

Matthew 8-9, Healings

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We've been studying the Sermon on the Mount since March of 2014. Let's take a moment to get our bearings in Matthew.

The book as a whole falls into three parts, divided by the landmark statements at 4:17 and 16:21 (chart, Figure 1).

- The first four chapters present the **Person** of Jesus the king.
- 4:17 reports, "From that time Jesus began to preach," and describes the **Proclamation** of Jesus the king.

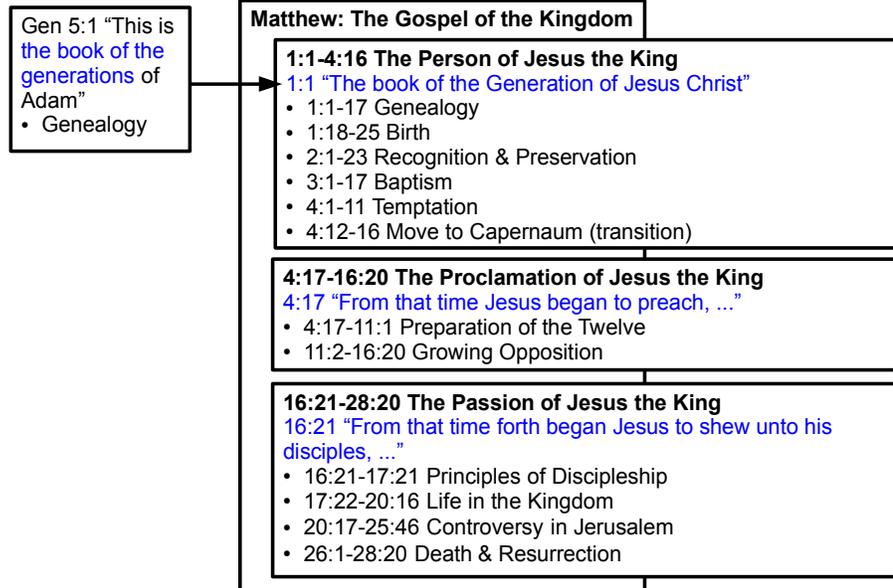


Figure 1: Overview of Matthew

- 16:21 reports, "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." Here we learn of the **Passion** of Jesus the king.

The Sermon on the Mount was part of the Proclamation section, describing how the Lord prepared his disciples to extend his preaching ministry. That preparation also included the healing section that we now begin. The Preparation of the Twelve occupies Matt 4:18-11:1, which is a chiasm (chart, Table 1).

The summary verses (4:23; 9:35) highlight two kinds of ministry: teaching and preaching, and

| | |
|---|---|
| 4:18-22 Calling & Commissioning the Four | 9:36-11:1 Calling & Commissioning the Twelve |
| 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. | 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. |
| ch. 5-7 Teaching (Sermon on the Mount) | ch. 8-9 Healings |

Table 1: Structure of Matthew 4-10, the Preparation of the Disciples

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healing sickness and disease. In ch. 5-7 we have had a summary of his teaching. Now Matthew assembles events that describe his healing power. It is clear from the differing organization of these miracles in Mark and Luke, as well as from the lack of any clear chronological indicators in Matthew, that Matthew has organized this material thematically. The point of this organization is to show how the Lord prepares his disciples—by teaching, but also by demonstrating his mighty works. This is a pattern that we should apply as we work with younger believers.

One motive for the focus on healing is that the prophet Isaiah made physical healing a sign of the Messianic age (chart):

Isa 35:5 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.

When John later sends his disciples to ask whether Jesus is indeed the Messiah, the Lord alludes to this and other passages from Isaiah to certify who he is:

Mat 11:4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: 5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

These two chapters report ten miracles, of which two (the woman with the issue of blood, and the ruler’s daughter) are interwoven, yielding nine narratives. Reminding us that we are still in the section dealing with the preparation of the disciples, Matthew divides these miracles into three triads by two discussions on discipleship (8:18-22; 9:9-17) (chart, Figure 2).¹ This structure encourages us to look either for correspondences across the three triads (forming an alternation), or for a distinctive theme to each of them (or possibly both), and we will be alert for such features as we study.

8:2-17, First Triad

Morris notes that each of these people (a leper, a Gentile, and a woman) would be devalued by our Lord’s contemporaries. Our Lord shows his concern for the outcast.

8:2-4, Leper

2 And, behold, there came a leper—The first healing deals with one of the most feared conditions in the

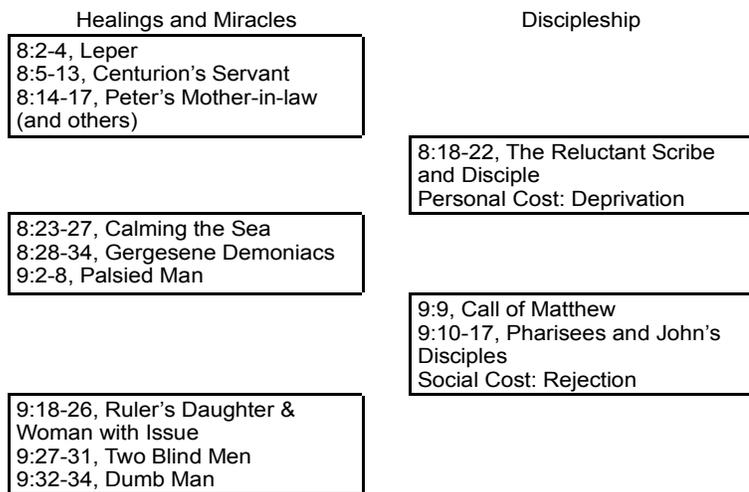


Figure 2: Structure of ch. 8-9

¹ This arrangement is noted by Morris, France, and Constable, and no doubt others as well.

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| | Death | Leper |
|---------------------|--|---|
| Marks of Mourning | Eze 24:17 Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips , and eat not the bread of men. | Lev 13:45 And the leper in whom the plague <i>is</i> , his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare , and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip , and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. |
| | Gen 23:4 I <i>am</i> a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a buryingplace with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight . | 46 All the days wherein the plague <i>shall be</i> in him he shall be defiled; he <i>is</i> unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation <i>be</i> . |
| Ritual of Cleansing | Num 19:6 And the priest shall take cedar wood , and hyssop , and scarlet , and cast <i>it</i> into the midst of the burning of the heifer. | Lev 14:4 Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive <i>and</i> clean, and cedar wood , and scarlet , and hyssop : |

Table 2: Leprosy as a Parable of Death

ancient world. It was highly disfiguring, recovery was rare, and cures were unknown.

The ceremonial emphasis on leprosy makes it a parable of death (chart, Table 2).² The distinctive signs that the leper was to bear, and the ritual of cleansing, recall the symbols of death. Aaron highlights the parallel between death and leprosy when he pleads for Miriam:

Num 12:12 Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb.

So leprosy points us to the root problem that our Lord came to solve, the sentence of death on our sinful race.

But it also points to the solution. In the entire OT, only two people are healed of leprosy. The first is Miriam, apparently by Moses' intercession (Num 12:13) and the other is Naaman the Syrian, by Elisha (2 Kings 5). Both anticipate the Messiah. We noted in the infancy narrative many points of similarity between our Lord, the "prophet like Moses," and Moses himself, and in ch. 3 we saw that the ministry of Elisha bears many points of resemblance to that of our Savior (chart, Table 3), including his beginning as a disciple. Malachi promised that Elijah would appear before the Day

| | Joshua | Elisha | Our Lord |
|----------------------|--|---|--|
| Name | Jehovah is Salvation | God is Salvation | Jehovah is Salvation |
| Forerunner & Teacher | Moses | Elijah | John |
| Marked by the Spirit | Num 27:8 Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, | 2Ki 2:15 they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. | Matt 3:16 and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him |

Table 3: Three Men Named "Salvation" (from Matt 3)

² The comparison is due to Trench, in his Notes on the Miracles: "He bore about him the emblems of death (Lev. xiii. 45); the rent garments, mourning for himself as one dead; the head bare, as was their wont who were defiled by communion with the dead (Num. vi. 9; Ezek.xxiv. 17); and the lip covered (Ezek. xxiv. 17). In the restoration, too, of a leper, precisely the same instruments of cleansing were in use, the cedar-wood, the hyssop, and scarlet, as were used for the cleansing of one defiled through a dead body, or aught pertaining to death; these same being never employed on any other occasion (cf. Num. xix. 6, 18, with Lev. Xiv. 4-7)." The citation is from p. 230 of the 15th (1895) edition published by Paul, Trench, Trübner & Company (London), available at Google Books.

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of the Lord:

Mal 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

Our Lord identified John the Baptist with that Elijah:

Mat 11:13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. 14 And if ye will receive *it*, this is Elias [Elijah], which was for to come.

This healing reinforces those correspondences. Just as Moses and Elisha delivered Miriam and Naaman from symbolic death, our Lord delivers his people from the true death.

and worshipped him, saying, Lord,--These two words, “worship” and “Lord,” suggest something about the leper’s faith, and the Lord’s response says something about him.

We discussed the two possible senses of “Lord” in connection with 7:21, 22. In direct address, it can be just a term of respect, but it can also describe the addressee as the Jehovah of the OT. It is often suggested that the verb is similarly ambiguous.

The Greek word involved is προσκυνεω, which the KJV universally translates “worship.”³ It appears frequently in the LXX, overwhelmingly as the translation of the *hishtaphel* of הוה. Both of these words mean “to prostrate oneself.” In both testaments, unbelievers perform this act as a sign of respect, and in the OT godly people offer prostration as a mark of respect without implying that the recipient is God. For example (chart),

Gen 23:7 And Abraham stood up, and **bowed himself** to the people of the land, *even* to the children of Heth.

