

# The Gospel According to Matthew

## Notes and Comments

Part III-A  
Chapter VIII

The Deity of Christ

Biblical Commentary Series

B. P. Harris

# The Gospel According to Matthew

## Notes and Comments

Biblical Commentary Series

Part III-A  
Chapter VIII

The Deity of Christ

B.P. Harris

Assembly Bookshelf  
Sacramento

**All Scriptures are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise indicated.**

“Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE, Copyright©1960, 1962, 1963,1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.”

Some Scriptural texts are sourced from: BibleWorks™ Copyright © 1992-2008 BibleWorks, LLC. All rights reserved. BibleWorks was programmed by Michael S. Bushell, Michael D. Tan, and Glenn L. Weaver. All rights reserved. Bible timelines Copyright © 1996-1999 BibleWorks, LLC. All rights reserved. Map datasets Copyright © 2005 BibleWorks, LLC: source of underlying data for some of the images was the Global Land Cover Facility, <http://www.landcover.org>. Detailed Jerusalem image Copyright © 2005 TerraServer.com. All rights reserved.

The following versions and works are referenced from BibleWorks:

**The English Translation of The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament** by Sir Lancelot C. L. Brenton, 1844, 1851, published by Samuel Bagster and Sons, London, original ASCII edition Copyright © 1988 by FABS International (c/o Bob Lewis, DeFuniak Springs FL 32433). All rights reserved. Used by permission. Apocryphal portion not available. Copyright © 1998-1999, by Larry Nelson (Box 2083, Rialto, CA, 92376). Used by permission

**The English Young's Literal Translation of the Holy Bible** 1862/1887/1898, by J. N. Young. ASCII version Copyright © 1988-1997 by the Online Bible Foundation and Woodside Fellowship of Ontario, Canada. Licensed from the Institute for Creation Research. Used by permission.

**The Tyndale New Testament (1534)** - Scholars have regarded the 1534 edition as Tyndale's definitive version of the New Testament. Though in 1535 he did issue another edition, the 1534 edition remains his crowning work. The text was entered by Mark Langley.

**The Geneva Bible 1599.** Text edited and provided by Mark Langley (mlangley1@cox.net).

**The Bishops' New Testament (1595).** This electronic edition is taken from a scanned 1595 Bishops' Bible, one of several Bibles produced during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, with at least 19 editions printed between the years 1568 and 1606. The text was entered by Mark Langley (mlangley1@cox.net).

**The English Darby Bible 1884/1890 (DBY),** a literal translation by John Nelson Darby (1800-1882), ASCII version Copyright © 1988-1997 by the Online Bible Foundation and Woodside Fellowship of Ontario, Canada. Licensed from the Institute for Creation Research. Used by permission.

**The English Revised Version (1885).** A translation of the Greek New Testament and Hebrew Old Testament into English, initiated by the convocation of Canterbury of the Church of England. The New Testament was published in 1881 and the complete Bible in 1885. The electronic text is copyright 2002 by Larry Nelson, Box 1681, Cathedral City, CA 92235. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

**The Holy Bible, American Standard Version 1901 (ASV),** similar to the English Revised Version of 1881-1885, both being based upon the Hebrew Masoretic text for the OT and upon the Westcott-Hort Greek text for the NT. The machine readable database Copyright © 1988 by the Ellis Enterprises, Inc., which by permission derived, re-formatted, and corrected the machine readable version of the ASV from the CompuBible Concordance Study System by NASSCO, Inc. of Lubbock, TX. Used by permission.

**The Seputagint with Apocrypha,** by Sir Lancelot C.L. Brenton, Samuel Bagster & Sons, London, 1851. Electronic text provided by The Common Man's Prospective, Copyright © 1999-2008 Ernest C. Marsh, [www.ecmarsh.com/lxx](http://www.ecmarsh.com/lxx). Used by permission.

**The Works of Flavius Josephus** - This addition includes the complete works of Josephus, fully parsed and lemmatized, as well as the 1828 Whiston English Translation. The Greek text is based on the 1890 Niese edition which is public domain.

**Robinson-Pierpont Majority Text GNT 1995.** Produced by Maurice A. Robinson and William G. Pierpont. Public Domain. Accented. The Robinson-Pierpont is a modern (1995) attempt at producing a reliable Majority Text version of the Greek New Testament

These books are free as the Lord provides. Please limit one per household. They are available from:

(Please note – At this time, this book is only available in digital format)  
([www.silicabiblechapel.com](http://www.silicabiblechapel.com))

Assembly Bookshelf  
P.O. Box 15086  
Sacramento, CA 95851 USA

*This book may be freely copied, duplicated or printed in any form, digital, paper, or any other format, in part or in whole—but if desired in part, only if reference is made to the whole. Permission is hereby freely granted—as long as it remains free.*

Copyright © 2022 by the Author

## Preface

How wonderful are the eighth and ninth chapters of the Gospel according to Matthew. The Deity of the LORD Jesus Christ is revealed and borne witness to by Matthew in his Gospel more than, perhaps, than in any other book of the New Testament, minus the writings of John. That is not to say the Paul does not bear witness to the Deity of Christ; indeed, he does, as do Mark and Luke and Peter, James and Jude! But Matthew bears witness to His Deity in many ways that the others do not, in that He emphasizes the fulfilment of the promise first made known to Adam and Eve, as revealed in Gen. 3:15, and borne witness to in Gen. 4:1. And then he emphasizes the fulfilment of the promise made to David in II Sam. 7:1-17, which fulfillment occurs when our LORD Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem.

And so, because of this most important testimony by Matthew in this regard, it should be noted that utmost care has been taken that all who might be quoted in this book are brethren in Christ who have remained faithful to the Historic Christian Faith, which Faith was first given to us by the Holy Spirit in Scripture through such ones as the apostle Matthew, as well as all the other apostles and prophets chosen by God to write Scripture. Since then the Church has obeyed the Scriptural injunction to build itself up on the most “Holy Faith” (Jude 1:20), faithfully bearing witness to it throughout the many centuries in different Creeds, Confessions, and Statements of Faith, from such early creeds as the Nicene Creed, and such later Confessions of Faith as the Westminster Confession of Faith 1646, and the London Confession of Faith of 1689, and then, finally, to all those many modern Statements of Faith that so many Churches also affirm today.

Statements of Faith, of course, are simply affirmations of those truths given to us by the apostles in Scripture regarding all those doctrines necessary for salvation. Paul tells us through Timothy the following in this regard—“Have an **outline of sound words**, which words thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.” (II Tim. 1:13 Darby)

Darby’s translation best reflects the meaning of the underlying Greek text, for the first word in the verse is the Greek word ὑποτύπωσις, which G. V. Wigram defines as a “*a sketch, delineation; a form, formula, presentment, sample.*”<sup>1</sup> And W. E. Vine says this regarding this same word: “HUPOTUPŌSIS (ὑποτύπωσις): **an outline, sketch** (akin to *hupotupoō*, “to delineate,” *hupo*, ‘under,’ and No. 3), is used metaphorically to denote *a pattern, example*, ‘form,’ in 2 Tim. 1:13, **of sound words** (RV, pattern); in 1 Tim. 1:16, ‘pattern’ and ‘ensample.’”<sup>2</sup>

Thus we can see that Darby's version better captures the nuance of the word Paul uses in II Tim. 1:13. The Holy Spirit wants us to have a **summary**, if you will, of those things taught by the apostles, an **outline** of those things we believe, a **formula** to which we can hold fast, that "mystery of the Faith" to which Paul also exhorted the deacons to hold fast. (However, perhaps, I should also mention that Paul is speaking of those fundamental doctrines of Scripture essential for salvation. I am afraid that some Churches have expanded their Summaries of the Faith into Confessions or Formulas that go far beyond what Paul originally desired or intended, thus turning such Summaries or Outlines that were meant to unite, into documents that divide!)

Nevertheless, the Church has always tried to obey this biblical admonition of the apostle Paul by keeping those essential doctrines of the Faith paramount in their Creeds, Confessions, Formulas, and Statements of Faith. Truly, this admonition of Paul became the basis for all Creeds, Confessions, and/or Statements of Faith in Church History.

Because of this, I have tried to my utmost to only quote from those in this book who have been faithful brothers in Christ who have not departed from what Paul calls—the mystery of the Faith—those *Outlines of Sound Words* from Scripture. In doing so, however, some may wonder why I quote from so many brothers from past centuries and not from more current brethren from our 21<sup>st</sup> century. The answer is simple. How could I bear witness to this wonderful testimony that Matthew has given us concerning the Deity of Christ, and then provide a quote from a more current Christian from the 21<sup>st</sup> century who has departed from that Historic Christian Faith in regard to some of the doctrines having to do with the Deity of Christ, as well as the Doctrine of the Verbal Plenary Inspiration of Scripture? It is not that I did not try. I would find one who would wax eloquent on a certain subject at hand, but then I would find out, after some investigation, such a one was not holding fast to that Historic Christian Faith in all its aspects, including that doctrine of Verbal Plenary Inspiration! It was most disheartening.

Unfortunately, I was only able to find a few current brethren to quote from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century who had not departed in certain aspects from that Faith. Now I know that fellow believers may be surprised that it seems so many today are departing from that Historic Christian Faith, for it is being done ever so slowly, one little step at a time, that many Christians do not even realize it is happening! But the fact that it is happening can be clearly seen by comparing, for example, most modern Statements of the Faith regarding the Blessed Trinity with

those of our ancient brothers of long ago. Certain aspects of the Faith have disappeared. For example, the Nicene Creed, which bore witness to Scriptures and that Faith once for all given to us by the apostles, bore witness to the truth that the LORD Jesus Christ is “the Only-Begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all time, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father.” Centuries later, we find the Westminster Confession of Faith still bearing witness to that aspect of the Faith, declaring that “the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding, the Son is eternally begotten of the Father.” And we find the Church of England, from long ago, declaring—“the Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took Man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance: so that two whole and perfect Natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very Man.”

Now, when this aspect of the Faith is looked for in so many modern Statements of Faith today, one will not find it. It has disappeared! No longer is it considered to be an essential doctrine that Christians need to believe. Why? Perhaps the answer to that cannot be answered to the satisfaction of all, but the fact still remains, this aspect of the Historic Christian Faith has disappeared from so many “Outlines of Sound Words!” One will have a hard time finding a witness to this Blessed Doctrine of the Only-Begotten in many of today's Statements of Faith today, whether it be a Statement of Faith of a Bible College, Seminary, or almost any Evangelical Church. Our ancient brethren held fast to that Faith passed on to them, but so many modern Evangelical Christians do not. They and other have departed from the Historic Christian Faith in this regard, just as Paul warned (I Tim. 4:1). And Church History has told us that departures in part, such as this, will become departures in whole, after a few generations. I am not saying that those who have departed in part today are not saved, for one cannot depart from the Faith, if they were not first in the Faith, but they are departing from the Faith that we are commanded to believe; and their departure in many cases is because they embraced the philosophical mindset of the world that rejects that which cannot be explained for that which can be explained. In other words, in so many cases rationalism is replacing faith, and human wisdom is replacing Divine Revelation.

If one has not recognized this departure today through such things as our Statements of Faith, another way one can recognize this slow departure away from the Historic Christian Faith is to look at so many of our new translations today and see how they have changed and redefined

important verses regarding the Doctrine of the Only-Begotten in such a way that it minimizes the wonderful truths mentioned above in first the Nicene Creed and then in later Confessions of Faith.

Our ancient brothers of centuries past bore witness to the Faith regarding the nature of our Lord Jesus Christ, because of such verses as John 1:14; 3:16; 8:42; Micah 5:2, which verses declared Him to be “the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth(Joh 1:14 KJV), the Son who “proceeded forth and came from God” (John 8:42 KJV), because it was “God who so loved the world that He gave His Only-Begotten Son” (John 3:16)— whom Micah confessed was the Son “whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2). Now, with these important verses in mind, look now to various versions produced in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century, and one will find in so many cases those very truths obscured.

For two thousand years translations of God’s Word—from the early Latin Vulgate, to the early German editions of the Bible, to all the early English translations of the Bible, from Tyndale, to the Geneva Bible, to the Bishops’ Bible, to the King James Version, to the English Revised Version of 1885, to early 20<sup>th</sup> century versions such as the American Standard Version, and even up to New American Standard Bible of 1977 and 1995, as well as the New Kings James Version of 1982—have continued to faithfully bear witness to these very doctrines regarding the Only-Begotten and His eternal begetting from the Father, and His procession, His going forth from everlasting. But now look to so many of the other modern versions that are so popular today and you will see that doctrine minimized, obscured, and in some cases completely nullified by changing the meaning, for instance, of Only-begotten, bespeaking our the Son’s eternal begetting of the Father, into a meaning of “one and only,” “one of a kind,” or even just “only,” completely undermining any thought of “procession,” or His “eternal begetting” from the Father. By their claim of now discovering to true meaning of the Greek word behind the translation “Only-Begotten,” they are really saying that all the godly saints for nearly two thousand years were ignorant to the true meaning of this Greek word and so had misled the Church in regard to the Blessed Doctrine of the Only-Begotten for now going on for nearly 2000 years. What they are saying by their assertions is that it took modern translators, supposedly being led by the Holy Spirit, to discover and then to finally declare to the Church, through their modern translations, the truth regarding the true nature of the Eternal Son of God. One well-known translator even declared that the Church had been repeating an error regarding this aspect of the Historic Christian Faith for 1500 years. He erroneously blamed Jerome’s Latin Vulgate for this, but what John



made known to the Church in such verses as John 1:14, 18 and 3:16, regarding ὁ μονογενὴς υἱός (the Only-Begotten Son) had already been confessed by godly men for centuries before Jerome. But he does not discuss that! Imagine that, he said they, the modern translators, had simply “corrected an error repeated for fifteen centuries.” Does that no men then that the Holy Spirit left the Church bereft of the true Faith regarding the truth of the Only Begotten Son of God, because so many godly men of God, including those whose mother tongue was Greek, were deceived, not understanding the true meaning of the Greek word μονογενής! But they today, whose mother tongue is not Greek, have discovered the true meaning of the word after fifteen hundred years!

Beloved, this may be the reason those truths are no longer found in so many Statements of Faith of today. The doctrine has been obscured and removed from the minds of many Christians today by translations that have departed from the Historic Christian Faith regarding He who was begotten not made, the Only Begotten Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father from everlasting!

And so, this is why I had to keep searching backward until I could find brethren who had not abandoned this wonderful aspect of the Historic Christian Faith regarding the Son of God. For if I did not, I would be guilty of minimizing Matthew’s wonderful testimony regarding the doctrine of the Eternal Son of God, the Man, who is the LORD! It is so sad what has happened to the Evangelical Church in my short lifetime upon the earth. We must always remember to pray for our brethren who have fallen away from the Faith, remembering that they are brethren, for as I mentioned above, one cannot fall away from the Faith if they were not first in the Faith. But in so praying, we must not forget that the LORD Jesus Christ is our first love, and our loyalty belongs first to Him, and not to those brethren who have departed from the Faith, no matter how well respected and loved they are, and no matter if they wax so eloquent on so many other doctrines of the Bible, for they are condoning a departure from one aspect of the Blessed Nature of the Son of God, so how could they be used to bear witness to another aspect of the same Blessed Nature of the Son of God; it would legitimize and condone their departure and would minimize the faithful and wonderful testimony of Matthew regarding Jesus the Son of God.

And so that is why I had to look so far backward for brethren who still held firm to the truth of the Only-Begotten Son of God who was made flesh and dwelt among us.. But in doing so, I feel I should also mention that because I had to look back to so many brothers from long ago, who came from so many different Churches in so many different parts of the world (that, unfortunately, denominated themselves over time), that I

could not agree with all their other opinions regarding other doctrines of the Bible not having to do with the Faith. So please understand that simply because I quote from them does not mean I endorse their other opinions regarding other doctrines of Scripture not having to do with those essential doctrines of the Faith. I can agree with them on those essential doctrines of the Faith that they affirm; with them I say amen and amen, for the Faith must ever remain inviolate, but on those other doctrines not having to do with the Historic Christian Faith, I, and we all, have liberty from Christ to disagree. And with some, especially in regard to some of their views, I completely and absolutely disagree.

For example, Martin Luther was firm in the Faith, and since he dealt with the translation of certain verses in Scripture having to do with the incarnation of the Only Begotten Son of God in the fulness of time, I provide some quotes from him because he was the one who God chose to translate the Scriptures into the German language; no doubt, God greatly used him in that endeavor, and also used him to restore the doctrine of justification by faith to the Church. Of him, J. N. Darby once said, "When God at the beginning of the sixteenth century caused His light to break forth on a world deeply sunk in darkness, Martin Luther was the instrument specially chosen by Him to spread the truth in Germany."<sup>3</sup> Yet it should be mentioned that just because God used him in those two things that does not mean he was necessarily right on everything else he taught or did, especially in regard to his unfortunate views regarding the children of Israel in his latter years. In that he was absolutely wrong and terribly in need of God's forgiveness. How sinful we all can be before God. His previous acts of righteousness could never justify his subsequent acts of wickedness toward the children of Israel. However, there is one act of righteousness that can undo any act of wickedness that any man or woman might do, and that one act of righteousness that can forgive all our sins, including Martin Luther's sin in his latter years, is the death of Christ upon the cross wherein His blood was shed for the remission of sins, forgiving anyone who believes (Rom. 5:1,18; Heb. 7:25-27; 9:7-14; 10:10-17; 1 John 1:7-10). Or consider another brother in Christ, John Calvin, with whom we can also respectfully disagree in regard to other doctrines not having to do with the Faith, and also with other things he did. But who can doubt that he wonderfully bore witness to the doctrine of the Incarnation of the Only-Begotten Son of God in his writings, and, because of his witness in that, I also gladly quoted from him; he was a faithful brother who held fast to the Faith. But there are other things that he taught with which I could not agree. The same can be said with such brothers as Henry Alford, or Francis Tinsley Bassett from the Church of England, or John Gill, a wonderful brother in Christ,

among those Christians called Baptist; he also wonderfully bore witness to the Historic Christian Faith, and so I also happily provided some of his insights regarding the Son of God, as he also has much to offer to the body of Christ, being a faithful brother in the LORD.

And, finally, the same can also be said about our wonderful brother John Nelson Darby, from whose Bible version I quote often. I dare say that I can say “amen” to more of views than to the views of other brothers mentioned above, because he and such ones as A. N. Groves, J. G. Bellet, Edward Cronin, Lord Congleton (John Parnell), George Muller, Henry Craik, R. C. Chapman, and many others like them, were all used of God to restore to the Church those precious New Testament Assembly Principles of Gathering that were first instituted for the Church by the apostles in those early days after Pentecost. He used those brothers to restore the truths of gathering in the Name of the LORD Jesus Christ, as well as Dispensational truth and Prophetic truth, as years before He used Martin Luther to restore the truth of justification by faith to the Church. But even though I can therefore say “amen” to so much that our brother Darby taught, he too held to some views with which I am sure many who loved him could not in clear conscience equally hold onto—such views, for example, regarding who can be received at the Lord’s Table, and/or, as another example, his belief in infant baptism.

So as with him, so too with all the others mentioned above, I gladly provided quotes from them, without having to agree with all their other views, adding their witness to the witness of Matthew, thereby showing how the Church has always borne witness to what Matthew revealed in his Gospel, regarding the nature of Christ, the Son of God.

I find it an honor and privilege to be able to fellowship with other brothers of long ago who were faithful to the Lord in their witness to the Faith, even though we might hold to different views on other doctrines not necessary for salvation, which doctrines, though, are still important. In such cases, I would hope, that as I am not claiming infallibility in my views regarding those other doctrines, they too, if they were still alive, would not claim infallibility in their views. I would hope that in those doctrines not having to do with the Faith, we would both respect each other’s opinions, knowing that we have liberty from Christ to disagree in such non-essential, though important doctrines; but in those doctrines having to do with the Faith we have no liberty to disagree!

A. N. Groves once shared in fellowship the following concerning those with whom we may disagree on those non-essential doctrines, but do agree on those essential doctrines of the Historic Christian Faith. He is not speaking about fellowship with those who have departed from the

Faith, but with those who are still in the Faith, but who may hold different views than we do, on other doctrines.

He shows the importance of keeping our commitment to the unwavering to the truth of the written Word of God, while never losing our love toward our brethren, just as Jesus commanded, and the Holy Spirit affirmed, through the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. Our brother Groves shared the following as an exhortation to all believers who love the Lord. His views will help explain my views as to why I gladly quoted so many other brothers in the Lord.

“My [original] principles...are ten times more precious to me now than they were all those years ago when I first discovered them in the Word of God, especially since I have now practiced them in many different situations within the confused state of the Church. Those principles have allowed me to view every Christian and group of Christians with the standing God gives them, without ever having to countenance any of the error that might be in their midst. I always understood our principle of fellowship to be this—the possession of the common life, found in the common cleansing of the blood of Christ (for the life is in the blood); these were our early thoughts, these were our first principles, and they still are to me. I have not abandoned them as I have matured in my Christian life.”<sup>4</sup>

Granted, this openness of ministry might be the more difficult means of witness (than one of simply preaching against error with words, or keeping oneself separated from others), but it possesses more power over the hearts of men and provides a better opportunity to bless them. I know, dear brother, you know this, because of your own experiences in this type of witness.

However, the moment we abandon this principle of receiving all who Christ receives because of our possession of the common life of Jesus, and rather, adopt a position of separating ourselves from other brethren [who are still sound in the Faith], with a mindset that only preaches against their errors with words [regarding errors or doctrines that have nothing to do with the essential doctrines of the Faith], then, at that moment, every Christian, or every group of Christians, will become suspect. The first thought in our mind will become, “What needs to be set straight in our brother’s life, or what false interpretation needs to be corrected.” No longer will it be enough to examine whether or not they are Christians, rather a standard will be set up where all their conduct and principles will first have to be examined and approved before they can be received. This mindset will *inevitably lead to the most bigoted and narrow-minded in our midst becoming the judges of all*. Why? Because it’s not in *the nature of a bigoted and narrow-minded conscience to yield*. Thus, those among us with an open and enlarged heart will find themselves forced to yield to the strictures of narrow-minded consciences.<sup>5</sup>

Every man-made traditional system will always, by definition, be narrower or wider than the truth of God’s Word, so I will always have to stop short or go

beyond its requirements, but in all this I would INFINITELY RATHER BEAR with all their errors, than be required to SEPARATE from THEIR GOOD! <sup>6</sup>

There is no truth more established in my own mind than this: if one wishes to have the most power in leading fellow believers out of error and into truth, one must stand before those brethren as one who is genuinely filled with the desire that they grow in grace (rather than being one who simply stands before them always judging their motives and slightest failures)—this proves to them that your heart is given over to them with a love that will cover a multitude of sins. It also proves to them that you have their best interest at heart, and that your heart is not simply filled with righteous and arbitrary judgments. <sup>7</sup>

Naturally, I will always unite together in a constant and fixed fellowship with those in whom I see and feel the life and power of God most fully manifested. But, at the same time, I will always be free to visit and to minister to brethren in other churches, where, indeed, I might find much disorder, just as I will always be free to visit the houses of my friends, friends who might not govern their households in the same way that I might govern them. <sup>8</sup>

I therefore know no distinction, but am ready to break the bread and drink the cup of holy joy with all who love the Lord and will not lightly speak evil of His name. I feel every saint to be a holy person, because Christ dwells in him...and though his faults be as many as the hairs of his head, my duty still is, with my Lord, to join him as a member of the mystical body, and to hold communion and fellowship with him in any work of the Lord in which he may be engaged. <sup>9</sup>

“As to our liberty in Christ to worship with any congregation under heaven where He manifests himself to bless and to save, can there be in any Christian mind a doubt? If my Lord should say to me, in any congregation of the almost unnumbered sections of the Church, “What dost thou here?” I would reply, “Seeing Thou wert here to save and sanctify, I felt it safe to be with Thee.” If He again said, as perhaps He may among most of us, “Didst thou not see abominations here, an admixture of that which was unscriptural, and the absence of that which was scriptural, and in some points error, at least in your judgment?” my answer would be, “Yea, Lord, but I dared not call that place unholy where Thou wert present to bless, nor by refusing communion in worship reject those as unholy whom Thou hadst by Thy saving power evidently sanctified and set apart for Thine own.” <sup>10</sup>

This is the mindset with which I tried to approach this portion of my commentary on Matthew, because it dealt with the important doctrine of the incarnation of our LORD and the Deity of Christ. I wanted to show how this important doctrine had been held throughout Church History unto the present and so I gladly quoted from other brothers in Christ from long ago up to the present. I wish I could have provided more quotes from brothers nearer to our own time; but so many who explained things so clearly, so much so that I wanted include them in the book, I found out after a little investigation, they had departed from that Historic Christian Faith in regard to the doctrine of the Eternal Generation of the

Son from God the Father. Therefore I felt it would undermine the testimony of so many other godly men throughout Church History, who had not departed from that truth, let alone the important testimony of Matthew himself regarding the Son of the Man, the Son of God, that I refused to use those quotes. However, there were a few from the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century who did hold fast the Faith, that I gladly quoted from them, such ones, for example, as F. F. Bruce, J. Vernon McGee, and, of course, William MacDonald. (Also I should say as an aside, since I quoted from many who were from long ago, please forgive me if one discovers something I missed regarding their views regarding the Historic Christian Faith, especially in regard to the Blessed Trinity and the doctrine of the Only-Begotten Son. As I said, tried to my utmost to only quote from those who remained true to the Faith, wherein I looked for actual statements of theirs wherein they affirmed it. But please realize that when quoting from those from long ago, it is hard to examine all their writings. Because of that, I also read brief biographies about them to make sure they were of good report. With that said, I genuinely feel they all were sound in the Faith, but with that being said, do not hesitate to make sure for yourself, for we are all commanded to try the spirits, so as to never give a God speed to one who does not remain in the doctrine of Christ—I John 4:1; II John 1:9-11.)

In closing, Philip Schaff once spoke of a saying that it seems has been misapplied to Augustine; instead, apparently, it seems it was made by one during a period of great upheaval in the Church in the early 1600's. Philip Schaff provides the saying in his *History of the Christian Church*, which I think is very apropos to use for today in our spiritual battle regarding the Historic Christian Faith amongst those who are Evangelical in witness. His statement regarding this saying was as follows: "It was during the fiercest dogmatic controversies...that a prophetic voice whispered to future generations the watchword of Christian peacemakers, which was unheeded in a century of intolerance, and forgotten in a century of indifference, but resounds with increased force in a century of revival and re-union: IN ESSENTIALS UNITY, IN NON-ESSENTIALS LIBERTY, IN ALL THINGS CHARITY." Amen and amen.<sup>11</sup>

BPH

Table of Contents

	Page
Preface . . . . .	ii
Matthew 8: 1-34	
8:1 . . . . .	1
8:2 . . . . .	4
8:3 . . . . .	6
8:4 . . . . .	8
8:5-7. . . . .	9
8:8-10 . . . . .	14
8:11-12 . . . . .	17
8:13 . . . . .	70
8:14-17 . . . . .	72
8:18 . . . . .	96
8:19-20 . . . . .	101
8:21-22 . . . . .	110
8:23-25 . . . . .	137
8:26-27 . . . . .	140
8:28 <sup>a</sup> . . . . .	158
8:28 <sup>b</sup> -32. . . . .	183
8:33-34 . . . . .	211

# Matthew

## Matthew 8

Before we begin chapter 8, perhaps it might help us if we point out the contrast being made by Matthew with the following chapters with those previous chapters we have just finished studying.

In Matthew 5-7 we had the “sayings,” the teachings of Jesus. Beginning with this chapter we have the “doings” of Jesus.

Jesus finished His Sermon on the Mount with the exhortation that “whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand” (Matt. 7:24, 26). This chapter and the next will practically show forth how those truths that He taught were to be done in righteousness.

Additionally, the following chapters will bear witness to the truths He taught about Himself. It will show forth the truths regarding His Person, i.e. the Son of the Man—the LORD, the Son of David, Jesus Christ, God manifested in the flesh.

And, finally, these chapters will also demonstrate the truth regarding how false prophets would be known by their “fruits.”<sup>a</sup> And so, in that light, Matthew will also show forth the true fruits of the true Prophet of God, the Christ, He that was greater than all the prophets of the Old Testament, yea, He that was none other than the Man, the LORD Jehovah Himself, just as He claimed in His Sermon.

### **8:1 When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.**

When we come to this verse, such versions as the NASB77\* and the ERV (English Revised Version of 1885) provide the reader a consistency in translation in order to show the connection of Matthew 7:28 and Matthew 8:1. If one notices in the KJV, which we are using in this book, verse 1 translates the Greek word

<sup>a</sup> **Matt. 7:15-16a**  
Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. **Ye shall know them by their fruits.** KJV

\*Because of an unfortunate change in the NASB 2020, regarding the Historic Christian Faith in regard to the doctrine of Only Begotten Son of God, all references to the NASB will either be from the 1977 edition or the 1995 edition, which editions were still faithful to the Faith in regard to that aspect of the Faith delivered unto us. It is unfortunate a change was made in this regard. And so, with regret, I cannot recommend their new edition, the NASB 2020, and will only use the NASB77 or NASB95.



## Matthew

ὄχλος as multitude, whereas in Matthew 7:28 the same word is translated “people.” Now, both translations are an appropriate translation for that Greek word, but by not translating both instances of the Greek word the same in both verses, it is obscuring the fact that Matthew is stating that the “multitudes” in 8:1 are of same “multitudes” that heard our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount.

Thus, with a consistency of translation as found in the NASB77 or the ERV, we see that a great number from among the people who heard His sermon did not want to leave the Lord Jesus, and so many from that multitude followed Him on down from the mount, wherein He taught. The significance in this is to realize that they had heard His teaching, with its assertions to His Deity, and yet they still followed Him, perhaps, with the notion that He, indeed, was the Messiah of Israel, although all did not yet fully understand all that was contained in that title. Matthew all the more seems to imply this with his use of the word translated “followed.” Up to this point the word was used by him only three other times in his gospel. It was used in Matt. 4:20 of Peter and Andrew who responded to the Lord’s call to follow Him, and it was used in Matt. 4:22 of John and James, and then, finally, in Matt. 4:25 referring to the great multitudes who, having heard His teaching and preaching still followed Him, seeking to learn more, as well as to have their sick ones healed. The implication is that at least they did not oppose Jesus and His teaching as was done by the Chief Priest and the Pharisees.

Thus, when we come to Matt. 8:1, and Matthew tells us that they “followed” Jesus down from the mount, the implication is that, among other reasons, they followed Jesus because they believed in Him, despite His assertions of His Divine Nature in His Sermon on the Mount. If one remembers, the Lord clearly implied His Deity in Matt.7:21-22, claiming the title “Lord Lord” (see pages 324-339 in the Gospel According to Matthew, Part II). The following two charts from Part II demonstrate this.

# Matthew

**Fig. 1—The Appellation Lord Lord Revised**

NEW TESTAMENT	
Greek	English
<b>Matthew 7:21</b> Οὐ πᾶς ὁ λέγων μοι, <b>κύριε, κύριε</b> , εἰσελεύσεται εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν· ἀλλ' ὁ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρός μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς.	<b>Matthew 7:21</b> Not every one that saith unto me, <b>Lord, Lord</b> , shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. KJV
OLD TESTAMENT	
Greek LXX (with Hebrew names)	English (KJV adapted)
<b>Deuteronomy 9:26</b> καὶ εὐξάμην πρὸς τὸν θεὸν καὶ εἶπα <b>κύριε κύριε</b> ( <b>Jehovah Elohim</b> ) βασιλεῦ τῶν θεῶν...”	<b>Deuteronomy 9:26</b> “And I prayed to God and said <b>LORD God</b> , King of the gods...”
<b>Judges 16:28</b> καὶ ἐβόησεν Σαμψων πρὸς κύριον καὶ εἶπεν <b>κύριε κύριε</b> ( <b>Adonai Jehovah</b> ) μνήσθητί μου ”	<b>Judges 16:28</b> And Samson cried before the Lord, and said, <b>Lord LORD</b> , remember me...”
<b>I Chronicles 17:24</b> λεγόντων <b>κύριε κύριε</b> ( <b>Jehovah Elohim</b> ) παντοκράτωρ θεὸς Ισραηλ..	<b>I Chronicles 17:24</b> “saying, <b>LORD Lord</b> Almighty God of Israel...” (Brenton’s LXX Version)
<b>Psalms 108:21 (109:21)</b> καὶ σύ <b>κύριε κύριε</b> ( <b>Jehovah Adonai</b> ) ποίησον μετ’ ἐμοῦ ἔλεος ἕνεκεν τοῦ ὀνόματός σου ὅτι χρηστὸν τὸ ἔλεός σου	<b>Psalms 109:21</b> But thou, O <b>LORD Lord</b> deal <i>mercifully</i> with me, for thy name’s sake: for thy mercy is good. (Brenton’s LXX Version—adapted)
<b>Psalms 139:8 (140:7)</b> <b>κύριε κύριε</b> ( <b>Jehovah Adonai</b> ) δύναμις τῆς σωτηρίας μου ...”	<b>Psalms 140:7</b> “ <b>LORD Lord</b> , power of my salvation...”
<b>Psalms 140:8 (141:8)</b> ὅτι πρὸς σέ <b>κύριε κύριε</b> ( <b>Jehovah Adonai</b> ) οἱ ὀφθαλμοί μου ἐπὶ σέ ἤλπισα	<b>Psalms 141:8</b> Because, <b>LORD Lord</b> , towards you are mine eyes; upon you I hope...”

**Fig. 2—The Appellation Lord Lord used in Ezekiel in the Greek LXX**

<b>Eze 12:10</b>	“Say to them, Thus saith the <b>Lord Lord</b> ...”
<b>Eze 13:20</b>	“Therefore thus saith the <b>Lord Lord</b> ...”
<b>Eze 14:6</b>	“... Thus saith the <b>Lord Lord</b> ...”
<b>Eze 20:39</b>	“...thus saith the <b>Lord Lord</b> ...”
<b>Eze 21:13</b>	“... it shall not be, saith the <b>Lord Lord</b> .”
<b>Eze 22:3</b>	“...Thus saith the <b>Lord Lord</b> ...”
<b>Eze 22:31</b>	“... saith the <b>Lord Lord</b> .”
<b>Eze 23:28</b>	“Wherefore thus saith the <b>Lord Lord</b> .”
<b>Eze 23:46</b>	“Thus saith the <b>Lord Lord</b> ...”
<b>Eze 26:15</b>	“For thus saith the <b>Lord Lord</b> ...”
<b>Eze 26:19</b>	“For thus saith the <b>Lord Lord</b> ...”
<b>Eze 26:21</b>	“...no more forever, saith the <b>Lord Lord</b> ...”
<b>Eze 28:12</b>	“...Thus saith the <b>Lord Lord</b> ...”
<b>Eze 28:25</b>	“Thus saith the <b>Lord Lord</b> ...”
<b>Eze 29:19</b>	“Thus saith the <b>Lord Lord</b> ...”
<b>Eze 34:8</b>	“As I live, saith the <b>Lord Lord</b> ...”
<b>Eze 34:10</b>	“Thus saith the <b>Lord Lord</b> ...”
<b>Eze 36:2</b>	“Thus saith the <b>Lord Lord</b> ...”
<b>Eze 36:3</b>	“...Thus saith the <b>Lord Lord</b> ...”
<b>Eze 36:5</b>	“Therefore, thus saith the <b>Lord Lord</b> ...”
<b>Eze 38:3</b>	“... Thus saith the <b>Lord Lord</b> ...”
<b>Eze 38:10</b>	“Thus saith the <b>Lord Lord</b> ...”
<b>Eze 38:17</b>	“Thus saith the <b>Lord Lord</b> ...”

In this light, we will now see how the Holy Spirit in this chapter will continue to affirm that truth regarding the affirmations of Deity by our Lord Jesus Christ in His Sermon on the Mount, beginning with verse 2, as well as how the *doings* of Jesus will demonstrate His love, mercy and righteousness.

**8:2 And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.**

In this verse we see that Matthew, or I should say the Holy Spirit will be using the same word for worship that the Holy Spirit used when speaking of our Lord’s declaration to Satan that only the LORD

## Matthew

God is to be worshipped (Matt. 4:10; cf. also Matt. 14:33; 28:9 and Rev. 22:8-9).<sup>b</sup> Thus, within the unfolding context, one would be safe in concluding that Matthew used the story of the leper in this verse to affirm the Deity of the Lord Jesus that was implied and then clearly stated in our Lord's teachings as found in chapters 5-7.

The leper clearly falls down and worships Jesus and in that act calls Him Lord. Now, if we were to take this verse out of context, one could claim the leper was using a title of human respect to one with authority. But, because Matthew implies the leper was one of the multitude that heard Jesus teach, and so heard Him refer to Himself as Lord Lord, and because Matthew uses the word worship, which Jesus says is reserved only for God, Matthew is at least suggesting that the leper believed Jesus' affirmation of Deity, and so worshipped Him, calling Him Lord, which, in the Jewish mind, under certain contexts, would refer to none other than Jehovah of the Old Testament, i.e. LORD. Indeed, in most cases within the New Testament, the name Lord was used as a reference, not to a human personage in authority, but rather as a reference to Deity, either the Father or the Son, depending on the context.

Edward Bickersteth in his classic work on the Trinity mentions the following about the use of the title or name Lord (Κύριος) in the New Testament.

The word *Kurios* (Jehovah in Old Test.) occurs 737 times in the New Testament – of these, in 18 instances it is confessedly applied to man or men. In 54 instances it appears in the discourses and parables of Christ, where the master, described as Lord, represents or typifies the Father or himself: and in 665 cases, the vast remainder, it is applied indiscriminately to the Eternal Father or to the Son.”<sup>12</sup>

And so, since in this chapter it is used of Jesus, it is being used as a reference to the Son's Deity, to His being Jehovah of the Old Testament as He declared in His Sermon on the Mount.

This is further confirmed when the leper says,

<sup>b</sup> **Matt. 4:10** Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. KJV

**Matt. 14:33** Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God. KJV

**Matt. 28:9** And as they went to tell his disciples, behold Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

**Rev. 22:8-9** And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. <sup>9</sup> Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God. KJV

## Matthew

“Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean” as we will discuss in the next verse.

**8:3 And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.**

We saw in the previous verse that the leper called Jesus LORD. In all of Scripture no one ever healed a leper by his own will or desire. Lepers had only been immediately healed by the will of the Jehovah, i.e. the LORD. We see this in the first mention of leprosy in the Bible in Exodus 4:6. Moses was given two signs to show that the LORD God has spoken to him and had appeared to him. The second sign was that Moses would put his hand in his robe, contracting leprosy, and then put it in again to find out, upon removing it from his robe, that he had been healed by the command of the LORD, meaning by His will and word. This was to be a sign that the LORD was the One that sent him (see Ex 4:6-8).<sup>c</sup>

The next instance that showed it was only by the will of the Lord that one could be healed of leprosy was found in the story of Miriam (see Num. 12:1-2). After the Lord struck her with leprosy in the story we see that Aaron implores Moses to not lay this sin to their charge, or to let the leprosy remain in their sister. In response to this we see that Moses writes in the book of the Law that he pleaded with the LORD to heal his sister, showing that Moses was not the one who could heal her, but only God.<sup>d</sup>

The last occasion was in the story of Naaman and Elisha the prophet (II Kings 5:1-17). The story clearly indicates that it was the LORD God who healed Naaman, even though it was done at the word of Elisha the prophet. The king of Israel states this in II Kings 5:7 and Naaman clearly understood it from his own words in verse 11, although he was upset that Elisha did not directly call of the name of the LORD to heal him in his presence. But, after complying with the Elisha's command, Naaman clearly affirmed that it is was the LORD God in Israel that healed him,

<sup>c</sup> **Exodus 4:6-8**

And the LORD said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. <sup>7</sup> And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his *other* flesh. <sup>8</sup> Then it will be, if they do not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign, that they may believe the message of the latter sign. KJV

<sup>d</sup> **Numbers 12:13**

And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee. KJV

## Matthew

which Elisha confirmed by not receiving payment for something he did not do, thereby also confirming to Naaman it was the LORD who healed him, before whom Elisha stood (II Kings 5: 15-16; also cf. Luke 4:27).

**II Kings 5:15-16** And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that *there is* no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant. <sup>16</sup> But he said, As the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take *it*; but he refused. KJV

Jesus, of course, knew this, as did the leper and as did all the people who stood nearby. Leprosy was healed in Israel only by the will of God as Moses so clearly revealed in the story of himself and in the story of his sister, where, in answer to the plea of Aaron, Moses cries out to God to heal Miriam.

But notice that when Jesus was asked to be healed by the leper, Jesus did not say something back to him like, “Only the LORD can heal leprosy.” Nor do we read that in response to this plea of the leper that Jesus then cried out unto the LORD, in a manner similar to Moses cry before Him, “Heal him now, O God, I beseech thee.” Why?—because Jesus Himself was the LORD God who could heal, and Jesus makes this clear that He was the LORD God who could heal, by simply saying, “I will; be thou clean!”

Therefore, Matthew is affirming through the story of the leper that Jesus was indeed the LORD God of Israel manifested in human flesh. Moreover it implies the leper believed this since he did not request that Jesus pray to God that he be healed as Aaron did to Moses or as Naaman expected of Elisha (II Kings 5:11).<sup>e</sup> Rather, he implies his belief by directly declaring, “Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.” And, Jesus bears witness to the faith of the leper, by not asking the question referenced above, as Jesus had to do with the rich young ruler who did not realize Jesus was the LORD God manifested in the flesh, as seen in Matt. 19:16-17.<sup>f</sup> Clearly Matthew is

### <sup>e</sup> II Kings 5:11

But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, **and call on the name of the LORD his God**, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. KJV

### <sup>f</sup> Matt. 19:16-17

And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? <sup>17</sup> And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is*, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. KJV

## Matthew

providing evidence that Jesus was none other than the LORD God of Israel, manifested in human flesh, and that He was making it known to the people by His words and actions.

This does not imply the leper or others understood the “how” of this, but it does demonstrate a first century Jew was not adverse to such a thought, for, after all, every Israelite was aware of the many “Theophanies” of the Old Testament. They well understood that the LORD appeared on earth to ones such as Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, and Manoah.

Finally, before moving to the next verse, it should be said that sometimes faith is shown, not by stating to others something like, “God is going to answer my prayer in the affirmative. I have faith that He will.” Of course, if a prayer is based upon a promise of God, we can boldly say so in advance, for through the promise of God, God has already made known He will. But sometimes faith is also exercised in saying simply, “if thou wilt,” or, “not my will, but thine be done,” for it shows faith in the power of God, the sovereignty of God, and the goodness and love of God to do that which is right for us. So, in cases where we do not know God’s will on a matter, it is still a bold prayer of faith to ask, “If thou wilt.”

**8:4 And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.**

In the previous verse Matthew shows us that Jesus was none other than the LORD of the Old Testament. In this verse, he further affirms this for Jesus tells the healed leper to go and show himself to the priest as Moses commanded. Why? How does this further show His Deity? The answer is found by realizing that Moses did not make up the regulations for leprosy; it was the LORD who gave him the regulations to follow. Thus, since God can never contradict Himself, the fact that Jesus commanded the leper to do what Moses commanded, confirms that

## Matthew

Jesus is revealing that He was speaking as the LORD God of Israel, as he first spoke to Moses all those years before. In the Law, Moses clearly revealed that the words he gave to Israel were the words and commands of the LORD, Jehovah, Himself—

**Deuteronomy 5:28, 31** And the LORD heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the LORD said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken.<sup>31</sup> But as for thee, stand thou here by me, **and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which thou shalt teach them,** that they may do *them* in the land which I give them to possess it. KJV

Therefore, all Jesus was “doing,” not just “saying,” was consistent with the previous commands He first gave to Moses, wherein He told Moses to make sure the people followed the statutes regarding leprosy.

**Deuteronomy 24:8** Take heed in the plague of leprosy, that thou observe diligently, and do according to all that the priests the Levites shall teach you: as I commanded them, *so ye shall observe to do.* KJV

Finally, Matthew also shows through this story that Jesus, in accordance with what He taught, did not come to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but He came to fulfil.

**8:5 And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,  
8:6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.  
8:7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.**

It is interesting to note that after the Lord Jesus heals the leper, who was of the house of Israel, that the Lord now heals a centurion’s servant, representing the Gentile world. Why? Why did Matthew set these two healings in juxtaposition? I believe it is because he was continuing to show that Jesus of Nazareth was



## Matthew

the Jehovah of the Old Testament.

Isaiah reveals the following about the Messiah in his prophecy concerning His work—

**Isaiah 49:6** And he said, 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. KJV

Isaiah tells us that the Messiah would also be a light for the Gentiles, to bring His salvation to all the earth. This sets the stage for what unfolds in the next few verses. The Lord will now demonstrate the true character of righteousness that He taught in His Sermon, in contradistinction to the righteousness of the Pharisees, and of others in Israel, like the Chief Priest, who excluded the Gentiles from God's favour. In so doing, He will also demonstrate that the love of God extends to all mankind without partiality. This is first demonstrated by His willingness to go to the house of a Gentile (cf. Luke 7:6).

The Mishnah, which contains many of those traditions of the elders that Jesus referenced in Mark 7:5,<sup>g</sup> as well as many Rabbinic and Pharisaical interpretations of the Oral Law, stated: "The dwelling-places of gentiles are unclean."<sup>13</sup> And in the Tractate Oholoth 18.10 they delineate it more minutely, stating: "To ten places the rules about the dwelling-places of gentiles do not apply: the tents of the Arabs, field-huts, simple tents, fruit-shelters, summer houses, a gate-house, the open space in a courtyard, a bath-house, an armoury, and the camping-grounds of the legions."<sup>14</sup>

Of course, one of the latter references, regarding the "open space in a courtyard," explains why the chief priest could talk with Pilate outside his dwelling place, which was called *The Praetorium* (Hall of Judgment in KJV). Since *The Praetorium* (Latin for Palace) was the dwelling place of Pilate, the Jews would not enter his palace, being a house of a Gentile. However, the "open space" outside that dwelling place, would not be considered a dwelling space of a Gentile and so

<sup>g</sup> **Mark 7:5** Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? KJV

## Matthew

would explain why the Jews could stand there and asked Pilate to come out to speak to them. This place outside the *Praetorium* in John 19:13, apparently was called *The Pavement*, being the place where he sat down in judgment. †

**John 19:13-15** When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the Judgment Seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. <sup>14</sup> And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! <sup>15</sup> But they cried out, Away with *him*, away with *him*, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. KJV

It is almost as if Jesus is openly demonstrating how His righteousness surpasses the righteousness of the Pharisees, as He taught in His Sermon, for true righteousness will never contradict the Word of God, and the Pharisees would many times contradict the Word of God, and so would make void the Word of God by their traditions.<sup>h</sup> Nowhere did the Law forbid one of the house of Israel to enter into the house of a Gentile. It is almost as if Jesus is saying, “You have heard it say, “Do not go into a house of a Gentile, but I say unto you....”

This is self-evident, for obviously our Lord would never consider doing anything that was forbidden by the Law. The Law never required such separation from the Gentiles as the Pharisees taught. It was one of those man-made traditions and restrictions that were added to Scripture that Jesus came to nullify, as they were an example of a righteousness that was deficient and full of spiritual pride, as well as being something that would hinder the spread of salvation to a lost world.

Moreover, by directing his readers hearts to the Isaiah's Messianic prophecy through his juxtaposition of this healing of a Gentile with that of an Israelite, he also is pointing to the fact that the Messiah, and so Jesus, is none other than the LORD, the Jehovah of the Old Testament who would arise as a light to Israel

† Some believe *The Pavement* referred to the place in the Temple complex wherein the Sanhedrin would sit in order to decide capital offenses. But I believe it is unlikely that this is the place referred to by John. Even though it is called in Hebrew *Gabbatha*, which some equate with this place used by the Sanhedrin, (called Gab, or Gazith), it could just as well be a Hebrew term designating that raised platform where Pilate would come to sit in judgment, as it indicates in John 19:13.

<sup>h</sup> **Mk 7:9,13** And he said to them, Well do ye set aside the commandment of God, that ye may observe what is delivered by yourselves to *keep*.<sup>13</sup> making void the word of God by your traditional teaching which ye have delivered; and many such like things ye do.

Darby's Version

## Matthew

so that the Gentiles might also be saved.

Most certainly, those in Israel would be aware of Isaiah 60:1-3, as the scroll would be read in their synagogue services—

**Isaiah 60:1-3** Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.<sup>2</sup> For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.<sup>3</sup> **And the Gentiles shall come to thy light**, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. KJV

This portion of Scripture plainly declares that it was the LORD Himself who would rise upon them, which later in the same chapter Isaiah once again identifies that Light and that Glory, which arose in Israel, to be none other than Jehovah, their God.

**Isaiah 60:19** The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but **Jehovah shall be thine everlasting light**, and **thy God thy glory**. Darby's Version

Moreover, by comparison and by a reminder, every Israelite reading Matthew's gospel would remember the light in Isa. 9:2 (which Matthew already referenced and identified with Jesus in Matt 4:16)—

**Isaiah 9:2** The people that walked in darkness have seen a **great light**: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the **light shined**. KJV

And, of course, John the Baptist's father Zacharias, also bore witness to the same truth when speaking of his son's mission in Israel to prepare the way for Jehovah, who is called the Dayspring or Sunrise from on high to shine upon them—

**Luke 1:76** "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; For you will go on before the Lord to prepare His ways; <sup>77</sup> To give to His people *the* knowledge of salvation By the forgiveness of their sins, <sup>78</sup> Because of the tender mercy of our God, With which the **Sunrise from on high shall visit us**, <sup>79</sup> To shine upon those who sit in

## Matthew

**darkness** and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace." NASB77

And, finally, Simeon, who prophesied by the Holy Spirit, and who while holding the baby Jesus in his arms, identified Him as the LORD God of the Old Testament by referring to Him as the Light that was given in Israel for the Gentiles in his prayer—

**Luke 2:25-32** And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Spirit was upon him.<sup>26</sup> And it had been revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.<sup>27</sup> And he came in the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, that they might do concerning him after the custom of the law,<sup>28</sup> then he received him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, <sup>29</sup> Now lettest thou thy servant depart, Lord, According to thy word, in peace; <sup>30</sup> For mine eyes have seen thy **Salvation**.<sup>31</sup> Which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples;<sup>32</sup> A **Light** for **Revelation** to the Gentiles, And the **Glory** of thy people Israel. (Capitalization of Salvation, Light, Revelation, and Glory is mine.) ASV

And it should be noted that verse 30 also points to the child in his arms as being the Salvation that comes from God, which Isaiah declares is none other than the LORD.

**Isaiah 52:10** The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth **shall see the Salvation of our God**. KJV

Luke refers to the same fact, following the Greek LXX, when he says that “all flesh shall see the Salvation of God,” which is taken from Isaiah’s prophecy in Isa. 40: 3-5. (Capitalization Mine)

**Isaiah 40:3-5** The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight the paths of our God. <sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low: and all the crooked *ways* shall become straight, and the rough *places* plains. <sup>5</sup> And the glory of the Lord shall appear, **and all flesh shall see the**

## Matthew

**Salvation of God:** for the Lord has spoken *it*. Brenton's LXX

In other words, the reason that salvation could be physically seen by Simeon is because the “Salvation” was a Person—the LORD Jesus Christ.

Thus, we see that Matthew is declaring to his readers that not only is Jesus is the Messiah, a Light not only unto Israel but also to the Gentiles, who according to true righteousness will love and will save both Jew and Gentile alike, but also that the Messiah is that Light, which Isaiah revealed to be none other than the God of glory, the Everlasting Light, Jehovah of the Old Testament, Christ Jesus our LORD.

**8:8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.**

**8:9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.**

**8:10 When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.**

Finally, in verse 8 through 10 we see another demonstration being made to Israel to disabuse them of the belief that true righteousness can be gained by obeying the precepts and traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees. Here again, we have a graphic demonstration of something our Lord taught in His Sermon. This one being that “except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:20).

The centurion did not believe He was worthy enough for Jesus to come under His roof. In other words, the centurion did not believe that any righteousness he may have had, or any righteousness he may have done, could ever be enough to earn him the right and privilege of having Jesus come to his

## Matthew

house. How different was this attitude of a Gentile from that of the Scribes and Pharisees, who would always justify themselves,<sup>i</sup> and so cause themselves to trust in their own righteousness as being that which would earn them the favour of God and so salvation and a guaranteed place in the kingdom of heaven. Of course, the Lord made it clear that it did not in Matt. 5:20. They did not understand true righteousness, and so did not understand the righteousness acts of Christ.

The apostle Paul, who was once a Pharisee himself, was once filled with self-righteousness, but within a few years he was saved by grace and came to learn and trust solely in the righteousness of Christ. He came to learn that Christ was the end of the law to all who believe.<sup>j</sup>

How different Paul became, who advancing as a Pharisee above all his fellow countrymen, when he met Jesus on the Damascus road. His heart was broken that his fellow Israelites were still blind and wish they could come to believe in the Messiah as he came to believe. Once he met Jesus he counted all loss to know Him as he testified in his Epistle to the Philippians.<sup>k</sup>

All of this finds its culmination in our Lord's declaration that He had not found so great a faith in all of Israel as that found in the heart of this Gentile. This must have astonished those of Israel who heard this, and, most certainly, would have greatly angered any scribe or Pharisee that may have been listening. But our Lord Jesus was the promised Messiah who came to save the whole world, to be a "light to the Gentiles," so that His salvation might reach "unto the end of the earth." This could never be accomplished by anything but by faith in Christ, wherein His righteousness would be imputed to the one who believes. As the Holy Spirit made clear through Paul in his epistle to the Romans—

**Rom. 3:19-24** Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.<sup>20</sup> Therefore by the deeds of the law there

<sup>i</sup> **Lk 16:15** Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. KJV

<sup>j</sup> **Romans 10:4** For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. KJV

<sup>k</sup> **Phil. 3:9** More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ,<sup>9</sup> and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith. NASB77

## Matthew

shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.<sup>21</sup> But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; <sup>22</sup> Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: <sup>23</sup> For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; <sup>24</sup> Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: KJV

**Romans 4:5** But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. KJV

This story is a beautiful foretaste of this precious promise that is made to the world, which is that Jesus, as the Promised Seed of Gen. 3:15, and as the Promised Messiah of Israel, God manifested in the flesh, would come to impute the needed righteousness for salvation to any who will believe, whether Jew or Gentile. This story makes it clear, to those of Israel who were listening, that Isaiah 49:6 was in the process of being fulfilled before their very eyes.<sup>1</sup>

Before we examine the next two verses (vs. 11-12) discussing the reward of one who has faith like the centurion, in contrast to many in Israel who do not have the same faith, and so are said to be cast out from that inaugural feast, we must first understand what it means to “enter” into the Millennial Kingdom to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, not in regard to one’s salvation, but in regard to one’s rewards.

The *Excursus on Entering the Kingdom of Heaven* in the supplements will discuss how the kingdom of heaven refers to the Millennial Kingdom of Christ upon earth. It will also discuss how entering that kingdom is the gift given to all who believe in Christ, but it will also discuss how one enters into the Millennial Kingdom is determined by how one lives their life for Christ.

Some Christians who say “Lord Lord,” will not be able to enter right into the kingdom, but must wait outside the place, wherein the Judgment Seat of Christ

<sup>1</sup> **Isaiah 49:6** And he said, 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. KJV

## Matthew

occurred, until all those who lived for Christ first enter into the Millennial Kingdom with the Divine approbation of “Well done thou good and faithful servant. Only then, will the others, after being first reprov’d by Christ at His judgment seat will they be allowed to enter.”<sup>m</sup>

Confusion of this fact has led some to conclude that those who say “Lord Lord” must be ones who are not saved. That is a misconception which will be discussed in detail in the aforementioned *Excursus*.

So, if one wishes to fully understand my reasonings in regard to verse 11 and 12 below, I would encourage one to first read the *Excursus on Entering the Kingdom of Heaven*, and decide for one’s self. But if one wishes to simply know my conclusions in regard to what the Lord is teaching in verse 11 and 12, then, of course, one can simply continue below.

