstorm Thoughts

The God of peace will be with you. — Philippians 4:9

Today's Scripture: Matthew 8:23-27

I laugh every time I hear the radio commercial that has a woman shouting to her friend in conversation. She's trying to talk above the sounds of the thunderstorm in her own head. Ever since a storm damaged part of her home, that's all she hears because her insurance company isn't taking care of her claims.

I've heard thunderstorms in my head, and maybe you have too. It happens when a tragedy occurs—to us, to someone close to us, or to someone we hear about in the news. Our minds become a tempest of "what if" questions. We focus on all the possible bad outcomes. Our fear, worry, and trust in God fluctuate as we wait, we pray, we grieve, and we wonder what the Lord will do.

It's natural for us to be fearful in a storm (literal or figurative). The disciples had Jesus right there in the boat with them, yet they were afraid (Matt. 8:23-27). He used the calming of the storm as a lesson to show them who He was—a powerful God who also cares for them.

We wish that Jesus would always calm the storms of our life as He calmed the storm for the disciples that day. But we can find moments of peace when we're anchored to the truth that He's in the boat with us and He cares. By: Anne Cetas ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Fierce drives the storm, but wind and waves  
Within His hand are held,  
And trusting His omnipotence  
My fears are sweetly quelled.  
—Brown

To realize the worth of the anchor, we need to feel the stress of the storm.

---

Breton fishermen on the coast of France have a brief prayer that humbly acknowledges God's control of nature and life: "God, Your sea is so great and my boat is so small." In recognizing that the sea belongs to God, the fishermen see God as the only source of safety for their boats. In calming the Sea of Galilee, Jesus taught the disciples not only about His power over nature but also about external and internal peace. The lesson about external peace was the easier of the two; He stopped the storm. Dealing with the storm inside the disciples was more difficult; fear had replaced the disciples' faith. Trust and tranquility are twins in the spiritual life. Perfect peace comes from complete trust (Is 26:3). —D. J. De Haan

Better the storm with Christ,  
than smooth waters without Him  
Sometimes God calms the storm,  
sometimes He lets the storm rage and calms His child.

**Matthew 8:27 The men were amazed, and said, "What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"**

- Mt 14:33 15:31 Mk 1:27 6:51 7:37
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Parallel Passages** - Matt. 8:23–27; Mark 4:35–41; and Luke 8:22–25

Mark 4:41+They became very much afraid and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

Luke 8:25b+ And He said to them, "Where is your faith?" They were fearful and amazed, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?"

**The men were amazed, and said, "What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"**- Compare a similar reaction by Jesus to the disciples in Mark 8:17-21; 9:19. Timidity was their frequent response - Mark 5:15, 33; Mk 6:50; 9:32; 10:32; 11:18; 16:8. Their lack of faith thus made them fearful in the crisis. They were afraid before the storm and now they were afraid after the storm! They were suddenly conscious that they were in the presence of the One Who had miraculously stilled the storm. And so they reacted much like Isaiah in Isa 6:5+ "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts" or like Peter in Luke 5:8+ who when he "saw that (the catch of fish as a result of Jesus' direction), he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!"

The creation is personified as obeying its Creator! Clearly the implication is that Jesus is the Lord over Creation. One can picture this little band of disciples buzzing over this miracle. And remember Judas Iscariot witnessed this and yet refused to believe in Jesus! Miracles of Jesus have never saved anyone! Only faith in Jesus saved then and now and forever. Amen

Their question in a sense shows some ignorance of their own Psalms for "Psalm 89:8-9 would have given them a clear answer to **what king of a man** Jesus was - "O LORD God of hosts, who is like You, O mighty LORD? Your faithfulness also surrounds You. **You rule the swelling of the sea; When its waves rise, You still them.**"

**THOUGHT** - "Who then is this?" is the crucial question. Clearly, this Jesus is fully human. He had a body that got so exhausted that He could sleep in the midst of this storm. The full humanity of Jesus Christ should be of tremendous comfort to us when we are suffering from the limitations of our bodies. "We do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15). But not only is our Lord fully human, He is also fully divine. He merely had to speak the word and the howling winds ceased and the surging waves were instantly as smooth as glass. Just as Jesus' full humanity encourages us because He understands, so His full deity should encourage us because He is powerful to act on our behalf. Nothing is too difficult for the living God. Not a breath of wind or a drop of water can defy His sovereign will. The better we know Him, the better we can trust Him in our trials. ([What to do When Life Gets Stormy](#))

**Guzik** observes that "In the span of a few moments, the disciples saw both the complete humanity of Jesus (in His tired sleep) and the fullness of His deity. They saw Jesus for who He is: truly man and truly God." (Ibid)

**Amazed** (2296) ([thaumazo](#) from **thauma** [from **thaomai** = to wonder] = wonder, admiration) means to wonder, marvel, be struck with admiration or astonishment. **Thaumazo** describes the human response when confronted by divine revelation in some form (Mt 9:33).

**Obey** (5219) ([hupakouo](#) from **hupó** = agency or means, under, assumes the need for submission + **akouó** physical hearing and apprehension of something with the mind - akouo gives us our English *acoustics* - the science of design which helps one hear) literally means "under the hearing" or to listen under, listening with attentiveness and then responding positively to what is heard -- to obey what is heard. The creation is personified as obeying its Creator! All uses in Matthew - Matt. 8:10; Matt. 8:27; Matt. 9:33; Matt. 15:31; Matt. 21:20; Matt. 22:22; Matt. 27:14



**Brian Bell** adds that "R.C. Sproul says that it was His awesome otherness that made them uncomfortable. That's exactly what Peter said on another occasion when Jesus filled their nets with so many fish that the boat began to sink: "When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' feet and said, 'Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!'" (Luke 5:8). The woman who was healed by touching Jesus' garment had a similar response in Mark 5:33: "But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth." Here's the deal. Unholy sinners are not comfortable in the presence of the holy Savior." Andrew Robinson, the worship pastor at Wildwood Church in East Moline, sang at the last Second Winders event. He said something I had not thought of before. The Apostle John, who enjoyed a very close relationship with Jesus, was later exiled to the island of Patmos. The resurrected and Jesus appeared to him and we read about his response in Revelation 1:17: "When I saw Him, I fell at his feet as though dead..." I wonder if we've overemphasized Jesus being our friend at the expense of losing our fear of Him? A reverential awe of God will keep us from being afraid during adversity. ([Sermon](#))

Isaac Watts wrote:

### [We sing the mighty power of God,](#)

I sing the mighty pow'r of God, that made the mountains rise,  
That spread the flowing seas abroad, and built the lofty skies.  
I sing the wisdom that ordained the sun to rule the day;  
The moon shines full at His command, and all the stars obey.

I sing the goodness of the Lord, who filled the earth with food,  
Who formed the creatures through the Word, and then pronounced them good.  
Lord, how Thy wonders are displayed, where'er I turn my eye,  
If I survey the ground I tread, or gaze upon the sky.

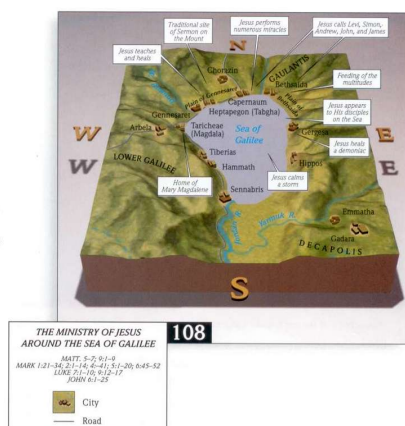
There's not a plant or flow'r below, but makes Thy glories known,  
And clouds arise, and tempests blow, by order from Thy throne;  
While all that borrows life from Thee is ever in Thy care;  
And everywhere that we can be, Thou, God, art present there.

**Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.**

-- Hebrews 13:8+

**Matthew 8:28 When He came to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs. They were so extremely violent that no one could pass by that way.**

- **when** - Mk 5:1-20 Lu 8:26-39 Ac 10:38
- **country of the Gadarenes** Ge 10:16 15:21 De 7:1
- **coming** - Mk 5:2-5 Lu 8:27,29
- **so** - Judges 5:6
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Click to enlarge - from the Holman Bible Atlas ([digital book](#); [Hardcover](#))  
copyright © 1998 B&H Publishing Group,  
Used by permission, all rights reserved.  
This is one of the best resources for Bible maps.  
Please do not reproduce this map on any other webpage.

**Parallel passages** - Matt. 8:28–34; Mark 5:1–20 Luke 8:26–39

Mark 5:1-5+ They came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes. 2 When He got out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him, 3 and he had his dwelling among the tombs. And no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain; 4 because he had often been bound with shackles and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him and the shackles broken in pieces, and no one was strong enough to subdue him. 5 Constantly, night and day, he was screaming among the tombs and in the mountains, and gashing himself with stones.

Luke 8:26-27+ Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. 27 And when He came out onto the land, He was met by a man from the city who was possessed with demons; and who had not put on any clothing for a long time, and was not living in a house, but in the tombs.

## DIVINE CONFRONTS DEMONIC

Matthew now shifts from Jesus' power over the natural world to His power over the supernatural world, both serving to substantiate the fact that the Man Jesus is fully God.

**Wiersbe** - This dramatic incident is most revealing. It shows what Satan does for a man: robs him of sanity and self-control; fills him with fears; robs him of the joys of home and friends; and (if possible) condemns him to an eternity of judgment. (BEC)

**When He came to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes-** Recall from Mk 4:36+ "other boats were with Him." In the picture above, **Gadarenes** (Mk 5:1+, Lk 8:26+ have **Gerasenes** - see [note](#) below) is on the southeast side of the Sea of Galilee (see also [Wikipedia map](#)). "The small town of Gerasa, or Gergesa (from which come Gerasenes and Gergesenes, respectively) was on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee, about six miles across the water from Capernaum, and the steep cliffs nearby fit the geographical setting described here. The town of Gadara (from which comes Gadarenes) is located farther south and is inland; but the general region, including Gerasa, was often referred to as the country of the Gadarenes." (MacArthur) **NET Note** adds that "The region of Gadara extended to the Sea of Galilee and included the town of Sennabris on the southern shore - the town that the herdsmen most likely entered after the drowning of the pigs."

**THOUGHT** - Don't miss this! Christ came to the demoniacs, to those who others would not dare go near! Christ even braved a storm to come to them! This is a dramatic illustration of Jesus' compassionate heart for the lost, no matter how deplorable or devilish their condition! Is this not also a perfect picture of grace, giving men what they do not deserve and could never earn, whether they demon possessed or in their right mind, for neither seeks for God (Ro 3:11b+)

**Two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs-** [See discussion](#) of how many demoniacs there were, one or two? Mark says this encounter occurred **immediately** (Mk 5:2+). Notice that here we are with Jesus clearly in close proximity to **tombs** and **swine**, both *unclean* for the Jew! Jewish ceremonialism was no hindrance for Jesus Who "come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Lk 19:10+) "Like a warm front hitting a cold front head on, the forces of good and evil collide." (Gire) Mark 5:6+ says the demon even though he hated God "**ran up and bowed down ([proskuneo](#)) before**" Him and this is exactly what every person who hates God and rejects His Son Jesus will be forced to do one day for Paul writes "that at the Name of Jesus **EVERY KNEE WILL BOW**, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that **every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father." (Php 2:10-11+).

**Phillips** quips that "These two demon-possessed men were more dangerous than the stormy sea...." (Exploring Matthew)

**Robertson** - "The tombs" (tōn mnēmeiōn) were chambers cut into the mountain side common enough in Palestine then and now. On the eastern side of the lake the precipitous cliffs are of limestone formation and full of caves. It is one of the proofs that one is a maniac that he haunts the tombs. People shunned the region as dangerous because of the madmen.

**Vincent - The tombs.** Chambers excavated in the mountain, which would afford a shelter to the demoniac. Chandler ("Travels in Asia Minor") describes tombs with two square rooms, the lower containing the ashes, while in the upper, the friends performed funeral rites, and poured libations through a hole in the floor. Dr. Thomson ("Land and Book") thus describes the rock-cut tombs in the region between Tyre and Sidon: "They are nearly all of the same form, having a small chamber in front, and a door leading from that into the tomb, which is about six feet square, With niches on three sides for the dead." A propensity to take up the abode in the tombs is mentioned by ancient physicians as a characteristic of madmen. The Levitical uncleanness of the tombs would insure the wretches the solitude which they sought. Trench ("Notes on the Miracles") cites the following incident from Warburton ("The Crescent and the Cross"): "On descending from these heights I found myself in a cemetery whose sculptured turbans showed me that the

neighboring village was Muslim. The silence of night was now broken by fierce yells and howlings, which I discovered proceeded from a naked maniac who was fighting with some wild dogs for a bone. The moment he perceived me he left his canine comrades, and bounding along with rapid strides, seized my horse's bridle, and almost forced him backward over the cliff."

**Demon-possessed** (1139) see note on [daimonizomai](#).

**Met** (5221) ([hupantao](#) from **hupo** = by, below + **antao** = to meet face to face with; **antao** is from **anti** = opposite) means to go to meet and may include an element of hostility or opposition as in Jesus' encounter with demon possession (Mt 8:28+; Mk 5:2+; Lk. 8:27+) and also in Lk 14:31+ meaning to meet to oppose in battle which is a good picture of what we see here - the Kingdom of darkness "meets" the Kingdom of light (the King of that kingdom). Compare the "hostile meeting" in Acts 16:16+.

**Tombs** (3419) ([mnemeion](#) from **mneme** = memory, remembrance) literally means a memorial and then a monument to commemorate the dead (Mt 23:29), but most often referred to a tomb, grave or [sepulcher](#). These burial chambers were commonly hewn out of rock hillsides or cliffs on the outskirts of a town or city. The first NT use describes "demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs" (Mt 8:28), the second Jesus' rebuke of the Jewish religious leaders who were "hypocrites" building "the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous" who they would have willingly murdered, (Mt 23:29, 30), the third describes the tombs opened and dead rising when Jesus died (Mt 27:52, 53), the fourth describes Jesus' burial tomb (Mt 27:60). Most uses refer to the **tomb** in which Jesus' dead body was laid - Mt 27:60; Mt 28:8; Mk 15:46; 16:2, 3, 5, 8; Lk 23:55; 24:1, 2, 9, 12, 22, 24; John 19:42; 20:1-4, 6, 8, 11 Acts 13:29.

**They were so extremely** ([lian](#)) **violent** (hard to manage, [intractable](#)) **that no one could pass by that way**- So no one dared go this way because the man (apparently two men) was not only **violent** but **strong** and could not be subdued. At least one of the men was naked (Lk 8:27).

Mark 5:3-5+ adds details not found in Matthew's account writing that "no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain; because he had often been bound with shackles and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him and the shackles broken in pieces, and no one was strong enough to subdue him. Constantly, night and day, he was screaming among the tombs and in the mountains, and gashing himself with stones."

