

WHEN GOD MADE HOUSE CALLS IN THE GALILEE

Sermon on the Mount Matthew 8 part 2

Rediscovering Jesus in the Jewish Gospels Lesson 19

Jesus comes back down to the masses Matthew 8:1-17

Jesus and those disciples who followed him up into the mountain descended with him to the shoreline of Galilee. Multitudes were awaiting His arrival. We wrongly assume that Jesus first preached this great sermon to the masses of loaves and fish eaters. It is safe to assume that he preached this or portions of it in many towns in the Galilee, but on this first delivery, He preached it to His disciples, up on the mountain to the twelve at minimum and doubtless other serious followers including the women often mentioned who attended them. Therefore, for two reasons, it is out of context to make the beatitudes a general message 1: it does not define salvation, 2: it was not first spoken to the masses. As we have established, neither keeping the beatitudes nor the Law of Moses was a means of obtaining salvation. The sermon clearly concluded with a diagnosis to help His core disciples discern between true believers and nominal professors that comprised the awaiting multitudes on the coastal plain below. The work of preaching the Gospel would now commence, authenticated by miraculous signs and wonders. Much like the process of the farmer who first gathers the massive harvest then culls out the rotten and diseased from the ripened edible produce This sermon taught the core Apostles how to discern from mere “professors” and genuine “possessors” of salvation. The crowds would demand more miracles and that He as King make their lives better. That He came to seek and save the lost would be lost on them and most would forsake him if they didn’t get what they wanted as John 6:66 would verify. The harvest was white, the laborers were few, but time was of the essence. He had only three years to train the 12 and finish salvation’s work. He had taught with authority (7:29). Now in chapter 8 we see how He legitimized His authority over disease and nature.

Healing the Leper 8:1-4 Three things occurred that were an astounding sign to the Jewish leaders:

1. Worship by the leper was not rebuked by Jesus. 8:2 The Deity of the Messiah
2. “He put forth His hand and touched Him.” The Compassion of the Messiah – touching the untouchable
3. He healed the leper. The miraculous proof of His Messiahship. Isaiah 29

The Law Concerning Lepers Leviticus 13,14

The Law made it clear that the disease was so dangerous that quarantine became the chosen method of limiting it. “He is a leprous man, he *is* unclean: the priest shall pronounce him utterly unclean; his plague *is* in his head. And the leper in whom the plague *is*, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean.” Leviticus 13:44-45

The Law of Purification Concerning Those Cleansed from Leprosy

The Mosaic law assumed that leprosy could be cleansed.

“but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded.”

Leviticus 14:1-20 – Levitical procedure for officially pronouncing “making clean”, one who has been cleansed.

Leviticus 14:21-32 – Levitical exceptions on the sacrifice for the poor.

The statutes of the Law inferred that the cleansing happened supernaturally before coming to the Priests.

The Messianic credibility of healing one from leprosy

“for a testimony unto them.”

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“The mouth of two or three witnesses” in this case required the witness of Priests. Matthew 18:16 “But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.” Accusations of transgression, trespass, and iniquity required 2 or 3 witnesses (Deuteronomy 17:6, 19:15).

“Believe me that I *am* in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me **for the very works' sake.**” (John 14:10-11).

“The chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for **this man doeth many miracles.**” (John 11:47).

They were responsible as eyewitnesses. “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets” (Matthew 23:29-31). “disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and **a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith**” (Acts 6:6,7).

This man healed of Leprosy came before the Priests in Jerusalem in the first year of Jesus’ ministry and they had to verify that indeed he had been healed. Doubtless, in their physical examination, they inquired as to how this healing happened. They may have heard rumors of His miracle of water into wine at the Cana wedding, but this evidence was sent right to their doorstep, and they were required by the Torah of God given to Moses to deal with it in due process and to give a pronouncement. The priests were of the sect of the Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection nor in miracles, yet they had to authenticate a healed leper. The only other healing of a leper recorded was by Elijah - Naman (2 Kings 5). Jesus would not only place himself alongside this mighty prophet but would far surpass him in signs and wonders. Jesus would single out an exclusive position that only the Messiah could hold. (Isaiah 29:18). Was this Jesus’ official invitation to begin their investigation into who Jesus was? For the next three years, they sent representatives who observed, questioned His disciples, and doubtless questioned those common people who heard him gladly. They eventually questioned Him attempting to ensnare Him in His own words (Mark 12:13).