**8:11 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.**

**8:12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

Our Lord now concludes this story of the Gentile centurion and of his great faith with the fact that there will be many more Gentiles of like great faith (and by inference this Gentile centurion also) who will in the future sit down in the Millennial Kingdom with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who, of course, represent those of Israel who are saved. The reason, of course, that the context seems to indicate that this Gentile centurion will also be included with those “many” sitting down with Abraham is because the context of verse 11 includes the centurion. This would indicate that in the resurrected state not only those with the same great faith that Abraham exhibited at the moment of his salvation, but also the faith many, many years later when he was nearly one hundred years old is being referenced (Rom. 4:17-21).<sup>n</sup> In the

<sup>m</sup> **II Cor. 5:10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

KJV

<sup>n</sup> **Rom. 4:17-20** (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.<sup>18</sup> Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.<sup>19</sup> And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara’s womb: <sup>20</sup> He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; KJV



## Matthew

same way that Abraham was in the Millennial Kingdom because he was saved with the imputed righteousness of Christ, as well as being in the kingdom to enjoy God as the reward of his faithfulness and his continuing walk of faith after he believed, the Gentile centurion and those Gentiles like him will also be rewarded by being at that Millennial table for all the same reasons, i.e. the imputed righteousness of Christ, and their walk of faith.

Thus, at that table all of Abraham's seed will be present, Jew and Gentile, who believe, but for those who lived for Christ, they also have a special privilege and reward given to them for being faithful in their walk with God (cf. Rom. 4:16) <sup>o</sup>

But now we come to a startling statement by our Lord in verse 12. He states that the children (lit., Gr. υἱοί, *sons*) of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. There is so much in this verse which must be understood if we are to understand the unfolding revelation given to us of our Lord, of His work and of His purpose for the soon to be ushered in Dispensation of the Church.

We must understand who is represented by the "children of the kingdom." We must understand what the phrase the "outer darkness" means. We must understand what it means to be "cast out," and finally, we must understand what the idiom "weeping and gnashing of teeth" must mean. If we do not properly understand these four things we will misunderstand the whole lesson our Lord is seeking to teach us. So let us begin with the phrase "the children of the kingdom."

**1) The children of the kingdom**—This phrase, children of the kingdom (lit. sons of the kingdom) is found only in one other place in the entire New Testament, and that place is in Matt. 13:38.

**Matthew 13: 37-38** He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; **the good seed are the children of the kingdom**; but the tares are the children of the wicked *one*; KJV

<sup>o</sup> **Rom. 4:16**  
Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all. KJV

## Matthew

So what is seen in this verse is that in Christ's mind "the children of the kingdom represent the good seed, which according to His explanation, represent the saved. This is also confirmed in verse 43 where He also calls them the righteous in the kingdom. <sup>P</sup>

So contextually in the Gospel of Matthew, we see that the phrase "the children of the kingdom" is used to represent true believers. In Matt. 13: 37-38 it would contextually represent both Jewish and Gentile Christians, and in our verse here in Matt. 8: 11-12, it represents certain Jewish Christians in contrast to certain Gentile Christians.

As an aside, before we continue, perhaps it would be best to mention that some object to the designation Jewish Christian, because they believe there are only "Christians" based upon the verse in Gal. 3:28-29—

**Gal. 3:28-29** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. KJV

But this is based upon a misunderstanding of this verse. Paul is simply stating that in regard to salvation there is neither Jew nor Gentile. In other words, salvation does not discriminate between one's ethnicity, nor is unity based upon one's background, social status or gender. Salvation is for all mankind, for the entire world (cf. Rom. 10:11-13).

Therefore, of course, there are Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians, but in Christ they are all one, since Christ made of the two one new man (Eph. 2:14-15) The same is true with the phrase, "there is neither male nor female." Of course, there are still male Christians and female Christians, otherwise Paul could not make a distinction between men and women in I Cor. 11-14 & I Tim. 2:81-5. And, for the same reason in the Church, even among the Jewish Christians one could speak of "Hebrews" and "Hellenistic Jews," even though, of course, just as Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians are still all Christians, so too, Hebrew Jews or Hellenistic Jews are still all Jews (Acts 6:1).

<sup>P</sup> **Matthew 13:43**

Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. KJV

## Matthew

So we see that Scripture recognizes that in the dispensation of the Church there are both Jewish and Gentile Christians. In fact, Paul specifically calls the apostle Peter a “Jew” in Gal. 2:14,<sup>q</sup> and he calls the Christian mother of Timothy a Jewish believer in Acts 16:1 (KJV—Jewess).<sup>r</sup> And then, of course, Paul himself on more than one occasion calls himself Jewish, using the term Hebrew in II Cor. 11:22,<sup>s</sup> and the term “Israelite” in Rom. 11:1! So we see that Paul is not saying that once one becomes a Christian they lose their ethnicity or gender. Unfortunately, some believe otherwise because they have stretched dispensational theology (which is true and biblical), into a “form” of dispensational theology, which is not completely true and biblical.

Thus, it is completely appropriate to state that in Matt. 8:12 the children of the kingdom bespeak certain Jewish Christian believers whose faith does not measure up to the great faith of the Gentile centurion. (For more on this please see the *Excursus*.)

Now some will say that since Matthew does not say “some” children of the kingdom, and/or because the head noun is not anarthrous, the phrase must refer to the nation of Israel as a whole and not to Jewish Christians individually. They liken it to Matt. 21:43, which they state shows that the kingdom of God will be taken away from the nation of Israel and given to the Gentiles.<sup>t</sup> But that is now what that verse is stating. We will discuss it when we reach that chapter, but suffice it to say that if one looks closely, the kingdom of God is taken away from the chief priests and the elders (see vs. 23 & 45). It does not say the kingdom of God is taken from Israel as a whole. Nor does it say it is given to the kingdom is given to Gentiles.

Consequently, the children of the kingdom cannot refer to the nation of Israel in contradistinction to the Gentiles, for obviously at that time Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are in the kingdom at the table, and we know David will also be in the kingdom (cf. Jer. 30:9), as well as Moses and Elijah, John the Baptist, and many, many, more and they are all Jewish, as is

<sup>q</sup> **Gal. 2:14** But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, **If thou, being a Jew**, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? KJV

<sup>r</sup> **Acts 16:1** And he came to Derbe and Lystra: and behold, a certain disciple was there, by name Timotheus, son of a **Jewish believing woman**, but *the* father a Greek. Darby's Version

<sup>s</sup> **II Cor. 11:22** Are they **Hebrews?** **so am I.** Are they **Israelites?** **so am I.** Are they the seed of Abraham? **so am I.** KJV

<sup>t</sup> **Matthew 21:43** Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. KJV

## Matthew

the Lord Jesus Himself! Indeed, there will be 144,000 from every tribe of the nation of Israel <sup>u</sup> in the kingdom with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, David, et cetera! <sup>v</sup> So the children of the kingdom cannot refer to the kingdom of God being taken from Israel and given to the Gentiles. There always will be a remnant of Israel in the kingdom (Rom. 11:5), and so it is no different in this verse.

So with that in mind let us now look to the second phrase.

**2) Outer Darkness**—The next phrase that is so important for one to understand in this portion of Scripture is the phrase translated in most Bibles as “outer darkness,” which, in turn, is a translation of the Greek phrase τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον. Literally the phrase would read τὸ σκότος (the darkness) τὸ ἐξώτερον (the outside). The Greek word σκότος is a noun, meaning darkness, and the word ἐξώτερον is an adjective meaning “outside.” The adjective is the comparative of ἔξω, which means “without” or “outward.” This phrase only occurs three times in all of the New Testament (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30).

Now some believe that this adjective is a comparative used as a superlative, in which case it would be translated as the “outermost darkness.” But A. T. Robertson and others believe it is being used as comparative. He sees it referring to the darkness “outside” that lighted palace, or, perhaps, we might say the darkness “without” that lighted palace He writes:

“Into the outer darkness (τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον). Comparative adjective like our “further out,” the darkness outside the limits of the lighted palace, one of the figures for hell or punishment (Mt 22:13 25:30). The repeated article makes it bolder and more impressive, “the darkness the outside,” there where the wailing and gnashing of teeth is heard in the thick blackness of night.” <sup>15</sup>

Alford also views it as a comparative, writing:

“τὸ σκ. τὸ ἐξ. the darkness outside, i.e. outside the lighted

<sup>u</sup> **Revelation 7:4**

And I heard the number of them which were sealed: *and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.* KJV

<sup>v</sup> **Jeremiah 30:9**

But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them. KJV

## Matthew

chamber of the feast, see ch. xxii.13, and Eph. v. 7, 8. These verses are wanting in St. Luke, and occur [without the same phrase] when our Lord repeated them on a wholly different occasion, ch. xiii. 28, 29.”<sup>16</sup>

Now, some may wonder where the comparison might come from since there is no other mention of darkness. If, indeed, our Lord is speaking of the imagery of a lighted palace, or lighted house (as seems to be confirmed by a similar account in the Gospel of Luke which we will mention shortly), it could very well be that outside the actual lighted room of the palace where the feast takes place, there were other darkened rooms, perhaps, a hallway, or a darkened area or room through which one must pass to reach the brightly lit room where the feast occurred. In that case, those not allowed to the feast would be considered to be in the “outer” darkness, i.e. “outside” the palace or house entirely, in comparison to the immediate darkness outside the dining room where the feast occurred.

Moreover, if one still wishes to see ἐξώτερον as a comparative adjective used as a superlative, the darkness outside the lighted palace or house would still be considered to be the “outermost darkness,” i.e. not the darkness of the hallway, or of the room or area immediately outside the banquet room, but the darkness out in the cold night air.

So the question becomes, “What does our Lord mean by this *outer darkness*, or *darkness outside*?” If one reads most commentaries (indeed, even A. T. Robertson held to this view as was seen in his quote above), one will be told it refers to hell and everlasting punishment. But our Lord does not say this. In fact, our Lord does not indicate in any of the three places in Scripture where this phrase occurs that He is speaking of hell. In other words, He could have said to cast him out into the outer darkness of hell. But He does not, and He does not even use the word “hell” in any of these three occurrences where “outer darkness” occurs, as He does use in such verses as Matt. 10:28; 11:23 and 18: 9, just to name a few..

This phrase appears in this verse before us, and

## Matthew

then in Matt. 22:13 and Matt. 25:30, but in neither of those verses does our Lord directly state that outer darkness refers an eternal state or condition.

For example, if outer darkness referred to hell or eternal punishment, then why did He not use the phrase in Matt. 25:46, just sixteen verses after He uses it in Matt. 25:30? In other words, why did He not simply say in verse 46, “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, *into outer darkness*,” if the phrase was another nomenclature for hell? Or, conversely, since He most assuredly knew, being God, that He would use the phrase “everlasting punishment” very shortly in the next parable, why did He not say something like this in Matt. 25:30, “And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, *into everlasting punishment*, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, if, indeed, the phrase referred to hell? Then it would be crystal clear. But the fact that He did not should give us pause, as it should also in the other two places where our Lord used the phrase, especially in the portion we are discussing right now (Matt. 8:12). So with this in mind let us continue.

When we look to a similar account recorded for us in the Gospel of Luke, we find the Lord includes some additional information. Let me provide the entire account.

**Luke 13:23-30** Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, <sup>24</sup> Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. <sup>25</sup> When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: <sup>26</sup> Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. <sup>27</sup> But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. <sup>28</sup> 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. <sup>29</sup> And they shall come from the east, and *from* the west, and from the north, and *from* the south, and shall sit

## Matthew

down in the kingdom of God.<sup>30</sup> And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last. KJV

Notice, our Lord does not use the phrase “outer darkness” at all when speaking of that same time period in the future when Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are in the Millennial Kingdom and many will come from the east and west, and the north and south to sit down with them, but He does use the adjective “without” (ἐξω).

And so, even though He does not use the actual phrase the “darkness without,” He does use the adjective ἐξω, which means “without,” or “outside” (NKJV), which, as we have shown, would bespeak that area outside the lighted house or palace, and which in Luke’s account bespeaks being just outside of the door in the night air where they are knocking on the door, and not somewhere far removed from earth in hell or in everlasting punishment. And, finally, we see in Luke that He also uses the same phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth,” which phrase we will consider shortly, but which in Luke’s account shows that the weeping and gnashing of teeth occurs outside directly adjacent to the palace or house and not in hell.

So we see in this passage in Luke that our Lord gives a little greater context to our passage in Matthew.

For example, in Matt. 8:11 He shows that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are seated, but He does not indicate where they are seated. But in Luke 13:25 our Lord reveals that this sitting occurs in a house, or palace. This helps explain why many speak of the outer darkness as referring to the darkness that is outside the lighted feast within the house or palace.

Also we see that the word translated as “sit” is the Greek word ἀνακλίνω, which literally means “to recline” or to “lie down.” It is used of our Lord being laid down into a manger in Luke 2:7 and is used of people sitting down upon green grass during the miraculous feeding of the five thousand in Mark 6:39. But it is also used in Luke 7:36 of reclining,

## Matthew

presumably, at a table in a house (ἀνεκλίθη in the Byzantine Text).<sup>w</sup> This reclining at a table in a house when dining, was common in Israel at that time, as is also shown when our Lord reclined at a table with His disciples at the Last Supper in the upper room of a house (Luke 22:21; cf. also Matt. 15:27).

Consequently, since our Lord speaks of eating with Him at a table in the Millennial Kingdom to His disciples (Luke 22:30),<sup>x</sup> and, since He speaks of sitting down or reclining with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom, and since He adds the additional information that this occurs in a house or palace in Luke 13:25, then it, more than likely, contextually indicates that the sitting or reclining that is mentioned in Matt. 8: 11, should be understood as occurring in a house or palace. This becomes all the more certain, since in Israel, at that time, this is how most Israelites would understand the Greek word ἀνακλίνω as used in these occurrences. Thus one can understand why some versions, like the NASB77, include the phrase *at the table* in italics in Matt. 8:11, and why Darby actually translates the word as such.<sup>y</sup>

Now, of course, all this is quite figurative. At that time in the Millennium there will be millions of believers sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But the symbolic imagery of a house or palace where such feasting occurred is very important for it helps explain symbolic the imagery of “outer darkness” in our passage in Matt. 8:12, and in the two other passages.

G. H. Lang, who was one of those brethren in England who were known as brethren who were open,<sup>‡</sup> put it this way—as he had personally witnessed this eastern custom himself, having ministered in that part of the world for many years, being a Bible teacher and evangelist. He relates how this custom has continued even into the twentieth century.

“A too little considered feature of the three references to “outer darkness” is that each pictures a house of feasting. In Matt. 8 and Luke 13 Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are

<sup>w</sup> **Luke 7:36** Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him. And He entered the Pharisee's house, and reclined *at the table*. NASB77

<sup>x</sup> **Luke 22:30** That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. KJV

<sup>y</sup> **Matt. 8:11** "And I say to you, that many shall come from east and west, and **recline at the table** with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; NASB77

**Matt. 8:11** But I say unto you, that many shall come from *the* rising and setting *sun*, and shall **lie down at table** with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of the heavens. Darby

<sup>‡</sup> Please see endnote #6 for further information on this faithful brother and some of his other books.



## Matthew

represented as reclining at table and others from all quarters joining them, while the ‘sons of the kingdom,’ those to whom the house and its pleasures more naturally belonged, see this feasting but are driven away from it into outer darkness...This element of the one picture really gives the clue to the interpretation, when it is remembered that in the East such a festivity usually took place at night. Staying in a native quarter in Alexandria [Egypt] I was [once on] the other side of the road from a large Oriental mansion. One night the whole house was brilliantly lit, a blaze of light from every room, evidently for some special affair. By contrast the street outside and the garden around were in black darkness, and nothing further was required to correspond to the term ‘the darkness the outer,’ which term equals the darkness which is without, outside the house...”<sup>17</sup>

Then he concludes with these words after he related the story above (he was focusing on the third parable that used the phrase *outer darkness*) and also after relating that he did not believe our Lord was speaking of unbelievers being sent to “outer darkness,” but believed it bespoke genuine believers, who, despite the displeasure of the Lord, would never be forsaken by Him, as it was He who had secured their eternal redemption.

“This is the picture; and, whatever may be the reality, it is not the same as the enemies of the king being slain in public, as in the parable of the pounds (Luke 19:27), nor as the tares, the very ‘sons of the Evil One,’ being cast into the furnace of fire, as in Matt. 13. Such obviously distinct pictures must be viewed as distinct, and distinct meanings be sought. To blur the picture [of hell and outer darkness] and confound the [two]...can be only confusing and misleading, as has commonly been the case in the treatment of this parable...Of Hades, the Abyss, the ‘Lake of fire’—of these *some* definite knowledge is imparted, though much is left unrevealed. Of ‘the darkness which is outside’ much less is revealed,; and it is not for us to speculate, least of all to be positive.”<sup>18</sup>

“In the interests of sound interpretation as well as of moral effect, it is vital to recognize that it is not utter strangers to God that are warned as to this outer darkness. No, it is ‘sons of the kingdom,’ those to whom by calling it naturally belonged; it is the ‘friend’ who had accepted the

## Matthew

invitation and taken his place; it is the personal slaves of the house, of the lord of the house, who are bidden to value their rich privileges lest they lose them and fall under his displeasure. The apostles regularly describe themselves as slaves. It was 'his own bondservants' to whom the lord of the house entrusted the talents...[But] the blessed Lord who loved and redeemed them, made it abundantly plain that one of His own servants may render himself obnoxious...Nor is the spiritual reality at all unknown now. There are children of God, servants of Christ, who through misconduct have forfeited the once-enjoyed liberty of sons, no more share the joy of their lord, and are in distressing darkness of soul...But the very fact that this is possible to one of 'His own' itself proves that the penalty cannot be eternal, for all such have eternal life and can never perish. No one grasping the illustration used would suppose that the unhappy slave would be left in the garden to starve to death, or that the dark night would last forever. Day would dawn, his bands would be loosed, life would be resumed, *but he would have missed the joyous festival*. That is to say, the special...honours...which are to accompany the return of the Lord from heaven and the setting up of His kingdom at the consummation of this age, are to be a reward for fidelity, for righteous and dutiful conduct in His absence, and without this manner of life they may be forfeited."<sup>19</sup>

Thus, perhaps, we can now see that "outer darkness" would be better translated as "the darkness outside," meaning the darkness outside the feast that occurred within the lighted palace. Once one understands this, one can begin to understand the unlikelihood that Jesus was referring to hell and everlasting punishment. Our Lord is not using the comparative adjective outside the context of the lighted festival. He is using it as a comparative adjective referring to the darkness outside the lighted house or palace, **which is a place right outside the palace, and so it is a place that is still considered to be in the kingdom of heaven** and not in a place of eternal punishment, which would be in the lake of fire. Besides, no one will be cast into the darkness of the lake of fire until "after" the Millennium, not before the Millennium, and this incident is "not" at the end of the Millennium, but rather "before" or at the beginning of the Millennium; so the outer darkness

## Matthew

simply cannot refer to hell, or that eventual darkness mentioned in association with everlasting punishment, which takes place in the lake of fire (see Jude 1:13 & Rev. 20:11-15).

Moreover, hell before the time of the Millennium where the unsaved are kept is not mentioned as being a place of darkness. If hell or hades was the place of darkness our Lord referred to, how could one lift up one's eyes across a wide gulf to "see" to the other side, where the unsaved rich man could see, as it says, afar off, seeing Abraham and Lazarus in his bosom? If hell, before the end of the Millennium, at the Great White Throne Judgment was a place of outer darkness, then one would not be able to "see" afar off.

**Luke 16:23** And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, **and seeth Abraham afar off**, and Lazarus in his bosom. <sup>24</sup> And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. <sup>25</sup> But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. <sup>26</sup> And beside all this, **between us and you there is a great gulf fixed**: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that *would come* from thence. KJV

Now, yes, the final end of the wicked is spoken of as a place of everlasting darkness (Jude 1:13; II Pet. 2:17), <sup>z</sup> but that is not until hell (hades) is cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14), <sup>a</sup> which had not yet occurred when our Lord spoke concerning the rich man and Lazarus.

So now, perhaps now we can begin to see that our Lord is not referring to hell in the lake of fire and everlasting torment and punishment.

But if that is the case, some may at this point begin to wonder as to why so many equate outer darkness with hell. The reason may be, beside the fact that is was so translated that way rather than by "the darkness outside" (which would give a different impression), that one of the first departures of the

### <sup>z</sup> Jude 1:13

Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved **the blackness of darkness forever**. KJV

### II Peter 2:17

These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom **the mist of darkness is reserved for ever**. KJV

<sup>a</sup> **Rev. 20:14** And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. KJV

## Matthew

Church from the teaching of the apostles, after they all died, was a departure from the doctrine of justification by faith alone for salvation from hell.

Immediately, after the death of the last of the Twelve apostles (the apostle John) more and more Christians began to equate justification (and thus everlasting life) with faith plus works. This error actually began in Jerusalem with those Jewish Christians who were of the sect of the Pharisees mentioned in Acts 15: 1-5, whose error continued to spread to other Churches, finally becoming solidified, a few centuries later in the Roman Catholic Church.\*

Along with that change came about another change—outer darkness was soon seen as a place of torment, which would become a place of eternal torment, if one was not released from it before it was thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:13-14). This gradual change can be seen in the Apocalypse of Ezra 4:37 where outer darkness is identified with the deepest part of Tartarus, the prison where the Titans of Greek mythology were kept, and a place where II Pet. 2:4 indicates the fallen angels are chained. This book is believed to be written late in the second century and so cannot be used as an example of a prior equating of outer darkness with hades or hell.

As time went on, the phrase outer darkness was more and more merged with the thought of hades or hell, and so, eventually, was also developed into the doctrine of purgatory in the Roman Catholic Church.

Since those who held this view believed salvation was by faith plus works, those who did not live up to their faith and so were found deficient in their works, had to be purged in the fires of hell, which came to be associated with this place of outer darkness (since outer darkness in Scripture was always associated with those who had a deficiency in their works and service). Because of this, rather than being viewed only as a place of regret and sorrow in the darkness outside the lighted palace, at the beginning of the Millennium, they viewed it as the temporary place of fire and torment in hell, which would become an eternal torment, if one was not purged and released

\* For a fuller study on this, please see my book, *Church Principles, Vol. II*, pg. 292-295.

## Matthew

from its fires before hell was thrown into the lake of fire which burns forever (Rev. 20:14).

This unbiblical doctrine of purgatory was built upon this false understanding of outer darkness, because it equated doing the will of God as an additional requirement for salvation, rather than justification by faith in Christ being the only requirement for salvation.

This writing of a Roman Catholic from the 19<sup>th</sup> century shows the eventual form of this false doctrine; it is found in a book that had the Imprimatur † of the Johannes M. Farley, the Archbishop of New York, and of the Roman Catholic Church.

“The feast of All Souls relates, therefore, to the souls in purgatory alone. Purgatory is a state of suffering in which those souls who were found at the time of death in a state of grace, but who had not sufficiently expiated their sins by repentance, are perfectly purified that they may be worthy to appear among the saints.

Purgatory is that formidable future in which we are destined to pay all that we owe to divine justice. Purgatory presents the darkness and the desolation, the grief and the remorse of hell. There is the same terrible fire, there are the same torments; everything is the same save despair and eternity. The same fire torments the lost souls in hell and the penitent souls in purgatory; and St. Augustine, summing up the tradition of the Church of the first four centuries, says, that ‘the same fire which consumes the chaff [viz., the reprobate] refines the gold,’ viz., those just souls who have left this world without having done penance in sufficient proportion to the number and gravity of their sins.

Therefore they burn, these afflicted souls; they burn in an actual, although a supernatural fire, in a fire which has as complete access to the undying spirit as the fires of earth to the human body. The justice of God gives to this cleansing fire an activity which we cannot conceive, and of which the intense ardor of the fire that acts upon our senses is but a feeble symbol.

**These souls are in outer darkness, like the souls of the lost.** They know not the time when their expiation will be ended. . . . Perhaps not for twenty years—a hundred years! perhaps not until the end of the world! . . . Terrible perhaps! how greatly it must add to the pain of this punishment! but also how clearly it should cause us to realize the greatness

†An Imprimatur is an official sanction and approval by the Roman Catholic Church that a book is free from doctrinal error and so rightly conveys official Roman Catholic Dogma.

## Matthew

and the enormity of sin, even of trivial, venial sin, since the God of everlasting love exacts for it from the creatures who love Him, and whom He Himself loves, so terrible a punishment.<sup>20</sup>

And then, from the *Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record*, ‡ we see another reference to the Roman Catholic's connection of purgatory to outer darkness, based upon a Christians lack of good works and unforgiven sin.

"It is not our intention here to refer to the effect of this doctrine in dishonouring the Saviour and rendering his salvation an incomplete work. We have already dwelt upon this. Our object now is simply to point out the demoralizing influence which purgatory and its practices has exercised upon members of the Romish Church, for upwards of a thousand years... It is the acknowledged doctrine of the Romish Church, that no Roman Catholic can go to hell, except he dies in mortal sin —unconfessed and unabsolved. But if he applies to the priest, he is bound to grant him absolution on the mere profession of regret for such a sin, and thus the eternal punishment is instantly converted into the temporary suffering of purgatory...The only possible case under which any Romanist would be doomed to **"the outer darkness," the place of eternal woe, according to the church,** is, by failing through some accident to obtain a confessor in his last hours."<sup>21</sup>

And then, strangely, even though the false doctrine of purgatory was rejected by Christians during the Protestant Reformation, the false doctrine of faith plus works was not fully abandoned by some Christians who came out of that period of Reformation, although they would always deny they taught such a thing. Nevertheless, it was reintroduced and taught, indirectly, because of a faulty understanding of salvation and free will, under the banner of the perseverance of the saints.

This too led to a faulty understanding of "outer darkness," not as a place of purgatory as the Roman Catholic believed, but still as a place into which a false Christian was cast as a place of eternal punishment.

‡ *The Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record* was a publication begun by John Kitto, a fellow worker with A. N. Groves after he returned to England from his missionary labours with Groves in Baghdad. Later the Journal was edited by Henry Burgess, who was a minister of the Church of England.

## Matthew

This false understanding of the perseverance of the saints also caused some to conclude that those who professed to know Christ, calling Him “Lord, Lord” in Luke 13:25-28 (KJV) and Matt. 7:21, were never really saved because the Lord declared to them that they never persevered in doing His will. Thus, some out of the Reformation concluded that of course outer darkness was not purgatory, but it was instead the place of everlasting punishment in the lake of fire into which hell (outer darkness) had been thrown because those who were thrown there were not really saved.

And so this false understanding of the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints (as opposed to the true doctrine of eternal security) also caused some from the Reformation to wrongly assign outer darkness as a place of everlasting torment.

Beloved, “outer darkness,” or more correctly, “the darkness outside,” cannot refer to hell or to everlasting torment in this verse. It must refer to a very short time period right that occurs before the beginning of the Millennium, simply because Scripture reveals that only Christians take part in the first resurrection, and so all those who are present in Matt. 8:21, and in the parallel account in Luke 13:25-28, as well all the other verses speaking of outer darkness (Matt. 22:13; 25:30), must all be Christians, although, as we will briefly explain under our consideration of the verb “cast out,” Matt. 22:13 comes the closest to the meaning of hell. But after our brief explanation, and our fuller explanation under that actual chapter and verse, I think the reader will see that even that reference is more than likely not referring to hell either. Why?—because all those who might falsely claim to be Christians throughout the Church age (being instead unregenerate, i.e. false Christians) will not even be raised until a thousand years after the second coming of Christ, and so, they could not even be present at that time before the Millennium. In other words, since some of those present, as revealed in Luke 13: 26, say that they ate in the Lord’s presence and heard Him teach in their streets, those who are present in those passages must reach back clear to the

## Matthew

time of the first century when the Lord ate before them and taught in their streets! Thus, this group includes all who said Lord Lord,” from the beginning of the Church Age until the end of the Church Age, which means the majority of those present would have been dead for a long, long time. This then would also have to include all those in Matt. 22:13 cast out into outer darkness. But unbelievers who think they are Christians, calling out Lord Lord, should still be warned; if Christians calling out Lord Lord can be deceived as to their “service,” certainly unbelievers calling out Lord Lord, can be deceived as to their “salvation!” The only difference is that they will not be judged until after the Millennium at the Great White Throne Judgment.

Thus, getting back to our verse in Matt. 8:21 and Luke 13:26, this means those claiming to have eaten in the Lord’s presence, and to have heard Him teach in their streets must, indeed, be real Christians, since the unsaved will not be resurrected until after the end of the Millennium. Thus, this time in outer darkness, i.e. the darkness outside, which occurs just after the first resurrection, but before the thousand year reign of Christ begins, must last but for a few days.

Moreover, this placement of outer darkness at the Judgment Seat of Christ before the beginning of the Millennium, also demonstrates that outer darkness is not a place of everlasting torment, nor can it be a place of purgatory which Catholics believe might even last for up to a hundred years, nor, indeed, can it be a present place where Catholics believe some right now will go who die without the absolution of a priest. It is a place in the future, not in our present dispensation, where they will be outside and adjacent to the place where all Christians throughout the Church Age will stand in their resurrected bodies at the Judgment Seat of Christ (remembering every Christian will be resurrected at the time of the rapture—I Thess. 4:14-17). Thus this outer darkness, or more accurately, “the darkness outside,” will be outside the house, or King’s palace, where the Judgment Seat of Christ occurs, and where, after a joyous inaugural feast, Christ the King



## Matthew

will begin His reign for a thousand years. (For more on this inaugural feast, please see pg. 63ff.)

Also this misidentification of outer darkness with hell has also contributed to a false understanding of Paul's statement that certain Christians will be saved, yet as by fire, and his statement that some Christian's works will be burnt up (I Cor. 3:12-15), as if that referred to a type of purgatory. This same false understanding has also turned outer darkness into a place of physical torment, rather than a place of discipline where Christians, who are remonstrated by the Lord show profound regret because they are shown how they failed the Master while they lived upon earth.

These references to fire by Paul refer to the thorough and penetrating judgment of Christ regarding the walk and service of every Christian. It refers to the fact that Christ knows our innermost thoughts and so can see through every excuse or rationalism we might make for not walking as we should have walked before God. It bespeaks the fact that our Lord's penetrating eyes will be like a "flame of fire" (Rev. 1:14), representing the thoroughness of His knowledge and judgment, not a burning of fire that torments us in outer darkness!

Let me close with two helpful quotes about this judgment by fire at the Judgment Seat of Christ, by two men of God, who while not equating outer darkness as a temporary place in the darkness outside the lighted palace for chastised Christians at the Judgment Seat of Christ, but rather equating it with the punishment of hell, nevertheless provided some helpful comments on the Judgment Seat of Christ. The first is by John Calvin.

*"If any man's work shall be burned. It is as though he had said: Let no man flatter himself on the ground that, in the opinion of men, he is reckoned among the most eminent master-builders, for as soon as the day breaks in, **his whole work must go utterly to nothing, if it is not approved of by the Lord.** This, then, is the rule to which every one's ministry requires to be conformed....He has already in the first clause promised a reward to good master-builders,*

## Matthew

whose labour shall have been approved of. Hence the contrast in the second clause suits admirably well—**that those who have mixed *stubble*, or *wood*, or *straw*, will be disappointed of the commendation which they had expected.**

*He himself will be saved*, &c. It is certain that Paul speaks of those who, while always retaining the *foundation*, mix *hay* with *gold*, *stubble* with *silver*, and *wood* with *precious stones*—**that is, those who build upon Christ, but in consequence of the weakness of the flesh, admit something that is man's, or through ignorance turn aside to some extent from the strict purity of God's word.** Such were many of the saints, Cyprian, Ambrose, Augustine, and the like. Add to these, if you choose, from those of later times, Gregory and Bernard, and others of that stamp, who, while they had it as their object to build upon Christ, did nevertheless often deviate from the right system of building. **Such persons, Paul says, could be saved, but on this condition—if the Lord wiped away their ignorance, and purged them from all dross.**

This is the meaning of the clause *so as by fire*. He means, therefore, to intimate, that he does not take away from them the hope of salvation, provided they willingly submit to the *loss* of their labour, and are purged by the mercy of God, as gold is refined in the furnace. Farther, although God sometimes purges his own people by afflictions, yet here by the name of *fire*, I understand the touchstone of the Spirit, by which the Lord corrects and removes the ignorance of his people, by which they were for a time held captive. I am aware, indeed, that many refer this to the cross, but I am confident that my interpretation will please all that are of sound judgment.

It remains, that we give an answer in passing to the Papists, who endeavour from this passage to prop up Purgatory. "The sinners [say they, i.e. the Papists] whom God forgives, pass through the fire, that they may be saved." Hence they in this way suffer punishment in the presence of God, so as to afford satisfaction to his justice. I pass over their endless fictions in reference to the measure of punishment, and the means of redemption from them, but I ask, who they are that pass through *the fire*? Paul assuredly speaks of ministers alone. [John Calvin limits those who pass through fire as being Christian ministers, thus nullifying the Roman Catholic doctrine that "all" sinners pass through this fire, and also that this verse speaks of Purgatory. By doing so, he also nullifies the whole

## Matthew

doctrine of Purgatory itself, for which I say Amen and Amen! However, I do not believe Paul limits it to Christian ministers, but rather includes every Christian, since all Christians are called to build upon the one foundation that is Christ through the use of their spiritual gifts.]...But even granting them this, how childishly they stumble at the term *fire*. For to what purpose is this *fire*, but for burning up the *hay* and *straw*, and on the other hand, for proving the *gold* and *silver*. Do they mean to say that doctrines are discerned by the *fire* of their purgatory? Who has ever learned from *that*, what difference there is between truth and falsehood? Farther, when will that day come that will shine forth so as to discover every one's work? Did it begin at the beginning of the world, and will it continue without interruption to the end? If the terms *stubble*, *hay*, *gold*, and *silver* are figurative, as they must necessarily allow, what correspondence will there be between the different clauses, if there is nothing figurative in the term *fire*? Away, then, with such silly trifles, which carry their absurdity in their forehead, for the Apostle's true meaning is, I think, sufficiently manifest.<sup>22</sup>

And then, J. Vernon McGee shares the following:

*"If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward (I Cor. 3:14)—That is, he shall receive a reward if he is building with gold, silver, or precious stones.*

I am of the opinion that we have many wonderful saints of God about us today. I have been able to meet some of these folk—some of them personally and some by letter—whom God is using in a marvelous way. They are building in gold.

As you well know, a little piece of gold isn't as visible as a hay stack. Possible God is the only One who knows that it is gold. Now a haystack is another thing—I have traveled across flat farmland and it seemed to me I could see haystacks that were twenty miles away. There are a lot of folk building haystacks, and everybody hears about what they are doing. The haystacks are going to be tested someday, and then there won't be one haystack left, because the testing is going to be by fire. The same thing will be true of works of wood or stubble.

*If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire (I Cor. 3:15)—You see the contrast: 'If any man's work abide'*

## Matthew

which he built on the foundation, he shall receive a reward; if any man's work goes up in smoke, he will suffer a terrible loss, but he himself will be saved. He does not lose his salvation if he is on the foundation, which is trust in Christ, even though he receives no reward.

Friend, what are you building today? What kind of material are you using? If you are building with gold, it may not be very impressive now. If you are building an old haystack, it will really stand out on the horizon, but it will go up in smoke. I like to put it like this: there are going to be some people in heaven who will be there because their foundation is Christ but who will smell as if they had been bought at a fire sale! Everything they ever did will have gone up in smoke. They will not receive a reward for their works.<sup>23</sup>

Before concluding, perhaps for the sake of clarity, it would be helpful and wise to briefly discuss the true nature of the biblical doctrine of the perseverance of the saints (which we briefly mentioned on page 31ff), which caused some to conclude that Matt. 7:21 cannot refer to true Christians, and which thereby, causes some to believe outer darkness refers to hades or hell which is ultimately cast into the lake of fire. Perhaps, it would be best to include it under one of our "Food for Thought."

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

All saints do, of course, persevere, that is, if one is speaking of every Christian's ultimate glorification by Christ. Scripture teaches that all who are foreknown are, indeed, predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ—Rom. 8:29, which by definition means every Christian will persevere in the end!

**Romans 8:29** For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. KJV

Thus, in that sense, all Christians do persevere. But that, unfortunately, is not how the doctrine of perseverance has always been applied as we referred above. Many erroneously teach that it also means all

## Matthew

Christians will persevere in this present life on earth before they die, and if they do not, it proves they were never true Christians. This is clearly delineated in this Treatise by the famous Jonathan Edwards.

“In order to men's being true Christians, it is necessary that they prosecute the business of religion, and the service of God with great earnestness and diligence, as the work which they devote themselves to...They that are God's true servants do give up themselves to his service, and make it as it were their whole work, therein employing their whole hearts, and the chief of their strength: Phil. iii. 13...Christians in their effectual calling, are not called to idleness, but to labor in God's vineyard, and spend their day in doing a great and laborious service. All true Christians comply with this call (as is implied in its being an effectual call), and do the work of Christians; which is everywhere in the New Testament compared to those exercises wherein men are wont to exert their strength with the greatest earnestness, as running, wrestling, fighting. All true Christians are good and faithful soldiers of Jesus Christ, and “fight the good fight of faith;” for none but those who do so, do ‘ever lay hold on eternal life’...Without earnestness there is no getting along, in that narrow way that leads to life; and so no arriving at that state of glorious life and happiness which it leads to. Without earnest labor there's no ascending the steep and high hill of Zion, and so no arriving at the heavenly city on the top of it. **Without a constant laboriousness there is no stemming the swift stream in which we swim, so as ever to come to that fountain of water of life that is at the head of it...Slothfulness in the service of God in his professed servants, is as damming as open rebellion; for the slothful servant is a wicked servant, and shall be cast into outer darkness, among God's open enemies,** Matt. xxv. 26, 30...Every true Christian perseveres in this way of universal obedience, and diligent and earnest service of God, through all the various kinds of trials that he meets with, to the end of life...[Thus] all true saints, all those that do obtain eternal life, do thus persevere in the practice of religion...”<sup>24</sup>

Now, I would never lightly seek to question the correctness and greatness of this dear servant of the God, whose service to God far outweighed anything I could ever wish to do for the Lord. He truly was a

## Matthew

godly servant of God. But, dear brethren, our love and loyalty must first be to the Lord, who is the perfect measure of all godliness, which means it is not disrespectful to question our brother's application of the doctrine of perseverance, for if we let our esteem for Jonathan Edwards keep us from questioning his assertion, does that not make us then question the assertions of other equally great and godly servants of God, who were also greatly used and blessed by God, but who hold to an opposite view of Jonathan Edwards, e. g. such godly servants as A. N. Grove, R. C. Chapman, George Muller and G. L. Lang?

Thus, the reader must search the Scripture and so decide for themselves before God which godly servant was right, for either way, one will end up questioning the viewpoint of one or the other. Therefore, we should continue to love every servant of God, and if we must disagree with one, recognize that it does not mean that we might still greatly benefit from other things he might have said or taught. None of us are infallible, and so we must never let disagreement lead us to have feelings of ill will toward another Christian.

Thus, rather than using the nomenclature, the perseverance of the saints, since it is applied in different ways by different Christians, I would suggest the nomenclature—the doctrine of the Eternal Security of the saint.

Every person who truly believes is eternally secure in their salvation by the work of Christ upon the cross, but, unfortunately, not every person that is thus eternally secured by Christ's work upon the cross perseveres in their Christian walk. Some do fall away. They do not persevere in the present, so much so, that some are even taken home by the Lord because they are still His (cf. I Cor. 11:30-32; 3:15). But since salvation is granted to one by faith in Christ alone, those who do not persevere do not lose their salvation, although they do lose their rewards that would have resulted from a life of perseverance upon earth!

Beloved, the act of faith of a saint yields eternal salvation, and the perseverance of a saint on earth in that salvation yields rewards. Lack of the latter does

## Matthew

not undo the former, nor does it prove the former was never real.

Faith rests upon the promises of God. The proof or evidence of our salvation is the promise that God gives to us in the Word. Faith should never rest upon the perceived maintenance of our good works, which some, unfortunately, do require as proof or evidence of one's salvation. What that effectively does is to make our salvation, or perhaps we should say our justification to be based upon not only our faith, but also upon our ability to maintain good works, which in reality is nothing more than a modified form of faith plus works.

Perhaps a short excerpt from *Safety, Certainty and Enjoyment* by George Cutting might help clarify this distinction a bit more.

“Before you turn to the verse, of which I shall ask you very carefully to look at, which speaks of how a believer is to KNOW and be SURE that he has eternal salvation, let me quote it in the distorted way that one's imagination often puts it—“I have given unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God these *happy feelings*, so that ye may *feel* that ye have eternal life.”

Now, please open your Bible and turn to the verse just misquoted. And while you compare it with God's blessed and unchanging Word, may He give you a heart like David who said, “*I hate vain thoughts; but Thy law do I love*” (Ps.119:113). The verse just misquoted is found in John's first epistle, and it really reads as follows—“These things I have WRITTEN to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may KNOW that you HAVE eternal life” (I John 5:13—NASB77 updated from KJV).

It is the certainty of that which is WRITTEN that gives us the certainty of our salvation, not our happy feelings.

Let me now direct you to another portion of the Bible that demonstrates this distinction, i.e., the fallacy of feeling in regard to our salvation, and the certainty of God's Word in regard to that same salvation. It is found in Exodus 11-12.

As you read this portion of Scripture, let me ask you this question, “How did the first-born sons of the thousands of Israel *know* for certain that they were safe the night of the Passover and Egypt's judgment?”

Let's answer this question by re-visiting in our mind two

## Matthew

different houses of the children of Israel during that night and hear what they have to say.

We find in the first house that we enter that they are all shivering with fear and suspense. "What is the reason for all this great fear and trembling?"—we inquire; and the first-born son informs us that the angel of death is coming that night throughout all the land of Egypt, and so, because they are not sure as to what will happen, they are all anxious and fearful for his own life.

"When the destroying angel has passed our house," says the young man, "*and the night of judgment is over*, then, and only then, *shall I know* that I am safe, but until then, I *do feel* safe. But, what is so strange is that our neighbors are not afraid; they say they *are sure* of their *safety* and salvation, but I and my family think they are being very presumptuous. All we can do is to wait for this long dreary night to end, and hope for the best."

But, seeing his anxiety and fearfulness, we ask, "But has not the God of Israel promised and provided a way of safety for you all tonight?"

"Indeed, He has," he replies, "and we have availed ourselves of that way of escape. The blood of the spotless and unblemished lamb has been sprinkled upon the lintel and the two doorposts of our house; but still we are not fully *certain* of our *safety* and deliverance from the angel of death."

Let us now leave these doubting, fearful and troubled ones and enter the house of the neighbor, the family he called presumptuous.

We enter the house with their lintel and doorpost also sprinkled with the blood of a lamb, the same as the first house we visited, but, inside, oh, what a striking contrast we find! Joy beams forth from every countenance. The first-born is rejoicing and they stand, with girded loins and staff in hand, enjoying the roasted lamb.

What can be the meaning of all this joy on such a solemn night as this? "Ah," say all they, "we are only waiting for the morning, and then we shall bid our farewell to our task master's cruel lash and all the drudgery of our slavery in Egypt."

"But hold on," we say. "Do you not remember that this is the night of judgment against Egypt's first-born sons?"

"Yes, we know that; but our first-born son is safe. We have no need to fear. The blood has been sprinkled according to the wish of our God."

"Your neighbors did this also," we reply, "but they are



## Matthew

all fearful and unhappy because they are uncertain of safety from the angel of death.”

“Ah,” responds the first-born, “but we have the sprinkled blood, and the unerring Word of God to stand upon.” God has said, “When I SEE THE BLOOD I will pass over you. He said that He would be satisfied when He sees the *blood* outside, and so we are satisfied with His *Word* inside.”

“The sprinkled blood makes us *SAFE*. The spoken Word makes us *CERTAIN*. Could anything make us safer than the sprinkled blood, or safer than His spoken Word? There is nothing that can make us safer, nothing.”

Now, dear reader, let me ask you a question, “*Which of those two houses do you think was safer?*”

“Do you say house number two, where everyone was so happy?” If that is your answer, then, you are wrong! The true answer is this—*both houses were equally safe!*

“Why?” You ask.

“Because their *safety* depends upon what God *said* about the *blood outside*, and not upon the state of their *feelings inside*.” They both obeyed the word of God and applied the blood to the lintels and the doorpost outside. So it mattered not what they thought or felt inside; it only mattered what God had *said* and *promised*. They unbelief could not alter or nullify a promise that God had made. So, since it is impossible for God to lie, the answer to our question is that *both houses were equally safe*.

So, dear reader, if you wish to be sure of your own blessing and salvation, do not listen to the unstable testimony of your inward feelings, but, rather, listen to the unfailing and unchanging word of God.

Jesus declares to us, “Verily, Verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me HATH everlasting life” (John 6:47). This is God’s Word to us. If you believe, you have everlasting life...But, one may still ask, “How may I be sure that I have the right kind of faith?”

Well, there can be but one answer to that question. Have you faith and confidence in the right person, that is, in God’s Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for you and me?

It is not a question of the amount of your faith, but of the *trustworthiness of the person* in whom your faith resides. One man takes hold of Christ, as it were, with a drowning man’s grip; another but touches but the hem of His garment: but the sinner who does the former is not a bit safer than the one who does the latter. They have both made the same

## Matthew

discovery, namely that while they can never trust in themselves to save themselves, they can trust in Christ to save them if they but reach out to Him with faith, whether that faith be weak or strong. And, because they trust His *Word*, and not their ever changing feelings, they can confidently repose themselves in His *finished work* upon the cross. That is what is meant by believing on Him. “Verily, Verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me has everlasting life” (John 6:47).

Make sure, dear reader, that your faith is not placed in your own attempts to self-improvement, or in the multitude of your good works, nor in what you might perceive to be spiritual feelings gained from religious exercises, nor in your religious or moral training from childhood, nor in any other thing other than Christ. You may have the strongest faith in any or all of these and still perish for eternity. Don’t deceive yourself by any “fair show in good works or in religious self.” The *feeblest faith in Christ* eternally saves, while the strongest faith in anything else is but the offspring of a *deceived heart*—such things may appear to bring life and peace to you, but they are simply false delusions given by the enemy of your soul to keep you from really escaping the eternal punishment of hell.”<sup>25</sup>

---

In conclusion, hopefully, all that we have shared has given us a greater insight as to what our Lord meant by outer darkness, and as to why some have come to view it as the place of eternal torment and punishment. Such a viewpoint became entrenched in Christian thinking during the centuries following the death of the apostle John, and eventually became codified into the doctrine of purgatory by the Roman Catholic Church. And then, even though the Protestant Reformation correctly rejected the doctrine of purgatory, many never rejected the Roman Catholic association of outer darkness with hades or hell.

And so, hopefully we can now see our Lord is talking about something completely different. He is talking about what Scripture calls the future Judgment Seat of Christ and outer darkness is simply the “darkness outside” the palace of the king, which

## Matthew

symbolical represents the joyous feast which will take place at the beginning of the Millennial reign of Christ.

May we now continue with the words and phrases in the verse of which we are discussing, the next one being the phrase “cast out.”

---

**3) Cast Out**—The phrasal verb cast out is the translation of one word, the Greek verb ἐκβάλλω. The translation of this Greek verb may be another reason why many English speaking Christians think outer darkness refers to hell. “Cast out” in the mind of most English readers carries a slight nuance of violence, along with a connotation utter disdain. But it might interest the reader to know that this Greek verb is also translated in a milder manner. I will provide a few examples below taken from the KJV which has the exact same Greek verb. (The specific verb is found within the bold type.)

**Mark 1:43** And he straitly charged him, and forthwith **sent him away**.

**Luke 10:2** Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly *is* great, but the labourers *are* few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would **send forth** labourers into his harvest.

**Acts 9:40** But Peter **put them all forth**, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning *him* to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

**James 2:25** Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had **sent them out** another way?

As one can see in these verses, the same Greek verb is translated without any sense of “force” or violent action. This shows that this verb carries more

## Matthew

than just a nuance of force; it also carries a nuance of putting or sending one forth without any sense of force, or at least not with “violent” force. This can be seen in S. T. Bloomfield’s Greek and English Lexicon, where he identifies these two different nuances of the verb ἐκβάλλω under two headings—“I. GENER. and with the idea of *force* employed...[and] II. SPEC. the idea of force being dropped.”<sup>26</sup>

Even with the one verse that lends itself more to this connotation of force, it need not be understood as “violent” force. In Matt. 22:13 where we see the wedding guest being ordered to be bound hand and foot by the king.

**Matt. 22:13** Then said the king to the servants, Bind him feet and hands, and take him away, and cast him out into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. Darby’s Version

Now some might think the guest was so tightly bound hand and foot that he was carried outside the king’s house or palace and then violently thrown down to the ground outside in the darkness. But there is nothing in the Greek of the verse to indicate such violence or that the guest was so tightly bound that he could not even walk. The servants could have equally fulfilled the king’s command by conducting him by the arm to the darkness outside, where he would still be able to shuffle along with them with his feet bound. I am sure many have even seen this today, where sometimes prisoners are able to shuffle into court with chains on their feet.

The Greek word “bind” does not require a tight binding where no movement is allowed. The word can equally be understood as one being somewhat “restricted” or “tied,” as can be seen where the word is used of the donkey and a colt being tied in Matt. 21:2. More than likely, since people cared for the welfare of their animals, some limited movement would have been allowed, so as to not bring too much discomfort to the animal.

Also we find the same word is used of Paul in Acts 21:11 where it says he will be bound hand and

## Matthew

foot, and then delivered into the hands of the Gentiles.

**Acts 21:11** And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and **bound his own hands and feet**, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles. KJV

When we read of the fulfilment of this prophetic word, we find that two chains were used to bind him (Acts 21:33). Now, when only the hands (not the hands and feet) were bound, this often meant each hand was bound to a different guard, which also indicated the chains that were used were of a length to allow some movement (Cf. Acts 12:6-7). But we know from Acts 21:11 this was not the case with Paul, for it says his feet were also bound, which would require the second chain to be used for his feet.

So that it seems that one chain was used for his hands and one chain for his feet. Also we know his hands were not chained to guards, rather his one hand was chained to the other hand, for Agabus, in Acts 21:10-11, appears as one who was not bound to any guard, but was only bound hand and foot himself, and Agabus says this is what will happen to Paul in Jerusalem.

This indicates that Paul had some freedom of movement with his hands, for he raises up one hand not two hands to the crowd in Acts 21:40, which means he had enough movement and length of chain to be able to raise one of his hands, while the other hand remained not raised. Also he had to have had some movement and enough length of chain for a limited movement for his feet so he could somewhat walk or shuffle (for it speaks of him being “led,” not carried, in Acts 21:37, in contradistinction where he first had to be “borne” because of the violence of the people just two verses before in verse 35).

In other words, he first had to be carried because of the violence of the people, not because he could not walk or shuffle, but then once he was safe, he was put down and was led into the castle (vs. 37). So in this case he must have had his feet chained together with

## Matthew

enough length of chain to walk or shuffle.

And so, since the same Greek verb “to bind” was used for Paul that was used for the wedding guest in Matt. 22:13, this means the wedding guest presumably was bound with chains also, wherein he was allowed some limited movement, and so did not need to be carried aloft by the servants and then cast out into the darkness outside.

So we see that even in the one verse that might provide a picture of violence, it does not necessarily demand such a viewpoint in the Greek, but is only possibly conveyed by the way the verse is translated into English. The verse could legitimately be understood as follows: “Then said the king to the servants, “After having bound his feet and hands [*with chains*], take and conduct him into the darkness outside: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth” (The phrase *with chains* is not a part of the Greek text, nor does the Greek word for “bound” require it. That is why I put it in italics, and also in brackets to make sure one realizes it is not in the Greek. I included it for purpose of demonstrating that the guest, in all likelihood, could still shuffle along under his own power and because in the New Testament most of the people who are said to be “bound” are said to be bound with chains—e.g. Mk. 5:3; Acts 12:6; 21:33.<sup>b</sup>

As for the imagery of being bound—the wedding guest is presumably chained, hands and feet to show the seriousness and gravity of the guest’s total disrespect in regard to the expectations of the king. But since the guest was still considered a friend, because he responded to the king’s invitation, unlike the other invited guests who ignored the king, and/or some who even murdered the servants of the king, the guest was led out by the servants under his own power, and then put out into the darkness outside, away from the presence of the king and the other guests who did show respect to the ways of the king in regard to a wedding.

Moreover, the imagery of binding the hands and feet could also bespeak the fact that work done by our

<sup>b</sup> Rendering the verb ἐκβάλλω as “conduct out” would be similar to the usage ἐκβάλλω in verse 4 of John 10:3-4, where Jesus is said to “lead out” his sheep in verse 3, which is then also described with this same Greek verb, being rendered as “putteth forth” his sheep in verse 4. In this sense, “conduct him out” could be understood as an equivalent in English of sheep being led out by Jesus or put forth, i.e. conducted out by Jesus. The verse might then read: “He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he conducts his own sheep out, he goeth before them. Obviously, in this verse there is not the thought of force or of any violent act.

## Matthew

own strength and ways in the things of God is a serious matter. Our hands represent our own power and feet represent our own ways, the way in which we walk. These things would be likened in Scripture to those works known as wood, hay and stubble, works done for God, but works not done by His power, and not done in accordance with the way of the cross, and the ways of Christ Jesus, which ways are meant to bring glory only to Him and not to ourselves.<sup>c</sup> Such things done by our own hands and feet, our own strength and ways, Scripture says will be burnt up, yet Scripture also says that the Christian will still be saved, yet as by fire.

Thus, perhaps, the imagery of binding the hands and feet is intended to show us that it is important as to how we serve Christ. Works of righteousness that are done for God by our own ways, by our own judgement of what pleases God (remembering King Saul),<sup>d</sup> done in our own power, robs Christ of the glory due only to Him, and instead focuses the glory upon ourselves and our own capabilities and creative ways. A Christian is to walk in the same manner he received Christ Jesus, which means it must be all of Christ and nothing of himself (Gal. 2:20; Col. 2:6). If we are saved, not by our power, but by Christ's power, and we are saved, not in the way we choose, but by the way He has chosen (John 14:6), then our walk (our service) should be done in the same manner, not by our power or the way we choose, but by His power and His the way He chose!

Finally, as for the verse that says those who accepted were good and bad, this should not be equated with being saved and not saved. Christians, unfortunately can do bad. Were not Ananias and Sapphira saved Christians, but were considered bad by their actions (Acts 5: 1-11), as were Demas (II Tim. 4:10), and Hymenaeus and Alexander (I Tim. 1:20)?

There is much in the parable to indicate this "bad" wedding guest was still a saved person, but we will discuss this in greater detail when we reach that chapter in Matthew's Gospel.

Therefore it becomes a matter of contextual

<sup>c</sup> **I Cor. 4:17** For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church. KJV

<sup>d</sup> **1 Sam 13:9,11a, 12,13** And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering...<sup>11</sup> And Samuel said, What hast thou done? . . .<sup>12</sup> . . . The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.<sup>13</sup> And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. KJV

## Matthew

judgment by the translator as to which category is being used of the Greek word commonly translated “cast out,” which in the case of Matt. 8:12 and the two other verses where “outer darkness” occurs, most translators of English Bible seem to have chosen the category of driving out, or expelling one forcibly, perhaps because they believe that “outer darkness” refers to eternal punishment. Thus, no doubt, they feel the translation of “cast out” might better express in their minds the final and just judgment of God against sinners.

In fact, if I believed that “outer darkness” represented hell in the lake of fire, I too would have chosen the forcible category of ἐκβάλλω, “cast out,” as the proper translation of the Greek verb in those verses! But that decision is based upon the presupposition that “outer darkness” is hell, which, we have demonstrated, is highly unlikely (especially because unbelievers are not even resurrected before the Millennium, and so will not even be present at that period in time referenced, but, instead are resurrected after the Millennium).