**Violent** (5467) ([chalepos](#)) means difficult, hard to bear, troublesome, hard, perilous and when referring people means fierce, violent dangerous, savage. Simply being in the region near these men placed one's life in jeopardy because these demonized men were *chalepos*—harsh and harmful, presenting a high risk to anyone in the region. That's a description of the last of the last days, for in the only other NT use Paul says "realize this, that in the last days **difficult** (*chalepos*) times will come." (2 Ti 3:1+)

**Could** (2480) ([ischuo](#) from **ischus** = might) means to be strong in body or in resources. **Ischuo** can speak of physical power as in Mk 5:4+ (cf Mk 2:17+ = "healthy", Mt 9:12+ = "healthy"). In Php 4:13+ Paul uses it to describe having the required personal resources to accomplish some objective. When Paul said that he could do all things, he meant all things which were God's will for him to do. He had learned that the Lord's commands are always the Lord's enablements. Where the finger of God points, the hand of God provides the way. In a negative sense it speaks of that which is good for nothing (Mt 5:13+). **Ischuo** is the equivalent of to have efficacy, to avail or to have force. Uses in Mark - Mk. 2:17; Mk. 5:4; Mk. 9:18; Mk. 14:37

#### Related Resources:

- [What are unclean spirits? Are unclean spirits demons?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about demon possession / demonic possession?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about demonic oppression?](#)
- Wikipedia article on [exorcism of Gadarene demoniac](#)
- [Can a Christian today perform an exorcism? What does the Bible say about casting out demons?](#)
- [Can a Christian be demon possessed?](#)
- [Questions about Angels & Demons](#)

---

#### MATTHEW 8:28–34 (cf. Mark 5:1–20; Luke 8:26–39)—Where were the demoniacs healed?

**PROBLEM:** The first three Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) each give an account of Jesus healing demoniacs. Matthew states that the place where the healing took place was the country of the **Gadarenes**. However, Mark and Luke say it was in the country of the **Gerasenes**.

**SOLUTION:** There is a textual problem here. The critical text of the Greek NT (Nestle-Aland/United Bible Societies) renders Mark and Luke the same as Matthew, namely, in the country of the “Gadarenes.” However, some manuscripts give the name of the country as the Gerasenes. It is possible to account for the variant reading in these manuscripts as a scribal error. Gadara may have been the capital of the region, and Matthew therefore referred to the area as the “country of the Gadarenes” because the people of that region, whether they lived in Gadara or not, were identified as Gadarenes. Mark and Luke were perhaps giving a more general reference to the country of the Gerasenes, which was the wider area in which the incident occurred. However, a scribe, confusing the reference in Matthew as a reference to the town instead of the people of the region, may have attempted to correct the manuscripts and altered the references to make them uniform. It seems that the best textual evidence is in favor of Gadara, although there are varying opinions among commentators. There is no contradiction or error here, because the problem developed as a result of transcription, and there is no evidence to demonstrate that there was a conflict in the original manuscripts. (Norman Geisler - When Critics Ask)

---

#### **MATTHEW 8:28–34 (cf. Mark 5:1–20; Luke 8:26–39)—How many demoniacs were healed?**

**PROBLEM:** Matthew reports that two demoniacs came to Jesus, while Mark and Luke say that only one demoniac approached Him. This appears to be a contradiction.

**SOLUTION:** There is a very fundamental mathematical law that reconciles this apparent contradiction—wherever there are two, there is always one. There are no exceptions! There were actually two demoniacs that came to Jesus. Perhaps Mark and Luke mentioned the one because he was more noticeable or prominent for some reason. However, the fact that Mark and Luke only mention one does not negate the fact that there were two as Matthew said. For wherever there is two, there is always one. It never fails. If Mark or Luke had said there was only one, then that would be a contradiction. But, the word “only” is not in the text. The critic has to change the text to make it contradict, in which case the problem is not with the Bible, but with the critic. (Norman Geisler - When Critics Ask)

- See also - [Why are there two demon-possessed men in the Gerasene tombs in Matthew, but only one in Mark and Luke?](#)
- 

#### **EVIL: ITS NATURE AND REMEDY Matthew 8:28–33 - James Smith**

This incident has been sneeringly called “The pig affair.” But in these two demon-possessed men we have some of the most terrible and heart-humbling revelations that we have in all the Bible. Look at evil as personified in these wholly-possessed ones.

I. Evil may be Closely Connected with Man. These men were “possessed” (v. 28). Evil takes possession of the sinner, controls his actions and thoughts, and completely masters his whole life. Sin is an awful tyrant, a perfect despot; it claims and affects every power and faculty of the being.

II. Evil is Allied with Death. “They dwelt among the tombs” (v. 28). They preferred the company of the dead to that of the living. They loved darkness rather than the light. Such is the effect of an evil heart. The things that holy men dread are loved. The company of those who are dead in sin is chosen rather than the company of those who are alive unto God. They love death; separation from God.

III. Evil is the Enemy of Liberty. “No man could pass that way” (v. 28). Sin always hinders true liberty. There are many still who are afraid to pass the tomb (grave) because of evil. As long as there is unforgiven sin in the heart there will be fear. Perfect love casteth out fear.

IV. Evil Shuns the Presence of Christ. “What have we to do with Thee?” (v. 29). All living in sin, and satisfied with it, hate the holiness of God. They will have nothing to do with Christ, yet they are afraid of being tormented by Him. They can see no hope in the Holy One of God.

V. Its Influence is only Toward Destruction. When the demons entered the swine they did with them what they were trying to do with the men—drove them quickly into destruction. Evil always chooses the shortest and steepest way to ruin. It is easy running downhill.

VI. Its Power is too Great for Man. Those possessed ones had no power of resistance whatever; they could do nothing to save themselves. No more can ye. Sin, like a poison, becomes an integral part of the being; it cannot be shaken off like a viper.

VII. Its only Cure is to be Cast Out. It cannot be tamed or reformed. Christ said to the demons, “Go.” The mighty, never-failing, cleansing Word of the Son of God alone can change the heart and separate the sin from the soul, as the demons were separated from the men. He speaks, and it is done.

VIII. Its Conqueror is often Unwelcomed. “They besought Him to depart out of their coasts” (v. 34). Those who don’t want victory

over their sins don't want the Lord Jesus. If you want sin put away, receive the Lord Jesus. If you want to die in your sins, let Him depart, and He will go. Welcome the sin-separating Saviour. (Handfuls of Purpose)

**J C Ryle** - Let us settle it firmly in our minds, that there is such a being as the devil. It is an awful truth, and one too much overlooked. There is an unseen spirit ever near us, of mighty power, and full of endless malice against our souls. From the beginning of creation he has labored to injure man. Until the Lord comes the second time and binds him, he will never cease to tempt, and practice mischief. In the days when our Lord was upon earth, it is clear that he had a peculiar power over the bodies of certain men and women, as well as over their souls. Even in our own times there may be more of this bodily possession than some suppose, though confessedly in far less degree than when Christ came in the flesh. But that the devil is ever near us in spirit, and ever ready to ply our hearts with temptations, ought never to be forgotten.

Let us, in the next place, settle it firmly in our minds, that the power of the devil is limited. Mighty as he is, there is one mightier still. Keenly set as his will is on doing harm in the world, he can only work by permission. These very verses show us that the evil spirits know they can only go to and fro, and ravage the earth, until the time allowed them by the Lord of lords. "Art thou come to torment us," they say, "before the time?" Their very petition shows us that they could not even hurt one of the Gergesene swine, unless Jesus the Son of God suffered them. "Suffer us," they say, "to go into the herd of swine."

Let us, in the next place, settle it in our minds, that our Lord Jesus Christ is man's great deliverer from the power of the devil. He can redeem us not only "from all iniquity," and "this present evil world," but from the devil. It was prophecied of old that he should bruise the serpent's head. He began to bruise that head, when he was born of the Virgin Mary. He triumphed over that head when He died upon the cross. He showed His complete dominion over Satan, by "healing all that were oppressed of the devil," when He was upon earth. (Acts 10:38.) Our great remedy in all the assaults of the devil, is to cry to the Lord Jesus, and to seek His help. He can break the chains that Satan casts round us, and set us free. He can cast out every devil that plagues our hearts, as surely as in the days of old. It would be miserable indeed to know that there is a devil ever near us, if we did not also know that Christ was "able to save to the uttermost, because he ever liveth to make intercession for us." (Heb. 7:25.)