1Sa 24:8 David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and **bowed himself**.

There is a stark change after the captivity. God sent Israel into Assyria and Babylon because of their idolatry. He showed them idolatrous cultures in their fullest, most offensive form, and ever after, the worship of idols has not been an issue in Judaism. As a result, Jews became very sensitive about bowing down to something other than the Lord, and after the captivity, godly people neither offer nor accept bowing as a mark of respect.

None of the exilic saints ever bows down to anyone but God. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego endure the fiery furnace for their refusal to bow to Nebuchadnezzar’s image. The king commands them,

Dan 3:15 Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye **fall down and worship** the image which I have made; well: but if ye **worship** not, ye shall be cast the same hour

3 This consistency is remarkable for a version that frequently diversifies its translations for the sake of style, and implies that the translators intend us to understand more than simple prostration. They do not hesitate to use “bow,” “fall down,” “do obeisance,” and other terms for הַשְׁתַּחֲוֶה in the OT.

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into the midst of a burning fiery furnace;

He does not ask that they believe in the image, or commit themselves to it, only that they perform an outward gesture of respect toward it. They respond,

Dan 3:18 be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor **worship** the golden image which thou hast set up.

Mordecai refused to bow to Haman:

Est 3:2 And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, **bowed**, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai **bowed** not, nor did him reverence.

In the LXX, he explains his unwillingness in a prayer to the Lord:

Est 4:17 (LXX) Thou knowest all things: thou knowest, Lord, that it is not in the insolence, nor haughtiness, nor love of glory, that I have done this, to refuse **obeisance** to the haughty Aman. For I would gladly have kissed the soles of his feet for the safety of Israel. But I have done this, that I might not set the glory of man above the glory of God: and I will not **worship** any one except thee, my Lord, and I will not do these things in haughtiness.

(We do not accept the LXX as canonical, but it was written after the captivity, and this addition is a reliable record of the attitudes of the Jewish community that produced it.)

This restricted use of the word continues in the NT. There are 60 instances of the verb, and one of the derived noun, in the NT (chart).⁴

- a) In fifteen cases, worship is offered to the Lord Jesus.
- b) Twenty-seven times it is offered to God.
- c) Twenty-one times, worship offered to idols or men is repudiated.
- d) Once, in the parable of the ungrateful servant in Matt 18:26, it is used of the servant before his Lord, who is clearly a figure of God.

It is instructive to consider some instances of c). Peter refuses worship as a man:

Act 10:25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and **worshipped** him. 26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.

For our Lord to accept worship, he must think of himself as more than a man. Again, John's angelic guide refuses worship:

Rev 22:8 And I John saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to **worship** before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. 9 Then

4 This survey is due to E.H. Bickersteth, *The Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1969, reprint of *The Rock of Ages*, New York, 1871), ch. 4, p. 54 in the Kregel edition. The text is available at <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/BookList/RockofAgesbyEdwardHenryBickersteth1871.aspx>

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saith he unto me, See *thou do it* not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

For our Lord to accept worship, he must think of himself as more than an angel.

Only once after the captivity, in Rev 3:9, does προσκυνεω refer to worship offered acceptably to the creature (chart):

Rev 3:9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and **worship** before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

The use of the term here is an allusion to several verses in Isaiah, which predict that in the coming kingdom, Gentiles will bow down before Zion:

Is 45:14 Thus saith the LORD, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and **they shall fall down unto thee**, they shall make supplication unto thee, *saying*, Surely God *is* in thee; and *there is* none else, *there is* no God.

Is 49:23 And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: **they shall bow down to thee** with *their* face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet;

Is 60:14 The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee **shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet**; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

Isaiah writes before the exile, and (like others before the exile) understands a bow as a courteous gesture even to one who is not God. The Lord, in addressing the Gentile church at Philadelphia, alludes to these passages to create a sense of cutting irony. Once Israel is restored, Gentiles will come respectfully to her, but while she remains unfaithful (“the synagogue of Satan”), she is the one who must bow down to the Gentile church of Philadelphia.⁵

Given this array of usage, our passage takes on deeper meaning, in two ways.

5 Those of covenant persuasion understand this parallel to teach that the church has become the true Israel: “This prophecy has been fulfilled ironically in the Gentile church, which has become true Israel by virtue of its faith in Christ. In contrast, ethnic Israel fulfills the role of the Gentiles because of their unbelief.” Beale, G. K. (1999). *The book of Revelation: a commentary on the Greek text* (p. 288). Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press. Again, “As it was prophesied in the Old Testament that the Gentiles should be converted and come unto Zion to the Jews, so here it is predicted that the Judaizing Jews shall in their conversion come to the Church of Christ as the true Zion.” Lange, J. P., Schaff, P., Moore, E., Craven, E. R., & Woods, J. H. (2008). *A commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Revelation* (p. 130). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software. But reading this verse as a *fulfillment* of Isaiah’s prophecies does violence to his language: not only does it turn Zion into a reference to a (mostly Gentile) church, but it requires that we understand the Gentiles of Isaiah to be a reference to Jews! It is far more satisfactory to see the citation as an ironic allusion to the ancient prophecy that applies it *illustratively* to what will happen in Philadelphia, *without denying* at all its ultimate *fulfillment*.

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First, the leper's gesture is more than a mark of politeness. He recognizes in Jesus something more than an itinerant rabbi. He may remember from the Synagogue the ancient promises of the promised Messiah whose name would be called God With Us (Immanuel) and the Mighty God, leading him to this expression of reverence toward Jesus.

Second, the Lord's response to the leper's worship is in contrast with Peter's response to Cornelius, or the angel's response to Peter. He willingly receives what belongs to God alone, and as a result we must either reject him as an imposter, or bow before him with the leper.

if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.--The leper's request is an eloquent expression of faith. He assumes the Lord's ability to help him, and questions only his willingness. This latter hesitation reflects his awareness of his own unworthiness. There is no demand here, just casting himself on the Lord. His deliverance comes when the Lord declares, "I will" (v. 3).

Contrast the request of the father with the spirit-possessed boy (chart),

Mar 9:22 if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

The father questions the Lord's ability, and by a demand imposes his own will on the Lord.

We have noted that leprosy is a parable of death, reminding people of the consequences of sin. Healing from leprosy is a parable of salvation, and this first healing by our Lord provides a commentary on different methods of evangelism. Our modern methods focus on asking about the will of the sinner: "Will you receive the Lord?" The leper suggests asking instead about the state of the sinner: "What is your condition before a holy God?" The leper is characterized by an acute awareness of his own helpless condition, and his only question is whether the holy Lord will receive him.

In evangelism, we ought to seek to bring people to the point that they see themselves as the leper saw himself, morally bankrupt and separated from God. The central question is not whether they will receive the Lord, but whether he will receive them. Such a conviction of personal unworthiness lies at the heart of true repentance, which is a prerequisite for biblical faith.

3 And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him,--This is a remarkable act, because of three provisions in the law (chart).

First, leprosy makes the sufferer unclean:

Lev 13:44 He is a leprous man, he *is* **unclean**: the priest shall pronounce him utterly **unclean**; his plague *is* in his head. 45 And the leper in whom the plague *is*, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, **Unclean, unclean**. 46 All the days wherein the plague *shall be* in him he shall be defiled; he *is* **unclean**: he shall dwell alone; without the camp *shall* his habitation *be*.

Second, uncleanness is communicated by touch:

Lev 5:2 Or if a soul touch any unclean thing, whether *it be* a carcase of an unclean beast, or a carcase of unclean cattle, or the carcase of unclean creeping things, and *if* it be hidden from him; **he also shall be unclean, and guilty**. 3 Or if he touch the uncleanness

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of man, whatsoever uncleanness *it be* that a man shall be defiled withal, and it be hid from him; **when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty.**

Third, an unclean person cannot participate in the peace offerings, under penalty of premature death at the hand of God:⁶

Lev 7:20 But the soul that **eateth of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings**, that *pertain* unto the LORD, having his uncleanness upon him, even that soul **shall be cut off from his people**. 21 Moreover the soul that shall touch any unclean *thing*, as the uncleanness of man, or *any* unclean beast, or any abominable unclean *thing*, and eat of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which *pertain* unto the LORD, even that soul shall be cut off from his people.

According to the law, by touching the leper the Lord himself would become unclean, and exclude himself from sacred fellowship. But in this case, just the opposite happens.

saying, I will; be thou clean.--The Lord joins the touch with a word

And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.--The Lord's touch does not make the Lord unclean, but rather makes the leper clean. This dynamic is unheard-of in the OT. Compare the question that the Lord asked Israel through Haggai:

Hag 2:11 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests *concerning* the law, saying, 12 If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No. 13 Then said Haggai, If *one that is* unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean.

Yet Christ is able to impart cleanness by his touch.

4 And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.--Given the rarity of healings, the arrival of the leper at the temple would constitute an announcement to the priesthood that the Messianic age has arrived.

8:5-13, Centurion's Servant (Palsy)

This healing addresses Isaiah's prophecy,

35:6 Then shall the lame *man* leap as an hart

Recall from Matt 4:13 that the Lord made Capernaum his base of operation, after Herod imprisoned John. So he is here returning to his adopted home after the Sermon on the Mount.⁷

6 The apparent meaning of being cut off from one's people: see Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, NICOT, 1979, pp. 241-242.

7 There is little question that the accounts describe the same incident: Luke 7 agrees that this episode takes place immediately after the Sermon.

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Capernaum was the closest city to the Jordan on the west bank, and located on the Sea of Galilee. The Jordan was a political boundary between the region of Galilee (ruled by Herod Antipas) and Batanea (ruled by Herod Philip II) (chart, Figure 3, Figure 4). So Capernaum was a border city, explaining the presence of a Roman garrison, as well as a tax collector (Mark 2:1, 14) (Matthew).