So, beloved, consider this for a moment; if for the last four hundred years in the KJV, the first part of Matt. 8:12 had read: “But the children of the kingdom shall be **sent forth** into the **darkness outside**,” or, “But the children of the kingdom shall be **put forth** into the **darkness outside**, with the second category of the verb ἐκβάλλω being used and the “darkness outside” being used instead of “outer darkness,” would that not give the English reader a completely different connotation? Does it not make the statement seem more innocuous than **to drive out** or **cast out**? How would Christians today think of this verse, if it had read that way for the last four hundred years throughout the English speaking world?

More than likely Christians would not even associate “outer darkness” with hell for the phrase would not even be found in the English Bible! The phrase instead would be the phrase the “darkness outside,” which we make one think of a place adjacent to the place of judgment and not of a place far away



## Matthew

from the place of judgment, in far location hell.

Moreover, I am sure many would then understand the verb “sent forth” or “put out” as a sense more of great dissatisfaction or chastisement, rather than a sense of being cast with wrath into the eternal punishment of hell.

Or consider this as to how this Greek verb can change the entire sense of a verse depending on whether it falls under the category of force, or without force. Here is another verse where the Greek verb ἐκβάλλω might be better translated “without any connotation of force.”

In Mark 1:12 the King James Version renders ἐκβάλλω with a word that indicates a form of force, i.e. the word “driveth.”

**Mark 1:12** And immediately the Spirit **driveth** him into the wilderness. KJV

I am not sure why they chose this English word “driveth,” but think about the word for a moment. In most cases, especially when used of individuals, and not of inanimate objects, the word “drives” carries some idea of force (although, even with inanimate objects in English the word “driveth” carries a certain level of force (e.g. driving a chariot furiously—II King 9: 20).<sup>e</sup>

Thus, I do not think the Holy Spirit would use ἐκβάλλω “with its connotation of force” for the Son, but would rather be using it “without its connotation of force,” for the Son of God was never “forced!” This is confirmed by the parallel passage of Mark 1:12 above that is found in Matt. 4:1, where the Holy Spirit uses the Greek verb ἀνάγω, which simply means to “lead up,” obviously without any sense of force, or of any sense of being driven.

Therefore, I believe one should not presume a sense of force is intended in that verse, for the Father, nor the Holy Spirit would ever “drive” or “force” the Son of God to do something.

The word “driveth” indicates a resistance of the one being driven, and that could never be true of the

<sup>e</sup> **II Kings 9:16** So Jehu rode in a chariot, and went to Jezreel; for Joram lay there. And Ahaziah king of Judah was come down to see Joram. <sup>20</sup> And the watchman told, saying, He came even unto them, and cometh not again: and the driving *is* like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously. KJV

## Matthew

Eternal Son of God who was sinless and so would never resist the will of God, or the leading guidance of the Blessed Holy Spirit to the point that He would need to be “forced! All Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity always act and move together in perfect harmony, unity and communion—anything less than that would indicate imperfection!

Therefore, I believe it would have been better to translate Mark 1:12 as something like, “immediately the Spirit **sent him out** into the wilderness” (using the other category of ἐκβάλλω that carries “no connotation of force”).

This shows how translations of certain words and phrases can alter one’s entire perception of a verse. Just as “the Spirit **driveth** him into the wilderness,” communicates a different idea than “the Spirit **sendeth him out** into the wilderness,” so the translation “the children of the kingdom **shall be sent forth into the darkness outside**,” communicates a different idea than “the children of the kingdom **shall be driven out or cast out into outer darkness**.”

**4) Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth**—The final phrase we must understand is the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” As with “outer darkness,” many associate “weeping and gnashing of teeth” exclusively with unbelievers. Part of the reason for this may be that they cannot comprehend how any Christian could weep and gnash their teeth when Christ comes a second time. They wonder how a Christian could ever be sorrowful when Christ returns. Or they might wonder how a Christian could express any other emotion than great joy at His coming. But the fact is to believe this is not quite biblical. Scripture does teach some Christians will express sorrow at His coming, which some may not have noticed because, of the way I John 2:28 is translated into English.

So let us first look at this verse, before we discuss the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

**1 John 2:28** And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be

## Matthew

ashamed **before him** at his coming. KJV

The first thing we must discuss is the translation of the Greek phrase ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ as “before him.” The Greek preposition translated above as “before” is the preposition ἐμπρός (elided to ἐμπ’). I believe a better translation than “before” in this verse would be the translation that communicated the idea of “away from.” In fact in the KJV the Greek preposition occurs a total of 671 times, yet it is translated as “before” only twice (here in this verse and in Acts 7:45). In the vast majority of the places (393 times) it was translated as “from.” Now that is not to say that it might not include the minor nuance of “before.” That, indeed, is possible, for the Greek language is very flexible, but what I am saying is that contextually, I believe the more common translation of “from,” with an idea of “away from,” would have better communicated the idea John was trying to convey, as can be seen in the NASB translation of the verse.

**I John 2:28** And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink **away from** Him in shame at His coming. NASB77

If John was only wishing to communicate the meaning of “before,” he certainly could have used the more common Greek preposition for that meaning, which is πρό, rather than the Greek preposition ἐμπρός which conveys the idea of movement “away from.”

Bloomfield provides the following nuances of this preposition in his Greek Lexicon.

“Ἀπό, prep. gov. the genit. Denoting the *going forth*, or *proceeding*, of one object FROM another, and used of such objects as before were *on*, *by*, or *with* another, but are now separated *from* and *stand apart* from it...”<sup>27</sup>

Therefore, what John is really saying in I John 2:28, is that some believers will move away from the Lord after His coming because of their shame! The NASB clearly shows forth this nuance in their translation, as does this note on the Greek text from the *Cambridge*

# Matthew

## *Bible for Schools and Colleges:*

*“not be ashamed before him]* This cannot well be improved, but it is very inadequate: the Greek is ‘be ashamed *from* Him’, or ‘be shamed *away from* Him’; strikingly indicating the averted face and shrinking form which are the results of the shame. ‘Turn with shame’ or ‘shrink with shame from Him’ have been suggested as renderings.”<sup>28</sup>

The point is not just that some Christians will be ashamed standing before Him; the point is that some Christians will turn away from Him in shame and great sorrow at His coming.

However, if one still prefers the traditional reading of “and not be ashamed before him at his coming” the fact still remains that John is saying that some Christians will experience shame in the presence of Christ at His coming. They will not be joyful, but rather sorrowful. Why? Because they did not abide in Christ, faithfully doing His will through the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Instead, they will realize that wasted their lives, living for themselves, and even in some cases in the way they chose to serve Him.

J. Vernon McGee said it this way in his commentary.

“A great many people are talking about the coming of Christ, and they get very excited about it; but it certainly is going to be embarrassing for them because they will not have any confidence and they are going to be ashamed before Him at His coming. Why? Because of their lives. The Lord Jesus says, ‘And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be’ (Rev. 22:12). Many people will look around for their reward, and they will find that they haven’t got any. Paul wrote, ‘If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire’ (I Cor. 3:15)...”

“There is nothing that will affect your life as such as the knowledge that you are going to stand in the presence of Christ and give an account of your works. Every believer will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. Paul writes, ‘For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his

## Matthew

body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad' (2 Cor. 5:10). The issue of salvation has already been settled because we are His children and in His presence. It is not a question of whether you are saved or lost; it is a question of whether or not you are going to get any reward or recognition. **There will be some folk who will not get any recognition...**The Rapture is not going to be such a thrilling event for a great many believers because of the lives they lived down here."<sup>29</sup>

Although J. Vernon McGee held to a narrower dispensational understanding of the Gospel of Matthew than I, on this point, regarding the future judgment of our lives by Christ for sinful lives lived (which, more than likely, means some sins were left unconfessed), and also for lives lived apart from His will, I think he said it perfectly.

Some Christians will experience great remorse at the Judgment Seat of Christ for things done for Christ, but not done in accordance with His will. And if some say, "Well, I disagree; some may be ashamed, but that does not mean they are sorrowful," let me ask just one question. "Does not shame involve sorrow?" If a husband transgresses against a wife, or wife against a husband, once the transgression is made known, is there not only shame, but also deep sorrow for hurting the one you love? Or, if a child disobeys their parent, and the transgression is found out, is their not only shame, but also weeping and deep sorrow by the child for disobeying his or her parent. Or, if one hurts a close friend, wherein the friend finds out you betrayed a trust, does not one feel ashamed and deep anguish for being untrustworthy to your friend? If all the above is true how much more would a true Christian be so ashamed and so filled with deep sorrow, if their Lord showed them how they betrayed His trust, disobeyed His commandments, hurt Him, and left Him as their first love? Would they not be so ashamed that they would shed many tears, with great sorrow and anguish in their hearts (cf. II Chron. 34:27)?<sup>f</sup> I most assuredly think so.

Would you not be filled with great sorrow if you thought you had done so much for Christ, but then you

<sup>f</sup> **II Chron. 34:27**  
forasmuch as thy heart **was ashamed**, and thou was humbled before me when thou heardest my words against this place, and against the inhabitants of it, and thou wast humbled before me, and didst rend thy garments, **and didst weep before me**; I also have heard, saith the Lord. (Brenton's English Version of the Greek Old Testament)

## Matthew

found out in the end that you did those things really for yourself, in your own power, and not in His power, in accordance with His will, and, because of that, you found out that you deeply hurt the Saviour? Would it not cause you deep anguish, if you saw all your works burn up as wood, hay and stubble, because you knew they were burning up because the Lord was hurt and displeased because you did not do them in accordance with His will and His life? I am sure it would.

So now that we have shown that it is not necessarily true that there could never be any sorrow for the Christian at the Lord's Second Coming, let us look a little closer to our Lord's declaration in this verse regarding this "weeping and gnashing of teeth" that will come to some believers in the future when standing before His Judgment Seat.

The phrase "gnashing of teeth" is an idiom in Scripture that bespeaks intense emotion. The Greek word βρυγμός in the phrase, however, does not tell us what that emotion would be; the word βρυγμός, in and of itself, simply means "gnashing," "grinding," and/or "chattering" (or in some Greek Lexicons *crashing*).<sup>30</sup>

It is interesting that this thought of teeth *crashing* together in the word is used in the writings of Hippocrates to describe the *chattering* of teeth brought about by a fever. He uses the word in a discussion regarding different types of Pleurisy (Πλευρίτις), wherein he describes one particular type of Pleurisy as having these symptoms: fever, chattering *of teeth*, and a dry cough.<sup>31</sup> The word translated "chattering" is the same word used by Matthew in his Gospel—βρυγμός.

This is important to note, for it indicates βρυγμός does not always bespeak a willful and intentional act of the will, wherein one purposely "grinds" their teeth in anger towards someone! Βρυγμός can also refer to an involuntary act of *chattering* brought about by other factors, such as a fever, as mentioned above, or by extreme cold, or, as some have observed, even by a sudden shock to the system of an intense and emotional nature. Yet, I would dare say that most English readers today only understand "gnashing" (βρυγμός) as being a purposeful "grinding of the

## Matthew

teeth” in anger toward someone. This common understanding can be seen in this Oxford definition found online: “gnash your teeth—to feel very angry and upset about something, especially because you cannot get what you want.”<sup>32</sup> But *gnashing* in the 1600’s conveyed much more than just *grinding*; it also conveyed the idea of *crashing*, in the sense of teeth crashing together, i.e. chattering, which may be why the KJV translators chose “gnashing” to translate βρυγμός, instead of “grinding,” or “chattering.”

If the King James’ translators had chosen the word “grinding” to translate βρυγμός, it would have excluded any idea of “chattering,” and if they had chosen “chattering,” it would have excluded any idea of “grinding.” But, by the choice of “gnashing,” it provided an English word that encapsulated both meanings, wherein one could discern through the context which of the two meanings was intended. This quote from the Puritan Edward Leigh demonstrates this. In speaking of one being in the cold, he uses the word “gnash” where today we would have expected “chatter,” but because “gnash” also meant “to chatter” a reader in the 1600’s would have perfectly understood what he meant. He wrote: “And there is so much cold there that the teeth gnash again with it.”

And, an early English dictionary from the 1700’s still shows these two different, though similar, meanings found in this one word “gnash.” It read: “To GNA’SH, v. a. (*knaschan*, Belg. *naschen*, Teut.) to strike, or clash together, applied to the teeth. To grind or strike the teeth together with a repeated, quick, or convulsive motion, either on account of rage, or from a sensation of excessive cold or agony.”<sup>33</sup> (Letterform is updated.)

The *Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature*, edited by John Kitto, the brother who travelled in those early days with A. N. Groves to Baghdad, also provides these two nuances of βρυγμός. And even though this quote is used to bespeak the future punishment of the lost, it still shows the writer clearly understood that βρυγμός can also mean the chattering of teeth.

The entry reads: “Our Lord generally describes it

## Matthew

under figures suggested by some comparison he had just before made, and in unison with it. Thus, having described future happiness under the figure of a midnight banquet, lighted up with lamps, then the state of the rejected is described under that of ‘outer darkness’ outside the mansion, and ‘gnashing’ or chattering ‘of teeth,’ from the extreme cold of an Oriental night (Matt. viii. 12; Luke xiii. 28); though the phrase also denotes rage and vexation (comp. Eccles xxx.10).”<sup>34</sup>

And so we see that the King James translators chose an English word to convey both meanings of the Greek word βρυγμός. Gnashing bespeaks either grinding or chattering, depending on the context, just as βρυγμός also bespeaks grinding or chattering, depending on the context. The former nuance is purposeful; the latter is not, but in Scripture both are still closely tied to some emotion.

S. T. Bloomfield speaks of this in his *Greek Lexicon*, where he says: “βρυγμός, οὖ, ὁ, (βρύχω,) *a grinding or gnashing*, i.e. of the teeth, Matt. viii.12. xiii. 42. xxii. 13. xxiv. 51. xxv. 30. Lu. xiii. 28, an image derived from a person in a paroxysm of pain, (comp. Acts vii. 54,) and **transferred from the feelings of the body to the affections of the mind. It is highly expressive of the sensations of bitter grief, indignation, and regret.**”<sup>35</sup>

Notice that he equates the word not only with indignation, but also with “grief” and “regret.” Consequently, the only way for one to determine which emotion should be associated with either physical manifestation of βρυγμός, is to carefully look to the context of the passage.

For example, the Greek word (βρυγμός), along with its verbal form (βρύχω), is used 14 times in the Greek New Testament and the Greek Old Testament. If we exclude the minor usage of a *roar* of a lion in Prov. 19:12, *gnashing of teeth* is used 4 times as a physical manifestation of “anger” in Job 16:9; Psalm 35:16; 112:10 and Acts 7:54, following the controlling and contextual words like *anger*, *tear*, *angry*, *attack* (i.e. *ran upon*) and *stoned*. Thus, it is those other



## Matthew

words in the context that indicate the type of emotion intended by (βρυχμός) the gnashing of teeth.

Next, *gnashing of teeth* seems to be used 2 times as a physical manifestation of “hate” in Psalm 37:12; Lam. 2:16 with such controlling and contextual words as: *wicked plotting*, *derision*, and *hissing*.

Then in Matt. 13:42 and Matt. 13:50 we see *gnashing of teeth* being a manifestation of “pain” with such controlling and contextual words as: *weeping* and *furnace of fire*. (Notice, though, outer darkness is not a part of these verses. Clearly this gnashing is in hell.)

And, finally, it is used 5 times of profound “regret” and “sorrow” in Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; & Lu. 13:28, again with the controlling word of *weeping* (but this time in outer darkness, and not in hell), which Bloomfield links to the verb κλαίω, which, in turn, he states implies “not only the shedding of tears, but every other external expression of grief.”<sup>36</sup>

So, generally speaking, we see that the phrase “gnashing/chattering of teeth,” takes on the emotional senses of extreme anger, intense hatred, great pain, or an overwhelming sense of sorrow and grief. It all depends on the context and the coinciding words used along with it.

So how should we understand βρυχμός in Matt. 8:12? I think in three ways. First, it is being used with its sense of one’s teeth chattering in the cold to complete the imagery of the story of the darkness outside the well-lighted palace of the King. And, second, it also seems it is being used of the chattering of one’s teeth to bespeak the utter depth of anguish, and sorrow of heart, being experienced by one whose body is trembling with uncontrollable weeping—it being a result of the shock of suddenly being censured by the Lord for a life lived for themselves, and not for their King. And, finally, it seems βρυχμός is being used with its general sense of gnashing one’s teeth in anger; but, in this case, it is not anger toward another, but is anger towards one’s self, for the same reasons listed above—a Christian life spoiled by living according to the things of the world, in disregard of Christ, just as Paul warns us all: “Beware lest any man

## Matthew

spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” (Col. 2:6,8 KJV)

We should not forget, as we said before, this group (which included those from the 1<sup>st</sup> cent.—Lu. 13:25-26—see pg. 33ff) could never refer to unbelievers, since unbelievers will not be resurrected until the end of the Millennium. Therefore, since all these that are sent out to the “darkness outside” are Christians, I do not think Christians would be gnashing their teeth in anger or hatred toward Christ! But I can very well understand how Christians would gnash their teeth in anger toward themselves, once the Lord reveals to them their false ways in service to Him, and/or all the many times they ignored His knocking on the door of their hearts, not for salvation, for they are already saved, but rather for the daily communion and the fellowship He so desired, and/or maybe after learning they were filled with more love for the world and the things of the world, than for Christ and the things of Christ (Remember Demas—II Tim, 4:10; also I John 2:15; James 4:4). But through it all, because they are believers, most certainly their gnashing would be against themselves—for their lives wasted—for they know the Lord is right (for on that day they will know as they are known—I Cor. 13:12). And so they know they are without excuse, for we all were warned by Paul of that coming day of judgement, not in regard to salvation, but in regard to our lives lived, and our works done (I Cor. 4:2-5; 3:13-15).

So with this examination of these three phrases, and the phrasal verb, “cast out,” let us now turn our attention to the whole passage in Matt. 8:10-12.

Our Lord begins with this declaration in verse 10: “Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” This shows us that faith is important to our Lord, and that faith, and our walk of faith in obedience, will affect our standing in the Millennial Kingdom when it comes to our rewards and our status before Him, either as being the least in the kingdom, or the greatest in the kingdom (Matt. 5:19).

The implication is that our Lord is saying to some

## Matthew

of those Jewish believers who thought they would be the greatest in the kingdom, because the Gentiles would never have a part in the kingdom like them, might actually end up being the least in the kingdom, and the Gentile centurion, which current rabbinical teaching at the time taught would never be able to take part in that feast, will actually end up being one of the greatest! Alford speaks of this understanding.

“Compare a remarkable contrast in the Rabbinical books illustrating Jewish pride: ‘God said to the Israelites, “In the world to come I will spread for you a vast table, which the Gentiles shall see and be confounded.”’<sup>37</sup>

And then we have the helpful comments of Alfred Edersheim, who was born of Jewish parents, raised in a Jewish home, attended Hebrew school from a young age, studied the Talmud, became fluent in many languages, including Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, and then later in life was led to the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom he trusted wholly.

Consequently, he was very familiar with the historical background of this story. And, even though our brother Alfred Edersheim follows the most common understanding that outer darkness refers to Hades (Gehinnom), and so those consigned to it would be unbelievers, I thought it would benefit the reader to read his witness to the historical mindset of the Israelite people of that day. Below is a portion of his helpful comments.

“But for the fuller understanding of the words of Christ, the Jewish modes of thought, which He used in illustration, require to be briefly explained. It was a common belief that in the day of the Messiah redeemed Israel would be gathered to a great feast, together with the patriarchs and heroes of the Jewish faith. One thing, however, was clear: Gentiles could have no part in that feast. On this point, then, the words of Jesus in reference to the believing Centurion formed the most marked contrast to Jewish teaching...”

“To complete our apprehension of the contrast between the views of the Jews and the teaching of Jesus, we must bear in mind that, as the Gentiles could not possibly share in the feast of the Messiah, so Israel had claim and title to

## Matthew

it. To use Rabbinic terms, the former were ‘children of Gehinnom,’ but Israel ‘children of the Kingdom,’ or, in strictly Rabbinic language, ‘royal children,’ ‘children of God,’ ‘of heaven,’ ‘children of the upper chamber,’ and ‘of the world to come’”

“Never, surely, could the Judaism of His hearers have received more rude shock than by this inversion of all their cherished beliefs. There was a feast of Messianic fellowship, a recognition on the part of the King of all His faithful subjects, a festive gathering with the fathers of the faith. But this fellowship was not of outward, but of spiritual kinship. There were ‘children of the Kingdom,’ and there was an ‘outer darkness’ with its anguish and despair. But this childship was of the Kingdom, such as He had opened it to all believers; and that outer darkness theirs, who had only outward claims to present. And so this history of the believing Centurion is at the same time an application of the ‘Sermon on the Mount,’ and a further carrying out of its teaching. Negatively, it differentiated the Kingdom from Israel; while, positively, it placed the hope of Israel, and fellowship with its promises, within reach of all faith, whether of Jew or Gentile.”<sup>38</sup>

So, to our Lord’s Jewish audience that were following Him, this was quite a startling statement of the Saviour. The Jewish multitude that was following Him (which, of course, would at that time include those who also believed Him, and those who might not have yet believed) had been taught that Gentiles (which would include the Romans) would not be in the kingdom, but our Lord taught that not only will some Gentiles be in the kingdom, some will even have an honored place at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, while some of the Jewish believers will not. And why would that be?—because of the Gentile’s great faith. And this leads us to the final questions that must be answered. First, why does “great” faith insure an honored place at the table, and, second, what does this table in the lighted palace of the king represent within the prophetic timeline?

As for the first, it must be remembered that without faith it is impossible to please God. Therefore, faith will play an important part in determining the rewards that will be bestowed upon us at the Judgment Seat of

## Matthew

Christ, and they will play a part in determining the responsibilities we will be given with Him in His thousand year reign.

Thus, the exercise of faith is essential not only for our eternal salvation resulting in our justification by faith, it is also essential for our present salvation that is called our “sanctification,” which affects our rewards in the Millennium. The former bespeaks our justification by faith, which results in an eternal salvation, which can never be undone. The latter bespeaks our justification by works, as mentioned by James in his epistle, which if done in accordance with the will of God, the Word of God, and fullness of the Holy Spirit, insures our Millennial rewards and a “Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

James is not contradicting justification by faith as taught by the apostle Paul; he is simply saying that after you are eternally saved by justification by faith, do not forget that there is a justification by works, not to earn eternal salvation, but to receive the approbation of Christ at his Judgment Seat, when those works that were done in accordance with the Word of God, in obedience to the will of God, will be rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Erwin W. Lutzer, who ministered at Moody Memorial Church in Chicago, the same Church where R. A. Torrey and H. A. Ironside ministered before him, speaks of this distinction as follows:

“When the Reformer preached (and rightly so) that we are saved by grace alone and not by works, some theologians went on to say that our works after salvation are also nonmeritorious. They concluded that in heaven all Christians will either receive the same reward, or else any differences will be due to God’s sovereign will. Many Bible students since that time have accepted the same basic premise...Of course, I passionately agree that when we put our faith in Christ we are declared righteous by God because of Christ and not because of our works. Our deeds before our conversion are of no merit in the sight of God... But works done after we have received the free gift of eternal life are special to God...These works are sought by

## Matthew

God and honor Him...”<sup>39</sup> “Salvation is guaranteed to those who accept Christ by faith; rewards are not. Entering heaven is one thing; having a possession there is quite another. One is the result of faith, the other, the reward for faith plus obedience.”<sup>40</sup>

And that brings us to our second question, regarding what is represented by this Table at the beginning of the Millennial reign of Christ, around which Jesus says Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will sit.

Since this feast occurs when Christ returns, perhaps, this joyous feast is the inaugural feast of the King, ushering in His reign upon earth, much like was practiced in Israel of old, as can be seen in the feast ordered by Adonijah when he tried to be king after his father David.

**I Kings 1:24-25** And Nathan said, My lord, O king, hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? <sup>25</sup> For he is gone down this day, and hath slain oxen and fatlings and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the king's sons, and the captains of the host, and Abiathar the priest; and, behold, they are eating and drinking before him, and say, *Long live king Adonijah*. ASV

Of course, we know this attempt of Adonijah was not legitimate and that Solomon was the one anointed to be king in David's place; but it reveals that such an inauguration feast would occur at the beginning of a king's reign, which, apparently, is also what occurred when Solomon was recognized as king. Scripture says there was great rejoicing in the city when he was recognized. More than likely, if Adonijah's feast was the result of an established practice in Israel for the inauguration of a new king, then most certainly the same inauguration feast would have happened for Solomon, which would explain the great joy, and the same use of the phrase “Long live the King.”

**I Kings 1:39-40** And Zadok the priest took the horn of oil out of the Tent, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, ***Long live king Solomon***.<sup>40</sup> And all the people came up after him, and the **people piped**

## Matthew

**with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy**, so that the earth rent with the sound of them. ASV

But one thing that must be noticed is that not all the city was included in that apparent feast for Solomon. Scripture declares that those who acted contrary to the will of King David were not present (see I Kings 1:40-41, 43, 46, 49-50—especially vs. 49).<sup>g</sup>

So if there was a feast for Solomon, it must be noted that it was not for those who had ignored the will of the King. It was only for the loyal and the obedient subjects of the King. The rest could hear the great rejoicing, but they were not present. However, all those who were not present at the joyous inauguration, were still in the kingdom of Israel, and were all present at the beginning of Solomon's reign! In other words, not being at the inauguration feast (for verse 49 says they each went their own way) did not mean they were not in kingdom of Solomon and present during his reign. (Of course, this is a very general and limited comparison, for many in Israel were sinners and not saved, whereas at the Lord's inaugural feast all will be saved, including those in the darkness outside. It will not be until a little later, at the beginning of His reign, after He takes His seat upon the throne, that the unsaved people remaining on the earth will be judged. At that time, which in Matt. 25: 31-46 is commonly referred to as the Judgment of the Nations, all the unsaved people will be dealt with who were left over from the Great Tribulation.)

Perhaps, this is what our Lord was referencing by the table in His kingdom. As we mentioned earlier, it was commonly understood that the reign of the Messiah would begin with a great feast. Scripture says that God will install the Lord Jesus Christ as King over Israel, and over all the earth, with great rejoicing.

**Psalms 2:6, 8** "But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain." <sup>8</sup> "Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Thine inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Thy possession. NASB 77

**Zechariah 9:9** Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout,

<sup>g</sup> **I Kings 1:40, 41, 43, 46, 49, 50** And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them. <sup>41</sup> And Adonijah and all the guests that were with him heard it as they had made an end of eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, Wherefore is this noise of the city being in an uproar? <sup>43</sup> And Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, Verily our lord king David hath made Solomon king: <sup>46</sup> And also Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom. <sup>49</sup> And all the guests of Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way. <sup>50</sup> And Adonijah feared because of Solomon; and he arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar. ASV

## Matthew

O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he *is* just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. KJV

As an aside, one thing should be mentioned; the inaugural feast of the King is not the same as the marriage supper of the Lamb. The marriage supper is for all who are in the Church, regardless of their rewards or lack of rewards, regardless of a “well done,” or a “reprimand” at the Judgment Seat—for all who are in the body of Christ, by virtue of their justification by faith, are present being robed in His righteousness, being His Bride (Rev 19:7-8).<sup>h</sup>

But when it comes to the inauguration feast of the King, it is based upon our justification by works, a “well done” from Christ, wherein He declares us righteous in our works and service done, in faith, by love, and in obedience to His Word, and in the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

And so, in the same way as with the inaugural feast of Solomon, perhaps the Lord is saying that not everyone who says, “Lord Lord” will be the ones allowed to that great inaugural feast that ushers in the Millennium; it will only be for those who receive a “Well done thou good and faithful servant,” for those who were loyal and obedient to Him, doing His will throughout their sojourning upon earth, those who ever followed His Word, who ever took up their cross, who ever denied themselves, trusting in His power, never trusting in their own power, in their own human abilities, their own natural talents to do the work of God; it will be for those servants who owned Him as their true King, and who never followed that other king—that old man called “self.” It would be for those who always did the work of the Lord in the fullness of the Holy Spirit and in accordance with His Word.

But after the feast is over, and His Millennial reign begins, the LORD will then receive into His presence those that were disqualified from attending that feast, those who were sent into the darkness outside that palace of feasting, for our Lord cannot deny Himself; they are still His servants, being the children of God,

<sup>h</sup> In Rev. 19:8 the righteousness of Christ is shown forth to us as righteousnesses (pl.) of the saints, since each saint received the righteousness of Christ when he or she first believed. The many are revealed as being clothed in the one fine linen (singular - τὸ βύσσινον), not many fine linens (plural), thus revealing that the righteousness of Christ (sing.) is imputed to them (plural) as seen by the one clothing of fine linen. This is also confirmed because the fine linen had to be “given” to the Bride. If the fine linen represented their individual acts of righteousness, it would not then have been given to them, for each one would already have that clothing. Thus, we see that each one’s righteousness in the text is the imputed righteousness of Christ, because of His one righteous act (Rom. 5: 18).



## Matthew

His brethren. They may have denied Him, His power and His ways, but He will never forsake them (though He will reprimand them), for He is always faithful, even if we are not—"because if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we endure, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us; if we are unfaithful, He remains faithful! He is not able to deny Himself!" (II Tim. 2:13).

So, because of that, after a short time of reprimand in the darkness outside, He will grant them their role in His Millennial Kingdom; but for them it will not be the role of the greatest in His kingdom; it will be the role of the least in His Millennial Kingdom; but even in that, they will rejoice, for He shall wipe every tear from their eyes, reminding them that all their sins were forgiven by His blood, assuring them that their unfaithfulness on earth will be remembered no more.

**Revelation 21:4** And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. KJV

So, suffice it to say, the "children of the kingdom," that the Lord identifies in Matthew's Gospel as believers, will be in the Kingdom, but many will be disqualified to sit at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the inauguration feast of the King.

Consequently, because salvation is only by faith for both Jew and Gentile, and because Millennial rewards are only for works done by faith, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and not the power of human endeavour, many Gentiles, like the centurion who exercised great faith in the power of God, not thinking that the Lord should reward and answer his request because of anything in himself, will not only be saved but will also be invited to sit at that table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, being, by faith, Abraham's other seed among the Gentiles (Rom. 4:16-18,20; Gal:3:9),<sup>i</sup> who walked in that same faith, putting no confidence in themselves, for either their justification, nor their sanctification.

<sup>i</sup> **Rom. 4:16, 18-20**

Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,<sup>18</sup> Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.<sup>20</sup> He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. KJV

**Galatians 3:9** So then they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham. Geneva Version

# Matthew

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Erwin W. Lutzer shared some more thoughts on why some Christians may still fail to earn the approbation of Christ.

“Paul’s point is that some leaders are trying to build the church with poor materials; they gather a congregation quickly but there is nothing transforming about their ministry. They might work hard, but because their energy is misdirected, they will have nothing that lasts in glory.”<sup>41</sup>

“The person who is ‘saved so as by fire’ is indeed a Christian, but his leadership has been flawed. He has relied too heavily upon himself, his techniques, and his training. He did not approach the work with a spirit of dependence and faith; he did not do the work with Spirit-directed faithfulness.”<sup>42</sup>

“Others build with precious stones; they have a ministry based on the Word of God, prayer, and the Spirit. They value character, which D. L. Moody defined as ‘what a man is in the dark.’ They know that they will be judged, not just for what they did but for who they are.”<sup>43</sup>

“We all struggle with the concept of negative consequences at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Many Christians think that Christ would never reprimand us at the *Bema*. Our sins have been washed away, and God cannot judge us for our **carnality, selfishness, and wasted lives**, we think. Because we are not under condemnation, we feel secure that any lose we suffer cannot be too serious. But, as we have learned, God does judge His people on earth even though they are forgiven and justified...”<sup>44</sup>

“There is warning for all of us who are tempted to hide our talent in the dirt, either because of fear or self-centeredness. And when we stand before Christ in a state of purity with our glorified bodies, the sins we committed on earth will look more hideous than we could ever have thought them to be. Grief, *deep* grief, is understandable... This is a judgment, an accounting of how our lives were lived, with appropriate rewards either given or withheld.”<sup>45</sup>

When we walk by ourself, in our human power and wisdom, using our own natural talents and creativity in God’s work, we use wood, hay and stubble as building materials for His Church; those things will

§ It should be mentioned that the Greek word translated “talent” does not refer to our natural talents. It is a monetary term based upon weight. Thus one will see some loose translations or paraphrases will translate the word with such terms as *bags of gold, bars of silver*, or in terms of *dollars*. The Greek word bespeaks the great wealth given to the servants of the Lord which must, therefore, mean what we receive after our spiritual birth, not our natural birth. Thus it refers to our spiritual gifts, and, indeed, the greatest gift of wealth of all, which is Christ Jesus Himself, by whose life we should live and also serve. (Col. 1:27, 29; Gal. 2:20).

## Matthew

burn. But when we walk by Christ, by faith, denying ourselves, taking up our cross, using the spiritual gifts that are the manifestation of the Holy Spirit flowing out from our own spirits, then we are using the building materials of gold, silver and precious stones; these will not burn; they will remain, winning the approbation of Christ.

It is most unfortunate, though, that today many Christians are not being taught this. Instead they are being taught the same thing those in the world are being taught. They are being taught that in order to live a Christian life you must learn to love your *self*, to go ahead and pamper your *self*, trust in your *self*, believe in your *self*, esteem your *self*, have confidence in your *self*, for after all, is not your *self* simply who you are? What is wrong with that? But Jesus teaches the opposite! Jesus teaches Christians to deny *self*, to take up their cross daily, and then to follow Him (Matt. 16:24 -25; Luke 9:23)!<sup>j</sup> Who should we obey, modern Christian leaders, or Jesus Christ who knows what is best for us! But this command is all but ignored in so many books written today. In fact, in many books on Christian living one will be hard pressed to find any reference to the cross or the denial of self as a means for spiritual growth! Would you not rather trust in the words of the Creator than in the words of one created?

George Wigram once said the following regarding this issue:

“There are three places the enemy wishes to establish self in...first, to get us to take self in our own doing as a foundation to stand upon before God: this is to dishonor Christ's finished salvation...Secondly, he tries to make us take self in our energy as a power by which to hold and to profit...this is to dishonor the Holy Spirit...Thirdly, he tries to make us take self as the end of salvation; as though, if we were saved, all God's object was accomplished: this is to dishonor the Father; for He saves us not for any other reason than that Christ may be honored...What is it then, say you, to deny self? Why he alone denies self who says everything about myself is bad and failed;—but to me, a poor leprous bankrupt, God has given Christ for justification and righteousness; and He has given me the

### <sup>j</sup> Matt. 16:24-25

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.<sup>25</sup>

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. KJV

**Luke 9:23** And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. KJV

## Matthew

Holy Ghost...[who] shall lead me on by faith in Christ Jesus, drawing out His resources, and so making me live to God. By His grace I will neither please my bad nor my good self, but only please God, and my neighbor for his good to edification. Such an one was Paul—a thorough self-denier.”<sup>46</sup>

How different is that from what Evangelical Christians are teaching today in so many cases. And then there is one like C T. Studd, who, like Paul was a thorough self-denier. He was a missionary to China, India and Africa. His motto was, “If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him.”<sup>47</sup> He believed that since Christ died for all, then “they who live should no longer live to **themselves**, but to him who died for them and has been raised” (II Cor. 5:15 Darby).

He called the apostle Paul, “the little giant...whose head was as big as his body, and his heart greater than both...[who] was called ‘fool’ because his acts were so far beyond the dictates of human reason, and ‘mad’ because of his irresponsible fiery zeal for Christ and men.”<sup>48</sup> But he also spoke of Christians, who loved the world and self, who were no different than Demas “who left old fiery hard-hitting Paul for an easier path [who]...thought Paul should wink at, or slobber over sin, instead of rebuking it”<sup>49</sup> (II Tim. 4:10). Such Christians he called, Chocolate Christians, “dissolving in water and melting at the smell of fire. ‘Sweeties’ they are! Bonbons, lollipops! Living their lives on a glass dish or in a cardboard box, each clad in his soft clothing, a little frilled white paper to preserve his dear little delicate constitution.”<sup>50</sup> Now some today may say, “Brother Studd, your words are so unkind to speak of fellow Christians in that way. You are too blunt!” But why do we automatically consider blunt words to be unkind? Could it not be the thinking of the world has compromised us more than think? Was Jesus being too “blunt” when he called some of Israel, “blind guides,” “hypocrites,” “fools,” “whited sepulchres,” “full of dead *men’s* bones, and of all uncleanness” (Matt. 23:16-27)? Or was He being “unkind” when He told the Christians in Laodicea,

## Matthew

“Because you are lukewarm, and neither hot, nor cold, I am about to vomit you out of my mouth” (Rev. 3:16). Why are we more apt to follow the mindset of the world, than the mindset of Christ?

Or let us consider, Jim Elliot, another “thorough self-denier.” He grew up in Grace and Truth Bible Chapel in Portland, Oregon, becoming a missionary to the Auca Indians of Ecuador. He said, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”<sup>51</sup> And this was his prayer, “God, I pray Thee, light thee idle sticks of my life and may I burn for Thee. Consume my life, my God, for it is Thine. I seek not a long life, but a full one, like You, Lord Jesus...Father, take my life, yea, my blood if Thou wilt, and consume it with Thine enveloping fire. I would not save it, for it is not mine to save. Have it Lord, have it all. Pour out my life as an oblation for the world.”<sup>52</sup> On Jan. 8, 1956, Jim Elliot, age 28, died a martyr, by the very hands of those he sought to bring the Gospel. His life was poured out in love for them.

All these followed the Lord, taking up their cross, and denying themselves. They were given a cross to bear, which they gladly bore in love; but all crosses are not the same. *Denial of self is not measure by the magnitude of our service, but rather by the magnitude of our obedience.* Not all crosses are borne on a mission field; some are borne in the very town of our birth! Paul went to the farthest part of the empire; James stayed in Jerusalem. The important thing is to hear His voice and obey. Nor is denial of self a self-imposed asceticism that seeks to imitate the cross of another. That is still “self” domineering, for “self” is doing the imposing! (See Col 2:23NASB77) Denial of self is first praying, “Not my will, but Thine be done;” then it is taking up the cross that the will of God gives us; then it is bearing that cross in the power of the Holy Spirit, not by the power of self! *His power comes when we deny our power* (Gal.2:20). These things will bring about the “well-done” of our Lord!

**8:13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto**

## Matthew

**thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.**

If you remember, we began our comments on this portion of Scripture with the statement that one will see another demonstration being made to Israel to disabuse them of the belief that true righteousness can be gained by obeying the precepts and traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees. We mentioned that once again we have a demonstration of something our Lord taught in His Sermon, that being “except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:20). And in mentioning that we mentioned that the centurion did not believe he was worthy enough for Jesus to come under His roof. In other words, the centurion did not believe that any righteousness he may have had, or any righteousness he may have done, could ever be enough to earn him the right and privilege of having Jesus come into his house. We showed how different was the attitude of that Gentile from that of the Scribes and Pharisees, who would always justify themselves before God, and so cause them to trust in their own righteousness as being that which would earn them favour with God and a guaranteed place in the kingdom of heaven.

They never understood true righteousness, and so never understood Christ. They never understood how He could be pleasing God, since He was not keeping their traditions, nor keeping Himself separate from sinners, especially those from among the Gentiles, which they believed true righteousness required.

Thus, how apropos it was that this portion concludes with Jesus praising the centurion’s faith, saying, “Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.” Unlike, the Scribes and Pharisees who pridefully walked by their own abilities to serve God, this Gentile humbly walked by faith, putting no trust in his own righteousness, but all His trust in the righteousness and goodness of Christ. Our Lord shows that great acts of faith are the acts which please God,

## Matthew

for they come from faith in Him. It matters not if one is a Jew or Gentile, faith, humility, and obedience brings a seat at the table of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Self-righteousness and faith in oneself will not.

**8:14 And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.**

**8:15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.**

**8:16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick:**

**8:17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.**

This now brings us to the last acts of healing by our Lord in this chapter, and as with the previous healings, it too points to the “doings” of Jesus in light of the “sayings” of Jesus in Matt. 5-7, as well as pointing to the fact that Jesus was, indeed, the LORD God of Israel in human flesh.

It points to the doings of Jesus in light of the sayings of Jesus, because it points to His mercy in healing such poor sinners as we all are. He first manifests it by healing Peter's mother-in-law, just as He did with the leper and the centurion's servant, and all those who were brought to Him.

Additionally (which we know from Luke 4:38) Jesus does so in response to what was asked of Him, thus also manifesting a giving heart which seeks to always give comfort everyone else's heart. More than likely, the wife of Peter must have been mourning the dire sickness of her mother, as would also Peter, and so our Lord brings them comfort by healing her in response to their request. And then, of course, the same thing is seen with all those who brought their sick and those who were possessed to Him, and He, in response to their request, healed them all and cast out the demons of those who were possessed.

And that shows how these miracles of healing, also

## Matthew

point to the fact that Jesus was, indeed, the Messiah who was none other than the LORD Jehovah of the Old Testament incarnated. Matthew informs us that by His miracles of healing He was fulfilling the prophetic word of Isaiah in Isaiah 53:4.

**Isaiah 53:4** Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. KJV

But one thing needs to be mentioned before we speak of how this points to our Lord Jesus being the LORD God of the Old Testament.

We must address why Matt. 8:17 does not read in English exactly as it reads in Isa. 53:4, and what does the declaration mean, especially in light of how this verse is misinterpreted by some Christians today, who are known as faith-healers. But first let me begin with an excellent comment on this portion of Matthew by R. C. H. Lenski.

Disregarding the LXX, Matthew himself translates Isa. 53:4 with exactness: Jesus “took (*nasa*’, λαμβάνειν) and “bore” (*sabal*, βαστάζειν, carried as a load) all the ailments that came upon men as the result of sin...[However], just as the sins Jesus expiated did not become sins that he had himself committed, for he was and had to be holy and sinless in order to be our expiation, so the diseases did not become the diseases of his own body, which was and had to be untainted by any results of sin in order to be fit for his vicarious work.<sup>53</sup>

And so, as Lenski says, Matthew provides an accurate translation of the Hebrew text of Isa. 53:4, and the meaning behind it. Now, some may dispute this, believing the Greek of Matthew is not fully reflecting the Hebrew of Isaiah 53:4, but the fact remains that Matthew, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, as a New Testament author, provides us an accurate translation of the Hebrew text from Isaiah 53:4a, including his use of νόσος (sickness) for מָכָאֵב (sorrow). But since מָכָאֵב (sorrow) in the Old Testament is never understood as sickness or disease, Matthew must be providing us another meaning for



## Matthew

מָכָא, which is not found in the Old Testament. Or, if not that, then there was a variant in this verse that contained a Hebrew word more in line with the meaning of νόσος. But there is no evidence for this apart from Matthew understanding of the verse! But, because of our faith in the doctrine of Verbal Plenary Inspiration, wherein the original manuscripts were perfect and free from error, Matthew's rendering of this part of Isa. 53:4, must accurately reflect the original Hebrew, which means either Matthew is providing evidence of another meaning for מָכָא of which no one was aware, or he was following a Hebrew manuscript of Isaiah which is not extant, which contained a different Hebrew word more in line with νόσος (sickness). And this brings us to a principle which I do not believe most translators or linguists today would accept. Because of Verbal Plenary Inspiration, all 66 books of the Bible were inspired to be One Book, so when a New Testament author quotes an Old Testament passage, and the Greek and Hebrew words do not align, then New Testament rendering becomes the standard by which the Old Testament passage should be measured.

Now, this is not the place to go into it in detail, but the reason why some Hebrew and Greek words may not always align between the Old and New Testaments, is because over the centuries scribal errors have crept into the text. But it is important to point out that none of these errors or variations have ever changed or altered a major doctrine of the Bible. Such is the case here. There could have been a variation in the text of Isa. 53:4, of which Matt. 8:17 is the evidence, which explains why in English the two read differently. But be assured that Matthew gives us a translation faithful to the original.

In fact, the discovery of the Isaiah Scroll in the mid-twentieth century among all those other Dead Sea Scrolls that were hidden during the time period of Christ have actually shown the presence of other such slight variations in the copies of the book of Isaiah.

For example, F. F. Bruce, who was the Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis at the

## Matthew

University of Manchester, in his work entitled *The Books and the Parchments*, states the following.

The roll of Isaiah mentioned at the beginning of this chapter exhibits a text which is closer to the Masoretic text than to the Septuagint. It differs from the Masoretic text especially in matter of spelling, and grammatical forms, but also to some extent in wording. The variants in wording are due for the most part to the substitution of familiar for less familiar words....One is in Isa. 21.8, <sup>(side note k)</sup> where the puzzling Masoretic reading (A.V., 'And he cried, a loin'; R.V., 'And he cries as a lion') is replaced by 'Then he who saw cried'—a reading hitherto known from no Hebrew manuscript, but frequently suggested as an emendation (the difference being between Heb. *harō'eh*, 'he who sees,' and '*aryeh*, 'lion')...An incomplete scroll of Isaiah, found along with the other in the first Qumran cave, and conveniently distinguished as 'Isaiah B', agrees even more closely with the Masoretic text.”<sup>54</sup>

Yet, in spite of these slight variations, many Biblical scholars have been amazed, at the overall accuracy between the Isaiah Scroll of the DSS and our Masoretic Text. He continues:

“Before the discovery of the Qumran manuscripts Sir Frederick Kenyon asked...with regard to the traditional text of the Hebrew Bible...’Does this Hebrew text, which we call Masoretic...faithfully represent the Hebrew text as originally written by the authors of the Old Testament books?’ The Qumran discoveries have enabled us to answer this question in the affirmative with much greater assurance than was possible before 1948.”<sup>55</sup>

And, of course, the same would hold true of the entire Canon of the New Testament. \*

And so we see that Matthew is bespeaking the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah that says the Messiah will take our infirmities, and bear our sicknesses. And that leads us into the misinterpretation of this verse by some today.

Some Christians today believe that the atonement of Christ not only took away our sins, but it also took away all our sickness. They teach that because

**<sup>k</sup> Isaiah 21:8** And he cried *as* a lion, Lord, I stand continually upon the watchtower in the daytime, and I am set in my ward whole nights. Darby's Version

\* **For** a fuller study on this subject please see the aforementioned *The Books and the Parchments*, by F. F. Bruce, and his book entitled, *New Testament Documents: Are they Reliable?* Both are excellent books on the subject.

## Matthew

Scripture declares that Jesus *bore* our sins in his body (I Pet. 2:24), and it says in Matt. 8:17 that he *bore* our sicknesses, both are removed from a believer, if they only believe (although in Greek they are two different words). Thus it is taught that just as a Christian believes they have received salvation by faith in the atonement of Christ, a Christian should believe they have also received divine healing or deliverance from all sicknesses by faith in the atonement of Christ. They teach a Christian's sickness is simply the result of not fully walking by faith, for Jesus has freed the believer from all disease, as He has freed the believer from all sin. They teach it will become a reality in their experience if they only exercise faith!

Such so called faith-healers tell people in their services that Christ has borne their sicknesses in the atonement, so they do not need to bear it themselves, after which they offer the Christian healing by a touch of their hand (which why would they have to do that if Jesus has already taken away the sickness in the atonement?). If they really believe what they teach, then all that is needed is to instruct the sick believer about the truth of the atonement and all its blessings, contained therein, and so encourage them to believe in the promise of God, just as they would do if a believer was worried that they would have to pay for the wages of their sins, wherein they would simply be instructed, without any laying on of hands, that Jesus bore their sins, and paid for the wages of sin, by bearing in His body our sins upon the cross (I Peter 2:24). In fact, if they were following their own teaching, they should believe there is no need for faith-healers, but rather simply *faith-teachers*!

Why do not faith-healers simply walk like Jesus walked and go out into the highways and byways and preach the gospel to lost souls and heal freely as Jesus did? The reason is because they really do not have the gift of healing, and so they need large numbers to create a psychological mindset whereby to influence the crowd. In some cases, people's minds are actually affected by the soulical power being manifested by the faith-healer, so that they come under his spell.

## Matthew

And what makes this even more obvious, is a statement made by J. Sidlow Baxter in his book of Divine Healing. He says—

“Those who preach from this text that healing is in the Atonement seldom if ever expatiate (so I glean) on the first half of its dual statement. They major on that second member, ‘bore our sicknesses,’ but they soft-pedal or quite bypass the preceding clause: ‘took our *infirmities*.’ Few such preachers, if any, would have the temerity to urge that we may claim healing for all our ‘infirmities’ as well as all our ‘sicknesses.’ Yet if healing for sicknesses is in the Atonement, equally so is healing for infirmities” and for any of us to be exploiting the one yet excluding the other is conspicuous inconsistency.

I am thinking of infirmities such as common eye complaints which require the wearing of spectacles, dental deficiencies which need orthodontic correction, and defective hearing such as often accompanies elderliness and calls for technical aid. These and other such *infirmities*, in some of their forms, are even worst to endure than sicknesses. So we may well ask, ‘Is supernatural healing for all such infirmities in the Atonement and available to present-day appropriation? If we say it is, we are at once up against the stubborn facts of contrary evidence. If we say that healing for infirmities is *not* in the Atonement, then how can we say that healing for sicknesses is? The two clauses in Matthew 8:17 are a poetic parallel, and inseparable pair. What is true of one is equally true of the other. If healing for all our infirmities is not in the Atonement, then neither is healing for all our sicknesses.”<sup>56</sup>

Again, if they were following their own teachings they should state that anyone that is beset with weaknesses should simply exercise faith in the atonement of Christ for not only did Christ bear our sicknesses, He also took our infirmities. So, what they should proclaim in their healing services, where they pray for people to be healed of their sicknesses, is to also come forward to be healed of your near-sightedness, or far-sightedness, to come forward to heal their dental cavities, their crooked teeth, and/or an impacted wisdom tooth.

Moreover, you will never find faith-healers teach that Christian women need never experience the pain

## Matthew

and infirmity of childbirth. But why not? Such sorrow and pain are the result of the fall, the result of sin! And if Jesus bore our sin in His body on the cross, and all that came from our sin, i.e. our sickness and infirmities, what about the first thing that came as a result of sin, i.e. the sorrow and pain of childbirth?<sup>1</sup>

All these things are the result of sin and are not things that will endure unto eternity, in the same way diseases will not endure, and most certainly in the same way sin will not endure. And yet faith healers do not claim these are things a Christians will not experience on this side of eternity if only they believe because. And the reason is they sometimes are suffering from these same things themselves that are the result of the fall of man and so of sin! (And I have seen faith healers wear glasses!)

According to the teaching of faith-healers, if they were consistent, they should say a Christian should never need a pair of glasses again, or should never have a cavity, or, indeed, if we address Christian women, they should never experience the pain and sorrow of childbirth again!

Yet, I would dare say, many faith healers have been to a dentist at some time in their lives. And I am sure, the wives of so-called faith healers, if they ever had children, experienced great pain in childbirth.

In fact, if infirmities and sicknesses are removed from a believer, as they teach, so that a Christian should never be sick or experience a painful malady, then in the same way sin should have been removed from a believer, so that they never sin, and yet the apostle John says if one say he has no sin, he is deceived and is not filled with truth.

**1 John 1:8** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. KJV

Additionally, some faith-healers teach that since a Christian receives healing by “taking” the healing by faith, if one after taking that healing by faith still has the sickness or disease, then they did not really take it by faith. In other words, they teach that if one accepts

<sup>1</sup> **Genesis 3:16**

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy conception; in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. (Gen 3:16 ASV)

**Jeremiah 49:24**

Damascus is waxed feeble, and turneth herself to flee, and fear hath seized on her: anguish and sorrows have taken her, as a woman in travail. KJV

## Matthew

that they still have the sickness, they need to renounce that and say something to the effect that “No, I have no sickness or infirmity because Jesus bore my sickness and took my infirmities in His atonement.”

But, beloved, such teaching is wrong; they do not understand Scriptures, nor do they understand this verse in particular. If they really believe that what they are saying is true then they must also believe that they have no sin either for Jesus bore our sin in His body on the cross as they say He bore our sickness. If they say that because of the atonement a Christian has no sickness, then they must say a Christian has no sin! If sickness and infirmities are gone for the Christian because of the atonement, then sin must be gone for the Christian because that is in the atonement.

So, let me ask another question? If faith-healers say that *we should declare we have no sickness* because sickness is gone being taken away in the atonement, then why do we not hear faith-healers *declare Christians have no sin*? If the one is true should not the other be as well since both are contained in the atonement?

But I have not heard or read about a faith-healer ever declaring such a thing, because if they did their whole false system and false doctrine would be exposed for Scripture plainly says this: “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (I John 1:8 KJV). But if they were being consistent, that is exactly what they would have to say.

Moreover, again following their teaching, where they declare that the reason that so many Christians are sick is because they do not believe in the full atonement and all the blessings contained therein, they should be asked about the apostle Paul and his life as recorded in Scripture

Beloved, if their application of the atonement in regard to Isa. 53:4 is true, then the apostle of faith, Paul, did not fully believe in the atonement of Christ! The very same word that Matthew uses in his Gospel that is translated as “infirmities” (ἀσθενείας) in Matt. 8:17, is the very same Greek word used by Paul of

## Matthew

himself in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians—  
“infirmities” ἀσθενείας (inflected as a dative).

**Matthew 8:17** That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by **Esaias the prophet**, saying, Himself took our **infirmities** (ἀσθενείας), and bare *our* sicknesses. KJV

**II Corinthians 12:8-9** For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.<sup>9</sup> And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness (ἀσθενεία). Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in **my infirmities** (ἀσθενείας), that the power of Christ may rest upon me. KJV

What! Did not Paul believe in the full atonement of Christ! Did he not know that he did not even need to ask Jesus to take away his infirmities, for Jesus already took them away in the atonement! And what is even more revealing is that in I Cor. 2:3, Paul uses the very same word again in describing the state of his being, when he was staying in Corinth.

**I Corinthians 2:3** And I was with you in **weakness** (ἀσθενεία), and in fear, and in much trembling. KJV

The Greek word is translated as “weakness,” but it is the very same Greek word (inflected as a singular) and could have equally been translated as follows—“And I was with you with **infirmity** (ἀσθενεία), and with fear, and in much trembling.”†

Imagine, Paul was preaching Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, but he did not know the full extent of what was contained in the crucifixion or atonement of Christ. According to the faith-healers he should have realized he did not need to bear that infirmity that he said he suffered from when he first came to them. And, with that being the case, imagine a faith-healer from today, if he was to be transported back in time, to the period Paul was dwelling in Corinth he would have invited Paul to come to his meeting and in that meeting he would have been told, that Paul, he who saw Jesus, had deficient faith, for if he was still suffering from an infirmity, he did not have sufficient

† I Cor. 2:3 (Gr. Καὶ ἐγὼ ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ καὶ ἐν φόβῳ καὶ ἐν τρόμῳ πολλῷ ἐγενόμην πρὸς ὑμᾶς.) Perhaps, I might mention for those readers who are not familiar with the Greek language that the reason why the endings of ἀσθενεία and ἀσθενείας are not exactly the same is because Greek is an inflected language, and so, depending on the usage (number, gender, and case) in the context, the word endings change to reflect these things. In certain instances, we do the same in English. For example, *infirmity* is singular, while *infirmities* is plural, but both are still the same word.

## Matthew

faith in the full atonement of Christ! This alone should warn people that so-called faith-healers are teaching false doctrines and are preying upon the most vulnerable, the weak and infirm.

Now, of course, we do not need to determine what infirmity Paul had, as if that would make a difference, for Matthew clearly said that Jesus took our “infirmities,” without any distinction as to which ones, and yet Paul clearly said he still had “infirmities!” How can that be reconciled? Well, a faith-healer might then say, ‘Well, Jesus did not take every infirmity, but most of them, Paul must have then had one of those infirmities that was not included in the atonement.’ Well, then beloved, according to that conclusion, they must admit that Jesus bore most of our sins, but not all. And if that is true, then no one has salvation and no one will be in heaven, for if Jesus did not bear every sin, then we have to pay the penalty for that sin he did not bear, which penalty would still be everlasting death, for the wages of sin (even if it be but one sin), is still death! But, Hallelujah! Jesus bore our every sin, past, present and future! So there is everlasting life to everyone who believes!

