

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW; YOUR KINGDOM COME...ON EARTH

Week 3 – The Authority of the King in the Natural Realm

February 8, 2022

Matt. 7:28-29 – *And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished (struck with amazement) at His teaching, ²⁹for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.* Jesus spoke truth! Truth necessitated and continues to necessitate a decision concerning the truth of Jesus' words and His Person. Jesus' words were different from what the scribes spoke. Rather than absolutes, Rabbinic literature/documents often offer conflicting and mutually exclusive values that have to be balanced and weighed by the reader! Rabbis before, during, and after Jesus' day were engaged in what was known as *Pilpul* which means "sharp analysis." Pilpul was the method of studying the Talmud (Rabbinic opinions) through intense analysis in an attempt to explain various rulings that came down from the Rabbis. The Pilpul method includes extreme disputing among the Rabbis and caustic hairsplitting! The Rabbis cited the works of past Rabbis. The teachings of the Rabbis truly begged the question, "Where's the authority?" Jesus rested on His own authority as He taught. Jesus taught His word! What are we doing with truth from Scripture?

CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH!

Jude v. 3 - *Beloved, while I was very diligent (earnestness in accomplishing, promoting, striving after) to write to you concerning our common salvation (our rescue/deliverance), I found it necessary (needful; beneficial) to write to you exhorting (begging, entreating, imploring) you to contend (to contest, to battle for, to argue for) earnestly (seriously, w/ intent, sincerely) for the faith (our conviction of the truth) which was once (one time) for all delivered (to give over, to commit for maintaining, for safeguarding, for entrusting) to the saints.*

GOD HAS ENTRUSTED US WITH HIS WORD!!!!

Jude was writing to believers whose salvation was NOT in jeopardy. False teachers, however, were preaching and living out a counterfeit gospel (also highlighted in Galatians) and were misleading those who needed to hear the true gospel – the absolute TRUTH! Jude's message for believers is to wage war against error and to fight strenuously for the truth. Scripture is complete, sufficient, and finished; therefore, it is fixed for all time.

Jude is the only book in Scripture entirely devoted to battling apostasy. Within this book, Jude is presenting the NEED to know sound doctrine (Eph. 4:14; Col. 3:16; I Pet. 2:2; I Jn. 2:12-14), to be discerning in sorting out truth from error (I Thess. 5:20-22), and to be willing to confront and attack error (II Cor. 10:2-3-5; Phil. 1:7, 27; I Tim. 1:18; 6:12; II Tim. 1:13; 4:7-8; Titus 1:13).

How "insightful" is it that we read Jude directly before we turn to the book of Revelation? Jude is telling the Church that the last days for the Church: apostasy in the

Church. And, then we read Revelation, the book in which we do NOT see the Church on earth from the beginning of Revelation 4 through to Revelation 19:10. The Church will be removed from earth in the Rapture prior to the tribulation. In Revelation 19:11ff, the Church will return to earth with Jesus Who will fight against the enemy and establish His 1,000-year reign, the Millennial Kingdom, on earth.

WHY IS JESUS SPEAKING PRIMARILY TO JEWISH PEOPLE IN THE GOSPELS?

God loves the nations – the Gentiles! God created the nation of Israel to reach out to the Gentiles...to share the truth about the one true God to them.

From Matthew 1 – Jesus’ genealogy extends beyond Israel! Jesus’ genealogy through Mary includes four Gentile women! (Some pondering re: Bathsheba)

In Matthew 2 we read of Gentile Magi looking for the King of the Jews. The Magi’s ancestors knew about the Messiah as the King of the Jews through the Jewish prophet, Daniel (Dan. 2).

Isa. 2:2 – all the nations shall go up to the temple during the Millennial Kingdom to be taught.

From eternity past, we read of God the Father telling God the Son...

Isa. 49:6 - *It is too small a thing that You (Jesus) should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob (Israel), and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You (Jesus) as a light to the Gentiles, that You (Jesus) should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.*’

Why did Jesus primarily address the Jewish people in the Gospels? Jesus is the Messiah that the Jews had been anticipating for centuries (Luke 2:25; 3:15). As such, He was born into a Jewish family and was reared according to Jewish law in a Jewish town (Luke 2:27; Gal. 4:4). Jesus selected Jewish disciples, spoke in Jewish synagogues. His mission, in fulfillment of the Jewish prophets, was to the Jewish people. However, none of this means that Jesus’ ministry was limited exclusively to the Jews.

Jesus offered salvation to everyone. I John 2:2 – *Jesus is the propitiation/ satisfaction for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.*

Jesus told the Jewish people, *I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd*” (John 10:16). Other sheep: Gentiles.

God promised to bless the world with His grace through the descendants of Abraham (Gen. 12:3; Gen. 18:18).