In general, occupying Roman troops were not popular with the local citizenry, any more than the tax collectors whose authority they enforced. Like the leper, Gentiles were disparaged.

Both Matthew and Luke recount this incident,⁸ but with different emphases (chart).

- Luke mentions that the Jewish elders conveyed the centurion's request, and that they reported his sponsorship of the synagogue. These details suggest that the centurion, and perhaps the Jews, thought that his request would be more acceptable if it came with Jewish endorsement, but Matthew omits these details.
- Luke omits Matthew's report in vv. 11-12 that Gentiles would sit down with the patriarchs in the kingdom, while some Jews would be excluded.

Both differences suggest that Matthew wants to emphasize that the Lord accepted the centurion because of his faith, not because of any Jewish endorsement. We see the same emphasis with the Syro-Phoenician woman in ch. 15.

Mat 15:26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast *it* to dogs. 27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. 28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, **great is thy faith:** be it unto thee even as thou wilt.

⁸ See Notes for an alignment of the two.

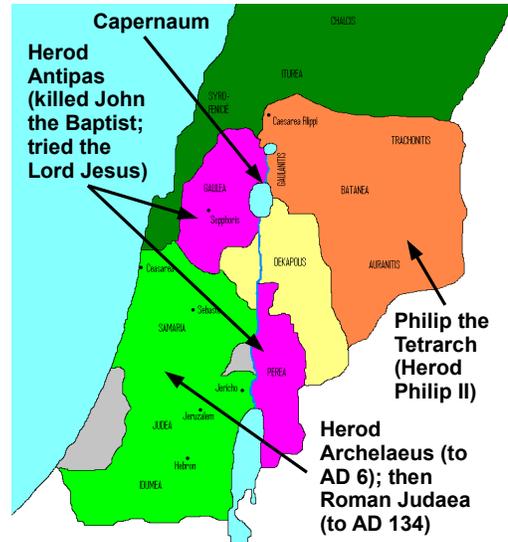


Figure 3: Political structure of Palestine during our Lord's earthly ministry



Figure 4: From Capernaum (left) to Jordan (right)

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Mark also reports this event, but not the Lord's commendation of her faith. Contrary to opinion of the Jewish elders, and perhaps even of the centurion, the key to acceptance with the Lord is faith, not alliance with Israel—and those in Israel who lack faith will not enter the kingdom.

5 And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, 6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.--Matthew describes the centurion, like the leper, as simply making a statement, not demanding healing as the father in Mark 9 does. Of course the centurion wants the Lord to help, as the verb "beseeching" makes clear, and as Luke's account emphasizes. Matthew omits these details to increase the parallel with the leper and Peter's mother-in-law. In all three cases the Lord is active, not simply responding passively. He sees the need and responds to it, even without an express request for help.

7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.--The Lord recognizes his faith and proactively comes to heal the servant

8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof:--We noted that Matthew is emphasizing the unworthiness of the beneficiaries of the Lord's work. This verse, and the parallel in Luke, show that he is not innovating, but simply endorsing what the centurion says about himself. An orthodox Jew would not enter the house of a Gentile, for fear of being defiled. Peter explained this to Cornelius, another centurion, and expected him to know it already (chart):

Act 10:28 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation;

When God sent Peter to visit Cornelius, he gave him a special vision to deter this fear, but no such vision had yet been given. The centurion of Capernaum understands this constraint.

but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.--He does not believe that the Lord's presence is required. His word would be sufficient.

9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me:--Literally, "I myself," or "I also." The centurion is reasoning about the Lord's power by analogy with his own situation.

He is "under authority." It would be wrong to understand this as self-deprecation, for he explains it by saying, "I have soldiers under me." That is, it is because he is under authority that he has authority over others. To be "under authority" is a license to do things that one could not justify individually. We might say, he "bears authority," and so can invoke it over others. He wears the insignia of the emperor, he is recognized as the representative of the emperor, and thus people do what he says.⁹

By saying "I also," he is recognizing that the Lord Jesus is also the representative of a higher authority. "I recognize you as one who bears authority, for I am also in such a position. It is that

⁹ "It is precisely the centurion's position in a chain of command that gives his word power." Nolland John. (2005). Preface. In *The Gospel of Matthew: a commentary on the Greek text* (p. 356). Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

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authority that will make your word effective.” Already at the beginning of the Lord’s ministry, he recognizes what the Lord will tell his disciples at the end,

Mat 28:18 All power [authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

and I say to this *man*, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.--In his case, the centurion’s authority is reflected in the power of his word over soldiers. He perceives that the Lord’s authority is such that he can command even sickness.

Perhaps his insight was shared by other military people. It is remarkable that all the centurions in the NT are viewed positively. In addition to this one (here and Luke 7), we read of

- the centurion at the cross (Matt 27:54; Mark 15:39; Luke 23:47), who recognized Jesus as the Son of God;
- Cornelius, the first Gentile convert (Acts 10);
- the centurions stationed at the temple, who delivered Paul from the Jewish mob (Acts 21:32), and in particular the one who delivered him from scourging (22:25-26);
- the centurion who warned of the plot to ambush Paul in the council (23:17);
- the centurions who gave Paul safe conduct to Caesarea (23:23);
- the centurion who guarded Paul in Caesarea (24:23);
- Julius, in charge of Paul during the voyage to Rome (Acts 27), who made decisions in Paul’s favor (v. 43)

Military men respect one another, even if they serve opposing countries. There is a certain camaraderie of arms, a common understanding on the part of those who know what it is to recognize authority and carry out its orders. Our Savior recognized the Father’s authority and sought to carry it out. His disciples recognize his authority and seek to carry it out. Believers are “soldiers of the cross,” disciplined to obedience and service in a way that unbelievers are not, and the centurions in the NT recognize that distinction.

10 When Jesus heard it, he marvelled,--“Marvel” usually implies surprise at something we had not expected, so theologians have focused on this verse with great interest. Usually other people are said to “marvel” at our Lord, and John tells us (chart),

Joh 2:24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all *men*, 25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

The use of the word to describe his attitude touches on the deep mysteries of how he unites the human and divine.

Our Lord only marvels twice in the gospels: here (and in the parallel at Luke 7:9) at a Gentile’s belief, and at the unbelief of the Jews of Nazareth:

Mar 6:6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief.

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Both are a reversal of how people ought to have reacted to the Messiah, as he highlights in the words that follow:

and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.--What was the centurion's exemplary faith? Like Abraham, he was "fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform" (Rom 4:21). In both cases, faith consists of resting upon God's word.

11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.--This is, after all, what the OT anticipated (chart):

Psa 22:27 **All the ends of the world** shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and **all the kindreds of the nations** shall worship before thee.

Amo 9:12 That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of **all the heathen**, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this.

Isa 2:2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and **all nations** shall flow unto it.

Isa 11:10 And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the **Gentiles** seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

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

Zec 8:22 Yea, **many people and strong nations** shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD.

Mal 1:11 For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the **Gentiles**; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the **heathen**, saith the LORD of hosts.

12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.--But this would not be what Israel wants to hear. John made this point (chart):

Mat 3:9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. 10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

He was not innovating, but recalling the OT warning:

Isa 5:5 And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; *and* break down the wall thereof, and it shall be

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trodden down: 6 And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts *is* the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant:

And our Lord picks up the warning:

Mat 7:22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Mat 21:43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

Here, they are cast out for lack of faith. In ch. 7, the false prophets are cast out for failure to do the will of the Father:

Mat 7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

It would be a mistake to contrast these with one another. Both involve our response to the Lord's authoritative word. They are two facets of the same mental attitude.

13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.--Again, the Lord emphasizes (as Luke does not) that the centurion's faith is the means by which he gained the healing he sought.

8:14-17, Peter's Mother-in-Law (Fever) and others

This third miracle in the first triad actually includes several healings. As a complex rather than a single miracle, it corresponds to the first element of the last triad, which weaves together the healings of the ruler's daughter and the woman with the issue of blood (chart).

14 And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.--Again, Matthew records no request. The Lord simply sees the need.

15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.--As with the leper, and in contrast with the servant of the centurion, he heals with a touch.

16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with *his* word,--Yet that evening, our attention is brought again to his word.

and healed all that were sick: 17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare *our* sicknesses.--This reference to Isa 53:4 (KJV "bore our griefs הלי and carried our sorrows מכאב") is the sixth of Matthew's twelve

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references to our Lord's fulfillment of OT prophecies.¹⁰

We are accustomed to understand Isaiah to speak of guilt, not physical illness, as the LXX suggests ("he bears our sins and is pained for us"). But Isaiah's Hebrew terms can describe physical as well as spiritual illness. The first one in particular is almost always used of sickness, as the KJV's broader usage makes clear (chart, Figure 5). Matthew, who deviates from the LXX at this point, plainly understands the promise to encompass sickness.

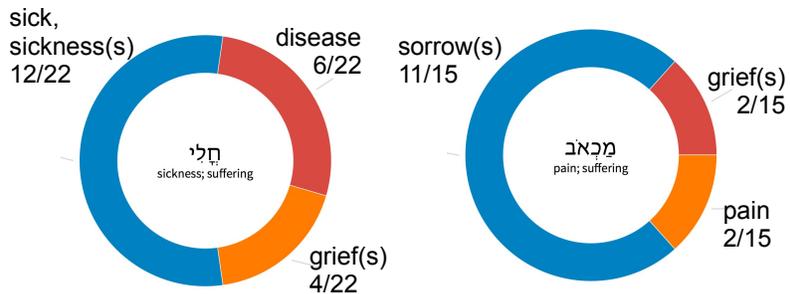


Figure 5: KJV translations of חָלִי and מַכָּאֵב ("griefs," "sorrows" in Isa 53:4)

Our Savior cautioned us not to assume that an individual's sickness is punishment for that individual's sins (chart):

Joh 9:1 And as *Jesus* passed by, he saw a man which was blind from *his* birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? 3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

But more generally, sickness is a consequence of sin. It was by Adam that "sin entered into the world, and death by sin" (Rom 5:12); before sin, there was no death, and no sickness that might lead to death. By the same token, in the new heavens and new earth,

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

In bearing our sins, our Lord laid the foundation for removing physical illness from the world, and his healing miracles anticipate that complete deliverance. In addition, healings did impose a burden on the Lord, something that Luke expresses in two contexts: in the plain before the Sermon, and when the woman with the flow touched him (chart).