So we now can see that Matt. 8:17 has been misunderstood and misinterpreted by so many Christians who claim to be faith-healers.

Jesus did take our infirmities and bear our sickness, and He did bear our sins in His body on the tree. That is true, but the thing the so-called faith healers do not understand is that it is their application and interpretation of that truth is false, and that is what has caused so much harm, as we will soon see by the words of our brother R. A. Torrey.

Their falsehood and misapplication of the fruits of the atonement have deceived many people, and it has hurt the spiritual well-being of so many innocent Christians.

So what is the true interpretation and application of this verse? I can think of no one better to explain it than R. A. Torrey, who was a minister (pastor), and also an evangelist who worked closely with D. L. Moody. He was one who sometimes witnessed God



## Matthew

truly miraculously heal Christians who were sick, some being the result of his own praying for them, after he had himself been called as an elder (a pastor) of a church to do so in accordance with James 5:14-15. He speaks of those healings not to bring attention to himself, or to promote himself, but simply to bear witness to the fact that he was not, in any way, denying that God did still choose to sometimes miraculously heal today.

In that light, he makes known that he also witnessed many, many false healings, by so-called faith-healers who did, indeed, seek to bring attention to themselves, and who did seek to promote themselves, claiming they were instruments of divine healing, when they were not.

In the book he writes about such meetings, and he exhorts the sick to never go to such “meetings for three days (or three hours, or three minutes) to get under the spell of psychological influences...akin to Couéistic auto-suggestively therapeutic influences, [or, to be] brought into the mesmeric atmosphere of a meeting where there is skillfully-planned, highly-emotional music and swaying of the body and passings of the hand and shouts of hallelujahs, that excite the imagination and thrill the body.”<sup>57</sup> Of course, such things are done to get the sick into an almost hypnotic state where one is then encouraged to declare out loud (supposedly as a declaration of faith) that their pain is gone, and that their sickness is cured, but, of course, they were not cured! (Unless God in His mercy did so despite such carnal techniques.) In speaking of these false healing, he continues:

“Not only did our Lord Jesus not hold such meetings, but neither did the Apostles hold such meetings. At times (though not nearly so frequently as when Christ Jesus Himself was here on earth, indeed at very rare intervals) there were notable manifestations of healing power in connection with the work of Peter and of Paul. But they did not advertise it nor emphasize it. They certainly did not have themselves photographed in various dramatic attitudes of prayer beside the sick. *They scarcely mentioned it in their various Epistles.* To anyone who has caught the spirit

## Matthew

of Christ and His methods as set forth in the Gospels, and the method of the Apostles as set forth in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles, the shameless advertising of themselves and of their exaggerated cures pursued by the late John Alexander Dowie and by quite a host of imitators today, is simply nauseating, and distressingly painful, and it is also utterly unscriptural, and anyone who practices it will be discredited by anyone of spiritual discernment. No wonder that on careful investigation it is found, that while there are some notable cases of real healing (as is to be naturally expected, because some few humble souls have really gotten in touch with the living Christ, in spite of so much that is so theatrical, carnal, hypnotic and utterly un-Christian in the surroundings), that an astoundingly large percent of those advertised as healed do not prove to be healed at all, or do not stay healed, and instances are not wanting where the alleged "remarkable cure" is found to be "framed up."<sup>58</sup>

In fact, R. A. Torrey writes of one particular false healing that led him to write the book. He states:

"The writer knows personally of some heart-breaking incidents of this kind under two of the most widely advertised healers of the present day, who have been drawing thousands to their weird and hypnotic gatherings.

Listening to the story of a friend, a broken-hearted sister, whose brother, a consecrated \_\_\_\_\_ minister, had been lured to these meetings and had been "healed," and whose healing had been loudly heralded, but who died in a sanitarium a few days later, a raving maniac, was one the factors that led to the publishing of this book."<sup>59</sup>

So, since I can think of one no better to quote on this subject (so a faith-healer will not be able to claim that the person I might quote does not know of God's healing today) let me continue with quotes from him.

R. A. Torrey truly believed that God heals today, which, I would dare say every Christian believes, for it is biblical and in accordance with His mercy and love. And during his lifetime as a servant of God, he witnessed many miraculous healings, even when doctors had said there was no hope for the one sick.

And since those healings he witnessed did not occur in large public healing meetings where the one

## Matthew

supposedly healed would never be seen again, but rather occurred in the quiet privacy of a home, where he knew the person, many times being a member of the church in which he ministered, the healing was known to be real and permanent.

Therefore, being one who was personally aware of many *true* divine healings of God of his day, he was one who was qualified to speak of the many *false* healings of his day, and so was also qualified to speak of the error and deception that was practiced by many of those so-called faith-healers, who would often promote their error and deception by misapplying this passage before us, Matthew 8:17.

In his book, R. A. Torrey continues with this helpful insight regarding Matt. 8:17.

"It is often said that this verse teaches that the atoning death of Jesus Christ avails for our sicknesses as well as for our sins; or, in other words, that "physical healing is in the atonement." I think that that is a fair inference from these verses when looked at in their context. 'Well, that being the case," many say, "every believer has a right to claim physical healing for all their physical sicknesses and infirmities right now, *just as much as a right to claim immediate pardon for all their sins on the ground of the atoning death of Jesus Christ.*' But that does not follow. It is very poor logic. For the question arises, 'When do we get what Jesus Christ secured for us by His atoning sacrifice?' The Bible answer to that question is very plain, and the Bible answer is, *when Jesus Christ comes again.*

We get the *first* fruits of the atoning work of Christ, the first fruits of salvation in the life that now is, *but we get the full fruits only when Jesus Christ comes again.* Romans 8: 18-23 makes that as plain as day, 'For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God. And not only so, but ourselves also, *which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*' The atoning

## Matthew

death of Jesus Christ secured for us not only physical healing, but the resurrection and perfecting and glorifying of our bodies. Can we therefore have the resurrection of our bodies right now? And have we a right to claim *that* now, because it was secured by the atonement, just as we claim forgiveness of all our sins now? Paul says in 2 Tim. 2: 16-18, that those who so teach have erred concerning the truth and are teaching destructive errors whereby they ‘overthrow the faith of some.’ Let me quote Paul’s exact words, ‘But shun profane babblings: for they will proceed further in ungodliness, and their word will eat as doth a gangrene: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; men who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some.’

No, *we do not get the full measure of what Jesus secured for us by His atoning death on the Cross in the present life but at His Coming Again. It is at the Coming of our Lord that ‘our spirit and soul and body’ are to ‘be preserved entire’* (I Thess. 5:23 R. V.).

When He comes again there will not only be wonderful manifestations of healing power among the people then living upon the earth, but we who have believed in Him before that, will have *not merely perfect physical healing* but a resurrection body, a glorified and perfected body, which was secured for us when He bore our sicknesses as well as our sins on the Cross of Calvary.

I have had in the past many friends who have believed and taught this extreme doctrine regarding healing being included in the atonement. Most of these friends are now dead.

But while we do not get the full benefits for the body secured for us by the atoning death of Christ in the life that now is, but when Jesus Comes Again, nevertheless, just as one gets the first fruits of his spiritual salvation in the life that now is, so we get the first fruits of our physical salvation in the life that now is.”<sup>60</sup>

And then he concludes with the distraction that is caused by these unbiblical healing ministries and admonishes us to be concerned with the true healing that should occupy us all, He continues—

“There is a vast deal of religious charlatanism in connection with these much self-advertised Divine Healers, “miracle men” and “miracle women,” and many of the so-called cures are framed up, and many of them do not last,—

## Matthew

and many of them never occur, the one who was alleged to be healed was not healed...Alas! There are one hundred persons who will seek healing for some sick friend for every one person who will seek salvation for some lost friend!

One of the appalling features of our modern religious life is the way in which people are absorbed in the matter of physical healing. They will do anything to get healing. They will throw overboard the precious faith of years and run frantically to any...demeaning system of error because they hope that in it they may find deliverance...Human nature is just the same today as when our Lord was on the earth. Multitudes, unnumbered multitudes, crowded about Him, journey many, many miles to see him, in the hope of getting healing for their bodies, but very, very few were eager for the salvation of their souls. Let us not go with the unspiritual...in this matter. Let us refuse to be side-tracked. Let us keep on the main line of preaching Christ Jesus, a Saviour from sin. That was God's promise through the angel concerning Him, 'thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people *from their sins*' (Matt. 1:21), not from their sicknesses, but 'from their sins.'

Let us, then, as we have said, keep on the main line of preaching Christ Jesus once crucified and thus making full atonement for sin. Christ Jesus now risen and able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him (Heb. 7:25), Christ Jesus coming again someday as the Saviour of our bodies, to 'fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that I may be conformed to the body of his glory (Phil. 3:20, 21).'<sup>61</sup>

So we see, beloved, many Christians who claim to be faith-healers today are, as R. A. Torrey said, religious charlatans, wolves in sheep's clothing, false Christians, or, if they are Christian, those who have fallen into error. In many cases, their error goes deeper and many will find that they even will hold to heretical doctrines concerning the Blessed Trinity, which, in and of itself, proves they are false teachers, and which should cause all Christians to never condone or receive them.

But this is not uncommon with false teachers. Many times what they teach will contain an element of truth within a mountain of error. Sometimes truth is parsed out in measure doses, just enough to attract the

## Matthew

unsuspecting hearer, but once the hearer has been drawn in, the truth is then obscured, and that mountain of error is revealed and taught, based upon verses that have been taken out of context, or by the vain imaginations of the human mind!

Dear brethren, it takes the true fulness of the Holy Spirit to manifest the gift of healing, for the gift of healing is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit as are all spiritual gifts (I Cor. 12:7). But the Holy Spirit is not going to fill a person who is unsaved, or if saved, one who has fallen into apostasy and utmost heresy, denigrating the Persons of the Blessed Trinity by their false doctrine and heresy. The Holy Spirit, is the Spirit of Truth, and, as such, will never fill such a person, if they are truly saved, but rather will be grieved with such a person, until they repent (Eph. 4:30).

Thus, the first thing a Christian should do when confronted with a faith-healer is to check out what he teaches on the Trinity, not in his Statement of Faith (although that is a good place to start), but in what he teaches, for many will claim to hold to the Faith, as witnessed by their Statement of Faith posted on their website, or written in their literature, but then when one examines their actual teaching, one finds they do not hold to the Faith at all! Sometimes Creeds, Confessions, and Statements of Faith are provided as evidence of their orthodoxy, simply to give themselves legitimacy to those they wish to attract, but it is only smoke and mirrors, for they are really heretical in their beliefs. If one who claims to be a faith-healer is not holding to the Historic Christian Faith, he is a false prophet and a false teacher, even if he is genuinely saved, for the saved can still fall into carnality and error, being self-deceived.

Moreover, there is another way to “try” so-called faith-healers. How much is money involved in their ministries. Do they ask for money? Do they indiscriminately take offerings at their healing meetings? Do they sell their books for profit, or offer free books to get people on their mailing lists so they can then inundate them with letters begging for money for the Lord’s work? Not only will the Holy Spirit

## Matthew

never sanction *false doctrines*, He also will never sanction *false practices*, or carnal ways.

If faith-healers claim that they are being led by the Lord Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, then one must ask why they do not walk as Jesus walked.

Jesus said to his disciples, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” (NASB77), and John, the beloved disciple of Christ Jesus, said, “And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments” (1 John 2:3).

Well, one commandment of Jesus that He gave to those who are called of God to exercise the gift of healing was this—“freely ye have received, freely give.”

**Matthew 10:8 Heal the sick**, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: **freely ye have received, freely give.** KJV

Nowhere is there any example of a servant of God, who was used by God to heal a person, afterward asking for money, or indirectly obtaining money by taking an offering, claiming it is for the Lord’s work. And yet, in so many cases, perhaps, in all cases, faith-healers will send out ushers down the aisles of their gatherings, or, if in open spaces, out among the crowds, to pass out offering baskets to collect money.

**Faith-healers** who explain to Christians that illness in their lives **is because of a lack of faith in the healing power of God**, have themselves **a lack of faith in the provisional power of God** to provide the necessary funds for their ministry! (If, indeed, it is truly of God.) Where is their faith!

Moreover, in some cases, they will even write books on healing and then sell them on their website for profit to fund their ministry!

Because their lack of faith in God to supply their own needs, and the needs of their ministry, they must publicly seek money from those they supposedly are ministering to, which, in itself, disobeys the command of God to “freely give,” which, according to Jesus, shows that those faith-healers are lacking not only in

## Matthew

faith, but also in their love for the Lord, for Jesus said, “If you love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15), which obviously they are not doing in regard to their not trusting in God to supply the necessary funds for their work.

If they have a lack of funds why do they not do what Paul did when funds were low? He went out to work with his own hands so he could continue to freely give to those in need (I Cor. 4:12; Acts 20:33-35; I Thess. 2:9).<sup>m</sup>

**Acts 20:33-35** I have desired no man’s silver, gold, or vesture.<sup>34</sup> Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.<sup>35</sup> I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to receive the weak, and to remember ye words of the Lord Jesus, how that he said, it is more blessed to give, then to receive. (Bishops’ Bible—I updated the spelling.)

**I Thessalonians 2:9** For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, *how* working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. NASB77

And if Paul did this as an example for us to follow (I Cor. 11:1), is this not another example where they are disobeying Scripture, in this case, disobeying the Holy Spirit Himself who commanded us all to imitate Paul as he imitated the Lord? And did not the Holy Spirit tell us to be careful to recognize all the ones who **do** imitate Paul, which by inference, reveals to us all, those who **do not** imitate Paul, which, obviously, includes so many so-called faith-healers?

**Philippians 3:17** Brethren, be ye imitators together of me, and mark them that so walk even as ye have us for an ensample. ASV

If God supplied his needs, Paul would devote himself full time to ministry, but if funds were lacking he made up the deficit by working with his own hands, just as Jesus did when He worked with His own hands as a carpenter, that is, until God sent Him forth to begin the work given to Him. In all that time

<sup>m</sup> **I Cor. 4:12a**

And we work  
hard, working  
with our own  
hands. (Literal)



## Matthew

we have no record of Jesus ever asking for money for His work or for His future mission, let alone for Himself. As with every aspect of His life, He trusted in God His Father to provide the necessary things He needed for His work, which the Father did through certain women out of their own substance (Luke 8:3) without Scripture ever providing an example where they gave because Jesus asked them for money. In fact, if Jesus did ever seek money from anyone but God, He would be contradicting to His own teaching (see Matt 6:25-34).

Think about it, when did Jesus ever pass out offering baskets to receive money for His work? Did he ever have His disciples pass out baskets to collect money for His work, say, after the Sermon on the Mount, or at later times of teaching? No, He did not. Rather, he passed out baskets to feed—to give—not to receive!

**Matthew 14:19-20** And he commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass; and he took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. <sup>20</sup> And they all ate, and were filled: and they took up that which remained over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. ASV

Rather than passing out baskets to receive support from those He healed or taught, or from those He preached the Gospel to, He passed out baskets to support those who came! He passed out baskets full of food to provide for their needs, not to receive for His own, or His disciples needs, or for His ministry needs. How different that is today with many faith-healers who do the complete opposite, passing out empty baskets or bags to be filled with money from those they supposedly came to help. And what is worse, in some cases (not all cases) some will receive large salaries from the ministry, whereby they grow rich by their ministry of healing, all in the Name of the One who had nowhere to lay his head, while they lay their heads on soft pillows in huge mansions.

And so we see on so many levels the false

## Matthew

teaching, the false living, and the false practices of today's so-called faith healers, who cruelly give those who are sick a false hope that God will heal them because they declare that Matt. 8:17 makes clear that all sickness for the Christian was done away by the atonement, so that any Christian can now claim a healing from God because of Christ's atonement, and if a healing does not occur, they tell the sick one they must exercise more faith! How heartless.

But Matthew 8:17 does give us a beautiful picture and foretaste of what will be fully ours in eternity! Jesus came to die for the sins of mankind, and so provide a salvation from all things that came upon us because of and as a result of sin, the foremost, of course, being death, and then for those who do not believe the Gospel, eternal death!

All, indeed, is taken away by His atonement, but just as He has never promised that His atonement keeps the believer from physically dying, neither did He promise that His atonement keeps the believer from all physical sickness and disease. In fact, many times, physical death is actually the result of physical sicknesses that faith-healers say was removed from the believer in the atonement (II Kings 13:14; Acts 9:37).<sup>n</sup> So if that was true, then why did the Christian die.

Another way to look at it is this. If what the faith-healers teach is true, if their teaching that all sickness and disease are now removed from the believer by the atonement, **then why do faith-healers die from sickness and disease themselves, and not just from old age?**

Again, it is simply cruel that faith-healers give false hope to those who are suffering, promising them freedom from sickness, if they only have enough faith, when they themselves die from sickness! And on top of that, after giving such false hope, they have the audacity to take money from the sick one!

Many times a Christian will still suffer from sickness in this life, and experience many other afflictions in our pilgrim walk, but we must not forget that, ultimately, we all will receive the full benefits of

### <sup>n</sup> II Kings 13:14

Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. KJV

Acts 9:37 And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid *her* in an upper chamber. KJV

## Matthew

His atonement. This is the hope we should give to the one who is suffering from sickness and weakness. There will come a time when there will be no disease or sickness, as well, as all that has come as a result of sin in this world. Hallelujah! He has told us: "He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (II Cor. 5:21 NASB77). "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (II Cor. 5:17 NASB77). "For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?' The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 15:53-57 NASB77).

And so, by fulfilling Isa. 53:4, wherein Matthew states that Jesus "Himself took our infirmities, and bare *our* sicknesses" (Matt. 8:17b KJV), Jesus was providing a foretaste of the full blessings of His atonement once we are glorified together with Him, when there will be no more death, no more sin, and no more sickness! This is a true hope!

Nevertheless, until that time we should not forget that in His mercy and grace, He has promised to always hear our prayers and entreaties for healing, and, in those times it is in accordance with His will, He still does heal, even today, and even miraculously (e. g. Phil. 2:26-27; James 5: 14-15; Acts 5:15). And, in those times it is not in accordance with His will, He has promised to provide for us that which is the true *balm of Gilead*, if you will, His grace that is sufficient and His love that is enduring, knowing that one day all will be manifested in its fullness, when as John says: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the

## Matthew

former things are passed away (Rev. 21:4 KJV). Amen.

And so, now we can return to the overall understanding and purpose for this chapter that we mentioned in the beginning, that being that in Matthew 5-7 we had the “sayings,” and beginning with this chapter we have the “doings” of Jesus, which “doings” also bore witness to the truths He taught about Himself, regarding His Person as the Messiah, who was none other than the LORD God manifested in the flesh.

John Calvin had a wonderful comment on this relationship between the *doings* of Jesus and the *sayings* of Jesus in light of Matt. 8:17, and how it points to the Person of the LORD Jesus Christ. John Calvin wrote:

“The solution is not difficult, if the reader will only observe, that the Evangelist states not merely the benefit conferred by Christ on those sick persons, but the purpose for which he healed their diseases. They experienced in their bodies the grace of Christ, but we must look at the design...He gave sight to the blind, in order to show that he is “the Light of the world,” (John viii.12.) He restored life to the dead, to prove that he is “the Resurrection and the Life,” (John xi. 25.) Similar observations might be made as to those who were lame, or had palsy. Following out this analogy, let us connect those benefits, which Christ bestowed on men in the flesh, with the design which is stated to us by Matthew, that he was sent by the Father, to relieve us from all evils and miseries.”<sup>62</sup>

And so that now leads to how these miracles of healing, point to the fact that Jesus was, indeed, the Messiah who was none other than the LORD Jehovah of the Old Testament incarnated. I know we spent a lot of time as to the actual meaning of our Lord healing our sicknesses, because of its misapplication of faith-healers today, but let us not turn our attention to the purpose of Matthew’s statement in Matt. 8:17.

When Matthew quotes Isaiah 53:4, he knows that many of his reader’s attention will be turned to that

## Matthew

entire portion of Isaiah's prophecy.

And, just as with Matthew's juxtaposition of the Gentile centurion with the Israelite leper in the beginning of the chapter, meant to draw his reader's attention that Jesus was none other than the LORD of the Old Testament, a Light for the house of Israel, but also for the Gentiles, thus fulfilling Isa. 60: 1-3, he now points the reader once again to show again that Jesus of Nazareth was truly who He claimed to be the LORD Jehovah of the Old Testament by his reference to Isaiah 53:4.

But first, if we look a few verses before Isaiah 53 into chapter 52, we read this regarding the LORD who would lay bare His arm, which Paul the apostles identifies as the Lord Jesus Christ in Rom. 10:14-16.<sup>9</sup>

**Isaiah 52: 6-10** Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I. <sup>7</sup> How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! <sup>8</sup> Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.<sup>9</sup> Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.<sup>10</sup> **The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.** KJV

Then Isaiah 53 continues as follows:

**Isaiah 53: 1-5** Who hath believed our report? **and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?** <sup>2</sup> For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire him.<sup>3</sup> He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.<sup>4</sup> Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.<sup>5</sup> But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and

<sup>9</sup> **Rom 10:9, 10-14**

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.<sup>11</sup> For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.<sup>12</sup> For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.<sup>13</sup> For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

<sup>15</sup> And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!<sup>16</sup> But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? KJV

## Matthew

with his stripes we are healed. KJV

Thus, we see that Matthew is declaring that since Jesus is the one to fulfill Isaiah's prophecy in Isa. 53:4 regarding our infirmities and sicknesses, and is the One who is wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, he is also teaching that Jesus is none other than the LORD that Isaiah speaks about. How?—you might ask. Because the one who is wounded for our transgressions, is the One who bore our griefs and carried out sorrows (or as Matthew says “took our infirmities and bare *our* sicknesses), and is so is the One who is despised and rejected by men, and so is the One of Isa. 53:2, who shall grow up as a tender plant, and so is the One that the pronoun “he” of Isa. 53:2 refers back to, i.e. the LORD of verse one, who laid bare His arm, which, in turn points to the LORD who made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations in Isa. 52:10, which, of course is Jesus our LORD! This, of course, another confirmation of the deity of Christ.

All the works that Jesus did, the great and marvelous miracles that healed so many of the children of Israel, and delivered so many from the oppression of Satan and the power of demons was none other than the unveiling of His Mighty Arm? This is made all the more clear when we remember that the “arm” is a Hebrew metaphor for power and strength. In other words, it bespeaks the power and strength of the one to whom the arm belonged! And to whom does Isaiah say the arm belongs? It is the arm of the LORD!

But Isaiah also prophesied that not everyone would believe this. He also said in verse one: “Who hath believed our report?” He implies what we know; the LORD, who revealed His mighty arm in healing the sick and casting out demons, was, nevertheless, “despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief (Isa. 53:3). Not many believed that Jesus was LORD God of the Old Testament incarnate, but Matthew did, as did a remnant in Israel.

And so Matthew continues to affirm this by

## Matthew

showing forth in chapter 8 how Jesus was exactly who He said He was, the LORD God who came to save His people and the whole world from their sins, if they only believe.

Oh, the grace and love of Jesus the LORD, He who was God manifested in the flesh, the One who laid bare His mighty arm by performing great miracles, by casting out many demons, and by delivering many people from their infirmities and sicknesses, was also the One who allowed His arms to be fastened to a cruel cross, by nails hammered through sacred hands, all so that the world might receive the greatest deliverance of all—the forgiveness of sins and the promise of everlasting life to all who will but believe the “report,” that old, old story of Jesus and His love. Amen.

**8:18 Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side.**

At this juncture Matthew now introduces two individuals into his Gospel, one who was not yet a disciple and one who already was a disciple. The first was a scribe who wished to follow Jesus and the second was a disciple who wished to follow Jesus but first bury his father. Jesus. It should be noted, however, that these two incidents did not chronologically occur at this time when Jesus was still in Galilee. They occurred much later when Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem passing through Samaria as Luke mentions in his Gospel, at which time this story unfolds (cf. Luke 9:51-52 with Luke 9:57-50).

Matthew, on the other hand places this encounter alongside the Sea of Galilee right before Jesus and His disciples enter a boat to cross the lake over to country of the Gergesenes where they meet the demon possessed man dwelling in the tombs (Mat 8:28-34). In Luke this occurs sometime after our Lord's crosses the lake to the country of the Gergesenes (see Luke 8:22-27).

So Luke shows that our Lord meets with this

## Matthew

scribe and disciple somewhere along a road near Samaria long after He and His disciples had sailed across the lake to Gergesenes, and Matthew says our Lord meets with this scribe and disciple along the Sea of Galilee right before our Lord and His disciple sail across the lake to Gergesenes.

So why does Matthew include this encounter as occurring at this time, while our Lord was still along the Sea of Galilee, and not later in its proper chronological order? The answer is because it was not Matthew's purpose to always follow a strict chronological order in his Gospel, unlike Luke who did follow a strict chronological order.‡

It must be remembered that the purpose of the apostles was to tell a story of good news regarding the Saviour of the world, and not simply to write a matter of fact history of a person called Jesus. Because of that, they grouped together different stories, teachings, parables and incidents to communicate to the reader that Jesus was the Messiah, that the Promised Seed of the Woman, the Man, the LORD, the Eternal Son of God whose goings forth were from everlasting—the LORD God of the Old Testament who came to reveal the nature, character and purposes of God.

Thus, the Holy Spirit did not inspire all of them to follow a strict chronological order, although they all followed a general chronological order. Certain stories and incidents, occurring at different times, were grouped together to teach a certain truth or to affirm a certain doctrine of our Lord, thus following a topical, didactic and apologetic order so as to bear witness to the glories of Christ. The only Gospel that was inspired to follow a strict chronological order was Luke's as can be seen in the side note above. The other Gospels never stated they were following a strict chronological order, per se.

This was not uncommon at the time to write in such a way. A first century reader would not think it unusual, whereas today we think in a more logical and linear manner, and so might think it a little foreign to our way of thinking. We prefer things to remain in a strict chronological order. In one sense, it is the

‡Luke specifically states he is going to write in a chronological order using the Greek word *καθεξῆς* to indicate this, which the New American Standard Bible (77) clarifies, translating the verse as follows. "It seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write *it* out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus." (Luke 1:3). Therefore, we see that of all the Gospels, Luke is the Gospel that clearly indicates that things are written in a strict chronological order.



## Matthew

difference between a Hebrew way of thinking and a more Western way of thinking. In the West the emphasis is on the parts by which one understands the whole, but in the Hebrew way of thinking, the emphasis is on whole by which one will understand the parts.

Thus, if Matthew was seeking to explain a certain truth about Jesus, it would not be unusual for him to draw together different incidents in Jesus' life, irrespective of their chronological order and then weave them together as a whole to demonstrate the truth he was wishing to demonstrate or explain, the primary emphasis being on the whole, and not, necessarily, on each individual part in its proper chronological order. An example of this can be found in the opening verse of the Gospel of Matthew.

**Matthew 1:1** The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. KJV

Here we see Matthew begin with an emphasis on the whole and not on the part. Obviously, David was not the actual son of Abraham; Isaac was his son. Nor was Jesus the actual son of David. He was the great (x 25) grandson of David (i.e. according to the genealogy of Matthew).

Why would Matthew leave out all the parts in between in this opening verse (minus the fact that in Israel a descendant could be called a son as we mentioned in our comments at that verse)? The answer is, as we said, that Matthew's emphasis is primarily on the whole, i.e. Jewishness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and, perhaps, Matthew is also hinting at this universal message of the cross with his decision to reference our Lord's twofold descent from both David and Abraham (before he gives our Lord's genealogy in part or in detail). Why would he do this? Well certainly, as was just said, this emphasizes the Jewish credentials of Jesus as the Messiah, for Abraham was the father of the Jewish nation and the Messiah was to be of his seed, and David was the king of Israel, of whose seed, we are told, the Messiah would reign

## Matthew

forever and ever. But, perhaps, this twofold designation might also hint (as was intimated in the introduction) that the Jewish Messiah was also to be a light unto the nations, for Abraham is also called the father of many nations, and by emphasizing Abraham, as well as David, Matthew would be declaring that the Gospel is for both Jew and Gentile—to the Jew first—yes, but also to the Gentile.

And so we see that Matthew in verse one of his Gospel ignored the strict chronological order of descendants that occurred between Abraham to David, and David to Jesus, putting each as an immediate son of one who was not their immediate father in order to place emphasis on the whole purpose of the Gospel—bringing salvation to Israel and to every nation.

Well, in like manner, Matthew utilizes this type of Hebrew literary structure in the rest of his Gospel to place emphasis on the Divine nature of Christ and upon His Divine Mission.

To a Hebrew mindset, this was completely natural and was not considered to be an error in historical accuracy, as a Western mind might think, but was simply a matter of emphasis and focus.

The fact remains that it was the Holy Spirit who decided to structure the Gospels in the manner in which they exist.

Thus, since the Holy Spirit inspired the apostles and disciples to write in the order they did, when we find incidents or stories grouped together differently than that in another Gospel, we should seek to find the answer as to why. Why did the Holy Spirit combine certain stories or incidents together into an order different than the strict chronological order of Luke? Was it for emphasis? Was it to create a topical rather than chronological order for instruction? Was it for apologetic reasons, or was it simply to present a cohesive grouping of our Lord's teaching, parables, the miracles, etc.?

We must remember that John says that there was so much more that Jesus said and did than what we have recorded for us in the Gospels, <sup>P</sup> and so we must trust that the Holy Spirit moved the writers to choose

<sup>P</sup> **John 21:25** And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen. KJV

**John 20:30** And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: KJV

## Matthew

the things they did and then to put them in the order He wished. Our responsibility is to discern that order and learn the reason for that order, whether it is a chronological order or a topical order.

We must realize that all things in the Gospels that are needful for life and godliness are contained in the Gospels, and so in that light they are arranged under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit for us in this dispensation and for all unto eternity, as the eternal Word of God. We need to look no further than the Holy Writ and, indeed, should never look beyond the Holy Writ, the Canon of Scripture, because anything beyond the Word of God is not the revelation of God, but rather is the foolish speculations of men, or the overt heresy of false prophets.

Perhaps, it might be helpful to close with this excellent comment by Edward A. Thomson, who was a minister in the Free Church of Scotland regarding the beautiful structure of the Gospel of Matthew. I do not know who could have said it any better.

“Almost the first peculiarity which strikes a reader in the perusal of it is its systematic form. Every part of it is distinguished by its orderly arrangement. The chronological order is set aside to a considerable extent, and a topical order is adopted which is quite as valuable in its own way and for its own purpose. Discourses, parables, prophecies, miracles, are grouped together by themselves in separate chapters. We have whole chapters devoted to each of them in succession,—chapters with nothing in them but sermons,—chapters with nothing in them but miracles,—chapters with nothing in them but, parables, and so on,—all classified according to their subject, and all bearing on the illustration of some particular feature of the official character of our Lord, or the demonstration of some particular claim, or other circumstance connected with it. In connection with this peculiarity of arrangement, it has also been observed, that this Gospel is...but the perfection of finish, and the sublimity of effect produced by its admirable combinations, are quite sufficient to compensate for the comparative generality of its descriptions; and besides, these combinations are often accompanied with such sharp and striking contrasts, that both our instruction and our interest are most felicitously secured...[And] we may add,

## Matthew

that this methodical arrangement bears upon it the unmistakable impress of its authorship. As a publican, Matthew must have been trained to the practice of methodizing his business-transactions according to some sort or rule or order....At any rate, the orderly habits of his profession, and the orderly character of his Gospel, are strikingly harmonious; so that here again we have another singularly impressive testimony to the genuineness of the Gospel..."

"The object of the evangelist is evidently to furnish, not a chronological history of the life of Christ, but rather a doctrinally historical survey of it, so to speak. Hence we have in it, as already noticed, a grouping together of the words and the deeds of Jesus, of His sermons and parables, of His miracles and movements,—without much regard to localities and dates, but as plainly proving in the plenitude of their combination, that the ancient prophecies were fulfilled in Him, that He was the very Messiah foretold in them, and that it is therefore vain, and worse than vain, to look for any other. Then, in addition to this 'bringing and blending together of the prophecy and the history, so that they appear as if no more twain but one in Christ, there is also a continuously sustained reference in almost every chapter to the kingship and the kingdom of the Lord Jesus, as that in which He was preeminently proved to be the true Messiah. It must be obvious that this was absolutely necessary in a Gospel designed for Jews. They could receive no Saviour, welcome no Messiah, but such as answered to the character of the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, of One who was at the same time "both Lord and Christ."<sup>63</sup>

**8:19 And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.**

**8:20 And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.**

This portion of chapter 8 continues to show forth the sayings of Jesus manifested in the life and doings of Jesus. It shows that our Lord did not lay up treasures for Himself upon earth, just as he taught in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 6:19). And, of course, it also shows he was not taking money for healing of the sick, or, indeed, making sure a freewill

## Matthew

offering is taken for his ministry, unlike so many today who purport to follow in Jesus' footsteps.

Our Lord never turned ministry into a "place of business." He never charged for His teaching, or took offerings for His teaching, let alone taking money for doing acts of kindness such as healings, unlike, as we said, so many today who invite all to come be healed and then sometime during the service pass around offering baskets for their ministry of healing and teaching. Our Lord freely gave, as should everyone who claims to be sent out by Him. And so He tells the scribe that He has nowhere to lay His head.

But there is another reason why our Lord tells the scribe that "foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head," and it is this, I believe.

Up to this point the two other personages mentioned in chapter 8 addressed Jesus as Lord, which we believe Matthew includes bespeaking our Lord's deity, that Jesus was, indeed, LORD. However, this time when the certain scribe came to Jesus, rather than addressing Him as Lord, he addresses Him as Master. And, what is interesting is our Lord refers to Himself as the Son of Man. (This is the first use this title in Matthew.) What is the significance of this all and what does Matthew intend by its inclusion in this chapter, beyond our Lord continuous manifestation of true righteousness to the people. To answer this question we must first understand who were the Scribes in our Lord's day?

Alfred Edersheim, the aforementioned Hebraist, who was raised in a Jewish home, but later in life came to Christ, provides a succinct description.

"In trying to picture to ourselves New Testament scenes, the figure most prominent, next to those of the chief actors, is that of the Scribe ... He seems ubiquitous; we meet him in Jerusalem, in Judaea, and even in Galilee. Indeed, he is indispensable, not only in Babylon, which may have been the birthplace of his order, but among the 'dispersion' also. Everywhere he appears as the mouthpiece and representative of the people; he pushes to the front, the crowd respectfully giving way, and eagerly hanging on his

## Matthew

utterances, as those of a recognised authority. He has been solemnly ordained by the laying on of hands; and is the Rabbi, 'my great one,' Master, *amplitude* [great dignity]. He puts questions; he urges objections; he expects full explanations and respectful demeanour. Indeed, his hyper-ingenuity in questioning has become a proverb...He is the 'lawyer,' the 'well plastered pit,' filled with the water of knowledge, 'out of which not a drop can escape,' in opposition to the 'weeds of unfilled soil'...of ignorance. He is the Divine aristocrat, among the vulgar herd of rude and profane 'country-people,' who 'know not the Law,'...More than that, his order constitutes the ultimate authority on all questions of faith and practice; he is 'the Exegete of the Laws,' the 'teacher of the Law'... Although generally appearing in company with 'the Pharisees,' he is not necessarily one of them—for they represent a religious party, while he has a status, and holds an office...Each Scribe outweighed all the common people, who must accordingly pay him every honour. Nay, they [scribes] were honoured of God Himself, and their praises proclaimed by the angels; and in heaven also, each of them would hold the same rank and distinction as on earth. Such was to be the honour paid to their sayings, that they were to be absolutely believed, even if they were to declare that to be at the right hand which was at the left, or vice versa.”<sup>64</sup>

We see a few things in this description of a scribe by Alfred Edersheim. First, he was well-educated. Second, he was filled with pride and arrogance (which, unfortunately, is even true for some today who are well-educated and who expect recognition for their letters and honor for their titles). Edersheim expresses this unfortunate foible of human nature when he writes, “He is the Divine aristocrat, among the vulgar herd of rude and profane 'country-people,' who 'know not the Law.'” And third, the scribe expected acquiescence to their opinions for they were the ones who took all the time to study the issues.

This is the character of scribes in our Lord's day. Many also had the same character flaws of the Pharisees, and so many were chastised by our Lord in the same way. However, that is what is surprising in this story. This scribe did not receive an obvious upbraiding by our Lord, but rather a subtle upbraiding,

## Matthew

for it seems this scribe was genuinely touched by our Lord's sayings and doings.

First of all, the scribe was more than likely a Rabbi himself, or, if not, at least one who held high honour among the people as a teacher and a leader, one who was understood by the people as having a mastery of the Law and the Prophets; and yet, the scribe addresses the Saviour as "Master." This demonstrates a willingness to learn, for he gives equal honour to Jesus, recognizing him as a fellow Rabbi (i.e. Master—cf. John 1:38), and so one from whom he feels he can learn. Perhaps, this scribe was one who heard our Lord's Sermon on the Mount and so was one of those who were "astonished at his doctrine."

**Matt. 7:28-29** And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: <sup>29</sup> For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes. KJV

Or, maybe, after hearing Jesus he recognized his own lack of understanding and so wished to learn of Him in a fuller way. In any case, something drew him to Jesus, and, as such, he says that he wished to "follow" Him (vs. 19), which meant he wanted to become His disciple. For that, this scribe should be commended. But, as with all who wished to follow Jesus and to be His disciple, the first thing the disciple needed to learn was to take up his cross, deny himself, and then follow Him. And the first lesson the scribe needed to learn about denying oneself was to deny the innate human desire to be lifted up, to be honored among those you are supposed to serve. This is revealed in this verse in a couple ways.

First it is shown in that our Lord uses the appellation Son of Man in speaking of Himself, rather than "Lord" in addressing the scribe. As was said earlier, this is the first time the title Son of Man is used in Matthew. Both the leper and the Gentile centurion honored Jesus as Lord. The leper not only addressed Him as such, but also worshipped Him as such. And the Gentile attributed to Jesus the authority of One who was greater than a human lord in that He

## Matthew

could command the healing of a person by the mere command of His voice. In that light, Jesus is showing the scribe that love of titles and taking offence at not being properly addressed is one of the first things a disciple needs to learn, if he wishes to follow Him.

It was good a good thing that the scribe honored Jesus, calling Him “Master,” but if he was to really give Jesus the proper respect he deserved, especially in the light that Scribes would always boast about how it was only they who really understood the Scriptures, he should have addressed Jesus as LORD, recognizing that He was the Promised Seed of the Woman, and so the Man, the LORD. But the scribe did not do so; he only called Jesus Master as he would call any other Rabbi. But Jesus did not take umbrage, as the Scribes and Pharisees would have taken umbrage. Instead Jesus taught this scribe true righteousness by a selfless “act” of humility. This act of humility that Jesus did was to simply refer to Himself as the Son of the Man when answering back the scribe, thus emphasizing His humanity and humility. Jesus, knowing that the scribe did not understand the true import of that Title, knew the scribe would recognize it as a subtle rebuke because not only did Jesus not take offence (as the scribe would have) for not being addressed with a proper title of respect, He also used a title that was lower in the scribe’s mind. In a comparison with whom Jesus really was, our Lord used a title that was lower than the angels, thus showing the scribe true humility, for Jesus was really the LORD, the scribe’s Creator! <sup>q</sup> If the scribe wished to be His disciple, he first needed to learn to deny himself, and be willing to be made of no reputation.

The apostle Paul, who also had to learn that lesson, bears witness to it in his epistle.

**Philippians 2:5-8** Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: <sup>6</sup> who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; <sup>8</sup> and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient *even* unto death, yea, the death of the cross. ASV

<sup>q</sup> **Heb. 2:6-7a**  
“But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels...” KJV



## Matthew

Would that every disciple of Jesus today would have this mindset of Jesus, having a mindset that is willing to deny self, and, therefore, is willing to never seek the accolades and recognitions of others based upon one's learning. In other words, to not have a mindset that makes sure people see and recognize the letters one puts after one's name, such as Ph.D., or Th.D., or by some other designations. Why not rather use a designation that will lower oneself, by using a nomenclature that shows commonality and humility, as Jesus commands every disciple in Matt. 23:8. On the other hand, all Christians should also remember that we are commanded to show respect and honor to those who labour hard in the Word—I Tim. 5:17. And because of that, the point is not that such who so labour should not be shown respect and honour by the brethren, the point is such honour and respect should not be expected or demanded from the brethren. It is the desire of such honour and respect that our Lord is addressing, and not the giving of such honour and respect.

Jesus forbids this desire for such accolades and recognition, teaching that every disciple, no matter what the level of learning one might have attained, should understand that we are all "brethren," thereby reserving all titles of respect to the Lord Jesus.

**Matthew 23:2,6-10** The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: <sup>6</sup> And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, <sup>7</sup> And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. <sup>8</sup> But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren. <sup>9</sup> And call no *man* your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. <sup>10</sup> Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, *even* Christ. KJV

After all, when it comes to spiritual things, every disciple should realize that all that they are and have attained was not because of something within them, but was because of the grace, mercy and love of the Lord. If not for the life of God and illumination of the Holy Spirit, we would know nothing of spiritual

## Matthew

things. So why boast or demand recognitions in things spiritual?

**I Corinthians 4:7** For who regards you as superior? And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? NASB77

Next, Jesus makes known to the scribe that as a disciple he will not receive any added honor to his position as a Scribe, for the Son of man had nowhere to lay his head. Consequently, Jesus is intimating to the scribe that he will not be honored by others of his profession as being a disciple of an honored Rabbi, who heads up a rabbinic school that will be respected by all. Jesus is saying He did not come to follow the standard practice of Rabbinism in Israel at that time where titles were sought and honors were gained.

Now, some might wonder how our Lord's response indicates this. The answer is found by understating the common procedures expected of a Rabbi or Master in Israel at that time.

When Jesus declares to the scribe that "the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head," He is telling the scribe that His goal is not to institute a new school along with other rabbinic schools in Israel, where disciples can come to a place that is recognized and respected a place of great learning.

It seems, more than likely (since Jesus knew what was in the heart of everyone—cf. John 2:25; 6:54),<sup>r</sup> that what the scribe was really seeking to gain was more honor as a disciple of one that the scribe thought would become a great Rabbi in Israel, perhaps, surpassing the honor of the School of Hillel, or the School of Shammai. And, as such, it seems this scribe wanted to be associated with what he thought would become a new and respected rabbinic school.

You see, dear reader, in Israel at that time a Rabbi would not only seek to make many disciples, they also in that pursuit hoped to be respected and honoured as a great religious leader. And the highest honour they

<sup>r</sup> **John 2:25** And needed not that any should testify of man: for he **knew what was in man.** KJV

**John 6:64** But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus **knew from the beginning** who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. KJV

## Matthew

could receive would to be recognized as the head of their own House or School. In Israel such schools would be called a Beth Midrash which many times would be known as the house of the Rabbi. Let me provide a quote by John Lightfoot, the well-respected 17th century English Hebraist and Rabbinical scholar, regarding this.

“*Beth-midrash*, or *beth-midrash*, was an upper room, like a divinity school or chapel, near akin to a synagogue; being the *house of the rabbin*, common for any use; here the disciples of the rabbins met.”<sup>65</sup>

And it is described in the Jewish Encyclopedia as follows:

“**Bet Ha-Midrash**...literally, ‘house of study,’ or place where the students of the Law gather to listen to the Midrash, the discourse or exposition of the Law. The bet ha-midrash in the Temple hall (Luke ii. 46...Matt. xxvi. 55...John xviii. 20) is called the “bet ha-midrash ha-gadol”...Its history cannot well be traced. A “bet wa’ad,” meeting-place of scholars, existed as early as the days of Jose ben Joezer of Zereda, the martyr of the Maccabean time, who teaches: “**Let thy house be a bet wa’ad for the wise**” (Ab. i. 4)... [In this place] the hearers or disciples were seated on the ground at the feet of their teachers (Ab. l.c.; Luke x. 39; Acts xxii. 3).”<sup>66</sup>

And in one other place John Lightfoot discusses further how this was seen as “house of the Rabbi.”

“It is well enough known what *beth midrash*...was among the Jews; and what the difference was between it and *the synagogue*. Now *beth midrash* was called also *be rabbanan*, *the school of the Rabbins*. And it is inquired ‘*What is the school of the Rabbins?*’ *It is the house of the Rabbins*. Where the Gloss: ‘Why do they call [beth midrash]...*be rabbanan?*’ namely, ‘Because it is their house for any use.’...And concerning the *beth midrash*, which was very near of kin to the synagogue, it is concluded, as you see, that it is as the very house of the Rabbin, teaching in it, and to be used by him for any use.”<sup>67</sup>

Now, it should be mentioned that sometimes this

## Matthew

designation *be rabbanan* was also used of the Beth Midrash because a Rabbi would spend so time in the place so set aside for study of the Law (especially in later times where any building could be set aside as a Beth Midrash), but it was also used sometimes of the actual home of a Rabbi, usually of an upper room in the house (especially in earlier times in Israel).

John Lightfoot says in another place:

*“To an upper room, in Talmudic language, was very familiar with that nation, that, when they were to concern themselves with the law, or any parts of religion out of the synagogue, they went up...into an upper room, some uppermost part of the house.... Such a kind of ...upper room, I presume, was the Beth-Midrash of this or that Rabbin. R. Simeon” saith, “I saw...the sons of the upper room, that they were few in number... Those are the traditions, which they delivered...in the upper room of Hananiah, Ben Hezekiah, Ben Garon”—and many instances of that kind”*<sup>68</sup>

Thus, by Jesus telling the scribe that He had nowhere to lay His head, he was telling the scribe that he if he wishes to follow Him, he should realize that he will not become a disciple of one who will establish a school or Beth Midrash as was done by so many other Rabbis in Israel and elsewhere. In fact, since it was a common expectation for a disciple to become like their Rabbi, the scribe should realize that he would never become the head of a rabbinic school or house. (In fact, Jesus made this clear later when He told His disciples they were not to be called Rabbi—Matt. 23:8.)<sup>m</sup> This, of course, would be difficult for one who was a member of the Scribes and Pharisees, who loved honour and prestige.

As Jesus did with so many who wished to follow Him, He first laid before them the one thing they needed to realize would be expected of them as one of His disciples—“ If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” With the scribe, Jesus apparently knew that religious ambition and the love for honour from his peers and from the people was the one area of his life

## Matthew

that needed to be addressed. That was the area of “self” that needed to be dealt with, and then be denied by the scribe.

But, as we will see in the next few verses regarding the “seventy other” disciples sent out by Jesus, as seen from the parallel passage in Luke 9:57-10:1, this scribe apparently did not follow Jesus since he found out his desire for prestige and honor could not be fulfilled. At the minimum, if he did begin to follow Jesus, it seems he did not become a part of the seventy disciples that were sent out.

**8:21 And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.**

**8:22 But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.**

Some have read these two verses and have thought our Lord’s answer to his disciple was a bit rash, but I believe once we understand the historical background of the incident, one will see that is not the case. First it would be helpful if we read Luke’s account of this exchange between our Lord and this disciple and second if we understand the burial customs in the first century in Israel.

Luke speaks of the same incident and provides us some additional facts not seen in Matthew. Luke’s account of this exchange is found in Luke 9:57 - 10:24, but we will only provide the three pertinent verses of this account below.

**Luke 9:57-60; 10:1** And as they went on the way, a certain man said unto him, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.<sup>58</sup> And Jesus said unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.<sup>59</sup> And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.<sup>60</sup> But he said unto him, Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but go thou and publish abroad the kingdom of God. <sup>Luke 10:1</sup> Now after these things the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself was about to come. ASV

## Matthew

We see three additional facts in Luke's account. 1) We see that these exchanges with our Lord occurred along the road to another village and not in a village itself. 2) We see that the Lord first tells this person to "follow" him before the person asks the Lord to let him go bury his father. This is not seen in Matthew's account, where we only see that the Lord telling him to follow him after he asks the Lord to let him to go bury his father, and not before he asks that question. So when we combine the two accounts together we see that the Lord commands him twice to follow Him, once before he asks the question, and then again after he asks the question. 3) We see that, more than likely this one was one of the seventy sent out by our Lord as seen in Luke 10:1, where Luke adds the word "others," meaning others besides the disciple he just mentioned in chapter 9, which includes the one seeking permission to bury his father—"Now after this the Lord appointed seventy **others**" (Luke 10:1). With this additional information, let us now discuss these points one by one.

First, the fact that Luke reveals to us that this occurrence with our Lord was not in a village, but rather was along the road becomes significant when we understand Jewish burial customs.

In the first century it was believed that a body should be buried the same day of the person's death. The rabbis taught that a dead body must never remain unburied overnight.

We also see this common practice demonstrated in the New Testament in John 11. In verse 17 we are told that Lazarus had been lying in the tomb for four days when Jesus arrived. Then in verse 39 we are told that Martha declares that it was the fourth day since Lazarus had died. (Even though the word "dead" is not in the Greek as noted in the KJV—"for he hath been *dead* four days,"—the Greek phrase τεταρταῖος γὰρ ἐστὶν is an idiom bespeaking the fact that Lazarus was in the fourth day of his death.). Thus, if he had been dead four days, and he had been in the tomb for four days, he had to have been buried the same day of his death. We also see this practice revealed in Acts

## Matthew

5:5-6 in the story of Ananias and Sapphira. Once Ananias fell down and died, we see that they immediately buried him that same day.

**Acts 5:5-6** And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came upon all who heard of it. <sup>6</sup> And the young men arose and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him. NASB77

This common practice is described in that well known Jewish Encyclopedia entitled, *The Jewish Encyclopedia: A Descriptive Record of the History, Religion, Literature, and Customs of the Jewish People from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*.

Although the law in Deut. xxi. 23 refers only to the culprit exposed on the gallows, the rabbinical interpretation derives from it that "no corpse is to remain unburied overnight" (Sanh. vi. 4, 46a, b; Maimonides, "Abel," iv. 8; Shulḥan 'Aruk, Yoreh De'ah, 357, 1). With reference to Num. xx. 1, it is even urged that burial should follow death closely (M. K. 28a; compare Acts v. 6-10; and see Tobler, "Denkblätteraus Jerusalem," 1853, p. 325, as to the present usage: "The burial takes place within as few hours after death as possible"). "To keep the dead overnight was not permitted in the city of Jerusalem" (Tosef., Neg. vi. 2; B. K. 82b; Ab. R. N. xxxv.). Whether this was due to the climate, which causes decomposition to ensue rapidly—compare Abraham's words: "Let me bury my dead out of my sight" (Gen. xxiii. 4)—or to the defiling nature of the corpse (Num. xix. 11-14), the generally accepted view was that the acceleration of the burial was a praiseworthy act unless preparations for the honor of the dead made delay desirable (M. K. 22a; Maimonides and Yoreh De'ah, l.c.).<sup>69</sup>

Additionally, we read that "as soon as the last breath was drawn, the eyes of the dead were closed by the oldest or the most distinguished son or next relative (Gen. xli. 4), the mouth was shut, and kept in position by a band on the cheek-bones..."<sup>70</sup> So we see that burial usually happened the same day of one's death.

Furthermore, we should understand that the Law declared that anyone who touches a dead body

## Matthew

becomes unclean for seven days.

**Numbers 19:11** He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days. KJV

Of course, since after the death of a family member, when there needed to be preparations for burial, it would be highly unlikely that this disciple of our Lord would not have become directly unclean by his contact with his father who had passed, especially if he was the oldest son who would be the one to close the eyes of his father, as seen above in our quotation. But even if he was not the oldest son, but simply one of the other sons, he still would be considered unclean since he would have been in his father's house. In other words, he still would have been unclean even if he had never touched his father's body as Numbers 19:14 states:

**Numbers 19:14** This *is* the law, when a man dieth in a tent: all that come into the tent, and all that *is* in the tent, shall be unclean seven days. KJV

Therefore, if the father of this disciple had just died, it would be highly unlikely that he would have left his dwelling and come out to meet the Lord "along the road" as we see from Luke's account, for he would have been unclean, and it does not seem, except for the funeral procession, he would have gone out publically to meet the Lord, for anything he might have touched would have immediately become unclean, just as Numbers 19:22 further declares.

**Numbers 19:22** And whatsoever the unclean *person* toucheth shall be unclean; and the soul that toucheth *it* shall be unclean until even. KJV

Additionally, when we consider second point above, even if the disciple came forth publically, being unclean, to meet the Lord, the Lord being omniscient, would have known his disciple was unclean and so would not have told him, even before the disciple told Him his father had died, to follow Him. Why?



## Matthew

Because the Lord followed the Law in every aspect and rather than telling the disciple to follow Him, he would have told him to go and make sure he purified himself in accordance with the Law, so as to not defile the “sanctuary of the LORD and be cut off.”

**Numbers 19:19** And the clean *person* shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even. <sup>20</sup> But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the LORD: the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him; he *is* unclean. KJV

Therefore, when we combine the additional information provided for us by Luke above in point 1 and 2 we see that in all likelihood the disciple’s father had not yet died, and the disciple was asking the Lord permission to wait until his father died before he had to follow the Lord, since the Lord had already commanded him to follow Him before that disciple asked his question of the Lord, as Luke reveals.

The only other possibility would be that the disciple, knowing the Lord was coming, was waiting along the road to meet Him, and, as he was waiting, he may have just received a message from someone from the village down the road that his father had just passed away, and so he was not yet unclean when the Lord finally arrived and so was asking the Lord to be excused. But it seems this would be a remote possibility, for if his father was so sick that he had just died, it would have been unlikely the son would have left his side, leaving the village to travel out to meet the Lord along the way. And even if he had, it seems he would have said something that indicated that to the Lord. Perhaps, he might have said something like, “Lord, I just received notice that my father has died, let me first go and bury him.” (Let me say, though, there is one other scenario which we will discuss shortly when we discuss our Lord’s statement to let the dead bury the dead.)

## Matthew

So, apart from the possibility we have just discussed, if this first scenario is true, and his father had not yet died, then it seems he is saying to the Lord that he wishes to wait until the time comes when he father dies, knowing his father was very old, which in his mind could be weeks or a few months. But after that time comes and he fulfills his filial duties, he is saying he will then follow Jesus as his Rabbi for what the disciple presumed would be for many, many years. But our Lord denies this request and once again tells his disciple, "Follow me." And then He says "let the dead bury their dead." And this is where the problem arises for many. These words of our Lord sound too dismissive and almost heartless. Some try to soften the impact of these words because they assume the disciple is making an excuse for not following the Lord, and so they believe the Lord had to be firm in his response because the Lord knew the disciple was being double minded. So they compare this response to our Lord's other sayings dealing with lukewarm commitments such as His sayings dealing with loving Him more than the members of one's family.

**Matt. 10:37** "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. NASB77

Now, of course, such a commitment is paramount. Our Lord must come first in all things. There are situations where our love for the Lord must not be compromised by our love for our family, for our Father in heaven is the Creator of all. He created our father and mother and us as well, providing us life and breath and care and love, and so deserves our love too, first and foremost, and above all other loves.

For example, this love and loyalty is shown in the Old Testament by a Nazirite not being allowed to bury any family member during the time he freely took a Nazirite vow, no matter how difficult that might be.

**Numbers 6:6-8** 'All the days of his separation to the LORD he shall not go near to a dead person. <sup>7</sup> 'He shall not make himself unclean for his father or for his mother, for his

## Matthew

brother or for his sister, when they die, because his separation to God is on his head. <sup>8</sup> 'All the days of his separation he is holy to the LORD. NASB77

And then there is the example of Abraham and Isaac, where Abraham's faith was tested in seeing if he was willing to give up his beloved Isaac in Gen. 22.

All these examples are brought forward to help explain this seemingly difficult saying of our Lord. And this certainly is a possibility if this disciple was indeed being lukewarm in his commitment to his Father above, the One who created him and gave him life, and to the Son whom the Father sent, the Lord Jesus Christ.

