

Miracles and Signs I**Matthew 8:1—13**

As Jesus finishes the “Sermon on the Mount” He leaves the people astonished at what He was teaching. His doctrine had never been heard before because the Scribes and Pharisees have never taught what Jesus taught. This is an indictment against the leaders of Israel because if they were godly, they would have known Scripture and if they knew Scripture they would have been looking for the Messiah to appear based on Daniel’s prophecy. They had gotten so far from God that they didn’t know what God expected from them and therefore couldn’t pass that on to the people. They were whitewashed tombs. Externally they appeared righteous but inside they were evil, self-serving hypocrites (Matthew 23).

With the “constitution” of the soon-to-come Kingdom having been spelled out, we will now see Christ performing miracles and signs. These will again prove to Israel that He is indeed the Messiah but they also have a deeper meaning to them. The next 10 signs and miracles all point to God’s prophetic plan for Israel and the Gentiles.

The 10 pictures (Matthew 8 & 9)

Scripture uses pictures and stories to illustrate something deeper. When Moses struck the rock in the wilderness to bring forth water it was a picture of Christ on the cross. Noah and family entering the ark pictured salvation in Christ. Joseph and Joshua were pictures of Jesus Christ. In Acts 13 we see the story of a false Jewish prophet who tried to keep the gospel away from a Gentile and was blinded contrasted with a Gentile, Sergius Paulus who was eager to hear the word of God. This was a depiction of Israel rejecting God and being blinded for a season while the Gentiles eagerly accepted.

Here are the 10 signs and miracles we will be discussing:

1. Verses 8:2—4 Cleansing of leper
2. Verses 8:5—13 Healing the Centurion’s servant
3. Verses 8:14—15 Healing Peter’s mother-in-law
- 3a. Verses 8:16—17 Multitudes healed and devils cast out
4. Verses 8:23—27 Calming the wind and the sea
5. Verses 8:28—34 Casting out devils
6. Verses 9:1—6 Healing sick man of palsy
7. Verses 9:18—25 Raising man’s daughter from dead
8. Verses 9:20—22 Healing woman with issue of blood
9. Verses 9:27—30 Healing two blind men
10. Verses 9:32—33 Dumb man possessed with devil cast out.

Cleaning of the Leper (verses 8:2—4)

Right after Jesus was done teaching on the mountain He came down with the great crowd following Him. One who probably heard Him teach and believed was a leprous man. Leprosy was actually defined very broadly and could refer to many serious skin conditions. It even referred to growths found on clothing or in houses (Leviticus 13:47—52, 14:34—42). The person found with any skin condition would need to show himself to the priest who would make the determination if the spot were leprous or benign. If leprosy were found that person would need to live outside the city gates and warn people that came near by crying out: “Unclean, unclean.” Being unclean, anyone touching him would become unclean. They were completely cut off and separated from the nation.

Leviticus 13:45—46 ⁴⁵ 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. ⁴⁶ All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be.

We know what the heart of this leper was like for he approached Jesus humbly and worshipped Him. This leper understood who Christ was and gave Him the honor that He should be given. This leper also demonstrated his complete faith in Christ by acknowledging that Christ could make him clean. By Law the leper would need to wait to have his skin condition get better before he could go back to the priests to be declared clean. Jesus touched the leper and immediately he was made clean. Normally if a man had touched a leper he would have been unclean for seven days. Here we see that instead of Jesus becoming unclean the leper became clean.

This leper is a picture of Israel in need of cleansing. Israel had forsaken God and became defiled by worshipping other gods. If they acknowledged and worshipped Jesus Christ as their Messiah they would be cleansed.

Jeremiah 30:12—17 ¹² For thus saith the Lord, Thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous. ¹³ There is none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up: thou hast no healing medicines. ¹⁴ All thy lovers have forgotten thee; they seek thee not; for I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one, for the multitude of thine iniquity; because thy sins were increased. ¹⁵ Why criest thou for thine affliction? thy sorrow is incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity: because thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee. ¹⁶ Therefore all they that devour thee shall be devoured; and all thine adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey. ¹⁷ For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord; because they called thee an Outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after

Notice that God says in verse 17 that He would heal and restore Israel. Matthew 8:3 Jesus says I will heal you to the leper. As Jesus is healing in Matthew those priests who know Scripture should realize that God said He would heal and when they see Jesus healing they should then equate Jesus with God.

After he was healed Jesus told the man to show himself to the priests. This is because he was under the Mosaic Law and Jesus followed every bit of the Law without fail. When he showed himself to the priests he did it as a testament or witness of what Jesus had done. They would find it hard to ignore what had happened.

Centurion's servant (verses 5—13)

Here we have Jesus interacting with a Gentile for the first time. Christ came to minister to Israel (Matthew 15:24). After Israel had been reached then God would deal with the Gentiles. However, He did reach out to those Gentiles who worshipped Him, humbled themselves and understood where they belonged in the prophetic program. An example of this is found in the Syrophenician woman (Canaanite) who worshipped Jesus and understood what her place was (Matthew 15:21—28; Mark 7:24—30).

According to Luke 7:4—5 This Centurion was considered worthy by the elders of Israel to have Jesus heal his servant because he loved the nation of Israel and built the synagogue for them in Capernaum. This is similar to Cornelius who was a religious man who feared God and gave alms to the Jews and prayed to God continually (Acts 10:2). Both men were blessed for blessing Israel (Genesis 12:3). Many people today apply these blessings and cursing to nations that bless or curse Israel. Here we see that is really applied to individuals. Since God has set Israel aside, the Abrahamic covenant is also set aside and therefore is not in operation today.

The Centurion had faith in Christ that He could heal his servant and put himself under Christ's authority. Again Jesus replies: "I will" come and heal the servant referencing the words of God in the Old Testament. It's interesting to see that Christ says this Gentile has more faith than anyone in all of Israel. This Centurion was rewarded for his faith and for his treatment of Israel just as those in the Judgment of the Gentiles in Matthew 25:31—40. Today, our salvation does not depend upon how we treat Israel for good works don't lead to salvation but salvation should lead us to good works (Titus 3:4—5).

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