Jesus had healed the leper between descending the mount where He gave the Beatitudes before entering the city of Capernaum (8:5). Immediately Jesus was made aware of the request of the Roman Centurion who would have had his cohort of troops permanently encamped on the main road near the entrance of the city. Luke adds that the request by the Centurion to make Jesus aware of the sickness of his servant was sent through the proper Jewish hierarchy of the synagogue. It was they who appealed to Jesus on his behalf stating that he was “worthy” because he had built us a synagogue, meaning the Synagogue of Capernaum (Luke 7:3-5). The Jewish leaders accompanied Jesus on the way to the Centurion’s house, “went with them” (7:6).

Historical note - Centurion (*centuria* = 100 in Latin). They commanded 100 men (Luke 2:7,8). A cohort was 1/10th part of a Roman legion, typically 600 - 1000 soldiers under the command of six centurions. Some were appointed by the Senate or Emperor or elected by their comrades, but most were enlisted men promoted through the ranks after 15 to 20 years of service. In the early days of the empire as Rome conquered territory some were awarded a tract of land and could build homes from which they were in charge of a city or region under the governor as a type of chief of military police force.¹ This centurion had a house and had built the Capernaum Synagogue. He was definitely “landed” and paid well through the taxes collected by Levi/Matthew (Mark 2:14,15). Was the Centurion providing security for the dinner which many publicans attended invited by Matthew? A gathering of many tax collectors in one place would have been a prime target for the anti-Roman zealots. Certainly, the miracles of Jesus had come to his attention.

Historical note – Capernaum (*Kfar Nahum*, lit. 'Nahum's village';) was a fishing village established during the time of the Hasmoneans, in the 2nd century BC, located on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee.^[2] It is thought to have had a population of about 1,500.^{[when?][3]} Nahum in Hebrew means comfort.

In Matthew 9:1-7 it is referred to as “His own city.” When Jesus was not far from the Centurion’s house, he was met by the friends sent with a message from him saying that he was “not worthy” refuting the praise the Jewish leaders had given him and that it was not necessary for Jesus to actually enter his house to heal his servant. It is very likely that the Jewish leaders would have never entered the house of an unclean and enemy Roman lest they be defiled no matter how worthy. Since the Centurion knew their customs, perhaps he could have been offering the disdain of being seen entering an unclean home of the Roman enemy. But I think it was deeper because he personally said to Jesus, “neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee” (Luke 7:2-8).

Historical Note - Synagogue of Capernaum

Archaeological excavations have revealed two ancient synagogues built one over the other. ^{[4]iii} The ruins of a great synagogue were first identified in 1866 during a survey by the British cartographer Captain Charles W. Wilson. Partially reconstructed in 1926, the dating of the Capernaum synagogue continues to be a matter of debate. What is certain is that the imposing ruin is not the synagogue referred to in the Gospel of Mark, though it is built on the black basalt foundation of an earlier 1st-century building. The latter was built of imported white limestone with Corinthian capitals and intricately carved stonework reliefs (vine and fig leaves, geometric designs, eagles, etc.). One relief carving of a cart may depict a portable Ark of the Covenant. ⁱⁱⁱ

Jesus’ ministry and life would end under the commands of a Roman centurion who exclaimed “Truly this was the Son of God”(Matthew 27:54). It is befitting to see the extraordinary faith of a Roman Centurion as the first bookend at the start of Jesus’ ministry about whom Jesus said, “I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” He expressed his faith in Jesus power, “say in a word, and my servant shall be healed” (Luke 7:8). It is significant to note that on the cross He said, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.” After Pentecost, the Gospel to the Jew first also went by Peter to a Gentile Roman Centurion next (Acts 10:1,2). Jesus practiced what He had just preached - Love your enemy.