But this presumes the disciple was making an excuse. But, even if he was, that still leaves one thinking our Lord's response was somewhat harsh, or to some, almost heartless. In other words, if our Lord was addressing the need for full commitment from one who would follow Him, could He not have said something like, "I know you are an honorable son and wish to show your love to your father. For that you should be commended for the fifth commandment says to honor you father and mother. But what you do not understand is that there is but six months left before the Son of Man will be delivered up to the hands of men to be crucified and you must therefore allow the dead to bury their dead, and go forth now and proclaim the kingdom of God" (remembering this disciple would be one of the Seventy).

After all, it seems that after the time He told his father and mother He must be about His Father's business, yet He nevertheless went back with them to Nazareth and was subject to them (Luke 2:49-51). And, it seems that He apparently waited until the time of Joseph's death, before He began His ministry, for we hear no more of Joseph once our Lord began proclaiming, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

Or consider Abraham, who was told to leave his country, kindred and father's house (Cf. Gen. 12:1 with Acts 7:24). Yet we see that though he obeyed the

## Matthew

first part of that command of God to leave his country (Ur of the Chaldees) by traveling to Haran, he did not fully fulfill the rest of that command until he was able to first bury his father in Haran (Gen. 11: 31-32). Only after he showed forth his filial duty and honor did he fulfill the last part of that command—to leave his father’s house. So we see that this disciple’s desire to honor his father was not without biblical warrant.

So why did our Lord tell him then to follow Him and let the dead bury their own dead in contrast to the biblical example and command of Scripture and in contrast, perhaps, to our Lord’s own apparent example? The answer, I think, will now become apparent as we now explain the other possible scenario, which we mentioned above we would shortly discuss.

Even though we mentioned that it did not seem that this disciple’s father had just died for the reasons we listed above and so was not in need of immediate burying (which we still believe), there is a second possibility—the father had not just died and was not in need of burying, because the father had already died and was already buried for at least 30 days and maybe even for many months! This would also explain why the disciple was not unclean, having been cleansed according to the Law many days or weeks before. Consequently, what the disciple was referring to and what our Lord was referring to was not his father’s first burial, but the father’s second burial! This, I believe, will explain why what some believe to be a harsh statement by the Lord, was not a harsh statement at all!

What many readers may not know is that the Jews at that time practiced “two burials” for their loved ones. The first burial occurred, as we mentioned, on the same day of one’s death, when the body was placed upon a stone platform in the burial chamber, wherein the body would be allowed to decompose. But after this a second burial would occur about a year later, when the flesh had completely decayed. This practice was known as “ossilegium,” which consisted of the remaining bones being placed into a stone box

## Matthew

called an “ossuary,” which was then placed into a niche in the burial chamber or cave with all the other ossuaries containing the bones of one’s ancestors. The Pharisees equated this process with being “gathered unto one’s fathers” (cf. Gen. 49:29-32).<sup>s</sup>

This practice of *ossilegium* was revered by the Pharisees because they believed this practice of second burial in the land of Israel atoned for one’s sin, thereby bringing about their final expiation from sin. Indeed, some taught that this final act piety by one’s son was the only way to guarantee the resurrection unto life of the one so buried!

Levi Rahmani, a famed Israeli archeologist and Chief Curator of Israel Antiquities Authority who has done archaeological research and work in the practice *ossilegium* during the time period of our Lord (i.e. the Second Temple Period), speaks of this belief.

“Among most of the Pharisees, a sinless state seems to have been considered a prerequisite to resurrection (Josephus Ant. 18.1.3; B. J. 2.8.14)...Into this framework fits the ruling of the Pharisaic circles, even before the destruction of the Temple, that executed criminals must be denied burial in their fathers’ tombs until the flesh had wasted away, after which time the bones were gathered together and buried in the family tomb (*m. Sanh. 6:5-6, t. Sanh. 9:8 Zuck, 429*). **This was based upon the belief that the painful process of decomposition of the flesh atoned for the sins.** Such thought of expiation seemingly appealed to certain of the most pious of the Pharisees, who well might have considered all and sundry as sinners, including themselves, in need of such expiation as precondition to their resurrection.

Later mourning customs in the main continued the earlier ones. However, a differentiation of the length of the state of mourning was now introduced....The *shiv’ah*, the seven-day period of mourning started with burial...During *shiv’ah* mourners stayed away from work, sitting at home upon (low) couches, heads covered, receiving the condolences of relatives and friends. The *shloshim*, the 30-day period, forbade mourners to leave town, cut their hair, or attend social gatherings.

Thus, the Work of Mourning, which previously had been as short as two to seven days, was now prolonged to 30 days and eventually to 12 months. At the end of this period,

<sup>s</sup> **Genesis 49:29**

And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that *is* in the field of Ephron the Hittite. KJV

## Matthew

the family member gathered his forbear's bones into a stone cist, today called ossuary, which then was left in the family vault...**In its ossuary, the whole skeleton of the deceased, now assured of a sinless state, was thus reserved for an individual and physical resurrection...**"

In the Pharisaic tradition, before the destruction of the Temple, we find texts that give us details of this custom and its motivations:

And further said Rabbi Meir: "A man collects the bones of his father and mother because it is a gladness unto him...when the flesh had decayed, they collected the bones and buried them in an ossuary...He was glad because his forbears rested from judgment."

These passages, which refer to customs in Jerusalem before its destruction in A. D. 70, through the time of Rabbi Meir, the famous pupil of Rabbi Akiva (ca. A. D. 135-70), illustrate the historical setting and ideological motivation of this custom, called ossilegium, or secondary burial (Likkut 'asamot)."<sup>71</sup>

This belief concerning the expiation of sin through second burial is also discussed in the aforementioned *The Jewish Encyclopedia: A Descriptive Record of the History, Religion, Literature, and Customs of the Jewish People from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, which we will also provide below. (Now, whether this quotation they provide about a passage in the Talmud is a further development in the theology of the second burial, or whether it is simply a more in depth discussion of what was taught in Second Temple Period, does not really matter, for if it is a further development of their doctrine, it is simply that which arises from the leaven of error [i.e. the leaven of the Pharisees] who taught that salvation could be earned by good works and outward ritual. And if it is a more in depth discussion of their common teaching concerning the expiration of sin after death, it will illustrate why our Lord said what He said as we will next discuss. The only expiation of sin that avails is the blood of Christ, which shortly would be shed upon the cross, of which, this disciple, who asked Him to first go and bury his father, was not even aware.)

The Jewish Encyclopedia provides this additional information.

# Matthew

“Still in the Talmudic passage the question is discussed whether burial is to prevent disgrace of the body, or is a means of atonement for the soul for sins committed during lifetime...The process of decay in the grave was believed to be painful to the body, and therefore to be the means of atonement (compare Ber. 18b; Tosef., Sanh...46b; Sanh. 47b)...This view concerning the atoning effect of the decaying process induced some to bring the body into close contact with the earth by either having the coffin perforated or by dispensing with the coffin altogether... Earth of the Holy Land, as based upon Deut. xxxii. 43, עֲמוֹ אֲדָמָהּ וְכָפַד = “the earth shall atone for his people” is therefore often put under the body in the coffin to accelerate the dissolution and the ceasing of the pain.”<sup>72</sup> §

Therefore, we can see that the Pharisees were teaching expiation of sin through this process between the first and second burial. This is the background of these two verses in Matthew regarding the request of this disciple to first leave to bury his father. It was not the first burial he was referring to, but the second burial. Perhaps the twelve month period was near its end and this disciple was simply seeking permission to complete the burial process of his father. And this now brings us to our Lord’s answer.

However, to fully understand His answer we must compare Scripture with Scripture to provide the full context. To do this we must combine Matthew’s account and Luke’s account, which we will do below.

**Matthew 8:21-22** And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.<sup>22</sup> But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead. KJV

**Luke 9:59-60** And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.<sup>60</sup> Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. KJV

When we compare these two passages we see that Matthew basically provides the middle part and not the first part, or the last part, i.e. “but go thou and

§ This, of course, was according to their rendering of the text before them. But the Holy Scriptures (Jewish Publication Society 1917) translates the text before them (עֲמוֹ אֲדָמָהּ וְכָפַד) as “doth make expiation for the land of His people.” The ERV (1885) renders the verse as follows: Rejoice, O ye nations, *with* his people: For he will avenge the blood of his servants, And will render vengeance to his adversaries, And will make expiation for his land, for his people. Deut. 32:43

## Matthew

preach the kingdom of God.” Thus when we combine the two accounts this would be how it would appear with the important words —

“And he said unto another of his disciples, ‘Follow me.’ But he said, ‘Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.’ But Jesus said unto him, ‘Follow me; and suffer the dead to bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.’”

Now, a few things need to be mentioned concerning the underlying Greek text and how it is translated. We will discuss each part, step by step, as we go, and then will adjust the translation with that part discussed. First, we must discuss the particle  $\delta\epsilon$  translated “but” in Matthew 8:22 in the phrase, “But Jesus said unto him...” The Greek particle  $\delta\epsilon$  serves both as an adversative conjunction and a continuative conjunction, depending on the context. In some cases it is crystal clear as to which one or the other it is serving. For example, the context clearly indicates it is being used in the adversative sense of “but” in Matt. 5:34 (also see verses 22, 28, 32, 37, 39, 44).

**Matthew 5:34 But ( $\delta\epsilon$ )** I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: KJV

Whereas, in the genealogies of Matt. 1: 1-16 the context clearly shows  $\delta\epsilon$  is being used in the continuative sense of “and.” For example, Matt. 1:2—

**Matthew 1:2** Abraham begat Isaac; **and ( $\delta\epsilon$ )** Isaac begat Jacob; **and ( $\delta\epsilon$ )** Jacob begat Judas and his brethren (and so on and so forth). KJV

(By way of comparison, the KJV translation of  $\delta\epsilon$  is almost evenly split between the adversative usage of “but,” and the continuative usage of “and.”)

In the translation before us, Matt. 8:22, we see that  $\delta\epsilon$  is translated by the adversative “but” in nearly all English versions, but in just a few versions it is translated by the continuative “and” (e.g. Young's Literal Translation, and T. Haweis'\* *Translation of*

\*Thomas Haweis (1734-1820) was an Evangelical minister in the Church of England, as well as a co-founder of the London Missionary Society; he also wrote many hymns for the Church, Three of his hymns can be found in *A Few Hymns and Spiritual Songs Selected for the Little Flock* (1856): Hymn #11 - ‘Jesus the Lord is Risen,’ Hymn #328 - ‘Lord Jesus to Tell of Thy Love,’ and in the Appendix, Hymn # 83 - ‘Behold the Lamb! ‘tis He who Bore My Sins.’ The Hymn, ‘Lord Jesus to Tell of Thy Love’ also appears in *Hymns of Worship and Remembrance*. It was also said he was close friends with John Newton (author of the hymn ‘Amazing Grace’) assisting him with his studies in Greek and Hebrew.



## Matthew

*the New Testament*). This is an important distinction because it matters as to whether Matthew is using it as an adversative or a continuative conjunction. If it is seen as an adversative, it lends itself to the idea that Jesus is forbidding the disciple to go and bury his father at all. But with a continuative sense it lends itself to the idea that Jesus is not forbidding the disciple to first go and bury his father, but to go within certain parameters. If it was meant to be a continuative conjunction then it would appear like this in English: “And he said unto another of his disciples, ‘Follow me.’ But he said, ‘Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.’ **And** Jesus said unto him, ‘Follow me; and suffer the dead to bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.’”

The next thing we must consider grammatically is the imperative mood used in both verbs in our Lord’s answer to the disciple. As we have mentioned before the imperative mood in Greek (generally speaking) is a mood of command. A very literal translation conveying this aspect would appear as “You must follow me,” and “You must suffer the dead bury their dead,” and (in Luke) “you must preach the kingdom of God.”

Moreover, it should be mentioned that just because our Lord commands this disciple to “follow Him” does not mean he must always be physically present with the Lord from then on. Many disciples who obeyed the Lord’s command to follow Him sometimes left Him physically to attend to other things.

For example, the apostles Simon and Andrew first followed the Lord while they were in Judea (John 1:37:43). However, we see that Andrew and Peter then left the physical presence of Jesus, returning to their fishing, at which time Jesus meets them once again, commanding them to follow Him (Matt. 4:18-20). Yet we see that that did not mean they remained physically with Jesus from that point onward, for they were physically apart from Jesus once more fishing in Luke 5:1-11, or at least Peter was (for Andrew is not mentioned at this time), after which it seems they were with Him continuously until they were named

## Matthew

apostles in Luke 6:12-14.

Yet even this did not mean they were always physically present with Jesus from that time forward, for Jesus soon sends them away from Him to preach the kingdom in other cities (e.g. Luke 9: 1-3; 22:35).

So we see that just because this disciple leaves the physical presence of Jesus to attend the second burial of his father does not mean he disobeyed the Lord's second command to follow Him (which Matthew records). It could be, like with other disciples, that Jesus is also sending this disciple away on a mission to preach the kingdom of God, in this case, to his family first. Then afterwards, when he returns to Jesus, it seems he was sent out once more on another mission to preach the Gospel, this time as one of the Seventy as we will shortly see.

Thus we see that the command to follow Jesus is not restricted to one being physical present, but also includes one who "follows" our Lord's sayings and "follows" our Lord's doings, i.e. walking as Jesus walked (also cf. Matt. 10:38; 16:24; Luke 9:49-50 KJV; John 12:26; 2:19-23; I Peter 2:21).

In light of all this, the combined verses would now appear like this with these added distinctions, including a full indication of the imperative mood, although I know it appears awkward and wooden in English.

"And he said unto another of his disciples, 'Follow me.' But he said, 'Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.' **And** Jesus said unto him, '**You must follow** me, and **you must suffer** the dead to bury their dead: but go thou; **you must preach** the kingdom of God.'"

Finally, we must address the last part of our Lord's response not mentioned by Matthew but included by Luke—the phrase "but go thou and preach the kingdom of God," which in the Greek appears as σὺ δὲ ἀπελθὼν διάγγελλε τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ. If I might provide the English equivalents, bringing out the imperative mood of the verb, it would appear as follows—σὺ (thou) δὲ (but) ἀπελθὼν (go) διάγγελλε (you must proclaim) τὴν (the) βασιλείαν (kingdom)

## Matthew

τοῦ (of) θεοῦ (God). In this case, it would appear as—

“And he said unto another of his disciples, ‘Follow me.’ But he said, ‘Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.’ **And** Jesus said unto him, ‘**You must follow** me and **you must suffer** the dead to bury their dead; **but go thou, you must proclaim** the kingdom of God.’”

A few things must be said about this last part of our Lord’s command. First, it is included as a part of our Lord’s answer to the disciple’s request. Thus we see the Lord does not forbid the disciple to go, but instead is telling him what to do when he goes! The reason this is disjointed from the rest of the command is because most translators conclude that the first δὲ should be understood as an adversative in the first part of Matt. 8:22, which is rendered in the KJV, “But Jesus said unto him,” which then sets the rest of the passage as an adversative command. But when we see δὲ as a continuative particle we see that Jesus is indeed allowing the disciple to first go, but to go with three conditions. First, he must go with the commitment to follow the Lord, which means, of course, to obey His commands and teachings. Second, he must go and suffer the “dead” to do the actual gathering of the bones into an ossuary to be buried a second time so as not to condone any false idea of atonement. And third, as we will now see, he must preach or, maybe better, proclaim fully the kingdom of God to those who are present.

The reason I changed “preach” to “proclaim” is because this is not the common verb used in the New Testament for “preach,” e.g. κηρύσσω or εὐαγγελίζω. This Greek verb that Luke uses is the Greek verb διαγγέλλω, which is only used in two other places in the New Testament (Acts 21:26; Rom. 9:17).

W. E. Vine defines it as follows:

“DIANGELLO (διαγγέλλω) lit., “to announce through,” hence, “**to declare fully**, or far and wide” (*dia*, “through”), is translated “declaring” in Act 21:26, RV (AV, “to signify”); in Luke 9:60, RV, “publish abroad” (for AV, “preach”), giving the verb its fuller significance; so in Rom

## Matthew

9:17, for AV, "declared." <sup>73</sup>

However, I do not believe the verb should automatically be understood as “proclaim everywhere” or “publish abroad” as some versions translate the word (NASB, ASV), which is inferred from the preposition *διὰ* being prefixed to the verb. It could just as well be understood as “thoroughly proclaim,” or “fully declare” as W. E. Vine suggests above, as a different nuance from the nuance “far and wide.” If one looks to the use of the word in the LXX, one will see that when it conveys the idea of “everywhere” or “far and wide” it is construed with a phrase indicating such—for example, “in all the earth” or “in all the land” (Ex.9:16; Lev. 25:9). Otherwise the proclaiming, declaring, or announcing is simply limited to the immediate place where the action occurs (e.g. by the walls of Jericho—Joshua 6:10).

Finally, it is also important to point out that in the Greek, the word translated “go,” is an aorist participle, preceded by the personal pronoun *σὺ*. It could be rendered into English simply as, “going thou,” with an adversative “but,” or a continuative “and.” In other words, our Lord is telling His disciple that when he leaves to return home to his father’s second burial he needs to go as His disciple and “proclaim,” or, perhaps “thoroughly declare” the kingdom of God to those present. In this case, we could render the combined texts in this very literal wooden manner.

“And he said unto another of his disciples, ‘Follow me.’ But he said, ‘Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.’ **And** Jesus said unto him, ‘**You must follow** me, and **you must suffer** the dead to bury their dead; **and going thou**, you must *thoroughly proclaim* the kingdom of God.’”

Or we could render it, following the same Greek grammatical rules, not as “going,” but simply as “when you go away,” being an adverbial participle (cf. Matt. 10:7; John 21:19 for similar Greek participial constructions; also cf. the Apocrypha, *σὺ δὲ ἐξέλθων*, and *when you go out*—Judith 2:10). By

## Matthew

doing this we could also bring out the full meaning of the Greek verb, ἀπελθὼν (from the Gr. ἀπέρχομαι), which includes the idea of “going away,” being prefixed with the preposition ἀπο. [See W. E. Vine—“ἀπέρχομαι, lit., to go away (*apo*, from) is chiefly used in the Gospels.”<sup>74</sup>] It then would appear as follows with διαγγέλλω translated as “fully proclaim.”

“And he said unto another of his disciples, ‘Follow me.’ But he said, ‘Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.’ **And** Jesus said unto him, ‘**You must follow** me, and **you must suffer** the dead to bury their dead; **and when you go away, you must fully proclaim** the kingdom of God.’”

And this brings us to our third and last point given to us in the parallel passage in Luke which we said we would discuss shortly. That point was, if you remember, that this disciple was one of the seventy mentioned in Luke 10:1, which confirms for us that Jesus did not forbid this disciple to depart to attend the second burial of his father, but rather he went by the direct command of the Lord.

Luke writes the following after the story of this disciple, stating: “Now **after this** the Lord appointed seventy **others**, and **sent** them two and two ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come (NASB77).”

We must notice that Luke says three important things. First he says “after this.” What does he mean by **this**? The “this” must be that which went before, which must include this story of the disciple who wished to first go and bury his father. Then he says seventy **others**. The fact that he says “others” means that “others” beside the seventy were also appointed. And then the third important thing he says is that the seventy others were also **sent**.

In that light, let me provide a comment made by John Gill on Luke 10:1, regarding the number of the disciples appointed and sent out.

John Gill writes:

“The Lord appointed other seventy also...in allusion to the

## Matthew

seventy elders of Israel, Numbers 11:16. The Vulgate Latin and Persic versions read, "seventy two", and so does Epiphanius (Contr. Haeres. haeres. 20). The Jewish Sanhedrim is sometimes said to consist of seventy one (Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrim, c. 1. sect. 3), and sometimes of seventy two (Misn. Yadim, c. 3. sect. 5); though commonly said to be of the round number seventy, as these disciples might be."<sup>75</sup>

And then we have a comment made by Bengel on this verse.

"Valla finds fault with the Latin of the Vulgate, which has "septuaginta duos." The word δύο follows within four words after ἐβδομήκοντα, [ἀνὰ δύο.] It would seem that some very ancient transcriber hastily transferred the word δύο from thence to this place. Or else Luke wrote the accurate number, *seventy-two*, in the first verse, and then in the seventeenth verse wrote in round numbers *seventy*; and so others set down in both verses either *seventy* or *seventy-two*."<sup>76</sup>

Consequently, depending on which variant is original in this passage, Luke might be have been stating that there was a total of seventy two disciples that were sent out by the Lord, which, according to the immediate context, would mean at least two of the three individuals mentioned in Luke 9: 57-62 were also appointed and sent out by the Lord!

Moreover, we also see that this disciple, who asked to first go and bury his father, also received a command to proclaim the kingdom of God just as the "others" in Luke 10:1 received a command.

Thus, since this disciple was the only one of the three the Lord directly commanded to proclaim the kingdom of God, it seems to confirm that he did go by the direct command of the Lord to attend the second burial of his father, and while there to proclaim the kingdom of God, and so was one of the "others," beside the seventy who were appointed by the Lord to go to other cities to preach the Gospel of His kingdom. This would also seem to indicate that the city or place to which the disciple was sent to attend the burial of his father was also one of the cities our

## Matthew

Lord had chosen to visit.

**Luke 10:1** Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them two and two ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come. NASB77

And so, now that we see that Jesus was not forbidding this disciple to honor his father in burial, but, instead, blessed his desire to honor his father as demonstrated in Scripture and as demonstrated by our Lord's own example of honouring His father, and this now brings us to the last question. Who are the dead?

The dead could simply be figurative language never meant to be taken literally. It could have simply meant that once one was buried the first time, there was no need for a second burial. Thus, to make this point, Jesus said something that everyone knew could never be done—the dead burying their dead, presumably meaning the other ancestors that were already dead in the family sepulcher, burying their dead descendant a second time once the flesh had decayed. But that impossibility is what emphasized the fact that a second burial was not necessary, the first being sufficient.

However, more than likely, I would say that Jesus was literally referring to the Pharisees as being the dead ones who were burying their own dead (lit. in the Gr., *the dead of themselves*), meaning one who was of their fraternity. Thus, the father was probably a Pharisee, a member of the fraternity of the Pharisees. (One could only hope he was like one of the secret Pharisees who believed in Jesus, but did not publically confess Jesus.)<sup>t</sup>

Now, some may object because they believe Jews in the first century did not yet share the belief that other Jews could be considered spiritually dead while they were still alive. Some believed that thinking came a few centuries later, as witnessed in the Talmud (Berakoth 18b), which declared:

“But the dead know nothing’: These are the wicked **who in their lifetime are called dead**, as it says. ‘And thou, O wicked one, that art slain, the prince of Israel’ (Eze. xxi.30)

# Matthew

[Ezek. 21:25]. Or if you prefer. I can derive it from here: ‘At the mouth of two witnesses shall the dead be put to death’ (Deut. xvii. 6). He is still alive! **What it means is, he is already counted as dead.**”<sup>77</sup>

But more than likely that is exactly what a self-righteous Pharisee in the first century would believe—especially of their fellow countrymen who they considered publicans and sinners. And it goes without saying that they also considered Gentiles as dead, though living. On this point they were right; the Gentiles, being wicked, were dead. The apostle Paul, being a Pharisee of a Pharisee declared the same!

**Ephesians 2:1-2** And **you** [Gentiles] *hath he quickened, who were dead* in trespasses and sins; <sup>2</sup> Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. KJV

But what the Pharisees did not know—which Jesus did know—and which Paul did not even know before he was saved, was that all men were dead in their trespasses and sins, including the so-called righteous Pharisee, for in Eph. 2:5 Paul includes himself, a Pharisee, and a Jew, among those who were “dead!”

**Ephesians 2:3-5** Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.<sup>4</sup> But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, <sup>5</sup> **Even** when **we were dead** in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved. KJV

The Pharisees did not believe or know this, being blind in their own trespasses and sins, and being ignorant in their darkened hearts and minds. In their own self-righteousness they prided themselves not as being the *wicked*, who were dead (though alive), like some Jews and all Gentiles were. They considered themselves as the *good* among all who were alive; but Jesus calls them dead, just as the Holy Spirit calls them dead through Paul in Eph. 2:1-5.

## † John 12:42

Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue. NASB77

**John 19:38** And after these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. He came therefore, and took away His body. NASB77



## Matthew

The Pharisees believed they were the only ones in Israel that pleased the God as we saw in our study on the Sermon on the Mount. They looked down with disdain on those who were not part of their fraternity.

**Luke 18:10-14** Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. <sup>11</sup> "The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, 'God, I thank Thee that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer.'<sup>12</sup> 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'<sup>13</sup> "But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'<sup>14</sup> "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted. KJV

And yet Jesus says that the sinner who recognized his sinful state with humbleness and repentance was more righteous than the Pharisee. To Jesus the Pharisees were dead, which he also infers by calling them whited sepulchres full of dead men's bones, after having already called them children of hell a few verses before.

**Matt. 23:27,33** Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within **full of dead men's bones**, and of all uncleanness. <sup>33</sup>"You serpents, you brood of vipers, how shall you escape the sentence of hell?

**Matthew 23:15** Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. KJV

Thus, like the Holy Spirit declares in Eph. 2:5, our Lord is declaring in Matt. 8:22 that the Pharisees were "dead." It is as if he was telling His disciple, "You must suffer the Pharisees to bury their dead, but you must not accept their foolish and superstitious teaching that there is atonement for sin in burial, expiation of sin in death, and a final freedom from

## Matthew

judgment by a second burial of purified bones in an ossuary.” Remember, below is what the Pharisees were teaching, and what our Lord is condemning.

“In its ossuary, the whole skeleton of the deceased, now assured of a sinless state, was thus reserved for an individual and physical resurrection...And further said Rabbi Meir; “A man collects the bones of his father and mother because it is a gladness unto him...when the flesh had decayed, they collected the bones and buried them in an ossuary...He was glad because his forbears rested from judgment.

Theses passage, which refer to customs in Jerusalem before its destruction in A. D. 70, through the time of Rabbi Meir, the famous pupil of Rabbi Akiva (ca. A. D. 135-70), illustrate the historical setting and ideological motivation of this custom, called ossilegium, or secondary burial (Likkut 'asamot).” <sup>78</sup>

Our Lord is telling his disciple to “let them be,” much like He also tells His disciples in Matt. 15:14—

**Matthew 15:14** Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. KJV

And what is telling is that the same Greek verb that is used in Matt. 15:14, is also used in Matt-8:22. The only difference is that one is plural in number because He is speaking to all His disciples, and the other is singular in number because He is speaking to the one disciple wishing to bury his father. Both are commands to essentially “let them be.” Both commands would be an admonition to beware of their teaching as our Lord states in Matt. 16:11-12.

**Matthew 16:11-12** "How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." <sup>12</sup> Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. NASB77

And this brings us now to the final reason our Lord told his disciple to go, but to not take part in the

## Matthew

second burial, letting the dead (i.e. the Pharisees) bury their dead, performing their rite of the second burial. The last command our Lord gives His disciple is to go and “fully proclaim” to them the kingdom of God. Why? Because they needed to hear that salvation from sin and death, and assurance of an entrance into the everlasting kingdom of God could never come from what they considered pious “works of righteousness,” such as they considered the second burial to be. What they needed to enter the kingdom of God was not a second burial, but a second birth! They needed to be born again as Jesus told Nicodemus (John 3:3-5)! † They needed a righteousness that surpassed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, and that righteousness was the righteousness of One who was sinless and pure, One who perfectly fulfilled the Law in every way, and that One was the Messiah of Israel, the Christ.

Anyone who thinks they could ever do enough works of righteousness to earn a place in the eternal kingdom of God, does not know the darkness of their own heart, or the blindness of their own being, or the mixture of good and evil that can pervade even the noblest work of righteousness. This is true of all of us, but most especially of the Pharisees. They tried to be the most righteous; but in doing so, they succumbed to the first of the seven deadly sins, spiritual pride. So their works of righteousness availed them nothing.

J. Gregory Mantle addresses this very point in his book entitled *Beyond Humiliation: The Way of the Cross*. I will first quote a part from a later portion in his book and then I will quote something from an earlier part.

He writes:

"The two great pillars upon which true Scriptural Christianity rests are the greatness of our fall and the greatness of our redemption....Nothing is easier than self-deception; few things are so difficult as real self-disclosure. We may be claiming and even professing the experience of holiness, and yet know nothing of a total death to the carnal or natural life..." <sup>79</sup>

† Jesus clearly makes it known that if one wishes to enter the kingdom of God one needed a second birth. The Pharisees were utterly ignorant of this truth. But Jesus told Nicodemus he had to be born again because only through new birth, by faith, could one be justified, receiving true righteousness, the righteousness of Christ.

**John 3:3-4** Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. <sup>4</sup> Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? <sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. KJV

## Matthew

And now from an earlier portion—

"For obvious reasons no branch of knowledge is so neglected as knowledge of ourselves. In other sciences, knowledge flatters the vanity of the unsanctified heart...But true self-discovery wounds our pride, and spoils the good opinion we had formed and cherished of ourselves. We may be skilled in every other science and ignorant in this...."

"Self -love conspires with trust in our own hearts to make dupes of us as regards our spiritual account. Proverbially, and in the verdict of all experience, love is blind; and if love be blind, self-love being the strongest, the most subtle, the most changeless, the most difficult to eradicate of all loves, is blinder still. Self-love will not see, as self-trust cannot see, anything against us.... What is necessary then, since self-love will cause us to live in such a fool's paradise ... is the searchlight of God..."

"Our love of ease and our unwillingness to be disturbed, lead us to avoid the prayer: 'Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any way of pain in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:23, 24).'"

"Painful and humiliating as the searching and exposure may be, the very beginning of a life that is all for God hinges upon our being absolutely honest with Him about our present spiritual condition." <sup>80</sup>

This was the message of the Gospel of the kingdom of God. It was not their works of righteousness that could save them, but it was the work of the Messiah unto blood that could save them, whose blood made atonement for their sins—if they but simply believe.

They needed to hear that full atonement from sin could never be gained, as the Pharisees erroneously and superstitiously taught, through that so-called "painful process of decomposition of the flesh." <sup>81</sup> Nor, could second burial in an ossuary containing their whole skeletal remains, after that decomposition of the flesh (wherein concurrently they believed their soul suffered in Gehenna) assure them a place in the kingdom of God.

Such a guarantee of one's final rest could only come through the forgiveness of their sin by blood and

## Matthew

the imputed righteousness of God's Messiah—Christ Jesus the LORD, who from the beginning of His ministry was proclaimed by John to be the Lamb of God, who took away the sins of the world.

This is why our LORD told His disciple that when he goes he must fully or thoroughly proclaim the kingdom of God, which included the revelation that the Messiah was the Lamb of God, which while not yet fully revealed what that meant, it did point them away from their own ability to make atonement for their sins by their own righteous acts done in superstition, such as the teaching and practice of a second burial for atonement for sin; moreover it also bespoke the fact that the blood of a lamb provided deliverance to them in the first Passover; and also the blood of the lamb provided atonement for them and their acceptance before God in the burnt offering. <sup>u</sup>

The whole focus of Sermon on the Mount and the Gospel of the Kingdom contradicted the teachings of the Pharisees and the errors of their ways; it presented to all who would listen the true means of righteousness and the true means of entrance into the kingdom of Heaven. This is what the disciple was commanded to herald.

So in conclusion, the reason why I believe Matthew takes these two incidents that occurred later in our Lord's ministry and includes them topically in this place is because he is emphasizing not just the *commitment* needed to be a disciple, but is emphasizing the *mindset* needed to be a disciple. Many believe that Matthew is emphasizing the former, whereas it seems to me that Matthew is emphasizing the latter, without ignoring the former.

We must not forget that topically Matthew is now presenting the outworking of the "sayings" of Jesus by topically speaking of the "doings" of Jesus, for our Lord's doings will never contradict His sayings; therefore, if we are to follow our Lord's sayings, we must be careful to do His sayings.

We mentioned this in the beginning of this chapter when we said: "Jesus finished His Sermon on the Mount with the exhortation that "whosoever heareth

<sup>u</sup> **Lev. 1:3-4** If his oblation be a burnt offering of the herd, he shall offer it a male without blemish: he shall offer it at the door of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the LORD. <sup>4</sup> And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. ERV(1885)

**Ex.12:5,7,13** Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take *it* out from the sheep, or from the goats: <sup>7</sup> And they shall take of the blood, and strike *it* on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. <sup>13</sup> And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye *are*: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy *you*, when I smite the land of Egypt. KJV

## Matthew

these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand” (Matt. 7:24, 26). This chapter and the next will practically show forth how those truths that He taught were to be done in righteousness.”

Thus, to bear witness to this Matthew includes the first incident with the scribe, which deals with the matter of *reputation*. A disciple can never truly “do” the “sayings” of Jesus if he or she is doing them in order to gain a *reputation* among the saints.

To many times Christians will serve the Lord to gain a “spiritual” reputation that will earn the admiration of other Christians. That is not “doing” those truths of the Sermon on the Mount in righteousness. And so I do not believe Matthew is simply speaking of the *commitment* needed to be a disciple, but he is also speaking of the *mindset* needed to be a disciple and that mindset is none other than the “mind of Christ” as taught also by Paul.

**Philippians 2:5-8** Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: <sup>6</sup> Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: <sup>7</sup> But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: <sup>8</sup> And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. KJV

Secondly, if one wishes to be a disciple he must always oppose the *traditions of men*, for man-made traditions invalidate the Word of God and are a danger to the spiritual well-being and spiritual maturity of a person. Jesus told the Pharisees the following—

**Mark 7: 8, 13** "Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men." <sup>13</sup> *thus* invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that." NASB77

The Pharisees developed man-made traditions

## Matthew

based upon false understandings and false applications of certain Scriptures, such as Deut. 32:43, from which they extrapolated that atonement and expiation of sin could come through being buried in the land of Israel for the decomposition of the flesh, and then the gathering of the bones for a second burial unto his fathers. This tradition invalidated the Word of God which said only blood could make an atonement for sin—

**Lev 17:11** For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement. KJV

**Hebrews 9:22** And according to the Law, *one may* almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. NASB77

And so , because of that, their *traditions* not only invalidated the Word of God and the spiritual well-being of a soul, it also endangered the eternal state of a soul in that their traditions falsely taught that sin could be atoned for by the decomposition of one's flesh in a grave in the land of Israel!

Thus, by the inclusion of this story of the disciple wishing to go first and bury his father, Matthew emphasizes a disciple must not follow the *traditions of man*, but only the traditions of God, which are now fully recorded for us in Scripture. It is a perfect example of the outworking of our Lord's repeated saying in the Sermon on the Mount—You have heard it say...but I say unto you.

It is as if our Lord is saying. You have heard it said unto you, "One must be buried twice, once unto the atonement of sin in the grave, and once in an ossuary for their rest from judgment. But I say unto you, leave the dead to bury the dead a second time, and you proclaim thoroughly the kingdom of God that it is only I who can fulfill all righteousness, and bring you atonement for sins. For unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees you shall in no way enter into the kingdom of God.

## Matthew

Thus our Lord is teaching that discipleship requires humility and the surrender of personal ambition, as well as fidelity to the truth of God's Word, over the *traditions of man* created by their own wisdom and misapplication of Scripture.

How important is that for today when Christian disciples turn ministry into a means to earn the praise, fame, and admiration of other disciples. That is not the mindset of Christ. Nor is it the mindset of Christ when traditions of men are created and added to Scripture, thus creating a mixture of the things of the world and the wisdom of man to the invalidation of the Word of God and the wisdom of God. God has given us all things pertaining to life and godliness and to add to that by the things of the world and its wisdom is an affront to the very glory of God.

**8:23 And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.**

**8:24 And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep.**

**8:25 And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.**

In these verses Matthew once again demonstrates that the Messiah, Christ Jesus our Lord, was none other the LORD of the Old Testament come in human flesh.

As Jesus was with His disciples on their way across the sea of Galilee to the country of the Gergesenes, which is located in the southern part of the lake, a great storm arose, which was common for the Sea of Galilee. Such storms affect the lake because of its situation among the surrounding hills and the distant Mt. Hermon. The high hills to the east, called today the Golan Heights, also contribute to such storms. When cooler winds blow down from the Golan Heights and then intersect with the warmer air above the lake, violent storms can result. The *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels* provides the following about this phenomenon.



## Matthew

“The storms on the Sea of Galilee are in many ways peculiar, and sometimes the wind seems to blow from various directions at one time, tossing the boat about. This arises from the fact that the winds blow violently down the narrow gorges and strike the Sea at an angle, stirring the waters to a great depth. Many of the storms, too, are quite local in their character. This may be understood by the fact that when a westerly wind is blowing, all may be smooth along the shores to the north and south of Tiberias and for a mile out, but there we may pass in a moment from the region of perfect calm into a gale so violent that the only chance of safety is to run before the wind to the eastern shore. At other times the south end of the Lake may be comparatively peaceful, but, sailing northward, we no sooner reach Mejdal than the wind from Wady el-Hamâm will seize the sail, and, unless it be instantly lowered, overturn the boat. These winds are from the west, but it is generally the wind from the north-east that raises a general storm over the whole Sea...The suddenness, too, with which the storms spring up may be illustrated by a storm which came from this direction, and which the present writer observed. A company of visitors were standing on the shore at Tiberias, and, noting the glassy surface of the water and the smallness of the Lake, they expressed doubts as to the possibility of such storms as those described in the Gospels. Almost immediately the wind sprang up. In 20 minutes the sea was white with foam-crested waves. Great billows broke over the towers at the corners of the city walls, and the visitors were compelled to seek shelter from the blinding spray, though now 200 yards from the Lake side. It is further to be noted that the north end of the Lake, being less sheltered than the rest, is more subject to storms. Indeed, only in peculiar circumstances could it escape having a chief share in any storm.”

“These facts may now be used to illustrate the two occasions on which Jesus is recorded to have been on the Sea in a storm (Matthew 8:23, Mark 4:37, Luke 8:23; and Matthew 14:24, Mark 6:48, John 6:18). On the former of these the journey was from Capernaum to Gergesa, and the wind was from the north-east. Thus the boat was struck on its side, and so ‘the waves beat into the ship’ and it became ‘filled...’”

“It might be imagined that the cessation of the storms might mean simply the passing from an exposed and stormy to a calmer and protected region, but in both the cases recorded this is impossible. In the first instance, when the

## Matthew

wind was from the north-east, the whole Sea would be disturbed...”<sup>82</sup>

In this light it should be noted that the Gospel of Mark tells us that this was a “great storm of wind” and Luke adds that windstorm “came down on the lake” (Lk. 8:23 NKJV). This was a windstorm, not a thunderstorm or rain storm. In fact, this particular Greek word that both Mark and Luke use for this windstorm is the same Greek word used in the Septuagint in Job 38:1 when it says the Lord spoke to Job out of a whirlwind. This is significant because these same types of storms still strike the lake today.

It was reported that on March 12, 1992 one such storm struck the lake with winds approaching hurricane force. The news report entitled, *Israel's Disastrous Winter Howls Out with Fierce Wind*, begins as follows: “TEL AVIV, March 12 (JTA) – Israel's worst winter of the century is bowing out with a final punch that has knocked down power lines and caused severe wind and flood damage all over the country this week, especially in the north. Instead of the rain, snow and hail that struck in a succession of storms beginning in December, Israel has been battered since Tuesday by the *Sharkiya*, a cold, dry easterly wind that attains hurricane force. The most serious damage was suffered by Tiberias and other communities on the shores of Lake Kinneret [the modern name for the Sea of Galilee], where 60-mph winds whipped up 6-foot waves.” The article then concludes with reports that the waves swept into lakeside restaurants and establishments in causing much damage.<sup>83</sup>

Other reports concerning such storms upon the lake have stated that waves have even reached a height of 9 feet. That is quite a height for an inland lake.

Knowing this, one can understand why the disciples were so afraid being in the middle of the lake with great waves breaking into the boat with no shelter to which they could escape. And in contradistinction to their fear, we have Jesus in the stern of the boat sound asleep!

## Matthew

John Gill shares the following concerning this contradistinction.

“Mark mentions the place where he was asleep, “in the hinder part of the ship”; that is in the stern: where he, as Lord and Master, should be, though to the great concern of his disciples, there asleep; and that in a deep sound sleep, as the word which Luke makes use of signifies; and as appears by the loud repeated call of his disciples to awake him: and though this sleep doubtless arose from natural causes, he being greatly fatigued with the business of the day past; yet was so ordered by the providence of God, to come upon him in such a manner at this time, for the trial of the faith of his disciples. Christ’s body needing sleep, and refreshment by it, shows that it was a real human body he assumed; subject to the same infirmities as ours; excepting sin; and is no contradiction to the truth of his divinity, as the Jew suggests. He slept as man, though, as God, he is Israel’s keeper, who neither slumbers nor sleeps.”<sup>84</sup>

And it is to this profound fact to which we wish to comment.

**8:26 And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.**

**8:27 But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!**

First it should be mentioned that our Lord wondered why they were so fearful, having so little faith. Our Lord is not chiding them for having insufficient faith, but for having a short-lived faith. This is further seen when we compare the parallel passage in Mark 4:40 where Jesus asks them as to why they have “no faith!”<sup>v</sup> In other words, if they have no faith, that means their faith did not persevere, which would not be the case if they still had “a little faith.” So we can see that it does not mean they had a little faith, meaning insufficient faith, but rather they had a brief or short-lived faith,<sup>w</sup> which means the Lord is gently upbraiding them for not holding on to

<sup>v</sup> **Mark 4:40** And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? **how is it that ye have no faith?** KJV

<sup>w</sup> For a fuller discussion of this word, see Gospel of Matthew, Part II beginning on page 221

## Matthew

the faith they had at the beginning of the journey. Their faith was short-lived, and when they were overtaken by this violent windstorm they became fearful and their faith vanished; they stopped believing.

This is further confirmed because the Greek verb “ἔχετε,” as found in Mark 4:40, is a present tense verb, which means, contextually, it can be understood with a durative sense of *having*, *holding*, or *keeping* (cf. I Cor. 6:7; I Tim. 3:9).<sup>x</sup> Therefore, it could be understood with the sense that the disciples were not holding onto their faith, they were not keeping it, persevering in their faith. In other words, the thought is that they had faith at first, but they did not keep that faith; they were not continuing on with their faith; they were not “holding fast” to their faith; their faith was brief, short-lived; it disappeared to the point where they simply had “no faith.” Moreover, in Luke 8:25, we find Jesus also asking them, “Where is your faith?” again, implying they lost the faith they once possessed. So if we combine all the three accounts together, we see that the Holy Spirit has each gospel writer giving only a portion of the full questioning of our Lord to His disciples regarding their faith. The Lord actually asks three questions. Matthew gives the first question before the miracle, and Mark and Luke give the next two questions after the miracle.

In other words, our Lord’s full questioning of them could have occurred this way—1) “Why are you fearful, O ye of faith short-lived?” (Matt. 8:26) At which point, the Lord stills the wind and calms the sea. Then, turning to them once more, He asks again, perhaps, with more surprise in His voice because he still sees fear in their eyes, 2) “Where is your faith?” (Luke 8:25). 3) “How is it that ye have no faith?” (Mk. 4:40).

A similar scenario regarding a brief or short-lived faith can be found when Jesus was walking on the water in Matt. 14:27-31. When Peter sees Jesus, he wishes to walk on the water with Jesus. So when Peter gets out of the boat he begins with great faith, and so he walks on the water. But Peter’s great faith was short-lived. He was not holding on to that faith.

### <sup>x</sup> I Cor. 6:7

Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that **you have lawsuits** with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? (The idea is **durative** in that they **are continually having** lawsuits with each other.) NASB77

**I Tim 3:9** Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. KJV

## Matthew

Once he took his eyes off the Lord, and focused on the wind and the waves instead, he became fearful and so began to sink, calling out to Jesus, “Lord save me,” upon which the Lord reached out and took Peter by the hand, chiding him with, “O you of little faith, meaning short-lived faith.” Matthew uses the same Greek verb, carrying this same nuance. Peter began with great faith, but it was short-lived, brief; it did not persevere. We must not forget that Jesus taught that it is not the quantity of our faith that will move a mountain, but the mere presence of faith, for even faith as small as a mustard seed can do move that mountain.<sup>y</sup> The problem is that Peter’s faith disappeared; it was short-lived.

So the question becomes, if they began with faith, but then failed to hold onto or failed to keep that faith, what faith did they have that was short-lived? Well, the most obvious would be faith in the power and mission of Jesus as the Messiah of God.

We know that some of the disciples possessed that knowledge from the very beginning of our Lord’s ministry, while some came to believe it shortly after Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. For example, Scripture specifically reveals this to be true of the disciples Andrew and Peter, Philip and Nathanael (see John 1:41-51).

Andrew declares to Peter the following in John 1:41—

**John 1:41** He found first his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found **the Messiah**” (which translated means Christ). NASB77

Shortly after that time that Andrew brings Peter to Jesus, Peter declares the following, as seen in Luke 5:8—

**Luke 5:8** But when Simon Peter saw *that*, he fell down at Jesus’ feet, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, **O Lord!**” NASB77

And then, early on we see Philip declare the following—

<sup>y</sup> **Matt. 17:20**

And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. KJV

## Matthew

**John 1:45** Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and *also* the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." NASB77

And then we see Nathanael declare—

**John 1:49** Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, **You are the Son of God**; You are the King of Israel." NASB77

This alone could account for the Lord's reference to their short-lived faith, for even though they did not yet fully understand the full purpose of the Messiah, nor the coming dispensation of the Church before the reign of the Messiah over Israel would begin for a thousand years, they did know that when the Messiah came he would deliver Israel from all their enemies, as, for example, David declares in Psalm 2, and as the prophet Isaiah revealed in Isa. 9:1-7. It mattered not that they did not yet know the timing and all the details of this deliverance; they knew enough that the prophets never said the Messiah would perish in a windstorm on the Sea of Galilee! So where was their faith in that truth?

Moreover, they had just heard the Lord in the Sermon on the Mount declare His righteousness as the LORD (Jehovah) of the Old Testament. Since the disciples did not reject our Lord's claim to Deity (despite the fact they still had many questions in that regard), where was their faith in that truth?

They certainly believed He was the great Prophet that Moses said would come, which means as the Son of God He spoke the words of God. So where was their faith in that truth?

**Deuteronomy 18:18** I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; **and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.** (Deut. 18:18 KJV)

If Jesus spoke the words commanded Him by God, then they should have known that God commanded them to take Jesus to the other side of the lake in their

## Matthew

boat, for Jesus as the Prophet only spoke what God commanded Him to speak and Jesus commanded them to depart to the other side of the lake!

**Matthew 8:18** Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, **he gave commandment to depart unto the other side.** KJV

**Mark 4:35** On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "**Let us cross over to the other side.**" NKJV

Well, if Jesus, as the promised Prophet spoke the will of God, then they should have known it was God's will for them to reach the other side, which means they would not perish but be preserved by God from any danger! So what happened to their faith in Jesus Christ as the Prophet?

Consequently, Jesus seemed incredulous that their faith was so short-lived, that they so soon lost their faith in Him as the Messiah, that they did not cling to their faith in Him as the Son of God, and then in Him as the promised Prophet who would speak the commandments of God. Their faith had not yet become established and mature.

Thus, our Lord gives them proof yet once again, in order to restore their faith in Him, by standing up and calming the winds and the sea, which causes them to marvel and declare, "What manner of *man* is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!" (Matt. 8:27).

Now, with that in mind, the first thing that should be mentioned about this verse is that the word "*man*" is not found in the Greek. The Greek phrase that is translated as "what manner of *man* is this," is simply three Greek words—ποταπός ἐστιν οὗτος. The first is an adjective denoting *manner*, *kind*, or *sort*. The second is the verb "*to be*," and the third is a masculine demonstrative pronoun that means *this*, or *he*. The reason for the inclusion of the word "man" in the verse is because a demonstrative pronoun will generally point to a masculine, feminine or neuter noun (unless is being used as a substantive). Thus since this demonstrative pronoun is masculine, the referent is assumed to be "man" by the translators—

## Matthew

“Of what manner is this (*man*).” This explains why most versions add the noun “*man*” to the verse. But as one can see the word “*man*” does not technically occur in the immediate context. There are other nouns that would qualify as referents, which are closer to this demonstrative pronoun. Let’s look at each one.

The most distant referent occurs in the previous story. Even though the noun “man” does not occur in the immediate context, it does occur in the previous story of the scribe as part of the appellation “Son of Man” in verse 20. The next possible referent is the noun, “Jesus,” used in verse 22, which is then referred to at the beginning of this story in verse 23 by the personal pronoun αὐτοῦ (him). So we do see that the demonstrative pronoun could refer back to the noun Jesus in verse 22 as referenced by the personal pronoun in verse 23 and another personal pronoun in verse 24. But if we continue we will see that there is a closer substantive noun, than even the noun “Jesus” in verse 22 to which the demonstrative pronoun might be referencing. In verse 25 we find the closest noun that could qualify as the referent of our demonstrative pronoun “this”( οὗτος), and that is the noun “Lord.”

**Matthew 8:25** And his disciples came to *him*, and awoke him, saying, **Lord**, save us: we perish. KJV

Now, of course, contextually, the Lord is the same as *Jesus* in verse 22, and, indeed, not from the present story, but from the narrative of Matthew, Jesus is the *Son of Man* from verse 20, so it would not necessarily be incorrect from the context to insert the generic “man” into the phrase, “What manner of *man* is this” (assuming that ποταπός ἐστιν οὗτος is not being used by Matthew as an exclamatory phrase, in which case it could simply be rendered, “how marvelous is this one...”). Nor, indeed, would it be incorrect if one concludes that the referent was the noun “Jesus,” for obviously Jesus was a “man.” But I feel contextually from the immediate story the referent should be “Lord,” as it is the closest noun to which the demonstrative could point, so that the disciples,



## Matthew

having called him moments before “Lord,” would then mean this in their next breath, “of what manner of *lord* is this” that even the winds and the sea obey him!” Let me now explain why.

If one notices, I did not use the upper case “Lord,” but rather the lower case “lord” in my suggested translation above indicating which referent of οὗτος was intended. The reason for this is that we must realize a number of things. First, as we already mentioned, not all the disciples were at the same level of understanding or revelation concerning Jesus. Peter seemed to have more of a revelatory knowledge and faith regarding who Jesus was than some of the other disciples. But with that being said, even Peter did not yet fully understand who Jesus was in all His glory.

Even though I am sure they trusted Jesus when He made His assertions to his Deity in His Sermon on the Mount, they still did not fully understand what that actually meant. (See *Notes on the Ancient Jewish Belief Concerning the Messiah*, at the end of these comments, on pages 156-157.)

Even when Peter, James and John were taken by our Lord to the Mount of Transfiguration, and the veil was pulled back some for them to see the glory of the LORD Jesus, Peter did not fully understand what he was experiencing, for afterwards he said he would be willing to build three tabernacles, one for the Lord and one for Moses and Elijah, as if they were somehow, somewhat, to be honoured in the same degree (Matt. 17:4). He did not yet see the utter transcendence of Jesus as LORD. And that was even after he had already been shown by the Father that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God, as one can read in the chapter before (Matt. 16:16-17).

Thus, even though Peter and maybe some other disciples had more of a revelation of who Jesus was, they did not yet fully understand what the full import of that truth. Perhaps, this following example might help us understand what I am trying to say.

We all believe in the LORD Jesus Christ. We do not doubt that fact. But because we understand that within the context of our own personal experiences,

## Matthew

we might not hold that belief within our hearts with a full level of understanding of what is entailed in the name LORD. In other words, I am sure that after the Damascus road experience, Paul held that faith down deeper in his heart than many other Christians today who grew up in the Christian Faith, having been born of Christian parents. So when we might say Jesus is LORD as many times we are wont to say, it might not bring the same response that it probably brought when Paul said Jesus was LORD. To Paul it must have always caused him to bow so low his heart, because he intimately knew how he once persecuted the LORD of glory. Every thought of it afterward must have taken Paul back to that day when he saw Jesus in the glory of the blinding Light of His Eternal Deity. It does not mean Paul was saved any more than we are saved, for even the faith of a mustard seed is enough to save a person. But it does mean Paul was so much more awed in spirit, it seems, than we are, for he was humbled by the glory of the LORD Jesus in a way we never have been.

Or perhaps we might use the example of a child being born of an earthly king. To the little child the king is "Daddy," but to subjects in the kingdom he is the King! But, let us skip forward to the time when that little child is now in his teenage years and he goes with his father to a royal engagement in a distant city. As they arrive the teenage son sees the city come out in thousands with great fanfare to welcome the king. And then when the king reaches the place where he will address his subjects, the son sees thousands and thousands, perhaps, tens of thousands of subjects all bow low to the ground when the king rises to address his subjects. At that moment the son realizes, yes, this is my daddy, but he is also the KING!

Now, if we might apply it to our story, we must realize that when Matthew or John wrote their Gospels, they full well knew that Jesus was LORD, Jehovah of the Old Testament. In fact, Scripture clearly says that they knew the full weight of that truth when the LORD Jesus, after His resurrection, revealed Himself to them in the upper room, culminating with

## Matthew

the moment He told Thomas to “be not unbelieving, but believing,” which, contextually means to start believing like the other disciples that Jesus the Messiah was LORD, the LORD God of the Old Testament (cf. John 20: 20-31, Zech. 14:1-9). And also, I am sure, thereafter, during the forty days of being taught by the LORD before He ascended back to heaven as seen in Acts 1:1-3 this truth was made known to them in many more ways from Scripture. (And so this idea now being taught by some Evangelicals today that the apostles did not fully understand the Trinity when Jesus ascended back to heaven is simply false and, I would dare say, a dangerous teaching, if not heretical teaching, for it teaches that the Church was founded upon ignorance of the true nature of the Godhead, ignorance of the truth of the Blessed Trinity, and ignorance of the true nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, which means it was not founded upon knowledge of the Truth! How horrible! Some have even taught the apostles were Binitarian at first and not Trinitarian! May God forgive us for allowing such things to be taught to Christians without any objection or censure.)

I would dare say that when John leaned upon Jesus’ breast, and asked, “Lord who is it?” the little word κύριος was used in the sense of “lord” and not “LORD,” as he would later think of it when “decades later when he wrote of that incident in his Gospel. Why? Because after the Lord’s resurrection, he fully understood Jesus was LORD, very God of very God, the Only Begotten Son of God, the great I AM.

So in this light, we should realize that in the Gospels when some of the disciples use the word “Lord,” many times it must have been used in the sense of “lord,” and not LORD. Jesus speaks to this when he says in John 13:13—

**John 13:13** Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for *so* I am. <sup>14</sup> If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. KJV

(Even though I am sure they were also beginning to

## Matthew

believe in varying degrees of faith that Jesus was, indeed, so much more than just “lord” but was the LORD God of the Old Testament, just as they heard Him claim in the Sermon of the Mount.)

Now, even though we now differentiate between “Lord” and “lord” in English, using “Lord” when used of Christ, and “lord” when used of men, it is not so in Greek, for Greek did not use upper case and lower case letters as in English. In fact, most extant Greek manuscripts of the New Testament are all written with upper case letters throughout. These are called uncial manuscripts. Thus, if we were to read the word “Lord” in a verse, where it is obviously being used of the Lord as to His Deity, let’s say, in Luke 2:11, it would appear in English as Lord, but in Greek, it would appear as KYPIOΣ. And if we were to read the same word in a verse where it is used of a man, for example, in Matt. 18:25, it would appear in English as “lord,” but in Greek it would still appear exactly the same as in Luke 2:11, as KYPIOΣ. Greek did not try to distinguish the two different meanings by upper and lower case letters.

Thus, while the use of Lord and lord is helpful in English, it is somewhat subjective, for no doubt, many times when the disciples would address Jesus as Lord, they were meaning it as “lord,” for it was common for Jews to address their rabbis with this appellation, as Jesus states in John 13:13 above. There is no way to tell in the Greek if the writer meant it for Lord meaning Deity or lord meaning one having authority and so held in honor and dignity. The only way to determine which meaning was meant was to consider the immediate context, along with the greater context of Scripture, as well as the historical background of the time. (Of course, this applies to the Gospels, for after the resurrection when they said Lord, I believe they always meant he was their lord because He was the LORD. So when we read of any one of the disciples saying Lord, in the rest of the New Testament, they understand it to mean LORD, Jehovah—cf. Malachi 1:6).