Rom. 11:15 – *For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?* When God restores Israel, it will be like life from the dead for the world (Isa. 11)!

FOLLOWING THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Matt. 8:1 - *When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him.*

The purpose of Matthew chapters 8-9 is to offer the credentials of the Messiah as prophesied in the Hebrew Scriptures. *When Jesus had come down from the mountain...* from delivering what we have entitled the Sermon on the Mount...He continued to demonstrate His authority as the King through countless miracles.

BEHOLD, A LEPER

Matt. 8:2 - *...behold, a leper....* Matthew introduced his readers, and us, to this miracle with “BEHOLD”! Why? The Holy Spirit, inspiring Matthew, wanted the readership, the Jews, to get fixated on... *a leper*. Was this significant?

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...behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean. It appears that quite suddenly as Jesus came down from the mountain He was confronted by a leper. Why a leper?

Leprosy was considered a curse. It was incurable. Leprosy was a living death. The leper was cut off from contact with society. Because anyone touching him would be defiled, the leper had to tear his clothes, uncover his head, and cover his lips. When someone drew near, he must call out, “**Unclean! Unclean!**” (Lev. 13:45-46).

This leper boldly approached Jesus!

Leprosy is a graphic illustration of sin’s destructive power.

...behold, a leper came and worshiped Him – honored, exalted, adored, praised Jesus! Perhaps the leper w/ total humility, prostrated himself before the *Lord* (Master). This is the first time in Matthew where Jesus is addressed as *Lord*...depending on the translation. The leper is recognizing Jesus’ authority and deity, *Lord, if You are willing,*

The leper believed that Jesus could make him clean, *...You can make me clean.*

Matt. 8:3 - *Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.* Jesus purposely touched the leper...the leper who oozed defilement! Jesus could have merely spoken the word and the man would have been healed. CONSIDER: When was the last time this man/this leper had been touched by another human being? Jesus knew that the man needed an emotional healing as well as a physical healing. How Jesus healed the leper demonstrated His kingly authority over sin as well as over physical and emotional disease.

This man was a Jewish leper! How do we know? Jesus instructs him, upon being cleansed, to go to the Jewish Levitical priest...to go to the Temple and offer an offering according to the Law of Moses (Lev. 14:1-32)! What a huge message to the priests of Jesus' day. There had been no record of any Jewish lepers being cleansed (Lk. 4:27).

The Rabbis taught that only the Messiah would be able to heal a Jewish leper! The Rabbis taught that the world was about to be purified by the coming of the Messiah! Healing a Jewish leper was considered a Messianic miracle by the Jews!

LEPROSY IN THE MOSAIC LAW

In Lev. 13 and 14, God did not tell the Levitical priesthood how to heal a leper. In the event a Jewish leper was healed, a leper approached the priesthood and declare, "I was a leper but now I have been healed." For the next seven days the priesthood was to investigate to determine the following:

- Was the person truly a leper?
- If this person was truly a leper, was he/she (vv. 29, 38) genuinely cured of the leprosy?
- If he/she was cured of the leprosy, what were the circumstances of the healing?

If, after seven days of investigation, the priesthood was firmly convinced that the person had been a leper and had been healed of his/her leprosy, then, on the eighth day there would be a series of offerings. The priesthood never had the opportunity to implement these instructions because from the time the Mosaic Law was given, no Jewish person 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.

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Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, I am willing; be cleansed. Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. How did the multitudes respond? I'm envisioning that they stood still and were struck with amazement as Jesus with a word and a touch transformed this dying man physically, emotionally – and perhaps spiritually! What a demonstration of Jesus' power! Did they hear Him say...

Matt. 8:4 - *See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.* This day, the day Jesus healed the Jewish leper, the priest on duty would have a most unique opportunity to see a Jewish man who had just been healed of leprosy by the Messiah Jesus! The priest was to validate the miracle and, most likely, give serious thought as to what it meant!

Acts 6:7 - *Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.* Is it any wonder that the priests...a great many of the priests...came to faith in

Jesus? Jesus healed many Jewish lepers and, by so doing, identified Himself as the Messiah. The priests repeatedly witnessed the proof of Jesus' Messiahship!

Jesus deliberately sent the cleansed leper to the priesthood – because it was the law... AND, to get the Jewish religious leaders to begin investigating His Messianic claims and to come to a decision regarding those claims!

JEWISH RESPONSE:

Luke 5:12-16 – (parallel passage) Jesus healed a Jewish leper ...*and He charged him to tell no one, 'But go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as a testimony to them, just as Moses commanded.'* ¹⁵ *However, the report went around concerning Him all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities.*

Luke 5:17 - ¹⁷ *Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem.*

Why did the Jewish leaders from Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem come to Jesus following the healing of the Jewish leper? To investigate Him. This was their response to the first Messianic miracle. According to Sanhedrin law, if there was any kind of Messianic movement, the Sanhedrin had to investigate the situation in two stages. The first stage was called the “stage of observation.” If the movement was declared to be significant, there would then be a second stage of investigation called the “stage of interrogation” when questions would be asked, and objections would be raised.