**Matthew 8:29 And they cried out, saying, "What business do we have with each other, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"**

- **What** - 2Sa 16:10 19:22 Joe 3:4 Mk 1:24 5:7 Lu 4:34 8:28 Joh 2:4
- **Son** - Mt 4:3 Mk 3:11 Lu 4:41 Ac 16:17 Jas 2:19
- **torment** - 2Pe 2:4 Jude 1:6
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Parallel passages** - Matt. 8:28–34; Mark 5:1–20 Luke 8:26–39

Mark 5:6-7+ Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him; 7 and shouting with a loud voice, he \*said, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!"

Luke 8:28+ Seeing Jesus, he cried out and fell before Him, and said in a loud voice, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me."

#### JESUS POWER OVER DEMONS

The **ESV** is more accurate than the NAS translating it " And **behold**, they cried out." The NAS (NET, NIV) does not translate the interjection "behold" which is in the Greek text. **Behold** is inspired and important.

**Behold** (2400)(**idou**) is the second person singular aorist middle imperative of eidon which means to see, perceive, look at. In the NT **idou** is used as a demonstrative particle that draws attention to what follows. **Idou** in the **middle voice** means "you yourself look, see, perceive!" The **aorist imperative** is a command emphasizing "Do it now! Don't delay!" **Spurgeon** reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"



**Lowell Johnson** - These verses shows us what Satan will do with a life and then we will see what Jesus can do with a life. ([The Day the Demons Performed a Swine Dive](#))

**And they cried out, saying, "What business do we have with each other, Son of God?"** - It is fascinating that these demons had never before seen Jesus in the form of a Man, and yet they instantly recognized He was the **Son of God!**, the one who Mark 5:7+ and Luke 8:28+ describe as "**Jesus Son of the Most High God.**" Note that demons possessing a man can control what they do and what they say, exerting power of the possessed person's will and mind. And so the demons are crying out through the man's vocal cords over which they have taken control! Notice these spiritual beings once again have more insight than most of those in Israel (including even His disciples at this stage - contrast their question in Mt 8:27) for they unquestionably recognize His divinity with the title **Son of God!** And think about this scene -- who is present with Jesus? The disciples and they hear this testimony and yet still wrestle with Who He is! Amazing! [Demons have faith](#) in God but their faith cannot save them (James 2:19+)! And yet they are brazen in basically saying that they want to be left alone to accomplish their "dirty work" of tormenting and destroying (cf )! **Spurgeon** adds that "This is the old cry, 'Mind your own business! Do not interfere with our trade! Let us alone, and go elsewhere!' Devils never like to be interfered with. But if the devils have nothing to do with Jesus, he has something to do with them." Note also as discussed below, not only do demons have faith in God, assurance of a future judgment, but they also believe in prayer! Their "theology" would put to shame the theology or lack of theology of most men, sadly even including some who profess to be believers!

Note the striking contrast in reactions to Jesus between the...

- Disciples - Mt 8:27 "What kind of a man is this"
- Demons - Mt 8:29 "Son of God."

Luke 4:41+ records "Demons also were coming out of many, shouting, '**You are the Son of God!**' But rebuking them, He would not allow them to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ."

**Net Note on What business do we have with each other** Literally = "what to us and to you?" (an idiom). The phrase *ti hemin kai soi* is Semitic in origin, though it made its way into colloquial Greek (BDAG 275 s.v. ego). The equivalent Hebrew expression in the OT had two basic meanings: (1) When one person was unjustly bothering another, the injured party could say "What to me and to you?" meaning, "What have I done to you that you should do this to me?" (Judg 11:12, 2 Chr 35:21, 1 Kgs 17:18). (2) When someone was asked to get involved in a matter he felt was no business of his own, he could say to the one asking him, "What to me and to you?" meaning, "That is your business, how am I involved?" (2 Kgs 3:13, Hos 14:8). These nuances were apparently expanded in Greek, but the basic notions of defensive hostility (option 1) and indifference or disengagement (option 2) are still present. BDAG suggests the following as glosses for this expression: What have I to do with you? What have we in common? Leave me alone! Never mind! Hostility between Jesus and the demons is certainly to be understood in this context, hence the translation: "Leave us alone...."

**Son of God** in the Gospels - Matt. 4:3; Matt. 4:6; Matt. 8:29; Matt. 26:63; Matt. 27:40; Matt. 27:43; Matt. 27:54; Mk. 1:1; Mk. 3:11; Mk. 15:39; Lk. 1:35; Lk. 3:38; Lk. 4:3; Lk. 4:9; Lk. 4:41; Lk. 22:70; Jn. 1:34; Jn. 1:49; Jn. 3:18; Jn. 5:25; Jn. 10:36; Jn. 11:4; Jn. 11:27; Jn. 19:7; Jn. 20:31;

**Cried out** (2896) ([krazo](#)) refers to a loud cry or vociferation, and is a strong word expressing deep emotion. **Krazo** is one of those [onomatopoeic](#) words, the very pronunciation of which imitates the hoarse cry of the raven ([listen](#)), and can be an inarticulate and brutish sound or an exclamation of fear or pain. Abbott-Smith says "generally used of inarticulate cries, *to scream, cry out* (Aesch., etc.)" It is used of the cry of an animal, the barking of a dog and two men in a quarrel, trying to bawl each other down (so Aristophanes, Knights, 1017)" 'The prophet in awful earnestness, and as with a scream of anguish, cries over Israel' (Morison)" **Krazō** was also a technical, rabbinic term to refer to the loud summons of a prophet, needing to be heard. In Lk 18:39+ the blind beggar cried "to cry clamorously; to scream or shriek." (You can almost hear him shrieking! He is motivated because he is blind and thinks this Man might help him see!)

**Have You come here to torment us before the time?"** - What irony -- the tormentor speaking about being tormented in the future, an interesting example of reaping what you sow! They knew there was a day when they would be eternally damned! Once again the demons show us that they have good theology and eschatology. Note the plural "**us**" indicating there was more than one demon, which is called **Legion** in Luke 8:30+ a name Luke says refers to "**many demons.**" Mark adds that it took 2000 swine to carry away all the demons into the deep (Mk 5:13+). Notice the time phrase **before the time**. In contrast to many men and women today, the demons believed in future judgment! They know that their ultimate fate will be eternal torment, as John records in (Rev 20:10+) It is sad that the demons are more sensitive to the finite amount of time they have to do their damage and as a result diligently seek to "redeem the time" (in a negative sense), while most believers have little appreciation of the preciousness of each day and the opportunities that are letting slip away (see [Redeem the Time](#)).



**Spurgeon** - This is the old cry, 'Mind your own business! Do not interfere with our trade! Let us alone, and go elsewhere!' Devils never like to be interfered with. But if the devils have nothing to do with Jesus, he has something to do with them."

**Guzik** - They also understood that they had limited time, and therefore worked as hard as they could up until they could not work anymore. This is one of the few admirable things we can say about Satan and his demons.

**The time** ([kairos](#)) is that pre-determined appointed time in which Satan and his henchmen would face their eternal judgment. And in this verse the demons "seem to have viewed Jesus' arrival on the scene as an illegitimate change in God's plan regarding the time when their sentence would be executed." (NET)

Both of the other synoptic accounts record the demon either **begging** ([deomai](#) - Lk 8:28+) or **imploring** ([horkizo](#) - adjuring) (Mk 5:7+, ) Jesus to not **torment** them.

**Henry Morris** - These "devils" (probably the fallen angelic spirits that followed Satan in his primeval rebellion against God) could recognize Jesus for who He was, even though He was now also a man. In fact, both Satan and his demons called Jesus "Son of God," but they never called Him "Son of man." They apparently refuse to acknowledge that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" (1 John 4:2,3).