As for the historical background of such a titles of

## Matthew

the Lord Jesus, the early co-worker with Anthony Norris Groves, John Kitto, relates for us in his *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature* the following:

“RABBI—a title of honour given to the teachers of the law in the time of Christ, and for which there is no exact equivalent in our language, though perhaps in purport and usage it comes near to ‘doctor or ‘master:’ a word combining both these significations would fairly represent it...It was there employed as a title in the Jewish schools in a threefold form...The lowest of these degrees of honour was *rab*. This with the relative suffix became *Rabbi*, ‘my master,’ which was of higher dignity; and beyond that was *Raban*, ‘great master; or with the suffix ‘*Rabboni*, ‘my great master,’ which was the highest of all.”<sup>85</sup>

He then continues and then speaks of this highest title of all, *Rabboni*.

“RABBONI—the title of highest honour applied by the Jews to the teachers of the law [*rabbi*]. In Mark x. 51 (translated ‘Lord’), John xx. 16, it is applied to Christ.”<sup>86</sup>

The significance of this highest title, *Rabboni*, becomes apparent because the parallel passage to Mark 10:51 in the Gospel of Matthew uses the Greek κύριος (Lord), inflected as a vocative, as being equivalent to the Hebrew (Aramaic) *Rabboni* as used by Mark (cf. Matt. 20:33).

Thus, since Mark uses the transliterated *Rabboni*, it means that the blind man was speaking in Hebrew (Aramaic) and Matthew writing in Greek uses a Greek word that would be used to convey the same meaning, which would be κύριος, (Lord), which because of its substitution for *Rabboni*, should better understood in English as “lord,” rather than “Lord.” And why is that so? It is because *Rabboni*, being a human appellation, bespeaking one who is held in great honour, and one whose authority is respected, would be better understood by the earthly use of κύριος, which in English would better be conveyed by using a lower case “lord,” since it shows the person speaking as such is using the word to convey the same meaning as

## Matthew

*Rabboni*, which in Israel was never used in the Old Testament to bespeak Jehovah. However, when κύριος was being used as an equivalent to Jehovah, then, of course, in English the upper case “Lord,” or LORD, would be a better way to convey that fact. (Indeed, I believe it would always be better if we rendered κύριος as LORD in our English New Testaments when speaking of Jesus as Jehovah, just as the KJV translators did in the Old Testament, thus showing English readers that the Gospel writers were declaring that Jesus was the LORD of the Old Testament!—e.g. render it such when Thomas declared, “My LORD and my God” in John 20:28))

In other words, when we understand all these varied titles of Jesus, sometimes the apostles were addressing Jesus as “lord” (meaning *Rabboni*), the common title of respect and honour used by all Israelites in the first century, just as they also used the common appellation of Rabbi. In those instances, the apostles were not referring to the Divine Nature of the Son. But other times they were, indeed, addressing Jesus as “LORD” (meaning Jehovah), the LORD God of the Old Testament. For example, besides our aforementioned reference to John 20:28, I believe Peter also did so in John 21:17, confessing to Jesus, “LORD, thou knowest all things. In those instances, I believe they were using κύριος (LORD) for Jehovah of the Old Testament, thus His Deity.

With all this by way of background, perhaps, we can now fully understand the wonderful revelation that is being made in this story of the great storm upon the Sea of Galilee as recorded by Matthew.

Matthew is declaring to his readers—by the way he presents the story contextually in chapter 8—(what he and some of the other disciples believed, but did not “fully” understand at the time, when in their moment of great fear, they cried out “lord” save us), that Jesus was and is, indeed, the LORD! Their faith and understanding that began to dawn upon their hearts, when they heard the Sermon on the Mount, wherein Jesus made known His name as “Lord LORD” (see pages 2-5 above), and their faith that was

## Matthew

held in their hearts, when they witnessed the Lord's miracles recorded in the first part of Matt. 8, began to waver, and then disappear (also cf. Luke 24:25-38). Their faith vanished in a time of testing, and they forgot the promises of God regarding his Messiah and His great power as LORD.

But now all these years later Matthew is making known his faith to his readers in Matthew chapters eight and nine that Jesus is none other than LORD!

So with this being said, let's now finish this story and see how Matthew is demonstrating so many years later after this event, that Jesus is LORD.

If you will permit me, I will now make use of the lower case "lord" in this story, to indicate when the disciples were using κύριος as a common human appellation of respect for the authority and honour of Jesus, as opposed to when they used κύριος (in English "Lord") to indicate the Divinity of Jesus. The story would now unfold as follows. (I will adapt the KJV.)

"And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Rabboni (lord), save us: we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of a "lord" is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!"

This utterly astonishes the disciples, because, as A. T. Robertson observes, the fact of the matter was that it did not take a period of time after the winds had ceased for the waves to slowly decrease their great agitation to a smooth level calm, as one would normally expect. Rather, the sea became instantly calm and smooth, when He said "Peace, be still!"<sup>z</sup>

This caused them to ask among themselves as to what kind of "lord" Jesus must be that the wind and waves would instantly obey Him! Obviously, at the moment they did not know the answer, for Mark and Luke also show an additional question was being

<sup>z</sup> **Mark 4:39** And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, **Peace, be still.** And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. KJV

## Matthew

asked among themselves, "Who then is this? (The Greek verb ἔλεγον in Mark 4:41, being in the imperfect tense, shows that this was not said once, but that the question was being bantered back and forth between themselves). Rather than coming up with the answer, their bantering back and forth showed they did not realize that Jesus had already provided the answer right before their eyes! And that answer is found, as always, in the Word of God.

It is found in Psalm 89:6-9, which speaks of the Jehovah, translated as LORD in the KJV, and Psalm 107:23-30, which speaks of LORD, translated as Jehovah in the ASV, and in Rev. 17:14 & 19:16, which speaks of the LORD of lords.

**Psalm 89:6-9** For who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD? *who* among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the **LORD**? <sup>7</sup> God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all *them that are* about him. <sup>8</sup> **O LORD God** of hosts, who is a strong **LORD** like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee? <sup>9</sup> **Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.** KJV

**Psalm 107:23-30** They that go down to the sea in ships, That do business in great waters; <sup>24</sup> **These see the works of Jehovah,** And his wonders in the deep.<sup>25</sup> For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, Which lifteth up the waves thereof.<sup>26</sup> They mount up to the heavens, they go down again to the depths: Their soul melteth away because of trouble.<sup>27</sup> They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, And are at their wits' end.<sup>28</sup> **Then they cry unto Jehovah** in their trouble, And he bringeth them out of their distresses.<sup>29</sup> **He maketh the storm a calm, So that the waves thereof are still.**<sup>30</sup> **Then are they glad because they are quiet; So he bringeth them unto their desired haven.** ASV

And then in these two verses where I have changed Lord to LORD.

**Revelation 17:14** "These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because **He is LORD of lords** and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful." NASB77



## Matthew

**Revelation 19:16** And he has upon his garment, and upon his thigh, a name written, King of kings, and **LORD of lords**. Darby's Version

So we can see the answer to the disciples' two questions was already provided by the LORD Jesus. As to the first question, "**What manner** of 'lord' is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" (Matt. 8:27) The answer is none other than Jesus, the LORD of lords, He, who is the LORD of all lords that have been, that are, or that ever will be upon the earth, the LORD God, who is greatly to be feared, the One, who "rulest the raging of the sea," and the One who, when "the waves thereof arise, stillest them!"

And, then, of course, in answer to the other question they were also asking among themselves, "**Who then is this?**" (Mk. 4:41)—the question, being not "what," but rather "who." The answer is Jehovah—Psalm 89:28-30: "They cry unto Jehovah in their trouble, And he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they are quiet; So he bringeth them unto their desired haven!" ASV

---

So now we have seen how Matthew has affirmed the Lord's Deity in chapter eight of his Gospel.

Even though in those early days of our Lord calling His disciples Matthew would have been classified as those who did not yet fully understand our Lord's teaching regarding His Deity, he now boldly proclaims, by his inclusion of the story of the healing of the leper, the story of the Gentile centurion, and now the story of the calming of the sea, that Jesus was none other than God manifested in the flesh, the LORD of lords, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, the LORD God Almighty who "commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof," and then "maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still."

May we never forget this story of the calming of the sea by our precious LORD Jesus Christ. For, we

## Matthew

can be assured that whenever we might find ourselves fearful, in the middle of our own times of testing, He is the LORD who is with us, faithful to bring us unto our desired haven!

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Beloved, if Jesus could calm a great storm upon the Sea of Galilee, when all hope was gone, when we see that their experience as sailors availed them nothing, could He not also calm the storms that we find might arise in our own lives? Can He not do what we are unable to do in our own strength, or by our own skill? So many times we try to effect a change by our own strength and talents—all to no avail—when all we need to do is simply cry out, “Lord, save us!” May we learn to hold fast to our faith, learning to walk more and more by faith, and not by sight, so that Jesus will not need to ask us, when He arises and says, “Peace, be still!” “Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?”

May we all experience His peace as the wonderful hymn declares—

Like a river glorious  
Is God’s perfect peace,  
Over all victorious,  
In its bright increase;  
Perfect, yet it floweth  
Fuller every day;  
Perfect, yet it groweth  
Deeper all the way.

#### **Refrain:**

Stayed upon Jehovah,  
Hearts are fully blest -  
Finding, as He promised,  
Perfect peace and rest.

Hidden in the hollow  
Of His blessed hand,  
Never foe can follow,  
Never traitor stand;

## Matthew

Not a surge of worry,  
Not a shade of care,  
Not a blast of hurry -  
Touch the spirit there. (Refrain)

Every joy or trial  
Falleth from above,  
Traced upon our dial  
By the Sun of Love;  
We may trust Him fully  
All for us to do;  
They who trust Him wholly  
Find Him wholly true. (Refrain)

—Frances R. Havergal

---

### NOTES ON THE ANCIENT JEWISH BELIEF CONCERNING THE MESSIAH

Let us first look at Alfred Edersheim and his evidence regarding ancient Jewish belief concerning the Messiah.

“These two inferences, derived from the Gospel-narratives, are in exact accordance with the whole line of ancient Jewish teaching. Beginning with the LXX rendering of Genesis 49: 10, and especially of Numbers 24: 7, 17, we gather, that the Kingdom of the Messiah was higher than any that is earthly, and destined to subdue them all. But the rendering of Psalm 72: 5, 7; Psalm 110: 3; and especially of Isaiah 9, carries us much farther. They convey the idea, that the existence of this Messiah was regarded as premundane – before the moon, (Ps. 72), before the morning-star (Ps. 110), and eternal – and His Person and dignity as superior to that of men and Angels: 'the Angel of the Great Council' (Isa. 9:6), probably 'the Angel of the Face'—a view fully confirmed by the rendering of the Targum...”

“Even more distinct are the statements in the so-called

## Matthew

'Book of Enoch.' Critics are substantially agreed, that the oldest part of it (chs. 1-36 and 72-105) dates from between 150 and 130 B.C. The part next in date is full of Messianic allusions; but, as a certain class of modern writers has ascribed to it a post-Christian date, and, however ungrounded, to Christian authorship, it may be better not to refer to it in the present argument, the more so as we have other testimony from the time of Herod. Not to speak, therefore, of such peculiar designations of the Messiah as 'the Woman's Son,' 'the Son of Man,' 'the Elect,' and 'the Just One,' **we mark that the Messiah is expressly designated in the oldest portion as 'the Son of God' ('I and My Son' Enoch 105.2)...**"

"Still more explicit is that beautiful collection of eighteen Psalms, dating from about half a century before Christ, which bears the name of 'the Psalter of Solomon.' A chaste anticipation of the Messianic Kingdom (in Ps. Sol. 11) is followed by a full description of its need and its blessings, to which the concluding Psalm forms an apt epilogue. The King Who reigns is of the house of David. He is the Son of David, Who comes at the time known to God only, to reign over Israel. He is a righteous King, taught of God.' He is Christ the Lord (χριστὸς κυρίου – Ps. Sol. 17:36), exactly as in the LXX translation of Lamentations 4: 20). 'He is pure from sin,' which qualifies Him for ruling His people, and banishing sinners by His word (Ps. Sol. 17:41). 'Never in His days will He be infirm towards His God, since God renders Him strong in the Holy Ghost,' wise in counsel, with might and righteousness ('mighty in deed and word'). The blessing of the Lord being upon Him, He does not fail (Ps. Sol. 17.42, 43). 'This is the beauty of the King of Israel, Whom God hath chosen, to set Him over the house of Israel to rule it' (Ps. Sol. 17:47). Thus invincible, not by outward might, but in His God, He will bring His people the blessings of restoration to their tribal possessions, and of righteousness, but break in pieces His enemies, not by outward weapons, but by the word of His mouth; purify Jerusalem, and judge the nations, who will be subject to His rule, and behold and own His glory" (Ps. Sol. 17.25-35). Manifestly, this is not an earthly Kingdom, nor yet an earthly King."<sup>87</sup>

And in regard to the varied Jewish viewpoints concerning the Messiah's relationship with God we have the following evidence, first as seen in Philo and then as seen in certain various biblical texts. It must

## Matthew

be remembered that Herod and many within the Sanhedrin were certainly influenced by Hellenistic Jewish thought, or, for those who might take issue with such a claim, at the minimum, they were certainly well aware of their thoughts regarding the Messiah. This evidence is referenced by Alan F. Segal when he states:

“Here Philo makes no disclaimer about the metaphoric quality of the terms he is using. He unabashedly calls the logos a “second God.” Thus, in calling attention to various similar scriptural passages, the rabbis were not just stylizing theoretical arguments. Real traditions of a “second God” were present in Judaism as early as the time of Philo.”<sup>88</sup>

The primary biblical texts that influenced such thinking were –

“... (1) Dan. 7:9f, and the speculations about the identity of the “son of man,” (2) the Ex. 24 theophany, possibly together with other passages in the Bible where God is pictured in the form of a man (3) the related descriptions of the angel of YHWH who carries the divine name (e.g. Gen. 16:7f., 21:17f., 22:11, 31:11f., Ex. 3:2f., Ju. 2:1f., as well as Ex. 23:21f.), [and] (4) scriptural verses which describe God as plural (Gen. 1:26).”<sup>89</sup>

All of these, Alan Segal states, gave...

“... a good inkling of the kinds of traditions which must have been current in the Hellenistic Jewish communities of the first century.”<sup>90</sup>

### **8:28a And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes...**

Finally, this chapter of speaking of the “doings” of Jesus in light of the “sayings” of Jesus concludes with the story of the two demoniacs in the country of the Gergesenes, one from whom the Lord cast out the demons named Legion.

What is the significance of this story in light of what Matthew has recorded up to this point in his Gospel?

## Matthew

I believe Matthew concludes this portion of his Gospel with this story because he is emphasizing the two main points with which he began this portion, which, if you remember, is the affirmations of the sayings of Jesus by the doings of Jesus in light of His claims to Deity. And so in that light Matthew continues to show how Jesus fulfills the Law and the Prophets by His actions, as Jesus declared in the Sermon on the Mount, and in so doing continues to manifest His Divine Nature.

However, in order to fully understand how this speaks to this truth we need to understand the location of where this occurs. Matthew declares that Jesus and the disciples land in the “country of Gergesenes,” while Mark and Luke name it the “country of Gadarenes” in the KJV.<sup>a</sup>

Moreover, if one uses the NASB or some other modern version one will notice that Matthew 8:28 in their Bible reads “country of the Gadarenes,” and in Mark 5:1 and Luke 8:26 the “country of the Gerasenes.”

The reason for these differences is that we have a variant in all three verses. Unfortunately, some variants do exist in our Greek copies of Scripture. Sometimes variants were introduced into the text by a scribe who made certain assumptions about a text, and/or about a perceived error in the text made by a previous copyist, such as, for example, an error caused by a misspelling of a word and so, because of that error, the new copyist attempts to smooth out and harmonize the passage by making a change to what he perceives to be correct word and/or inflection of the word. Such errors even occur today when copies are made of Scriptural texts. For example, F. F. Bruce once spoke of an error made in a printed copy of a Bible. He writes—

“From the end of the first century to our own day this process of copying and recopying has gone on. Since the fifteenth century the copying and recopying has been done by means of the printing press; before that it was done by hand. It is difficult to copy any documents without making slips; this so even with modern printing methods, where

<sup>a</sup> **Mark 5:1** And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. KJV

**Luke 8:26** And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee. KJV

## Matthew

repeated revisions in proof by a variety of readers reduce the chance of error to a minimum. Yet very curious misprints have crept into some editions of the Bible. One edition of the English Bible displayed the significant misprint in Psa. 119:161, ‘*Printers* have persecuted me without a cause’...” [Of course, it should have read ‘**Princes** have persecuted me without a cause.’] “If misprints can creep into the published text in spite of all the opportunities for previous correction, it is much easier for errors to occur when long texts were copied out laboriously by hand.”<sup>91</sup>

But, what is amazing in all this is that God has not allowed such mistakes made by copyists to ever alter a fundamental doctrine of the Bible, so much so that F. F. Bruce concludes his comment above with this quote made by Sir Frederic Kenyon, who was a leading authority in this field of textual criticism dealing with such variants.

“It is reassuring at the end to find that the general result of all these discoveries and all this study is to strengthen the proof of the authenticity of the Scriptures, and our conviction that we have in our hand, in substantial integrity, the veritable Word of God...Any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the *authenticity* and the *general integrity* of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established.”<sup>92</sup>

And so over time we see some variants did creep into these three passages in our Gospels because of the fallibility of men. Broadly speaking the KJV, NKJV, the Bishop’ Bible and the Geneva Bible follow the Byzantine Greek Text-Type that contains the variant Γεργεσηνῶν (Gergesenes) in Matt. 8:28 and Γαδαρηνῶν (Gadarenes) in Mark 5:1 and Luke 8:26 (although certain manuscripts from the Alexandrine Text-Type family also contain Γεργεσηνῶν in Matt. 8:28). On the other hand, nearly every modern version follows a more critical and eclectic Greek type-text based broadly upon the Alexandrine Text-Type that adopts the variant Γαδαρηνῶν (Gadarenes) for Matt. 8:28, and the variant Γερασηνῶν (Gerasenes) for

## Matthew

Mark 5:1 and Luke 8:26.

Apparently one of the reasons for these variants is that scribes were not able to reconcile in their minds these three geographical locations with what they perceived the text said. Thus, it seems they attempted to correct the text, assuming a mistake in spelling had been made or perhaps there was a mispronunciation of the word in dictation that caused an error to be made in how it was spelt.

For example, some perceive the variant Γερασινῶν (Gerasenes) actually arose from a mispronunciation of Γεργεσινῶν (Gergesenes), or vice versa, and thus both words refer to the same place. James Albert Broadus speaks to this possible reason, stating, “The form Gergesa may possibly have been merely a different pronunciation of Gerasa, the *r* of the latter taking a rattling guttural sound like that of the strong Ayin, which is modern Arabic sounds much like our *rg*.”<sup>93</sup>

Thus, with the spelling of Gerasa, rather than Gergesa, scribes may have thought that Gerasa was the city of Gerasa in the Decapolis (today known as Jerash), some thirty miles south east of the Sea of Galilee, which of course would be too far from the Sea of Galilee to fit in with the story of the text. Thus, some scribe might have thought the word was misspelled (e.g. many centuries ago Origen thought that very thing) and so they corrected it to Gergesa. Or, conversely, some scribes might have thought the reverse, and that Gergesa (which some thought did not exist along the shore of Galilee at all, was a misspelling of Gerasa and so they corrected it to Gerasa. In any case, it seems that scribes honestly tried to harmonize texts believing such misspellings may have occurred in the exemplar before them. But all this may have been based on a misconception of what the text actual said.

First, some may not have been aware of a region of Gergesenes in the vicinity of Gadara, but they were aware of a region of “Gerasenes” (modern day Jerash in the ancient region Decapolis) and so they assumed a misspelling had occurred and so they dropped the



## Matthew

“g” (γ) and changed the word to Gerasenes. Or, for those who knew that a region of Gergesenes did exist in the vicinity of Gadara, and they had an exemplar that contained the word Gerasenes, they might have assumed Gerasenes was a misspelling and so they added the “g” (γ) and changed it to Gergesenes. Either way some scribe, probably long after Matthew had passed away, became the first scribe to alter original wording with one variant or the other, perhaps, because the scribe held one of the misconceptions mentioned above.

Nevertheless, if one takes into account the broad contextual constraints found in all three synoptic passages, I believe the reading of the Textus Receptus reflects the original wording, i.e. the region of Gergesenes in Matthew and the region of the Gadarenes in Mark and Luke.

Consequently, Matthew, Mark and Luke are not contradicting each other. The different nomenclatures simply show that the same area was known by two different names. This is not an unusual phenomenon in the Bible or in geography in general, especially in areas that have a long and varied history.

For example, the Sea of Galilee is also called “Lake of Gennesaret” by Luke in his Gospel (Luke 5:1), yet no one would claim that Luke was confused or made a mistake because he did not call the Lake the Sea of Galilee as did Matthew. Indeed, John even calls it by another name in his Gospel; he calls it the Sea of Tiberius (John 21:1)! All this shows is that a geographical area can be known by more than one name.

This phenomenon also occurs in regard to certain cities in the Bible. For example, the city of Hebron is also called Kirjatharba, as can be seen in Genesis 23:2 and in Nehemiah 11:25.

**Genesis 23:2** And Sarah died in Kirjatharba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her. KJV

**Nehemiah 11:25** And for the villages, with their fields, some of the children of Judah dwelt at Kirjatharba, and in

## Matthew

the villages thereof, and at Dibon, and in the villages thereof, and at Jekabzeel, and in the villages thereof. KJV

Even after many centuries Nehemiah still refers to Hebron by its more ancient name, Kirjatharba, even though it was most often called Hebron.

This same phenomenon happens in our world today. For example, sometimes the Netherlands is called “Holland,” or Antarctica is called the “South Pole,” or Great Britain is called “England.”

And so we can see in these parallel accounts that Matthew uses one designation, the country of Gergesenes, for that part of the area also known as the country of the Gadarenes, even though the two regions were not completely coterminous. In other words, the country of Gergesenes could include part of the country of the Gadarenes, and that of the Gadarenes could include part of the country of the Gergesenes. Thus, by examining their respective boundaries that intersect, the general location where the casting out of the demons occurred can be determined.

So the question arises, “Where was this location, and why did the Holy Spirit designate it by two different names?” The *Popular Commentary on the New Testament*, edited by Philip Schaff, speaks of the major view regarding this location, and also a different theory introduced by Dr. W. M. Thomson in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (not to be confused with the aforementioned Edward A. Thomson).

“The variety in names has occasioned much discussion as to the exact locality. The common view is that the city referred to was *Gadara*, the capital of Perea, situated south-east of the southern end of the lake. It was about seven miles from Tiberias, on a mountain near the river Hieromax; was probably inhabited by Gentiles, and is now called *Omkeis*. This place was not too far away to be the city referred to, since the events occurred before ‘the city’ was reached. **The name ‘Gergesenes’ is then to be regarded as derived from the old ‘Girgashites,’ who lived there before the conquest of the Israelites.** (Josephus says the name survived.) *Gerasenes* was probably a corruption, or derived from the city *Gerasa*, which was situated in the same district, though at a great

## Matthew

distance. Another theory, now coming into favor, is that a place called *Gerasa* or *Gergesa*, existed near the lake shore. (See Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, ii. pp. 34-37).”<sup>94</sup>

In fact, if one were to read Tyndale’s NT, it seems he regarded Matthew as referring to the ancient nation known as the *Gergesites*, as it seems Thomas Haweis also does in his NT. Thus, Tyndale, renders the phrase as “*the countre of the Gergesites*,” and Thomas Haweis renders it as “*the region of the Girgafenes*.”<sup>b</sup>

As for this different theory that Philip Schaff said was coming into favor, it might be best to provide an extended quote from the aforementioned book of Dr. W. M. Thomson that explains his theory, for his theory has become the most popular viewpoint today. However, I believe it results from a misunderstanding of the text, and, perhaps, from not taking into account all the contextual reasons why our Lord went to the area referred to by most other commentators as the southeastern portion of the lake and not the northeastern portion of the lake at modern day Kursi, as theorized by W. M. Thomson.

Below is an encapsulation of Dr. W. M. Thomson reasonings for this new location in his own words.

“Here...is something of great interest to me, and I think, will be to you before we are done with it. The name of this prostrate town is Kerza or Gersa, as my Bedawîn guide shouted it in my ear the first time I visited it, on that windy day we have been describing. It was a small place, but the walls can be traced all round, and there seem to have been considerable suburbs. I identify these ruins with the long-lost site of Gergesa, where our Lord healed the two men possessed with devils, and suffered those malignant spirits to enter into the herd of swine. If this be correct, it is a discovery of some importance. From Origen down to the last critic who has tried his skill upon the Greek text of the New Testament, the conflicting and contradictory readings of manuscripts in regard to the place where the miracle was performed have furnished a fruitful source of discussion. Matthew locates it at Gergesa, Mark and Luke at Gadara. A few various readings give Gersa. The Vulgate, Arabic, and others that follow the Vulgate, read Gergesa in all the evangelists; nor are these all the discrepancies in regard to

<sup>b</sup> **Matt. 8:28** And when he was come to the other syde in to the **countre of the Gergesites** ther met him two possessed of devylles which came out of the graves and were out of measure fearce so that no man myght go by that waye.  
**Tyndale’s New Testament**

**Matt. 8:28** And when he came to the other fide, into the region of the Girgafenes, there met him two demoniacs, coming from the sepulchres exceeding fierce, so that no perlon was able to pafs by that road. **T. Haweis New Testament (1795)**

## Matthew

the name of this place. Only one of these readings can be correct. Which shall we select? This is the question to be settled. Our inquiries will, of course, be confined to the topographical indications which may have a bearing upon the problem.

Our first point is that the miracle could not have occurred at Gadara. **It is certain, from all the accounts we have of it, that the place was near the shore of the lake. Mark says that when he came out of the ship immediately there met him a man, etc. With this precise statement the tenor of all the narratives coincides, and therefore we must find a locality directly on the shore, and every place must be rejected that is not consistent with this ascertained fact. Again, the city itself, as well as the country of the Gergesenes, was at the shore of the lake. All the accounts imply this fact. Lastly, there was a steep mountain so near at hand that the herd of swine, rushing down it, were precipitated into the lake.**

Now Gadara does not meet any one of these necessary conditions. I take for granted, what I believe to be true, that Um Keîs marks the site of Gadara, and it was, therefore, about three hours to the south of the extreme shore of the lake in that direction...No one, I think, will maintain that this meets the requirements of the sacred narratives, but is in irreconcilable contradiction to them. It is true that a celebrated traveler, from his lofty stand-point at Um Keîs, overlooks all intervening obstacles, and makes the swine rush headlong into the lake from beneath his very feet. But to do this in fact (and the evangelists deal only in plain facts), they must have run down the mountain for an hour and a half, forded the deep Jermuk, quite as formidable as the Jordan itself, ascended its northern bank, and raced across a level plain several miles before they could reach the nearest margin of the lake, a feat which no herd of swine would be likely to achieve, even though they were "possessed." The site of the miracle, therefore, was not at Gadara. This is an important result. **Nor was it in the country of the Gadarenes, because that country lay south of the great river Jermuk; and, besides, if the territory of that city did at any time reach to the south end of the lake, there is no mountain there above it adapted to the conditions of the miracle; and, farther, the city itself where it was wrought was evidently on the shore.** There we must find it, whatever be its name.

And in this Gersa or Chersa we have a position which fulfills every requirement of the narratives, and with a name

## Matthew

so near that in Matthew as to be in itself a strong corroboration of the truth of this identification. It is within a few rods of the shore, and an immense mountain rises directly above it, in which are ancient tombs, out of some of which the two men possessed of the devils may have issued to meet Jesus. The lake is so near the base of the mountain that the swine, rushing madly down it, could not stop, but would be hurried on into the water and drowned. The place is one which our Lord would be likely to visit, having Capernaum in full view to the north, and Galilee "over against it," as Luke says it was. The name, however, pronounced by Bedawîn Arabs is so similar to Gergesa, that, to all my inquiries for this place, they invariably said it was at Chersa, and they insisted that they were identical, and I agree with them in this opinion.

In studying the details of the miracle, I was obliged to modify one opinion or impression which had grown up with me from childhood. There is no bold cliff overhanging the lake on the eastern side, nor, indeed, on any other, except just north of Tiberias. Every where along the northeastern and eastern shores a smooth beach declines gently down to the water. There is no "jumping-off place," nor, indeed, is any required. Take your stand a little south of this Chersa. A great herd of swine, we will suppose, is feeding on this mountain that towers above it. They are seized with a sudden panic, **rush madly down the almost perpendicular declivity, those behind tumbling over and thrusting forward those before, and, as there is neither time nor space to recover on the narrow shelf between the base and the lake, they are crowded headlong into the water, and perish.** All is perfectly natural just at this point, and here, I suppose, it did actually occur. Farther south the plain becomes so broad that the herd **might have recovered and recoiled from the lake, whose domain they would not willingly invade.**

How do you suppose these discrepancies in the name of this place crept into the text? We must leave that question to professed critics. I have an abiding conviction, however, that Matthew wrote the name correctly. He was from this region, and personally knew the localities. His Gospel, also, was written first of all, and mainly circulated, in the beginning, in these Oriental regions. John does not mention the miracle, and Mark and Luke were strangers to this part of the country, and may possibly have intended, by mentioning the country of the Gadarenes, to point out to their distant Greek and Roman readers the mere vicinity of

## Matthew

the place where the miracle was wrought. Gergesa, or Gerasa, or Chersa, however pronounced, was small and unknown, while Gadara was a Greek city celebrated for its temples and theatres, and for the warm baths on the Hieromax just below it. They may, therefore, have written "country of the Gadarenes." <sup>95</sup>

So now one can see all his reasons for suggesting this new location for the casting out of the demons. But the change undermines the very reason as to why Matthew mentions that our Lord even went to the country of the Gadarenes, moreover it does not take into account the specific words and phrases the Holy Spirit inspired the writers to use in recording this event.

Thus, for the following reasons, I believe our brother Thomson's theory was incorrect in identifying the miracle of the swine with Kursi. Rather, the major, or common view, mentioned above was the correct theory, or at least was closer to the truth.

(If one wishes to study the various reasons why the northeastern location of Kursi cannot be the location of the miracle mentioned by Matthew, please see a detail discussion of the true location of this miracle according to Scripture in our *Excursus on the Location of the Two Demoniacs and the Herd of Swine in Matt. 8:28-34* found in the supplements.)

Now that we have laid out all these details of the Gospel accounts, why does it make a difference in Matthew's Gospel whether the event took place in the northeastern portion of the lake or in the southern portion of the lake?

First and foremost, because the Old and New Testaments make up the "One Book" of the Bible, we realize that though the Holy Spirit chose not to identify exact borders of the Gergashite nation in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit does make known to us in the New Testament that at least a portion of their kingdom included this southeastern portion of the Sea of Galilee! There is no reason to discount this important revelation, as the Old and New Testament constitute one divinely inspired Book.

If we simply accept Matthew's affirmation that this

## Matthew

was still known to those in Israel as the country of the Gergesenes, i.e. the ancient homeland of the Girgashites, and not try through linguistic means to identify it as being a variation of the Gerasenes of the Decapolis, we find that the Holy Spirit is directing the mind of the Matthew's primary audience at the time, which in Matthew's Gospel would have been those with Jewish roots, to another important point—this area of the ancient kingdom of the Girgashites on the southeastern portion of the Sea of Galilee was also a part of the country of the Gadarenes in New Testament, as the Holy Spirit identifies it in the Gospel of Mark and Luke.

John Kitto, the early companion of Anthony Norris Groves in Baghdad speaks to this juxtaposition in his *Pictorial Bible: Being the Old and New Testaments According to the Authorized Version*.

“The country of the Gadarenes.'-Luke agrees with Mark; but Matthew (viii. 28) has the country of the Gergesenes.' Some copies and translations have sought to obviate the apparent discrepancy by supposing 'Gergesenes' in Matthew, was inserted through the error of some copyist who should have written Gadara. But this method of removing difficulties is so replete with danger, and should be used with such extreme caution and reluctance, as a last resource, that we are not disposed to allow it on the present occasion. It is better and easier to conclude, that there were two towns, Gadara and Gergesa, in the same district, so near to each other that the district itself was sometimes named from the one and sometimes from the other.

**Or, with equal probability, we may suppose that the two names for the same country co-existed from the circumstance that the country of the Gergesenes' was the ancient name, derived from the Girgashites by whom it was formerly occupied, and who were expelled by Joshua; while the country of the Gadarenes' was a modern name derived from the important town of Gadara. What renders this a more probable solution of the difficulty is, that if there were two names, one ancient and another modern, it would be in itself likely that Matthew, writing for Jews, should use the former, while Mark and Luke, who wrote for the Gentiles, would as naturally use the modern name.”**<sup>96</sup>

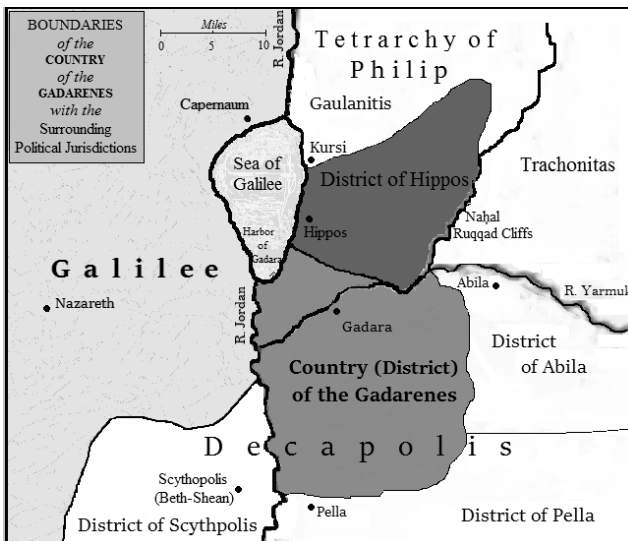
## Matthew

And once this is understood, our minds can then be directed by the Holy Spirit to another group of people—the ancient Hebrew tribe of Gad.

Now it should be mentioned that the connection to the tribe of “Gad” does not come because of the name, “Gadarenes,” per se, although some might disagree (the name *Gadar* being of Semitic origin); there is no evidence that a city or village named Gadara was so named after “Gad.” Nor is the name Gadarenes ever used in the Old Testament. In fact, the first historical evidence we have of such a city named Gadara is not until the fourth century B.C., nearly a millennium after the conquest.

The name Gadara refers to those who belonged to the jurisdictional authority of the Decapolis’ city of “Gadara,” and the name Gadarenes refers to those under its’ jurisdictional authority (See Fig. 3)

**Fig. 3 The Political Divisions and Jurisdictions in Northern Israel in the Time of Christ**



Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the “area” of the city of Gadara and the country of the Gadarenes



## Matthew

would have directed the minds of Jewish readers of Matthew's Gospel to the ancient tribe of Gad, for that is where the tribe lived, and that was the northern limit of the land given to them by God, and, as we said, the name *Gadar*[a] is of Semitic origin—the Greek *alpha* commonly being added to Semitic “place names.”<sup>97</sup> Moreover there is also recent archeological evidence that the site was occupied as far back as the 13th or 14th cent. B. C., which also allows a possible connection of the site to the ancient tribe of Gad.<sup>98</sup>

We are told in the Old Testament that while the tribe of Gad was generally located on the eastern side of the Jordan River between tribe of Manasseh on its northern border and the tribe of Reuben on its southern border, it also included a narrow portion of land to the west of the tribe of Manasseh that extended all the way up to the “lower” end of the Sea of Chinnereth, which was the ancient name for the Sea of Galilee!

In other words, the ancient tribe of Gad reached to the southeastern portion of the lake (but not up to the northeastern portion of the lake where Kursi lies). Thus, the northern most border of the tribe of Gad terminated at this southeastern portion of the lake. (See Fig. 4, *Map of Israel after the Conquest*, on following page for the location of the tribe of Gad and then Fig. 5, *The Seven Nations of the Land of Canaan* for the location of the ancient nation of the Girgashites on the page following that.)

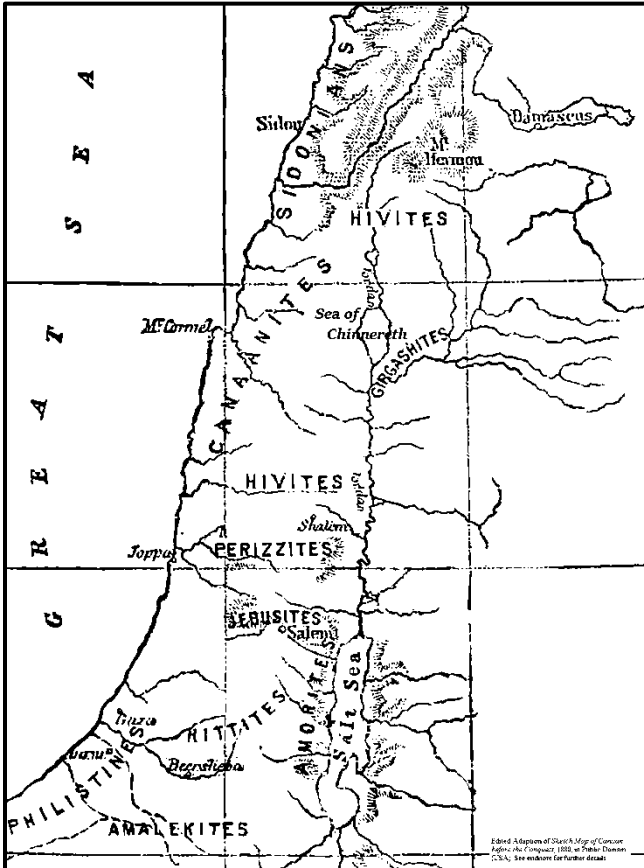
**Joshua 13:24-28** Moses also gave *an inheritance* to the tribe of Gad, to the sons of Gad, according to their families.<sup>25</sup> And their territory was Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the sons of Ammon, as far as Aroer which is before Rabbah;<sup>26</sup> and from Heshbon as far as Ramath-mizpeh and Betonim, and from Mahanaim as far as the border of Debir;<sup>27</sup> and in the valley, Beth-haram and Beth-nimrah and Succoth and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, with the Jordan as a border, **as far as the lower end of the Sea of Chinnereth beyond the Jordan to the east.**<sup>28</sup> This is the inheritance of the sons of Gad according to their families, the cities and their villages. NASB77

Fig. 4—Map of Israel after the Conquest <sup>99</sup>



(Public domain adaptation, please see footnote.)

**Fig. 5—The Seven Nations of the Land of Canaan<sup>100</sup>**



(Public domain adaptation, *Sketch-Map of Canaan before the Conquest*—please see footnote.)

As an aside, one can see with these last three maps, Fig. 3 on page 169, Fig. 4 on page 171, and this map, Fig. 5 above, that the location of what is now identified as Kursi in the northeastern portion of the Sea of Galilee would not fall into that area of the country known as the country of the Gadarenes, but,

## Matthew

instead would be found in the area of what was known as the ancient kingdom of Gershuri, which area fell into the lot of the tribe Manasseh as seen in Deut. 3:14 (See Fig. 4. *Map of Israel after the Conquest*, pg. 171),<sup>c</sup> while the southeastern portion of the lake fell into the inheritance of the tribe of Gad as also seen in Fig. 4, as we have already discussed.

Perhaps it should also be mentioned that though Deut. 3:14 might seem to say the northeastern portion of this lake was not allotted to the tribe of Manasseh because it says “unto” the coast of Geshuri (Geshur), let me provide this comment by Keil and Delitzsch in their commentary on Deuteronomy for clarification.

“The region of Argob, or the country of Bashan, was given to *Jair* (see Num. xxxii. 41), as far as the territory of the Geshurites and Maachathites (cf. Jos. Xii. 5; Jos. xiii. 11). ‘*Unto*,’ as far as, is to be understood as inclusive. This is evident from the statement in Jos. xiii.13 : ‘*The children of Israel expelled not the Geshurites nor the Maachathites; but the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites until this day.*’ Consequently Moses allotted the territory of these two tribes to the Manassites, because it formed part of the kingdom of Og.”<sup>101</sup>

Thus we see that “unto” meant “including,” otherwise Joshua 13:13 would not speak of them trying to expel them from a land that was never allotted to them?

Thus, even though, that area was part of the inheritance belonging to the tribe of Manasseh, it should be noted that Israel was never able to dispossess them from their land, as we also learn in the book of Samuel when it tells us that David married the daughter of the king of Geshur, from which marriage his son Absalom was born.

**II Samuel 3:2-3** So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.<sup>3</sup> And his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron. ASV

<sup>c</sup> Deut. 3: 14 Jair the son of Manasseh took all the country of Argob unto the coasts of Geshuri and Maachathi; and called them after his own name, Bashanhavothjair, unto this day. KJV

## Matthew

So we see that only by properly identifying the true location of this story of Jesus, the disciples, and the two demoniacs, can we understand the significance of Jesus going to this part of the Sea of Galilee. And when we understand the true location, the Holy Spirit directs our minds to three distinct groups of people—the ancient nation of the Gergashites (Gergesenes), the Gadarenes (those belonging to the city of Gadara), and finally, to the ancient tribe of Gad (who were of the lost sheep of Israel).

First let us briefly discuss the tribe of Gad. As for the tribe of Gad, as to whether any from that tribe still lived in that area when the Lord visited the area, we know the following from Scriptures.

Shortly after the Assyrian invasion, the Bible says that there were so many Gadites taken into captivity (II Kings 17:18)<sup>d</sup> that the area was left so completely desolate of any from that tribe (not that there may not have been a few who escaped) that Jeremiah states the following in Jeremiah 49:1.

**Jeremiah 49:1** Concerning the Ammonites, thus saith the LORD; Hath Israel no sons? hath he no heir? why *then* doth their king inherit Gad, and his people dwell in his cities? KJV

But we should mention this verse does not say there were none left from that tribe in that area, but only the king of the Ammonites took over that area and allowed his people to dwell there. This, of course, would indicate that there were not a sufficient number of Gadites to prevent this. Thus, the area was overrun with the pagan Ammonites.

Nevertheless, since II Kings 23:23 makes a comparison between the removal of Israel with that of Judah—

**II Kings 23:27** And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there. KJV

—we learn that removal does not mean every last

<sup>d</sup> II Kings 17:18  
Therefore the  
LORD was very  
angry with Israel,  
and removed them  
out of his sight:  
there was none  
left but the tribe of  
Judah only. KJV

## Matthew

person of the tribe was taken into captivity, but the tribe as an entity was gone. Why? Because Jeremiah 39:9-10 tells us that certain individuals during the removal of Judah were still left in the land, which means the same thing may have occurred with Israel during her removal because of the comparison made with Judah's removal in II Kings 23:27.

**Jeremiah 39:9-10** And as for the rest of the people who were left in the city, the deserters who had gone over to him and the rest of the people who remained, Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard carried *them* into exile in Babylon.  
<sup>10</sup> But some of the poorest people who had nothing, Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard left behind in the land of Judah, and gave them vineyards and fields at that time. NASB77

Thus we see that "removal" does not, necessarily, mean every last person of the tribe was taken captive. So, in the same way, "removal," as used with Israel, does not necessarily mean every last one of the tribe of Gad was removed from their tribal land. There may have been a few left in the land as there were a few of Judah left in the land.

Moreover we do know that there were certain descendants from some of those tribes of Israel that were taken into captivity still living in Israel even up to New Testament times. In other words, even though most of the Gadites were taken captive by Assyria, a few may have escaped because they were the poorest of the land (as with Judah and its removal to Babylon), and some may have already moved their families to Judah even before the captivity, and then returned. Or, another possibility is that some who were descendants from those of Gad, who had served king David so long before, also eventually returned.

Compare all the verses below that speak of individual survivors that may have remained, or of those who may have moved to certain cities of Judah before, or of those who had served David, any of whom may have returned to their tribal inheritance, and so may have been ancestors of some still living in the country of the Gergesenes, and/or the Gadarenes.

## Matthew

**I Chronicles 12:8** And from the **Gadites there came over to David** in the stronghold in the wilderness, mighty men of valor, men trained for war, who could handle shield and spear, and whose faces were like the faces of lions, and *they were* as swift as the gazelles on the mountains. NASB77

**I Chronicles 5:26** So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul, king of Assyria, even the spirit of Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away into exile, namely the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and brought them to Halah, Habor, Hara, and to the river of Gozan, to this day. NASB77

**II Chronicles 30:6** And the couriers went **throughout all Israel and Judah** with the letters from the hand of the king and his princes, even according to the command of the king, saying, "O sons of Israel, return to the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, that He may return to **those of you who escaped and are left from the hand of the kings of Assyria.** NASB77

**II Chronicles 31:6** And **the sons of Israel and Judah who lived in the cities of Judah**, also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep, and the tithe of sacred gifts which were consecrated to the LORD their God, and placed *them* in heaps. NASB77

In fact, we have one from one of those ten tribes of Israel actually mentioned in the New Testament; Anna the prophetess was from the tribe of Asher. She would have been a descendant of those of her tribe who somehow had escaped being taken into captivity by the kings of Assyria (II Chron. 30:11; Luke 2:36).

And, of course, we have the tribe of Benjamin is also mentioned; Paul the apostle and his relatives were descendants of Benjamin (Phil. 3:5; Acts 23:16).

And so we see that it is very possible that there may have still been some descendants from the tribe of Gad still living in the area in the time of our Lord because their ancestors had somehow escaped the captivity, or had been left in the land because they were poor.

Next, as for the Gadarenes, we know they were

## Matthew

made up of many pagan Gentiles, as the area was first conquered by Alexander the Great, becoming a part of the Seleucid Kingdom, and then after a brief control by the Hasmonean King Alexander Jannaeus, was retaken by the Nabatean Kingdom, and then later conquered by the Romans under Pompey. So one could say it was a cosmopolitan city of Gentiles, with an underlying population of Jews throughout.

As for the other people in that area, especially the Gergashites or Gergesenes, it is possible some descendants from the ancient Gergashite nation still lived in the area, simply because it was still known as the country of the Gergesenes (Gergashites), which could be an indicator of that fact, unless the name was only being used to indicate the location of that ancient nation, as we already mentioned.

It is interesting that a comment is made by David Chyträus in his *Commentary on Matthew*, ‡ published in 1560, wherein he states that a remnant from that ancient nation of Gergashites continued to exist in that portion of the Sea of Galilee, and that it was they, not the Jews, who were the ones who kept the pigs mentioned in the story in Matthew chapter eight.<sup>102</sup>

Nevertheless, when all is said and done, what is most important is that this land along the southeastern portion of the lake is used by the Holy Spirit to bring to the readers mind the former location of two groups of people—the ancient Gergashites who once occupied that area, and the ancient tribe of Gad to whom that land had been given as an inheritance. This is only location around the Sea of Galilee where these two people intersect and can be represented.

So in a most general sense, even if none of the actual descendants of those two peoples still lived in that area, the names of those two peoples still represent Jew and Gentiles—the darkened souls of Gentiles are represented by reference to the ancient Gergashites (cf. Eph. 4:17-18; 2:11-12), and the lost sheep of the house of Israel are represented by reference to the area belonging to the tribe of Gad (cf. Matt. 15:24).

With this in mind we might now understand why

‡ David Chyträus was a German Theologian who was very influential in those days shortly after the death of Martin Luther. He was one of the formulators of the Confession known as the Formula of Concord.



## Matthew

there were two demoniacs in the story as recorded in Matthew, rather than only one, as recorded in both Mark and Luke. One of them represented the Canaanite nation of the Girgashites, and thus, Gentiles, and the second represented the lost sheep of Israel because of the area of the tribe of Gad.

Why? Why would Matthew include both demoniacs in the story, but Mark and Luke would only include the one demoniac who was delivered of the group of demons called “Legion?”

The answer I believe is found once again in the purpose of our Lord’s message in the Sermon on the Mount, which Matthew had been affirming by recording the “doings” of the Lord after He delivered the Sermon on the Mount.

---

I realize that we have made a long circuitous journey, but we had to do so, since the word Γεργεσηνῶν (Gergesenes) has been completely erased from most modern versions in Matthew, adopting a different reading found in what is considered better manuscripts. But, I feel, along with many other brothers that older manuscripts are not always the better manuscripts, and in this instance that the Textus Receptus and many Byzantine Texts reflect the original. And, now that we have completed this circuitous journey we can now return to our original paragraph from the beginning.

If one remembers, this is what I asked at the beginning of this story, “What is the significance of this story in light of what Matthew has recorded up to this point in his Gospel?” I answered, “I believe Matthew concludes this portion of his Gospel with this story because he is emphasizing the two main points with which he began this portion, which, if you remember, is the affirmations of the *sayings* of Jesus by the *doings* of Jesus in light of His claims to Deity.

## Matthew

And so, Matthew continues to show how Jesus fulfills the Law and the Prophets by His *doings*, and in so doing, continues to manifest His Divine Nature.”

By introducing a reference to the ancient nation of the Girgashites into the story, Matthew draws attention once more to our Lord’s assertion that the failure of Israel in keeping the Covenant of the Land, was the reason for their not having the promised blessing of God upon their land as they expected. Our Lord came to show them that there is none righteous no not one and that by the works of the law no man could be justified. They needed to realize that salvation could never come by their own works of righteousness, but only by the righteousness of God imputed to them, which righteousness was found in Him, the Messiah, the Son of the Living God, who was very God of very God.

As I mentioned in our notes and comments on the Sermon of the Mount—the children of Israel thought they were keeping the Covenant of the Land. They did not know of their utter failure in this regard, and this is the reason for our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount—to show the people how they utterly failed in keeping their promised obedience, thereby, setting the stage for the ending of the Dispensation of the Law and the introduction of the new Dispensation of Grace.

This seems to be the reason the Holy Spirit had Matthew write this Gospel the way he did, with the Sermon on the Mount being at the forefront; it revealed to Israel the reason why God was going to judge their nation, and why the Dispensation of the Law was about to end, laying the basis for the Dispensation of the Church, whereby all of mankind could be saved, both Jew and Gentile.

Indeed, the Sermon on the Mount brought finality to the fact that no one could ever keep the Law of God unto righteousness and salvation. And this is reason for the introduction into the story of the Girgashites. Part of the covenant Israel made with God was to keep the commandments of the Lord and one of those commandments was to drive out the seven Canaanite nations from the land.

## Matthew

**Deuteronomy 7:1-3** When Jehovah thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and shall cast out many nations before thee, the Hittite, and **the Girgashite**, and the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; <sup>2</sup> and when Jehovah thy God shall deliver them up before thee, and thou shalt smite them; then thou shalt utterly destroy them: **thou shalt make no covenant with them**, nor show mercy unto them; <sup>3</sup> neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. ASV

**Numbers 33:51-53** “Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye pass over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, <sup>52</sup> then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their figured *stones*, and destroy all their molten images, and demolish all their high places: <sup>53</sup> and ye shall take possession of the land, and dwell therein; for unto you have I given the land to possess it. ASV

But we find they did not obey the Lord, and so drive out the Canaanite nations living in the land as they were commanded. And so they failed to keep their part of the Covenant of the Land, as those from the seven nations became a snare to them.

**Judges 1:28** And it came about when Israel became strong, that they put the Canaanites to forced labor, **but they did not drive them out completely**. NASB77

And so the LORD chastised them and made known to them that their failure to keep that part of the Covenant meant His promise to drive them all out would no longer be guaranteed because of their lack of obedience and righteousness.

**Judges 2:1-3** And the angel of Jehovah came up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you: <sup>2</sup> and ye shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall break down their altars.

## Matthew

**But ye have not hearkened unto my voice:** why have ye done this? <sup>3</sup> **Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides,** and their gods shall be a snare unto you. ASV

And, indeed, we find those nations did become a snare to them, leading them to do evil, resulting in great oppression (Judges 2:11-15). Yet God in His mercy sent judges to them to deliver them, but more often than not, they refused to listen to them.

**Judges 2:17** And yet they did not listen to their judges, for they played the harlot after other gods and bowed themselves down to them. They turned aside quickly from the way in which their fathers had walked in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do as *their fathers*. NASB77

Well beloved, this, I believe, is the reason Matthew uses the nomenclature of the country of the Gergesenes; the designation of the county of the Gergesenes bespoke the ancient nation of the Girgashites whose land included the lower end of Galilee that rightly belonged to the tribe of Gad. And it was because of their lack of faith and obedience to God that that land still contained those who were heathen, i.e. Gentiles, whether or not some of them may have been actual descendants of the Girgashites or not. In contradiction to the command of the Lord, the heathen, represented by the name Gergesenes, still occupied the land belonging to the tribe of Gad, which was now under the power of Rome.

Because of this, this whole story included here in Matthew's Gospel of the country of the Gergesenes would bring to the minds of the children of Israel, including the Scribes and Pharisees, the failure of their fathers in keeping the Covenant of the Land. It would also remind them that because of that failure certain Canaanite peoples continued to exist in the land of Israel because the Lord said He would no longer drive them all out, but would leave them to test them whether they would keep the way of the Lord or not.

And what is interesting is that if one was reading I

## Matthew

Kings 9:20-21 in the Greek Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Bible, one would read that one of those nations that survived being left in the land, after the death of Joshua was the Gergashite nation.

**I Kings 9:20** so that none of the people should rule over him that was left of the Chettite and the Amorite, and the Pherezite, and the Chananite, and the Evite, and the Jebusite, and the **Gergesite**, who were not of the children of Israel, their descendants who had been left with him in the land, whom the children of Israel could not utterly destroy; and Solomon made them tributaries until this day.  
Brenton's Version

The inclusion of that nation in that passage shows that there was a variant in the Hebrew text (the Masoretic Text does not include the name Gergashite, which meant there could have been Hebrew texts in our Lord's day which contained that variant, which in turn meant that Hebrew texts in Galilee in our Lord's day would read of the Gergashites, being left in their land. This, of course, would explain why the southeastern portion of the Sea of Galilee continued to be known as the country of the Gergesenes.

So by including this story of the demoniacs in the country of the Gergesenes, Matthew is reminding Israel that once again, that as the LORD spoke to their fathers of old and they did not listen, the LORD was speaking to them again, this time by the Son of Man who was the LORD Jesus Christ, and they were not listening. He was reminding them that just as their fathers refused to listen to the ones that God had sent to them so long ago (i.e. the judges and the prophets) to bring them back to the ways of God, so too they now were refusing to listen to the "One" God had now sent to them to bring them back to the ways of God, indeed, to Him who is the only Way—His Only Begotten Son, the "Judge" of the whole earth, and that Prophet that Moses said God would send for them to heed!

**John 5:26-27** For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; <sup>27</sup> And hath

## Matthew

given him authority **to execute judgment** also, because he is the Son of man. KJV

**Acts 10:42-43** And he charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that **this is he who is ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead.**<sup>43</sup> To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins. ASV

**Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19** The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;<sup>18</sup> **I will raise them up a Prophet** from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.<sup>19</sup> And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require *it* of him. KJV

The question was would they listen to Him, or would they refuse to listen to Him, not having ears to hear, as so many of their fathers in the past had repeatedly done, neither listening nor obeying? And the answer will be found in the next few verses.

**8:28b ...there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.**

**8:29 And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?**

**8:30 And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding.**

**8:31 So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.**

**8:32 And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.**

## Matthew

As with all of Scripture, much can be gleaned if we closely follow the actual text as we have already seen in the previous verses, for Scripture is very precise down to the smallest jot and tittle. (This is why a dynamic theory of translation, rather than a complete or literal word for word theory of translation, is so detrimental to the spiritual well-being of the believer and to a proper understanding of the Bible as “One” Book. The Word of God is one Book—the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings, the Gospels, the book of Acts, the Epistles of Paul, the General Epistles and the book of Revelation. One obtains a full understanding of God’s nature, character, and purpose by comparing Scripture with Scripture, and comparing words with words in every book. Every single word in Scripture is inspired and all 66 books of the Bible compared are necessary to have the full revelation what is true.)