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

Luk 8:46 And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that **virtue** **δυναμις** is gone out of me.

The word translated "virtue" in these verses is **δυναμις** "power, strength." Our Savior bore a burden when he healed people. His body gave up strength to restore strength to others, just as he

¹⁰ My count excludes 13:54; 26:54, which are clearly on the lips of our Lord rather than the narrator., but includes 26:56. See footnote 10 and longer endnote on Matthew 1.

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bore our sin to relieve us of sin. As Isaiah prophesied, he bore their sicknesses.

So our Lord's passion makes healing possible, as Isaiah teaches, and as David anticipated:

Psa 103:3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

From Matt 8:17, some people claim that believers should never be ill, and healing should be available on demand. The rest of the NT warns against such a conclusion. Paul asked three times to be healed from his thorn in the flesh, but it was not removed (chart). He describes it as an "infirmity" ἀσθενεία, the same word used in Matt 8:17 to describe what the Lord bore for us.

2Co 12:7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 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. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in **infirmities**, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

When he reports the healing of Epaphroditus, it is not as a matter of fact, to be expected because of the Lord's passion, but as an extraordinary blessing:

Phi 2:27 For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

God does sometimes heal now, in response to our prayers and on the grounds of his Son's work. But we should not presume on this blessing. Carson puts it well, in his comment on Matt 8:17:

This text and others clearly teach that there is healing in the atonement; but similarly there is the promise of a resurrection body in the atonement, even if believers do not inherit it until the Parousia.

8:18-22, Discipleship

This brief episode interrupts the chain of miracles to remind us of the overarching theme of discipleship. It also introduces the important title "son of Man" for the first time.

The Withdrawal and Challenges to Discipleship

18 Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side.--The Lord frequently draws apart from the multitudes. Here, he seeks solitude after a busy evening of healing. At the end of ch. 4, we suggested that the Sermon on the Mount happened on a mountain to escape the crowds, though they followed him (chart):

Mat 4:25 And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, and *from* Jerusalem, and *from* Judaea, and *from* beyond Jordan. 5:1 And seeing

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the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: 2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them,

He also drew apart with the Twelve after they returned from their mission:

Mar 6:30 And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. 31 And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. 32 And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

Again the crowds followed them, and he responded by once again sending the disciples away and seeking solitude with his Father:

Mat 14:22 And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away. 23 And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray:

There is a lesson here for us. The modern world tempts us to devote all of our effort to work, but we need time to draw apart and be with the Lord.

Next Matthew inserts two interviews with people who are interested in following the Lord. These probably occurred much later, as their location in Luke 9:57-60 suggests. But Matthew provides further details: the descriptions of the people themselves, and how they address the Lord. It is worthwhile to compare these individuals (chart, Table 4):

Contrast the titles used by these two people. The scribe addresses him as “master,” that is, “teacher,” which is how a scribe would characterize the Lord. The disciple addresses him as “Lord,” which may be a recognition of his authority. Both titles are appropriate:

| | 8:19-20 | 8:21-22 |
|-------------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Description of the person | Scribe | Disciple |
| How he addresses Jesus | Master (teacher) | Lord |
| Expression of interest | Enthusiasm | Deferral |
| Nature of the Lord's response | Discouragement | Encouragement |

Table 4: The Two Candidates

Joh 13:13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for *so* I am.

But both are important, and taking one to the exclusion of the other can lead to problems.

19 And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.--From the Lord's perspective, the withdrawal was necessary to escape the press of the crowds. But from the perspective of those in the crowd, it defined the disciples as the “in group,” who got to stay with the Master, and some groupies naturally want to go along.

Among these is a scribe, a member of a group that does not usually come off well in Matthew. We don't know whether in fact he persisted in following the Lord after the next verse, but the Lord's response shows caution. Gill hypothesizes:

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he, seeing the miracles which Christ wrought, and observing the fame of him among the people, began to think that he would be generally received as the Messiah; and by joining himself to him, promised himself much ease, honour, and wealth.

As a scribe, he may have recognized the alignment between the Lord's healing actions and the OT prophecies, and seeks to "jump on the bandwagon."

The scribe takes the initiative in seeking the Lord out. This is not wrong in itself: Andrew and John took the initiative in coming to the Lord (chart):

Joh 1:35 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! 37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38 Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? 39 He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

But this was an exploration; they did not "follow him whithersoever" until he later called them by the Sea of Galilee.

We should be careful about rushing ahead of the Lord. The driving principle must be:

Joh 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

We should be confident of his guidance, and when others come to us full of enthusiasm, we must be careful to assess their motives.

20 And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.--He challenges the scribe with the practical implications of his desire. The Lord had no settled abode. In fact, that may be why he seeks to withdraw to the other side—he cannot go home to rest, so he must withdraw to the wilderness.

His challenge probably reflects the warning of 7:15ff about false prophets. We are sometimes so eager for the approval of men that we welcome those who come to us without examining their true motives. The Lord is more cautious.

But if there is a danger in being overwhelmed by superficial enthusiasm, there is the opposite danger of being too reticent. The next episode shows this risk in the case of someone who is already recognized as one of the Lord's disciples.

21 And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.--It would be a great dishonor not to provide the last rites for a family member. It is not clear whether the man's father has already died (in which case his presence with the Lord here is already a sign of unusual devotion, though his question betrays doubts), or whether he is asking leave to stay at home until his father dies, as Abram did with Terah (chart):

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Acts 27:2 The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, 3 And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. 4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.

But in either case, he is putting his family responsibilities ahead of the Lord’s claims on him.

22 But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.--This man already bears the name of “disciple.” The Lord reminds him of the commitment that this position entails. Later, he will make this requirement explicit:

Luk 14:26 If any *man* come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

So in these two individuals, the Lord warns us against two errors of discipleship: premature enthusiasm, and distraction by the cares of the world.

The Title “Son of Man”

v. 20 is the first time in the NT that our Lord calls himself the “Son of Man.” This is his favorite title for himself, appearing more than 80 times in the gospels (most often in Matthew). Figure 6 (chart) shows the distribution of the term. It appears mostly in the wisdom literature, the book of Ezekiel, and the gospels, and is rare elsewhere.

To understand this title, we consider first the general nature of the idiom “son of X” in the OT. Then we look at some noteworthy instances that suggest the term has messianic overtones. Perhaps the most important observation is that just as the term is used only of Jesus in the NT, in the OT it overwhelmingly describes the prophet Ezekiel, suggesting a relation between them. Finally, we’ll ask why the Lord uses the expression in 8:20.

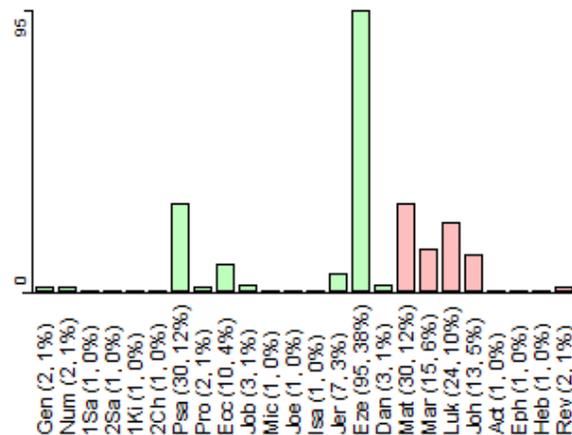


Figure 6: υιος (του) ανθρωπου in the Greek Bible

Son of X

The expression “son of X” is commonly used in Hebrew to indicate someone with the characteristics of X (chart).

Jon 4:10 Then said the LORD, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast

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not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and **perished in a night** [was the son of a night]:

1Sa 10:27 But the **children of Belial** [worthlessness] said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace.

2Sa 1:4 And David said unto him, How went the matter? I pray thee, tell me. And he answered, That the people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are fallen and dead; and Saul and Jonathan his son are **dead** [sons of death] also.

So “son of man” would be somebody who is prototypically man. This appears to be the sense in which the expression is used in its first occurrence in the Bible:

Num 23:19 God *is* not a man אִישׁ, that he should lie; neither the son of man בֶּן־אָדָם, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do *it*? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

Moses’ point is to distinguish God as God from man with his human limitations. There are about ten other instances of this usage in the OT (see notes).

This meaning of “a typical man” leads to the term’s use in Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job, as they grapple with the practical challenges of the human condition.

It is worth noting that of the four words often translated “man” in the OT (אָדָם, אִישׁ, אַנּוּשֶׁ, גִּבּוֹר), the Greek expression used by our Lord comes almost entirely from בֶּן־אָדָם.¹¹ This word for “man” is identical with the proper name “Adam.” The Hebrew form appears about 520 times in the OT, 20 of which our version translates “Adam.” The sense “son of Adam” lends depth to the notion of “typical man, everyman” that the idiom suggests, and makes the title all the more appropriate for our Lord, who came as “the last Adam” (1 Cor 15:45), the “one man” who by his righteousness restored what “one man” destroyed by his sin (Rom 5:15-21).

