

The Gospel According to Matthew

Notes and Comments

Part III-B
Chapter IX

The Deity of Christ

Biblical Commentary Series

B. P. Harris

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Assembly Bookshelf
Sacramento

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Preface from Part III-A

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.*”¹ 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.’”²

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 21st 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 21st 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 20th century and early 21st 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 20th century and early 21st 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 20th 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."³ 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.”⁴

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.⁵

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! ⁶

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. ⁷

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. ⁸

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. ⁹

“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.” ¹⁰

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 20th and 21st 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.¹¹

BPH

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Matthew

were, indeed, addressing Jesus as “Lord” (meaning

Matthew 9

9:1 And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city.

9:2 And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

9:3 And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.

9:4 And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?

9:5 For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?

9:6 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.

9:7 And he arose, and departed to his house.

When we begin chapter 9 we see the continuation of Matthew bearing witness to the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ in the story of the man sick of palsy. As with the leper of chapter 8 and the centurion’s servant and Peter’s mother-in-law, as well as many others we see that Jesus in love and mercy heals those who were sick.

In chapter 8 this was shown to demonstrate that our Lord was the Promised Messiah of Israel, the Christ, the One who “took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses,” which, in turn, demonstrated that He was none other than the LORD God of the Old Testament. In chapter 9 it is to show the same, but with a little different perspective. Chapter 8 points to Isaiah 53 to show how the doings of Jesus as the “Messiah,” showed forth his Deity. In other words, Matthew is putting emphasis on the works that the Messiah would do once He came to Israel, on His acts of deliverances

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as prophesied in Isa. 53:3-4 (also cf. Isa. 61:1).

Here, in the beginning of chapter 9, this emphasis continues, but Matthew now reveals another aspect of how Jesus continues to fulfill Scripture, the Law and the Prophets, this time with the title Son of the Man, which he first used in Matthew 8:20 with the emphasis on His Humanity in that title, but this time he is revealing an emphasis on His Deity in that title, which we presently explain.

Perhaps, it might help to provide a short quote (with some minor changes) from *Understanding the Trinity* regarding this, our Lord's title, as the Son of Man.

“And so, when this title is used of our Lord, it also should remind us of His humiliation (Phil. 2:7-8). Hebrews 2:9 tells us He was made “a little lower than angels.” What condescension our Saviour was willing to endure. Even though He was the Creator, the Eternal Son of God, He was willing to take upon Himself the lowly title “Son of Man,” and yet, His title “Son of Man” was more than just a Semitic idiom. It was also a literal statement of fact. The word “Son,” in “Son of Man,” was meant to convey a temporal generation and derivation, just as the word “Son” in “Son of God” was meant to convey His eternal generation and derivation from God the Father.

By referring to Himself by the title the “the Son of the Man,” Christ is literally declaring (as to His humanity) that He was the “Son of the Man (Adam).” Remember, “Adam,” is many times, translated simply as “Man,” for he was the first Man. When Christ took on the “seed of Abraham” (Heb. 2:16), He was also being shown to be from the seed of Adam, for Abraham descended from Adam, and so Christ was the Promised “Seed,” the One promised to mankind from the very earliest pages of the Bible (Genesis 3:15).

Christ not only had to be the Son “of” God, being consubstantial with God, in order to secure our salvation, He also had to be the Son “of” Man, being consubstantial (in a limited analogous way, of course) with Man, in order to save our souls. That is why He is the only one who can save mankind. He is the Son of God, as to His deity, because He eternally *proceeded* from God His Father (Jn. 8:42), and the Son of Man as to His humanity, because he temporally *proceeded* from His father Adam through Mary

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(Luke 3:23-38).

In addition, the fact that the title, “Son of Man,” was considered more than just an Old Testament idiom, (although even in that, as we have shown the word “son” still does not lose its literal connotation) is demonstrated and clearly revealed because of the underlying Greek text in the title “Son of Man” as used in New Testament.

When the writer of Hebrews quotes from the Old Testament passage of Psalm 8 in Hebrews 2:6 he uses the same underlying Greek words found in the Septuagint for “son of man,” υιος ανθρωπου. These words are without the definite article (anarthrous) showing that the character or quality of man is being emphasized. The translators did this because the Hebrew phrase was a Semitic idiom as we have already mentioned, and by making substantives anarthrous, they were emphasizing the same idiomatic meaning, that being, of course, one who is human, a human being. As far as I can tell, this anarthrous construction is used in the LXX every time the phrase “son of man” is used in the Old Testament, or at least I can say the majority of the times.

However, what is most revealing is that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John did not follow this same grammatical construction when they recorded Christ’s assertion that He was the Son of Man. They wrote it as, ο υιος του ανθρωπου, literally, the Son of “the” Man

By using the article before Man, the writer, or should I say the Holy Spirit, is emphasizing identity, as opposed to the character or essence of the anarthrous construction. The Holy Spirit is emphasizing to us that Christ was the Son of “the” Man (Adam). **Most of the time Christ was not declaring He was the Son of Man spoken about in Daniel, but, most of the time, He was declaring He was the Son of “the” Man – the Promised Seed of Genesis 3:15 – mankind’s only hope of salvation.** He was declaring that He was the One that generations had long sought and prayed for, the One that was promised to mankind’s very first parents so long ago. What a wonderful Saviour He is!

Therefore, the title “Son of Man” is not a Semitic idiom when used of our Lord in the New Testament (except in the few places). * It is meant to be understood in a literal sense.

For example, when the Lord tells us in Matt. 20:28 that the “Son of Man” came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many, He was not using a Semitic idiom which simply meant, as a human being He was going to give His life as a ransom for many.

*A few places, where the title “Son of Man” is used in a more general sense, i.e. simply carrying the idea of a human being without a direct reference to Adam, can be found in such verses as Heb. 2:6 and Rev. 1:13.

In both cases the word is anarthrous, indicating the emphasis is on substance and not on identity.

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No, He was saying the Son of “the” Man was going to give His life a ransom for many. Only the Son of “the” Man could make such a sacrifice. Only as the Promised Seed, could the Son of God ransom the many. Only He was the promised “Seed,” the son of Adam, as to His humanity, being of the seed of the woman. The title makes a contrast with His other title, the “Son of God,” which also is not a Semitic idiom, but is to be understood literally as to His deity. Christ is the Son of God as to His deity and the Son of Man as to His humanity. Both bespeak generation and derivation (the former, of course, being eternal).¹²

Truly, He was, as we will see, the Man, the LORD, the Promised Seed of Gen. 3:15. And, as such, He was the only one who could procure forgiveness for mankind by His death upon the cross.

Others who have testified to this wonderful truth are such ones such as Frédéric Louis Godet. He said it this way regarding the title of the Son of the Man with the promise made in Gen. 3:15:

“It is generally acknowledged at the present day, that the title Son of man, by which Jesus preferred to designate Himself, is not simply an allusion to the symbolical name in Dan. vii., but that it sprang spontaneously from the depths of Jesus' own consciousness...The term Son of man is generic, and denotes each representative of the human race (Ps. viii. 5; Ezek. xxxvii. 3, 9, 11). With the art. [article] (*the* Son of man), this expression contains the notion of a superiority in the equality. It designates Jesus not simply as man, but as the normal man, the perfect representative of the race. **If this title alludes to any passage of the O. T., it must be to the ancient prophecy, “*The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head*” (Gen. iii. 15).**”¹³

And so we need to fully understand how the title “the Son of the Man” alludes to the “seed of the woman.” This connection is understood by realizing that Gen. 4:1 is an interpretation of Gen. 3:15.

Gen. 3:15 says the Promised Seed will be the seed of the woman. But Gen. 4:1 reveals He will also be of the seed of Adam because Eve considered her firstborn to be the Promised seed of Gen. 3:15! In other words, if she did not have the understanding that the Promised Seed would also be the Son of the Man,

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meaning Adam, then she never would have made the declaration that she did, for she knew her firstborn male child was begotten by Adam. (But this will be discussed in detail in our *Excursus on the Son of the Man who is the Promised Seed in Genesis 3:15*—found in the supplements.) But she was mistaken in one point; the Promised Seed that would be of her and Adam could not be directly of her, i.e. her firstborn, because He would have to be born of a virgin.

But for now, suffice it to say that it is important to have the correct translation of Eve's declaration Gen. 4:1 in order to understand how it provides the proper interpretation of Gen. 3:15 and the Promised Seed.

Unfortunately, I believe the correct translation of Gen. 4:1 is not that which we have in most of our English Bibles (although it is in some Bibles); but it is found in some Bible Commentators and in what Hebrew scholars have testified to over the centuries. Additionally, in some Bibles this correct translation has actually been provided in the margins as an alternate translation of the text. (This too will be discussed in greater detail in our *Excursus*, i.e. if one wishes to pursue further study on this issue.)

For example, if one looks into the margin of that phrase in the New American Standard Bible (1977) at Gen. 4:1, one will see an alternate reading of: "man, the LORD" (not "man with *the help* of the LORD). And if one looks into marginal notes of some early editions of the King James Version, one will also find similar readings; for instance, one such edition from 1662 provides this alternate reading along with its reference to Gen. 3:15; the alternate translation in the margin simply reads, "the man, the Lord, Gen. 3:15."¹⁴ Thus, this alternate translation suggested for the Hebrew text would then appear as follows: "I have gotten a Man, the LORD.

Thus, with this translation, we see **that Gen. 4:1 actually becomes the first prophetic word concerning the future incarnation of the Eternal Son of God**, wherein the Messiah, the Promised Seed of the Woman, will not only be Man, **but He would also be the LORD Himself**. (For a deeper study, see

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our *Excursus on the Son of the Man who is the Promised Seed in Genesis 3:15* in the supplements)

Moreover, this also reveals that the LORD in the Garden of Eden explained to both Adam and Eve (in part) further details regarding the Promised Seed that would crush the Serpents head, which makes Eve's declaration, more than just a declaration of her of thanks, it also make it a declaration of her faith in the promise made by God.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon mentions Eve's faith in a sermon he preached on September 19, 1886 entitled, *Believers as Blessed as the Blessed Virgin*. In his sermon he said the following regarding Gen. 4:1 and Eve's faith—

“The promise given at the gate of Eden—‘the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head’— had aroused the desires of all the godly women of Israel. They longed to behold this promised One, the great Messiah, the restorer of the race; and they desired children in the hope that amongst those children might appear the promised seed. It is probable that mother Eve herself thought that her firstborn was the promised Deliverer; for, according to some readings, she said, **“I have gotten a man, the Lord.”** Though she was greatly mistaken, yet still it showed her faith, and her hope. All the families of Israel watched for the appearing of the Desire of all nations, the Glory of his people.”¹⁵

So we see that the title the Son of the Man points back to Adam through Eve in the Old Testament, which means it points to the promise made concerning the Seed of a Woman that would bruise the head of the Serpent, i.e. the Devil. And in the New Testament this same truth is borne witness to in the genealogy of our Lord through his mother Mary in Luke 3: 23-38, which we will now discuss.

In Matthew's Gospel we see the genealogy of Joseph reaching back to David and then to Abraham. However, in Luke's we see the genealogy of Mary, starting with Eli, her father going back to Seth, and then, of course, to Adam (by Eve).

Matthew starts with Abraham going forward to

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Joseph the husband of Mary. Luke starts with Eli, Mary's father going backward to Adam.

Since Luke reveals that Eli is the father of Mary, we realize that Eli would be the maternal grandfather of Jesus. And since a descendant in the Hebrew culture can also be considered to be the son of an ancestor (which is why Jesus could be called the son of David, the son of Abraham, without directly being their son—Matt. 1:1), Jesus could equally be called the son of Eli, who was His grandfather according to the flesh through Mary, and so, he could be also be called the son of Matthat, his great-grandfather, and so on and so forth all the way back to Adam, where Jesus could also be called the son of Adam, i.e. the Son of “the” Man (cf. Gen. 2:23 KJV, which begins with the phrase, “And Adam [Heb. *Adam*] said,” and ends with the phrase “out of Man [Heb. *Iysh*]”).

And this is exactly what Luke does in his Gospel. But this is not readily seen in most English translations, because the word “son” is added in front of each ancestor going all the way back to Adam in Luke 3: 23-28, instead of it only appearing one time in the list of ancestors going backward, as it does in Greek beginning in verse 23.

The KJV does show this, by letting the reader know that the word “son” was not in the Greek text after verse 23, by putting the word *son* in italics before each ancestor.

Unfortunately though, in many modern versions, because of their false theory of adapting a dynamic equivalence philosophy of translation, they do not even put the word in italics, or, at least, provide a side note to indicate the word is not in the original but is added by the translators. This misleads many Christians into believing the Holy Spirit inspired Luke to write the word “son” before each ancestor's name when He did not. And what is even more misleading is that some modern versions go further in adding other words to Scripture, even repeating the previous name before each ancestor. In other words, some mislead the reader into thinking that Luke wrote, “Joseph was the son of Heli and Heli was the son of

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Matthat and Matthat was the son of Levi,” and so forth and so on until it says, “Enosh was the son of Seth. Seth was the son of Adam. Adam was the son of God.”

This is most unfortunate for it robs God’s people of their spiritual heritage given to us by the Holy Spirit in the Word of God and the truth Luke was declaring. It keeps them from being able to learn something about that wonderful promise made to us all in Gen. 3:15, and as to how it was fulfilled in Jesus, being both the Son of the Man and the seed of the Woman (or, at least, robs God’s people of having the opportunity to decide for themselves if this is what Luke meant in his genealogy).

Darby’s version, however, is one of the few translations that show, very precisely, in English the actual construction of the Greek text. It shows that Luke uses the word “son” in the whole genealogy only once in verse 23 when speaking of Jesus.

In other words, Luke is not saying that each ancestor was the son of the previous ancestor, as implied in those versions that add words to Scripture (unbeknownst to the reader) and say that Joseph was the son of Heli, and Heli was the son of Matthat, and Matthat was the son of Levi,” which is not what I believe Luke is saying! The fact is, that what they are doing it is not even a translation, but rather their own personal opinions and interpretations being added to the text and then presented to the reader that that is what Luke wrote. They do not even put their added words into italics to let the reader know it is not words in the Greek. Such opinions are fine for a teacher, but not for a translator. At best, if they believe Luke could be saying what they assert, they could as we said above, put their interpretation into italics, so as to let the reader decide for themselves, rather than making the decision for them.

So what Luke is really saying is that Jesus is the son of each ancestor, in a similar way that Matthew could call Jesus the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Matthew 1:1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ,

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the son of David, the son of Abraham. KJV

Luke is simply doing the same thing going backwards, except he is saying it by using the word “son” once of Jesus, and then applying it to every ancestor thereafter. This is what Darby allows the reader see this in his literal translation.

Below one will be able to see how he translates it. (I will begin with verses 23-24 and then skip to verse 31b, and then to verse 34, and then to the end, verses 37-38 to provide the reader the sense of how it applies all the way back to Adam. The only adjustment I will add to his translation is to put the words “as was supposed” in parentheses, to more clearly show the supposed relationship only applied to the first in the list, to Joseph, and to no one else)

Luke 3:23-24, 31b, 34, 37-38 And Jesus himself was beginning to be about thirty years old; being (as was supposed) son of Joseph; of Eli,²⁴ of Matthat, of Levi, of Melchi, of Janna, of Joseph...^{31b} of Nathan, of David...³⁴ of Jacob, of Isaac, of Abraham...³⁷ of Methusala, of Enoch, of Jared, of Maleleel, of Cainan,³⁸ of Enos, of Seth, of Adam, of God! (Darby's Version)

As one can see by Darby's word for word translation, Luke is not saying that Joseph was the son of Eli (for Joseph was the son of Jacob, being begotten by him, as seen in Matthew 1:16).^a

Rather, Luke is saying that Jesus was beginning to be about 30 years old, being as was supposed by all the son of Joseph. But since Jesus was not his son according to the flesh, Luke wrote “as was supposed the son of Joseph.”

But Jesus, indeed, could be known as the son “of” Eli according to the Hebrew way of thinking, since the Virgin Mary was the daughter of Eli, which in turn meant in the Hebrew way of thinking, that Jesus could be known as a son of Eli, according to the flesh (which in English we would call the grandson of Eli), for while there was no genetic connection with Joseph, there was a genetic connection with Eli through His mother Mary. The Greek of Luke makes

^a **Matthew 1:16**
And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. KJV

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this so clear. So as Luke continued on with his genealogy, Jesus would next be known as “of” Matthat, meaning in the Hebrew way of thinking he would also be known as a son of Matthat (in English great-grandson).

You see, Luke is not saying that Eli is the son of Matthat. He is saying Jesus is the son of Matthat. Darby’s translation makes this easier to understand. And so it continues—Jesus is “of” Levi (meaning the son of Levi), and so on and so forth to the next ancestor and to the next, reaching to “of” David, and then to “of” Abraham, which is why Jesus is also known as the Son of David, and the Son of Abraham.^b This continues reaching back to “of” Enos, “of” Seth, “of” Adam, and, finally, “of” God!

In other words, Luke is bearing witness to the fact that Jesus is truly “the Son of “the” Man” (i.e. Adam) through the genealogy of His mother Mary. Darby’s version allows the reader to see that Luke was saying it was only from Joseph that Jesus was supposedly a son by physical descent. Physically, through the Virgin Mary, Jesus was indeed considered the son (grandson) of Eli, etc., going up the line to being the son of David (or as Paul says, “of the seed of David”—cf. Rom. 1:3), going all the way back to being of the seed of Abraham, and finally to being of the son of Adam, by physically being descended also from Eve, his great-grandmother multiplied many times over.

I believe this is why the Woman was prophetically named “Eve” by Adam. The name Eve means “life,” because she, by being the mother of all living, became the great-grandmother, many times over, of He who was the Promised Seed, the “Living One” (Luke 24:5 NASB77), the one who came to give “life,” to all who might believe in Him (John 11:25).^c

What wondrous grace, forgiveness and love of God is this—sin and death first came about by Woman, but God then chose Woman whereby deliverance and eternal life could be brought about through the birth of the Seed of a Woman, of a virgin, of Mary, the mother of our LORD. Woman, who became the source of

^b **Matthew 1:1**

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. KJV

^c **John 11:25**

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: KJV

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death by the wiles of the devil, became a source of life by the wisdom of God!

In the same way—was not the grace, forgiveness and love of God shown to Man? Sin and death next entered into the world by the sin of Man, i.e. of Adam (Rom 5:12),^d but then also righteousness and eternal life came about by Him who was, according to the flesh the Son of the Man (Adam)!^e

This could only be, of course, because after Luke says that Jesus is “of Adam,” i.e. “the Son of “the” Man,” he includes one more genitive, i.e. τοῦ θεοῦ (vs. 38 “of” God)! Luke makes it known that Jesus is also “of God!” And this is why “the Son of the Man,” the Promised Seed, has the authority to forgive sin and bring life to all who believe, for not only is He the Son of the Man, according to His human nature, but also He is the Son of God, according to His Divine Nature! So he is indeed, as Paul says, the Second Man, who is the LORD from heaven.^f

In other words, by translating Luke’s genealogy correctly and as literally as possible in English, we learn that by being of the seed of the Woman (i.e. the Virgin Mary) Jesus is also of the seed of Mary’s father, Eli, the seed of Mary’s grandfather, Matthat, and so on to the seed of Mary’s great, great-grandfather many times over, David, just as Paul says in II Timothy 2:8 (also cf. Rom 1:3).^g

II Timothy 2:8 Remember that Jesus Christ **of the seed of David** was raised from the dead according to my gospel: KJV

Moreover, since David was of the seed of Abraham, so is Jesus, just as Paul also says in Gal. 3:16.

Galatians 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. KJV

And since Abraham was of the seed of Adam, so also must be Christ, which makes Him the “Son of “the” Man,” being of the seed of Adam.

^d **Romans 5:12**

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: KJV

^e **II Corinthians**

15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (1Co 15:22 KJV)

^f **I Corinthians**

15:47 The first man *is* of the earth, earthy: the second **man** *is* the **Lord** from heaven. KJV

^g **Romans 1:3**

Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; KJV

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So Scripture teaches that the Messiah was Divine by being eternally begotten “of God the Father.” He was the Only-Begotten Son of God the Father from eternity. But the Scripture also teaches the Messiah was human, by being of the seed of David, of Abraham, and ultimately of Adam, i.e. the Son of “the” Man, the Promised Seed of the Woman, being born of the Virgin Mary in the fulness of time (Μαρία, ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς—Matt. 1:16)

Matthew Henry succinctly brings all this together in his commentary.

“Matthew designed to show that Christ was the son of Abraham, in whom all the families of the earth are blessed, and that he was heir to the throne of David; and therefore he begins with Abraham, and brings the genealogy down to Jacob, who was the father of Joseph, and heir-male of the house of David: but Luke, designing **to show that Christ was the seed of the woman**, that should break the serpent’s head, traces his pedigree upward as high as Adam, and begins it with Eli, or Heli, who was the father, not of Joseph, but of the Virgin Mary. **And some suggest that the supply which our translators all along insert here is not right, and that it should not be read *which*, that is, which Joseph was the son of Heli, but which Jesus...was the son...of Eli, of Matthat, &c., and he, that is, Jesus, was the son of Seth, of Adam, of God.**”

Then he concludes as follows—

“The genealogy concludes with this, *who was the son of Adam, the son of God*. (1.) Some refer it to Adam; he was in a peculiar manner the *son of God*, being, more immediately than any of his offspring, the offspring of God by creation. (2.) Others refer it to Christ, and so make the last words of this genealogy to denote **his divine and human nature**. He was both the *Son of Adam* and the *Son of God*, that he might be a proper Mediator between God and the sons of Adam, and might bring the sons of Adam to be, through him, the *sons of God*.”

In this light, let us now turn back to the portion of Scripture before us in Matt. 9:1-8, where those Scribes (which Luke calls teachers of the Law—Luke 5:17),

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thought to themselves that Jesus was blaspheming. They should have realized the true import of what Jesus was saying as the Son of the Man when He told the paralytic that his sins were forgiven.

They thought Jesus was blaspheming because only God could forgive sins (cf. Luke 5:21). In that they were correct, the LORD God is the only one who can forgive sins.

Micah 7:17b-18 "... they shall be afraid of the LORD our God, and shall fear because of thee.¹⁸ Who *is* a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth *in* mercy. KJV

Isaiah 33:22, 24 For the LORD is our judge, The LORD is our lawgiver, The LORD is our king; He will save us--²⁴ And no resident will say, "I am sick"; The people who dwell there will be forgiven *their* iniquity. NASB77

But that is the point! That actual fact is what they missed and is the reason, I believe, Jesus refers to Himself as the Son of the Man in this context! This is why I believe Jesus next tells them they had something to learn, something that they needed to "know" in order to realize "the Son of the Man" who was standing before them had the power to forgive sins and so was not blaspheming (vs. 6, also cf. Luke 5:21).^h He does this by prefacing His next act with these words: "But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." He wanted them to know that the Son of the Man, being the Promised Seed of the woman had this authority because He was more than just very Man of very Man, He was also very God of very God, the LORD God, the LORD Jesus Christ. And so to demonstrate this, so they will know, after forgiving the paralytic of his sins, He heals the paralytic!

This is also made known to them because many Jews believed some people suffered maladies because of sins, whether their own sins or that of their parents. This is seen in a verse like John 9:2.

^h **Luke 5:21** And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? KJV

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John 9:2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" NASB77

Thus, it may be that the Lord knew the scribes and Pharisees believed this paralytic was suffering the same fate for the same possible reason, which if true would mean that in their mind only God could forgive the paralytic's sins, and that only God could heal such malady sent because of God's own judgment. For, in their minds, if God judged someone with sickness or blindness or lameness because of some sin, how could that malady be healed by anybody else but God! They believed that without that sin that caused that malady in the first place being first forgiven by God Himself, no one had the power to overrule God judgment!

And so, with that in mind, Jesus made it known to them that the Son of the Man could not only heal, but also forgive, because He was the Man, who was the LORD, the Promised Seed of Gen. 3:15 that was prophesied to come!

So by this act of healing the scribes were presented with the dilemma of a supposed blasphemer of God (in their minds) having the power or the authority of God to heal! They must have wondered how this could be, just like they did in John's Gospel, when in John 9:16 it says they wondered how one could perform such healings, if they were not pleasing to God.

John 9:16, 29-38 Some therefore of the Pharisees said, This man is not from God, because he keepeth not the sabbath. But others said, **How can a man that is a sinner do such signs?** And there was division among them.

²⁹ We know that God hath spoken unto Moses: but as for this man, we know not whence he is.³⁰ The man answered and said unto them, Why, herein is the marvel, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he opened mine eyes.³¹ We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and do his will, him he heareth.³² Since the world began it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind.³³ **If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.**³⁴ They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach

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us? And they cast him out. ³⁵ Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and finding him, he said, **Dost thou believe on the Son of God?** [NASB77 from the NA27 Greek Text—**Son of the Man**] † ³⁶ He answered and said, And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him? ³⁷ Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that speaketh with thee. ³⁸ **And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.** ASV

Well, as in John's Gospel above, the Lord gave them the answer to their silent questioning as to how a "man" could forgive sins by referring to Himself as the Son of the Man. They needed to learn who the Son of the Man in Scripture really was. He was God!