**Torment** (928) ([basanizo](#) from [basanos](#) - English *basanite* indicates basically, a [touchstone](#) to test gold and other metals. Basanite was used in this way - If you use one thing as a *touchstone* of another, you use it as a test by which you judge the second thing = a 'Lydian stone' used for testing gold because pure gold rubbed on it left a peculiar mark]; [b] *Basanos* described *the instrument of torture* by which slaves were tortured; i.e., were forced to reveal the truth by torturing them [[see metaphor](#)]; and [c] *torment or acute pain*) means literally to rub on the touchstone (*basanos*) or to test by means of the touchstone and then to test or make proof of anything. Figuratively, the verb **basanizo** refers to any severe distress, and so means to afflict, to harass, to vex, to torment. **Basanizo** then can mean to subject one to severe torment or distress, as with diseases (Mt 8:6+), with birth pangs (Re 12:2+), by the threat of Jesus' punishment of unclean spirits of the Gadarene demoniac (Mt 8:29+, Mk 5:7+, Lk 8:28+), by prophetic warnings (Rev 11:10+), of the torment associated with God's righteous judgment (Rev 14:10+). John describes the fate of the HEAD DEMON, SATAN, writing that "the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be **tormented** (*basanizo*) day and night forever and ever." (Rev 20:10+)

**Time** (2540) ([kairos](#)) means a point of time or period of time, frequently with the implication of being especially fit for something, the period which would be especially appropriate and favorable in this context to cast the demonic hordes into the Lake of fire.

**Matthew 8:30 Now there was a herd of many swine feeding at a distance from them.**

- **a herd of many swine** - Lev 11:7 De 14:8 Isa 65:3,4 66:3 Mk 5:11 Lu 8:32 15:15,16
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Parallel passages** - Matt. 8:28–34; Mark 5:1–20 Luke 8:26–39

Mark 5:8-11+ For He had been saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" 9 And He was asking him, "What is your name?" And he \*said to Him, "My name is Legion; for we are many." 10 And he began to implore Him earnestly not to send them out of the country. 11 Now there was a large herd of swine feeding nearby on the mountain.

Luke 8:29-30+ For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times; and he was bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard, and yet he would break his bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert. 30 And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him.

**Now there was a herd of many swine feeding at a distance from them**- Pigs suggest the owners were Gentiles. Galilee was known to be inhabited by both Jews and Gentiles. However, since the synoptic accounts do not reveal the owners ethnicity, we cannot exclude Jewish owners who raised the swine to sell to the Gentiles. Matthew says **at a distance** whereas Mark says **nearby** (Mk 5:11+), in either case clearly visible to Jesus and the demons.

**Swine** (5519) see note on [choiros](#)

- Mk 5:7,12 Lu 8:30-33 Rev 12:12 20:1,2
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Parallel passages** - Matt. 8:28–34; Mark 5:1–20 Luke 8:26–39

Mark 5:12+ The demons implored Him, saying, "Send us into the swine so that we may enter them."

Luke 8:31-32+ They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss. 32 Now there was a herd of many swine feeding there on the mountain; and the demons implored Him to permit them to enter the swine. And He gave them permission.

## PRAYING DEMONS

**The demons began to entreat Him, saying - Began to entreat** is in the [imperfect tense](#) indicating that they begged Him again and again! So demons have to have permission from God even to afflict these pigs. Satan and his demons have power but are always on a "divine leash!"

**Demons** (1142)(**daimon**) is an evil spirit used in the modern Greek manuscripts only in Mt 8:31. There are 4 uses of **daimon** in the Textus Receptus Mk. 5:12; Lk. 8:29; Rev. 16:14; Rev. 18:2 but the modern manuscripts use [daimonion](#) in place of daimon. It is interesting that the word **daimon** "signified, among pagan Greeks, an inferior deity, whether good or bad." (Vine) **Gilbrant** adds that "In early Greek thought **daimon** was an imprecise term denoting "gods," "lesser deities," or any supernatural being. They could be good or evil depending on the circumstances with which they were associated. By contrast, **daimonion** narrowly defined those evil spirits that were feared by man. This distinction accounts for the limited use of **daimon** in the Septuagint and the New Testament: "**Daimon** is avoided because it is too closely associated with positive religious elements, whereas **daimonion** indicated from the very first the hostile spirits of popular belief" (Foerster, "daimon," Kittel, 2:12). This is confirmed by its lone occurrence in the Septuagint, Isaiah 65:11. Israel is rebuked for attempting to gain the advantage by preparing a table for *gadh*, the "god of fortune." (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

**Entreat** (3870)([parakaleo](#) from **para** = side of, alongside, beside + **kaleo** = call) means literally to call one alongside, to call someone to oneself, to call for, to summon. **Parakaleo** can include the idea of giving help or aid but the primary sense is to urge someone to take some action. All uses in Mark - Note 5 times in Mark 5 - Mk. 1:40; Mk. 5:10; Mk. 5:12; Mk. 5:17; Mk. 5:18; Mk. 5:23; Mk. 6:56; Mk. 7:32; Mk. 8:22. [See note](#) on the repeated use of the verb **parakaleo** in strikingly different contexts (and contrasts).

**Trapp** writes "notice that the demons can't even afflict pigs without the permission of God. "And if a legion of devils had not power over a herd of hogs, much less have they over Christ's flock of sheep, saith Tertullian."

**If You are going to cast us out, send us into the herd of swine-** Note the interesting irony that **unclean** spirits ask to be sent to **unclean** animals! They knew their fate - there was no **"IF"** about it! In other words they were not expressing uncertainty or mere possibility but were saying "Since it is certain that you are going to cast us out." They would be **cast out**. Their fear was the Jesus might "command them to go away into the **abyss**." (Lk 8:31+) Why the demons ask to be sent into swine is not stated.

This is the first of three strange "prayers" (so to speak) in this section, the second recorded only by Mark where the man delivered of demons "was imploring Him that He might accompany Him," (asking to be a disciple!) and the third being the horrible prayer of the whole city in Mt 8:34 where they implored Jesus to leave. He answered the first and third "prayers" affirmatively and the second He denied, telling the man to return to Decapolis and "report to them what great things the Lord (JESUS) has done for you and how He (Jesus) had mercy on you." Notice that Jesus was in essence telling this man to tell them He was the Lord! How often I hear the lame excuse from skeptics that Jesus never claimed to be God! Clearly they have never really read the Scriptures!

**Cast out** (throw, send, drive) (1544) (**ekballō** from **ek** = out + **bállō** = to cast, throw, drive) means to cast, throw out often with the idea of force and frequently used of casting out demons as in this passage. (cf Mt 7:22, Mt 8:31,9:34, 10:1, etc). Used of casting or throwing unbelievers into outer darkness (hell).

**Swine** (5519)(**choiros**) refers to a pig, a hog, a poker, a young swine. Swine were detestable creatures being classified with the dog (cf. Lk 8:32ff.; Lk 15:15). They were considered unclean according to the laws of

purification - Lev 11:7-8<sup>+</sup>, Dt 14:8. The ancient Canaanites sacrificed and ate swine before their so-called "gods." Despite their being a popular sacrificial animal among the Greeks at special events, the Old Testament paints them as destructive, undesirable creatures (Ps 80:13; Pr 11:22). Most of the NT uses are in the story of Jesus casting out the demons and sending them into the swine (Mt 8:30, 31, 32, Mk 5:11, 12, 13, 16, Lk 8:32, 33<sup>+</sup>) To protect themselves from defilement for worship on the Sabbath day, Jews would not even touch pigs.

In an act of brazen disrespect to the Jews, the despicable ruler [Antiochus Epiphanes](#) raided the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem, stealing its treasures, setting up an altar to Zeus, and **sacrificing swine on the altar**. When the Jews expressed their outrage over the profaning of the temple, Antiochus responded by slaughtering a great number of the Jews and selling others into slavery. He issued even more draconian decrees: performing the rite of circumcision was punishable by death, and Jews everywhere were ordered to sacrifice to pagan gods and eat pig flesh.