At this point according to Luke, Jesus had only been speaking to the rulers of the Synagogue and the friends of the Centurion. Now He speaks directly to the Centurion who had come out of his house. Jesus told the Centurion “I will come and heal him” (Matthew 8:7). Jesus, upon hearing the Centurion’s profession of faith that just His word was as powerful as His presence to heal, turned and said to “them that followed” – The Jewish leaders; “Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” This was the 4th thing that really got their attention and the hits would keep on coming to their self-righteous sensibilities.

Jesus' next statement invites a close look. “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. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (8:11,12). The phrase “from the east and west” is taken from Psalm 107:3. Some see a possible illusion also to Isaiah 49:12 and Isaiah 59:19. John the Baptist had referred to the first of Isaiah’s four Servant passages in Isaiah 40:3,4 saying the highway of the king Messiah would be straightened and smoothed for the return and restoration of Israel. Jesus later elaborates on this final supernatural regathering at end of the Tribulation or Jacob’s Time of Trouble. God’s elect are the remnant of Israel who have responded in faith to the gospel through the 144,000 witnesses. Not only will they sit in the Kingdom with the patriarchs of Israel, Jesus is also referencing Isaiah’s inclusion of the Gentiles that would believe and enter the kingdom. “It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth” (Isaiah 49:6). This was pronounced by Simeon at the infant Jesus’ presentation at the Temple. When Jesus mentions that “the children of the kingdom shall be cast out” he is not teaching that the Church will replace Israel or that Gentile Church will replace Jews. The children of the kingdom who are cast out are clearly Jews who reject their Messiah, not all Jews. Romans 2:28,29 differentiates between Jews who have only been physically circumcised under the Covenant of Moses but have not

experienced the spiritual circumcision in the heart and in the spirit under the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31:31. Romans 3 expounds on the natural and spiritual advantages of Jews born under the unconditional covenant of Abraham signified by circumcision but who are concluded guilty of breaking the Covenant of Law under Moses and therefore though sons of the Abrahamic covenant are in violation of the Mosaic Covenant. Everyone, including natural-born children of the Israel and as well as Gentiles, are pronounced guilty and in need of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:22-30). Redeemed Gentile strangers from the ends of the earth will join Jewish believers in the Kingdom while children of Abraham who were never redeemed through Jesus the Jewish Messiah will be cast out from enjoying the Messianic Kingdom. Jesus refers to this separation in Matthew 25:32-34 in the Judgment of the Nations ie: Gentiles. How shocking it will be after 2/3rds of Jews were massacred in the Tribulation (Zechariah 13:8,9) for a surviving Jew who does not believe the Gospel of Jesus, preached by the 144,000 Jewish witnesses when denied entrance into the Kingdom of God. Weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth can only mean the torment of Hell. “But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you *yourselves* thrust out” (Luke 13:27,28; 16:28). Unthinkable to the Synagogue rulers that a Roman Centurion would make it in but that they possibly would not! They had a window of opportunity to witness His miracles that authenticated His Divine authority and claims. Sadly, these leaders in Capernaum for the most part missed that opportunity to believe while thousands of common folks did believe. “And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee” (Matthew 11:23,24).

Imagine the dinner conversation in the Kingdom between the Centurion, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They all got in by believing and the Lord accounted it to them as righteousness. Paul put a fine point on the difference between those who get in and those who don't. “For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Rom 10:3,4). Jesus had dinner with the publicans for which these Jewish leaders condemned Him. It was beneath them to attend. The Roman centurion and a publican named Levi would sit in the kingdom and they would be shut out. Mary Magdaline a sinful woman would be there but not them. A rejection to dine with the Savior (Revelation 3:20) will mean exclusion from dining with Him at the marriage supper of the Lamb as well as dining with Him in the Kingdom. “When Jesus heard *it*, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Mark 2:17).

“And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, *so* be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour” (Matthew 8:13).

God in flesh as the Great Physician made a house call to a Roman Centurion.

ⁱ info@legxiii.com

ⁱⁱ [Capernaum - Wikipedia](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ [The Synagogue at Capernaum \(jewishvirtuallibrary.org\)](#)