Notice that in John's Gospel, as seen in the NASB77 (Jn. 9:35-38), Jesus did not ask the blind man, "Do you believe in the Son of God?" He asks him, "Do you believe in the Son of the Man?" And then He allowed the blind man who was healed to worship Him (John 9:38). Why would Jesus do this, (if one assumes the variant Son of the Man is correct), and why would Jesus receive worship from the healed blind man when worship only was due to God? ⁱ

Obviously, Jesus would be declaring that the Son of the Man was also the LORD God, which was the thing Jesus wished the scribes and Pharisees would learn.. But what is interesting about this variant in John 9:35, where some Greek texts read "Son of the Man," rather than "Son of God," is that it does not change the meaning of the verse! I actually prefer the Majority Text which has "Son of God," but by using the NA27 Greek Text used by the NASB77, which reads "the Son of the Man" (τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου), one sees that it does not change the response of the blind man in verse 38. Whether one uses the Majority Greek Text of "the Son of God," or the NA27 Greek text of "the Son of the Man," the passage ends the same—"And he worshipped Him!"

Amen and amen! The Son of the Man is the Son of God. Just as we saw in Luke's genealogy—Jesus is the son... "of Adam (the Man), and Jesus is the son... "of God!

Therefore we can see how Matt. 9:1-8 becomes an

† The definite article is in the NA27 Greek Text, but is left out in the NASB77.

ⁱ **Matt. 4:10** Then Jesus said to him, "Begone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only'" NASB77 **Deut. 6:13** "You shall fear *only* the LORD your God; and you shall worship Him, and swear by His name. NASB77

Matthew

important passage in Matthews' Gospel regarding the Deity of the LORD Jesus Christ. Matthew is directing the thoughts of his readers back to the beginning of creation in the Garden of Eden by including this incident in our Lord's life as the Son of the Man.

As was said before, many times one hears the assertion made by those who are not Christians that Jesus never claimed to be God. The fact of the matter is He did claim to be God when He said, "But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins "-- then He said to the paralytic-- "Rise, take up your bed, and go home." (Mat 9:6 NASB77)

So, as this is an important story that reveals the truth behind the title "the Son of the Man," let us look at it a little closer in light of the rest of Scripture and understand how Matthew is affirming the Lord's claim to Deity, as was also done in his Sermon on the Mount.

The scribes of Matt. 9:3, who were supposed to be familiar with the texts of Scripture, being considered teachers of the Law, should have understood the full import of our Lord's declaration to the paralytic man. But they did not. If they did they would not have accused Jesus of blasphemy because He pronounced the paralytic man's sins forgiven. They would have understood that He was directing their minds back to the book of Genesis regarding the seed of the Woman who was the LORD, as revealed to us in Gen. 3:15 and Gen. 4:1.

So it is very important to understand the meaning of the title the Son of the Man, and its reference to our Lord's Deity, as well as its reference to His Humanity as the Promised Seed of the Woman spoken of in Gen. 3:15, as affirmed in Gen. 4:1.

The title reveals the fact that Jesus was claiming to be the Promised Seed of the woman who would bruise the head of the serpent. When one understands those two verses, one will understand how this passage of Scripture is another affirmation by Matthew that Jesus claimed to be God by calling Himself the Son of the Man, who could forgive sins.

Matthew

Again, if one wishes to pursue this study in greater detail I have provided this *Excursus on the Son of the Man and the Promised Seed in Genesis 3:15* in Part III, the *Supplements* volume. Otherwise one can continue with our notes and comments on page 18.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Dear reader, if you happen to not be a Christian, if you have never learned that the Son of the Man has the power on earth to forgive sins as the One who was graciously promised to come in the very beginning of creation to come and undo what our first parents, Adam and Eve, had done, then will you not now turn to Him and be saved today. Believe in Him as the Man, the LORD, who died to take away your sins and you will be saved.

Matthew 9:6 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. KJV

Today, this same verse may apply to you. You may not be paralyzed in body, but you find yourself paralyzed in your soul, unable to find peace with God. Well, dear reader let me adapt this verse above into a Gospel tract for especially you—

But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins—Jesus says to the sick of soul, those who are paralyzed by sins, by guilt, and by many transgressions—Arise, lift up your hearts, believe in God, believe also in Me (John 14:1), and you will find peace for your souls. For God so loved the world that He gave His Only Begotten Son so that whosoever believes in Him might not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16). I have come that you might have life! Your sins are forgiven if you but repent and believe! I paid the price for your sins upon the cross, shedding My blood for you. My peace I give to you, if your but turn to me to be saved—

Matthew

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matt. 11:28-30).

Let us now continue with our notes and comments.

9:8 But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.

This is the second time in the Gospel of Matthew that the people recognized our Lord had a power or authority that set Him apart from other men. (The word “power” in verse 8 is the Greek word ἐξουσίαν and is translated “authority” in other places in the KJV.) The first time Matthew records that the multitude recognized that Jesus had a certain authority (power) that set Him apart from others was in Matt 7:28-29.

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

And now in Matt. 9:8 we are told the people recognize once more that Jesus was exercising a certain authority not seen before among men, except this time the people were clearly recognizing that the authority was given by God, because they were glorifying God that such power to forgive and heal was being provided for mankind.

If one notices the last part of the verse does not say that the power was given to a man, but was given “to men” (plural). This does not mean that men had received this power, but means this power had been provided “for” men, i.e. for mankind. With this sense the Greek phrase (τοῖς ἀνθρώποις) would be called a

Matthew

Dative of Advantage. In order to convey what Matthew is saying we might translate the last part of the verse as follows: “the One having provided such authority for men” (i.e. mankind).

Moreover the word translated “such” is a demonstrative pronoun which emphasizes the type of authority that is meant. In Matt. 7:29 the authority that was meant was the authority of one teaching on behalf of God. In the verse before us (Matt. 9:8) the authority that was meant was the authority to forgive sins.

However, in Matt. 7:29 the authority is specifically spoken as being possessed by Jesus, in this verse this is not specified, which seems to indicate a hesitancy to assign such power to a “man.” But what is recognized by the people by their glorifying of God is that in their minds Jesus must be in good standing with God for if He was not He could not have exercised this authority of forgiveness that God was providing for the well-being of all mankind. The people were growing in their understanding of who Jesus was, but they could not yet seem to accept the fact that He was God manifested in the flesh, yet they could not deny that He did things that only God could do!

In the Gospel of Mark we learn the people also were saying among themselves that such a thing had never been seen before, i.e. that one like Jesus could tell a man his sins were forgiven, and then to prove that He was not blaspheming (for only God can forgive sins), he then heals the man of the malady they thought was given to the man as a judgment by God for some sin! (Mark 2:12).

And then in the Gospel of Luke we learn some people were also filled with “fear” about what they had just seen, saying that had witnessed a strange thing! (Luke 5:26).^j The word translated “strange” is the Greek word παράδοξος (*paradoxos*) which you might notice is from where we get our English word “paradox.”

So this tells us that this occurrence was so different from other miracles of healing that it was causing a certain consternation, if you will, among some of the

^j **Luke 5:26** And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day. KJV

Matthew

people because what they witnessed did not add up! It was a paradox in their mind! How could Jesus do what only God could do? This fact provides some basis for believing that the people must have believed this man's paralysis was a punishment from God for some sin, just as some believed was true in the story of the blind man in John 9:1-38.

And so Luke says it was a paradox to them, a seeming contradiction, for here before them was a man who they had believed was paralyzed by God because of some sin, and yet here is another man named Jesus who forgives that paralyzed man of his sins, and then heals him of that very paralysis they thought was God's judgment upon him! In their mind only God could do that, and yet, here is Jesus forgiving him and healing him!

And so this paradox in their mind was so immense that some were filled with fear, perhaps wondering if this Jesus could truly be the LORD in human flesh. Otherwise how could He do what he was doing? Perhaps the fact that it says they were filled with fear shows it was beginning to dawn upon some of them that maybe the Son of the Man, was the Messiah, the Man, the LORD. Perhaps they wondered if the LORD was appearing again to men, as they heard so many times in their synagogues when the Scriptures told them how the LORD appeared to Abraham, to Moses, and to Joshua. No doubt many hearts were still dull; they did not know that the incarnation was different than those Theophanies, but perhaps, for some, this curtain of blindness was beginning to be drawn back, for they were praising God that Jesus was the one chosen by God to bring about this authority for men.

9:9 And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

Our Lord now leaves the house from which the paralytic man had been let down through the roof and the next thing Matthew records for us is his own

Matthew

calling. When we compare Matthew's account with Mark's we find that Jesus goes to the sea shore at Capernaum to teach the people, presumably, because more people could congregate in the open harbour than in the synagogue (Mark 2:13).

What is interesting is that recently a large harbour complex has been uncovered at the ancient site of Capernaum. It is said it consisted of a promenade along the shoreline supported by a sea-wall that was almost one-half a mile long. Along the promenade they discovered multiple piers extending out into the lake, some up to 100 feet or so from the promenade. Along the promenade there were said to be shops, administrative buildings, etc., and a toll-house, where taxes were collected on goods being imported and/or exported across the lake, or along the road going through the city that connected the area of the lake with the city of Damascus. It is here at the toll-house that Jesus meets a tax-collector named Matthew. The phrase "sitting at the receipt of custom" is literally, "sitting in the toll-house" (τὸ τελώνιον—Matt. 9:9), in this case the office or toll-house of the harbour of Capernaum.

More than likely, Matthew would have been well acquainted with Jesus, for it is said in a parallel account in Mark 1:32-33 that the whole city came to see him.^k Moreover, Matthew probably would have also heard Jesus teach, if not in the synagogue, then along the promenade of the harbour where his toll-house was located. Also, I am sure that Matthew may have talked about Jesus with the many citizens, fishermen, and merchants of the city that would have had to deal with him as the custom official.

Another important fact to know is that as custom official, Matthew would have been considered a great sinner by the scribes and Pharisees. He was called in Greek ὁ τελώνης (the publican, the tax-collector), a hated and derogatory title in the minds of many Jews, for they were considered to be liars and cheaters, filled with much covetousness, robbing the people (cf. Luke 3:12-13). Zaccheus, himself a tax-collector (Luke 19:2), intimates as much when he tells Jesus: If

^k **Mark 1:32-33**

And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils.³³ And all the city was gathered together at the door. KJV

Matthew

I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold” (Luke 19:8b ERV).

Alfred Edersheim relates in his book, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, that there were two types of publicans or tax-collectors in Israel, both being greatly despised, especially by the Pharisees, but one of those two types was despised even more so than the other, and it was that type to which Matthew belonged! He writes:

“It is of importance to notice, that the Talmud distinguishes two classes of publicans: 'the tax-gatherer in general (*Gabbai*), and the *Moches*, or *Mochsa*, who was specially the...custom-house official. Although both classes fall under the Rabbinic ban...[a customs official] such as Matthew was—is the object of chief execration. And this, because his exactions were more vexatious, and gave more scope to rapacity. The *Gabbai*, or tax-gatherer, collected the regular dues, which consisted of ground-[tax], income-[tax], and poll-tax... If this offered many opportunities for vexatious exactions and rapacious injustice, the *Moches* might inflict much greater hardship upon the poor people. There was tax and duty upon all imports and exports; on all that was bought and sold; bridge-money, road money, harbour-dues, town-dues, &c... The very word *Moches* seems, in its root-meaning, associated with the idea of oppression and injustice. He was literally, as really, an oppressor.”¹⁶

“What has been described in such detail, will cast a peculiar light on the call of Matthew by the Saviour of sinners. For, we remember that Levi-Matthew was not only a “publican,' but of the worst kind: a *Moches* ...[or customs official]...who himself stood at his custom-house; one of the class to whom, as we are told, repentance offered special difficulties. And, of all such officials, those who had to take toll from ships were perhaps the worst...” But now quite another day had dawned on him. The Prophet of Nazareth was not like those other great Rabbis, or their pietist, self-righteous imitators. There was that about Him which not only aroused the conscience, but drew the heart—compelling, not repelling. What He said opened a new world. His very appearance bespoke Him not harsh, self-righteous, far away, but the Helper, if not even the Friend, of sinners.”¹⁷

“And so Matthew sat before his custom-house, and hearkened and hoped... And so, we take it, long before that eventful day which for ever decided his life, Matthew had,

Matthew

in heart, become the disciple of Jesus. Only he dared not, could not, have hoped for personal recognition—far less for call to discipleship. But when it came, and Jesus fixed on him that look of love which searched the inmost deep of the soul, and made Him the true Fisher of men, it needed not a moment's thought or consideration. When He spake it, "Follow Me," the past seemed all swallowed up in the present heaven of bliss. He said not a word, for his soul was in the speechless surprise of unexpected love and grace; but he rose up, left the custom-house, and followed Him. That was a gain that day, not of Matthew alone, but of all the poor and needy in Israel-nay, of all sinners from among men, to whom the door of heaven was opened. And, verily, by the side of Peter, as the stone [Matt. 16:18], we place Levi-Matthew, as typical of those [floor] rafters laid on the great foundation, and on which is placed the flooring of that habitation of the Lord, which is His Church." ¹⁸

9:10 And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.

And so we see that the hated publican Matthew immediately left all to follow Jesus, leaving behind a life that may have been filled with much covetousness, dishonesty and lying. It seems Matthew admitted as much by making sure that the readers of his Gospel recognized the fact that he had been transformed by the love and grace of Jesus.

In the next chapter, Matthew lists himself as one of the twelve apostles, not simply as Matthew, but as Matthew, "the publican," which becomes even more revealing for in his Gospel, since as we have shown publicans were identified with those considered to be the worst sinners in society. The fact that he adds this description to his name, unlike Mark and Luke in their lists, shows that he must have considered himself to be a chief of sinners, if I might borrow Paul's designation of Himself.

This shows the reader of his Gospel, not only the humility of Matthew, but also how much gratitude and love Matthew had for Jesus, and also even more so, how much love Jesus had for sinners in the person of Matthew, the publican.

Matthew

9:11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?

9:12 But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

We now come to the purpose of this whole story. On one side we have the Pharisees, which we know from Luke 5:17, included the greatest and most respected Pharisees from Jerusalem, maybe even some with whom Jesus spoke when he was but a young child of twelve years old (Luke 2:46-47). Perhaps some of them remember how they were “amazed at His understanding and His answers” (Luke 2:47) and so travelled to Capernaum to assess the situation with all they had heard about Jesus. Most likely, some of them would have been present at the healing of the paralytic.

Luke 5:17 And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was *present* to heal them. KJV

On the other side we have Jesus of Nazareth, who had recently identified Himself as the “Son of the Man,” and who had claimed to be the Promised Seed of Gen. 4:1, the Man, the LORD, more than likely in the presence of those same “doctors of the law.” And in between the two were the sinners mentioned by the Pharisees, who would be considered by those same doctors of the law to be among the basest sinners of all, traitors to Israel and to God.

And so we see the Son of the Man come and call Matthew, one of those basest of sinners, a publican, to rise up and follow Him.

Now, though, the Pharisees may have been amazed at this, I do not think they would have objected to such an invitation by Jesus for a publican to follow

Matthew

Him. Though it might be difficult for a publican to repent in their mind, they would not have ruled it out completely. But if that repentance caused Matthew to join Jesus, they would be fine with that, but they would not be fine with Jesus joining Matthew in his home with other sinners.

So when Matthew next invites Jesus to a dinner in His home, filled with other publicans and sinners, they were aghast that Jesus would accept such an invitation, for to sit down with other Israelites, who in their mind not only were cheats and liars, but also traitors to Israel, was a form of guilt by association.

To this Jesus responds that it is the sick that are in need of a physician not the well! And that is the important point to remember. The purpose of a physician is to heal, and to maintain one's health. A physician hates disease and sickness. He does not wink and nod at disease; he does not tolerate sickness and disease, but rather seeks to eradicate sickness or disease.

Moreover a physician knows (speaking generally) that a patient cannot heal himself because he or she does not understand the full nature of the sickness or the prescribed manner of the treatment for a particular disease. In other words, the reason the sick seek out the doctor is because they are not able to cure themselves.

The Pharisees did not understand this, or, I dare say, even agree with that concept when applied to spiritual sickness, because they believed everybody had the power within themselves to cure themselves (i.e. justify themselves, make themselves righteous) by simply observing the commandments and statutes of the law as interpreted by their traditions (oral law) and their manner of their life of meticulous separation from every form of evil. In other words, they felt by keeping oneself aloof from sinners, by following their scrupulous life of separation, they believed anyone could justify themselves before God, keeping themselves ritually clean, and, therefore, be able to earn their salvation by works of righteousness, thus earning a place in the kingdom of the Messiah for

Matthew

themselves.

They did not know that in reality no one ever had the power or ability to justify their own self before God, that is, to make themselves righteous in God's sight. They believed otherwise; they believed man could do this, and did do this, and that they were living proof that men could do it!

They had not yet learned what another Pharisee, the apostle Paul, had to learn—there is none righteous, no not one, which thing he learned after meeting the only One who was righteous, that being JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, Jesus Christ who was the end of righteousness for all who believe.

Acts 22:14 "And he said, "The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will, **and to see the Righteous One**, and to hear an utterance from His mouth. NASB77

Jeremiah 23:6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell in safety; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, **JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**. Darby's Versions (Capitalization mine)

Romans 10:3-4 For being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.⁴ **For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth.** ASV

Therefore, in their view, since they had not yet learned that by the works of the law no flesh would or could be justified, they believed such men like the publicans were sick because they chose to be sick and so did not deserve their mercy; they believed such men were an offense to God because they did not seek to deliver themselves from their evil ways, by converting to the Pharisaical way of life, bringing themselves to a place of righteousness before God by minute observance of the Law. The story of the Pharisee and the Publican clearly demonstrates this!

Luke 18:9-14 And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: ¹⁰ Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one

Matthew

a Pharisee, and the other a publican. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. ¹² I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. ¹³ And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. KJV

Thus they believed that every human being had the ability to be righteous before God, if they only asserted themselves in obeying every detail of the law as understood by them, along with observing the strict hedge they put around the law so as to not violate even the smallest of statutes. And so they “justified” themselves before God! They “believed in themselves,” and in their chosen way of life, as codified in their traditions, being the only kind of life that pleased God. They believed a person could be righteous simply by observing the law, if only could only understand what that law demanded down to the smallest of details.

But what they did not understand was the innate sinfulness of man, even in their separation from what they considered evil. They may have thought they were clean before God because they so meticulously separated themselves from others whom they considered unclean, but they were still unclean because they did not, and could not separate themselves from the sin nature and uncleanness that was within themselves! Jesus makes this clear when He declares—

Matthew 23:27 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. KJV

In commenting on this verse we are discussing, William MacDonald succinctly put it this way—

Matthew

“The Pharisees considered themselves healthy and were unwilling to confess their need for Jesus. (Actually they were extremely ill spiritually and desperately needed healing.) The tax collectors and sinners, by contrast, were more willing to acknowledge their true condition and to seek Christ’s saving grace. So the charge was true! Jesus did eat with sinners. If He had eaten with the Pharisees, the charge would still have been true—perhaps even more so! If Jesus hadn’t eaten with sinners in a world like ours, He would have always have eaten alone!¹⁹ (Exclamation mine.)

And so, because they did not understand or acknowledge this, they became very exclusive in their associations, associating closely only with those who also followed their chosen way of life, so they could they make sure by their separation kept their righteousness intact before God, by not disobeying even the smallest of commandments..

And so, for example, one way they put this belief into practice was they would never eat with and fellow Israelite who was a publican. Why you might wonder? Because they never could know if that publican had correctly tithed his food!

In their mind, if they ate with such a one, they might be eating something that rightly belonged to another, because it was not correctly tithed, which, if they ate, they believed would bring condemnation upon themselves by God. So their answer to this possibility was to attempt to never eat or be in close association with anyone else except those who were of their own sect, for Pharisees were bound to vigilance in their tithing, so by only eating with those in their sect, they did not need to worry about whether the food was tithed correctly.

And so this minute outward observance typified in our Lord’s charge, “Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel” (Matt. 23:24), helps explain their many separations from others.

In part, this also explains the reluctance of the lawyer in Luke 10:29-37 (who more than likely was of the Pharisees—cf. Matt. 22:34-35), from answering the Lord directly as to who was the neighbour to the

Matthew

half dead man. He simply says the one who shows mercy (vs. 37), rather than answering, the “Samaritan.” The reason, of course, is that the Pharisees believed the Samaritans were unclean, so if the lawyer admitted that the Samaritan was a neighbour in the parable of the Israelite going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, that would mean a Samaritan must be included in the command to love your neighbour as if he were yourself. In other words if the Samaritan acted as the neighbour in the parable, then that means the priest, or the Levite, or any Israelite, including the Pharisees were bound to love the Samaritan as a neighbor, as the Law commands!

Now this would bring much consternation to a Pharisee, for that would mean if he met an injured Samaritan along the way one day, if he wished to obey the command to love your neighbour as yourself, he too would have to stop and help him, which would entail touching him, which in the Pharisee’s mind would mean becoming unclean, and yet, if they did not help him, then they would be breaking the command to love your neighbor as if he was yourself!.

Such a dilemma would undermine their whole concept separation from evil as being a necessary ingredient for pleasing God and for maintaining their righteousness before Him.

This was the Pharisaical mindset that caused them to never eat with anyone they might consider unclean, whether a Gentile, or even a fellow Israelite of whom they could not be sure they tithed their food correctly. All this helps explain why they were so shocked that Jesus was eating with publican and sinners in the house of Matthew.

And contextually that brings us to Hos 6:6, the verse the LORD told them to go and learn. The Lord wished them to learn why it was not unrighteous to be willing to eat with publicans and sinners, but rather it was a righteous act to eat with publicans and sinners, that is, when the purpose of eating with them was to bring healing them.

Now, as with all things spiritual, we should clarify that the Lord Jesus, by eating with publicans and

Matthew

sinners, was not advocating one disregard the warning of Psalm 1, which states—

Psalm 1:1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! NASB77

Believers, especially, young people growing up in the Lord, should always be careful with whom they closely associate. Christians should be friends to all (in the sense that our Lord called Judas Iscariot a friend, and in the sense that we are to love our neighbor, as seen in the parable of the good Samaritan—Matt 26:50; Luke 10:27-37), loving all mankind and hoping for their salvation, just as God loved all mankind in sending His Son, but they should only be good friends with those who believe in the Lord, and who are faithful in their walk with the Lord Jesus. They should be the only ones they are close with. Why? Because the same Lord, who in love called Judas friend, also gave us Ps. 1:1 and also gave us I Cor. 15:33.

I Corinthians 15:33 Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals." NASB77

So we see that the Lord is not advocating unrestrained eating with publican and sinners simply to obtain close fellowship. He was not going to a place to have unrestrained fellowship with sinners. He is not disregarding the thought behind I Cor. 15:33 or Ps. 1:1. He is speaking about those, like Himself, who have been given a work, by the Father above, to speak righteousness to those who are unrighteous, to speak peace to those who have no peace, to speak hope to those who have no hope. He is speaking of bringing the balm of the Gospel of peace to those who are sick by the turmoil of sin. Jesus did not accept Matthew's invitation to go and have a "good" time, as many are wont to say today. No, He was going to be a "light" in darkness. He was going to "preach" the good news that the kingdom of God was at hand. If that was not the case I do not think He would have gone.

Matthew

And why could Jesus do this, and, indeed, desire to do this? The answer is because He was full of love, and so also full of mercy! Jesus loved those publicans and sinners, because they were still those made in the similitude of God. The Pharisees, however, had no such love. Why? Because they did not know the full depth of their own sinfulness, for if they did they would be full of mercy toward such sinners too, for they would know that but for the grace of God, they would be no different.

The martyr of long ago, John Bradford understood this. It was said that the phrase, “but for the grace of God,” came from him. It was said that he was a humble man, who when he was being put to death for his Christian witness, was said to be one who “asked all the world [for] forgiveness, and forgave all the world.”²⁰ He was tender-hearted and full of mercy knowing that even his own righteousness was but filthy rags before the LORD. The phrase arose because, upon seeing “malefactors carried to execution, he would say, ‘There goes John Bradford, but for the grace of God!’”²¹ His heart broke because he knew those sinners being led to execution were moments away from an eternity in hell, and he wept in his heart because he knew he deserved the same. There was no pride or self-justification in his heart, but there were such things in the hearts of those Pharisees censuring the Lord, which was aptly demonstrated by the story of the publican and the Pharisee that that Lord told in Luke 18:9-14 as we mentioned above.

This is the sentiment that Jesus wanted to teach the Pharisees, and so he brought their attention to a verse from the book of Hosea as we will now see.

9:13 But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Our Lord’s quote above is taken from the first part of Hosea 6:6, which reads—

Matthew

Hosea 6:6 For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. KJV

This verse was spoken when the people of Israel were far from God, but did not know they were far from God. They still worshipped the LORD, but falsely did so through the calves Jeroboam had set up for them as being an image of the LORD. Moreover they also worshipped other idols along with their supposed worship to the LORD (Hosea 8:4-5; 11:2). Yet in their false ways, they proclaimed their innocence (Hosea 12: 8),¹ and not only that, they became self-righteous in the supposed sanctity of their chosen way of life, not knowing it was really a sinful path, created by their own beliefs and superstitions, and so was an affront to God (Hosea 4:1-2; Micah 7:2).