When we compare the three Gospel’s regarding the incident of the casting out of the demons in the country of the Gergesenes/Gadarenes near the city of Gadara, we discover that Matthew gives a general accounting of the incident that does not included the part contained in the Gospels of Mark and Luke, but equally Mark and Luke do not have that part that is found in Matthew’s Gospel. Those missing and added parts can be seen in the chart on the next page (Fig. 6).

(Please notice, to better understand how all three Gospel accounts fit together, I have included my own translation of the underlying Greek text of Matt. 8:28 in the chart below, while trying to keep intact as much of the KJV rendering as possible. I did this because the underlying Greek syntax intimates that both demoniacs cried out at the same time they come out of their tombs, the significance which we will soon discuss. There will be a couple more portions wherein I will provide my own translation, but I will discuss that under the appropriate order of events.)

**Fig. 6—Comparison of All Three Gospels**

Part of the Story Left Out of Mark and Luke's Gospel Account	
<b>Matthew 8:28-34</b> And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, two demoniacs, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way, went out to meet him. <sup>29</sup> And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?	
Part of the Story Left Out of Matthew's Gospel Account	
<b>Mark 5:6-9</b> But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, <sup>7</sup> And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, <i>thou</i> Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. <sup>8</sup> For he said unto him, Come out of the man, <i>thou</i> unclean spirit. <sup>9</sup> And he asked him, What <i>is</i> thy name? And he answered, saying, My name <i>is</i> Legion: for we are many	<b>Luke 8:28-30</b> When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, <i>thou</i> Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not. <sup>29</sup> (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.) <sup>30</sup> And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.
Part of the Story Included in All Three Gospels	
<b>Matthew 8: 30-34</b> And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding. <sup>31</sup> So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. <sup>32</sup> And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters. <sup>33</sup> And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils. <sup>34</sup> And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought <i>him</i> that he would depart	



## Matthew

out of their coasts. KJV

As we begin with this comparison, we see that Matthew includes a part of the story not included in Mark's Gospel or Luke's Gospel. Matthew reveals that there were two demoniacs and not one demoniac as mentioned in Mark and Luke. He also reveals the fact that the story begins somewhere on the road leading up to the city. And finally, he adds the fact that there was a loud, forceful "speaking out" to Jesus from "afar off" by the two demoniacs (Matthew 8:29). We will see that this is different, in both content and timing, than the second loud "speaking out" to Jesus that is done by just one of the two demoniacs, as recorded for us in Mark 5:6-7 and Luke 8:28

As for the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of Luke we see they completely leave out this first "speaking out" made by the two demoniacs together as recorded by Matthew. Instead they begin with the encounter of Jesus with just the one of the demoniacs "speaking out" in a loud voice to Jesus. How this came about will be discussed shortly.

So now that we have discussed this part of the incident recorded in Matthew's Gospel, that is not recorded in Mark and Luke's Gospel, let us now look at that part recorded in Mark and Luke that is not included in Matthew's account.

Beginning with Mark 5:6 and Luke 8:28, we have details the Holy Spirit did not inspire Matthew to record. The first detail is the fact that the demoniac in Mark's account first sees Jesus from "afar off," which detail refers back to that time period when both demoniacs came out of their tombs together as recorded by Matthew, but was not recorded by Mark or Luke.

Obviously, if Mark says Jesus was first seen from a distance, one wonders what it was that happened at that time. Mark does not tell us, but when we read Matthew we learn what happened at that time. The two demoniacs upon seeing Jesus from afar, come out of their tomb and begin shouting out to Jesus, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?"

## Matthew

Apparently what happened is that both demoniacs, while sitting their tomb are looking down the road toward the lake, soon they see afar off some travelers coming up the road. Scripture indicates this was their common practice, since it says they would hinder those travelers who would pass by their tomb. Perhaps, they would try to extort money from the many travelers that would pass on their way up toward Gadara. In any case, they see Jesus beginning to walk up the road from the lake, presumably on His way to the city with His disciples.

How do they know it was Jesus from a distance? Scripture does not say, but more than likely it was by the demons within them recognizing that one was Jesus, which caused them both to come out of their tomb and begin to shout out down the road, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?"

Moreover, we should mention that once they learned it was Jesus, presumably from the demons within them, they did not to be told more about who He was, for they may have already known much about Him, as Scripture says His fame was far spread, which Matt. 4:25 says included Decapolis.<sup>e</sup>

And because His fame was so far spread, and since Scripture says great multitudes of people also followed Him from Decapolis, it would not be surprising that some from there, upon hearing of the power of Jesus to heal and cast out demons had some time before traveled to hear the Sermon on the Mount that took place some weeks before our story. And so, after the Sermon on the Mount was over, when they were travelling back home to Gadara, or some other place in Decapolis, maybe they had been stopped by the two demoniacs upon the road, whereupon the two demoniacs learned about Jesus, and how He healed people of diseases, and how He cast demons out of people, and even how He claimed to be the LORD!

So it could be that one of the demoniacs, after hearing the demon within him identify one of the travelers coming up the road as being Jesus, indeed, as being Jesus the Son of God, sees that this is his chance

<sup>e</sup> **Matthew 4:24-25** And **his fame went throughout** all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. <sup>25</sup> And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and **from Decapolis**, and *from* Jerusalem, and *from* Judaea, and *from* beyond Jordan. KJV

## Matthew

to be free of the great torment he has suffered by the demon[s] within him, since, as we just mentioned, the fame of Jesus and His power to cast out demons may have reached him. If that is the case, this is what may have happened

When the two demoniacs see Jesus coming up the hill on the road to the city, while He was still afar off, both demoniacs come out of their tomb and “speak out” to Jesus with a loud voice, “What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?”

This is the first “speaking out” to Jesus from afar off that Mark and Luke do not record, although Luke does record for us that that shouting out to Jesus did occur before, without ever recording what was cried out, for he mentions in Luke 8:28 that the one demoniac in his Gospel “had cried out” before he ever reached Jesus and had fallen down to the ground at His feet. In the Greek this is understood in Luke 8:28, because of the use of the aorist participle ἀνακράξας (having cried), which is used to refer to antecedent time to the time of the main verb, which in Luke 8:28 is “he fell” (προσέπεσεν) before him. Young’s Literal Translation brings out this nuance of the Greek construction, unlike the KJV.

**Luke 8:28** “and **having seen Jesus**, and **having cried out**, he fell before him, and with a **loud voice, said**, 'What—to me and to thee, Jesus, Son of God Most High? I beseech thee, mayest thou not afflict me!’”

This is an added detail of Luke and Mark that Matthew does not record—i.e. after falling down before Jesus, a second “speaking out,” to Jesus with a loud voice occurs, this time not by both demoniacs, but this time just by one of the demoniacs. Thus, we see this second “speaking out” of one of the demoniacs occurs not from a distance as when he first spoke out loudly, but this time right before Jesus at His feet, after he had fallen down before Him.

The reason Matthew does not record this second “speaking out”, is because he does not record the fact that one of the demoniacs breaks away from the other

## Matthew

demoniac and “runs right up to Jesus, as Mark says.

This little detail of one demoniac running up to Jesus is not even mentioned by Luke, but if we harmonize Mark’s account with Luke’s account we see that of the demoniacs, after having already “spoken out” with a loud voice to Jesus from afar when he first sees Him, then breaks away from the other demoniac and “runs up” to Jesus. Then comes Luke’s statement that he falls down before Jesus, which then, as Mark adds another detail, he “worships” Him.

So we see that Mark 5:6 tells us that one demoniac, not two demoniacs, “runs” toward Jesus from “afar,” while Luke, not mentioning this run, does mention the end result of that run—all of a sudden the one demoniac who had shouted out from a distance to Jesus, is now right in front of Jesus, falling down before him (Luke 8:28), worshipping Him.

What an amazing statement! Just a short time before, this demoniac with the other demoniac had shouted out to Jesus with a loud voice from a distance, “What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” But now we find that he is right at the feet of Jesus worshipping Him. What happened?

It seems as if one of the demoniacs had a moment of clarity from the oppression and control of the demons within him, and in that moment of clarity his desire to be freed from their bondage came to the surface. Since I believe he was one of the lost sheep of the house of Israel, perhaps he had remembered what life was like before he became demon possessed, before he had ever made friendship with the second demoniac. Perhaps, he had been remembering his life in the synagogue as a child, being taught the great stories of the deliverances of LORD.

And so, when the demons forced him and the other demoniac to shout out, “What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” and he heard with his own ears that it was Jesus the Son of God coming, the Jesus of whose fame, perhaps, he had heard of from

## Matthew

different travelers on the road, he decided, with whatever control of his will he may have had left, to “run up” to Jesus “to worship” Him. He did this, presumably, with a hope of deliverance from the terrible bondage of the demon[s] within. And so Jesus, knowing what was really going on, and knowing what was in the heart of this child of Abraham, immediately begins to command the unclean spirit to come out of Him

In consequence of this repeated command of Jesus for the demon to come out, the demon name Legion quickly reasserts his control over the man (as is common with demons), not by throwing him to the ground, as a demon would often do, nor causing him to cut himself, as he had been done to the man many times before, but this time by taking complete and utter control over him and his vocal cords, shouting out with a loud voice to Jesus again, “What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? **I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not**” (Mark 5:7).

This is the second “speaking out” that is now done by just one of two demoniacs; this time not from “afar off,” but now right at the very feet of Jesus.

So now that we have provided the overall context of this incident from all three Gospels, let us now lay out the order of events of this incident point by point in greater detail.

1) Two demonics, perhaps, sitting in their tomb overlooking the road that leads to Gadara, see travelers at a distance walking up the road. As they both come out of their tomb, still at some distance, they are driven by the demons within them shout out loudly to Jesus, who is still somewhat down the road, “What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time? This brings the knowledge, to their ears, from their own lips, that one of the travelers is Jesus the Son of God.

This shouting out occurs, according to Matthew

## Matthew

8:28, at the same moment they leave their tomb, which Mark 5:6 confirms by revealing that Jesus is first seen from a distance, from afar off.

2) After seeing Jesus from afar, as we just mentioned, one of the two demoniacs in a seeming moment of clarity makes a decision to break away from the other demoniac and run up to Jesus, (which Mark records) and then falls down before Him (which Luke records), and then worship Him (which Mark records). While this happens, since Scripture does not say otherwise, and since Mark and Luke do not mention the second demoniac, more than likely, the second demoniac decided to stay somewhat back at a distance from the circle of Jesus and His disciples. This breakaway by one of the demoniacs (which we will refer to as the first demoniac) explains why Mark and Luke do not include the second demoniac in the story. Their recounting of the incident begins with the fact that the first demoniac, seeing Jesus from afar, runs forward and falls down before Jesus, while the second demoniac, apparently, stayed at a distance outside the circle of Jesus and His disciples, and so they do not mention Him.

3) Since Mark tells us what Luke does not record, that the first man after falling down before Jesus worships Him, we learn that the first demoniac must have still had some control over his will! And because of that, Jesus knowing his heart, Jesus begins to command the demon to come out of him. Scripture does not say, but it would not surprise me that in this moment of clarity, the first demoniac cries out in tears to Jesus to be freed from these demons within him who so torment him. In either case, whether the first demoniac did so vocally or not, Jesus knows all, and so knows the heart of this man worshiping before Him, and so begins to command the demon[s] to come out

4) Now, at this moment of Jesus commanding the demon[s] to come out, we learn in both Mark and

# Matthew

Luke, this second “speaking out” to Jesus now occurs, but this time with a slight difference from the first “speaking out” recorded for us in the Gospel of Matthew. But before we discuss the difference, we must address the phrases that introduce each “speaking out,” and how that clarifies the order of events.

One thing that is significant with this second “speaking out” is that there is a grammatical difference from the first “speaking out” in Matt. 8:29. The Gospel of Matthew, when introducing the first “speaking out” to Jesus, has the present participle λέγοντες (saying), construed with the aorist verb ἔκραξαν (they cried out), which indicates, according to rules of Greek grammar, that the “speaking out” is that which was “cried out.” Thus it reads: “And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?”

However, in Mark 5:7, with the second speaking out, we have a different construction in the Greek. The aorist plural verb ἔκραξαν (they cried out) that Matthew wrote is now inflected as singular aorist participle, κράξας (after he cried out, or it could be rendered “having cried out”) in Mark. And then the present plural participle λέγοντες (saying) in Matthew is now inflected as singular aorist verb εἶπεν (he said) in Mark! The participle and the verb are completely reversed as can be seen in Fig. 7 below.

**Fig. 7—Two Different Greek Constructions**

Matthew 8:29a			
καὶ, ἰδοὺ,	ἔκραξαν (pl.),	λέγοντες (pl.)	
and, behold,	they cried out,	saying	
Mark 5:7a			
καὶ	κράξας (sing.),	φωνῇ μεγάλῃ	εἶπεν (sing.)
and	having cried out,	with a voice loud	he said

This is significant because the order in Matt. 8:29 indicates that what is cried out is what is said; but the reverse order in Mark 5:7 indicates that that what is

## Matthew

cried is not what is said!

Perhaps part of the confusion comes from construing φωνῇ μεγάλῃ (loud voice) with κράξας (“having cried out”), rather than construing φωνῇ μεγάλῃ (loud voice) with εἶπεν (he said—cf. Luke 8:28). Mark is not saying, “He cried out with a loud voice **and** said,” but rather, “**and** having cried out, he said with a loud voice.” Also notice that there are not two “ands” (καὶ) in the text, as suggested by the KJV. There is only one conjunction in the text: καὶ κράξας φωνῇ μεγάλῃ εἶπεν (And having cried out, he said with a loud voice). I am not sure why the KJV includes two conjunctions. As far as I know there is no such variant in the Greek text.

Another important point that can be seen in the Greek text, which is not readily seen in most English translations, except for a few (but can be seen in Fig. 7 above), is that the aorist participle κράξας can be understood as referring to antecedent act to the act of the main verb εἶπεν (he said). Let me explain.

Although Greek aorist participles can many times indicate *contemporaneous* time with the aorist main verb to which it is construed (e.g. the common phrase δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν (he answered and said—Mark 10:3, Luke 19:40, etc.), aorist participles can also indicate *antecedent* time with aorist main verbs (e.g. χωρισθεὶς...ἦλθεν in Acts 18:1,<sup>f</sup> and also ὑποστρέψαντες...διηγήσαντο in Luke 9:10.)<sup>g</sup>

It is the latter use of the aorist participle that I believe is being used in our verse in Mark 5:7. This is also true if one wishes to follow the NA27 Greek text, which, instead of having the aorist εἶπεν (he said), it has a present λέγει (he says). It should be mentioned that antecedent time is also indicated when aorist participles are construed with present tense verbs. So whether one prefers NA27 reading, or the TR reading, contextually, I believe it should be rendered as—“having cried out, he said” or “after he cried out, he said.”

So with this being the case, what is the significance of this “cried out” in contrast with the “cried out” mentioned by Matthew?

<sup>f</sup> **Acts 18:1** And after these things, Paul having departed out of Athens, came to Corinth. (Young’s Literal Translation)

<sup>g</sup> **Luke 9:10** And the apostles having returned related to him whatever they had done. And he took them and withdrew apart into a desert place of a city called Bethsaida. (Darby’s Version)



## Matthew

What I believe is happening is, as I said under point 3 above, after the first crying out, or “speaking out” loudly by both demoniacs together when they first came out of their tomb, after they saw Jesus afar off, one of demoniacs has a moment of clarity, wherein he regains momentary freedom over his will. In that moment, he leaves the other demoniac and runs up to Jesus to worship Him. If this was not the case, why would he run forward and fall at the feet of Jesus to worship? He must have had a moment of clarity and had some control over his will!

So, more than likely, as we already said, this verse reveals the first demoniac has this moment of clarity, and so (although Scripture does not say so, but it would not surprise me) rushes forward to Jesus with a plea in his heart, if not in actual words, to be delivered from the demon within him. This would help explain why he is said to worship Jesus, and why Scripture says Jesus immediately begins to command the demon to come out of the man, as we will see in Mark 5:8, which will be discussed in point 5 below.

But then what happens, when the first demoniac is worshipping Jesus, is that Jesus immediately begins to command the demon to come out of the man prostrated before him, worshipping Him. But the demon begins to resist the commands of Jesus, and so it seems, violently reasserts his control over the man

So, if that is the case, what is this inarticulate cry mentioned by Mark that had already occurred before he speaks out again to Jesus? I believe this inarticulate cry is what would be better rendered as a “scream” or a “shriek!” This cry, it seems, is a shriek of agony and despair, either being made by the poor man, for the man realizes the demon is violently taking back full control over him again, or, what is more likely, it is the demon himself, having taken direct and absolute control over the man’s vocal chords, who is letting out this scream or terrible shriek because he knows he must obey! The reason why I believe this is as follows.

When we get to Mark 5:9, we see in the context that Jesus directly asks the same one who first lets out

## Matthew

this inarticulate “shriek” of agony, who then “speaking out” loudly to Jesus, “What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not,” this question, “What is thy name?” So if it was the man on his own “speaking out,” Jesus would be asking the man what his name is. But if it is the demon himself from within the man speaking out, then Jesus would be asking the demon what his name is.

With that in mind, it seems if it was the man of himself speaking out, and the man of whom Jesus is asking the question, then the man would have answered, “My name is Legion, because **they** are many,” meaning the man says, “I am called Legion because I have many demons in me.” But that is not what was said in response to Jesus’s question. What was said was this: “My name is Legion, because **we** are many! Thus, Scripture is showing us it is the demon himself who is directly speaking to Jesus from the man, having taken complete and utter control over the poor man!

It seems Luke’s parallel account also confirms this because Luke includes a parenthetical sentence, and in the next verse he shows exactly who Jesus was speaking to because the one who answers Jesus continues speaking, now pleading that they not be sent into the deep. If I may, I will provide my own translation, based upon the Majority Text.

“And Jesus asked him, saying, ‘What is your name?’ And he said, ‘Legion’ (for many demons had entered into him). And he began pleading with Him that He not command them to go out into **the abyss**.” **Luke 8:30-31**

As for the word I translated “abyss,” perhaps I should mention briefly, before I continue with our thoughts, that the abyss (the KJV the deep), which is the Greek word ἄβυσσος, means “bottomless pit.” That is how the word is rendered in the book of Revelation where it occurs many times (e.g. Rev. (:1, 2, 1; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3).

Apparently it is a place containing many demons, who no longer are allowed to roam about the earth, as

## Matthew

well as those fallen angels mentioned in Jude 1:6. It is also the place where Satan will be bound for a thousand years during the Millennium (Rev. 20:1).

But until a demon is consigned there, it seems that a demon can go in and out of humans, for reasons we are not told, and when they go out they wander about in “waterless places,” until they find another body to possess, or if not, until they return to the same body they left, but this time taking along with them other demons which they apparently had also met wandering about in those waterless places (see Luke 11: 24-27; also cf. Isa. 13:19-22 with Rev. 18:2).

But what is indicated is that when Jesus casts out a demon from a man or woman, He did not allow demon the freedom to roam about on earth in these waterless places to look for more bodies to possess, but instead He sent them to this abyss where they could do no more harm!

It seems this must be the case, for if such was not the case, why did the demons not just let Jesus cast them out, after which they could have then wandered about in a waterless place until they could find someone else to possess? Instead, they beg Jesus to not send them into the abyss, but into the swine. They must have thought if they entered the swine, they could then come out later to possess men again. But what they did not know, but what Jesus knew, was that the swine would rush into the sea and die, upon which, I am sure, unbeknownst to them, they would have to go into the abyss anyway! The fact is they must have known that a demon cast out by Jesus was sent to the abyss and so they thought if they went into the swine they would escape that place of torment.

So now let me return to our thoughts that Scripture indicates that Jesus was speaking directly to the demon, and not to the man himself.

Our passage in Luke 8: 30-31 also confirms it for us that it was Legion, the demon himself, who was speaking as a representative for all the other demons in the man, because it was he that began to plead to Jesus to not send them (him and all the other demons) into the abyss, which would not be something a

## Matthew

human would request.

So all this seems to indicate that the one who gave forth that terrible shriek, who had next shouted out at Jesus, “What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not,” who had said his name was Legion, and who then begins to plead with Jesus that he not send him and all the other demons into the abyss, is the demon directly speaking through the man, not indirectly through the man.

So what seems to be happening is that while the demoniac is at the feet of Jesus worshipping Him, the demon does what he oftentimes did before, he “caught” the man, as Luke says (Luke 8:29\_. However, the rendering, “caught,” does not, I believe, really do justice to the Greek word as it is used in our context.

The Greek word Luke uses, συναρπάζω, is a word that means *a violent seizure by force, which in many cases is done with malice*. It is used of Stephen being physically seized with great malice in Acts 6:12, and it is used of a ship being “seized,” if you will, by a violent wind that drive the ship helplessly forward to a place they sailors not wish the ship to go (Acts 27: 14-15).

And S. T. Bloomfield in his *Greek and English Lexicon to the New Testament* says this regarding the word: “Συναρπάζω, f. άσώ, (σύν, intens. άρπάζω,)...to grasp all around, i. e. to seize with violence...of an evil spirit seizing violently one possessed, Lu. viii.29.”<sup>103</sup>

Therefore, with this fuller understanding of the word, we can see that this is not the man simply being “caught” by the demon, rather it is the man being “violently seized” by the demon. And not only seized, but seized with a full and complete hold or grasping.

This emphasizes, I believe, the idea I mentioned of a violent seizing and control over the entire being of the man, including as we will see, even of his vocal chords. The demon must have been filled with so much rage that the man who was worshipping Jesus was, presumably, also seeking deliverance, and so the

## Matthew

demon violently seizes the man, taking complete and absolute control over his entire being. What terrible bondage this man must have suffered by this demon!

Therefore, because Jesus is continually repeating His command to the demon to come out of the man, and because the demon knows he must eventually obey, the demon, now in complete control of the poor man, gives forth a terrible cry, a terrible “shriek,” knowing that he must now come out of the man.

This manifestation of anger seems to be a common phenomenon of demons when they realize they must vacate their abode in a human being. It seems the same thing happens in Mark 9:26, where the demon also lets out a terrible cry before vacating the child.

**Mark 9:25-26** And when Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again." <sup>26</sup> And after **crying out** and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and *the boy* became so much like a corpse that most of *them* said, "He is dead!" NASB77

Of this passage and this phenomenon of a demon crying out or giving forth a terrible shriek, John Gill shares the following. (Please note he is using the KJV and so is referring to the KJV's use of *the spirit*.)

“And *the spirit* cried, and rent him sore, &c.] We rightly supply, *the spirit*, as do the Syriac and Persic versions, *the demon*; **for it was he, and not the child, that cried, and made an hideous noise**, at his ejection; being filled with wrath and rage, that he must be obliged to quit the possession he had so long held; and therefore, in spite and malice, before it left him, shook and tore him, and threw him into dreadful convulsions: *and came out of him*; though sore against his will, being obliged to it, by the superior power of Christ.” <sup>104</sup>

How awful is the raging of Satan as a roaring lion, and the raging of his demons that torment mankind!

Thus it seems that when Mark writes, “And having cried, He said with a loud voice,” he is referring to the aforementioned inarticulate “shriek” of the demon,

## Matthew

after which the demon then “speaks forth” a second time to Jesus. With this sense, I believe a full stop, a period, should be understood after “he ran and worshipped Him.”

Mark.5:6-7—“But when he saw Jesus afar off, he [the demoniac] ran and worshipped him.” “And having shrieked, he [the demon in the man] said with a loud voice, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, I beseech thee, that thou not torment me not!”

So while, of course, the words still come out of the mouth of the demoniac, we learn that it is not the man being moved from within to speak out to Jesus with this question and plea; it is the demon having taken full control of the man’s vocal chords speaking out to Jesus, just as it was not the man himself that first gave forth that terrible shriek, but rather was the demon himself, after reasserting his full control over the man, realizing that his time was short and he must obey Jesus.

With this distinction now being made, it must be pointed out that this “inarticulate” shriek at the feet of Jesus must also be distinguished from the “articulate” cry referenced by Luke in Luke 8:28. We know this because Luke’s “cried out” is said to have had happened **before** the demoniac falls down before Jesus, which is the position for worship, but Mark’s “cried out” is said to have happened **after** he worships Jesus.

Because of this, and in order to keep the two “cried outs” from being confused, let me combine the two accounts below in Fig. 8 below, wherein I will use “shrieked,” rather than “cried,” from Mark’s Gospel. I will also render the Greek text in English in accordance with what we already discussed above in Fig. 7 on page 192, concerning the aorist participle in the Gospel of Mark. Hopefully this will help clarify the difference between the two accounts.

Fig. 8—“Cried out” in Mark and Luke Compared

One Demoniac Alone at the Feet of Jesus	
<b>Mark 5:6-7</b> But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and <b>worshipped him. And cried</b> with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, <i>thou</i> Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. KJV	<b>Luke 8:28</b> And having seen Jesus, and <b>having cried out, he fell before him</b> , and with a loud voice, <b>said</b> , 'What - to me and to thee, Jesus, Son of God Most High? I beseech thee, mayest thou not afflict me!' YLT
The Two Accounts Combined	
And having seen Jesus afar off, and <b>having cried out, he ran, he fell before him, and worshipped Him. And having shrieked, he [the demon] said with a loud voice</b> , What have I to do with thee, Jesus, <i>thou</i> Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, I beseech thee, that thou not torment me not!	

Finally, now that we have compared the two accounts, one will see in regard to what the demon “speaks out” with a loud voice to Jesus that the two accounts are nearly identical, though they do have slight differences. This is not a contradiction of what was said, but it is simply Mark and Luke only using a portion of the whole question and request that put to Jesus by the demon. When this happens in Scripture we must realize both accounts are needed to get the full account of what is revealed by the Holy Spirit.

This is not unusual. It is similar with what one has to do to learn the full title that Pilate had written above the head of Jesus when he was crucified upon the cross.

From what was written on the sign, we see that the Gospels of Matthew and Luke record six of the same Greek words in their Gospels, which are rendered into English as: “This is the King of the Jews.” (The word “of” is indicated by the use of the genitive case, not by an actual word in Greek, so in English the six Greek words must be rendered by seven English words.) However, Matthew’s same six Greek words include

## Matthew

one extra word that Luke does not include, the word “Jesus.” So now we know the sign had at least seven Greek words (eight in English): This is Jesus the King of the Jews.” (Mark only includes the last four words on the sign [five in English], “The King of the Jews.”)

However, unlike the other Gospel writers, when we come to John’s Gospel, he tells us there were two other words on the sign after the word Jesus, the two words “the Nazarene.”

So if we wish to know everything which was written on the sign above Jesus, we must combine all the four Gospels together, as each Gospel writer chose a part of the whole to include in their respective Gospels (which was done for a reason). So when we combine all four Gospel accounts together (following the TR text), we learn this is what Pilate wrote upon the sign that he nailed above the head of Jesus upon the cross: “This is Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews.”

So, when we come back to Mark and Luke’s account of what the demon named Legion shouts out to Jesus, we see, when we combine Mark and Luke together, it becomes this. (Mark’s portion that is missing in Luke, I will put in bold type, and Luke’s portion that is missing in Mark, I will underline.) “What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God? **I adjure thee by God, I beseech thee**, that thou torment me not.”

5) Let us now go into greater detail regarding what prompted this violent seizing of the demoniac and his speaking out so forcefully and loudly to Jesus. Both Mark and Luke’s use an explanatory γὰρ (for) in Mark 5:8 and in Luke8:29, and also an imperfect verb as an explanation for the demons reaction (according to the TR).

Unfortunately, this is obscured in the KJV, because it did not bring out the imperfective sense of the verb in either Mark or Luke. For example in Mark 5:8 the imperfect verb is translated as “he said;” rather than “he was saying,” which I believe better fits the context. Now sometimes the imperfect can be



## Matthew

understood with a perfective sense, but as Henry Alford shares regarding this use imperfect in Mark 5:8—“ἔλεγεν] *not imperf. for pluperf., either here or any where else; for He was saying to him, &c.*”<sup>105</sup>

As for the imperfect tense in general, Robertson states: “The aorist tells the simple story. The imperfect draws the picture. It helps you to see the course of the act. It passes before the eye the flowing stream of history.”<sup>106</sup> And for this specific imperfect verb in Mark 5:8, he writes regarding the phrase, “for he said” (ἔλεγεν γάρ) the following: “For he had been saying (progressive imperfect). Jesus had already repeatedly ordered the demon to come out of the man whereat the demon made his outcry to Jesus and protested.”<sup>107</sup>

As for Luke 8:29, which also uses an imperfect verb, let me provide the following from Henry Alford. He writes the following regarding that imperfect verb: “**παρήγγελλεν, He was ordering**, imperf. in the midst of this ordering, and as a consequence of it, the possessed man cried out, as in last verse.”<sup>108</sup>

We see this same use of the imperfect verb in Mark 7:26, when we see the woman repeatedly asking Jesus to cast the demon out of her daughter. It does, indeed, draw the picture of what was happening.

**Mark 7:26** Now the woman was a Gentile, of the Syrophoenician race. And **she kept asking Him** to cast the demon out of her daughter. NASB<sup>77</sup>

So what Scripture is saying is that while the man was at His feet of Jesus worshipping, Jesus began to command and repeatedly commanded the demon to come out, saying, “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!”

Now, perhaps, some may wonder why Jesus would ever have to repeatedly command the unclean spirit to come out! After all, Jesus was sovereign, and all powerful! He could have commanded the demon only once to come out and it would have obeyed, as, for example, happened in Mark 1:23-26.

**Mark 1:23** And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,<sup>24</sup> Saying, Let *us* alone;

## Matthew

what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. <sup>25</sup> And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. <sup>26</sup> And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. KJV

The answer to that question is I do not know, but I do know that sometimes, what Jesus could do instantly, He sometimes decides to do in stages, as was the case of his healing of the blind man in Mark 8:24, which Jesus does, unlike His other healings of the blind, with two stages. (See marginal note.) <sup>h</sup>

So we must simply trust Jesus had a reason to do it in this way. It certainly was not because the demon had the power to resist our Lord's command!

**6)** So now that we have examined this second speaking out to Jesus in detail, and what prompted it, let us now compare it closely with the first speaking out to Jesus by both demoniacs when they were still afar off.

What is missed by some is that these were two different "speaking outs" made to Jesus. The first was made by both demoniacs together. The second was made by the one demoniac alone. The first was made from a distance. The second was made near at the feet of Jesus.

Failure to understand this is why some who wish to discredit the Bible think they have found a contradiction in the Bible. They have not.

So, because it is important to distinguish between these two instances of "speaking out," let us briefly compare them in greater detail.

When we look closely at these two "speaking outs" to Jesus—the first speaking out by the two demoniacs together, as recorded by Matthew, and then this second "speaking out" by just one demoniac alone, as recorded in both Mark and Luke's account—we see that the first "speaking out" is also different from the second because the it contains two questions—"What have we to do with thee?", and "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?"

### <sup>h</sup> Mark 8:22-25

And they come unto Bethsaida. And they bring to him a blind man, and beseech him to touch him. <sup>23</sup> And he took hold of the blind man by the hand, and brought him out of the village; and when he had spit on his eyes, and laid his hands upon him, he asked him, Seest thou aught? <sup>24</sup> And he looked up, and said, I see men; for I behold *them* as trees, walking. <sup>25</sup> Then again he laid his hands upon his eyes; and he looked stedfastly, and was restored, and saw all things clearly. ASV

## Matthew

However, when we look into the second “speaking out” in Mark 5:7 and Luke 8:28 we see not two questions but just one question—“What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God?, and then it has a request or plea—“I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.” Please see Fig. 9 below.

**Fig. 9—Two “Speaking Outs” to Jesus Compared**

Speaking out by Two Demoniacs at a Distance	Speaking out by One Demoniac who is Alone at the Feet of Jesus	
<b>Matthew 8:29</b> and, behold, they cried out, saying, “What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” KJV	<b>Mark 5:7a</b> And cried with a loud voice and said, “What have I to do with thee, Jesus, <i>thou</i> Son of the most high God? <b>I adjure thee by God</b> , that thou torment me not.” KJV	<b>Luke 8:28b</b> and with a loud voice said, “What have I to do with thee, Jesus, <i>thou</i> Son of God most high? <u>I beseech thee</u> , torment me not.” KJV
Greek Text of Question		
Question	Question	Question
Τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί, Ἰησοῦ υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ	Τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, Ἰησοῦ υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου	Τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, Ἰησοῦ, υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου
Second Question	Request	Request
Ἦλθες ὥδε πρὸκαιροῦ βασανίσαι ἡμᾶς;	Ὅρκίζω σε τὸν θεόν μή με βασανίσῃς.	<u>Ἀέρομαί σου</u> μή με βασανίσῃς
English Translation of Question		
Question	Question	Question
“What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God?”	What have I to do with thee, Jesus, <i>thou</i> Son of the Most High God?	What have I to do with thee, Jesus, <i>thou</i> Son of the Most High God?
Second Question	Request	Request
“Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?”	I adjure thee <u>by God</u> , that thou torment me not.	<u>I beseech thee</u> , torment me not.

Moreover, when we compare the two in greater detail we also see these had to be two different “speaking outs” to Jesus, because all the pronouns in

## Matthew

Matthew's account are plural in number, whereas all the pronouns in Mark and Luke's account are singular in number!

So, it is very important to understand this distinction for it clarifies the reason Matthew speaks of two demoniacs and Mark and Luke speak of only one demoniac. It is not a contradiction at all.

7) After the demon lets out that terrible shriek at being commanded by Jesus to come out of the man, and after the demon then speaks out loudly to Jesus—"What have I to do with thee, Jesus, *thou* Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, I beseech thee that thou torment me not"—and after Jesus then asks the demon his name, and the demon then answers back, "Legion, for we are many," and after the demon next asks Jesus to let them go into the swine, instead of into the abyss, we see that Jesus says, "Go."

**Matthew 8:31-32** So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.  
<sup>32</sup> And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters. KJV

This is significant because Mark and Luke tell us that all these demons that were known as Legion—which went into the herd of swine—all came out of just one demoniac, the one that had run up to Jesus, and worshipped Him. Mark and Luke do not even reference the second demoniac, and Matthew never says that the second demoniac had any demons cast out of him.

Now, we do know this second man had demons, for Matthew calls him a demoniac, but we do not know if he had just one demon or many demons like the first demoniac. He could have only had one demon in him as was the case with many other demoniacs in the Gospel, but we simply do not know, for Scripture does not tell us.

Now, some may wonder how we know that this "Legion," this multitude of demons was only in the

## Matthew

one demoniac and not in both. The answer is because in Luke's Gospel, in Luke 8:33, he clearly states that the demon[s] named Legion came out of only the "one" demoniac, and not the two demoniacs. It says, "Then went the devils out of **the man**, and entered into the swine." Scripture does not say they went out of the "**men**" (plural) and entered into the swine." Also, when the multitude came out to see what occurred, Scripture says in Luke 8:35 that they "found **the man**, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid." Notice again that in this verse Scripture says that they "found **the man**, out of whom the devils were departed," not they "found **the men**, out of whom the devils were departed."

This shows us that Scripture does not indicate what happened to the second demoniac. It does not address him beyond his initial description and his initial "speaking out" to Jesus with the first demoniac from afar off in the very beginning of the encounter. So we do not know if any demons were cast out of him. He may have, but we simply do not know. We will discuss the significance of this shortly.

8) Finally, we come to the final order of events in this story of the demons and the swine which we learn by harmonizing all three Gospel accounts together. From this point on, beginning in Matt. 8:30, all three Gospel's accounts are essentially the same through Matt. 8:34, where we find everybody begging Jesus to leave their coasts. There are a few minor details that one or the other Gospels might add, but essentially they all agree. For example, both Mark and Luke in their Gospel include what happens to the healed demoniac after Jesus departs from the country of the Gergesenes, but since Matthew's Gospel ends with the plea of the whole city for Jesus to leave, we will not discuss that part of the story in any great detail, but will discuss it later in only in part.

---

Now that we have compared all three accounts

## Matthew

with these 8 points above, let us now provide everything the Holy Spirit has given us of this encounter with Jesus, as recorded in Scripture, by combining all the three Gospel accounts together into one Gospel harmony of this incident (with two explanatory transitional statements we will provide in this Ariel Font). See Fig. 10 below on page 209.

Please note this will not be an actual word for word account from the text of the King James Version, because if we are to harmonize all three accounts together, some conjunctions must be added, some must be removed, some pronouns in inflected verbs must be brought out for clarity's sake, and, finally, some phrases in italics must be added to clarify the points we made above.

So please understand this will be more of a retelling of the story in our own words. Nevertheless, if one will look closely, one will still notice, that in the whole, most of the words used are still the exact words taken from the King James Version of the three Gospels.

I did provide my own translation of Matt. 8:29 as we mentioned in the beginning of our discussion on the harmonization of these three accounts, and I did bring out the antecedent aorist participles in Mark 5:6 and 7 and in Luke 8:28a as we discussed, and I did change one word in Luke 8:29 from the KJV "caught," to the word "seized," for reasons we already explained.

Also one will notice the word "cried" in Mark 5:7 is changed to "shrieked," per our discussion above. We also brought out the imperfective aspect of the Greek imperfect verb of Mark 5:8, as we also discussed above. But other than that, I think one will see the entire harmony is almost word for word from the King James Version with details included from one Gospel, not included in the other Gospel, brought together to provide in one whole story everything that the Holy Spirit had recorded for us regarding this miracle of the LORD.

In order to distinguish the words from each of the different Gospel for the reader, Matthew will remain

## Matthew

in this Times New Roman Font. The Gospel of Mark will be in brackets, in this [Book Antiqua Font]. And the Gospel of Luke will be in braces, in this {Bookman Old Style Font.}

And, as I mentioned above, after Matt. 8:29, I will include a transitional statement in this Ariel Font, including those parts missing from Matthew's account that begin with Mark 5:6 and Luke 8:28a. Then I will include another transitional statement in this Ariel Font, after Mark 5:6 and Luke 8:28a, before I pick up the Scriptural text again, beginning with Mark 5:7 and the rest of Luke 8:28.

Also it should be mentioned that certain conjunctions that needed to be added, so as to make a smooth transition between all three accounts, will be put into Times New Roman in Italics. And, one will also see some pronouns in the Scriptural text are changed to proper names and/or a descriptive phrase that contextually construe with those pronouns. This, again, will be done for clarity sake in light of our discussion above (e.g. in one case "He" is changed to *Jesus*, and in another case, "him" is changed to *the demon in the man*). Also, so the reader knows when this is done, these changes to the pronoun will also be put into *italics*.

Finally, some phrases were also added in *italics* to reflect the explanatory comments made above to the textual account. It is important to note that all words in *italics* in any font are not in the Gospels at all, but are reflections of our comments made concerning the account. Nevertheless, one will notice we tried to keep it to the minimum. One will also notice I have capitalized all pronouns referring to Jesus in the story.

Finally, let me mention again, in three places I provided my own translation from the Greek text. The first was that part of Matthew 8:29 that we already discussed, the second is Mark 5:6 and Luke 8:28a in regard to the two aorist participles, showing past time in regard to the main verb, and the third being the last part of Matt. 8:33, which we have not yet discussed but which we will. Because of that, since we have not yet discussed Matt. 8:33, I will underline the part I

## Matthew

translated according into a very literal rendering.

### **Fig. 10—Harmonization from Matthew, Mark and Luke of the Miracle of the Swine**

“And when He was come to the other side of the sea into the country of the Gergesenes, [into the country of the Gadarenes,] two demoniacs, coming out of the tombs (exceeding fierce so that no man might pass by that way), went out to meet Him. And, behold, they cried out, saying, ‘What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?’

*At this point, we see one of the two demoniacs that had just cried out together with the other demoniac, perhaps, in a moment of clarity, leave the other demoniac, and then run up to Jesus and His disciples, wherein, he falls down before Him, and worships Him.*

[And having seen Jesus from afar] {and having cried out,} [he ran,] {fell down before him,} [and worshipped him.]

*Then, at this point, it seems the demon named Legion violently reasserts his control over the demoniac who had broken away from the other demoniac to run up to Jesus to worship Him. Then, at this point, the demon is then said to have cried out (shrieked), before he speaks out once more to Jesus, a second time, in a loud voice. The reason for this we learn is because Jesus was repeatedly telling to the demon to come out of this demoniac.*

[And, having shrieked, *the demon* said with a loud voice, ‘What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God? I adjure Thee by God], {I beseech Thee, torment me not.} For He was commanding, [He was saying, unto *the demon*, ‘Come out of the man, *thou* unclean spirit.’] {For oftentimes it had seized him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness. And Jesus asked *the demon*, saying, ‘What is thy name?’ And he said, ‘Legion’} {for



## Matthew

we are many,'] {because many devils were entered into him.} [And *the demon* besought *Jesus* much that He would not send them away out of the country,] {into the deep.} And there was a good way off from them a herd of many swine feeding {on the mountain,} [nigh unto the mountains.] So the devils *in the one demoniac* besought Him, saying, 'If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine [that we may enter into them.]' And forthwith *Jesus* [suffered them] *and* [gave them leave.] And He said unto them, 'Go.' And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine [they were about two thousand] ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and were chocked, *and* perished in the waters, [in the sea].

And they that kept them, [the swine], fled, and went their ways into the city, [and told] everything [in the city, and in the country], and the matter of the demoniacs. And, behold, the whole city came out to meet *Jesus*: [to see what it was that was done,] and when they saw him {and found the man} [that was possessed with the devil, and had the Legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: they were afraid. And they that saw *it* told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil,] *and* {by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.} [and *also* concerning the swine And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts] {Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about} besought *Jesus* that He would depart out of their coasts, {for they were taken with great fear} [And when He was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with Him. Howbeit *Jesus* suffered him not, but saith unto him, 'Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.' And he departed,] {and he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things *Jesus* had done unto him}, [and *also* began to publish in Decapolis how great things *Jesus* had done for him: and all *men* did marvel."]

## Matthew

So now that we have compared all three accounts and we learn that the demons represented by the demon name Legion all came out of only one of the two demoniacs, the one that runs up and worships Jesus, we must return to the question as to what happened to the other demoniac. Let us now turn our attention to this as this will bring us to our concluding thoughts with this portion of the eighth chapter of Matthew's Gospel.

**8:33 And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils.**

**8:34 And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts.**

If you remember I said there was one part of the harmonization from above, the last part of Matt. 8:33 that I said I translated myself and would discuss later. The King James Version's rendering of the last part of verse 33 as, "what was befallen to the possessed of the devils," is unfortunate, being a little misleading, because the words "what was befallen" implies both men were delivered of the demons, but the text does not indicate what happened to the second demoniac, nor does it contain any Greek word that could be translated as "was befallen."

The Holy Spirit only tells us that the second demoniac came out with the first demoniac who had the demons named Legion.

The word "befall" in English means something happens to a person and Matthew does not say that anything "happened" to the second demoniac! That is simply an assumption that is made. The only other place in the entire New Testament that the King James Version translators even use the word "befall" is in Acts 20:22: "And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there." At least in that verse we find an

## Matthew

underlying Greek word that could be translated “befall,” the Greek verb συναντάω, but there is no such Greek word in Matt. 8:33 or even any equivalent Greek word. In fact, one will not even find a verb in the last part of the sentence.

All Matthew writes is this: καὶ τὰ τῶν δαιμονιζομένων, which in English is: “and” (καὶ), a neuter article “the things” (τὰ), an article in genitive case, “of the” (τῶν), and then the noun in the genitive case, “demoniacs” (δαιμονιζομένων), and one will find that the NASB77 and YLT both translate this last phrase in verse 33 with that in mind, translating the neuter article “the things” (τὰ), as the *incident* or the *matter* of the demoniacs, as we will show below.

**Matthew 8:33** And the herdsmen ran away, and went to the city, and reported everything, including **the incident** of the demoniacs. NASB77

**Matthew 8:33** and those feeding did flee, and, having gone to the city, they declared all, and **the matter** of the demoniacs. YLT

And so we see that Matthew simply does not address this issue of what happened to the second demoniac. He did not say that anything had “befallen” the second demoniac. So Scripture does not tell us if Jesus cast demons out of the second demoniac—He may have, or He may not have.

All Matthew says regarding the *thing*, or the *matter* of second demoniac is that he came out to meet Jesus on the way with the first demoniac, and together with the first demoniac “spoke out” loudly to Jesus, “What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” After that Matthew is silent regarding this second demoniac, saying nothing of him, and Mark and Luke do not even mention him.

So where does that leave us. Matthew does not say if Jesus cast out demons of the second demoniac and Mark and Luke do not even mention him. When such a thing like this happens in Scripture, I believe, within the limits of a proper hermeneutic, the Holy Spirit

## Matthew

wants us to consider all possibilities and meditate on what each possibility could mean in conjunction with all of Scripture, for after all it was the Holy Spirit who introduced the second demoniac into the story for some purpose.

It seems there are three possibilities as to what happened to the second demoniac. 1) Jesus cast out demons of him also and so he was saved like the first demoniac. 2) Jesus did not cast out demons from him because he did not seek deliverance. 3) The second demoniac was later saved by the witness of the first demoniac. Let us consider each possibility and see what it teaches.

If indeed, Jesus did in his mercy cast out a demon from the second demoniac too, Matthew may be representing for us a picture of the coming dispensation where the Gospel of grace would go forth in power to deliver both Jew and Gentile from the bondage of the sin and the devil, even one as bound in sin and great evil like this second demoniac, which Scripture implies was a Gentile, either being a Roman, a Greek, a Syrian, or, indeed, possibly one whose ancestors had been from the nation of the Girgashites.

This possibility which should not be discounted, especially since Matthew begins the Gospel with Jesus only going to seek out the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but then ends his Gospel with Jesus giving the Great Commission to the eleven where He tells them to go and make disciples of all nations, which means not just to Israel, but to all people, i.e. the Gentiles.

In this case, Matthew could be showing by this that the Gospel was given to the Jew first, but then to the Gentile also. In this case, if Jesus cast out demon[s] from the second demoniac too, it was intended to foreshadow the coming age of grace of God wherein the Gospel would go forth to Jew and Gentile alike, since the Messiah was also to be a light to the Gentiles that all the earth might be saved! <sup>i</sup>

In this case, this story becomes an example of the great love and mercy of Jesus that even though he went to the other side to save the lost sheep of the

<sup>i</sup> **Isaiah 49:6** And he said, 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. KJV

## Matthew

house of Israel that was the first demoniac, He also in mercy saved this non-Israelite, who may have even been a descendant of that ancient Gergashite nation, just as He would do again, with another from one of those seven ancient nations of Canaan, the daughter of the woman of Canaan mentioned by Matthew in Matt.15:22-28.

But what if the second possibility is what happened? What then can we learn?

Because Matthew uses the designation the country of the Gergesenes, which nation represented great evil in the Old Testament, I believe it is reasonable to conclude that since the first demoniac was an Israelite, the second demoniac may have been, as we just said, one from that ancient nation of the Gergashites. But, if he was not an actual descendant of that nation, then, at least, he would represent those who practiced great evil like that ancient nation did.

And so, because of this, this second demoniac may have been filled with so much evil, and filled with so much hate even at the mention of the name of Jesus, that he wished no deliverance from the demon or demons that possessed him. Consequently, this is why he stood apart from Jesus and His disciples, wanting nothing to do with them.

But if this second demoniac refused deliverance, the Holy Spirit may want us to know that when we go out in Gospel witness, not all men have faith!

**II Thessalonians 3:1-2** Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified, just as *it did* also with you; <sup>2</sup> and that we may be delivered from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith. NASB77

Unfortunately, Scripture makes clear that there is a point where men so suppress the truth in unrighteousness that they are completely given over to their evil ways. Paul reveals this in Rom 1: 18-32. Such may be the case with this second demoniac.

There are cases in our Gospel witness where one must realize that some are going to oppose and resist the truth so much that sometimes the Holy Spirit may tell us to leave them alone and take the Gospel

## Matthew

elsewhere where men and women will listen. Jesus teaches His disciples to exactly do this in Matt. 10:14 and Luke 10:10-11.

**Matthew 10:14** And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. KJV)

**Luke 10:10** But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, <sup>11</sup> Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. KJV

And we learn that the apostles practiced the same thing in Acts 13:51 and Acts 18:5-6.

**Act 13:51** But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. KJV

**Act 18: 5-6** And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews *that Jesus was Christ*. <sup>6</sup> And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. KJV

And we even see Jesus doing this in this story too, for when the whole city comes out wanting nothing to do with Jesus He leaves immediately, just as He does at other times also. For example, consider the time when His witness was refused in His home village of Nazareth.

**Luke 4:28** And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, <sup>29</sup> and they rose up and cast Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff. <sup>30</sup> But passing through their midst, **He went His way**. KJV

Thus we learn by considering this second possibility that we should not be discouraged when our Gospel witness is not received. This may be the reason why

## Matthew

Matthew includes the second demoniac in the story, and yet says nothing about him being delivered from a demon. He may want us to know that even Jesus would come to places where they would not receive His witness.

This teaches us that we should not think that when our witness is not received, it is because we somehow did something wrong. Of course, I am not saying that we should never consider that possibility. We should always be humble enough to make sure that is not the case, but I am saying we should also realize that sometimes we do nothing wrong. Sometimes we will find we were filled with the Holy Spirit; we went where we were sent by God; yet there were no results!

When this happens we should not be discouraged (excepting, of course, for the fact that we are sad that none were saved), for the same thing happened to our Lord! He obviously was full of the Holy Spirit, for the Spirit was given to Him without measure (John 3:34 KJV)! And He was sent by God to that area, for the Son never went anywhere, or did anything, or speak anything of Himself, but went, did, and spoke as He was commanded by the Father (John 5:30; 8:28; 12:49)! And yet, because of the great evil and because of the unbelief of those in the country of the Gergesenes, our Lord had but one result, the first demoniac. The rest of the entire city and country did not receive Him, but implored Him to leave them alone.

If this happened to our Lord, who was very God of very God, who did such a great miracle, we should not be discouraged when it happens to us. If our hearts our right before God, and if we rely only on the power of God, if we do not rely upon the wisdom of men or upon our own natural ability, if we are filled with the Holy Spirit of God, and go only where He sends us, and yet no one listens to us, no one's heart is softened by the Word of God that is preached, or no hearts are convicted of sin, then we must realize there are places where this will happen, just as it did with our Lord in the country of the Gergesenes.

The Bible even tells us that people's hearts were so

## Matthew

hard in His hometown of Nazareth that Jesus was not able to do a mighty work, which is not to say He could not, if He so wished, for He was God Himself. But He gave men and women the free will to believe Him or not to believe Him. (See Luke 13:34.)<sup>j</sup>

**Mark 6:5-6** And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed *them*.<sup>6</sup> And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching. KJV

If we are faithful and obedient, sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit, our Lord will lead us where He desires us to go, maybe even sometimes to a place where He knows they will not accept our witness—perhaps, so that they will have no excuse before God on that Day. But God is pleased with us because we were faithful servants to obey Him and go, even though it meant total rejection. We must remember we do not save people. God saves people. Our responsibility is to bear witness. If we do that in the power and fulness of the Holy Spirit then we should not be discouraged, but we should be thankful that the Lord gave us an opportunity to witness for Him.

Unfortunately, sometimes men are so filled with evil that they refuse to be saved, even in the presence of great power and miracles, just as happened with our Lord in the country of the Gergesenes.

In the end this happens also. In the future men will do so much evil, be filled with so much unrighteousness, that they will refuse to receive the love of the truth so as to be saved, and will continue to take much pleasure in wickedness, so much so that Scripture says that God will send upon them a strong delusion to believe a lie (II Thess. 2: 9-12).

How awful is the devil that is so willing to torment men to eternal damnation! But such things do occur and Matthew's including the presence of the second demoniac in the story may be an example of that awful reality.

But recording for us that Jesus Himself was not always accepted by those He came to save, and in

<sup>j</sup> **Luke 13:34** O Jerusalem, Jerusalem which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen *doth* gather her brood under *her* wings, **and ye would not!** KJV



## Matthew

some cases was not even able to many miracles because of the disbelief and resistance of some, we should not be discouraged when the same occurs to us in our Gospel witness.

The last possibility that may have happened is that after the first demoniac went back to witness for the Lord in Gadara, and throughout Decapolis, it may be that he also went out seeking this second demoniac that he knew for so long, and by his witness, perhaps, the second demoniac was saved at a later time. This teaches us that we should encourage newly saved believers to speak to their family and friends. In this way, the Lord may bring salvation to those who may have resisted at first.

So, maybe Scripture remained silent regarding this second demoniac, because the Holy Spirit wanted us to learn from each possible scenario as we have shared. Since Scripture does not say, we cannot be dogmatic on any of the three possibilities, but we can certainly learn from considering each possibility.

And so now that we have compared all three Gospel accounts and attempted a harmonization with them all, let us continue.

After our Lord casts out the demons and they enter the swine that are then destroyed, we find that those who kept the herd flee to the city to tell them what happened. Who were these herdsmen who kept the pigs? Were they Gentiles or were they Israelites?

I believe, most certainly they must be Gentiles, for it is known that Israelites were forbidden to raise pigs anywhere in the land of Israel. The Mishnah speaks of this when it states: “They may not rear fowls in Jerusalem because of the Hallowed Things, nor may priests rear them [anywhere] in the Land of Israel because of [the laws concerning] clean foods. **None may rear swine anywhere**” (Baba Kamma 7:7—bold print mine).<sup>109</sup>

Moreover, once we also remember that every Israelite, for more than a century, remembered year by year through their celebration of the feast of dedication (John 10:22) the cleansing of the Temple from the awful pollution and desecration made by

## Matthew

Antiochus IV by his sacrifice of a pig upon the altar. Also the Jewish nation suffered so much because He also forced them to offer pigs in sacrifice. Therefore, it is highly unlikely a Jew would ever rear swine anywhere in the land of Israel.

Josephus, the first century historian describes that awful period for the Israelites as follows—

“[Antiochus IV] left the temple bare, and took away the golden candlesticks, and the golden altar [of incense], and table [of shew-bread], and the altar [of burnt-offering]; and did not abstain from even the veils, which were made of fine linen and scarlet...And when the king had built an idol altar upon God's altar, **he slew swine upon it**, and so offered a sacrifice neither according to the law, nor the Jewish religious worship in that country. He also compelled them to forsake the worship which they paid their own God and to adore those whom he took to be gods; **and made them build temples, and raise idol altars in every city and village, and offer swine upon them every day.**”<sup>110</sup>

So in all likelihood, because of all these points, the swine were owned by Gentiles, not by Jews. And because they so brazenly raised them in the land of Israel it shows that they were Gentiles who took no thought for those Israelites in whose land they dwelt, whether they were Romans, Greeks, Syrians, or even one with ancient Gergashite DNA. Indeed, as we will also see, they had no regard for the true God of Israel, but instead honored and revered their own false gods by the sacrifice of swine.

In other words, it seems the Gentiles living in the land of the Gergesenes/Gadarenes showed forth the same hateful spirit that Antiochus IV showed forth to Israel, having no concern for the God of Israel or for any Israelite living in the land.

We must remember that that not only were swine a common part of a Gentile's diet, they also played an important part in their religious services. The Gentiles routinely sacrificed pigs to certain gods for

## Matthew

appeasement, for atonement for crimes committed, as well as for a means to insure prosperity for themselves. The latter were sacrifices offered in a purification ceremony known as “lustrations.” One of the most common Roman “lustrations” was an oft repeated and well-known sacrifice called *Suovetaurilia*, which offering consisted of a pig, a sheep, and a bull. We do know that many Romans, Greeks, and Syrians, also lived in Gadara.