#### Related Resources:

- Torrey Topical Textbook [Swine](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Swine](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Swine](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Swine](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Swine](#)
- Smith Bible Dictionary [Swine](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Swine](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Swine](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Swine](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Swine](#)

**Matthew 8:32 And He said to them, "Go!" And they came out and went into the swine, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the waters.**

- **Go** - 1Ki 22:22 Job 1:10-12 2:3-6 Ac 2:23 4:28 Rev 20:7
- **the whole** - Job 1:13-19 2:7,8 Mk 5:13 Lu 8:33
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Parallel passages** - Matt. 8:28–34; Mark 5:1–20 Luke 8:26–39

Mark 5:13+ Jesus gave them permission. And coming out, the unclean spirits entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, about two thousand of them; and they were drowned in the sea.

Luke 8:32-33+ Now there was a herd of many swine feeding there on the mountain; and the demons implored Him to permit them to enter the swine. And He gave them permission. 33 And the demons came out of the man and entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

### DELIVERANCE OF TWO MEN DESTRUCTION OF TWO THOUSAND SWINE

One would think that the numbers of swine would be meaningless for a human soul is of inestimable value compared to swine! That would not prove to be the case as the story unfolds! This recalls Jesus' words "How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." (Mt 12:12+)

**And He said to them, "Go!"** - It is interesting that this is very same command in [present imperative](#) which Jesus spoke to the centurion in Mt 8:13<sup>+</sup>! And so in Mt 8:13 Jesus heals with a **Word** and similarly in this passage He delivers with His **Word**. Heb 1:3<sup>+</sup> says He "upholds all things by the **word** of His power (His powerful Word)." Luke 1:37ASV+ (in a more literal rendering) says "no **word** from God shall be void of power."

**Wiersbe** says "He restored them to sanity, society, and service. The account in Mark 5 (Luke 8:26–39) shows that one of the men asked to become a disciple of the Lord. But, instead of granting his request, Jesus sent him home to be a witness. Christian service

must begin at home." (BEC)

**And they came out and went into the swine** - Jesus' again demonstrates His authority of the powers of the darkness as evidenced by their immediate obedience to His command.

**Swine** (5519) see note on [choiros](#)

**And the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished**([apothnesko](#) = died) **in the waters** - Mark 5:13+ alone tells us the whole herd consisted of 2000 swine. Notice that Jesus did not tell the swine to rush to their destruction. What this episode shows is that the ultimate intent of the demons was destruction! The goal of the demons was the same for these humans or the hogs - destruction! This recalls Jesus' works in John 10:10 "The thief (speaking in context of false shepherds but representative of the goal of their father the devil) comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." For **perished in the waters** Luke 8:33+ has **was drowned** ([apopnigo](#)). **Hiebert** comments on Mark's use of **drowned** ([pnigo](#)) which paints a gruesome picture for they "Were choked in the sea" where the [imperfect tense](#) describes the sinking of the pigs as one after the other they plunged into the water and were suffocated."

**MacArthur** - But we do not know why they did what they did (SWINE RUN DOWN STEEP BANK) or what happened to them after the pigs drowned. (Ibid)

**J C Ryle on the herd rushed down...and perished** - The extraordinary malice, hatred of God's creation, and love of mischief, which are attributes of Satan, appear strikingly in this fact. Satan must be doing harm. If he cannot harm man he will harm swine. Well would it be for the world, if Christians were as unwearied and zealous in doing good, as devils are in doing evil.

The Gadarene Swine Law: Merely because the group is in formation does not mean that the group is on the right course.

-- Source Unknown

**Spurgeon** comments on the way the demons affected the swine "Swine prefer death to devilry; and if men were not worse than swine, they would be of the same opinion." "They run hard whom the devil drives." "The devil drives his hogs to a bad market."

**Adam Clarke** on some who comment it was unfair to the owner of the pigs. "But the owners of the swine lost their property.' Yes, and learn from this how small value temporal riches are in the estimation of God. He suffers them to be lost, sometimes to disengage us from them through mercy; sometimes out of justice, to punish us for having acquired or preserved them either by covetousness or injustice."

**David Guzik** writes that "Some protest that this was unfair to the owner of the pigs. " 'But the owners of the swine lost their property.' Yes, and learn from this how small value temporal riches are in the estimation of God. He suffers them to be lost, sometimes to disengage us from them through mercy; sometimes out of justice, to punish us for having acquired or preserved them either by covetousness or injustice." (Clarke) Spurgeon had several wise comments on the way the demons affected the swine: "Swine prefer death to devilry; and if men were not worse than swine, they would be of the same opinion." "They run hard whom the devil drives." "The devil drives his hogs to a bad market." (Enduring Word Commentary)

**Rushed** (3729) ([hormao](#) from **horme** = violent impulse from **ornumi** = to excite, arouse) means to set out, to rush headlong, violently, impetuously. It describes a "swift and violent forward motion uncontrolled by reason." (Friberg) It is so fitting that while here **hormao** describes a herd of Sanhedrin controlled by their rage rushing at Stephen in Acts 7:57+, all three synoptic accounts Mk 5:13+, Mt 8:32+ and Lk 8:33+ use **hormao** to describe the herd of swine controlled by evil spirits rushing to their death! There is not much difference between these two pictures, because the "religious" mob was also controlled by evil spirits and had destruction on their mind!

**Perished (died)** (599) ([apothnesko](#) from **apo** = marker of dissociation implying a rupture from a former association, separation, departure, cessation + **thnesko** = die) literally means to die off (that is, to die and thus be away from this earthly realm) and thus speaks of literal physical death for the swine.

---

**Question:** [Why did Jesus allow the demons to enter the herd of pigs?](#)

**Answer:** The story of Jesus casting the legion of demons into a herd of pigs is found in Matthew 8:28–34; Mark 5:1–20; and Luke 8:26–39. Only Matthew mentions the more prominent of the two demoniacs involved. Demoniacs were persons whose minds came under the control of an evil spirit or spirits. That such phenomena were especially prominent during the days of Christ's earthly ministry is consistent with Satan's efforts to counteract God's program. It also allows us to witness the spiritual warfare in which our Savior was constantly engaged. Demons knew exactly who Jesus was—"Son of God"—and were aware of their ultimate doom (Matthew 8:28–29).

As Jesus was traveling in the hilly region east of the Jordan River, the path of this man who was controlled by demons and lived among the tombs crossed that of Jesus. Because of the physical strength the demons gave the man, he was able to break and throw off the chains with which people tried to bind him. When the demons begged Jesus to let them go into a herd of pigs, He gave them permission. They entered the pigs, rushed down the steep bank into the lake, and were drowned. Jesus thereby made known His authority and thwarted whatever evil purpose the demons had.

Why the demons begged to be allowed to enter the swine is unclear from the account. It could be because they didn't want to leave the area where they had been successful in doing their mischief among the people. Perhaps they were drawn to the unclean animals because of their own filthiness. The demons may have made this strange request because it was their last chance to avoid confinement in the Abyss, the place of confinement to which evil spirits are doomed (Revelation 9:1-6). Whatever their reasoning, it is clear from the account that demons had little power of their own and were unable to do anything without Jesus' permission. As Christians, we can take comfort in the knowledge that the forces of the enemy of our souls are under the complete control of God and can only act in ways He allows.