Noteworthy Instances of בֶּן־אָדָם

Most of the instances in the Psalms simply characterize the human condition. But at least twice, the expression has Messianic associations.

Psa 8:4 What is man אָנוּשׁ, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

Like similar parallel pairs noted above, this emphasizes the lowliness of man. Yet the Psalmist goes on to say that God has put all things under man’s feet, alluding no doubt to Gen 1. As the writer to the Hebrews observes (2:8, 9), an honest glance at the chaotic world around us shows that this can hardly be a reference to man generically, and the same unruly world that leads to his skepticism must have been obvious to David.

¹¹ See notes for details. בֶּן־גִּבּוֹר appears only as a proper name. בֶּן־אָנוּשׁ appears only once, translated ὁ ἀνθρώπος. אִישׁ appears 13x, 9x as a gentile or specific individual and 4x in the generic sense. These four instances, and one of the gentilics, are ὁ ἀνθρώπος, while the others are ὁ ἀνδρὸς or something else.

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Psa 80:17 Let thy hand be upon the man *שׂא* of thy right hand, upon the son of man *whom* thou madest strong for thyself.

Asaph is bemoaning the sad state of the people, and praying for the Lord to deliver and restore them. Clearly his reference here is to a ruler who will be able to bring about such a restoration.

This title is entirely appropriate for the Messiah. Throughout, he is to be the perfect man, but man none the less, who will exercise successfully the dominion over creation (Gen 1:28) that Adam abdicated by sin. If he is to be king over his people, he must be one of them:

Deu 17:15 Thou shalt in any wise set *him* king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: *one* from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which *is* not thy brother.

If he is to redeem his people, he must be their kinsman:

Lev 25:48 After that he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him: 49 Either his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, or *any* that is nigh of kin unto him of his family may redeem him;

There remain 93 instances in Ezekiel, one in Daniel (8:17), and the Aramaic parallel בר אנוש in Dan 7:13 (translated *σὺς ἀνθρώπου*, like all the instances of the Hebrew). Here are the examples in Daniel (chart). The first is clearly a Messianic vision, and our Lord alludes to it (chart).

Dan 7:13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the **Son of man** came **with the clouds of heaven**, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and **glory**, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed.

Mat 24:30 And then shall appear the sign of the **Son of man** in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man **coming in the clouds of heaven** with power and **great glory**.

Mat 26:64 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the **Son of man** sitting on the right hand of power, and **coming in the clouds of heaven**.

The other instance refers to Daniel himself:

Dan 8:17 So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, **O son of man**: for at the time of the end *shall be* the vision.

Because Daniel and Ezekiel were contemporaries in Babylon, and Ezekiel knows of Daniel (14:14, 20), we should consider them together. Daniel went into captivity before Ezekiel (606 BC vs. 597 BC), but both of Daniel's "son of man" passages are during the reign of Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, while Ezekiel's ministry (and the use of the title to describe him) is

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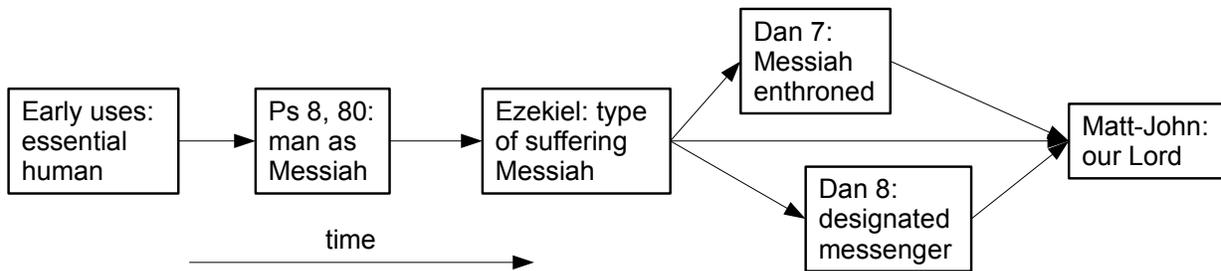
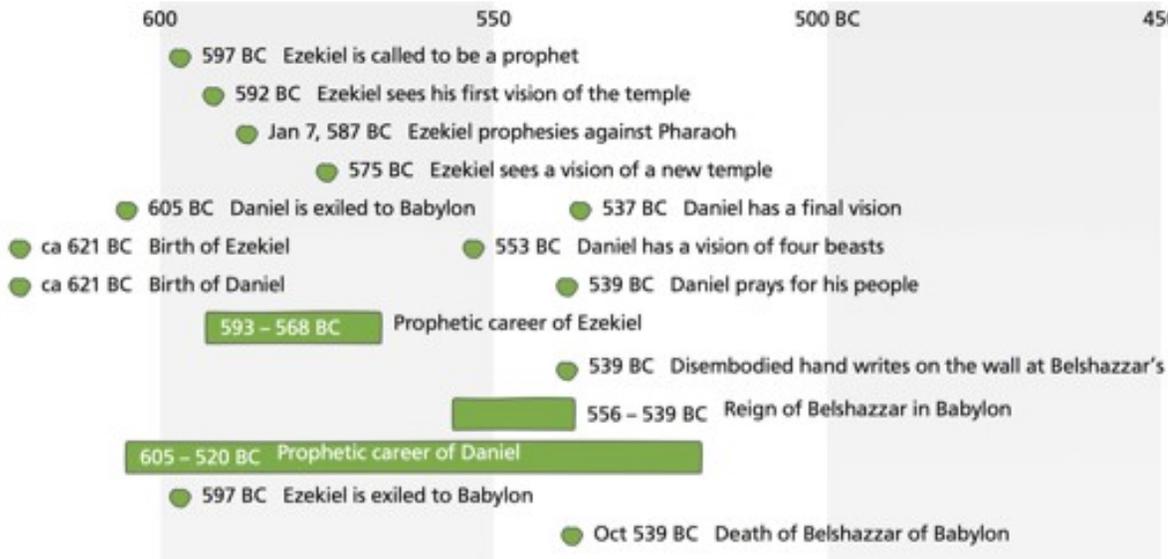


Figure 7: Development of the "Son of Man" Title

much earlier, during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. So the uses in Daniel are later than those in Ezekiel (chart, Error: Reference source not found).¹² The prominence of the title in Ezekiel suggests that its use in Daniel, and subsequently our Lord's adoption of it, are dependent on Ezekiel.

Ezekiel and the Lord Jesus

To one who knows the OT, the title "Son of Man" inescapably recalls Ezekiel, and our Lord's choice of this title suggests that we look to parallels with Ezekiel for a clue to what he understands. So what does Ezekiel have in common with our Lord? Why would the Lord choose Ezekiel's title to describe himself?¹³ To answer this question, let's consider several striking characteristics of Ezekiel that apply also to our Lord.

¹² See Error: Reference source not found for a revised analysis of the development. I now believe that the main point of Dan 7 is the humanity of the Messiah, in contrast with the four beasts. 7:14 is "a son of man," not (AV) "the son of man."

¹³ For some of these parallels see C.H. Bullock, "Ezekiel, Bridge Between the Testaments." JETS 25:1 (March 1982) 23-31, online at http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/25/25-1/25-1-pp023-031_JETS.pdf

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| | | |
|---------------------|---|--|
| Time | Eze 1:1 Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth <i>month</i> , in the fifth <i>day</i> of the month, | Luk 3:23 And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, |
| Location by a river | Eze 1:1 as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, | Mat 3:13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. |
| Heavens opened | Eze 1:1 <i>that</i> the heavens were opened, | Mat 3:16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, ... |
| Visions of God | and I saw visions of God. | ... and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: |

Table 5: Comparing the calls of Ezekiel and the Lord Jesus

He is called by a river, with heavens open and a vision of God

There are striking similarities between the calls of Ezekiel and of our Lord (chart, Table 5). In particular, Ezek 1:1 is the first time in the Bible that the heavens are said to be opened, and Matt 3:16 is the second.¹⁴ These similarities may have drawn the Lord’s attention to Ezekiel and encouraged him to adopt the title that God gave Ezekiel.

He is among his people in their exile

The only other individuals called “son of man” in the Bible, Daniel (8:17) and Ezekiel, were the only prophets to the exiles who were themselves exiles (chart, Table 6). Jeremiah is their contemporary, but he is in Israel and when he ministers to the captives, he does so by letter (ch. 29).

| | Location | Audience |
|----------------|-----------|----------|
| Jeremiah | Jerusalem | Jews |
| Ezekiel | Babylon | |
| Daniel | | Gentiles |

Table 6: Prophets of the Captivity

Daniel speaks mostly to Gentile kings, some of whom pay attention; Ezekiel ministers among the captives themselves, who largely reject him. When he is called, the Lord tells him,

Eze 3:4 And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them. 5 For thou *art* not sent to a people of a strange speech and of an hard language, *but* to the house of Israel; 6 Not to many people of a strange speech and of an hard language, whose words thou canst not understand. Surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee. 7 But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel *are* impudent and hardhearted.

He anticipates our Lord, who came among his people in their misery to minister to them. As “son of man” he can be “touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Heb 4:15).

¹⁴ See notes for later examples.

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He is divinely designated as Son of Man

In Ezekiel, the title is always vocative.¹⁵ For example (chart),

Eze 2:1 And he said unto me, **Son of man**, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee.

Eze 2:3 And he said unto me, **Son of man**, I send thee to the children of Israel,

Eze 2:6 And thou, **son of man**, be not afraid of them,

Eze 2:8 But thou, **son of man**, hear what I say unto thee;

This is what God calls him. Many others were “son of man” in the sense of being human, but God singled out Ezekiel as the specific human through whom he would minister to his people.

The only other vocative instance of υιος ανθρωπου in the Greek Bible is Dan 8:17.