So what we must realize with this background information, is that when Jesus cast out those demons from a demoniac who was a fellow Jew, one well-known by all Gentiles living in that area, and then, after casting those demons out, letting them enter into the herd of swine being kept by Gentiles for sacrifice, knowing they would be soon destroyed, I believe that Jesus is making known to the Gentiles living in the land of Gergesenes, that their intransigence to the things of the God of Israel in whose land they were living is no small matter. I believe He is making known that that area should be respected as the sacred land that it is, for if the true righteous anger of our LORD was shown in “driving” out the moneychangers from the precincts of the Temple because it was holy and should be respected, then in the same way one should not forget that the land was also considered sacred and should be respected, for it was called a holy land (Zech. 2:12). By this miracle Jesus was doing what He did on a few other occasions. He was pulling back the curtain on who He was, manifesting the true nature of His Person for some to see (e.g. John 18:35-36; Matt. 17:1-2).

It was said in the Old Testament book of Zechariah that the LORD of hosts would cleanse the land of Israel of that which is unclean and that which is unrighteous.<sup>k</sup> What could be more unclean than an unclean spirit named Legion? And it was Jesus of Nazareth who removed that unclean spirit from the land!

Jesus as the Messiah did in part, in the country of the Gergesenes with the demons named Legion, what He will do in full in the future throughout the entire

<sup>k</sup> **Zechariah 13:2**

"And it will come about in that day," declares the LORD of hosts, "that **I will cut off the names of the idols** from the land, and they will no longer be remembered; and **I will also remove the prophets and the unclean spirit from the land.**" NASB77

## Matthew

land of Israel, and, indeed, throughout the entire earth as the LORD of hosts, at which time He will also lay hold of that old Serpent, Satan, the Devil, and cast him into the Abyss for a thousand years.

The LORD Jesus was prefiguring what He would do when He comes again a second time.

Remember that when the seven sons of Sceva in the book of Acts, called exorcists, witnessed what Scripture says God was doing through Paul, which included sending out demons from men, that they attempted to do the same thing. But when they tried the demon had no fear of them, and so overpowered them and wounded them (Acts 19:11-16). And yet when Jesus confronted a whole Legion of demons at once, numbering at least two thousand, they trembled in His presence, and fled out of the man to the swine. Why? Because Jesus was not a mere man like the seven sons of Sceva, nor a mere man who needed the power of God to cast out demons like the Apostle Paul, He was none other than the LORD God Himself, who had authority over all of creation and authority over every demon (Col. 1:16; 2:15). Paul could only cast out demons by the authority of another; the LORD Jesus cast out demons by His own authority, which the demons recognized and so trembled. This story demonstrated that Jesus of Nazareth was the LORD God in human flesh who in the future would show forth the same authority over all the earth.

So we continue to see that Matthew by the format of His Gospel is continuing to show how Jesus the Messiah was fulfilling the Law and the Prophets by His teaching and by His doings. But we also see that Matthew is repeatedly showing Jesus the Messiah was the LORD to anyone who had ears to hear and eyes to see, and was willing to search the Scriptures to see if these things were so (Acts 17:11).

With that in mind, there was another way that Matthew was demonstrating that Jesus was the LORD by the inclusion of this miracle in his Gospel.

From another perspective, we can see the only one who could “righteously” destroy the herd of swine was He who never gave up the possession of the herd,

## Matthew

which could only be God Himself. Anyone else who would destroy the flock would be held liable for the destruction of another's property.

The Creator of that property was the true owner of that property, and that was no one else but God Himself! The entire earth and so also the land of Israel belonged to the LORD, for "the earth is the LORD's and the fulness thereof" (Psalm 24:1a KJV).

He owns the cattle on a thousand hills and so, of course, every kind of animal, and so if some were keeping some of those animals in a place which He did not authorize, He had every right to do what He would with those animals.

**Psalm 50:10-11** "For every beast of the forest is Mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird of the mountains, And everything that moves in the field is Mine." NASB77

And then again, from yet another perspective, we can also see the Deity of Christ being expressed through Jesus making this righteous judgement against those keeping this herd of swine, apparently, keeping them with the same spirit of contempt as shown by Antiochus IV to the God of Israel and to His people.

When Jesus the Son of God, the LORD, makes known His Deity and His authority and power to all present by this miraculous act, the significance of it should not be lost to the mind of the reader of Matthew's Gospel, for in the Old Testament the pre-incarnate Son of God made a similar judgment in regard to the livestock of Pharaoh. He destroyed the livestock of Pharaoh and of many other Egyptians also because of their disregard and contempt for the God of Israel and His people (Exodus 9:13-19).

And Scripture declares that that this judgment was made against their herds so Pharaoh might learn "the earth is the LORD's" (Ex. 9:29). I am sure the significance of this would not be lost in the mind of any Israelite witnessing this miracle made by this judgment of Christ, if his or her heart was open to the things of the LORD.

## Matthew

This miracle shows forth that Jesus is the LORD who also allowed many of the animals in Egypt to be killed, and yet, just as He was righteous in doing so then, He was righteous in doing so now, for as Moses said, “the earth is the LORD’s,” and as another prophet of God said, David: “The earth *is* the LORD’S, and the fulness thereof; the world, **and they that dwell therein** (Psalm 24:1 KJV)

So by casting out the demons, and by allowing them to enter the swine to be drowned, not only was He making known to the Gentiles the sanctity of the land and the sanctity of the Law of God, He was also making known His power and authority as the LORD to any Israelite that was present who might have witnessed the Divine miracle.

Also by this miracle of Jesus, Matthew is showing us that Jesus is continuing to fulfil the Law and the Prophets by all that He did, i.e. by His “doings.” Jesus is fulfilling that part of the Law and the Prophets, which the children of Israel in the land of the Gergesenes were not doing, which was making known the purposes of God to any Gentile or stranger living in the land of Israel.

The Law taught in Deut. 31:12 the principle that every Israelite should make known the truth of God’s Word to any stranger living in the Land of Israel. (Let me provide the Targum of Deut. 31:12, which elaborates and makes comment on this particular commandment of the Law by its paraphrasing of the verse.)

**Deuteronomy 31:12 Assemble the people**, the men, that they may learn, the women, that they may hear instruction, the children, that they may partake the benefit (reward) of those who bring them, **and your sojourners who are in your cities, that they may behold the majesty of the law, and be reverent all of them before the Word of the Lord your God**, and observe to do all the words of this law. (The Jerusalem Targum) <sup>111</sup>

This specific law, even though it was intended to be observed only once, every seven years in the year of release (Deut. 31:10), did not mean it did not reflect

## Matthew

a more general principle intended to be observed by God's people anytime and anywhere.

The prophets of old spoke of this, as did David himself, who was a prophet, in such places as Psalm 96:1-7, when he exhorts the children of Israel to bear witness to Gentiles the sacredness, holiness and grandeur of God.

**Psalm 96:1-7** Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. <sup>2</sup> Sing to the Lord, bless his name: proclaim his salvation from day to day. <sup>3</sup> **Publish his glory among the Gentiles,** his wonderful works among all people. <sup>4</sup> For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised: **he is terrible above all gods.** <sup>5</sup> **For all the gods of the heathen are devils:** but the Lord made the heavens. <sup>6</sup> Thanksgiving and beauty are before him: holiness and majesty are in his sanctuary. <sup>7</sup> **Bring to the Lord, ye families of the Gentiles, bring to the Lord glory and honour.** Brenton's LXX Version

And this is exactly what Jesus the Son of David was doing, which, apparently, the children of Israel living in that area of Israel were no longer doing (even though, if they were truly keeping their part of the Covenant, they should have been doing). And so, in fulfilment of that evangelical spirit of the Law and Prophets, we see Jesus, the Son of David doing here in the land of the Gergesenes, in the presence of man Gentiles, what the Law and the Prophets expected every Israelite should do, bearing witness to the nature, character and purpose of God.

And so, in the light of all we have shared above, as to who Jesus was as to His Person, and who He Jesus was, as to His doing, we must ask, "What was the reaction of those of Israel living in that area to our Lord's fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets and the evangelical witness and manifestation of His power as the LORD God in the miracle of the swine?" Were they thankful that the "rearing" of pigs, which no Israelite was allowed to do, was no longer being done in the land? Were they thankful that such a herd that was used for sacrifice to false gods in their sacred land

## Matthew

was finally “gone” from their coasts? The answer is No! Instead they wanted the Lord Jesus, Himself, to be “gone” from their coasts!

We see this in the fact that the last verse of this chapter, Matt. 8:34, declares that the “whole city” came out to meet Jesus and beseech Him to depart from their coasts!

The fact that Matthew says it is the “whole city” that seeks to remove Jesus from their coast is most revealing. It is revealing because we know from the histories of Josephus that many Jews lived in the city of Gadara at that time (Josephus, *War of the Jews*, Book II, 18.5). This means that those Israelites living in the city and the countryside did not care that swine were being raised in their land, or, at least they did not show it, for if they cared, they could have remained in the city when they heard the news of the miracle, or if they did go, they could have refrained from asking Jesus to leave their coasts! This is just another indication that Israel was not keeping their part of the Covenant of the Land, as Jesus made clear in His Sermon on the Mount, and as Matthew is trying to demonstrate in his Gospel.

Israel was clearly warned against countenancing the practices of those seven nations of Canaan which included eating the flesh of swine which had been offered to false gods (and which by general principle I believe could apply to other heathen practices, such as was done by Antiochus IV, and as those presently being done by those Gentiles who were keeping the herd of swine for food, profit, and sacrifice to false gods).

**Isaiah 65:3** This is the people that provokes me continually in my presence; they offer sacrifices in gardens, and burn incense on bricks to devils, which exist not. <sup>4</sup> They lie down to sleep in the tombs and in the caves for the sake of dreams, *even* they that eat swine's flesh, and the broth of *their* sacrifices: all their vessels are defiled. Brenton's Version

Because of this, if Israel was truly keeping their part of the Covenant of the Land they would have



## Matthew

welcomed our Lord's miracle of casting out of the demons from a fellow Israelite and the subsequent removal of the swine from their country.<sup>1</sup>

And so, by their rejection of Jesus, rather than a giving of thanks to God for what Jesus did, it shows those Israelites living in the city of Gadara and the surrounding countryside were not living righteously in accordance with God. If they were living righteously before God, they would have recognized the righteous act of Jesus, for it was the Father who told Jesus exactly what to do, which was exactly what Jesus did! God the Father told Jesus to let the demons to enter the swine, knowing they would be destroyed. And so, since everything Jesus did was in accordance with God the Father, which meant in accordance with righteousness, of which, the Law and the Prophets, were but a manifestation, Matthew is showing that if Israel was keeping their part of the Covenant of the Land, they would have recognized the righteous act of Jesus and would not have implored Him to leave their coasts, especially if they believed He was the promised Messiah who would deliver them from the bondage of Rome and cleanse their land.

Remember, the fame of Jesus and His claim to be the Messiah had spread throughout Decapolis and Syria, which meant those in Gadara knew that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah. So, leaving aside for the moment, that their view of the Messiah coming to immediately and physically set up His kingdom was false, the fact that that was their view, and the fact that they knew Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, and yet they did not rejoice in the righteous act that He did, shows they had simply had no desire in regard to the things of Scripture or the purposes of God.

This may be another reason why the designation of the country of the Gergesenes was still being used by Matthew without any explanation. That designation for that region of Israel may have been used because all of Israel knew that their fellow brethren, who were living in that area of Israel, were very clouded in their thinking by their association with the Gentiles living in that land. Perhaps Matthew knew that that

<sup>1</sup> **Deut. 12:29-30**

"When the LORD your God cuts off before you the nations which you are going in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land,<sup>30</sup>

**beware that you are not ensnared to follow them,** after they are destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How do these nations serve their gods, that I also may do likewise?' <sup>31</sup> "You shall not behave thus toward the LORD your God, **for every abominable act which the LORD hates they have done for their gods;** for they even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods. <sup>32</sup> "Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it. NASB77

## Matthew

designation would direct the mind of any Israelite who might read his Gospel, back to the ancient nation of the Girgashites, and how the Girgashites and others from the seven nations had so caused their forefathers to be compromised and misled.

Thus we can see by that designation being used that the one of the two demoniacs was an Israelite (because Jesus came to seek the lost sheep of the house of Israel), and the other one was a Gergesene, or at least, a Gentile who is being used to symbolize one from that ancient nation (perhaps, in the same manner that Jews in that day would use the name “Edom” to represent Rome).

In this way, by performing this miracle, our Lord is reminding the children of Israel of the danger of making close association with those who hate God and worship idols, which shows again by His “doings” that He was fulfilling the Law and the Prophets.

The Law clearly warned Israel of the danger of these false associations in Deut. 7:1-5, and, we find the Prophets reminded them of the same thing in Isaiah 65:2-5. The Law says—

**Deuteronomy 7:1-6** When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; <sup>2</sup> And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: <sup>3</sup> Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. <sup>4</sup> For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. <sup>5</sup> But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. <sup>6</sup> For thou *art* an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that *are* upon the face of the earth. KJV

## Matthew

And the prophets say (as we already quoted)—

**Isaiah 65:2-6** I have stretched forth my hands all day to a disobedient and gainsaying people, to them that walked in a way that was not good, but after their sins. <sup>3</sup> This is the people that provokes me continually in my presence; they offer sacrifices in gardens, and burn incense on bricks to devils, which exist not. <sup>4</sup> They lie down to sleep in the tombs and in the caves for the sake of dreams, *even* they that eat swine's flesh, and the broth of *their* sacrifices: all their vessels are defiled: <sup>5</sup> who say, Depart from me, draw not nigh to me, for I am pure. This is the smoke of my wrath, a fire burns with it continually. <sup>6</sup> Behold, it is written before me: I will not be silent until I have recompensed into their bosom. (Brenton's Version)

Is it not interesting in the light of what Isaiah said above we see that Scripture says that the first demoniac “had *his* dwelling among the tombs,” i.e. graves (Mark 5:3 KJV), and, if he was not actually eating swine's flesh as mentioned above with the second demoniac, he was certainly connected with it in the story.

So this may be one of the reasons the Holy Spirit had Matthew include the story of the second demoniac in the story. He was focusing the attention of his brethren on the point that they were not really following the Law, being faithful to their part of the Covenant of the Land, just as their ancient forefathers were not following the Law. And, just as their ancient fore-fathers were oblivious to their true condition, so too, they were oblivious to their true condition. If that was not the case, why did they, with the rest of the city, implore Jesus to leave them alone, and why in the end of his Gospel did so many turn their backs on Jesus, their Messiah?

And so, by focusing the story in his Gospel on the two demoniacs and the destruction of the herd of swine, and then the reaction of the whole city, Matthew is trying to show his fellow Israelites that their hearts had become so dull, their hearts so hard of hearing, and their eyes so dim, that in God's eyes they had become just like their forefathers of old who also

## Matthew

had become dull, deaf and blind (Matt. 13:15)

So by the brevity of Matthew's account, and yet his added information of that second demoniac, not included by Mark or Luke, we see three lessons we should all learn—

1) The danger of close associations with those who hate God and His truth, symbolized by these two demoniacs, one an Israelite, and one a "Girgashite," or at least a "Gentile." Compare, if you will—

**I Corinthians 15:33** Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals." NASB77

**II Corinthians 6:14** Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? <sup>15</sup> And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? <sup>16</sup> And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>17</sup> Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, <sup>18</sup> And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. KJV

2) Our Lord's hate for those practices, meant to ensnare His people, symbolized by the presence the herd of swine that was drowned. Compare, if you will—

**Revelation 2:15** So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. KJV

**Revelation 2:20-23** But I have *this* against thee, that thou sufferest the woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess; and she teacheth and seduceth my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. <sup>21</sup> And I gave her time that she should repent; and she willeth not to repent of her fornication. <sup>22</sup> Behold, I cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of her works. <sup>23</sup> And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know

## Matthew

that I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto each one of you according to your works. ASV

**3)** The danger of self-deception, symbolized by those Israelites who did not recognize their compromised ways, or the righteousness of our Lord's ways. Compare, if you will—

**Proverbs 30:12** There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, yet are not washed from their filthiness. (Darby's Version)

**Revelation 3:17** Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: KJV

How sobering yet also wonderful is Matthew's closing account of chapter eight with this incident wherein Matthew continues to show that Jesus was the LORD God of the Old Testament made flesh, He who was incarnated for our salvation.

He was indeed the LORD who stills the wind and the seas, commanding all of creation, and He was also the LORD over all unseen host, the demons that so oppressed men below!

Some people claim that Jesus never claimed to be God. This is not so. He directly claimed to be God in the Sermon on the Mount, and He claimed to be God in His "doings" by doing that which only God could do!

What mortal man, only by a word of his mouth, could cause wind and waves to not slowly subside, but to subside immediately! The answer is no one but God!

Or what mortal man, simply by His own presence and a word from his mouth, cause a whole legion of demons to tremble, to beg Him to not send them into the abyss? Imagine that, thousands of demons, feared for their immediate future because of just one lone person standing before them. What person could do

## Matthew

such a thing, unless it was the Person of the Son, the Only-Begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all time, co-equal, co-eternal, and consubstantial with God the Father!

Or, who among mere men could equal the love of the LORD Jesus Christ who went to “the other side” of the Sea of Galilee to the country of the Gergesenes, to save just one lost sheep of the house of Israel, knowing that all the rest there would reject Him! You might answer that a few among men might do so. That is true, I will not disagree; but who among men would have the love to “go to the other side,” so to speak, from heaven to earth, becoming flesh, suffering much, dying alone on the cross for the sins of the whole world? The answer is no one, but He who is God the Son, our LORD Jesus Christ.

Does not our Lord Jesus Christ over and over show that He was the LORD Jehovah, very God of very God, demonstrating His full and eternal power? Indeed, He does!

But equally so, does not the LORD Jesus also show by His “doings” that He was the Christ, the Son of Man, the true Rabbi of Israel, who rightly interpreted the Law and the Prophets, righteously fulfilling it all down to the smallest jot and tittle, showing men that they should seek first “the kingdom of God and His righteousness,” and showing men a righteousness which surpassed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees.? Indeed, He does.

Beloved, not only did Jesus come that we might have life and life more abundantly, He also came to “do righteousness,” giving us a way to walk in, walking, as He walked, in His path of true righteousness.

**Psalm 85:13 Righteousness** shall go before **Him**, and shall make **His** footsteps **a way to walk in**. ASV (capitalization mine)

**I John 2:6** He that saith he abideth in **Him** ought himself also to walk even as **He walked**. ASV

How wonderful is Jesus our LORD!

---

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Are there any “Girgashites,” if you will, affecting our lives, our fellowships, our Churches? Or, in the parlance of today, are any Girgashites affecting one’s social network? Indeed, I believe there are, for we are told that in the end time demons will continue to seek to spread their lies and false teachings through those they can ensnare. Paul warns us all in I Tim 4:1, that some will fall away from the Faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.

**I Timothy 4:1** But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. (ASV)

And so, could it not be said that this demonic activity during the end times will really be no different than what happened to Israel of old through the Girgashite nation, wherein, some fell away from the Faith, if you will, by giving in to their seducing ways?

Now, most certainly, it must be said, a Christian can never be demon-possessed, but a Christian certainly can be demon harassed (e.g. Paul and the spirit of divination in Acts 16:16-18), and most certainly the enemy of our souls is ever walking around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may seduce and devour (I Pet. 5:8). And because of the Holy Spirit’s warning in I Tim. 4:1, we should not be surprised if the roaring lion might seek to devour us through the use of seducing spirits and doctrines of demons.

In that light, since the name Girgashite is associated with the seven nations of Canaan, who in turn are associated with idols, which idols we are told are demons in Psalm 106:34-39—

**Psalm 106:34-36** They did not destroy the peoples, as the LORD commanded them,<sup>35</sup> but they mingled with the nations, and learned their practices,<sup>36</sup> and served their

## Matthew

idols, which became a snare to them. <sup>37</sup> They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons, <sup>38</sup> And shed innocent blood, The blood of their sons and their daughters, Whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; And the land was polluted with the blood. <sup>39</sup> Thus they became unclean in their practices, And played the harlot in their deeds. NASB77

—and since (even though demons cannot possess a Christian because of the Holy Spirit in us—I John 4:4) demons still resort to deception and harassment in the form of false teachings meant to cause one to depart, or to fall away, from the Faith, should we not then be ever vigilant, with whom we associate! Should we not take heed to the Holy Spirit’s warning in the Word?

**I Timothy 4:1** But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons NASB77

**I Timothy 1:19-20** keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith. <sup>20</sup> Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme. NASB77

So beloved, since the New Testament warns us all of such a strategy of demons, we must always be vigilant to never allow those Girgashites of our own day, i.e. false Christians who, naming the Name of Christ, teach false doctrines and false lifestyles, to ever infiltrate our lives, Churches, fellowships, or, as I said before, any social network one might have.

Moreover, in that light we should also realize that sometimes such evil spirits will try to ensnare Christians by bringing a spirit of toleration into the heart of a Christian where they develop a mindset that says, “Does it really make any difference if one believes that? Or, “Is it really that bad? After all, they are not hurting anyone.” When this happens they let man’s definition of love (which is really a demon’s definition of love), to replace God’s definition of love. Thus they become like those Christians of old in Thyatira who tolerated the false teaching of Jezebel.



## Matthew

**Revelation 2:20-25** But I have *this* against thee, that thou sufferest [**tolerate**] the woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess; and she teacheth and seduceth my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols.<sup>21</sup> And I gave her time that she should repent; and she willeth not to repent of her fornication.<sup>22</sup> Behold, I cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of her works.<sup>23</sup> And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto each one of you according to your works.<sup>24</sup> But to you I say, to the rest that are in Thyatira, as many as have not this teaching, who know not the deep things of Satan, as they are wont to say; I cast upon you none other burden.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless that which ye have, hold fast till I come. ASV

So when this happens what are we to do?

Scripture tells us to not give such ones any credibility or reception into our Churches, our homes, or in today's world, we might also say, into any social network. Scripture says to not even give them a God speed! In other words to not tolerate them or their false teaching in any way.

**II John 1:9-11** Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.<sup>10</sup> If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed:<sup>11</sup> For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. KJV

And yet this commandment of the Lord is often ignored and such ones are still received and given credibility, if not directly in person, then indirectly through their books, wherein there are still being received via their writings. How is that any different?

If the apostle John said not to receive them into the Church, into the fellowship of the saints, where they are able to disseminate their false doctrines; how is it then ok to receive them into the fellowship of the saints by receiving their writings, whereby they are still teaching? The point for not receiving them into the Church was so they could not teach, but if one

## Matthew

receives their writings, and recommends any of their books, are they not still allowing them to teach!

Where is the spiritual discernment of the Christian in all of this? In accordance with II John 1:91-11, one must conclude there is no spiritual discernment!

For example, there was one particular person in the field of linguistics, who claimed to be a Christian, and yet was one who had fallen away from the Faith, or was one who never was in the Faith, being a false Christian. Yet, today, this one is routinely praised by well-known Evangelical leaders, who describe his work concerning Scripture and the translation of Scripture, as being ground-breaking, beneficial, clear, inspiring, etc. And so he is gladly quoted § and his books are recommended to young (and old) Christians, despite his lack of holding to the Faith. So his teaching is still being allowed into the fellowship of the saints, in complete disobedience to the commands of the apostle John!

This particular person, whose work is so praised by some Evangelical leaders actually denied verbal plenary inspiration, believing instead that the Bible contained factual errors; he also assigned the creation story to myths, and even denigrated the LORD Himself, having declared it was the LORD who was disingenuous in what He said to Adam, while it was the Serpent, the Devil, who was more honest and forthcoming in what he said to Eve! How terrible!

He even taught that it was Evangelical fundamentalists who were the ones distorting the nature of Jesus Christ; yet it was he who declared that the doctrine of the Deity of Christ was unorthodox!

Is that not an example of a Girgashite, or one who gave heed to seducing spirits and the doctrine of demons? And yet he is still tolerated and in some cases still welcomed to teach in the midst of fellow Christians by recommending and giving credibility to his writings which are filled with false doctrine.

Even though he is now dead, he is still living through his books and some of his books regarding linguistics and translation theory are still praised by certain Evangelical leaders, considering his work as

§ It is important to note, of course, that we are talking about quotes being made of those who claim to be Christian, to be speaking truth in the name of Christianity, whose writing is seen as being spiritually insightful and edifying. We know that there are other types of quotes that are made for other reasons. For example we all know that Paul himself, at one time, quoted a pagan poet (Acts 17:28). We are not speaking of quotes of that nature. We are talking about quotes made by those who pretend to be spiritual, speaking the truth in love, but who are in reality speaking falsehood, in falsehood, for they have departed from the Historic Christian Faith, while claiming to be Christians who are sound in the Truth.

## Matthew

being ground-breaking! The Holy Spirit told us to never receive such a one, not even to give such a one a God speed, and yet that warning is completely being ignored by many Christian leaders today.

What is happening is that instead of weeping about such an enemy of the cross of Christ, as the Apostle Paul wept of those in his day (Phil. 3: 18), this person's work in the field of translation theory is praised! Rather than avoiding the worldly and empty chatter of such a one, because such chatter spreads like gangrene, some Evangelical leaders still recommend his work, thereby encouraging the spread of his gangrenous teaching, which, as Paul says leads to the Faith of some being upset (II Tim. 2:15-18).

Where is the spiritual discernment of such Christian leaders who praise his work and recommend his work in total disregard to the warning of an apostle of Christ, who was inspired by the Holy Spirit to give the warning to us all? \*

Why do they not follow the commands of another apostle of Christ, John, and so treat him as one who should never be received into the circle of Christians in order to teach—which command is ignored and violated, when any his writings are given credibility.

Now some might say, "Well, we do not recommend any of those writings which are wrong, such as was mentioned above, but only those writings which are not wrong, but rather are beneficial." Where does the apostle John make that distinction! He says that if one does not abide in the doctrine of Christ, he is not to be received at all! John does not tell us, "Just be careful to not accept his bad teaching; other than that you can still receive him." Again, beloved, where is the spiritual discernment in some of our Evangelical leaders who encourage young students and old to read his work because they consider it beneficial and ground-breaking?

For certain Evangelical leaders to recommend the writings of anyone who falls away from the Faith, or never was in the Faith, all because they believe some of his works are ground-breaking and beneficial, would be no different than recommending, for

\* To be fair to such Christian leaders, it may be they simply did not know what this certain professor believed, although it is not hard to find out, which makes me wonder if they really did know, but simply did not care, for they considered his teachings of translation theory as being the more important thing. But on the other hand, maybe they simply did not know, and if they had known, they would not have recommended his work. (Of course, this still does not address why they would think his translation theory was a good thing in the first place.) There have been times when I have quoted ones who appear sound in the Faith, but then to my chagrin I find out later they were not in certain aspects. So, for that reason I removed their quotes where I could, in submission to II John 1:9-11, and also, so as not to give them any credibility before the saints. (This will explain my caution in my Preface.) The Lord's honour is what is paramount!

## Matthew

example, the writings of a Mormon teacher who wrote about the importance of family, whereupon, because some viewed it as beneficial, his books on that subject were then recommended to fellow Christians. I do not think an Evangelical leader would justify such a thing by saying, “Well, we do not recommend those writings of his which are wrong, but only those writings which are not wrong, which we view as beneficial!”

The Holy Spirit makes it clear such a one should never be received into our circle of fellowship—period. The Holy Spirit did not say you can receive the writings of one who denigrates the Son of God, if you consider some of his writings to be beneficial!

Beloved, as Jesus said, “A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. (Mat 7:18). The one who believed and taught the things mentioned above was not a good tree. He was, and still is, through his writings, a bad tree. Why would any Christian leader ever think he could make a contribution to our understanding of the Bible? He cannot, for a bad tree cannot produce good fruit.

If a Christian considers the work of such a one as ground-breaking and so praise-worthy, and so, still recommends certain writings of his, and at the same time claims to be walking by the Holy Spirit, then he or she, by their recommendation, is saying that the Holy Spirit is recommending those certain writings and so also considers his work as praise-worthy! That, dear brethren, is an impossibility for the Holy Spirit of God would never praise the work or recommend the work of one who denigrates the Saviour, and blasphemes the Holy Bible as filled with many errors!

Next, we are told in II Timothy 3:1-5 that such seducing spirits (which we are likening to the Girgashites of old), will also deceive Christians into denying the power of godliness, which, of course, is the power of Christ living in us as Paul says in Gal. 2:20. Why is the power of godliness the power of Christ living in us? The answer is because Christ is Godliness. He is God manifested in flesh, the power and wisdom of God (I Tim. 3:16; I Cor. 1:23-24).

## Matthew

**II Timothy 3:1-5** But know this, that in the last days grievous times shall come. <sup>2</sup> For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, <sup>3</sup> without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, <sup>4</sup> traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; <sup>5</sup> holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof: from these also turn away. ASV

**I Timothy 3:16** And without controversy great is the **mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh**, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. KJV

**I Corinthians 1:23-24** But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; <sup>24</sup> But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, **Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.** KJV

So such teaching that has a form of godliness, yet denies the power of godliness, would also fall into that Girgashite category of seducing spirits and doctrines of demons that is deceiving like the Girgashites of old.

And what are we told to do with those who bring this teaching? We are commanded to avoid them (assuming they do not repent (II Tim. 3:5).

But, as with those mentioned above who disregarded the Holy Spirit's command regarding those who had fallen away from the Faith, I am afraid many Christian leaders are doing the same with this warning. They are not avoiding such men. who have a form of godliness, but who are denying the power; instead they are welcoming them and their teachings. They are not heeding the warnings of the New Testament, as those Israelites in Matthew's day, living in the country of the Gergesenes, were not heeding the warnings of the Old Testament. And so, what is happening because they are not avoiding such teachers who are denying the power of godliness, some Christians end up developing some of the same

## Matthew

characteristics of those very teachers.

In II Tim. 3:1-5, we see the first characteristics of those who deny the power of godliness is that they are *lovers of self*. This is the teaching of seducing spirits, for the simple reason it contradicts the teachings of Jesus, who taught us this—"If any *man* will come after me, **let him deny himself**, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23b KJV).

Seducing spirits and demons love to contradict the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, following the same tactic the Devil used in the Garden of Eden when he contradicted God's Word given to Adam and Eve, which word was, they would die if they ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Instead, he told them outright, in total contradiction to God's word, "You surely shall not die!" (Gen. 3:4).

Those spirits and demons, like their head, the Serpent, do the same today. Jesus said to "deny" self, they say be "lovers" of self. Once such a teaching is accepted, as it is being accepted by many Christians today through a new field called Christian Psychology, the door is opened for all the other things listed in II Tim 3:1-5 to then enter into the lives of Christians (to a greater or lesser extent).

And so this, too, is another sign of that Girgashite way of life being taught by seducing spirits in these last days. Such Girgashite like spirits, if you will, will always teach a way that is different than the way of Christ, and of the apostles—a way that not only dilutes and denigrates the Historic Christian Faith, but also a way that dilutes and denigrates the way of the cross as found in the Word of God (Luke 9:23; Gal. 2:20).

Their "different" way is also expressed in the thinking of the "world," through those who are also filled with these doctrines of demons, and who, as a result, have developed their own set of "truths," which truths they then seek to impose outright upon Christians. And if they are not able to do that, they then the world is content to slowly mislead and deceive Christians, so their so-called truths, can be slowly mixed in with the absolute truths of God's

## Matthew

Word, whether it be those truths given to us regarding our Christian living, or those truths in the Word of God concerning what constitutes sin, or, for example, those truths that are held dearly by faith, such as the Verbal Plenary Inspiration of the Scripture, or such truths as the Virgin birth.

Once that is accomplished seducing spirits know that absolute truth will become so diluted and watered down, that it will become “relative.” They know, even if it takes a generation or two, that it will lead to some Christians becoming apostate, fallen from the Faith, willingly holding on to doctrines that denigrate the Saviour, whether it be His deity, His virgin birth, or even the veracity of His Word by a denial of Verbal Plenary Inspiration. Is this not what has happened throughout Church history where Churches, once considered bastions of the truth, are now completely apostate, “churches” in name only?

And this happens because Christians quickly forget that error creeps forward slowly, by only slight alterations of the truth, for the Devil knows the slightest alteration of the truth will spread like leaven, leading to a whole host of evils, wherein the true nature, character, and purpose of God will become completely obfuscated.

The “world”, which is controlled by Satan and his evil spirits, desires the Church and the Christian to accept their truths, their virtues, and their thinking, their thinking of what truly promotes the well-being of a person, of what brings about a person’s true happiness, or of what real love is for one’s fellow human being. All this is what Scripture call the wisdom of the world and the philosophies of man.

Therefore, seducing spirits will always seek to get the Church and the Christian to accept that wisdom (even if in part). And what are characteristics of that wisdom and philosophy of the world it seeks Christians to accept, if even in part? That wisdom of the world includes such things as what they view to be the truth of human behavior, i.e. their psychologies, what they view to be the truth of social relationships, including family relationships, i.e. their sociologies,

## Matthew

what they view as the truth of morality, i.e. their philosophy of relativism, what they view as the truth of mankind's past, i.e. their theories of evolution, what they view as the hope for the mankind's future, i.e. their utopia of humanism, and, finally, what they believe was and is the basis for all of the above—a love and a belief in one's self, wherein “humankind” is destined to evolve for the better, all based upon their belief in the innate goodness of man (thus their hope of utopia).

All these things the “world,” being under the control of the “god of this world,”<sup>m</sup> the Devil, seeks to impose upon the mind of the Christian and the fellowship of the saints, and he does so by deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons!

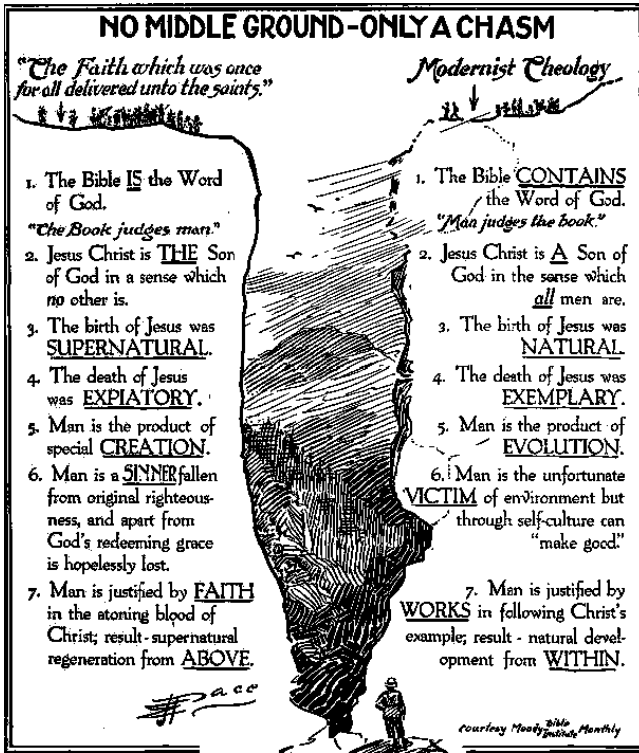
The enemy of our souls will always seek to do this, first by watering down the importance of the foundational and fundamental truths of Christianity, which explains why the Church is always confronted first, by things like the denial of certain aspects of the Historic Christian Faith and the weakening of the doctrine of the Verbal Plenary Inspiration of Scripture. These things were undermined a hundred years ago by such things as “Higher Criticism,” and of late, by a psychological linguistic approach to the understanding of Scripture and the translation of Scripture, whereby subtle changes are being introduced into God's Word, which in turn lead to the Historic Christian Faith being undermined, and the way of Christ being obscured.

The Devil knows full well that if he can undermine Scripture, he can ultimately undermine the nature of Christ, and then the whole truth of Christ and God. Consider this picture (Fig. 11 on next page) drawn a century ago that was used to warn Christians of the same tactics of Satan that were being used back then. (Unfortunately, what Evangelicals would not allow to come in through the front door a hundred years ago, they are now allowing to come in through the back door today. The spiritual battle has not ended, for roaring lion is still seeking whom he can devour.)

<sup>m</sup> **II Cor. 4:4** In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (KJV)



Fig. 11—No Middle Ground – Only a Chasm <sup>112</sup>



Dear Christian, have you ever wondered how some Churches today, who centuries ago were bastions of the Truth, now teach a morality that is relative, wherein some practices and lifestyles that were always considered sin, are no longer considered sin, but are now openly embraced in their churches?

The answer is the thinking of world, and the false teaching of seducing spirits and doctrines of demons (the Gergashites of our day), which thinking and teaching slowly infiltrated some of those Christian Churches of old, which in turn produced a leaven which over a period of a hundred years or so completely leavened those very same Churches. Why?—because its leaders were not vigilant in following the Word of God with its warnings.

Beloved, we must not think this will never happen

## Matthew

to us, or to our Churches of today. Christ Himself has prophetically warned us about it. Christ Himself, walking in the midst of those Churches in the book of Revelation that were first established by the apostles, tells us that one of those seven Churches had a “name that they are alive yet they are dead” (Rev. 3:1), and another one of those seven Churches, the last one, was filled with Christians who believe they are “rich, and increased with goods, and in need of nothing,” and yet they do not know they are “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Rev. 3:17). And for those who believe that those mentioned were never Christians in the first place, one must remember that God does not chasten those who are not His true children (Heb. 12:5-8). And so since He chastened those in Laodicea they were saved (Rev. 3:19). And even if one still disagrees, the question must be asked, “What did Christian leaders do in the late first century that allowed an apostolic Church to get so filled so quickly with Christians in name only!

This is the one of the lessons we can learn from the story of Jesus and the two demoniacs, living in the country of the Gergesenes. The world with its seducing spirits and doctrine of demons can be represented under this name of the “Gergesenes,” and like those ancient Gergashites, the world with the seducing spirits and doctrine of demons, still tries to ensnare the Christian and the Churches with subtle distractions, and slight alterations of the truth, so that over time, once a foothold has been gained, they can bring about a full and outward denial of the truth, and of Him who is the Truth.

Dear brethren, we can encapsulate all this in two verses of Scripture: “Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (I John 2:15-16), and then the verse, “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is

## Matthew

the enemy of God” (James 4:4).

In that light may we never make friendship with the world, or embrace any truth that is not found in Scripture as being a source for our Christian doctrine, or a source for our Christian living, or a source for the work of the Lord, or a source for translating Scripture.

All that the Church and the Christian needs is found in Christ the Wisdom of God, and in Christ the Power of God, in Him who is the living Word, who gave us the Written Word, who thereby left us His words and teachings whereby we may live and grow thereby. Amen.

**Colossians 2:8-10** See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. <sup>9</sup> For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form,<sup>10</sup> and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority. NASB77

**Psalm 19:7** The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. KJV

**I Peter 2:1-3** Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, <sup>2</sup> **As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:** <sup>3</sup> If so be ye have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious. KJV

**II Tim. 2:15** Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. KJV

---

# Matthew

## Endnotes

- 
- <sup>1</sup> George V. Wigram, *Analytical Greek Lexicon* (Samuel Bagster and Sons, London, 1852) pg. 419
- <sup>2</sup> W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Fleming H. Revell Company, Old Tappan, NJ, 1981) pg. 124 (Vol. 2)
- <sup>3</sup> J. N. Darby, "Preface to the German Testament," *The Present Testimony*, Vol. XV, 1867, pg. 466
- <sup>4</sup> B. P. Harris, *Bearing Witness to the Original Principles of the Early Brethren: As Found in a Letter Written by A. N. Groves to J. N. Darby in 1836 (Updated Version) Including Some Excerpts from his Journal* (Assembly Bookshelf, Sacramento, 2014) pg. 9-10
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 11-12
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 14
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 16
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 19
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 51
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>11</sup> Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, Vol. VI* (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1988) pg. 650
- <sup>12</sup> Bickersteth, Edward Henry, *The Trinity*, (Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, MI, 1957), pgs. 74-75
- <sup>13</sup> Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah: Translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1933) pg. 675
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 676
- <sup>15</sup> Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament, Volume I* (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1960) pg. 65
- <sup>16</sup> Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament, Volume I* (Moody Press, Chicago, 1958) pg. 80-81
- <sup>17</sup> G. H. Lang, *Pictures and Parables: Studies in the Parabolic Teaching of Holy Scripture* (The Paternoster Press, London, 1955) pg. 306
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 306-307
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 307-308
- <sup>20</sup> Paulist Fathers and other Eminent Authorities, *The Light of the Cross in the Twentieth Century, Volume III* (The Office of Catholic Publications, New York 1905) pg. 90-91
- <sup>21</sup> John Kitto, Henry Burgess, Benjamin Harris Cowper, eds., *The Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record, Volume I* (Alexander Heylin, London, 1855) pg. 289-290
- <sup>22</sup> John Calvin, John Pringle, tr., *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians, Vol. I* (Calvin Translation Society, Edinburgh, 1848) pg. 139-141 (Bold print is mine.)
- <sup>23</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee, Volume 5, I Corinthians—Revelation* (Thru the Bible Radio, Pasadena, 1983) pg. 18

<sup>24</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections: In Three Parts* (James Crissy, Philadelphia, 1821) pg. 346-348

<sup>25</sup> George Cutting, *Safety, Certainty, and Enjoyment: If a believer...Why not sure of salvation? If saved...Why not happy?* (Assembly Bookshelf, Sacramento, 2017) pg. 13-18, 20-21

<sup>26</sup> S. T. Bloomfield, *A Greek and English Lexicon to the New Testament* (Longman, Orme, Brown, Green & Longmans, London, 1840) pg. 110

<sup>27</sup> S. T. Bloomfield, *A Greek and English Lexicon to the New Testament* (Longman, Orme, Brown, Green & Longmans, London, 1840) pg. 34-35

<sup>28</sup> A. Plummer, ed., *The Epistles of St. John, The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, Volumes 77-79* (At the University Press, Cambridge, 1906) pg. 117

<sup>29</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee, Volume V, I Corinthians—Revelation* (Thru the Bible Radio, Pasadena, 1983) pg. 785

<sup>30</sup> “Βρυγμός (from perf. Pass. of βρύχω)... a gnashing or crashing.” Greville Ewing, *A Greek Grammar and Greek and English Scripture Lexicon Containing all the Words which Occur in the Septuagint and Apocrypha as well as in the New Testament, Second Edition* (James Hedderick & Co., Glasgow, 1812) pg. 165

<sup>31</sup> Hippocrates, Paul Potter, tr., *Hippocrates, Vol. V, Affections and Diseases I & II* (Harvard University Press, London, 1988) pg. 264 (Ἄλλη πλευρίτις πυρετὸς ἴσχει καὶ βρυγμός καὶ βῆξ ξηρὴ— Another pleurisy: fever, chattering of the teeth, and a dry cough are present)

<sup>32</sup> [www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/American\\_english/gnash/](http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/American_english/gnash/)  
Accessed 6/14/2022.

<sup>33</sup> William Rider, *A New Universal English Dictionary: or, A Compleat Treasure of the English Language, Tracing the Words from their Primitive Fountains; Explaining the Various Senses in which they are used, and Expounding all the Technical Terms, in the Several Arts, Sciences, and Manufactures, Compiled with the Utmost Care and Assiduity* ( W. Griffin, London, 1759) under listing for GNASH

<sup>34</sup> John Kitto, ed., *The Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature, Vol. II* (Mark H. Newman & Co., New York, 1851) pg. 784-785

<sup>35</sup> S. T. Bloomfield, *A Greek and English Lexicon to the New Testament* (Longman, Orme, Brown, Green & Longmans, London, 1840) pg. 64

<sup>36</sup> S. T. Bloomfield, *A Greek and English Lexicon to the New Testament* (Longman, Orme, Brown, Green & Longmans, London, 1840) pg. 219

<sup>37</sup> Henry Alford, *The New Testament for English Readers, Vol. I, Part I* (Rivingtons, London, 1868) pg. 52

<sup>38</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *Jesus the Messiah* (Longmans, Green, and Co., New York, 1898) pg.149-151

<sup>39</sup> Erwin W. Lutzer, *Your Eternal Rewards: Triumph and Tears at the Judgment Seat of Christ* (Moody Publishers, Chicago, 2015) pg. 13-14

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 54

- 
- <sup>41</sup> Erwin W. Lutzer, *Your Eternal Rewards: Triumph and Tears at the Judgment Seat of Christ* (Moody Publishers, Chicago, 2015) pg. 60
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid., pg. 71
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid., pg. 76
- <sup>46</sup> George V. Wigram, "The Cross of Jesus Christ, What are its Uses and Applications, by the Spirit, in Scripture?" *The Inquirer*, Vol. II (J. Wertheimer and Co., London, 1840) pg. 148
- <sup>47</sup> William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary* (Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 1995) pg. 1728
- <sup>48</sup> C. T. Studd, *The Chocolate Soldier* (Christian Literature Crusade, Fort Washington, Penn.) pg. 17
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid., pg. 20-21
- <sup>50</sup> Ibid., pg. 4
- <sup>51</sup> Elisabeth Elliot, *Shadow of the Almighty: The Life and Times of Jim Elliot* (HarperSanFrancisco, 1989) pg. 247
- <sup>52</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>53</sup> R. C. H. Lenski, *Commentary on the New Testament, the Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel* (Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., Peabody, MA, 1998) pg. 336-337
- <sup>54</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments: Some Chapters on the Transmission of the Bible* (Fleming H. Revell Co., Westwood, NJ., 1963) pg. 122-123
- <sup>55</sup> Ibid., pg. 124
- <sup>56</sup> J Sidlow Baxter, *Divine Healing of the Body* (Zondervan Publishes, Grand Rapids, 1979)
- <sup>57</sup> R. A. Torrey, *Divine Healing: Does God Perform Miracles To-day?* (Fleming H. Revell, New York, 1924) pg. 13
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid., pg. 35-37
- <sup>59</sup> Ibid., pg. 14
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid., pg. 43-47
- <sup>61</sup> Ibid., pg. 52, 53-54
- <sup>62</sup> John Calvin, *Commentary on Harmony of the Evangelist, Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (Calvin Translation Society, Edinburgh, 1845) pg. 251-252
- <sup>63</sup> Edward A. Thomson, *The Four Evangelists: With the Distinctive Characteristics of Their Gospels* (T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1868) pg. 28-32
- <sup>64</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume I* (Longmans, Green and Co., London, 1883) pg. 93-94
- <sup>65</sup> John Lightfoot, *The Whole Works of John Lightfoot: The prefaces of former editions: indexes of places, subjects discussed, Talmudic and Greek words together with a tract entitled "Battle with a wasp's nest", Volume I* (G. Cowie and Company, London, 1825) pg. 215
- <sup>66</sup> Isidore Singer, Cyrus Adler, eds., *The Jewish Encyclopedia: A Descriptive Record of the History, Religion, Literature, and Customs of the Jewish People*

## Matthew

---

*from the Earliest Times to the Present Day, Volume III* (Funk & Wagnalls, New York, 1907) pg. 116-117

<sup>67</sup> John Lightfoot, *Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae: Hebrew and Talmudical exercitations upon the Gospels, the Acts, some chapters of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and the first Epistle to the Corinthians, Vol. IV* (At the University Press, Oxford, 1859) pg. 280

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 14-15

<sup>69</sup> Isidore Singer, Cyrus Adler, *The Jewish Encyclopedia: A Descriptive Record of the History, Religion, Literature, and Customs of the Jewish People from the Earliest Times to the Present Day, Volume III* (Funk & Wagnalls, New York, 1907) pg. 432-434

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 434

<sup>71</sup> Rahmani, Levi (1981). *Ancient Jerusalem's Funerary Customs and Tombs: Part One. The Biblical Archaeologist*, 44(3), p. 175. doi:10.2307/3209608

<sup>72</sup> Isidore Singer, Cyrus Adler, *The Jewish Encyclopedia: A Descriptive Record of the History, Religion, Literature, and Customs of the Jewish People from the Earliest Times to the Present Day, Volume III* (Funk & Wagnalls, New York, 1907) pg. 432

<sup>73</sup> W. E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Fleming H. Revell Company, Old Tappan, 1981) pg. 281

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 157 (Part II)

<sup>75</sup> John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament, Vol. I* (Mathews and Leigh, London, 1809) pg. 591

<sup>76</sup> John Albert Bengel, *Gnomon of the New Testament, Vol. II* (Smith, English and Co., Philadelphia, 1860) pg. 89

<sup>77</sup> A. Cohen, tr., *The Babylonian Talmud: Tractate Berakot, Translated into English for the First Time, with Introduction, Commentary, Glossary and Indices* (At the University Press, Cambridge, 1921) pg. 119-120

<sup>78</sup> Rahmani, Levi (1981). *Ancient Jerusalem's Funerary Customs and Tombs: Part One. The Biblical Archaeologist*, 44(3), p. 175. doi:10.2307/3209608

<sup>79</sup> J. Gregory Mantle, *Beyond Humiliation, The Way of the Cross*, (Moody Press, Chicago, IL) Pg.28-29

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 26-28

<sup>81</sup> Rahmani, Levi (1981). *Ancient Jerusalem's Funerary Customs and Tombs: Part One. The Biblical Archaeologist*, 44(3), p. 175. doi:10.2307/3209608

<sup>82</sup> James Hastings, John A. Selbie, eds., *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, Vol. II* (T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1908) pg. 591-592

<sup>83</sup> JTA Daily News Bulletin, Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Vol. 70, No. 50, New York, Friday, March 13, 1992) pg. 4

<https://www.jta.org/1992/03/13/archive/israels-disastrous-winter-howls-out-with-fierce-wind> accessed 0/5/2020

<sup>84</sup> John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament, Vol. I* (Mathews and Leigh, London, 1809) pg. 83

<sup>85</sup> John Kitto, *A Cyclopeda of Biblical Literature, Vol. II* (Mark H. Newman, New York, 1845) pg. 596

---

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, (Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2004), pg. 121-123

<sup>88</sup> Alan F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven, Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism*, (E.J. Brill, Leiden, Netherlands, 1977), pg 164

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., pg. 183-84

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., pg. 180

<sup>91</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments: Some Chapters on the Transmission of the Bible* (Fleming H. Revell Company, Westwood NJ, 1963) pg. 177

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., pg. 190

<sup>93</sup> John Albert Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1886) pg. 188

<sup>94</sup> Philip Schaff, ed., *A Popular Commentary on the New Testament: By English and American Scholars of Various Evangelical Denominations, Volume I* (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1878) pg. 83

<sup>95</sup> William M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book: Or, Biblical Illustrations Drawn from the Manners and Customs, the Scenes and Scenery of the Holy Land, Volume II* (Harper & Brothers Publishers, New York, 1868) pg. 34-37

<sup>96</sup> John Kitto, *The Pictorial Bible: Being the Old and New Testaments According to the Authorized Version, Volume 4* (W. and R. Chambers, London, 1856) pg. 168

<sup>97</sup> Mersten, Birgit, and Ernst Axel Knauf. "From Ġadar to Umm Qais." *Zeitschrift Des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* (1953-) 104 (1988): 128-45. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27931333>

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Fig. 4—*Map of Israel after the Conquest* is an edited adaption of *No. 2. Map of Palestine After the Conquest*, A. R. Ohman, Map Engraver, published by L.U. Snead, Warren St., New York, 1900—Public Domain (USA)—edited with alterations, changes and additions to reflect issues discussed in this book. Sourced from: L.U. Snead, *The Bible Students' Cyclopædia* (L. U. Snead & Sons, Publishes, Upland, Ind., 1900) Map No. 2, back of book.

<sup>100</sup> Fig. 5—This is an edited adaptation of the *Sketch-Map of Canaan before the Conquest* (1880) in Public Domain (USA). Some locations as well as topographical indicators were removed to facilitate better viewing of the seven locations of the seven nations in the land of Canaan, in accordance with those listed in in Deut. 7:1. What is interesting with this map is the identification of the Girgashites, i.e. the Gergesenes as occupying the southeaster portion of the lake. As was stated in the notes and comments, while the Country of the Gergesenes (Girgashites) encompassed much of the Country of the Gadarenes, the northern limit of the Country of the Gadarenes only reached to the southern border of the district of Hippos. Thus, while the Country of the Gergesenes (Girgashites) included not only the southeastern portion of the shore of the Sea of Galilee, it also extended down to the southeastern portion and beyond Jordan over the Yarmouk River, whereas the Country of the Gadarenes only extended



## Matthew

---

up to the lower southeastern portion of the Sea of Galilee (Chinnereth). Also it should be noted that the map was shortened in the north to focus more on the land of Israel. Other than that all things remain the same. If one wishes to look at the original map it was sourced from page 156 of *A Dictionary of the Bible*, entitled *Sketch-Map of Canaan before the Conquest*— Philip Schaff, ed., *A Dictionary of the Bible* (American Sunday-School Union, Philadelphia, 1880) pg. 156

<sup>101</sup> C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament, Vol. I, the Pentateuch* (Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Mass., 1989) pg. 303-304

<sup>102</sup> David Chyträus, *Commentarius In Matthaeum Evangelistam, Ex Praelectionibus Davidis Chytraei collectus* (*Commentary on the Gospel according to Matthew assembled from the lectures of Davidis Chytraei*) (Johannes Crato, Vitebergas, 1560) pg. 197

<sup>103</sup> S. T. Bloomfield, *A Greek and English Lexicon to the New Testament* (Longman, Orme, Brown, Green & Longmans, London, 1840) pg. 420

<sup>104</sup> John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament, Vol. I* (Mathews and Leigh, London, 1809) pg. 449

<sup>105</sup> Henry Alford, *The Greek New Testament: With a Critically Revised Text, a Digest of Various Readings, Marginal References to Verbal and Idiomatic Usage, Prolegomena, and a Critical and Exegetical Commentary, Vol I* (Longmans, Green and Co., London, 1894) pg. 340

<sup>106</sup> A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Hodder & Stoughton ; George H. Doran, New York, 1923) pg. 883

<sup>107</sup> A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament, Volume I* (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1930) pg. 295

<sup>108</sup> Henry Alford, *The Greek New Testament: With a Critically Revised Text, a Digest of Various Readings, Marginal References to Verbal and Idiomatic Usage, Prolegomena, and a Critical and Exegetical Commentary, Vol I* (Longmans, Green and Co., London, 1894) pg. 518

<sup>109</sup> Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah: Translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1933) pg. 342

<sup>110</sup> Flavius Josephus, William Whiston, tr., *The Works of Flavius Josephus, Vol. I* (Henry G. Bohn, London, 1845) pg. 497-498

<sup>111</sup> J. W. Etheridge, *The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel, with the Fragments of the Jerusalem Targum* (Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts and Green, London, 1865) pg. 656-657

<sup>112</sup> Ernest James Pace, *Christian Cartoons* (Sunday School Times Company, Chicago, 1922) pg. 11

# Matthew

---

## **Books from Assembly Bookshelf**

**Anthony Norris Groves**

On the Nature of Christian Influence

**George Cutting**

Safety, Certainty, and Enjoyment

**B. P. Harris**

Bearing Witness to the Original Principles of the Early Brethren:  
As Found in a Letter Written by A. N. Groves to J. N. Darby in 1836  
(Updated Version)

Church Principles of the New Testament, Vol. I

Church Principles of the New Testament, Vol. II

Our Worship is Important

Press on to Spirituality

Studies in the Usage of the Greek Word *Μονογενής*

The Christian and Difficult Times in the 21st Century

Understanding the Trinity

Upon this Rock: An Exposition of the Glories of Christ in

Matthew 16:13-18, Along with the Foundation of the Faith

The Gospel According to Matthew: Notes and Comments, Part I

The Gospel According to Matthew: Notes and Comments, Part II

The Gospel According to Matthew: Notes and Comments, Part III-A

The Gospel According to Matthew: Notes and Comments, Part III-B

The Gospel According to Matthew: Notes and Comments, Part III-Supplements

Sermon on the Mount: An In Depth Study

What is Biblical Discipleship?

What is Revival? Should Brethren in the Lord Pray for Revival?

**If one would like to freely download these books in digital format, they are  
available at [www.silicabiblechapel.com](http://www.silicabiblechapel.com)**

## **About the author:**

B. P. Harris is an elder in the Church that meets in The Bible Chapel in Sacramento, CA. He was saved at a young age in 1959 at Church of the Open Door in Los Angeles, CA, during the ministry of J. Vernon McGee, and now resides in Northern California where he has been happily married for over 42 years with his loving wife. The Lord has blessed them with five daughters.