

Miracles and Signs II**Matthew 8:5—22**

Matthew 8 and 9 have a series of stories about Jesus Christ healing and performing miracles. We know Matthew is not written in strict chronological order because the story of Matthew being called is found in chapter 9 while we know from Luke that the Disciples were all called before the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 4, 5 and 6). Since Matthew only included a select number of stories of Christ's miracles and put them in a specific order, his purpose must be deeper than to just tell a series of stories about how Jesus was able to heal, cast out demons and control the weather. There are no wasted words in Scripture.

When reading Matthew we need to not only look at the surface story but to examine the broad, prophetic meaning of the story behind the story. Since Matthew shows Christ as King and is focused on the coming Kingdom we can assume that each particular story is focused on some aspect of truth relating to Israel and/or the Kingdom. Since Israel was trained to always look for signs it is not surprising that God would reveal His Son through signs and show Old Testament truths through these signs.

This principle of showing a deeper, hidden meaning behind the surface story is found in each parable spoken by Christ. A parable is story based on an actual event that conveys some biblical truth. This can also be seen in stories of Christ's healings and miracles.

Last week we saw a leper who came to Christ to be made pure. This is exactly what Israel needed to do instead of depending on their own self-righteousness. This purification of Israel is predicted in Isaiah 1, Zechariah 13 and Malachi 3:1—6. As Christ cleaned the leper He will cleanse the people of Israel but only if they come to Him.

The Centurion

We next read about the Centurion's servant who was paralyzed. Although this man was a Gentile and Jesus Christ was limiting His ministry to Israel (Matthew 15:24) Jesus healed him because the Centurion had blessed Israel by being friendly toward her and building a synagogue. He was blessed because he blessed Israel (Genesis 12:3). The Abrahamic covenant was in effect.

It was the faith of the Centurion that impressed Jesus. It was not about how much faith he had but about whom his faith was in. The standard of faith is never about how much faith you have but about in whom you have faith. Think about your salvation. Were you saved based upon how much faith you had and only after having enough faith you would be saved? Of course not. Your salvation is based upon the object of your faith—Jesus Christ. You are saved as soon as you trust Christ and only Christ for your salvation. Those who are healed have completely trusted Christ, that He would be able to heal them. It was not having faith that they could be healed but that they could be healed by Christ.

Verse 11 makes it clear that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will be in the Kingdom. This means they will have been bodily resurrected and be recognizable. Those with resurrected bodies will be intermingled with those with the standard issue human body. This means that there will be those who are not capable of sinning mixed in with those who still have a sinful nature. We can also see that the Gentiles will have a place in the Kingdom (Daniel 7:13—14). These are "the many that come from east and west." Remember, Israel will have been gathered to her promised land at this time. The children of the Kingdom refers to unbelieving Israel. The Kingdom was to be given to Israel and the leaders of Israel but only if they would accept it (Matthew 21:33—46). Unbelieving Israel, led by the bad shepherds (Jeremiah 50:6; Ezekiel 34) who were put in charge of Israel will be cast into hell. The Kingdom of Heaven is not located in heaven but is God's heavenly rule and government on earth (Isaiah 9:6—7; Zechariah 14:8—21; Mica 4:1—5).

Peter's mother-in-law and multitudes healed

According to verse 17 these healings were all in fulfillment of Scripture. Isaiah 53:4 prophesied that this would happen and is related to the coming Kingdom. Isaiah 53 is about removal of sin and physical healing while Isaiah 54 is about the marriage of Israel to her husband, Christ. When Christ came to earth and performed innumerable healings the leadership of Israel should have immediately recognized Him as their Messiah. This promise of healing is actually completely fulfilled at the Second Coming when all of Israel will be saved (Romans 11:26). They will all be cleansed and healed.

A fever is part of the curse that Israel would experience if they turned their back on God and served other gods (Leviticus 26:14—20; Deuteronomy 28:15—20). Israel was in a state of disobedience and therefore was experiencing all of the curses that were promised. Only Christ can heal Israel just as only Christ could heal Peter's mother-in-law. It is significant that as soon as she was healed she got up and ministered (served) them. This is exactly what will happen with Israel at the Second Coming. She will be cleansed and healed allowing her to serve her King in the Millennial Kingdom. Jeremiah connects physical ailments with turning away from God.

Jeremiah 8:19—22 ¹⁹ Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because of them that dwell in a far country: Is not the Lord in Zion? is not her king in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities? ²⁰ The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. ²¹ For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me. ²² Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

Putting the Kingdom first

On two separate instances a disciple came up to Jesus and said he wanted to follow Him. Jesus points out that a disciple of His must be willing to give up all he has (Luke 14:26—33).

Luke 18:22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

Matthew 19:21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

It's interesting to note that Peter did give up all he had to follow Jesus. Since he did this, Peter was given the promise of ruling in the Millennial Kingdom. Whatever was given up before the Kingdom would be given back 100 fold when the Kingdom is brought in at the Second Coming. Although this and similar passages are misused to show how blessed we will be if we give our money to "God" the only ones being financially blessed are the shysters begging for money in the name of God. An understanding of God's program for Israel would help people to discern if they should give or withhold financial support to a particular ministry.

Matthew 19:27—29 ²⁷ Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? ²⁸ And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹ And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

As Matthew 6:33 states those who put the Kingdom first will be given everything needed and much more.

Matthew 6:33 ³³ But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. ³⁴ Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

For previous notes and additional mid-Acts materials please visit www.MidActsTruths.com