Dan 8:16 And I heard a man's voice between *the banks of Ulai*, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this *man* to understand the vision. 17 So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, **O son of man**: for at the time of the end *shall be* the vision.

Why does Gabriel give Daniel this name? Two points of connection are worth noting.

First, this vision takes place in the 3rd year of Belshazzar (8:1), 550 BC.¹⁶ Ezekiel’s last vision was in the 25th year of the captivity (40:1), or about 572 BC, 22 years earlier. It may be that Ezekiel has passed away, and Daniel now takes his place as God’s spokesman to the exiles.

We consider the second connection in the next similarity, about zeal for the sanctuary.

In the gospels, the title is always a self-description by the Lord Jesus. Our Lord is the prototypical man as the last Adam (1 Cor 15:45). Thus this title reflects his consciousness of the incarnation, of being the man uniquely chosen and set apart by the Father.

He focuses on God’s sanctuary

The backbone of the book of Ezekiel is three “visions of God” (1:1-3:15; ch. 8-11; ch. 40-48; chart, Figure 8). Each vision concerns the Temple.

In ch. 1-3, he sees the glory of the Lord on his throne-chariot (chart). This

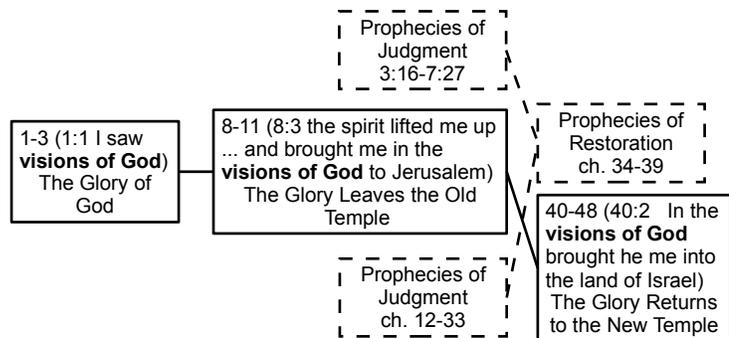


Figure 8: Ezekiel and God's Sanctuary

15 Some writers note that Ezekiel is called simply “son of man,” but our Lord, “the son of man.” The difference is because the Ezekiel instances are vocatives, which are always anarthrous. Robertson p 465 cites Moulton p. 70 for the article with the vocative, but Moulton is talking about the use of the arthrous *nominative* for direct address. Bibleworks shows no instances of the article followed by the vocative in BGM.

16 Following Wikipedia’s dating of the coregency with Nabonidus in 553 BC.

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appears to be the reality that the ark of the covenant is meant to represent, but Ezekiel first sees it outside of the temple, in captivity in Babylon where it has come to visit God's people (chart).

Eze 1:4 And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness *was* about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire. 5 Also out of the midst thereof *came* the likeness of four living creatures. ... 22 And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature *was* as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above. ... 25 And there was a voice from the firmament that *was* over their heads, when they stood, *and* had let down their wings. 26 And above the firmament that *was* over their heads *was* the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne *was* the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. ... 28 As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so *was* the appearance of the brightness round about. This *was* the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD.

This section ends with a declaration that echoes above the sound of the wings of the cherubim,

Eze 3:12 Then the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, *saying*, Blessed *be* the glory of the LORD from his place.

The last clause is confusing, but the Hebrew can be rendered, "The glory of the Lord is more blessed **than** its place." That is, the glory of the Lord is more important than the temple.

Ezekiel must have been puzzled by this vision. Why would the glory of the Lord be in Babylon, rather than in the temple? The answer comes in the next vision (ch. 8-11). The Lord takes Ezekiel back to Jerusalem, where he sees abominations within the temple itself. He leads him successively inward (chart, Figure 9), in each case taking him to a new **location**, showing him an **abomination**, and calling on him to **observe**:

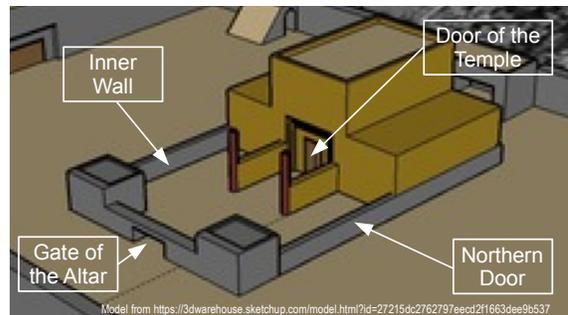


Figure 9: Abominations in the Temple

Eze 8:5 behold northward at **the gate of the altar** this **image of jealousy** in the entry. 6 He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? *even* the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? but turn thee yet again, *and* **thou shalt see greater abominations**. ... 10 So I went in and saw; and behold **every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols** of the house of Israel, pourtrayed **upon the wall** round about. ... 13 He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, *and* **thou shalt see greater abominations** that they do. 14 Then he brought me to the **door of the gate of the LORD'S house which was toward the north**; and, behold, there sat women **weeping for Tammuz**. 15 Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen *this*, O son of man? turn thee yet again, *and* **thou shalt see greater abominations** than these. 16

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And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD'S house, and, behold, **at the door of the temple of the LORD**, between the porch and the altar, *were* about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they **worshipped the sun** toward the east. 17 Then he said unto me, **Hast thou seen this, O son of man?**

Then, in the climax of this section, the divine glory leaves the temple, moving outward from the holy of holies (chart, Figure 10).

First the glory leaves the cherub (singular) of the physical ark and moves to the threshold:

Eze 10:4 Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, *and stood* over the threshold of the house;

Next it mounts the chariot, which carries it to the east gate and pauses:

Eze 10:18 Then the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims. 19 And the cherubims lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight: ... and *every one* stood at the door of the east gate of the LORD'S house; and the glory of the God of Israel *was* over them above.

Then the chariot, with the glory, moves to the Mount of Olives:

Eze 11:22-23 Then did the cherubims lift up their wings, ... and the glory of the God of Israel *was* over them above. 23 And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which *is* on the east side of the city.

From there it moves to Babylon, where Ezekiel has already seen it in ch. 1.

In the final vision, the Lord shows him the temple that the Jews are to build upon their return. Chapters 40-42 contain detailed instructions, including measurements. Then ch. 43 promises the return of God's glory to this new temple, and instructs the Jews to build it (chart):

Eze 43:1 Afterward he brought me to the gate, *even* the gate that looketh toward the east: 2 And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice *was* like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory. 3 And *it was* according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, *even* according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city: and the visions *were* like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face. 4 And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect *is* toward the east. 5 So the spirit took me up, and

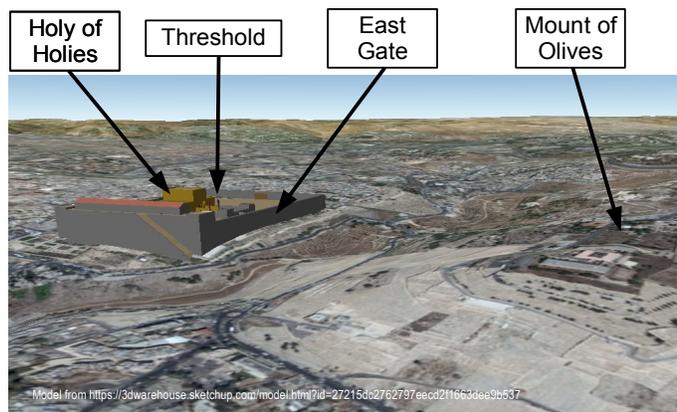


Figure 10: The Departure of the Glory of the Lord

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brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house. ...
10 Thou son of man, shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern. 11 And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write *it* in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.

Our Savior also reveals the corruption of the temple and cleanses it (chart). At the very beginning of his ministry, before he settles down in Capernaum,¹⁷ the Lord visits the temple, rebukes its abominations, and promises to restore a newer and greater temple, his body:

Joh 2:14 [Jesus] found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: 15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; 16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. 17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up [Psa 69:9].

At the end of his ministry he returns to the temple, having entered it over the Mount of Olives (retracing the steps of the departing Glory of the Lord), and cleanses it again:

Mat 21:12 And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, 13 And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer [Isa 56:7]; but ye have made it a den of thieves [Jer 7:11].

Both of these episodes are marked with Scripture citations showing that this zeal for the temple was associated with the Messianic expectation.

His repeated criticism of the “scribes and pharisees, hypocrites” (ch. 23) probes the sources of this corruption. After rebuking them, he, like the glory of the Lord in Ezekiel 10-11, leaves the temple:

Mat 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not! 38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. 39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord. 24:1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple:

And in the Olivet Discourse he warns of “the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet,” that will “stand in the holy place” (24:15).

¹⁷ See notes to Matt. 4. John appears to be chronological, and places the cleansing of the temple before our Lord's baptizing work in John 3, which happened while John was still active. The Lord moves to Capernaum (Matt 4:12) only after John is put in prison.

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The book of Hebrews makes a great deal of our Lord's ministry in the heavenly tabernacle, "which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Heb 8:2).

So our Lord shares Ezekiel's emphasis on the purity of God's sanctuary, another reason for him to choose Ezekiel's title as "son of man."

During this age, God's sanctuary is the church. If we would be like the Son of Man, we should treasure its purity and desire above all else to be among God's people.