They boasted in their self-righteousness that they knew God, but they did not know Him (Hosea 8:2 with Isaiah 65:2-6). ^m That was the context behind the verse the Lord pointed to in Hosea 6:6. And the reason this context was so important was because, albeit for different reasons, the Pharisees were just like those Israelites in Hosea's day.

As we just said, the Israelites in Hosea's day thought they were righteous and innocent before God, not knowing they were not—

Hosea 12: 8 And Ephraim said, Surely I am become rich, I have found me wealth: **in all my labours they shall find in me none iniquity that were sin.** ERV

The Pharisees were no different, viewing themselves as free of sin and righteous before men and God, being blind to their own sins and hypocrisy. And so Jesus is telling them to “go and learn.”

Matthew 23:27-28 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.²⁸ Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. KJV

¹ **Hosea 12:8** And Ephraim said, "Surely I have become rich, I have found wealth for myself; In all my labors **they will find in me No iniquity, which would be sin.**" NASB77

^m **Hosea 8:2** They cry out to Me, "My God, we of Israel know Thee!"

Isa. 65:1-6 I have spread out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, Who walk *in* the way which is not good, following their own thoughts,

³ A people who continually provoke Me to My face, Offering sacrifices in gardens and burning incense on bricks;⁴ Who sit among graves, and spend the night in secret places; Who eat swine's flesh, And the broth of unclean meat is *in* their pots. ⁵ "Who say, 'Keep to yourself, do not come near me, For I am holier than you!' These are smoke in My nostrils, A fire that burns all the day. ⁶ "Behold, it is written before Me, I will not keep silent, but I will repay; I will even repay into their bosom. NASB77

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Those Israelites in Hosea's day had no care for the plight of widows; they were uncaring, and actually robbing them instead.

Isaiah 10:1-2 Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and to the writers that write perverseness; ² to turn aside the needy from justice, and to rob the poor of my people of their right, **that widows may be their spoil**, and that they may make the fatherless their prey! ASV

The Pharisees were no different, as seen when our Lord refers to them as devouring widow's houses in their pursuit of money. And so Jesus is telling them to "go and learn."

Matthew 23:14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. KJV

Those is Hosea's day "loved money," seeing it as proof of divine favor, which Micah, who also prophesied in the days of Hosea, also makes known.

Hosea 12:7-8 *He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress.* ⁸ And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance: *in* all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that *were* sin. KJV

Micah 2:2 They covet fields and then seize *them*, And houses, and take *them* away. They rob a man and his house, A man and his inheritance. NASB77

Micah 3:11 Her leaders pronounce judgment for a bribe, Her priests instruct for a price, And her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the LORD saying, "Is not the LORD in our midst? Calamity will not come upon us." NASB77

The Pharisees were no different—

Luke 16:14-15 Now the Pharisees, **who were lovers of money**, were listening to all these things, and they were scoffing at Him. ¹⁵ And He said to them, "**You are those**

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who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God. NASB77

The Pharisees certainly did not worship the idols which the Israelites in Hosea's day worshipped, but they did unwittingly worship one idol in addition to their worship of the LORD, and that was the idol of covetousness which Paul, who was once a Pharisee himself, clearly identifies as a form of idolatry (cf. Col. 3:5;ⁿ also cf. Luke 16:13-15 and 23:14). And yet, the Pharisees, like their forefathers of old, still proclaimed their innocence before God in such pursuits (Luke 16:15; 18:19), becoming self-righteous in the supposed sanctity of their chosen way of life, not knowing it was really a sinful path, created by their own beliefs and traditions added to God's Word. And so Jesus is telling them to "go and learn."

And so we see that the Lord Jesus wanted the Pharisees to realize that in the eyes of God they were no better than the publicans and sinners they condemned Jesus for going to meet with and to eat with.

If they realized that they would have never questioned the Lord's decision to eat with them, rather they would have joined Him, if perchance some fellow Israelites could be brought to salvation. But alas the Pharisees did not realize this for they opposed Jesus in His work. They did not realize it because they were blinded to their own spiritual condition, as mentioned in that succinct quote from William MacDonald which I will provide again below—

"The Pharisees considered themselves healthy and were unwilling to confess their need for Jesus. (Actually they were extremely ill spiritually and desperately needed healing.) The Tax collectors and sinners, by contrast, were more willing to acknowledge their true condition and to seek Christ's saving grace. So the charge was true! Jesus did eat with sinners. If He had eaten with the Pharisees, the charge would still have been true—perhaps even more so! If Jesus hadn't eaten with sinners in a world like ours, He would have always have eaten alone!²² (Exclamation was

ⁿ**Colossians3:5** Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry; ASV

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point mine.)

So we see our Lord tells the Pharisees to go and learn what was said to those Israelites in Hosea's day for our Lord knew the similarity between them and those Israelites would slowly dawn upon them if they truly repented and humbled themselves before God. If they would go and learn, they would realize the emptiness of their external worship and outward performance of ritual and sacrifice before God.

Moreover, our Lord also knew that if they read Hosea 6:6, it would remind them of other Scriptures, which also bespeaks the insufficiency of outward sacrifice in God's sight, when hearts are darkened and devoid of truth within. Such as these verses—

Proverbs 21:3 To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to Jehovah than sacrifice. ASV

Isaiah 1:11-20 To what purpose *is* the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. ¹² When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? ¹³ Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; *it is* iniquity, even the solemn meeting. ¹⁴ Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear *them*. ¹⁵ And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. ¹⁶ Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; ¹⁷ Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. ¹⁸ Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. ¹⁹ If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: ²⁰ But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*. KJV

The Lord hoped they would learn that mercy was

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more important than sacrifices simply because sacrifices were given to remind man of their need for mercy! He hoped they would learn that animal sacrifices, in and themselves, were not for the appeasement of God, as if they took away sin. Those animal sacrifices were not for God, but for man to point him to the one Sacrifice that could appease the wrath of God, the sacrifice of His Son.

If we but think a moment about it, “Why would God desire animal sacrifices for Himself?” Sacrifices could never take away sin, which means they could never appease God, as those in Hosea’s day thought, and as many Pharisees also thought, believing their outward ritual of sacrifice took away their sins, allowing themselves to justify themselves to God by boasting of their obedience to ritual requirements.

Hebrews 10:11 And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;

Hebrews 10:4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. (KJV)

Animal sacrifices were to point to the mercy of God in providing forgiveness of sins by the coming sacrifice of His Son in the fullness of time, but the people changed them into a means itself of forgiveness and salvation apart from any thought of the Promised Seed who would come to have his heel bruised by the serpent, but who would in that bruising by the serpent, die upon a cross and rise again on the third day to once and for all bruise the head of that serpent, destroy his works and destroying death itself.

To the Pharisees, the maintenance of animal sacrifices and ritual became a source for their self-justification before God and a justification for their way of life, with no thought of the true condition of their hearts, for they believed such outward ceremony also justified their hearts before God as being acceptable.

And so, instead of the sacrifices reminding them that they were sinners in need of forgiveness, and so

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the mercy of God, they became the basis of their self-justification and righteousness before God. Instead of animal sacrifices becoming a means whereby they learned that they should be merciful, because God was being merciful to them in granting them atonement through the shedding of innocent blood, until that time came when His Son's blood would be shed as the Son of the Man, they became proud in their ability to be meticulous in their religious devotion to God through sacrificing and tithing. Instead of animal sacrifices producing mercy in their hearts, it produced hardness of heart to the things upon God's heart, such as mercy, judgment and faith. (cf. Matt. 23:23).^o

Unfortunately, this truth was lost upon the minds of the Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees, and many others who had forgotten this true reason for sacrifices. They forgot that sacrifices were meant to humble man, in that an innocent little lamb or other animal had to have its blood spilt because of our sins and our iniquities.

They simply forgot the reason for sacrifices was to bring about humility and brokenness in one's heart, because the Law showed them the standard of righteousness required by God, but then also their utter inability to meet that standard, which meant they had no means of delivering themselves from the penalty the Law imposed, which was eternal death.

In their forgetfulness and ignorance they needed to learn what another Pharisee had learned, the apostle Paul—

Romans 10:3-4 For not knowing about God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.⁴ For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. NASB77

Rom. 3: 20-22 Therefore by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the Law cometh the knowledge of sin, but now is the righteousness of God made manifest without the Law, having witness of the Law and the Prophets, to wit, the righteousness of God by the faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all that believe.

^o**Matt. 23:23** Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have **omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith:** these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. KJV

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Geneva Bible (updated spelling mine)

And so sacrifices were meant to point them to this reality. They were given to humble man by showing him this is what your sins have done. An innocent animal must be killed in your place to make atonement for your sin. Sacrifices therefore should bring about in our heart humility, not pride, mercy, not condemnation, for sacrifices were meant to put a spotlight on the fact that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, and that “there is none righteous no not one.”

Every man was equal before God in their sin, for if one broke even the smallest commandment, he had broken them all, and even if one could claim they had never broken one commandment, that one was still equal in sin with everyone else for all were born with a sin nature. With such knowledge how could any man boast like the Pharisees, “I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican” (Luke 18:11).

But, ever since the beginning of time, when sacrifices were instituted by God, mankind had an uncanny ability to justify and excuse themselves before God as did Cain. Why? Because sin has so destroyed the proper working of our spirit, soul and body, that our soul can now act independently of our heart, and so rationalize away what we know to be true in the conscience of that spirit or heart, so much so that men can convince themselves as to the sanctity of our chosen way of life.

For those who are unsaved God, this results in “suppressing the truth in **unrighteousness**” (Rom. 1:18) and in the saved this can result in suppressing the truth in **self-righteousness**!

This is what happens when man makes over the Word of God into his own image, which in turn makes over the God of the Word into their own image. It suppresses truth and justifies carnality in mere external forms of worship at best, and suppresses truth and justifies evil at worst.

So to sum it up, the lesson our Lord wished the

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Pharisees to go and learn was the same lesson Asaph tried to make known to Israel of old in Psalm 50, especially in verses 7-23. Let me close with a comment by C. H. Spurgeon on this portion of Scripture.

“Though they had not failed in maintaining his outward worship, or even if they had, he was not about to call them to account for this: a more weighty matter was now under consideration. They thought the daily sacrifices and the abounding burnt offerings to be everything: he counted them nothing if the inner sacrifice of heart devotion had been neglected. What was greatest with them was least with God. It is even so today. Sacraments (so called) and sacred rites are the main concern with unconverted but religious men, but with the Most High the spiritual worship which they forget is the sole matter. Let the external be maintained by all means, according to the divine command, but if the secret and spiritual be not in them, they are a vain oblation, a dead ritual, and even an abomination before the Lord.”²³

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“And having seen *it*, the Pharisees said to His disciples, ‘Why does your Teacher eat with the publicans and sinners?’ And Jesus, having heard *it*, said to them, ‘The healthy have no need of a physician, but the sick have *need*. So go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice, for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.’” – Matthew 9: 12-13

By applying Hosea 6:6 to the Pharisees in His day, as we find in Matt. 9: 13, our Lord is showing there is a Biblical Principle within that verse that transcends the specific situation wherein it was first stated by the LORD through Hosea. Thus, even though the Pharisees were not practicing the idolatry of their forefathers (except the idolatry that arises from covetousness and the love of money) they still were trusting in their outward forms of worship which caused them to be blind to the absence of mercy in their lives toward their fellow brethren. In that light,

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as followers of Christ in the dispensation of the Church, we should realize the same lack of mercy toward our brethren might happen to us as well when outward forms of worship are maintained, but the condition of our hearts are not maintained.

Now we should be careful not to swing to the opposite extreme, when, in the name of mercy, outward forms of worship are deemed unimportant and alternate forms are tolerated in the name of that mercy. Indeed, outward forms of worship are given to us by God to lift up and glorify His Son, which is why God's people, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament are admonished to keep to the pattern, for all things are ordered by God to bespeak and show forth the glories of His Son, whereby His name is lifted up, and not the name of a man, or the name of any particular denomination (Ex. 25:8-9; I Chron. 28:11-12; I Cor.3:10; Phil. 3:17 NASB77; I Tim. 1:16; Heb. 8:5). That is why we are told to follow the outward forms of worship given to us in I Cor. 11-14.

Our Lord never told His people to do away with those biblical forms of worship in the name of mercy, but to maintain those outward forms with mercy. This can only be done when we maintain the outward forms of worship given to us by the Spirit, in the Word of God, in the fulness of the Spirit of God.

The natural (soulical) man has always had the ability to be religious, maintaining outward forms of worship given to us in the Word, without ever manifesting the life of God, wherein mercy is shown to those with whom we might not agree.

When this happens, one is wrongly trusting in the outward forms of righteousness, as being that which pleases God, rather than trusting in the inward righteousness of Christ in our hearts as that which pleases God.

Outward forms of worship, maintained by soulical Christians, will always be short of mercy and love, whereas outward forms of worship, maintained by spiritual Christians will always be full of mercy and love.

Christ's mercy will always be full of righteousness

Matthew

and Christ's righteousness will always be full of mercy. True mercy will never sacrifice righteousness and true righteousness will never sacrifice mercy. However, since mercy and righteousness are attributes of Christ, the balance in us can never be maintained apart from the work of the cross in one's life, whereby the life of Christ is manifested in us and through us.

If we count ourselves crucified with Christ, in accordance with Gal. 2:20, then Christ can live out His life through us and we will become spiritual Christians.

Correct forms of worship as found in the New Testament are important, and should never be changed, altered, or neglected, but they only please God when they are a manifestation of the life of His Son, who is full of mercy and grace, and not a manifestation of our life, and ways, and self that is always short of mercy and love as was the case with the Pharisees. And that can only happen when we being filled with the Spirit, and that can only happen when we are taking up our cross, denying our self, and following the Saviour in daily obedience (cf. Ps. 40:6-8; 50:8-15, 23; Prov. 21:2-3; Micah 6:8; Eph. 5:1-2; Heb. 13:15-16).

An example of the above can be found in the life of Anthony Norris Groves whose walk and fellowship was questioned by certain zealous brethren, who had a zeal for God, but like the Pharisees of long ago, had a zeal that was not according to true righteousness.

Their zeal for righteousness was not of Christ within them, because if it was, they then would have had an equal zeal for mercy. No one can be more righteous than Christ, and yet Christ was always merciful to His people who were in need of sanctification.

Anthony Norris Groves understood this being one who walked with Christ in the way of the Cross and in the fullness of the Holy Spirit and the fullness of the Word of God.

Once when he was questioned by His brethren for associating with those whom his brethren thought he should not be associating with (much as the Pharisees

Matthew

once questioned Christ and those with whom He associated with as we have seen in Matthew 9:10-13, Anthony Norris Groves replied as follows—

“You say I quit your communion; if you mean by that, that I do not now break bread with the Church of England, this is not true; but if you mean that I do not exclusively join you, it is quite true, feeling this spirit of exclusiveness to be of the very essence of schism, which the apostle so strongly reproves in the Corinthians. 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 manifests Himself where he worships; 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.”

“Yet 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.”²⁴

In this light may we never forget the admonition of our Lord: But go ye and learn what *this* meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (Matt. 9:13)

Matthew

Before we move on now to the rest of chapter 9, one other thing should be mentioned about Matthew's affirmations of the Deity of Christ.

In Matthew 9:13, when the LORD Jesus quotes the first part of Hosea 6:6, "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice," and then explains it with His own, "for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," it is meant to be a whole statement and not simply a quote from the Old Testament along with His own concluding remark.

Thus, what Matthew is saying is that Jesus was combining the "I" in first part (I desire), with the "I" in the second part (I came) into one new Scriptural admonition, which He wished them to go and learn!

In other words, another thing Jesus also wanted them to go and learn was that He was claiming to be none other than the LORD God that spoke to Israel through the prophet Hosea, and now He was speaking to them as the same LORD God!

Unfortunately, some versions of the Bible obscure a reader's ability to see this, or, at least, from being able to consider this, by the way they use quotation marks, or for those versions which do not use quotation marks like the KJV, by the location the colon mark in the verse.

Many versions makes it seem that Jesus is only telling them to go and learn what the statement, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice," means.

For example, the King James Version did not use quotation marks in the verse, but did place a colon after the word "sacrifice" in Matt. 9:13.

"But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

But let us see what happens if we place the colon after the word "meaneth" instead of after the word "sacrifice," and also substitute the demonstrative pronoun *that* with the pronoun *this*, which one can see was done in the ERV of 1885.‡ It then reads like this:

‡ The pronouns are in italics because they are not found in the original Greek. Literally that Greek phrase reads, "what it is." But go ye and learn **what it is**, I will have mercy..." And so in some cases italics were added in English to smooth out the translation, as was done here. The same can be said for the colon mark. It is not in the Greek but is added as a reasoned conclusion as to what Jesus meant. But that conclusion was subjective, in the same way their use of the pronoun *that* was subjective. This can be seen because the English Revision of the text in 1885 believed it should be *this* instead. Of course, that change is also subjective choice, but because of the use of the present tense ἐστίν in the phrase "what it is," the demonstrative pronoun *this* fit the context better.

Matthew

“But go ye and learn what *this* meaneth: I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

With this slight change one can see that Jesus wished them to go and learn what the whole sentence meant and not just the first part from Hosea 6:6. One must remember that the Greek manuscripts of the Bible do not contain quotation marks or colon marks. They are added by translators to help the English reader understand a verse, but sometimes it becomes a matter of interpretation, because in the Greek the verse can be understood in more than one way and the translator needs to make a judgment as to which way is more likely.

One unfortunate punctuation mark included in the 1611 edition of the King James Bible is found in Titus 2:13. In the 1611 edition it appeared as follows:

Titus 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; KJV 1611

Notice the comma placed after “the great God,” which causes the verse to speak of the appearing of two Persons—the great God, and then also our Saviour Jesus Christ. The underlying Greek text does not say that (remembering there were no commas in the Greek). The Greek construct says that one Person would appear, and that would be Jesus Christ, who Paul says is our great God and Saviour! § This is one of the most important verses in Paul’s epistles which clearly makes known the Deity of Jesus Christ!

This comma remained in subsequent editions of the KJV throughout most of the next century. The comma was still found in the 1762 edition of the King James Bible, which edition was published under the direction of Dr. Thomas Paris of Trinity College in Cambridge. It was not until the revision of the KJV in 1769 that the comma was correctly removed so that it now appears as follows:

Titus 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious

§ To be fair to the godly translators of the KJV, this may have been a printing error, which errors did sometimes occur in the first KJV edition of the Bible in 1611. For example, in Ps. 69:32 the verse ended in the 1611 edition as “seek good.” It should have read “seek God.” Now, even though it cannot be proven for sure, more than likely this was a printing error made, by a weary printer, rather than being a weary translator. In any case, by 1617 this error in Ps. 69:32 had already been noticed and corrected. But not so with Titus 2:13; it took over 150 years for it to be corrected.

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appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

So we can see how added punctuation marks in English can change the whole meaning of a verse!

In light of this, I am not so sure that Jesus was singling out Hosea's quote, in and of itself, to be considered apart from His statement that He added to the quote. (After all, who better to write the Word of God, but He who was the Word of God?) In other words, I believe He desired His whole statement to be considered as a whole new Scriptural admonition given to them to go and meditate upon. Jesus was telling them to go and learn what the whole statement means—"I (the LORD) desire mercy and not sacrifice, for I (the LORD Jesus) came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance!"

Another reason it seems this is what Jesus wished them to learn, is because if Jesus was truly referring only to that Scripture taken from Hosea for them to go and learn, then Matthew could have simply written something like καθὼς γέγραπται (just as it is written) as Luke did in his Gospel (e.g. Luke 2:23), in which it would then read as, "But go and learn what *this* means, just as it is written, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Or the Holy Spirit might have inspired Matthew to qualify it with something like Mark was inspired to qualify it with in his Gospel regarding a quote from the Old Testament—ὥς γέγραπται ἐν τοῖς προφήταις, (as it is written in the prophets—Mark 1:2 KJV).

If the Holy Spirit had inspired Matthew to write something like that before or after that text quoted from Hosea, then there would be no question that what the Lord was referring to with his admonition to go and learn, was only those words actually written in Hosea.

But since that was not the case, we must ask ourselves, "Why? It should be noted that almost every other quote from the Old Testament in Matthew's Gospel is qualified by Matthew in some way to indicate it was a quote from the Old Testament.

Matthew

As far as I can determine, he makes 37 quotations from the Old Testament in his Gospel. In every instance, except for four, some type of phrase is used to indicate that quote was taken from the Old Testament, whether it was by a phrase as demonstrated above, “as it is written,” or by something like “that which was spoken,” or sometimes by “that it might be fulfilled,” etc.

Of these four quotations which are not identified by some type phrase, the first is our verse in Matt. 9:13 and the second is a reference in Matt. 10:34-35. In that reference I believe our Lord repeats what He did in Matt.9:13; He creates a new Scriptural declaration of His Deity by using phrases taken from Micah 7:6 and fits them in with His own.

Matthew 10:34-36 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. **And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.** KJV

Micah 7:5-6 Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. ⁶ For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; **a man's enemies are the men of his own house.** KJV

When we see from the context of both verses above, we can see a phrase such as “it is written,” would not fit, for the Lord is making a new statement of His own, with a different focus than that found in Micah 7:5-6.

The third of the four exceptions is that found in Matt. 18:16-17 where the same thing occurs as in the first two, where Jesus makes another new saying incorporating words taken from the Old Testament, in this instance Deut. 19:15.^P As with the first two, since the LORD Jesus was the One who authored both statements, He adapts the one from the Old Testament for a new statement or saying in the New Testament.

^P **Matt. 18:16-17**

But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.¹⁷ And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. KJV

Deut. 19:15 One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established. KJV

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Therefore, again, a phrase as “it is written” simply would not apply, for in the Old Testament the focus was on charges being brought against an offender, whereas in our Lord’s new statement, the two or three witnesses are not those bringing a charge, but those investigating a charge brought by someone else.

And, finally, the last exception is found in our Lord’s cry from the cross in Matt. 27:46 when he cried out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”^q Obviously, in such a context it would not make sense for Jesus to say, “As it is written, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken Me?’” The whole focus being made by Matthew is Jesus was alone in His own thoughts, agony and pain, speaking to His Father in heaven. The time of teaching had past. His time of great suffering had come, being our great sacrifice.

In such case, a reference such as “it is written,” would seem to minimize that which the Holy Spirit was trying to present to the reader of the Gospel, that being that the reader had now come to the climax of the whole Gospel story, so what was required was to simply stop, listen and to learn by observing the love being manifesting by the Son of God upon a cross in full “agony and blood,” being all alone, as was prophesied in Psalm 22!^r And so, it clearly shows that Psalm 22 was referring to Jesus upon the cross.

So we can see that when such phrases as “it is written” are missing from quotes taken from the Old Testament, Matthew is indicating, except in our last instance in Matt. 27:46, that the Lord Jesus is making a new Scriptural admonition or declaration of His own, taking words He spoke in the Old Testament and combining them with words He is speaking in the New Testament. And why could He do that? Because the same LORD who spoke the first word was the same LORD who spoke the second, so each was fully the Word of God!

Therefore, when we see this; we see that Matthew is providing further evidence for his readers that Jesus was claiming to be none other than the LORD God of the Old Testament, now in human flesh.

^q **Matt. 27:46** And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? KJV

^r **Psalm 22:1** My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? *why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?* KJV

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Now some may then ask as to why Jesus did not just come out and directly tell them that the One who was telling them that “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,” was none other than the same One who told their forefathers, “I desire mercy and not sacrifice.”

Well I believe He did! He was directly telling them that very thing, that is, if we but pause, read it carefully, meditate upon it, and then go and learn what He was really saying. Or in the case of them who did not read it, but actually heard it, if they but paused, and repeat it over in their minds, meditating upon it carefully, letting it sink into their hearts, they could have learned that Jesus was the LORD.

Perhaps He did it this way because He knew that only the humble of heart would be able to see and understand this, which is why many things He said were sometimes said in a way that only those so enlightened by the Father above would be able to understand and believe (cf. Matt. 11:27; 13:11-16, 34; 16:17; Luke 10:21). But of course, the Pharisees were not humble of heart, but rather were proud and self-righteous, hearing but not able to hear.

So when Jesus told the Pharisees to go and learn this: “I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, for I came not to call *the* righteous, but sinners unto repentance,” He wished them to learn that He Himself was the LORD God of Israel who first gave Israel the admonition against the perfunctory worship of their souls, mixed with the blind rationalism of their minds. And now, as then, the same LORD God of Israel, the Son of God made flesh, was now exhorting them in the same way, for if they wished to obey the LORD God of Israel (which they boasted they did) then they should obey Him and realize that their self-righteous and hardened hearts had blinded them to the righteousness of God’s mercy, which He was demonstrating to them by eating with publicans and sinners in need of salvation.

They boldly claimed that they would never have acted like those Israelites of old, (cf. Matt. 23:29-32), never opposing the prophets of LORD God of the Old Testament.

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Matthew 23:29-30 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,³⁰ And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. KJV

And yet they question and oppose Him, Jesus the LORD, He who sent those Old Testament prophets! With self-righteous pride they boasted they never would have persecuted the prophets of old or seek their death, and yet Jesus knew they would soon seek His death, He who was the Man, the LORD.

Therefore, He wanted the Pharisees and scribes to go and learn if He as the LORD was extending mercy to publican and sinners, they should also extend mercy to them, for that is what is on the heart of God.