The Bible doesn't explain to us Jesus' reasoning, but displaying His sovereign power over demons could be one reason why Jesus sent them into the pigs. If the pigs' owners were Jews, Jesus could have been rebuking them for violating Mosaic law which forbids Jews from eating or keeping unclean animals such as swine (Leviticus 11:7). If the swineherds were Gentiles, perhaps Jesus was using this miraculous event to show them the malice of evil spirits under whose influence they lived, as well as displaying His own power and authority over creation. In any case, the owners were so terrified to be in the presence of such spiritual power that they made no demand for restitution for the loss of their property and begged Jesus to leave the region. The people were awe-struck but unrepentant—they wanted no more of Jesus Christ. This shows the hardness of their hearts and their desire to remain in sin. The healed demoniac, on the other hand, demonstrated the true faith and repentance of a changed heart and begged to be allowed to follow Jesus. Perhaps the unmistakable difference between the saved and the unsaved was an object lesson for the disciples and all who witnessed the event. Jesus sent the healed man away, giving him a commission that he joyfully obeyed: "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you" (Mark 5:17-20). ([Gotquestions](#))

---

### **Vance Havner - The Gadarene**

AFTER mastering a wild sea the Lord Jesus masters a wild man. Three Gospels give us the story of the Gadarene demoniac (Matt. 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39), and it is unusual that Mark's account, usually the briefest, is here the longest.

There are those who would make this man to be only an insane case, but our Lord clearly recognized demon-possession by His saying, "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit." That He was merely accepting the common view of His time is an argument too foolish to reserve room for refutation.

Much has been said about the destruction of the swine who refused to endure what men put up with. Huxley made much of this "destruction of property" as an argument against the Lord. Our Lord never went at anything tamely. He made bold strokes and brushed everything else aside to get at a needy life. What are a few hogs compared to a human soul? The destruction of the swine was a bold evidence of the miracle and a daring declaration that lives are ever more important than property. If the owner of the hogs had accepted the Lord Jesus he would have had a treasure inestimable. Instead, he saw only temporal loss and gain, and because Jesus was hurting his business, he besought Him to leave. Men have followed that procedure through the ages. When Christ interferes with our personal gain we usually beseech Him to leave.

There is a beautiful truth in the healed man's desire to go with the Lord and His disciples in the ship to other parts. Doubtless he wanted to get away from the scenes of his past, and it looked very inviting—this prospect of sojourning with the Lord in new fields, ever hearing His words and witnessing His miracles. But it was not so to be; he must stay in the old, unromantic spot and tell what the Lord had done for his soul (and what a witness he must have been!).

Many of us have known this experience. We have longed to follow the Lord across the sea or into some more interesting field, but He has commissioned us to stay at home—live down an evil past, perhaps—and be an obscure and unknown witness. It is not given to everyone to go far afield; there must be the disciple who stays at home. Time and time again we meet with those who went to foreign fields or undertook vast enterprises under mistaken leadings. It is so easy to confuse our wants with God's leadings. The work of the gospel is too often made the springboard from which to dive off into water too deep for us. This man obeyed the Lord's command, and as he proclaimed his story men marveled, according to Mark's account. Together with a marvelous experience of deliverance he had an obedient spirit, and that makes a great combination.

Are you willing that Christ should do His wonders in your life at any cost to property and circumstances? Then you need to be willing to let Him station you where He will, to be His witness

**Matthew 8:33 The herdsmen ran away, and went to the city and reported everything, including what had happened to the demoniacs.**

- Mk 5:14-16 Lu 8:34-36 Ac 19:15-17
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Parallel passages** - Matt. 8:28–34; Mark 5:1–20 Luke 8:26–39

Mark 5:14+ Their herdsmen ran away and reported it in the city and in the country. And the people came to see what it was that had happened.

Luke 8:34+ When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they ran away and reported it in the city and out in the country.

**The herdsmen ran away, and went to the city and reported everything** - **Everything** would be the financial loss and the healing of the demon possessed men, the former taking being more important to the people than the latter. Robertson says "we have the mastery of the mind of the Master on the minds of the maniacs, the power of Christ over the demons, over the herd of hogs."

**Ran away** (escaped) ([5343](#))([pheugo](#)) means to flee away in the sense of to take to flight in order to seek safety. To flee in the sense of to escape something, being made safe from danger by eluding or avoiding it. **Pheugo** is the root of our English word "**fugitive**" defined as one who escapes from something or someone.

**Reported** (announced, proclaimed) ([518](#))([apaggello](#) from **apó** = from + **aggéllō** = tell > **aggelos** = messenger) means to bring a message from any person or place. Carry back a message from a happening and thus give an account of something (to report, announce, tell, inform). To proclaim or announce. To make something known publicly. It was used of a messenger, to bring tidings, report, announce.

**Including what had happened to the demoniacs** - The way the sentence reads it is almost as if the fact that Jesus cast out the demons was secondary to the loss of the swine.

**Demoniacs** ([1139](#)) see note on [daimonizomai](#)

---

**Death of a Dog** - One day as Dick Hillis preached in a Chinese village, his sermon was suddenly interrupted by a piercing cry. Everyone rushed toward the scream, and Dick's coworker, Mr. Kong, whispered that an evil spirit had seized a man. "That is heathen superstition," said Dick, who had not previously encountered demon possession.

A woman pushed through the crowd toward them. "I beg you help me!" she cried. "An evil spirit has again possessed the father of my children and is trying to kill him."

Kong stepped over a filthy old dog lying in the doorway, and faced the madman. The room was charged with a sense of evil. "An evil spirit has possessed Farmer Ho," Kong told the onlookers. "Our God, the 'Nothing-He-Cannot-Do One' is more powerful than any spirit, and He can deliver this man. First, you must promise you will burn your idols and trust in Jesus, son of the Supreme Emperor."

The people nodded. Kong asked Dick to begin singing the hymn "There is Power in the Blood." With great hesitation, Dick began to sing, "Would you be free from your burden of sin. ..."

"Now," continued Kong, "in the name of Jesus we will command the evil spirit to leave this man." Kong began praying fervently. Suddenly, the old dog in the doorway vaulted into the air, screeching, yelping, whirling in circles snapping wildly at his tail. Kong continued praying, and the dog abruptly dropped over dead.

Instantly Dick remembered Luke 8, the demons of the Gadarenes who invisibly flew into the herd of swine. As Kong finished praying, Farmer Ho seemed quiet and relaxed, and soon he was strong enough to burn his idols. At his baptism shortly afterward, he testified, "I was possessed by an evil spirit who boasted he had already killed five people and was going to kill me. But God sent Mr. Kong at just the right moment, and in Jesus I am free. (From This Verse - Robert Morgan)

**Matthew 8:34 And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they implored Him to leave their region.**

- **they implored** - Mt 8:29 De 5:25 1Sa 16:4 1Ki 17:18 18:17 Job 21:14 22:17 Mk 5:17,18 Lu 5:8 8:28,37-39 Ac 16:39
- [Matthew 8 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



**Parallel passages** - Matt. 8:28–34; Mark 5:1–20 Luke 8:26–39 -**Clearly Matthew leaves out much detail in this story of the Gadarene Demoniac.**

Mark 5:15-20+ They came to Jesus and observed the man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the "legion"; and they became frightened. 16 Those who had seen it described to them how it had happened to the demon-possessed man, and all about the swine. 17 And they began to implore Him to leave their region. 18 As He was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed was imploring Him that he might accompany Him. 19 And He did not let him, but He \*said to him, "Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you." 20 And he went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

Luke 8:35-39+ The people went out to see what had happened; and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting down at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they became frightened. 36 Those who had seen it reported to them how the man who was demon-possessed had been made well. 37 And all the people of the country of the Gerasenes and the surrounding district asked Him to leave them, for they were gripped with great fear; and He got into a boat and returned. 38 But the man from whom the demons had gone out was begging Him that he might accompany Him; but He sent him away, saying, 39 "Return to your house and describe what great things God has done for you." So he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

### **NOT MEET AND GREET BUT MEET AND GO!**

I agree with **Bob Utley** who says "This is one of the saddest verses in all of the Bible. In the presence of the greatest man of history, these villagers were more concerned about the death of a few hogs than they were over the redemption and reclamation of two demonized persons and the spiritual potential of the gospel for their area."