The emphasis on the sanctuary may be a second reason that Daniel shares Ezekiel's name, in 8:17 (chart). In that chapter, the Lord predicts the desolation of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes (the vision of the he-goat, Alexander the Great, with four horns, one of which, representing the Seleucids, sprouts the little horn), and its subsequent restoration under the Maccabees:

Dan 8:1 In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar [550 BC] a vision appeared unto me, ... 11 Yea, he magnified *himself* even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily *sacrifice* was taken away, and the place of his **sanctuary** was cast down. ... 13 Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain *saint* which spake, How long *shall be* the vision *concerning* the daily *sacrifice*, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the **sanctuary** and the host to be trodden under foot? 14 And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the **sanctuary** be cleansed. ... 16 And I heard a man's voice between *the banks of Ulai*, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this *man* to understand the vision. 17 So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, **O son of man**: for at the time of the end *shall be* the vision.

This chapter is the first place in Daniel that we encounter two words for "sanctuary," 8:11 מקדש and קדש 8:13, 14. These two words are favorites of Ezekiel, who uses 11% of the instances of קדש and 41% of the instances of מקדש in the entire OT.

The vision of ch. 8 sets the stage for Daniel's prayer for the restoration of the temple in ch. 9.

Dan 9:1 In the first year of Darius [538 BC] the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, ... 2 ... I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. ... 3 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: ...16 O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people *are become* a reproach to all *that are* about us. 17 Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy **sanctuary** that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.

Dan 9:26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the

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sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

From Ezekiel, through Daniel, and down to our Lord, the Son of Man represents man before God and God before man. He thus has a special interest in the purity of the sanctuary where God dwells among his people, its defilement, and its restoration.

He teaches in parables

Ezekiel uses parables more frequently than other prophets, including the enactment of the siege of Jerusalem (ch. 4), the useless vine (ch. 15), the lofty cedar (ch. 17, ch. 31), the boiling pot (ch. 24), the shepherds (ch. 34), and the valley of dry bones (ch. 37). Even the word “parable” appears more often in Ezekiel than in any other OT book (chart, Figure 11). Apparently he was known for this tendency:

Eze 20:49 Then said I, Ah Lord GOD! they say of me, Doth he not speak parables?

Our Lord made extensive use of parables in his teaching:

Mat 13:3 And he spake many things unto them in parables,

Did he do so in part because he was following the example of Ezekiel?

He bears the iniquity of his people

The expression “to bear sin” or “to bear iniquity” takes an interesting range of subjects in the Bible, including both Ezekiel and our Lord. To understand the implications of this description, let’s consider the four things that can “bear sin.”¹⁸

First, and most naturally, the sinner bears sin. Sin, or guilt, is a burden that we carry when we break God’s law (chart).

Lev 5:17 And if a soul sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the LORD; though he wist *it* not, **yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity.**

Second, God’s law provided that a sacrifice could bear the sin in place of the sinner. The most vivid example is the scapegoat on the day of atonement:

Lev 16:21 And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess

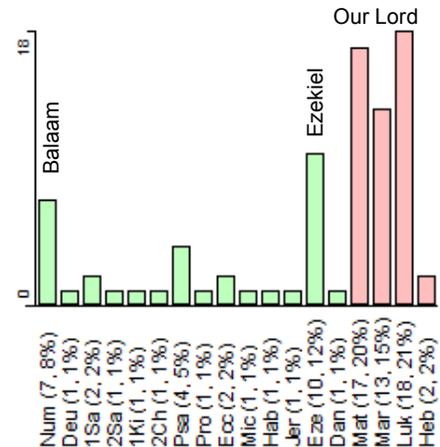


Figure 11: παραβολή in the Greek Bible

¹⁸ “Thus we find it applied—(1) to the sinner; (2) to the sacrifice; (3) to the priest; and (4) to God Himself.” Smeaton, G. (1871). *The doctrine of the atonement, as taught by Christ Himself* (Second Edition., p. 104). Edinburgh: T&T Clark.

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over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send *him* away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: 22 And the goat shall **bear upon him all their iniquities** unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.

This is a natural extension of the application to the sinner. If he is to be relieved of his burden, it must be transferred to a substitute, and that transfer lies at the heart of the Jewish sacrificial ritual.

Third, the priests and Levites are said to bear the sin of the people (chart):

[Moses to Eleazar and Ithamar:] Lev 10:17 Wherefore have ye not eaten the sin offering in the holy place, seeing it *is* most holy, and *God* hath given it you **to bear the iniquity of the congregation**, to make atonement for them before the LORD?

Num 18:23 But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and **they shall bear their iniquity**: *it shall be* a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance.

Exo 28:36-38 And thou shalt make a plate *of* pure gold, and grave upon it, *like* the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. ... 38 And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may **bear the iniquity of the holy things**, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD.

By itself, the death of an animal cannot satisfy God's claim. Someone needs to represent the sinner before God, and that is the role of the priest. He bears the burden of the sinner's sin in this labor. Even the non-priestly Levites, in caring for the sanctuary, share in this ministry of allowing a holy people to come before God.

Finally, and strikingly, God himself is said to bear sin. We tend to miss this unity of thought in the OT because English versions generally translate the word, in this context, as "forgive." For instance (chart), God describes himself to Moses as

Exo 34:7 Keeping mercy for thousands, **forgiving** iniquity and transgression and sin,

This must have been a mystery to OT readers, but in the light of the gospel we can perfectly well understand what God is saying. The only way a holy God can forgive the sin of his people is by carrying that burden himself, and this is what our Lord did when he died for us and rose again.

Ezekiel is a priest:

Eze 1:3 The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest,

Like every priest, while he was in Jerusalem ministering at the temple, he bore the sin of the people. But now he is in exile, far from the polluted temple that is about to be destroyed. Still, God assigns him a symbolic action by which he will continue to be the sin-bearer:

Eze 4:1 Thou also, son of man, take thee a tile, and lay it before thee, and pourtray upon

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it the city, *even* Jerusalem: 2 And lay siege against it, and build a fort against it, and cast a mount against it; set the camp also against it, and set *battering* rams against it round about. 3 Moreover take thou unto thee an iron pan, and set it *for* a wall of iron between thee and the city: and set thy face against it, and it shall be besieged, and thou shalt lay siege against it. This *shall be* a sign to the house of Israel. 4 Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: *according* to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it **thou shalt bear their iniquity**. 5 For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days: **so shalt thou bear the iniquity** of the house of Israel. 6 And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and **thou shalt bear the iniquity** of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year. 7 Therefore thou shalt set thy face toward the siege of Jerusalem, and thine arm *shall be* uncovered, and thou shalt prophesy against it.

Like all the priests, he was typical of our Lord in this ministry, as Isaiah makes clear.¹⁹

Isa 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the **LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all**. . . . 12 he was numbered with the transgressors; and **he bare the sin of many**, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Of the four individuals who could bear sin, our Lord fulfills three of them. He was not a sinner, but he was the sacrifice that receives the wrath of God, the priest who presents that sacrifice to God, and God himself who ultimately bears the burden of his people's sin.

The title "son of man" is appropriate for this ministry because the redeemer must be a kinsman.

Use of the Title in Matt 8:20

So we have seen that the application of the title to our Lord is the culmination of a careful development in its meaning throughout the OT (chart, Figure 12).²⁰ The one passage we have not discussed in detail is

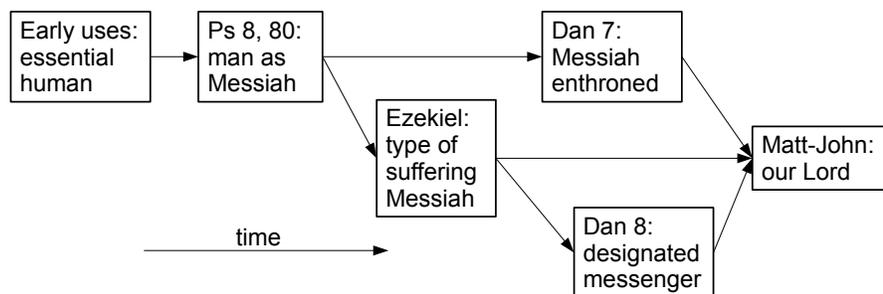


Figure 12: Development of the Title "Son of Man"

¹⁹ In fact, at least one scholar has suggested that Isa 53 is prophetic of Ezekiel: Richard Kraetzschmar, *Das Buch Ezechiel*. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1900, p. 46. <http://books.google.com/books?id=eLmlaopuXSIC&oe=UTF-8>

²⁰ Note the shift in this diagram from the earlier version in which I suggested that Dan 7:13 developed from Ezekiel. Though the KJV reads "the Son of Man," the Aramaic lacks the article. The point appears to be the contrast between the beasts of the first part of the chapter and the appearance of a man to have dominion over them, recalling Genesis 1.

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Dan 7:13-14, in which Daniel sees “one like a son of man” (not “the Son of Man”) come before the Ancient of Days to receive “dominion, and glory, and a kingdom.” In the context, this expression emphasizes the humanity of the one who receives dominion, in contrast to the wild beasts (Aramaic “living things”) representing the nations who are described earlier in the chapter. Messiah’s subjection of the earth is thus presented as the fulfillment of the promise of Gen 1:28 that man would have dominion over “every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”

Our Lord’s first use of the title in 8:20 thus emphasizes his role as the incarnate Messiah. In spite of his specific designation by the Father and the importance of his redeeming and kingly work, he has no place to lay his head. He truly is a man among men. At the same time, this claim to be human sets us up for the evidence in the next three miracles that he is also the son of God.

8:23-9:8, Second Triad

These three episodes have two themes not present in the first three. In each we will see the response of those who observed the miracle, and in each case the response presents us with evidence for his deity (in the central miracle, including the title, “Son of God”).

8:23-27, *Calming of the Sea*

The first miracle is the only one of the nine episodes that is not a healing. It demonstrates the Lord’s broader authority over nature.