A GENTILE CENTURION AND HIS SERVANT/SLAVE

Matt. 8:5-9 - *Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, ⁶ saying, 'Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented.'* ⁷ *And Jesus said to him, 'I will come and heal him.'* 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. ⁹ For I also am a man under authority,*

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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.'

Jesus ministered to a Gentile and his servant/slave. Some have suggested that the servant was Jewish. Who else would be a slave to a Roman? Another Roman? NO! Others have suggested that the Centurion's servant is most likely Gentile. (I leave that for you to ponder).

What are your thoughts, from an historical/cultural perspective, regarding a powerful Roman officer, approaching Jesus, a Jewish Rabbi, asking for help? The

powerful approaching the “powerless” – in the Roman mindset. Consider as well, a Jewish person’s feelings about the Romans. There would be a deep loathing on the Jewish side toward the Romans. BUT, this is Jesus Whom the Centurion approached!

The Centurion, the Gentile, came to Jesus on behalf of his servant. Under Roman law, a master had the right to kill his slave. And, it was expected that he would do so if the slave became ill or injured to the point where he could not work. The Centurion pleaded with Jesus on behalf of his servant.

If this is the same Centurion as recorded in Luke 7 where we read that the Centurion had a connection with the elders of the Jews who told Jesus that this Centurion loved Israel and built a synagogue. Perhaps the Centurion learned respect for Israel and the Jewish people from the servant...if the servant was Jewish!

Jesus’ response to the Centurion: *I will come and heal him.* Jesus did not hesitate to go to the Centurion’s house though it was completely against Jewish custom to enter a Gentile’s home. The Centurion wanted Jesus to heal his servant, but how could he expect Jesus to defile Himself by entering his home? The Centurion said, *Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed.* The Centurion showed great faith in Jesus’ word. He understood that Jesus could heal with His word just as easily as with a touch. God had revealed to this Centurion Jesus’ power and authority and worthiness!

Matt. 8:10 - When Jesus heard the response from the Centurion, *He marveled, and said to those who followed, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!’* Jesus praised the Centurion’s faith stating that this Gentile’s faith surpassed that of any Jewish person in Israel!

Matt. 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!* The Centurion received Jesus’ promise of inclusion and fellowship! This was unimaginable. Jesus announced that there will indeed be Gentiles in the kingdom of heaven and that they will even sit down to dinner with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This was unheard of to many of the Jewish people in Jesus’ day. Most importantly, in the context of Matthew’s account, it is not one’s nationality/ethnicity that determines one’s eternal destiny, but his faith.

Matt. 8:12 - *But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* Jesus conveyed the truth that just as the Gentile’s racial identity provided no automatic “in” to the kingdom, the Jewish people were not guaranteed entrance into the Kingdom of God based on their nationality. Entrance into the Kingdom of God is only by grace through faith in the Jewish Messiah, Jesus!

Matt. 8:13 – And, at that very moment, Jesus told the Centurion, *...Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you. ‘And his servant was healed that same hour.*

This Centurion, who sought the Lord's mercy toward his servant, came to Jesus on the basis of faith, and it is this faith which not only healed the servant, but also saved the Centurion.

PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW

Matt. 8:14-15 - *Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever. ¹⁵ So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them.*

The culture of the Middle East during Jesus' times regarded four groups of people as outcasts of society: lepers, Gentiles, slaves/servants, and women. In Jewish thinking, those who were excluded and unimportant: lepers, Gentiles, slaves/servants, and women. Whom did Jesus heal/transform? A leper, a Gentile, a Gentile's servant, and a woman.

OH, WHAT A WONDERFUL SAVIOR!

QUESTIONS:

From Matt. 8:1-15, what was new to you?

Within the context of Matthew chapters 5-7, how do you understand this portion of Matthew 8?

Is there a connection between the Sermon on the Mount and Matthew 8?

What impacted you most in the text and why?

Comparing what you have understood in the past about Jesus' miracles, has your perspective changed? Why?

Is God touching your heart? How?

Why is there a focus on Jesus' authority?

Did you know about the Jewish response to those who were claiming Messiahship?

What stands out to you about the gospel of Matthew? Why?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK:

Reread Week 3's handout with the Bible references.

Jot down your observations and questions.

Begin writing a journal with your observations, questions, and answers (if you've started researching answers)

Share with at least one person what you have gleaned from Matthew 8:1-15.

Read Week 4 when you receive it.