**And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus-** **Behold** ([idou](#)) is a command to pay attention, to give heed! Indeed this passage is amazing! Note Matthew gives us a detail not found in either Mark or Luke that it was the **whole city**, not just part or a few! Jesus presence and power has unified the city in defiance to His presence, surely a precursor or foreshadowing of the city of Jerusalem crying out "Crucify! Crucify!" (Lk 23:21+) So yes the **whole city** came to **meet Jesus** but it was not a "welcoming party," but but a "departing party." It was not a *meet and greet*, but a *meet and go* to the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe! Woe! Recall that the greater light this city had just received would result in a greater degree of punishment at the judgment. Speaking to the city that was His base of operations in the early Galilean ministry Jesus declared

And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. Nevertheless I say to you that **it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you.**" (Mt 11:23-24, cf Lk 10:13-15+)

**Spurgeon** sarcastically writes that "Here was a **whole city** at a *prayer meeting*, *praying* against their own blessing....Horrible was their *prayer*; but it was heard, and Jesus departed out of their coasts!"

**Wiersbe** - What a transformation in these two men! You would have expected the people who saw the miracle to ask Jesus to stay and heal others who were sick and afflicted. Apparently money was more important to them than mercy, and they asked Jesus to leave.

**Hendriksen** writes that "**Heartlessness** characterized demons, swineherds, and people in general. Over against this attitude stands the **helpfulness** of Jesus." (Ibid)

**Spurgeon** - Surely, this legion of demons must have had the same effect on them as on the poor man when Christ first came to him. These foolish people took up the same cry as the poor demoniac: "The whole multitude besought him to depart from them? Christ sometimes hears this kind of prayer. There is many a man who has entreated that his conscience might not be troubled any more, and it never has been troubled again. But what an awful prayer for any people to pray! "The whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them."

**David Gooding** has an interesting note on the people's reaction to Jesus Who had freed them of the fear of the demoniac - What a sad comment on man's fallen and unregenerate state it is, that man should feel more at home with demons, than with the Christ who has power to cast out demons. Yet is often so. Men who would try to help a criminal or a drunkard, or, if they should prove

incorrigible, would want the one imprisoned and the other put into hospital, find it embarrassing and somewhat frightening if the criminal is saved by Christ and turned into a sane, wholesome, regenerate disciple. ([According to Luke](#))

**John MacArthur** - In stark contrast to the delivered maniac, the response of the sane people tragically illustrates sin's power over the lost. It blinds them to the truth and causes them to hate it and reject all evidence of it. They obstinately cling to their false illusion of well-being because love of iniquity dominates them. Jesus had performed an undeniable miracle that clearly manifested His absolute power over the supernatural realm and to deliver people from the forces of hell. (Ibid)

**And when they saw Him, they implored Him to leave their region-** Deliverance of two demoniacs and departure of their demons should have been a delight but instead was viewed by the **whole city** as a disaster! The people who saw the miracle should have Jesus to stay and heal others who were sick and afflicted but money was more important than mercy! Silver [trumped](#) souls! **Implored** is the picture of the city (THE WHOLE CITY) begging Jesus to depart! Amazing! The city was more interesting in the financial loss of the swine Jesus sent into the darkness of the sea, than in the future destination of their own souls, which ironically Jesus would one day in the future send into the outer darkness of the Lake of Fire (for those who never came to believe in Him)! When people care more for safety of swine than for salvation of souls, you know the priorities are upside down! It is still the same today. Many people who "hug trees" to make sure they are not cut down, are sadly indifferent to the life small babies created in the image of God who are murdered by the thousands each year in America, surely one of the greatest "holocausts" in our lifetime! We can be assured that God is not "winking" at the sacrifice of human beings even as He did not wink at the abominable child sacrifices the so-called God's of Molech (Lev 20:4-5+).

**Spurgeon** - Surely, this legion of demons must have had the same effect on them as on the poor man when Christ first came to him. These foolish people took up the same cry as the poor demoniac: "The whole multitude besought him to depart from them? Christ sometimes hears this kind of prayer. There is many a man who has entreated that his conscience might not be troubled any more, and it never has been troubled again. But what an awful prayer for any people to pray! "The whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them."

**Kent Hughes** has frightening comment, especially if you have been procrastinating regarding belief in Jesus --

Tell Him to leave you alone, and He will. And if you tell Him enough, there will come a time when the opportunity for repentance will be gone. If you have not already done so, turn to Christ for salvation. Come to Christ for healing. If He is speaking to you, you must respond now, for this may be the last time! (Preaching the Word- Luke)

Rabbi, begone! Thy powers  
Bring loss to us and ours.  
Our ways are not as Thine.  
Thou lovest men, we—swine.

Oh, get you hence, Omnipotence,  
And take this fool of Thine!  
His soul? What care we for his soul?  
What good to us that Thou hast made him whole,  
Since we have lost our swine?  
John Oxenham

---

**J C Ryle** - Let us not leave this passage without observing the painful worldliness of the Gergesenes, among whom this miracle of casting out a devil was wrought. They besought the Lord Jesus to "depart out of their coasts." They had no heart to feel for anything but the loss of their swine. They cared not that two fellow-creatures, with immortal souls, were freed from Satan's bondage. They cared not that there stood among them a greater than the devil, Jesus the Son of God. They cared for nothing but that their swine were drowned, and "the hope of their gains gone." They ignorantly regarded Jesus as one who stood between them and their profits, and they only wished to be rid of Him. There are only too many like these Gergesenes. There are thousands who care not one jot for Christ, or Satan, so long as they can make a little more money, and have a little more of the good things of this world. From this spirit may we be delivered! Against this spirit may we ever watch and pray! It is very common. It is awfully infectious. Let us recollect every morning that we have souls to be saved, and that we shall one day die, and after that be judged. Let us beware of loving the world more than Christ. Let us beware of hindering the salvation of others, because we fear the increase of true religion may diminish our gains, or give us trouble.

---

## Rejection Of Christ

"And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their

coasts." (Matthew 8:34).

In view of the context, it seems incredible that the people should ask Jesus to leave but in view of current attitudes and actions of our society it is not so incredible as one would think.

### **FIRST—THE POPULARITY OF THE REJECTION**

"Behold, the whole city." This is not a rejection of one or two dissidents but the rejection by the whole city. Rejecting Christ is very popular. Oftentimes just one person complains and the courts rule out something that has to do with God, but it is more than the one person, it is society that objects or the one person would not get anywhere with his complaint. Society is not fond of God, they do not get upset when the courts rule God out of school or some other place. Rejection of Christ is nearly universal.

### **SECOND—THE PROMPTING OF THE REJECTION**

"Behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus." This city in the region known as Gadara had a man (Matthew says two men) who was demon possessed and was a real menace to the city. The city had tried many different ways to control the man but all the ways had failed. But when the fierce uncontrollable man met Jesus the demons left him and he was changed into a normal peace loving man. But in the process of healing the man of demons, Jesus also stopped the swine trafficking. God's law forbid the Israelites raising swine, but wealth overruled, and the city allowed the swine traffic to go on. It may have brought in much tax dollars to the city which could help their education program. So regardless of the Mosaic law forbidding swine business the city allowed it to continue. But when Christ works He attacks all sin, not just the sin that we do not appreciate the effects. So regardless of the fact that Christ solved a major problem for the city, the people preferred swine to the Savior and told the Lord to leave. They would rather have their problems and the wealth from the swine traffic than have their problem solved. People are still this way. They do not want the booze business stopped because it brings in big money. The slaughter it causes on the highway and other problems it causes, people would rather have than have the Lord do away with the booze.

### **THIRD—THE PRECEPT IN THE REJECTION**

"They besought Him that He would depart out of their borders." This sounds like our courts who today rule God out of many places though God solves many problems man cannot. The shootings in the schools would stop overnight if our courts let God back in our schools. But if they did that, He might run booze out of town. Society would rather have booze and the shootings than God and no shootings. We will never get God to remove the curses from our lives and society when we run God out of our lives and society. (Sermon Starters - James Butler, Vol 6).