And if they claimed they would have been obedient to LORD and His prophets of old, they should go learn that He was none other than the same LORD who was speaking to them.

He wanted them to go and learn that because He was about to fulfill what all the sacrifices pointed to. It is as if by telling them to go and learn what this means, "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners unto repentance," He was telling them something like the following: "I am telling you I desire mercy and not sacrifice (for the Old Covenant is ending with all its sacrifices) for I am about to begin a new work under the New Covenant where your old prejudices held in self-righteousness must cease if you wish to please Me, the LORD God. You therefore, need to realize, since you claim to honor the prophets of old, that I am the Prophet who was to come, as foretold by Moses of whom Moses told you to listen,^s and more than that, I am God manifested in the flesh, and so am telling you, that you need mercy and not sacrifice, for those sacrifices are coming to an end for they are about to be fulfilled in the sacrifice of Myself, so that salvation might come to all men, not only to the publicans and sinners of your own people, but the publican and sinners of the Gentiles, of all of Adam's race. So, if you desire to

^s Deut. 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;

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. ¹⁹ 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

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please God, then you must go and learn what this means—‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice, for I came to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance!’ For when you learn what this means, you will learn that I AM, Jehovah your God.”

9:14 Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?

9:15 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

After our Lord’s admonition to the Scribes and Pharisees to go and learn, we find next that disciples of John approach Jesus; the verse says “then came to him the disciples of John.” This word “came” is a compound verb made up of a preposition in Greek which includes a meaning of “near,” “toward,” and “before,” combined with the simple Greek verb for “come,” which carries a meaning of moving toward.

This verb that they came does not necessarily mean the disciples of John were not present when Jesus was admonishing the Pharisees to go and learn, and then they came, arriving from some other place, for the same verb is also used in Matt. 8:25 when the disciples and Jesus were all together in the boat on the Sea of Galilee, when the great storm assailed them and Jesus was sound asleep in the stern of the boat. They were already present in the boat with him and the same verb is used when they simply moved toward Jesus who was asleep in the stern of the boat to awaken Him.

Thus it seems these disciples of John were all in the crowd that followed Jesus to Matthew’s house, and there saw Jesus willingly enter the house and sit down with the publican and sinners. But since they do not approach Jesus until after the incident with the scribes and the Pharisees who questioned why Jesus would go in and eat with publicans and sinners, it seems they

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must have been waiting outside Matthew's house until the feast was over to approach Jesus, for it says they did not come up to ask Jesus their question until after Jesus had already answered the scribes and Pharisees their question.

This shows the great popularity of Jesus among the people on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the great threat Jesus must have posed to the Pharisees and scribes. He had great influence and popularity over the people, so much so that a whole crowd was patiently waiting for Jesus to come out of Matthew's house after the feast was finished, some for healing, some for learning, and some for criticizing.

It seems the disciples of John were those who were present to learn from Him, whereas it seems the scribes and Pharisees were those who were present to criticize and to discredit Him.

Thus when Jesus emerges, answering first the question of the Pharisees posed to His disciples in regard to why He ate with publican and sinners, the disciples of John which were in the same crowd waiting outside Matthew's house now move forward and approach Jesus to ask of Him another question. We must remember that John was now in prison (cf. Mk. 1:14) and John had already declared that he, John, must decrease and that He, Jesus, must increase (John 3:30), so, perhaps, the disciples of John were there to seek further instruction and guidance in their fulfilling the will of the God of Israel.

One thing that should be added is that although Matthew has only the disciples of John asking the question, when we compare the Gospel of Mark and Luke we see that not only did the disciples of John ask this question in verse 14, the Pharisees also asked this same question also, which shows us a contrast between the two.

In Matthew's Gospel it says the disciples of John asked the question, but Matthew also reveals that the Pharisees also were wondering why Jesus' disciples did not fast, which means the disciples of John and the Pharisees might have been talking with each other about this while they were both waiting outside the

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house for the feast to end.

In Mark 2:18, however, it reveals that the Pharisees also verbally asked the question, which means, after the disciples of John first asked the question, some of the Pharisees must have also spoken up before Jesus began to answer their question, perhaps, saying something like, "Yes, please tell us why your disciples do not fast!" Of course, the disciples of John would have asked the question with respect, knowing Jesus was the Messiah as John had taught them, but the Pharisees asked the same question, more than likely, with hostility and disdain, and perhaps to turn everyone else that was present, against Jesus, by making it seem that Jesus was being lax in things that both the disciples of John and the Pharisees believed were necessary to please God.

But, of course, when it came to fasting often, the disciples of John did so in true humility because they were mourning for the spiritual condition of the people of Israel, whereas the Pharisees did so in self-righteous justification because they thought such outward forms of piety won them favour with God and so earned them a honored place in the coming kingdom.

As for Luke's Gospel, in Luke 5:33, we learn that the very same Pharisees that first questioned the disciples as to why Jesus would eat with publican and sinners, and the very same Pharisees whom Jesus admonished to go and learn, were the same Pharisees who joined in asking Jesus why His disciples did not fast. ^t We see this because the English pronoun "they," which is contained in the inflected Greek verb, refers back to the scribes and Pharisees of verse 30 in Luke's Gospel who were the ones asking why Jesus ate with publicans and sinners.

So, if we put it all together from all three Gospels, it seems, more than likely, that three different groups approached Jesus after He and His disciples emerged from the feast and the Pharisees and scribes asked why Jesus would eat with publican and sinners. First the disciples of John approached Jesus respectfully asking their question (Matt. 9:14), then certain

^t **Luke5:30-33** And the **Pharisees** and their scribes *began* grumbling at His disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with the tax-gatherers and sinners?" ³¹ And Jesus answered and said to them, "*It is* not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. ³² "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." ³³ And **they** said to Him, "The disciples of John often fast and offer prayers; the *disciples* of the Pharisees also do the same; but Yours eat and drink." NASB77

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disciples of the Pharisees joined in, adding their voices to the question asked by the disciples of John (Mark 2:18), and then, finally, the same Pharisees who were admonished by Jesus to go and learn also added their voice to the question, more than likely with the same condescending attitude displayed regarding His eating with publican and sinners in the first place.

It seems that what was happening, though the passage does not directly say, was that because subsequent groups of Pharisees were adding their voices to the respectful question asked by John's disciples, that the first group of Pharisees were increasingly getting agitated and perhaps angry and hostile toward Jesus for His actions. Why? I think the answer can be found in the traditions of the Pharisees, which the Pharisees considered sacrosanct and binding upon all, and against which Jesus continued to disregard as being those things which did not please God, but in reality negated God's will and Word (cf. Mark 7:1-13).

When it came to fasting, there were many different kinds of fasts in Israel, some, of course, were commanded in the Law such as on the Day of Atonement (cf. Lev. 16:29 and Acts 27:9). Other fasts were brought about by certain circumstances, and of these types the Lord would never oppose. For example some of these types of fasts were observed in the case of mourning, as was done when King Saul died (I Sam. 31:13; II Sam 1:11-27). Moreover, another time fasting that was appropriate was when national disaster was at hand. For example, Joel 1:14-15 speaks of this.

Joel 1:14-15 Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders *and* all the inhabitants of the land *into* the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD, ¹⁵ Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD *is* at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come. KJV

But at that moment in time, that disaster was not upon Israel, for Jesus their Messiah was present to save and not to condemn and judge as would happen on the day of the LORD (John 3:17). Jesus was

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preaching to repent for the kingdom of God was at hand, so they should repent and believe and rejoice that salvation had come to them.

Therefore, fasting would not be appropriate when the Messiah was in their presence, rejoicing over a prodigal son who had repented (i.e. Matthew, the publican).

Jesus illustrated this fact with the picture of a bridegroom on his wedding day. It is almost as if Jesus could be saying, "I am here, your King and your Messiah, seeking to save those who are lost. I am alive in your presence, so if you call for a fast that I did not call for, then you are dishonoring Me as your King and your Messiah, who has now come to save not to condemn. Why would My disciples fast when they believe in who I AM with great hope and joy. You fast because you do not believe in Me, seeking to win favour with My Father by your supposed piety, but you are not winning the favour of God, for you are dishonoring His Only-Begotten Son that He sent!

Indeed, once again, perhaps, not as direct as in Matt. 9:3-6 when He forgave sins, our Lord Jesus is once again asserting His Deity to all those who have ears to hear, to all those who are willing to "go and learn," to all those who humble themselves under the hand of God the Father, being willing with faith to be shown the truth in regard to Jesus as the Son of God, the Son of Man, and the Messiah of Israel.

To those who are so inclined, willing to be taught of God (cf. Matt. 16:13-16), one would see that our Lord is referring to Himself as the God of Israel present as a bridegroom. This is all the more significant for part of that crowd Jesus was still addressing were those Pharisees that He had admonished in Matt. 9:13 to "go and learn" in part from the prophet Hosea. Thus they would know that the LORD God of Israel in the book of Hosea used the imagery of bridegroom for Himself.

Well, Jesus is saying if you understood what I meant to go and learn that "I desire compassion, and not sacrifice, for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners," you would also understand when I say,

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“Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them?” that I am saying I am the bridegroom referred to by Hosea in Hose. 19-20.

And so, just as Hosea 6:6 was spoken to your forefathers, but still had application to you, so too, even though Hosea 2:19-20^u was spoken to your forefathers, it will have application to you, if you will only believe in Me. Thus, Jesus is identifying Himself as the Bridegroom of Israel, their LORD.

Isaiah said much the same thing is Isaiah 62:5.

Isaiah 62:5 For *as* a young man marrieth a virgin, *so* shall thy sons marry thee: and *as* the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, *so* shall thy God rejoice over thee. KJV

The Pharisees were hard of heart and dull of hearing, but the disciples of John, no doubt, would have understood what Jesus was saying, for John from the very beginning told all that Jesus was the Son of God, and so the Lamb of God, as well as the Bridegroom from above, which means they would have understood why Jesus was saying His disciples were rejoicing.

John 1:33-36 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.³⁴ And I saw, and bare record that this is **the Son of God**.³⁵ Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;³⁶ And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold **the Lamb of God!** KJV

John 3:29-31 "He who has the bride is the **bridegroom**; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. And so this joy of mine has been made full.³⁰ "He must increase, but I must decrease.³¹ "He who comes **from above** is above all, he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. NASB77

And so, more than likely, the disciples of John, once

^u**Hos.2:19-20** And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.²⁰ I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD. KJV

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they heard the answer of Jesus, they would have understood that He was claiming to be the LORD of the Old Testament. But the Pharisees still needed to “go and learn” this.

And not only that, by John the Baptist’s assertion that Jesus was the one who came down from above, the disciples of John would understand why Jesus’s disciples would be rejoicing rather than fasting—to them the One promised from the very beginning in the Garden of Eden, the Seed of the Woman, the Man, the LORD, was Jesus who was in their presence! Faithful believers, throughout many millennia, had prayed, perhaps, with fasting, waiting until that day would come when the Promised Seed of the Woman would come to bruise the head of the Serpent and redeem them all. And now that day had finally come! Why would they fast now when He stood in their presence!

And yet there is more in this verse. When the Lord Jesus states at the end of verse 15 that “when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast,” He is implying that the Pharisees should “go and learn” another thing.

After the Lord Jesus is physically taken away from His disciples because of His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, the time would come when it would be appropriate for His disciples to fast, but not for the same reasons the Pharisees were fasting.

Besides chastising them for fasting at a time they should be rejoicing, and directing their minds to the imagery of the LORD as the Bridegroom, Jesus is also chastising them, it seems, for the type of fasting they were doing, i.e. a fast they tried to impose on everyone. This is understood when we realize the Pharisees, as Alfred Edersheim shares in his book *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services as They Were at the Time of Jesus Christ*, “were wont to fast every Monday and Thursday during the weeks intervening Passover and Pentecost, and again, between the Feast of Tabernacles and that of the Dedication of the Temple.”²⁵

And Alfred Edersheim also shares regarding the

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parable of the Pharisee and the publican in Luke 18:9-14 that “it is to this practice that the Pharisee in the parable refers, when boasting, ‘I fast twice in the week,’²⁶” and then in a footnote he says the reason for this practice was—“because on a Thursday Moses had gone up to Mount Sinai, and came down on a Monday, when he received for the *second time* the Tables of the Law.”²⁷

In fact when we compare this account with the one in Mark we find out that that Mark adds that when the Pharisees asked their question about fasting, they were actually in the middle of fasting! Mark uses a present participle (νηστεύοντες) so that the Darby’s version and the NKJV’s translation of the “Pharisees were fasting” is better than the KJV the “Pharisees used to fast.”

In other words, the fact that they were fasting suggests that this feast in Matthew’s house was occurring near the end of a fast day when the Pharisees and the disciples of John were still fasting.

The problem with the Pharisees’ fast, as opposed to the disciples of John’s fast, and the fast that Jesus’s disciples would do in the future, was that that the Pharisees took that which should have been voluntary, and tried to make mandatory for all, for they considered themselves more pious and spiritual than others in Israel.

In their mind they were the standard of righteousness in Israel, so if they chose to fast, everyone should fast. They apparently believed that if one was equally as pious and spiritual as they were, they would be fasting too! Otherwise, they considered them as not being very devoted to God.

But their imposed fasting on themselves and others was a fast of self-righteousness and superficial piety, whereas the fast of the disciples of John at that time was a true fast of mourning because of the low spiritual condition of the people of Israel. The disciples of John were fasting for the same reason that Daniel fasted—Daniel was mourning the low spiritual condition of the people of Israel (Dan. 9:2-19).

And so, since Jesus and His disciples were not

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fasting like they, the Pharisees were fasting, they viewed them all as being less pious than themselves. What an affront that would be to think that Jesus was less devoted to God than they were, or, indeed, to think that He who was the Righteous One of Israel was not the true standard of righteousness. The Pharisees believed they were instead! Their spiritual arrogance was amazing.

Moreover, adding to this all, it is very possible that the Pharisees (and not the disciples of John) made sure it was known that they were fasting. We must remember that Jesus mentions how the hypocrites (i.e. the Pharisees) would disfigure their faces to make sure everyone knew they were fasting.

Matthew 6:16 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. KJV

Thus it would not be surprising that the Pharisees came to Jesus asking this question with disfigured faces, in pious sanctimony, acting as if they were more devoted and committed to God than He!

And so we see that Jesus is also condemning the Pharisees for not recognizing who was standing in their midst, the LORD God of the Old Testament, and He was also condemning them for thinking that they could save their souls through their acts of piety.

Additionally, with all this in mind, another thing we see Jesus teaching us is that God is not pleased when men add religious traditions to the Word of God, which they then impose on others as being obligatory for them to follow. (Apparently, Jesus knew full well that He was eating on one of their fast days.) Nowhere did God command the children of Israel in the Law to fast twice a week on the second and fifth days. While it may be fine if a Pharisee chose to do so individually and voluntarily for themselves, it was not right to impose the fast upon others, as being that which was a command of God. If they wished to fast themselves on those days that would be their own free choice, but to impose it on

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others was wrong and disrespectful to God.

Presumptuous regulations, which are added to what God has already given to us for the ordering of our lives before Him, are never pleasing to God, for it implies that God provision is not sufficient for our spiritual well-being. That was true in the Old Testament with the Pharisees, and it is true in the New Testament with those who presume much the same as the Pharisees of old.

Scripture teaches us that God has given to us all things necessary pertaining to life and godliness (II Pet. 1:3).^v So when a Church creates new rituals not found in God's Word (as has been done by the Roman Catholic Church), or new methods gleaned from the wisdom of the world which are integrated and mixed together with God's Word (as has been done by many Evangelical Churches) it is an affront to God's wisdom. It does nothing but puff up and glorify man over God. It was that way when Cain added to the Divine regulations regarding sacrifice, and it was that way when Jeroboam did so with his worship of the LORD imaged in the calves, and it was that way with the Pharisees who did so with all their minute regulations that weighed down people with burdens too great to bear, making the Word of God of none effect.

Mark 7:7, 13 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.¹³ Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye. KJV

Matt. 23:4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay *them* on men's shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers. KJV

This fact of not adding to the revelation of God explains the next few verses.

9:16 No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made

^v **II Pet. 1:3** seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.NASB77

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worse.

In this verse Jesus is speaking of Himself and His teaching as being the new piece of cloth, which is completely different than the Old Covenant, that has had added to it by the Pharisees so many additional regulations and man-made traditions.

The old garment is the Old Covenant, meant to come to an end, so the disciples of John needed to learn that one cannot mend that old garment with things taken from Christ and His teachings. He came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets, not to extend the Law and the Prophets. He came to introduce a New Covenant, not to extend the Old Covenant. So the new cloth is that which comes from Christ and so in one sense He is saying something to this effect, "Why take my sayings as a new piece of cloth and attempt to fit it in and mend what is torn and ready to vanish? If you do so, it will not help, but only make things worse, for by the Law no flesh shall be made righteous, for by works of the Law no flesh shall be justified (Rom. 3:20-22). So why not instead obtain from Me a whole new garment made entirely of new cloth, and not just a piece of that new cloth or garment. Seek the whole new garment, for that new garment is none other than the garment of My righteousness which I will effect in a New Covenant! No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse!"

Isaiah 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh *himself* with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth *herself* with her jewels. KJV

9:17 Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.

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As with the previous verse Jesus is speaking of Himself and His teaching as being the new wine which is established in a new covenant.

It is most unfortunate that some misuse these two verses, taking them out of context, to justify their introduction into the Church new methods for Church finance, adopted from the business world, new marketing techniques adopted from the world, utilized for Church growth, and new practices and principles gleaned from the psychologies of human behaviour, added and integrated into the teaching of the Word of God for Christian living. All these things are called the “new wine” by some, as being that which is given to them by Jesus in accordance with this verse.

This false application of these verses, of course, means that other Christians or Churches that do not believe in what there are calling the “new wine,” are then considered by them as being the old garments and the old wineskins in the parable that are no longer being useful to God in His fresh move among His people.

In other words, if a Church, for example, is using the methods used by the apostles of not asking others to give them money for their work, or not selling there ministry for profit to fund God’s work, or not using the proven marketing strategies of business to gain new customers, for the purpose of the Church gaining new members, and in so doing God deems that that Church should remain small (as most of the Churches founded by Paul were, when compared to the mega churches of today), even though they are faithful to God’s way in every way as found in the Word, they then regard that Church as being old fashioned, out of date, an old garment, and old wineskin, devoid of the blessing of God, for obviously they are not large like they are.

This mindset of certain Christian leaders, who are saying the above, are really saying that the new wine of the LORD can grow old, rather than staying new and fresh. They are saying the new wine put in new wineskins have both grown old and so new wine and new wineskins need to be given in every generation.

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They are saying that was sufficient for the first century, is no longer sufficient today for the garments and wineskins have grown old. So to them new wine becomes only that which is successful in their eyes, which means large Churches with many members.

The same holds true regarding financing the Work of God. They are really saying the ways of the apostles are considered outdated, not efficient in raising money for the work of God, which in turn would then mean the Lord's ways are outdated and old, for the apostles practiced what He practiced!

Or what they are really saying, without really saying it, is that the Lord Jesus Christ's principles for spiritual growth, being that of taking up one's cross daily, and denying one's self are no longer considered sufficient and efficient for spiritual growth in today's modern society. They too have become old like an old wineskin. They may have been the new wine of the first century, but not the new wine of the 21st century!

If one doubts this mindset today, read books written on Christian maturity today, and in so many books you will no longer find any mention of denying self, and taking up one's cross daily. Indeed, the way of the cross is hardly mentioned anymore today; instead most are filled with principles gleaned from Christian psychologies and philosophies.

This means that the new wine that the Lord Jesus taught as being essential is no longer considered essential for spiritual growth and so His teaching is no longer relevant in the modern world today. (Of course, such things as Church growth mentioned above are often the conclusion made by men who are no longer walking by faith, for they consider numbers as being a sign of God's blessing. If that is the standard of God's blessing then what are we to make of Jesus, who, at one point had only a few following Him, and in the end He had none! They all scattered, leaving Him alone (John 16:32).^w

Unfortunately, some judge the Church, as they judge a business. A company with a large customer base must be successful, so they conclude that a Church with a large membership must be successful,

^w **John 16:32**

Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. KJV

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which, of course, is not true, if those numbers are gained by human wisdom mixed in with biblical principles.

The new teaching of today is that new wine is different for every generation, and so Churches which do not receive the current methods and principles taught as new wine, they are then labeled as being the old wineskins.

This simply is not what Jesus is speaking of when referring to new wine and old wineskins; the new wine He is speaking about is that which He brought about in the fullness of time. He was speaking of that which He was doing at that very moment in time—His teaching, His worship, and His walk before God.

New wine was His Divine Life as manifested in the flesh upon the earth; it was His teaching as reflected in such declarations of His as Luke 9:23.

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. (Lk. 9:23 KJV)

In other words, if one wishes for new wine, then one needs to look no further than Luke 9:23.

If one is not denying one's own self, but instead is teaching we must love our *self*, affirm our *self*, and believe in our own *self*, what they call new wine is not the new wine of Jesus.

If one does not teach we must take up our cross daily, and follow the Master, such a one cannot claim to have new wine from God.

The new wine of Jesus was also reflected in such declarations as Matt. 5:43-44.

Matthew 5:43-44 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. ⁴⁴ But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you. KJV

If one does not love as Jesus loved, loving all those who hate us, who curse us, and who despitefully use us and persecute us, then they do not have the new

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wine of Jesus. If Christians bring politics into the Church, wherein we view those of another party with the same disdain and hate that they view us in return, they do not have the new wine of Jesus.

Christians should never hold political enemies in disdain and hate, supposedly, for Christ and His kingdom, for if one does so, they are not obeying the commands of the King in whose kingdom they strive!

Indeed, one could say the entire Sermon on the Mount is new wine! Jesus said, If you love me you will keep My commandments (John 14:15, 21).

And the commandments of Jesus and the teachings of the apostles are the new wine. We are told to imitate them, following their teaching, as they imitated Christ and followed His teaching, which means in the end, the new wine is the entire New Testament, for that contains the teaching of Christ and His apostles (and prophets)!

Matthew 28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." NASB77

II Tim. 1:13 Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. NASB77

Phil. 4:9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you. NASB77

II Peter 3:2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: KJV

This is what the disciples of John and the Pharisees needed to learn.

So in a very real sense, one can say that the entire New Testament is the new wine that Jesus talked about that need to be put in new wineskins. New wine for the Church is not found in any writings of men,

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who may not have even been saved, such as those teachings found in human philosophies and human psychologies. New wine for the Church is not found in new creative methods or principles adapted from the world or the wisdom of man. New wine for the Church is none other than the Everlasting Word of God, and in that sense, though the new wine expands over time, it never grows old. but keeps expanding, spreading over all the earth for all to hear and to read!

Acts 6:7 And the word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith. NASB77

Therefore the new wine is already in the Church, and the Church has always been the new wineskin that holds the new wine. The new wine was vouchsafed to the Church. It is not held in anything else, and so cannot be found in any other place. And as the new wine spreads, so too the Church spreads with it! It is most unfortunate that some Christians do not recognize this and instead think that new wine means new ways to serve God. That is a total misapplication of what Jesus was teaching—the new wine is the LORD Jesus Christ and His teaching, which is the New Testament, and the Church is the new wineskin, which can never become an old wineskins.

The only way the Church could ever become an old wineskin is to stop being a New Testament Church, wherein it falls away from the Truth, returns back to the Old Covenant, and teaches that the works of the Law are the only means for salvation. But apart from that a Church which is built upon the Bedrock that is Christ can never become an old wineskin, for the Church is the Body of Christ.

Now some might say, but what about Churches that adopt man-made traditions. How can they be new wineskins, filled with new wine? Beloved, if they are saved, they are still new wineskins filled with new wine. In can be no other way for the Church is the Body of Christ and the Body of Christ cannot be called an old wineskin! There are other reasons why

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Churches do not manifest the new wine, the life of Christ, but one cannot say it is because they are an old wineskin, or have no new wine within them. To teach that would be contradicting the Lord Jesus and the work that He did in making of Himself one New Man (Eph. 2:13-18)!

In that light we should always realize that even the most carnal Church is still the Church that Christ said He will build. In the end every Church will grow unto maturity. Therefore, we should always be careful to show love to our brethren no matter what Church they belong to or how old-fashioned some say that they are. Are we not glad the Lord does not treat us as some treat their other brethren?

If we really seek new wine, we will be filled with love for all our brethren in whatever Church they might belong, that is as long as they have not, as a whole, left the Faith and so are a Church in name only. But if they are sound in the Faith, yet, unfortunately, filled with some error and/or the traditions of man which usurp the Word of God, we should still seek to edify them in love and not hold them in contempt or disdain.

I think Anthony Norris Groves said it best in regard to the new wine that is the Lord and is the Word as found in His Church. I shared this above in regard to Matthew 9: 12-13, but let me share it again in regard to this.

“Yet 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

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apart for Thine own.”²⁸

Jesus was teaching that He was the New Wine—His words were new wine—and His New Testament (New Covenant) was New Wine.

The Church of Christ does never becomes an old wineskin; it may empty itself of the new wine, but it never becomes an old wineskin, for Jesus taught the old wineskin was the Old Covenant, with all its external ritual and ordinances which Jesus came as the Messiah to fulfill.

