



Matthew 8:1-22

# KINGDOM HEALING

Matthew 8:1-9:35 is a major unit of material. Here Matthew presents nine miracle stories (containing ten actual miracles plus summaries of others). These accounts are arranged into three groups of three stories each. In

between the three triads appear two pairs of passages dealing with discipleship [8:18-22; 9:9-17]. In this first section, Jesus touches a leper, who was ritually unclean due to his bodily disease. He rewards and praises the faith of a Gentile centurion who was an outcast among Jews due to his ethnic background. He heals and cares for a woman, who was usually treated as a second-class citizen due to her gender. In each case Jesus ignores cultural taboos and lavishes compassion on the ostracized. Characteristically, Matthew finds the fulfillment of Scripture in Jesus' actions.

—Craig L. Blomberg

## The Five Major Discourses of Jesus in Matthew:

1. The Sermon on the Mount (5:1-7:29)
2. The Mission of the Disciples (10:5-11:1)
3. The Parables of the Kingdom (13:1-53)
4. The Instruction of the Disciples (18:1-19:2)
5. The Prophecy of the End Times (24:1-25:46)

Jesus' authority as the Messiah is not only demonstrated in His teaching and proclamation of the kingdom (7:29) but also in His power to heal all diseases as a foretaste of the kingdom (8:11).

*Now Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of disease among the people. (4:23)*

*And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. (9:35)*

Matthew 8-9 record ten miracles of Jesus in three segments of three stories each—8:1-17; 8:23-9:8; 9:18-34. In this first section, Jesus heals three people considered on the lower end of society.

## THE LEPER: A PICTURE OF SAVING FAITH (8:1-4)

- Leprosy is a picture of \_\_\_\_\_.
- The leper is a picture of \_\_\_\_\_.
- The healing is a picture of \_\_\_\_\_.

*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 not a Gentile, a freeman and not a slave."*

—Warren Wiersbe

*Leprosy, symbolic of sin in the Bible, was considered incurable; leprosy was the most loathsome disease.*

—J. Vernon McGee

*Leprosy might begin with the loss of all sensation in some part of the body; the nerves are affected; the muscles waste away; the tendons contract until the hands are like claws. There follows ulceration of the hands and feet, then the progressive loss of fingers and toes. 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.*

—William Barclay

*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.*

—Arnold Fruchtenbaum

Jesus commands the leper to avoid spreading the news of his healing but instead to go directly to the priest who could verify his cleansing and re-admit him into the community (Leviticus 14:1-9). The purpose of Jesus' command was to enable the priests to see the reality of the healing and to limit those who would follow Him merely for the signs (John 2:23-25).

### THE GENTILE: A PICTURE OF SURPRISING FAITH (8:5-13)

- Great faith changes the way I see \_\_\_\_\_.
- Great faith changes the way I see \_\_\_\_\_.
- Great faith changes the way I see \_\_\_\_\_.

Such great faith not only astonishes Jesus but also shows that entrance into the kingdom of heaven is not based on one's ethnicity, position, or good works but only on faith and trust in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9). The Gentile centurion stands in contrast to the self-righteousness and blindness of many of the Jews of Jesus' day. Their continued refusal to trust in Jesus would result in their eternal condemnation in hell.

### THE WOMAN: A PICTURE OF SERVING FAITH (8:14-15)

One more story of healing is added to this section (Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38-39). The healing of Peter's mother-in-law not only shows the power and compassion of Jesus but also indicates the proper response to all healing—getting up and serving others (cf. Galatians 5:13; 2 Cor. 1:3-7).

### THE HEALING MINISTRY OF THE MESSIAH

*Surely He has borne our griefs [Heb., choli, "sicknesses"]  
And carried our sorrows [Heb., makob, "pains"];  
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,  
Smitten by God, and afflicted.  
But He was wounded for our transgressions,  
He was bruised for our iniquities;  
The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,  
And by His stripes we are healed.  
All we like sheep have gone astray;  
We have turned, every one, to his own way;  
And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*  
—Isaiah 53:4-6 (cf. 1 Peter 2:24)

*Jesus did not perform miracles to "get a crowd." Time after time, Jesus instructed those He healed not to talk too much. He did not want people trusting Him simply on the basis of spectacular deeds.*

—Warren Wiersbe

*It was taught by the rabbis that only the Messiah would be able to heal a Jewish leper.*

—Arnold Fruchtenbaum

*Great variety of visitors resorted to Christ. One comes to Him on behalf of a **son**, another for a **daughter**; a third for **himself**. I see none come to Him for his **servant** but this one Centurion.*

—Bishop Hall (1574-1656)

*By saying that he was unworthy, he showed himself worthy of Christ's entering, not within his house, but within his heart.*

—Augustine (AD 354-430)

**Marveled.** Greek, *thaumazo*, "to be struck with astonishment." Used of Jesus in 8:10; Mark 6:6.

*Jewish burial customs...involved a reinterment of the bones a year after the initial burial. At that point the son would place his father's bones in a special box known as an ossuary to be set into the wall of the tomb.*

—The NET Bible

*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.*

—J. C. Ryle (1816-1900)

*Jesus' healing miracles pointed beyond themselves to the Cross.*

—D. A. Carson