II Cor. 3:1-6 Are we beginning again to commend ourselves? or need we, as do some, epistles of commendation to you or from you? ² Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men; ³ being made manifest that ye are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in tables *that are* hearts of flesh.⁴ And such confidence have we through Christ to Godward: ⁵ not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to account anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God; ⁶ **who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant; not of the letter, but of the Spirit:** for the letter killeth, but the **Spirit giveth life.** ASV (Capitalization mine)

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. NASB77

Galatians 6:15 For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. NASB77

Hebrews 8:13 In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old *is* ready to vanish away. KJV

The Old Covenant was given for a time until the fullness of time arrived in which the Son of God, the Christ of Israel would introduce the New Covenant in His blood. Christ did this upon the cross when His blood was shed for our sins. Now all things of the Old have been fulfilled in Him and He is the Mediator of a New Covenant, the new wine, if you will, wherein we live and serve by the Holy Spirit, having been

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cleansed by His blood, having been baptized into the body of Christ, so that we are in Him and He is in us, and His Words are now written upon our hearts, and not upon tablets of stone. This is the new wine of Jesus (also see Heb. 8:10).^x

This might seem like a paradox, but if we are seeking for new wine, look backwards, not forwards, for the New Wine is found in the Word of God, both in the Word of God that in the beginning was with God and was God, the Only-Begotten Son of God, and in the Word of God that is the inspired Scripture. It is found in no other place and it ever remains new and fresh for Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever, and also the Word of God is unchanging, being the Everlasting Word of God.

Psalms 119:89 Forever, O LORD, Thy word is settled in heaven. NASB77

Psalms 119:152 Of old I have known from Thy testimonies, That Thou hast founded them forever. NASB77

1 Peter 1:25 But the word of the Lord abides forever." And this is the word which was preached to you. NASB77

If we seek new wine to serve God, then look to Christ in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily (Col. 2:8-9). Hold fast to Him.

If we seek new wine to serve God, then search the Scriptures, with humble hearts and prayerful spirits so as to be taught of the Holy Spirit, through gifted men in the assembly. Look to the Word of God, not to the words of Christian teachers who have borrowed thoughts from the philosophies and psychologies of the world, who have then integrated or merged them with Christian thoughts and truths, who then produce writings of that mixture, which some may think are profound and most wise, but whose words are by Scripture, in reality, are considered foolishness (I Cor. 1:19-20).^y How amazing it is that those who admire and utilize such wisdoms can so easily rationalize away God's assessment of human wisdom and philosophy.

^x **Hebrews 8:10**

For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: KJV

^y **1 Cor. 1:19-20**

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.²⁰ Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? KJV

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Unfortunately, according to Scripture, such who do so, are acting like “mere men” (I Cor. 3:3 NASB77), which refers to the natural men of I Cor. 2:14, which are those who are “soulical,” approaching the things of God with the wisdom of their own soul.

9:18 While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.

What an amazing contrast is made between those of Israel questioning the walk of Jesus before God, and this ruler of Israel who, while Jesus was answering the scribes and the Pharisees, comes and falls down before Jesus and worships Him. Now, this word translated worshipped can be used of the honor and respect shown to one considered to be greater, with no thought of Divinity, but I believe like that of Matt. 8:2 that Matthew is demonstrating the Divinity of the Lord, and so this ruler, whose name is revealed in the other Gospels to be Jairus is confessing his belief in Jesus as the Son of God, much like John the Baptist did, and like Nathaniel did, and, of course, as Peter did (Matt. 16:16).

Why is it so hard to believe that Matthew is revealing that Jesus was being worshiped as the Son of God, i.e. the Divine Messiah, the Promised Seed of the Woman, the Man, the LORD? Somehow the thought has gained traction among some Christians that Jesus never claimed to be Divine. The opposite is the truth. Jesus over and over claimed to be Divine, in ways that those who have ears to hear can hear and those who have eyes to see can see. Many in Israel, even apart from these claims of the Lord Jesus, always believed that when the Messiah comes, He would be Divine. This was seen from the beginning in Gen. 3:15, as well as in such verses as Isaiah 7:14—Immanuel, i.e. God with us; Isa. 9:6—Mighty God; and Micah 5:2—goings forth even from Everlasting, as well as all the verses we have shown so far from

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the Gospel of Matthew, e.g. Matt. 8:27 (which if one wishes to revisit is found on page 144ff.)

Thus as a believer in the Divine Messiah he knows with great faith that if Jesus but comes and lays His hand upon his daughter she shall live. This great faith was also demonstrated by Martha in John 11:21-27.

So, more than likely, Jairus could have been a believer in Jesus as the Divine Messiah that was promised to come in human flesh. Perhaps, after the Lord's crucifixion and then resurrection, Jairus became one of the many in Israel, who could confess along with Thomas, "My LORD, and my God!" This could be why Luke mentioned the name of this particular ruler in Israel, as opposed to another synagogue ruler in Israel whose name Luke did not mention (Luke 13:14). Perhaps, it is because Jairus became a Christian after the resurrection of Christ?

In any case, before we continue, perhaps, it might be best to explain why Matthew says that Jairus came telling Jesus his daughter was dead, while Mark and Luke seemingly say Jairus came telling Jesus his daughter was near death (cf. Mk. 5:22-23 and Luke 8:41-42).

This supposed contradiction is used by some who wish to discredit the Bible, declaring this shows that Scripture is not inspired but is filled with errors. But, of course, as with other passages that they try to discredit, the seeming contradiction would fade away if they did not approach Scripture with predisposed mindset to discredit it. If they would simply take time to study the Word they would find there are no errors in Scripture.

As for this seeming contradiction, it is usually explained by stating that Matthew is just summarizing the event without going into details. Perhaps that could be the explanation, but that still does not explain why Matthew would say that Jairus immediately says to Jesus after falling down and worshipping him that his daughter had died.

Here in Matthew, Jairus says she has died *before* Jesus and his disciples arise and follow him towards his house. However, the other Gospels seemingly

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state that he does not find out his daughter has died until *after* they are on the way to his house, at least, it appears that way on the surface. I suppose a summary still might explain this difference, but let me suggest another possibility.

The first thing to realize is that there is not a contradiction between the three Gospels at all; for the seeming contradiction between Matthew and Mark is only the result of our translation, and that with Luke simply because Luke is giving a different perspective of the situation as we will shortly discuss.

First, let us examine Matthew and Mark. I do not believe the Greek verb and adverb in Matthew, translated into English as *is even now dead*, or *has just now died*, can be understood in any other way than that in Jairus' mind she was already dead, but I do believe the Greek verb and adverb in Mark's Gospel could be understood in another way.

In most versions the phrase ἐσχάτως ἔχει in Mark is translated as something along the line of his daughter being "at the point of death." However, it could just as well be translated that she "is at the end," meaning death. In other words, Mark's phrase of ἐσχάτως ἔχει would mean that his daughter had reached the end of her life, the last extremity of her life, which, of course for every human being means death; so ἐσχάτως ἔχει would mean she was dead.

Literally, in an absolute wooden English translation, the phrase, along with the rest of the sentence, would read, "My little daughter, she has the furthest." That, of course, would be hard to understand apart from a little meditation upon it, but it is saying she has reached the last or final state of this life—death. Now some believe ἔχει with an adverb must be rendered into English as the verb *to be*, but that is not always the case. Sometimes it can convey the sense of possessing a particular state of existence, in this case, death. But if one wished to translate the verb as the verb *to be*, it could be rendered, "My little daughter is in the last *state*."

Or, if we wished to paraphrase it for discussion, could be paraphrased as, "My little daughter has

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breathed her last.”

Alford also recognized this equivalency between what Matthew wrote and what Mark wrote. He says in his *Greek New Testament*, “ἐσχ. ἔχει = ἄρτι ἐτελεύτησεν Matt.”²⁹ And in his *Greek Testament for English Readers*, he adds this notation regarding the phrase in Mark, writing: “**lieth at the point of death** answers to *is even now dead* in Matthew.”³⁰

The reason why it seems many understand it with the meaning of “at the point of death” is because it is assumed that when Jairus speaks to Jesus he did not know his daughter had died. This seems to be the understanding because it assumes from the story of the messenger arriving a few moments later with the news of her death, after Jesus and his disciples had departed with Jairus (Mark 5:35),^z is the very moment Jairus first learns that his daughter had died; but that is not the case for when we read Matthew we see Matthew clearly tells us Jairus says she died “before” the messenger ever reaches him. So what is the answer?

It could be this; when Jairus left his house she was in the throes of death, but still alive. Therefore Jairus decides to leave to find Jesus so that He might come and hopefully heal her before she reaches death. But before Jairus leaves the house, he tells one of his servants that if his daughter dies while he is out trying to find Jesus, to immediately come to him and tell him.

More than likely, as a ruler of the synagogue, and with all the commotion going on in the village with the feast being held at Matthew’s house, Jairus and the messenger already knew Jesus was there. And so with those instructions being set, Jairus quickly leaves the house to find Jesus.

However, once Jairus reaches Jesus, he suddenly sees his servant outside the throng of people trying to reach him, or perhaps he even sees him further down the street, running toward him.

Thus, at the very moment of seeing the messenger coming towards him, he knows his daughter must have died right after he left the house to find Jesus. So

^z **Mark 5:35** While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house certain* which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further? KJV

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then, with this sad news, he falls on his face before Jesus, worshipping Him, and saying that his daughter has reached the end, and so begged Him to come heal her for He knows if Jesus does this she will live.

This explains why he says to Jesus in Matthew ἡ θυγάτηρ μου ἄρτι ἐτελεύτησεν (My daughter **just now** died) rather than saying ἡ θυγάτηρ μου ἐτελεύτησεν (My daughter died). In other words he adds the adverb for “just now,” meaning it just happened. Thus, this explains why both Matthew and Mark tell us that Jairus tells Jesus that his daughter had died before Jesus arises and follows him.

In this light, this also explains why Mark includes the part of the story where Jairus asks Jesus to save (σῶζω) his daughter in Mark 5:23. Again in most translations the word is translated as something along the line of being “made well,” or being “healed,” which is, indeed, one of the meanings of the word in certain contexts. And I think the reason many conclude this is one of the contexts in which that word should be understood is because most believe Jairus did not know his daughter was dead until after his servant or messenger actually reached him. However, when we understand that Matthew states that he already knew she was dead and Mark says the same thing in a different way, I believe σῶζω should be understood and translated by its the most common meaning, that being, to be “saved” or “delivered.” By way of example, I might mention that in the KJV the verb is translated as “save,” rather than “heal” or to “make whole” by almost a 10 to 1 ratio.

In fact, the writer of Hebrews uses this same Greek verb σῶζω of Jesus being saved from death, not meaning, of course, of Jesus being healed or made whole, for He was sinless, innocent, and without a sin nature, perfect in every way. But it was being used of His being delivered from death, i.e. being raised out of the grave, out of death.

Hebrews 5:7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able **to save him from death**, and was heard in that he feared. KJV

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Thus I believe in the context it is being used to mean that Jairus was asking Jesus *to deliver her from death, or to save her from death, bring her back to life*, since in his mind his daughter had just then died, as we explained above, as Matthew stated, and as Mark stated. So this shows there is no contradiction between the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Mark. That now leaves us with the Gospel of Luke, which we will now examine.

In his Gospel Luke clearly writes the opposite of Matthew and Mark, writing that Jairus' daughter was not dead but was in the process of dying.

Luke 8:41-42 And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house: ⁴² For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him. KJV

So the question arises as to why he would write she was dying when Matthew and Mark declares that when Jairus was beseeching Jesus to come to his house he knew she was dead? This difference between Luke and Matthew and Mark is why some who wish to discredit the inerrancy of Scripture, declaring that Scripture contradicts itself. Well, as we already stated, Scripture does not contradict itself, and the reason for this change will become apparent once one considers all the possibilities.

One possibility is that mentioned by the German theologian Hermann Olshausen in his commentary. In explaining why Jairus stated that his daughter had died to Jesus, and yet a messenger comes later to give him that news, Olshausen says that some "think that experiments were still being made for the purpose of reviving her; in which case, the message of the servants would refer to the futility of these attempts."

³¹ Thus it is suggested that when Jairus leaves, after his daughter dies, to find Jesus, he also knows that there were those present who were not yet ready to give up, believing they might still be able to revive

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her. Thus, even though Jairus knew others were still trying to revive her, to him his daughter was dead, and he believed the best chance for her to be revived was to find Jesus, so he left.

In any case, the suggestion is made that after those who were trying to revive failed, they then sent out a messenger to find Jairus to tell him they failed to do so, and so she was, sorrowfully, truly dead.

I suppose with this possible scenario, one might conclude that Luke then would have been recording the belief of those who were still trying to revive her, thus, in their mind “she was still in the final stages of death,” not yet truly dead, so that, while Matthew and Mark recorded the belief that Jairus himself had, that she was indeed dead, Luke was speaking of the perspective of those who were not ready to give up. I suppose this might be possible, but I do not think so myself.

Another possibility, which I do not believe is the case either, but which I will mention, is that Luke uses the imperfect form of the verb for dying in his Gospel which can mean death. Luke wrote αὕτη ἀπέθνησκεν, which most versions understand as she “she lay dying,” or “she was dying,” referring to that ongoing action in the past without any reference as to its completion, which meaning is conveyed by the imperfect tense. But some believe that in Greek there are times when the imperfect tense is used of an act which is ongoing but is known to have ceased at one point in the past and so has an aoristic sense.

For example, in Mark 6:18, the Greek imperfect verb ἔλεγεν can be understood as meaning “he said,” as translated by many versions, giving an aoristic sense, or the imperfect verb could be understood as “he had been saying,” as translated by the NASB77, rendering it with an imperfect sense.^a But in both cases from the context, the reader knows the “speaking” had to have ended because of the context of the narrative. This fact is the reason why some call this an “aoristic imperfect,” and so believe that in certain cases the imperfect can be used of completed action in the past.

^a **Mk. 6:18** For John **had said** unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. KJV

Mk. 6:18 For John **had been saying** to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." NASB77

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Now, some believe this sense only occurs with the verb ἔλεγεν, but others believe this sense might be used with other imperfects (which we will mention shortly). And then others, I would say the majority, disagree completely, affirming there is no such thing as an aoristic imperfect, and that the only reason ἔλεγεν is rendered as completed action is not because of the Greek, but because of the English, believing in certain instances such a translation as “he said” makes the passage more understandable than a true imperfect rendering.

But for those who believe an aoristic imperfect is sometimes a legitimate use of that tense, and that it is not necessarily limited to ἔλεγεν, it should not surprise us that the same thing could be understood with Luke’s use of the imperfect ἀπέθνησκειν, which most versions understand as she “was dying,” yet with an aoristic sense would be understood as “she died.” Thus, if it is being used of action that one knows came to completion in the past by the context, then, like the Greek verb ἔλεγεν in Mark 6:18, it too could be understood a past action that had occurred, but was known to have ended.

Thus, if this is the case in Luke then the same Greek imperfect verb ἀπέθνησκειν could be understood as “she died.” As for other examples of this possible usage of ἀπέθνησκειν, one might consider Numbers 33:39 in the LXX, which has the same Greek imperfect ἀπέθνησκειν, and is given, presumably by the context an aoristic sense in translation: “And Aaron was a hundred and twenty-three years old, when he died (ἀπέθνησκειν) in mount Hor.”

Now, as was mentioned above, it still retains in Greek the sense of ongoing action in past time, but, since it is known to have been completed, it is understood as died. So in the same way in Luke 8:42 the phrase might be understood as something like “she was breathing out her last breath,” an act bespeaking a finite action that does not continue, and cannot be repeated, carrying a sense of completion, which is why it might fit this sense of an aoristic

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imperfect. And so, because of this, recognizing this as the last action of the living soul of his little girl, in Jairus mind, she had died.

It is interesting that Wycliffe so translates it as she was dead in his translation, not that she was dying, which, of course, we should mention is a translation of the Latin translating the Greek imperfect, but which still shows how Wycliffe understood the verse. Here is his translation: “For he hadde but o doughtir almoost of twelve year edl: **and sche was deed**, and it bifelde the while he wente he was thrungun of the puple.”³²

This same Greek imperfect verb ἀπέθνησκειν is also used in the LXX in Gen. 35:18 with this last action of life: “And it came to pass in her giving up the ghost (for she was dying), that she called his name, ‘The son of my pain;’ but his father called his name Benjamin” (Brenton’s Version). Thus ἀπέθνησκειν if understood as an aoristic imperfect could be understood as a description of her breathing out her last breath, i.e. giving up the ghost, which, of course, is death. With this sense one would then translate Brenton’s translation as, “And it came to pass in her giving up the ghost (for **she died**), that she called his name, ‘The son of my pain;’ but his father called his name Benjamin.”

This is how most English translations of Gen. 35:18 translate the equivalent term in Hebrew. For example, that is how the KJV rendered it.

Genesis 35:18 And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for **she died**) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin.

For further consideration of this sense, one can compare such verse in the LXX as Num. 33:39; Jud. 2:19; II Chron. 24:22. *

So if such a use of the imperfect tense is a legitimate usage, the imperfect tense of the verb in Luke could describe that final act of life of Jairus’ daughter, which act is finite once entered into and so cannot end in any other way than death, and so is an equivalent way to say that one breathing out their last,

* One might also be interested in reading Dana and Mantey’s *A Manual Grammar of the Greek NT*, regarding the imperfect verb ἐφίλει in John 11:36 (page 188).

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thus one is saying that person died.

Consequently, in this case, in Jairus' mind his daughter was already dead when he left his house, because he saw her breathing out her last, which also explains why Jairus does not act surprised with the messengers news.

Nevertheless, as I said before, I do not believe that is what Luke is saying, nor that he is using an aoristic imperfect. So, if that is the case, how can we still reconcile what Luke says with what Matthew and Mark say? The answer might be as simple as a pair of parentheses.

It seems that Matthew and Mark are recounting the incident from the perspective of what was actually said by Jairus to Jesus. In his mind, and in the mind of others, she was dead. Luke, on the other hand, never records for us what Jairus says to Jesus. Notice that all Luke says is that he was beseeching Jesus to come to his house without ever telling the reader what was said between him and Jesus (Luke 8:41).

And then in verse 42 Luke lets the reader know why Jairus is beseeching Jesus to come to his house. Luke writes, "For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying" (Luke 8:42a KJV). But we must notice that in that verse Luke is not recounting what Jairus said to Jesus, for if he was, then Luke would have used an introductory phrase such as, "for he said," and followed with a first person singular verb so that verse 41 and 42 would read something like this: And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house, *for he said; I have* one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying."

But notice that Luke uses a 3rd person singular verb, and is making the statement himself to the reader, not from the perspective of that moment, but from the perspective of the whole incident as a narrator looking backward over the whole incident after the fact! In other words, unlike Matthew and Mark, Luke is making known to the reader the true

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nature of what was occurring. He is narrating the story as one who already knows the outcome.

Luke is simply letting the reader know the fact that Jairus' daughter was not dead, though from the other Gospels it appeared that she had died in not only Jairus' mind, but also in the mind of the messenger and others at the house. Jesus, of course, knew they all believed this, but He did not make it known until later. Therefore, Luke's comment in verse 42 might be considered a parenthetical comment to the reader, letting the reader know what Jesus already knew at that moment when Jairus first came to Him, but which at that time Jesus did not tell Jairus or anyone else.

Perhaps it might help us understand what Luke is doing as a narrator of the story if we put the first part of verse 42 within parentheses.

Luke 8:41-42 "And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him to come into his house; ⁴² (for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying). But as he went the multitudes thronged him..." (KJV adapted)

In other words, Luke is simply giving the reader the true facts of the incident from his perspective as a narrator, already knowing the full story, which Jairus and everyone else did not know until later. But Jesus knew! Jesus knew Jairus' daughter was not really dead, which the reader finds out in verse 52, from the very lips of Jesus.

Luke 8:52 And all were weeping, and bewailing her: but he said, Weep not; **for she is not dead**, but sleepeth. ASV

Thus, in his narrative Luke lets the reader know the truth of her condition in a parenthesis at the beginning of the story while both Matthew and Mark wait until the end of the story to let the reader know this truth when Jesus enters into the house.

Matthew 9:24 He said unto them, Give place: **for the maid is not dead**, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.

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KJV

Mark 5:39 And when he was entered in, he saith unto them, Why make ye a tumult, and weep? **the child is not dead**, but sleepeth. ERV1885

Jesus knew she had not died, when Jairus first approached Him, but He decides to not let anyone know until he arrives at Jairus' house. Or, at least, I should say Scripture does not say He ever made it known before that moment. I suppose it is possible that he made it known privately to Jairus after the messenger finally was able to reach them in the midst of the throng of people as they were on the way to his house. If that was the case, that may help explain why He told Jairus to not be afraid, but only believe (Mark 5:36).

So what we see is that Luke is narrating the story from the perspective of a narrator who knows the ending, and Matthew and Mark tell the story from the perspective of Jairus and what he believed and said to Jesus at the moment he met Jesus. The messenger thought she was dead, Jairus thought she was dead, but Jesus knew it only appeared she was dead. But Matthew and Mark, obviously, knowing the end of the story too, simply decided to not let the reader know that truth until later in the story.

As for the little girl, perhaps, she was in some type of a deep coma, which, for all intents and purposes, could not be discerned by those around, so in Jairus' mind, when he saw the messenger approaching, he believed she was dead.

In any case, we can see there is no contradiction between the three Gospels when they are all compared together in context. Matthew and Mark record for us the perspective of Jairus and his honest belief that his daughter had died, which Jairus is told is not the case when he and Jesus reach the house. But Luke simply lets the reader know this beforehand by a parenthetical statement.

So we see the supposed discrepancy between the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke is not a discrepancy at all, but simply a retelling of the story

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from two different perspectives.

When all is said and done, Scripture does not tell us why Jairus believed that his daughter was dead; it never pulls the curtain back on those moments at his little girls' bedside, before he leaves his house to look for Jesus, or of the arrangement he may have made with his servant, but since we do know that he believed his daughter was dead by the time he first speaks to Jesus, it would not be so unreasonable to assume that some arrangement had been made between Jairus and the messenger before Jairus ever left the house. He may have told his servant that if his daughter dies, to come immediately and let him know. And so, as we suggested above, once Jairus is standing before Jesus, getting ready to speak to him, and he sees the messenger trying to make his way through the crowd, Jairus knows immediately that his daughter had just died, but that did not deter him, for he still asks Jesus, just like Matthew also records, to come and lay his hands upon her, believing that if Jesus did so, she would live again.

9:19 And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples.

9:20 And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment:

9:21 For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.

And so, now that Jesus responds to Jairus' plea of faith, leaving with his disciples for Jairus' house, we see another example of one who has faith in the healing power of Jesus, this time by a woman who had an incurable malady for over twelve years.

Human physicians had been unable to heal her, but she had faith that Jesus could do so, if she could but touched the hem of His garment. Where did this faith of hers come from? Most assuredly, as with all faith, it must have come from the words of God. Perhaps the Holy Spirit brought to her remembrance the story of Asa, who was never healed, having sought only the

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healing of physicians, and not of the LORD (II Chron. 16:12).^b Or, perhaps, the Lord above brought to her memory the words of David who said that the LORD was He “forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases” (Ps. 103:3), or of Isaiah who declared that the Messiah would take our infirmities and bear our sicknesses (Isa. 53:4 with Matt. 8:17). Indeed, she may have simply heard the words that Jesus had spoken just a short time before to the Pharisees, saying that “they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick” (Matt. 9:12). She may have even heard the Sermon on the Mount, wherein she was one of the ones who were astonished by His teaching, being one who taught with authority and not like one of the scribes (Matt. 7:28-29).

Perhaps, that is when the woman first began to believe that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah, the LORD God Himself in human flesh as Jesus taught (Matt. 5:8; 6:33; 7:21-22), and as promised by in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:15; 4:1; Deut. 18:15-19), and as promised by the Prophets, like David (II Sam. 7:19), or like Isaiah (Isa. 9:6; 40:3-5, 9-11; 53:4), or like Micah (Micah 5:2), or like the last of the Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist (John 1:19-36)!

Or finally, perhaps, if hers was not the first incident of this type of healing obtained by touching the hem of His garment, the Holy Spirit may have chosen to make known to her, through a family member or a friend, that if one but touches the hem of the garment of Jesus the Messiah, one can be healed, for there were reports of this type of healing occurring in other places in the Gospels.

Mark 6:56 And wherever He entered villages, or cities, or countryside, they were laying the sick in the market places, and entreating Him **that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak; and as many as touched it were being cured.** NASB77

Luke 6:19 And the whole multitude **sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed *them* all.** KJV

^b **II Chron. 16:12**

And in the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa became diseased in his feet. His disease was severe, yet even in his disease he did not seek the LORD, but the physicians.

NASB77

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Perhaps, the Holy Spirit used these reports to impress upon her to go and do likewise to be healed. In that case, her faith would have originated from the burden of the LORD within her heart reminding her that "He would take our infirmities and bare our diseases." (Matt. 8:17 Darby).

In any case, she must have come to the belief that Jesus was the Man, the LORD, the Promised Seed of the Woman, who would heal her if she but touched His garment, for who else could heal her in such a way? No one could but He who was none other than the LORD God Almighty.

And so, if she believed that Jesus was the Son of God, the promised Messiah, the Mighty God, He whose goings forth were from everlasting, she would have certainly believed that Jesus could heal her simply by laying His hand upon her, as she may have witnessed Jesus do with the leper after His Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 8:1-3). But, since Jesus was now encircled by those who hated Him and who questioned His every move, she may have feared that such a touch would render Jesus ceremoniously unclean in those eyes of the Pharisees (cf. Lev. 15:25-28), which would then be used by them to attack Him, so she thought if I but touch the hem of His garment I will be healed. In that way, perhaps, she thought Jesus would not be hindered from continuing on to Jairus' house because of his little girl, which it would not be surprising since she most assuredly would have personally known the little girl, or at least known about her, as did many in Capernaum, as she was the daughter of the ruler of their synagogue.

So, perhaps, she did not want to hinder Jesus in any way for she knew that if the Pharisees could use anything against Jesus they would do so, and so since she feared it might cause problems for Jairus and his little girl, she decided to quietly touch the hem of Jesus' garment to be healed. What wondrous faith, but also what selfless love toward others!

Finally, we might ask ourselves as to why Matthew would include this story in this portion of his

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Gospel? Again, it was because he was showing His readers, that is, to those whose hearts were not dull, nor their ears hard of hearing, or their eyes blind to spiritual things (Matt. 13:15) that Jesus was the Messiah, the Promised Seed, the Man, the LORD, the Son of the Man, the Son of God, and now with this story, the FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATER to cleanse all uncleanness.

In the Old Testament, when a woman suffered from this malady, she was considered unclean until she received cleansing. This cleansing required “living water,” as did many things in the Law. The writer of Hebrews refers to all these “various washing” in Heb. 9:8-10, all of which required living water.

Hebrews 9:8-10 The Holy Spirit *is* signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed, while the outer tabernacle is still standing,⁹ which *is* a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience,¹⁰ since they *relate* only to food and drink **and various washings**, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation. NASB77

So by the woman looking to Jesus for healing, and by Jesus rendering her clean of this particular type of malady, perhaps, Matthew is making known that Jesus is none other than the “Fountain of Living Water,” who heals and cleanses us, as spoken of by the prophets, regardless whether it is referring to one dispensation or the another, for in all dispensations the LORD remains the same. He who was the Fountain of Living Waters in the Old Testament, is the same Fountain of Living Waters in the New Testament, and will be the same Fountain in Living Waters in the Millennium, unto eternity.

Jeremiah 2:12-13 Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, **saith the LORD.**
¹³ For my people have committed two evils; they have **forsaken Me the fountain of living waters**, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. KJV (capitalization of “me” is mine.)

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Jeremiah 17:13-14 O LORD, the hope of Israel, All who forsake Thee will be put to shame. Those who turn away on earth will be written down, because they have forsaken **the fountain of living water, even the LORD.** ¹⁴ **Heal me, O LORD, and I will be healed;** Save me and I will be saved, For Thou art my praise. NASB77

Zechariah 13:1 "In that day there shall be **a fountain opened** to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem **for sin and for uncleanness.** KJV

Zechariah 14:1,4,8-9 Behold, a day of Jehovah cometh, when thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. ⁴ And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the mount of Olives shall be cleft in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, *and there shall be* a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. ⁸ And it shall come to pass in that day, **that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem;** half of them toward the eastern sea, and half of them toward the western sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. ⁹ And Jehovah shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall Jehovah be one, and his name one. ASV

Psalms 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. NASB77

Psalms 51:7 Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. NASB77

He is the source of living water unto eternal life for all who believe, for He Himself is a Fountain of Living Water!

John 4:14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. KJV

Andrew A. Bonar has given a wonderful comment on that regulation given to the children of Israel in Lev. 15:25. (His comments he refers to the same event of the women with an issue of blood, as recorded in the

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parallel account provided by Mark in his Gospel.)

“Take the case of the woman in Mark v. 29, twelve years thus deeply distressed, groaning over her misery, living alone, in vain trying every physician, and keeping aloof from friends as much as possible, lest she should spread defilement on them by her presence. What a picture of a sinner! A sinner conscious of her nature’s fearful pollution, mourning over her weak and wicked heart, trying every remedy that man can suggest, yet still sad at heart, and her soul still running down with its new outflowings of sin. But one tells her of Jesus. She hears of his having, the night before, calmed the sea at its height of storm, and having gone over to the other side for the sake of saving one soul. She comes; she sees and hears him for herself, **and is persuaded that he has the very fountain of life in his person.** In this faith she touches the hem of his robe, as if to say, ‘He is full of love and power, even to the very skirts of his garment.’ She brought no gift; for she had spent all her living already on physicians. She brought nothing like a begun cure; for she was ‘nothing bettered, but rather grew worse.’ She had not long-waiting to show as a plea; for she came only that morning. She had no repentance to offer; for hitherto her regrets were simply that she had in vain sought to other physicians. She had no love to allege; for she was only now coming to see what reason for love there was. She offered no prayer; she simply drew near, and placed herself in contact with the fountain of life and healing! The result was immediate cure! *Sin* and *grace* met! and this is ever the singular result of their meeting. How often now, after presenting at Jerusalem her turtle-doves, would she walk at that sea-shore with the daughter of Jairus—who was born the very year she took her disease, and who was raised from the dead the very same day that she was healed—and together would they sing and praise the Lord, one saying, ‘Who healeth all thy diseases,’ the other responding, ‘Who redeemeth thy life from destruction.’ (Ps ciii.3)”

“When Jesus healed *the leprosy* and *the issue of blood*, was he not tacitly explaining the type couched under these diseases and their cleansing? Was it not like his healing the man at the pool of Bethesda? There was an emblem in it all, though he said not at the moment that this was what he wished to show. It was enough that he had declared himself “*come to fulfil the law.*” They were thus warned to expect that his every action should tend in that direction. It is in reference to this chapter that Zechariah (chap. xiii. 1) calls

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Christ the 'Fountain for uncleanness'...; and Isa. iv. 4, speaks of washing away 'the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purging away the blood of Jerusalem,' by judgments that will drive them to this fountain. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift! ³³

9:22 But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

What we see in this verse is that our Lord rewards her faith by healing her of disease which all the physicians were unable to do. The Lord makes this known by declaring, "thy faith hath made thee whole." Literally, it would read, "the faith of thee, has delivered thee." It is translated as "made whole," for it was the malady from which she was delivered.

What is interesting, though, is that the Greek word for "made whole," σφζω, is inflected as a perfect tense, which means that when our Lord spoke those words the healing had already taken place. This is confirmed because in the parallel account in Mark's Gospel we see that she felt that she was healed the moment she touched the fringe of His garment (Mark 5:28). Moreover, Mark also writes that at that very moment Jesus knew that power had gone forth from Him to heal (Mark. 5:30), and in Mark 5:33 it says that it had been done in her before Jesus declared that her faith had already made her whole. So what this shows us is two things.

First it shows us the certainty of her faith, which shows it was not positive thinking or hoping, but rather a firm conviction that the moment she touched the fringe of His garment, she would be healed. One must notice the Holy Spirit records for us, not "If I should only touch his garment **I might** be healed," or, "If I should only touch his garment **I hope** I shall be healed," or "If I should only touch his garment **I pray** I shall be healed," but rather, "If I should only touch his garment **I shall be healed!**"

Matthew 9:21 for she said within herself, If I should only

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touch his garment I shall be healed. Darby's Version

This is not positive thinking, but a firm belief in that Jesus was the LORD Jehovah who heals, and a firm belief that in some way it was made known to her that this would happen, for all faith finds its source in the Word of God. As we said above, perhaps the Holy Spirit brought to her remembrance the story of Asa, who was never healed, having sought only the healing of physicians and not the healing of the LORD (II Chron. 16:12). Or, perhaps, the Lord above brought to her memory the words of David who said that the LORD was He “forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases” (Ps. 103:3), or of Isaiah who declared that the Messiah would take our infirmities and bear our sicknesses (Isa. 53:4 with Matt. 8:17).

In any case, since faith cometh by the Word of God, the Holy Spirit must have assured her that this act of her will, in faith, would provide the deliverance she so long had desired. And so, she took a step of faith by reaching out and touching the hem of His garment, at which point, just like she believed would happen because she believed the word of God given to her by the prompting of the Holy Spirit, she was healed instantly.

Secondly, since the perfect tense shows the healing had already taken place before Jesus made that declaration, we see by the next phrase, this may have been the moment when she was saved spiritually. She was delivered of her malady a few moments before, but she was delivered spiritually after Jesus spoke to her. We see this because the very last sentence of this verse says, “And the woman was made whole from that hour.”

The Greek verb translated “made whole” in this sentence is the same Greek verb translated “made whole,” in the previous verse. The only difference is that this time it is in the aorist tense and not the perfect tense. Thus, since the Greek verb σόζω is used of deliverance from diseases, but also deliverance from sin and bondage, and, of course, one's final deliverance from hell in the lake of fire, it could be

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that this second usage of σώζω speaks of her spiritual deliverance. The change to the aorist tense, which simply focuses on the act of deliverance and not the resulting state of that deliverance, may be a hint that Jesus is talking about two different things. Otherwise, if Jesus was still referring to her physical healing, why not still use the perfect tense, to assure of her continuing state of wellness from the malady?

Therefore, the first usage bespoke her physical deliverance and the second of her spiritual deliverance. If this is true, then Jesus would be declaring that she was spiritually justified by her faith, which makes clear to us, she was not only believing in the power of Jesus to heal, she also believed in the Person of Jesus as the Son of God, the Lord God in human flesh! In other words, perhaps, it meant that she believed in Him as the “Lord LORD,” as He made known to those present at the Sermon on the Mount. So perhaps either she had heard that sermon and believed, or she was told of the sermon and believed.

We see a similar incident in the story of the woman who was a sinner bringing an alabaster box to anoint the feet of Jesus in the house of the Pharisee name Simon (Luke 7:36-50). In that story at the conclusion, Jesus declares that her sins were forgiven. No healing or physical deliverance was involved in the incident. Rather, the focus was her desire for forgiveness and salvation, and in this incident the same Greek verb for salvation or deliverance is used. In verse 50 Jesus says, “Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.” This reminds us of Paul’s declaration in Rom. 5:1.

Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. KJV

And so, it seems that this woman who touched the fringe of His garment, was delivered from her malady, but also was delivered from that very hour from her sins, being declared justified by Jesus because she, like Abraham before her, “believed in the LORD,” and it was accounted to him for righteousness!

Genesis 15:6 And he believed in the LORD; and he

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counted it to him for righteousness. KJV

Many times in Scripture we find that physical healing brings spiritual healing, if you will. We see this in the Old Testament with the healing of Naaman, who, from that moment on, said that he knew there was no god in the earth (which include the god Rimmon he used to worship) but only the God of Israel II Kings 5:15-19). We see it in the story of the blind man from birth who was given sight by Jesus in John 9:1-38. And we see it in the story of this woman healed of her malady.

Moreover, this verse conjoined with verse 21 also shows us it matters not if our faith is small or great, for it is not the faith, in and of itself, which heals or saves us; it is the LORD Himself that saves or heals us. Our part is simply to believe it; God does the rest, honoring even the weakest of faith that is as small as a mustard seed. It is not the quantity or strength of faith that brings salvation or healing, but the mere exercise of faith that brings salvation or healing.

Most assuredly, this woman had faith in the power of the Son of God and in the Person of the Son of God, but Scripture may intimate that it might have been a faith like that of the man who pleaded to Jesus regarding his child, “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief” (Matt. 5:24).

Verse 21 says the woman coming to Jesus was continually saying to herself, “If I should only touch his garment I shall be healed.” Matthew uses the imperfect verb ἔλεγεν (to speak), which can bespeak continuous or repeated action in the past, which I believe is the case in this verse. Thus, if I might use Darby’s version, the verse could, and more than likely should, be rendered: “for she was continually saying within herself, ‘If I should only touch his garment I shall be healed.’” (Some believe the imperfect might sometimes carry an aoristic sense, but I do not believe that is the case in our verse.)

Now this repetition does not mean she did not believe, for as I said before she was not saying that if she but touched the hem of His garment she *might* be

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healed, but rather she would be healed. So she most assuredly was convinced that she would be healed, which is confirmed in verse 22 by Jesus' declaration. But since faith is a function of our human spirit, many times we believe in our hearts, in our spirits, but our soul does not cooperate with our heart, and instead wavers and introduces doubt into our human spirit.

Too many times, Christians are in danger of bringing faith down into the realms of the soul, wherein faith is seen as being nothing more than the ability to think positively. But what they are really doing, and simply do not understand, is that they are putting their faith in their own faith! They are thinking faith is measured by the ability to eliminate all doubts, wherein, the truth of the matter is that *faith is really measured by the ability to believe in the presence of many doubts!*

This was what occurred with the man who cried out to Jesus, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." He believed in his spirit, but he doubted in his soul, and so he cried out to Jesus to help him. And so this may have been what the woman was doing within herself. She believed in her heart, but in her soul, in her mind, she remembered all those physicians who had promised her a cure, and yet none came. Over and over her hopes were dashed to the ground. Each new promise of healing caused her to hope this might finally be the cure that works, thinking to herself that this physician is so sure of his treatment. But each time her hopes begin to fade away as she awakes the next morning and the malady remains, and then after a week or so, as with all the rest of the promised cures, there still is no change and her condition persists, and once more she falls into a state of hopelessness.

And so, this time when faith was brought forth in her by the Holy Spirit through some means, such as we mentioned above, she felt different. She knew this was God speaking to her from the Word of God, or from a reading of the Word of God she may have heard standing outside the synagogue. And so, she once more has hope! She believed in her spirit this

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time she would be healed, but maybe the enemy of our soul whispered in her ear, putting this thought in her mind (soul), “This will be no different than all the others. You will wake up tomorrow with the same condition. Nothing will change” (This would be just like Satan to do.) And so outwardly in her soul, in her mind, in her emotions, her feelings, she feared she would not be healed. But down deep in her spirit she was given assurance by God through Scripture she would be healed, and so she may have been continually speaking to her soul from her spirit (like David sometimes would speak to his disquieted soul—e.g. Ps. 43:5)^c saying to herself (to her soul) “No—If I should only touch his garment I shall be healed.” And so a spiritual battle may have ensued in her soul, but the “will” of her spirit prevailed by faith, and she acted upon that faith, telling her feet to follow Jesus and her hands to reach out to Jesus, and her fingers to but touch the fringe of His garment. She stepped out in nothing but faith, the faith of her spirit and not by any strength of her soul, for her soul may have still been filled with doubt; but she reached out in faith and touched His garment. And so, as shown by the imperfect tense of this verb, her faith may have been small, like the size of a mustard seed, but that faith was sufficient, for it is not the quantity faith that prevails, but the exercise of faith, even as small as a mustard seed, and the power of the One in whom our faith resides, which is the LORD Jesus Christ.

Of this faith that saves, John Gill once said:

“Thy faith hath made thee whole: through faith in Christ she received the cure from him; for it was not her act of faith that either merited, or procured it, but his power, and he himself the object of her faith that effected it: though he is pleased to take no further notice of the virtue that went out from him; but commends her faith, for her further and future encouragement in the exercise of it, and for the encouragement of others to believe in him. In the Greek text it is, thy faith hath saved thee; both from her bodily disease, and from her sins: not that there is such an intrinsic virtue in faith as to deliver from either; for certain it is, that it was not virtue that went out of her faith, but virtue which

^c **Psalm 43:5** Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, *who is* the health of my countenance, and my God. KJV

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went out from Christ, that cured her of her issue; though faith was the means of drawing it out; or it was that, through which, virtue from Christ exerted itself, and produced such an effect: and it is as certain, that not faith, but Christ, is the author and cause of spiritual salvation: faith looks to Christ for salvation, and receives every blessing of it from him, as righteousness, peace, pardon, adoption, and eternal life; so that believers are saved by grace, through faith; through the exercise of that grace they have the joy, and comfort Of salvation now; and through it they are kept, by the power of God, unto the full possession of it hereafter.”³⁴

Perhaps this would be a good place to discuss healing in general. What should we expect when we pray for healing, whether for ourselves or for others?

Basically, in Scripture, we see that there are three possibilities, and each one is biblical. Sometimes God heals as an answer to a simple plea made by us in prayer, without us knowing whether the answer will be yes, or whether the answer will be no. Other times healing is the result of a faith that knows God will heal, as here in Matt. 9:21-22. And then, other times an answer to a prayer for healing can be “no,” as with Paul in II Cor. 12:8-9,^d wherein one must trust and have faith that God’s grace is sufficient!

When the first occurs we give thanks; when the second occurs we rejoice in God’s mercy; and when the third occurs we trust in God’s grace.

In that light, it is wrong for some to teach that if one is not healed, it must be because their faith was too weak, and if it was stronger the healing would have occurred.

This is simply wrong and it only disheartens the one in need of deliverance to tell them their lack of healing was because they did not believe enough, or that their faith was not strong enough. We should never forget that with the Lord Jesus a cry of “Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief” is enough to receive the deliverances requested of Him (Mark 9: 19-27). Those who teach otherwise are not being biblical. They are in essence teaching that it is the faith that has the power to heal, which is not so.

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

Matthew

Faith, in and of itself, is not the power that heals us. If that was the case, then our “faith” would be the “savior,” rather than Jesus being the Savior!

Beloved, Jesus is our Savior, not our faith, and so many so-called *faith healers* mislead the saints of God when they blame a weak or faltering faith for one’s lack of deliverance. We must not forget what Jesus taught us regarding one who was weak in faith as written in the Gospel of Mark.

Mark 9:22b-25 “...but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. ²³ Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things *are* possible to him that believeth.²⁴ And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, **Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.** ²⁵ When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, *Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.*” KJV

This man’s faith was weak, but because the faith was in Him who was powerful, he received the answer to his prayer and his child was delivered. Or consider this teaching of Jesus—

Matthew 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

In this lesson we see it is not the weakness or level of faith that Jesus says will prevail, it is the mere presence of faith that prevails, even if that faith is small as a mustard seed.

The problem was not that the disciples did not have enough faith, the problem was the disciples stopped believing (cf. Luke 17:5-6).^e

In Matthew 10:1 they had already received authority to cast out demons. In the presence of an apparent strong demon they stopped believing that word of Jesus.

So, again the Holy Spirit is teaching us that what hinders us is not the weakness of our faith, but rather

^e **Luke 17:5** And the apostles said unto the Lord, **Increase our faith.**⁶ And the Lord said, **If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed,** ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you. KJV

Matthew

the absence of persevering faith in what God has promised us!

Or consider one last thing Jesus taught. Some might think that when Christians add to their prayer, “if it is your will,” they are somehow being weak in their faith, rather than being strong in their faith. But that is not the case. The truth is that such a prayer is a prayer of faith in the goodness of God and a trust in the belief that His will shall always be the best thing for us. And it is also a sign that one has faith in the power of God, because shows that one believes that “whatever the LORD pleases, He does, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps” (Ps. 135:6 NASB77).

Moreover, in Mark 1:40-41 the Holy Spirit demonstrates this for us in the story of the leper.

Mark 1:40-41 And a leper came to Him, beseeching Him and falling on his knees before Him, and saying to Him, **"If You are willing,** You can make me clean. ⁴¹ And moved with compassion, He stretched out His hand, and touched him, and said to him, **"I am willing;** be cleansed." NASB77

Even the Lord Jesus Christ Himself prayed to the Father, “saying, Father, **if thou be willing,** remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42 KJV).

If the Son of God, during the days of His sojourning upon earth among us, prayed thus, how much more can we pray the same way without any fear that if we add, “if it is thy will,” that somehow means we do not have much faith, as some false teachers and evangelists like to claim today! It does not mean that at all! Our Lord’s example is proof enough, for if the Holy Spirit tells us to imitate Christ, how can that be wrong (I Cor. 11:1).

So you see, beloved, it is not the power of the faith that delivers, but it is the power of the One in whom we have faith that delivers. Faith is not a power within us that we can use as we will. Faith is a belief that God will use His power to do as He will!

Peter speaks to this very thing in Acts 3:12-16.
Acts 3:12, 16 And Peter, seeing it, answered the people,

Matthew

Men of Israel, why are ye astonished at this? or **why do ye gaze on us as if we had by our own power or piety made him to walk?** ¹⁶ And, **by faith in his name, his name has made this *man* strong** whom ye behold and know; and the faith which is by him has given him this complete soundness in the presence of you all. Darby's Version

So, we should never think that if we only would have had stronger faith, God would have answered our prayer and brought healing. When it is His will, God will bring about the healing, and so we rejoice, but if He does not bring about the healing, we should bow our head and say "thy will be done."

I have read the testimony of one who through her quiet prayer to God has seen Him heal many others, while she herself continues to be weak and sick.

I have myself had a malady for seventeen years now, of which I have pleaded with the Lord many times that He might heal me. But the answer each time has been no; and so, when a new day begins, and then another and another, I awake with the same malady and levels of pain and by His grace bow my head and say, "Thy will be done, and all that you do is good." (And lest one think that the prayer above is an easy thing to do, let me say that also many times over the years I have gone to God and say, "Why Lord, why? Why must I have this malady? I could do so much more without it. Why do you not let me be healed of this pain?" But in those times, when it is not easy, and my trust in His good will begins to falter, it is not long before He sweetly brings me back to a place of trust—a place where even though my soul is still cast down, my spirit is at rest in His love and goodness.)

So, dear brethren, for those who are equally sick or live with a chronic condition, I do know the pain and disappointment of a "no." But in the pain and disappointment I also know that all things in Christ Jesus are "yes," and all things truly work together for good (II Cor. 1:20; Rom. 8:28). God is good and His will is always good! Every "no" is a "yes," for the *no* is filled with God's *goodness*, teaching us that His grace is sufficient. On that our faith must turn to and rest.

Matthew

It is hard and difficult sometimes, but I try never to forget that He knows our pain, and try to remember to pray as my Saviour prayed when He was suffering (so much more than I will ever have to suffer), praying, “Not my will, but Thy will be done.”

If Christ prayed that in love for me, cannot I also, by His grace in love also pray that to God, “Not my will, but Thy will be done, dear Father.”

In any situation, I know and believe that God is *good* and that He does all things *good*, and that in that *goodness*, I believe all things (including an answer of *no* in prayer) † still works together for *good* to all who love Him and who are called according to His purpose, and, in that, I love Him with all my heart.

Beloved, even the smallest of faith cannot thwart God’s will; if He has promised it, He will still do it, no matter what the level of our faith is.

Equally, a perceived strong faith cannot force God’s will; if He has not promised it, there is nothing man can do to bring it about. If we think we can, such a strong faith is false, manufactured by ourselves, for if it was a true faith, God’s will would have been be done.

What is important to know is that the will of God will always be brought about in our lives when we pray by faith, whether weak or strong, for faith that is weak or strong is still faith. Positive thinking is not faith. God will always honor any faith that is true; but in that, He still wishes the weak faith of His children to wax strong, for by that our faith will become an encouragement for others to also have faith!

† Of course, we must not forget that if a Christian is not abiding in Christ, a *no* from God may be a form of discipline from Him in order to bring us back into fellowship with Him. (See Hebrews 11:2-14; I Cor. 11:20-21, 30-32). But if we are abiding in Christ, we should realize the *noes* are the *yeses* of God’s love and goodness, wherein He asks us to trust Him and His will.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Let me close with this word of exhortation, this food for thought, from our brother C. H. Spurgeon regarding this portion of Scripture.

“Be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole,” is a most sweet and effectual way of lulling fears to rest!

Matthew

Possibly the poor woman may have been haunted by the fear that she would suffer a relapse; but our Lord consoles her by the assurance that her faith had effectually made her whole. She had not obtained a little time of deliverance from the evil, so that it would recur again, but she was made whole. The Lord gives her a medical certificate; he sends her forth with a clean bill of health. Oh, how sweet it is when Jesus Christ gives a full assurance to any one of us of complete salvation, so that we are delivered from all fear of the malady's return, and can walk abroad free from fear.

I know that some Christians think that after Christ has saved us and given us new hearts, the old hearts may come back, and though his grace is in us a well of water which he promises shall spring up to everlasting life, yet they think that it may dry up to the last drop. Beloved, I do not thus read the word, but the very opposite is clear to me in sacred writ. The work of God in the soul is a lasting and an everlasting work; and if you are once healed by Christ, he has wrought in you an effectual cure, which will hold good throughout time and eternity. I know that whatsoever God doeth it shall be for ever. He who has made you whole will keep you whole, for his gifts and calling are without repentance.”³⁵

He then continues with the exhortation for that weak faith that will equally save as a strong faith, to, nevertheless, wax strong with each subsequent faltering step of faith, until each faltering step becomes a march forward with all boldness. Jesus honors the weakest of faith, but He wishes our faith to grow stronger as we grow in Him (Rom. 4:20)!

“What is there that faith cannot do? ... If we have to force a passage through a throng of devils we need not hesitate; and though all the world combined and stood against us, we need not fear. Our faith has made us whole: who can undo the miracle? A faith which by divine grace brings us out of hell, and secures us for heaven, what is there that it cannot accomplish? It laughs at impossibilities, and marches from strength to strength in majestic serenity. Holy confidence shall win victory upon victory, till at last it shall cry, “I have finished my course; I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of life, that fadeth not away.” Beloved reader, I cannot imagine a sweeter consolation than this: Thy faith hath saved thee: go in

Matthew

peace:” endeavour to suck the honey out of it.

And then our brother Spurgeon closes with a word to all who doubt, most especially to those who do not believe in the LORD Jesus Christ.

“We will close this meditation by considering the faith which our Lord commended. It made her whole: that is its best certificate of excellence. There is much to note in reference to that faith, but a few brief hints may suffice. Her faith is to be commended because it outlived a long season of discouragement. She had been twelve years afflicted think of that! Patience had had its perfect work in her. But she believed in Christ for a cure, and the cure came. So will it be with every one who will believe in Jesus. If there could be a soul sound which had been living in sin twelve hundred years, if it had faith in Jesus, he would make it whole. After half a century of impenitence, he that believeth in Christ Jesus is saved at once. Eighty years of sin vanish in a moment when a man trusts in the great atonement. Come, dear unconverted reader, and cast yourself at Christ's feet at this quiet hour, for Jesus will not cast you out.”³⁶

9:23 And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise,

9:24 He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.

9:25 But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.

9:26 And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

Matthew now resumes the story of Jairus and his daughter. When Jesus arrives, more than likely only minutes after he left Matthew's house He arrives at Jairus' house. Of course, we do not know the exact length of time, but it is said Capernaum was a small village of about 1000-2000 people and the central portion of the village appears to extend a few hundred feet along the shoreline of Galilee. The synagogue was said to be in the center of the village, and the

Matthew

cemetery was said to be about 600 feet to the north of the synagogue, which means the city extended only a few hundred feet or so from the shoreline of the Sea of Galilee, which was about 400 feet to the south of the synagogue. Thus it would not take long to reach Jairus' house from anywhere in the village, assuming his house was near to the synagogue. (For example, a house believed to be Peter's house was excavated only at a distance of about 85 feet south of the synagogue.)

In any case, assuming the throng of people did not impeded Jesus too much, he would have arrived within minutes to Jairus' house. When He arrives Jesus announces that the little girl was not dead, but simply sleeping, at which word the people laughed, because from their perspective, and from the messenger's perspective, and from Jairus' perspective, she was dead (apart from the possibility that while on their way to his house Jesus may have told Jairus she was not dead, at which time he told Jairus, "Be not afraid, only believe"—Mark 5:36). But who would know the truth of the matter better than He who knows all things!

From our Lord's statement, the question arises as to whether Jesus raises her from the dead, or restores her to full health. Many believe that he raised her from the dead and so was using "sleep" as an euphemism for death as is most common in the New Testament (e.g. I Cor. 11:30; 15:6; I Thess. 4:13-15).

However, if Jesus had simply said, "the maid sleepeth," and not "the maid is not dead, but sleepeth," perhaps, that then may have been the case.

Thus, if Jesus was using sleep as a euphemism for death out of sensitivity to the feelings of other, he would have been contradicting His own assertion that she had not died! The fact is that Jesus clearly says she was not dead.

Yet, still some point to the story of Lazarus to demonstrate that Jesus uses a similar declaration of one who truly died, but who, nevertheless, is said to be only sleeping, thus Jairus' daughter should be understood to also be truly dead.

Matthew

John 11:11-14 These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. ¹² Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. ¹³ Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. ¹⁴ Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. KJV

But, again, the one thing which must be noticed that makes these two incidents different is that Jesus never says, like He does with Jairus' daughter, that Lazarus "is not dead;" in fact He says the opposite. When His disciples misunderstood Him, He clearly says, "Lazarus is dead!" But with Jairus' daughter He clearly says the opposite; He says that she is not dead! So the story of Lazarus does not justify a belief that Jesus is really saying that she is dead.

However, this does not detract from the glory of Jesus as the Son of God, for it shows a different aspect of His Divinity. It shows His omniscience and His omnipotence. Let me explain.

We do not know how long Jairus' daughter was in a state that everyone viewed as death. Obviously, as we suggested with all the possibilities we mentioned above that everyone at the time believed she was dead. Jairus did at the feet of Jesus. The messenger did that came looking for Jairus. The mourners did, and all the others gathered at Jairus' house did. But Jesus knew she was not dead. How did He know this apart from His Divine attribute of omniscience?

Thus Matthew shows that Jesus knew the truth of the matter, despite being told by Jairus, and later, by a second witness (i.e. the messenger), that she was dead. Thus it shows the reader that He was omniscient, for He knew the truth of the matter before He ever saw the little girl.

Next it shows His omnipotence, for if she was in a state that fooled all who were present, she obviously must not have had a heart beat or breathing that could be discerned. I do not pretend to know the correct nomenclature, but I believe one would say she must have been in cardiac arrest, which also stopped her breathing shortly thereafter (but unbeknownst to all

Matthew

but Jesus, she was not yet brain dead). Now, we do not know for how long she was in this state, but in general I believe it is said that one can survive in that state for only a few minutes before brain damage begins, and Jesus said she was not dead.

Now, even though Capernaum was a small village, it seems more time than that must have elapsed, perhaps, as much as twenty minutes, but if so, what becomes all the more amazing is that she is not only healed by our Lord so that she is once more breathing and her heart beating, she is also healed of any brain damage that may have occurred in her state of supposed death! So this was a great miracle! That also bespeaks the Deity of our Lord also, for He healed her of any damage that was caused by her sickness. So the fact that she was not raised from the dead does not detract in any way from the glory of God or the glory of Jesus as true God of true God!

9:27 And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us.

9:28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.

What we see in this portion of Matthew regarding the two blind men is that Matthew is once more affirming the Deity of Christ. In Matt. 9:6 he did so by including our Lord's use of the title Son of the Man with the words "has authority on earth to forgive sins," and in this verse he does so by including the story of the two blind men using the title Son of David with the words "have mercy on us."

The title Son of the Man shows forth our Lord's Deity and His authority to offer forgiveness to all of Adam's race (showing He was the Saviour to all the Gentiles) and now the title Son of David shows forth our Lord's Deity and His desire to show mercy and forgiveness to all of Israel (showing He was the Saviour to all the Jews).

Matthew

How does the title Son of David bespeak this? We might say by three important facts. First, it shows the two blind men believed Jesus was the promised Messiah, the promised Christ to Israel, for the title “Son of David” was a common nomenclature for the Messiah in the first century. This is revealed to us in the Gospel of Mark 12:35 where Mark writes the following.

Mark 12:35 And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, **How say the scribes that Christ is the Son of David?** KJV

Secondly, by using the title Son of David, it also shows that the Christ was Divine, which Jesus makes known in the next two verses in that portion of the Gospel of Mark.

Mark 12:35, 36-37 And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the Son of David? ³⁶For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. ³⁷ **David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son?** And the common people heard him gladly. KJV

Now, of course, this quote by Jesus was taken from Ps. 110:1, wherein Christ the Son of David is called Lord (*Adon*) in verse 1 and also Lord (*Adonai*) in verse 5. **Adon** and *Adonai* ‡ are both used as a Divine title many times throughout Scripture—throughout the Law, throughout the Writings, and throughout the Prophets.

Psalm 110:1-5 A Psalm of David. The LORD said unto my **Lord** (*Adon*), Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. ² The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. ³ Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth. ⁴ The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. ⁵ The **Lord** (*Adonai*) at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. KJV

‡ *Adon* is the singular form of the word, while *Adonai* is the intensive plural form of the word. They both are translated as Lord in the KJV.

Matthew

For example, it is a Divine Name of the LORD God in the **Law** where we find that Moses identifies the Lord (*Adonai*, *Adon*) as being the same as the LORD (Jehovah) in Gen. 15:2 and Exodus 23:17. (I will first use Darby's translation for the Law and the Writings because he regularly translates the Hebrew Tetragrammaton as Jehovah, while other English versions translate it as LORD, when standing alone, and as GOD, when it follows *Adon* or *Adonai*, so the English reader does not know the Tetragrammaton is being used in both instances. But Darby translates it consistently as Jehovah, which helps the reader see that *Adon*, *Adonai* bespeak Deity—see Fig. 12 below)

Fig. 12—The Hebrew Names of God as Rendered by Different Translations

Hebrew Name	KJV	NASB	DARBY
Adon and Adonai	Lord	Lord	Lord
Jehovah (YHVH)	LORD	LORD	Jehovah
Elohim	God	God	God
Adonai Jehovah	Lord GOD	Lord GOD	Lord Jehovah

Genesis 15:2 And Abram said, **Lord (Adonai) Jehovah**, what wilt thou give me? seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus. (Darby's Version)

Exodus 23:17 Three times in the year all thy males shall appear in the presence of the **Lord (Adon) Jehovah**. (Darby's Version)

Next, in the **Writings**, besides our verse referred to by the Lord Jesus in Ps. 110:1, we also see in Ps. 8:1 and Psalm 35:22-23 that David understands the Lord (Adon, Adonai) as Jehovah, and so Divine.

Psalms 8:1 To the chief Musician. Upon the Gittith. A Psalm of David. **Jehovah** our **Lord (Adon)**, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy majesty above the heavens. (Darby's Version)

Matthew

Psalm 35:22 Thou hast seen *it*, **Jehovah**: keep not silence;
O **Lord** (**Adonai**), be not far from me. (Darby's Version)

And then in the **Prophets** one will find the same testimony in Isaiah 40:10 and Isaiah 10:16, 20-21. This time I will use the King James version where *Adon* and *Adonai* are rendered in accordance with Fig. 12 above.

In Isaiah 40:3, Isaiah first speaks of the voice in the wilderness preparing the way of the **LORD** (**Jehovah**). In the New Testament Matthew says this voice in the wilderness is none other than John the Baptist who Matthew says is preparing the way for Jesus (see Matt. 3:3 & 3:13-14)!^f Thus Jesus is **LORD** (**Jehovah**). Then in Isa. 40:10, the **LORD** (**Jehovah**) is also called the **Lord** (**Adonai**) **GOD** (**Jehovah**). Thus showing that Jesus is **Lord** (**Adonai**) **GOD** (**Jehovah**). And, finally in Isa. 40:9, the **LORD**, the **Lord GOD**, is also identified as God (**Elohim**). Thus, showing that Jesus is the **LORD**, and He is known as the **Lord GOD**, and He is known as God!

Isaiah 40:3-5, 9-10 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the **LORD**, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: ⁵ And the glory of the **LORD** shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see *it* together: for the mouth of the **LORD** hath spoken *it*. ⁹ O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift *it* up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, **Behold your God** (**Elohim**)! ¹⁰ Behold, the **Lord** (**Adonai**) **GOD** (**Jehovah**) will come with strong *hand*, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward *is* with him, and his work before him. KJV

And then in Isaiah 10:16, 20-21 in the KJV we see the same collocation of names referring to the same Person who is Divine, i.e. Adon, Adonai, Jehovah, Mighty God.

Isaiah 10:16, 20-21 Therefore shall the **Lord** (**Adon**), the

^f **Matt. 3:3, 13, 14**

For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight... ¹³

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. ¹⁴ But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" KJV

Matthew

Lord (Adonai) § of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire²⁰ And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the **LORD** (Jehovah), the Holy One of Israel, in truth.²¹ The remnant shall return, *even* the remnant of Jacob, unto the **mighty God** (El). KJV

Thus one finds in Scripture that not only is the Son of David known as **the Christ**, He is also known as **the Lord (Adon, Adonai)**, who is **the LORD (Jehovah)**, and, of course, is **God (Elohim, El)**.

As an aside, perhaps it should be mentioned that the Father is known as LORD (Jehovah) in Isa. 40:28, and the Son is known as the LORD (Jehovah) in Isa. 40:3, and, indeed, in the New Testament the Holy Spirit is known as LORD (Jehovah) in II Cor. 3:18 (ERV, Darby, NASB).^g The fact that they all are called by the same Name of LORD shows each of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity are co-equal, co-eternal and co-essential. The Father being unbegotten, the Son being eternally begotten of the Father before all time, and the Holy Spirit eternally proceeding from the Father through the Son—not three Gods, i.e. Divine Beings, but One God, i.e. one Divine Being, in whom subsists Father, Son and the Holy Spirit—Three Persons who possess the one and same and undivided Divine Substance, without separation or diminution.

Therefore, since all Three Persons are co-eternal and consubstantial any Name used of the one can be used of the others, save those names dealing with paternity, filiation, or spiration, and the work unique to those designations, i.e. Father, Son and the Holy Spirit

Thus we see that the Lord Jesus reminds the scribes and Pharisees that the Son of David was the Christ (Man) and that the Christ was the Lord (*Adon, Adonai*), which the Pharisees also knew from Scriptures meant He was the LORD (Jehovah).

So Matthew is connecting the Messianic title Son of David in this chapter in juxtaposition to the title

§ There are some manuscripts that have יהוה—Jehovah in this place

^g **II Cor. 3:18** But we all, with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit. ERV1885

II Cor. 3:18 But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord, with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by *the* Lord *the* Spirit. Darby's Version

II Cor. 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. NASB77

Matthew

Son of the Man, which we showed refers to the Promised Seed of Gen. 3:15, and which Gen. 4:1 identified as the Man, the LORD (Jehovah), which we now see is also identified as the Lord (Adon, Adonai). Thus, Matthew is asserting that Jesus is the Divine Saviour of not only the Jews but also of the Gentiles, all of whom descended from Adam and Eve.

And, finally, the third important fact that shows Matthew is affirming the Deity of the Jesus in this chapter by the title Son of David is because in Matt. 9:28 both blind men call Jesus "Lord." And I should mention, I do not believe Κύριε (Lord) is being used as a human appellation, but rather is being used as a Divine appellation, for the simple reason they both cried out to Jesus for mercy.

By addressing the Son of David as Lord (Κύριε), crying out to Him for mercy, the two blind men were showing that they understood Jesus as being One who had authority to bestow such mercy, as in the previous verses we saw that Jesus had the authority to forgive sins! One does not cry out for mercy from one who cannot grant mercy, especially for the type of mercy they desired. They must have been two godly Israelites, who like others, like John the Baptist, believed in the Scriptures that Jesus was Lord.

Thus, this confirms they saw Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of David, the Lord GOD sitting on a throne, being the rightful King of Israel who had the authority to bestow mercy. This showed forth their faith in Him as the Christ. But some may still wonder as to how does that shows forth their belief that He was the LORD GOD.

The answer is because of the type of mercy they were requesting. They were asking Jesus to heal their blindness, to restore their sight. How could a human king do such a thing? Could King David ever have answered a cry for such mercy? Could King Solomon ever have answered such a cry for mercy? Could King Hezekiah ever have answered such a cry for mercy? Could any human being ever answer such a cry for such mercy? The answer, of course, is no! The only One who had the authority to answer such a cry for

Matthew

such mercy was One who was Divine!

And in Scripture only One is ever shown to have such authority to heal blindness—Jehovah Himself. The two blind men knew this, and so displayed their faith in Him when they cried out to Jesus, the Son of David, pleading with Him to heal their blindness.

This is further confirmed when Jesus asks them “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” And then they answered, “Yes, Lord.” Why would Jesus ask them this question once they asked for His mercy in granting them recovery of their sight? Because, Jesus knew that they knew the only One in Scripture who could do such a thing was the LORD. Thus when they answered not just “Yes,” but rather “Yes, Lord,” which I would render “Yes, LORD,” we see that they were acknowledging Him as none other than the LORD God of Israel in human flesh.

Throughout the Old Testament no human being ever restored sight to a blind person who was born, * Indeed, we see this confirmed in the New Testament when it declares:

John 9:32 Since the world began it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind! (exclamation point mine - ERV)

But the Old Testament does speak of that coming day when the blind would see and be healed and that would be in the days when the Son of David, who was the LORD, would Himself open the eyes of the blind (e.g. Ps. 146: 8, 10; Isa. 35:1-6; 42:1-7).

Psalms 146:8, 10 The **LORD** openeth *the eyes of the blind*: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous: ¹⁰ The LORD shall reign for ever, *even* thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the LORD. KJV

Isaiah 35:1 The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. ² It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see

* In II Kings 6:18-20, we see that the men who came to Elisha were not born blind, but were made blind by the LORD in answer to the prayer of Elisha in verse 18.

And then in verse 20, we see again it was the LORD who restored their eyesight; Elisha's part was simply to ask the LORD that He would restore what He first took away.

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the glory of the LORD, *and* the excellency of our God. ³ Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. ⁴ Say to them *that are* of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come *with* vengeance, *even* God *with* a recompence; he will come and save you. ⁵ **Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened**, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. ⁶ Then shall the lame *man* leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. KJV

Isaiah 42:1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, *in whom* my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. ² He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. ³ A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. ⁴ He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law. ⁵ Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: ⁶ I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; ⁷ **To open the blind eyes**, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, *and* them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. KJV

The two blind men, most assuredly were aware of such verses, as were many in Israel, and most certainly the scribes and the Pharisees; and so, by the two blind men calling Jesus the Son of David, and because they believed He was the LORD who would come, they cried out to Him for healing, which act showed their faith in the Scripture and in Jesus as the LORD.

Jesus Himself, in the synagogue in Nazareth, refers to this prophetic truth while reading from the book of Isaiah.

Luke 4:18-22 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, ¹⁸ The Spirit of the

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Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and **recovering of sight to the blind**, to set at liberty them that are bruised, ¹⁹ To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. ²⁰ And he closed the book, and he gave *it* again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. ²¹ And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. ²² And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son? KJV

This portion He read is found in Isaiah 61: 1-2a—

Isaiah 61:1-2a The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are* bound; ² To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD KJV

And when one reads a few verses further to verse 8 in Isaiah, one finds out that the One who is speaking in verse 1 is none other than the LORD (Jehovah). Thus the LORD in verse 1 is the Father, whose name is LORD and the one anointed by the Father, who is speaking, is also the LORD, as both are God.

Thus, we see that only the LORD God can restore blindness, which shows that the two blind men believed Jesus was LORD, meaning Jehovah, the promised Messiah.

Now some may wonder why that passage from Isaiah in their Bible does not say anything said about the blind receiving their sight, whether they have the KJV, NKJV or the NASB! The reason is because the underlying Hebrew text used by those translators did not have that Hebrew phrase in it. But it is found in the Septuagint Version of the Hebrew Scriptures. This is how it reads in the Septuagint in English.

Isaiah 61:1-2a The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me; he has sent me to preach glad tidings to the poor, to heal the broken in heart, to proclaim liberty to

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the captives, **and recovery of sight to the blind**; to declare the acceptable year of the Lord. Brenton's LXX Version

One may wonder why this is so? The reason is because the underlying Hebrew Text that is used in our English translations is that based upon the Masoretic Text, which was produced in the latter part of the first millennium after Christ. This, of course, was a copy of earlier copies, as are our Greek copies are copies of early copies of the New Testament. The Masoretic Text is very accurate and trustworthy; however, in a few places there are minor differences from the Hebrew Text used by those who produced the Greek Septuagint a few centuries before Christ. This is one such place. Obviously the Hebrew Text used by those who translated the Hebrew into Greek had this Hebrew phrase in Isaiah. This, of course, is reflected in their Greek translation of Isaiah, but it is also confirmed by the Hebrew copy read in the synagogue in Nazareth, which was read by our Lord Jesus! So the Holy Spirit confirms that in this case the Greek Septuagint preserved a phrase from the Hebrew original, wherein the Masoretic did not.

Therefore, we must realize that in the Hebrew Old Testament there are a few places where a few words somehow were mistakenly dropped from the text in transmission from earlier Hebrew copies and that the Holy Spirit has recovered them for us in the New Testament. This is one such case. There are not many cases such as this, and there are not any that would ever change any major doctrine of the Bible, but it does occur sometimes by, what more than likely, was an inadvertent scribal subtraction to the text, perhaps brought on by weariness or distraction as has also happen in a few places with the New Testament, when various copies are compared, but again, without any change to any major doctrine. How thankful we are that God has preserved His Word despite the frailties of man. †

So we can see that by these three reasons, Matthew is showing forth the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, not only by the title the Son of the Man, but also with

† If one wishes to study further on the transmission of Scripture over the centuries, an excellent book on the subject is *The Book and the Parchments* by F. F. Bruce. Also we discuss it briefly in our *Excursus on the Son of David, the Man who is the Lord God, in II Samuel 7:19* found in the supplements.

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the title Son of David.

(If one wishes to do an in-depth study on why the title “Son of David” referred to the Deity of the Messiah, and thus to the LORD Jesus Christ, one can read the same *Excursus on the Son of David, the Man who is the Lord God, in II Samuel 7:19* that can be found in our supplements volume to this book.)

9:29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.

We see in this verse that Jesus rewards their faith.

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. KJV)

As we said in our comments on the woman with the issue of blood for twelve years, it is important to note that faith is a characterization or function of our human spirit, not our human soul. Paul speaks of the “spirit of faith” (II Cor. 4:13),^h not the soul of faith. So if we wish to walk by faith, we must walk by the our human spirit, as filled by the Holy Spirit, and as also filled with the Word of God, for we are told the words of God are *spirit* and *life* and thus the source of all faith (John 6:63; Rom. 10:17).ⁱ All that is of the Holy Spirit aids our faith.

So if a Christian wishes to walk by faith, they must walk by the Holy Spirit which means walking by their spirit as filled by the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the Word of God.

The human soul, on the other hand, is in need of transformation submitting itself to the things of God. Walking by the Spirit results in spirituality. Walking by our soul results in the opposite of spirituality, soulishness, which keeps the Christian from properly walking by faith.

Soulishness is the condition of unbelievers. It is rendered as the natural man (Greek adj. ψυχικός,

^h **II Corinthians**

4:13 But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, “I believed, therefore I spoke,” we also believe, therefore also we speak; NASB77

ⁱ **John 6:63** “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. NASB77

Romans 10:17 So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. KJV

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soulical, from ψυχή, soul) in I Cor. 2:14. But it must not be forgotten that not only can Christians act like unbelievers by being carnal, so too they can also act soulical (natural) like unbelievers, which Paul defines as “walking as mere men” (I Cor. 3:3).

In a Christian, being soulical bespeaks one who resists the things of their regenerated spirit, i.e. the dictates of the conscience, the affections of Christ, who dwells within their hearts, and a spirit which is willing to deny oneself (soul) by taking up one’s cross. All this hinders a walk of faith.

Why is it so hard for us as Christians to trust God for the things of life, or for Christian ministries and Churches to trust God for financial needs, so much so that worldly marketing strategies and marketing ploys are resorted to in order to raise money for God’s work? Or why is ministry and teaching sold to make money to fund the work. The Lord Jesus never raised money in that way.

The answer is because soulishness hinders one from walking by faith, or from being willing, in those times when financial support is low, to work with one’s own hands for one’s own needs and for the needs of those with us in the work.

Soulishness hinders us from believing that what God orders for His work, will be provided for by God. He will always provide the necessary funds for His work in answer to our prayers in faith, and if funds ever fall short (as long as we are abiding in Him and waking by the Spirit) that means God in His wisdom intends those funds to be short, perhaps, providing for us by desiring us to “work with our own hands”.

If someone as greatly used as the apostle Paul, had to sometimes work night and day for his ministry, if you will, why do not Christian leaders today not do the same thing? Are we not told to imitate Paul, and follow his way of ministry? (See Acts 20:33-35; I Cor. 11:1; Phil.4:9; II Thess. 3:7-10)

Lack of faith causes Churches and Ministries, to resort ungodly organizations to obtain mortgages to fund the Lord’s work, when God as the King of the Universe is more than able to provide the funds

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necessary to carry on His work, and if He does not, then, perhaps, that aspect which we believe should be included in the work is not His will for the work. But it takes the work of the cross, a willingness to be made of no reputation, and a faith in the providence and sovereignty of God to obey God in this way.

The Lord who said to not be unequally yoked with unbelievers would not lead one to become yoked together with unbelievers in allowing them to control the work of God by indebtedness or, for example, when it comes to Bible Colleges, to allow accreditation boards, which in some cases I have found even have a few who deny the Faith sitting on their boards, in demanding acquiescence to their unbiblical regulations, all so they can obtain their accreditations! Would Jesus ever do such a thing like that?

So we see the Lord rewards the faith of these two blind men who were two Israelites, who were forced by their circumstances to walk by faith in humility; in their poverty and physical blindness, they were rich in faith, seeing clearly with the eyes of their hearts.

And so Matthew tells us that because of their faith in Jesus as the LORD, the Son of David, the One who had the power to restore their blindness, He granted their request for mercy and restored their sight. He told them, "Because of your faith, so let it be done for you."

However, it should also be mentioned before we continue. What would the two blind men have said if Jesus as the Son of David said something to the effect that blessed are you for your faith in Me, but your blindness is within the will of God and must remain, but His grace will be sufficient for you?

The answer I believe, if, indeed, they were men of faith as their father Abraham and their father David, would have been something to the affect that we then bow to your will and trust your wisdom and will seek to serve you with all our heart. (This reminds me of the story of great hymnist, Fanny Crosby, who did that very thing.)

True faith, or should I say a full faith from His

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hand is not just faith in one aspect of God's character but faith in God's character. It is not just faith in one attribute of God, but faith in the very Being God that is characterized by many attributes. Thus if one believes in the mercy of God they will believe in the justice of God. If they believe in the love of the LORD, they will believe in the righteousness of the LORD, for they are all characterizations of His Fullness, which does not change. Thus His love is righteous and His righteousness is love; His mercy is just and His justice is mercy. So since His wisdom is absolute, His wisdom will be good, just, righteous, merciful and loving. Thus all that God allows in our lives is good. So if He allows sickness, God is good. If He allows trials; God is good. If He allows adversity; God is good.

The two blind men had faith in Jesus as God, and so faith in Jesus as the wisdom of God and so the goodness of God, for He was the Son of David, our Redeemer, who was the Lord GOD, and so all that He chose to do was good, for it came from His Father in Heaven.

Faith trusts and believes all things. Job once said: Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity? In all this Job did not sin with his lips. (Job 2:10 NASB). I believe the two blind men would have said the same thing. May it also be true for us, whether He grants our request, or does not, for what He orders by His grace, will always be sufficient, loving and wise.

9:30 And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it.

9:31 But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.

Verse 30 brings us to the question, "Why did Jesus repeatedly charge people to not say anything?" The answer may be that Jesus, knowing human nature, did not want sensationalism to attract people to the things of God, for sensationalism does not last; but faith exercised in the unseen things of God does last.

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How unlike this is with many Christians today who claim to be healers. They do all they can do to sensationalize healing, whether by frequently talking about it or writing about it to attract people, or even in some cases video-taping it or televising it to attract people, after which, in many cases, offerings for money are then taken. Why! Are we not told to walk as Jesus walked? Are we not told to imitate Christ? Can one imagine Jesus sending His disciples out with offering baskets after He would teach and heal many people to collect an offering of money! (Rather, instead, in great contrast, He sent out His disciples with baskets of food to feed the people!) Money so many times becomes an indication as to the spiritual maturity of a servant of God and whether their ministry is a work of faith. A spiritual Christian will walk as Jesus walked, and if they are used by God to bring healing to one, they will not seek to publish it and utilize it for attracting more people and then pass out baskets to collect money from those in attendance, many of whom will more than likely, be unbelievers. How is the free gift of grace shown forth in love, if ministry is not freely given, but rather is given out for monetary return?

Thus, this verse becomes a public standard of righteousness that can be applied to Christians who claim to be servants of God with the gift of healing today. I am not, necessarily questioning their salvation, but most assuredly I am questioning their claim to be filled with the Holy Spirit, for like God the Father, who changeth not, and like God the Son, who changeth not, God the Holy Spirit changeth not!

The Holy Spirit will not tell us to imitate Christ Jesus, and then lead the servants of Christ Jesus to do those things that are the opposite of Christ Jesus. Now all this is so many times rationalized away with the thought that one can attract so many people to come and hear the Gospel. But why cannot we trust that when we walk as Jesus walked, by faith we can then trust that the will of God will be done, and that those who are meant to come will come, and those who are meant to believe, will believe?

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The Holy Spirit tells us to test the spirits. This is one of the biblical ways we can test the spirits. Are they walking like Jesus walked? If not, they are not being spiritual Christians, but rather they are being carnal or soulical Christians.

Spiritual Christians will imitate Christ and walk as he walked—a high standard to attain, yet a high standard so many times not attained, but always a high standard to be attained!

Secondly, this verse shows forth how the Lord practiced the things that He taught. The Pharisees would make sure all men knew of their good works. Jesus said, “All their works they do for **to be seen of men**” (Matt. 23:5 KJV). They loved the accolades of the people and the titles of respect it would bring them, not realizing that their good works were leading themselves into the sin of spiritual pride and reputation sought and achieved. Jesus also said of them that they “love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi” (Matt. 23:5-7).

But for us, his disciples, Jesus told us to do the opposite, to not seek the glory of men, nor seek to gain those titles of respect, but rather He said, “Be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren” (Matt. 23:8).

Again, this is another example, of the high standard of righteousness and humility shown by our Lord.

Many times Christians love to be honored by other Christians, with today’s titles of respect and prestige; and they so many times seek to make known their works of righteousness, but if we follow the spirit of Jesus we will not seek to make known our works, but will instead practice what He taught us when He said, “Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 6:1).

If we seek to walk like Jesus walked, we must seek to have the mind of Christ, and if we seek to have the mind of Christ, we must be willing to be made of no reputation as did our Saviour. The teachings of Jesus

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will lead us to the mind of Jesus, which in turn will give us a solid foundation upon which to serve Him. If we say we love Him, we must in humble adoration seek to obey Him, to order aright our service to Him.

Matthew 7:24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. KJV

9:32 As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil.

9:33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.

This miracle, as with the miracle of restoring sight to the blind, was another prophetic confirmation included by Matthew to show that Jesus was the Promised Messiah, the Son of David.

Isaiah 35 was long considered a Messianic Psalm by many in Israel, and in Isa. 35:6 it speaks of the those unable to speak, being healed by God, and then being given the ability to speak, to shout, and, indeed, to sing!

Isaiah 35:4-6 Say to them *that are* of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come *with* vengeance, *even* God *with* a recompence; he will come and save you. ⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and **the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.** ⁶ Then shall the lame *man* leap as an hart, and **the tongue of the dumb sing:** for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. KJV

And, as with the blind being healed, so too the dumb being healed was spoken as that which had never been seen in Israel! But it is said it would happen when God came to save them! And was it not Jesus who came to save them. Over and over, beloved, Matthew gives evidence that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of David, who was the Lord GOD. And so Isa. 35:4-6 is another verse which provides such evidence.

As for the reference to vengeance in this part of

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Isaiah, some might wonder how it could apply to the first coming of Christ. The answer is that we must realize that with prophecy many times the first and second comings of Christ are referenced together without any reference as to the intervening dispensation of the Church. This is seen when the Lord read from the prophet Isaiah in the synagogue (Luke 4:17-21).

Luke 4:17-21 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,¹⁸ The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,¹⁹ To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.²⁰ And he closed the book, and he gave *it* again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.²¹ And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. KJV

This passage is taken from Isaiah 61:1-2, which reads:

Isaiah 61: 1-2 The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are* bound; 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn. KJV

But notice that our Lord Jesus stopped after the first phrase, before the next phrase “and the day of vengeance of our God.” The first part of the passage referred to the first coming, while the phrase “and the day of vengeance of our God,” referred to the second coming.

Now some might conclude, and some do that the vengeance referred to in Isa. 35:4 also refers to the same vengeance of Isa. 61:2, but there is one difference. In Isaiah 61:2 the vengeance is written after the references to the first coming in Isa. 61:1-2a,

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thus providing a nice break, wherein the Church age occurs. However, in Isa. 35:4-5, the reference to vengeance does not come after the reference to the first coming (Isa. 35:5), but before that reference, thus indicating the vengeance has reference to His first coming, as the statement “he will come and save you” is construed with verse 5 and 6 which states that when He comes to save them He will open the eyes of the blind, the deaf hear and the dumb speak, all of which the Lord Jesus fulfilled (Matt. 9:30, 33; 11:5).

Therefore, we must ask did our Lord first coming entail any act of vengeance? And the answer is that yes it did, but it was not vengeance against the nations of the world as will be with His second coming.

The vengeance of our Lord’s first coming was brought against Satan, just as it was promised in Gen. 3:15, where it was said that the Seed of the Woman would bruise the head of the Serpent.

Gen. 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. KJV

This was the judgement mentioned in such verses as John 14:30; 16:11, Heb. 2:14 and Col. 2:15.

John 14:30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. KJV

John 16:11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. KJV

Heb. 2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. KJV

Col. 2:13-15 And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,¹⁴ having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us *and* which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.¹⁵ When He had disarmed the rulers and

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authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him. NASB77

The power of death that the Serpent gained over mankind by his deceptiveness in the Garden was nullified. This our Lord Jesus did upon the cross, when He cried out “it is finished!” The Serpent’s head was bruised; vengeance was meted out; and the Devil was judged for all eternity.

And so we see another witness to the Deity of the LORD Jesus Christ in these two chapters of Matthew, chapters eight and nine.

In fulfillment of Isaiah 35:4-5, our Saviour, as God manifested in the flesh, took vengeance upon the Devil, the Serpent of old, by bruising his head, thereby showing He was the Promised Seed of the Woman, the Son of David, the Man, who is the Lord GOD.

This casting out of demons in those who were dumb, out of those who were held fast under the power of the Devil, is evidence provided by Matthew that Jesus was none other than God manifested in the flesh, the God who came with a vengeance and with recompense, but also the God who came to save by nullifying the power of death that the Devil held over mankind, demanding their death before a righteous God because of their sins.

Now, because Satan was judged no one needs to die the second death, for Jesus shed His blood on the cross, taking away that certificate of debt that was against us, paying it in full by His blood, and so leaving it nailed to the cross, where that debt was paid!

Now sinners can be declared righteous before God, if they only believe.

Romans 3:23-26 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; ²⁴ Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: ²⁵ Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; ²⁶ To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the

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justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. KJV

9:34 But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.

Yet despite the goodness and compassion of Christ and the testimony of Scripture that He was the Son of David, who is the Lord GOD, the God who takes vengeance, and the God who saves, the Pharisees loved their evil deeds more, refusing to come to the Light to be saved.

Many Pharisees claimed to have the Spirit of God, and claimed to be those who pleased God, but their accusations against the LORD Jesus Christ showed otherwise.

Many rabbis taught before, during, and after our Lord's sojourning upon earth that the Holy Spirit was given to those who sought to attain to a level of righteousness wherein the Holy Spirit was bestowed upon them because of their separation, which they believed the Lord Jesus was not practicing, because of such things like His entering into and eating in the house of a publican like Matthew, as well as not enforcing their many traditions, like eating with unwashed hands (cf. Mark 7:1-5).^j

A certain Rabbi, Phineas ben Yair (Jair), once said, as recorded in the Mishnah, the following—

“Observance of the Law leads to carefulness; carefulness, to diligence; diligence, to cleanliness; cleanliness, **to separation; separation, to purity**; purity, to fear of God; fear of God, to humility; humility, to fear of sin; fear of sin, to saintliness; saintliness, **to the Holy Spirit**; the Holy Spirit, to the resurrection of the dead (A.Z. 20b; cf. Sotah 9:15).”³⁷

There are variations of this list, but all essentially say the same thing that in that the Holy Spirit is given to one in accordance with their own righteousness and strict separations—a common tenet of Pharisaism. In fact, another variation of this list clearly makes known that the **separation** mentioned in the list above, was the same as the **asceticism** or Pharisaism below. It

j **Mark 7:1-5**

Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.² And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault.³

For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash *their* hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.⁴ And *when they come* from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, *as* the washing of cups, and pots, brassen vessels, and of tables.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

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reads:

“The (study of the) Law leads to circumspection, circumspection leads to diligence, diligence leads to freedom from guilt, freedom from guilt leads to **asceticism (or Pharisaism)**, asceticism leads to purity, purity leads to sanctity of life, sanctity of life leads to meekness, meekness leads to the fear of sin, fear of sin leads to holiness, holiness leads to (the acquisition of) the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit leads to the resurrection from the dead; but the greatest of all is sanctity of life. *Avodah-zarah*, fol. 20, col. 2.”³⁸

Of all those in Israel, the Pharisees thought of themselves as the ones upon whom the Holy Spirit should be given, and yet because they sought to establish their own righteousness, being ignorant of true righteousness, they blasphemed God the Son, the One who came to save them.

Romans 10:3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. KJV

9:35 And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. 9:36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

In these two next verses Jesus indicts those Pharisees who pretended to be those who deserved the Holy Spirit, who pretended to be leaders, guides, shepherds of the people.

In verse 34 they accused Him of being controlled by the prince of the devils, and so, before the people, showed forth themselves as the “guardians” of the flock, the “protectors” of Israel, rising up against all imposters who claimed the possession of the Holy Spirit, and yet, as was mentioned, they were the ones

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who lacked the Holy Spirit, being blind guides and false shepherds.

But Jesus was the true Shepherd of Israel and the One who pleased the Father in all things, having the Holy Spirit without measure (John 3:34), blessed by the Father with the declaration, “Thou art my Son in whom I am well-pleased!”

So in verse 36, when Jesus calls the children of Israel “sheep having no shepherd,” he was indicting the Scribes and Pharisees of their false piety.

His reference to Israel being sheep without a shepherd, would have been recognized by the Scribes and Pharisees as an indictment against them (who saw themselves as shepherds of the sheep) as being those self-righteous shepherds mentioned in Ezekiel 34.

Ezekiel 34:1-12, 14-16 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, ² Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe *be* to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? ³ Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: *but* ye feed not the flock. ⁴ The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up *that which was* broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. ⁵ **And they were scattered, because *there is no shepherd*:** and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. ⁶ My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek *after them*. ⁷ Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; ⁸ *As I live*, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because *there was no shepherd*, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; ¹¹ **For thus saith the Lord GOD;** Behold, I, *even I*, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. ¹² As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep *that are* scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. ¹⁴ I will feed them in a

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good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and *in* a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵ I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD. ¹⁶ I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up *that which was* broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment. KJV

This imagery is also what was behind the parable of the Good Shepherd in John 10:1-18, wherein in contrast to the Pharisees, Jesus said He was the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep.

Alfred Edersheim provides this helpful comment regarding this indictment of our Lord against the leaders of the people in Israel. He writes:

“It was in accordance with the character of the Discourse presently under consideration, that Jesus spake it, not, indeed, in Parables in the strict sense (for none such are recorded in the Fourth Gospel), but in an ‘allegory’ in the Parabolic form, a hiding the higher truths from those who, having eyes, had not seen, but revealing them to such whose eyes had been opened.

“If the scenes of the last few days had made anything plain, it was the utter unfitness of the teachers of Israel for their professed work of feeding the flock of God. The Rabbinites also called their spiritual leaders’ feeders,’ *Parnasin*...a term by which the Targum renders some of the references to ‘the Shepherds’ in Ezek. xxxiv. and Zech. xi.

“The term comprised the two ideas of ‘leading’ and ‘feeding,’ which are separately insisted on in the Lord’s allegory. As we think of it, no better illustration, nor more apt, could be found for those to whom the flock of God was entrusted...They [the Pharisees] were, surely, not shepherds, who had cast out the healed blind man, or who so judged of the Christ, and would cast out all His disciples. They had entered into God’s Sheepfold, but not by the door by which the owner, God, had brought His flock into the fold. To it the entrance had been His free love, His gracious provision, His thoughts of pardoning, His purpose of saving mercy...They had climbed up to their place in the fold some other way—with the same right, or by the same wrong, as a thief or a robber. They had wrongfully taken what did not belong to them--cunningly and undetected,

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like a thief; they had allotted it to themselves, and usurped it by violence, like a robber.

“What more accurate description could be given of the means by which the Pharisees and Sadducees had attained the rule over God’s flock, and claimed it for themselves? And what was true of them holds equally so of all, who, like them, enter by ‘some other way.’”³⁹

And so what we see is that once again Matthew is showing the Deity of our LORD Jesus Christ, for the One who accused the leaders of Israel in Ezekiel 34 as being false shepherds (vs. 5) is none other than the Lord GOD Himself (vs. 11), the same nomenclature used of Jesus, the Son of David in II Sam. 7:19.

From the beginning to end, to his Jewish readers who would search the Scriptures to see if it was so, Matthew is proving that Jesus of Nazareth was none other than the Christ, the Son of David, the Son of the Man, the Lord GOD.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

These verses show that some men pretend to religious leadership and yet they fail miserably because they are filled with the things of self and the boastful pride of life like that of the Scribes and Pharisees. Oh, how needful is a soft heart before the Lord that sees one’s true self in the light of His countenance, and not in the light of each other.

When we measure ourselves by ourselves we flatter ourselves, for man is a miserable standard by which to walk.

II Corinthians 10:12 For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding. NASB77

Such a means of spiritual appraisal is always fraught with danger, for even though sometimes,

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especially during revivals, the leadership of a movement may be of such a spiritual character that the danger of using them as a standard of piety may be somewhat lessened, but biblical history in both the Old and New Testament and, indeed, in Church history teaches us that it never lasts and soon that spiritual character is replaced with a man-made system that has compromised itself with philosophy and the things of the world.

When such a change occurs, then the Word of God becomes more and more compromised and finally a whole system of religious expectations are created wherein if one wishes to join the ranks of those in the system one is expected to conform to what they have established, rather than what God has established in His Word. At that point then a false system has been created where deception continues to grow like leaven, and after many years sometimes these once solid works of God become completely devoid of the truth.

This is what happened in Israel after their return from captivity. They returned under solid leadership, such as that of Ezra and Nehemiah, but after time with the rise of the Pharisaical party, which rose out of a desire to please LORD, ended up being the ones who condemned the very LORD they wished to serve!

In other words, as with all movements wherein men become the standard of righteousness and correct behavior, the same result occurs—a movement once spiritual becomes soulical and ultimately, in some cases, most carnal. So what is the answer? The answer is to never measure ourselves by ourselves in the first place. Our measurement should always be the LORD Jesus Christ.

Paul, who was a Pharisee of Pharisees before he was saved, measured himself by the measurements of other Pharisees in the Pharisaical systems; but after he met the LORD Jesus, he left all that behind him when he believed. He learned the true measurement of what pleased God was not that which was developed over time by man, but that which did not develop at all, but which existed from all of eternity—the LORD Jesus

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Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever.

This very realization caused the apostle Paul to say the following to the Philippian Christians.

Philippians 3:3-11 For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh: ⁴ though I myself might have confidence even in the flesh: if any other man thinketh to have confidence in the flesh, I yet more: ⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as touching zeal, persecuting the church; as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless. ⁷ Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ, ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, *even* that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith: ¹⁰ that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; ¹¹ if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead. ASV

If you remember, above we provided a quote by Rabbi Phineas ben Yair who mentioned that the resurrection from the dead was obtained by observance of the Law and a system of self-effort and improvement whereby through the works of the Law one gained the Holy Spirit. That was the system developed by the Pharisaical party. But Paul, who was excelling in that system more than all others, counted that system, that way of life, as rubbish, for he realized that the righteousness of Christ was the only means of the gaining the Holy Spirit and the only means of attaining the resurrection of the dead. Human effort availed nothing, and to follow such systems that wed the things of man with the things of God was an affront to God's standard—His Only-Begotten Son. Christ was the only safe means of measurement to follow! Christ was the answer to Paul. Christ was the standard of true righteousness, not the

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religious systems of man which purported to be doing the will of God.

The system of the Pharisaical party condemned true Righteousness, Christ Jesus, and accused Him of being controlled by the prince of the world. How awful.

May we all learn not to measure ourselves by any system instituted and maintained by man, no matter how spiritual it may appear, for our only safety is to measure ourselves by our Saviour and even in that to realize self-deception is still possible, for we might still think of ourselves more highly than we ought. The apostle said it best when he wrote:

I Cor. 4:1-4 Let a man so account of us, as of ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.² Here, moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.³ But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. ⁴ For I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. ASV

Paul understood this and so said that even he who stopped measuring himself by the Pharisaical system did not trust himself in his judgment, his assessment of himself, saying in another place—

“Romans 12:3 For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. NASB77

May we all entrust ourselves to the judgment of Christ and never conform ourselves to a system, no matter how religious and supposedly good, but rather always conform ourselves to Christ as we take up our cross, deny ourselves, and follow Him, ever loving our brethren as if they were ourselves.

9:37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few;

9:38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that

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he will send forth laborers into his harvest.

And so because Jesus says the children of Israel have been abandoned by those who called themselves shepherds, He shows how He, as the Good Shepherd, will seek those who have been scattered and abandoned. He now likens those lost sheep as the plenteous harvest. He tells His disciples to pray that the “Lord of the harvest” would send forth labourers into his harvest to bring in the harvest.

What does Jesus mean by the “Lord of the harvest,” and why would He use that terminology? First, we must realize from Scripture a “lord of the harvest” is the one who owns the land wherein the harvest is to take place.

In Ruth 2:21, we find that Scripture states that Boaz speaks of the harvest as being “my” harvest. He declares to Ruth that, “Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all **my harvest**.”

He says this, because the field wherein the harvest took place was that field that belonged to him, as said in Ruth 2:3, “on the portion of the field belonging unto Boaz.”

Then, next, we find that Scripture also calls Boaz a “lord” in Ruth 2:13, when Ruth said to Boaz, “Let me find favour in thy sight, **my lord**.” So in the story of Ruth we see that the “lord of the harvest” was Boaz, the great-grandfather of King David.

With that in mind, we see that the title “Lord of the harvest” in Jesus’ declaration would be the one who owned the land wherein the harvest was to take place.

So where was the harvest to take place in our Lord’s mind? It was to take place in the land of Israel for Jesus was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, which had been abandoned and misused by false shepherds. We see this stated in Matt. 15:24 (and confirmed in Matt. 10:6).^k

Matthew 15:24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. KJV

Well, beloved, who owns the land of Israel. To

^k **Matthew 10:6**
But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. KJV

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whom does that “field,” so to speak, belong? Scripture tells us it belongs to none other than the LORD!

Jeremiah 2:1, 7 Now the **word of the LORD** came to me, saying...⁷ And I brought you into the fruitful land, To eat its fruit and its good things. But you came and defiled **My land**, And My inheritance you made an abomination. NASB77

So, who was the Lord of the harvest that Jesus spoke of? It was none other than the LORD Jesus Christ!

Secondly, the Lord of the harvest is identified as the one who sends the labourers out into the field. Well, of whom does Matthew say was the One who “sends” out the labourers into the field? In the next chapter we see that it is Jesus who sends out the labourers.

Matthew 10:5-6 These twelve **Jesus sent forth**, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not:⁶ But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. KJV

So again, what we see is that Jesus is declaring to all who have an ear to hear, is that He Himself is the *Lord of the harvest*, sent by God the Father into the *fruitful land*, if you will, to oversee the harvest of the field that belonged to Him.

Thus, Jesus is declaring, and Matthew is providing another affirmation to his readers that Jesus is LORD, Jehovah, the Lord GOD of the Old Testament, for not only is the LORD the owner of the field wherein Israel dwells, He is the owner of the entire earth, who will equally in the end time act as the Lord of the harvest when He sends out His angels to gather in His crop from His field, which is the world.

Psalms 24:1 The earth *is* the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. KJV)

Deut. 10:14 Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD'S thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is. KJV

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I Chron. 29:11 Thine, O LORD, *is* the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all *that is* in the heaven and in the earth *is thine*; thine *is* the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. KJV

Matthew 13:30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. KJV

And so this ends Part III of our notes and comments on the Gospel according to Matthew. How wonderful is chapter eight and nine of Matthew where he shows forth from the Old Testament that Jesus of Nazareth is LORD. Over and over he provides evidence of His Deity, affirming the Lord's words that He was none other than *Jehovah Adonai*, that is, LORD Lord (Matt. 7:21-22). He provides such evidence in that makes known to his Jewish readers that the winds and the sea obey Him, which in the Old Testament is shown to be only by the command of *Jehovah* (Matt. 8:26 with Ps. 107:23-30). He shows forth His Deity by recording for his readers the incident of Jesus saying that the Son of the Man has the authority to forgive sins upon the earth, which in the Old Testament is said to be the prerogative only of *Jehovah*, the LORD (Matt. 9:1-6 with Micah 7:17b-18, Isaiah 33:22,24). Additionally, by that same title—the Son of the Man—Matthew directs the hearts of his Jewish readers back to Eve's declaration regarding the Promised Seed who would be the Man, the LORD (Gen. 3:15). Over and over we see Matthew bearing witness to the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ in these two chapters.

The same occurs with Matthew's story regarding the two blind men crying out to Jesus, "*Thou* Son of David, have mercy on us." Like with the title "Son of the Man," the title "Son of David," directs the hearts of his Jewish readers back to the declaration of King David that his son, who would be the Messiah, was none other the Lord GOD (II Sam 7:19 YLT, Luther's

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Version). This declaration regarding the Deity of the Son of David is also affirmed in that the only King that could ever answer their cry for mercy for the restoration of their sight was He who was the LORD of all! How could any earthly king ever answer such a cry for mercy (Matt. 9:27-30 with Ps. 146: 8, 10; Isa. 35:1-6; 42:1-7)?

In this same manner, this same affirmation was also made in that it had never been heard in Israel that one dumb, unable to speak, could ever have his voice restored, except by a miracle of God, which Jesus Himself performed (Matt. 9:32-33 with Isa. 35:2-5).

And finally, the Deity of Christ is shown in that Matthew shows that Jesus is the “LORD of the harvest” who seeks labourers to go out into the field which He owns, which field the Old Testament identifies as the land of Israel, and, indeed, that of the whole earth, which the Old Testament clearly says is the LORD's (Matt. 9:32-33 with Ruth 2:3, 13, 21; Ps. 24:1; Deut. 10:14).

How wonderful are chapters eight and nine in Matthew, showing forth first to the Jews, and then to the whole world that the Promise Seed of Gen. 3:15 had come, and that He was none other than Jesus of Nazareth, God manifested in the flesh, the Son of the Man, the Seed of the Woman, the son of Mary, the Son of David, the Man, who is the Lord GOD! How could we not believe that Jesus is LORD!

May we all bow in humble adoration of Him, and confess with our own lips the wondrous truth that in the city of David, so long ago, there was born the Son of David, Christ Jesus the LORD, the Saviour of Israel and of all the world. May all the earth believe in Him!

“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the LORD.” Luke 2:10-11 KJV

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Anthony Norris Groves

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