23 And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.--He takes the lead, though they are the sailors.

24 And, behold,--The particle urges us to pay particular attention to something surprising, unexpected, or impressive. What is impressive in this case? Matthew relates two details.

there arose a great tempest in the sea,--“Tempest” translates *σεισμος*, which is the usual term for “earthquake.” This was not an ordinary storm, but an extraordinary upheaval. No doubt it is an attempt by Satan to destroy the redeemer before he can complete his work, just as Satan tried to destroy him in as a child, at the hand of Herod.

The disciples had never seen such a storm—perhaps because they had never had Christ with them in the boat in the midst of the sea. Often we as believers face severe problems, because Christ is in us, and the adversary is seeking to hinder his work. No one ever had such trials as did Job, because no one ever manifested the presence of the Lord as Job did. So when we face such difficulties, rather than despairing, we should rejoice that our efforts for the Lord merit the adversary’s attention! Like the apostles, beaten by the Sanhedrin for their preaching,

Act 5:41 they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves:--The first detail that demands our attention is that such a mishap should befall this Person who has just been demonstrating his

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sovereign power over the forces of nature in illness. Why would God let such a dreadful thing happen to him?

but he was asleep.--The second detail is the Lord's calm response: he is asleep!

Trench notes the superficial similarity and very deep contrast with Jonah, who also slept through a storm on a boat.

- Both could sleep without fear, but for very different reasons: Jonah, because his conscience was dead; our Lord, because his was pure.
- Jonah's presence was the cause of the storm, and endangered the sailors; our Savior's presence delivered them from it.

25 And his disciples came to *him*, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.--They have never seen a storm like this, and are terrified.

His response has two parts. First he deals with them, and then with the storm. The order shows which he thought was the more serious problem.

26 And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?--The biggest problem was not the storm. It was the lack of faith on the part of the disciples that the storm uncovered.

“O ye of little faith” ολιγοπιστος, -οι appears only five times in the Bible, four in Matthew and once in a parallel passage in Luke (chart).

[in the Sermon on the Mount:] Mat 6:30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, **O ye of little faith?** [Luke 12:28 is a repetition of this statement]

[our passage:] Matt 8:26 And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, **O ye of little faith?**

[when Peter tried to walk on the water:] Mat 14:31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, **O thou of little faith**, wherefore didst thou doubt?

[when the disciples were worried that they forgotten to pack a lunch:] Mat 16:8 *Which* when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, **O ye of little faith**, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?

Our Lord uses the term to rebuke the disciples for lack of faith concerning two things:

- physical provision (clothing in Matt 6:20 and the parallel in Luke 12:28; food in Matt 16:8)
- protection in danger (in both cases, on the sea of Galilee, the disciples in our passage, and Peter after the feeding of the 5000 in 14:31)

We should pay close and sober attention to our Lord's rebuke. Indeed, we are too often “of little faith,” particularly regarding our concrete needs of food and clothing, and protection from harm. We should particularly note his rebuke in 16:8. Their lack of food was the result of their own

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forgetfulness, yet even there he tells them to trust in the Father's care.

Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.--Only after dealing with the major problem of their lack of faith does he even get up from his resting position, and then deal with the comparatively minor issue of the storm.

27 But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!--They do well to be amazed. The ability to command the raging ocean is throughout Scripture the prerogative of deity. By his word, God originally divided the dry land from the seas (chart):

Gen 1:9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry *land* appear: and it was so.

Nahum uses the ability to rebuke²¹ the sea as an example of God's power in judgment:

Nah 1:3-4 The LORD ... rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers:

And Ethan sings,

Psa 89:8 O LORD God of hosts, who *is* a strong LORD like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee? 9 Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.

By this miracle, the Lord is preparing them for a confession they will hear when they reach the other side.

8:28-9:1, Healing of the Demoniacs

28 And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes,--The different gospels give different names here, and the Majority Text differs in every case from the Majority Text.

In our text, Matthew refers to the country of the Gergesenes, and Mark and Luke to the country of the Gadarenes. The modern critical text loses Gergesa entirely, makes Matthew refer to the country of the Gadarenes, and Mark and Luke to the country of the Gerasenes. The map (chart, Figure 13) shows the locations of each, and the voyages needed to reach them. Only Gergesa has steep slopes close to the sea, as required by the history (chart, Figure 14), so Matthew probably preserves the name of the closest village, while Mark and Luke, writing for a larger audience, recall the name of a larger



Figure 13: From Capernaum to Gergesa

21 Matthew's word "rebuke" ἐπιτιμασθαι and its derivatives are the largest single group of translations (8/14) of Nahum's גער, though in this place (and only here) the LXX translates with a different word, ἀπειλασθαι.

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and more famous city, and the scribes of the Alexandrine mss could only think of the even larger Gerasa, too remote to fit the story at all. Neglect of the MT leads some modern evangelicals (e.g., Carson, France) to the embarrassing position of asserting that the event actually happened at a location that none of the sources (by their methods) attests!



Figure 14: The "steep place" at Gergesa (from Mendel Nun, "Gergesa: Site of the Demoniac's Healing." *Jerusalem Perspectives* 50 (1996) 20)

there met him two possessed with devils,--
Mark and Luke only

mention one, perhaps the more prominent of the two. Clearly, Matthew is not just copying Mark (as the theory of Markan priority maintains), but has independent knowledge. In fact, he was likely an eyewitness. We already recognize that Matthew has arranged these miracles topically rather than chronologically, and the call of Matthew follows this one (in 9:9-13) because of the structuring of the section as 3+3+3 with discipleship sections in between. In both Mark (ch. 5) and Luke (ch. 8), the demoniac episode follows the calling of the twelve (Mark 3, Luke 6).

coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.--We should not picture them stumbling around the tombstones in a western graveyard. Tombs in the Bible are not holes dug in the ground, but caves hewn in the rock (chart, Figure 15). In addition, they tend to be out the outskirts of town, not (like a traditional churchyard) right in the center. These two features explain the presence of the demoniacs there: they could find shelter from the elements, and were away from the main population (which probably drove them out because of their fierceness).



Figure 15: Cave tombs in Israel
(http://exploringbiblelands.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/IMG_1841.jpg)

29 And, behold, they cried out,

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saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God?--Our Lord has just (8:20) described himself as Son of Man. It is interesting that in Matthew, the first ones to recognize his title as Son of God are not his disciples (that won't come until 14:33), but the forces of darkness. Satan calls him this during the temptation (4:3, 6), and now the demons, upon seeing him, immediately know who he is.

Think of the impact this confession must have had on the disciples! They have just witnessed his divine action of commanding the wind and the waves, and suspect that he is more than just a man. Now they hear superhuman forces acknowledge him as Son of God.

art thou come hither to torment us before the time?--The demons are aware that they ultimately doomed. Some of their associates, who transgressed in the days of Noah, are already being detained, awaiting a future judgment (chart):

Jud 1:6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

Our Lord describes the destiny that is prepared for them:

Mat 25:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

We will one day participate in the judgment of the angels:

1Co 6:3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels?

How miserable the hosts of evil must be! They know that they are doomed; they are trying to produce as much discomfort for God's creation as they can in the time left to them. But ultimately, their work is futile.

30 And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding.--We should not be surprised at the presence of a herd of unclean animals. All three of the names attested for the miracle (Gergesa, Gadara, Gerasa) lie in Decapolis, the region of ten Greek-speaking cities that was independent of the Herods, and thus outside of Jewish culture (chart, Figure 3, page 9).

31 So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out,--Already in 8:16, the Lord cast out demons. Perhaps they have learned from their colleagues in Capernaum that the Messiah has arrived, and what he is doing to them, and they anticipate that they will meet the same fate.

suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.--Perhaps they are afraid that if cast out with no physical body to inhabit, they will have to join the demons of Genesis 6 in confinement.

Contrast their attitude toward him with how they treated other people. 8:28 said that "no man was able ἵκεν to pass by that way," because of their antagonism and threatening, but before the Lord they are completely submissive.

32 And he said unto them, Go.--They have chosen their own fate; he leaves them to it.

And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.--In

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the end, their malevolent influence on the swine leads to the destruction of their abode anyway.

As noted above, even if the Majority Text tradition were not clear in Matt 8:28, this geographical note is decisive in locating the miracle at Gergesa, since that is the only place on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee with a steep hill near the water.

33 And they that kept them fled,--It is interesting that there were other candidates for the demons to invade, presumably more attractive than swine, but they must have known that the Lord would not authorize them to afflict other people.

and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils.--As with the disciples on the boat, this account emphasizes the reaction of those who observe the miracle.

Two noteworthy things took place: the healing of the demoniacs, and the destruction of the pigs. While the “every thing” reported by the swineherds certainly includes the destruction of the pigs, the highlight for them is the deliverance of the demoniacs.

8:33-9:1 resemble the Lord’s interview with the woman at Jacob’s well in John 4 (chart, Table 1).²² Jews viewed both Gergesa and Samaria as unclean, but the Lord offers his message to both of them, with very different results: the people of Gergesa reject the Lord and ask him to leave, while the people of Samaria believe on him and invite him to stay. The people of Gergesa are more concerned about the loss of their swine than the restoration of their afflicted neighbors. The application to us is clear: we are to

| Gergesa, Matt 8-9 | Samaria, John 4 |
|---|---|
| 8:33 And they that kept them fled, | 28 The woman then left her waterpot, |
| and went their ways into the city, | and went her way into the city, |
| and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils. | and saith to the men, 29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? |
| 34 And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: | 30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him. |
| | 31-39 (Doing God’s will; harvest; many believed) |
| and when they saw him, | 40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, |
| they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts. | they besought him that he would tarry with them: |
| 9:1 And he entered into a ship , | and he abode there two days. |
| and passed over, | ... 43 Now after two days he departed thence, |
| and came into his own city. | and went into Galilee. |

Table 7: City reactions in Gergesa and Samaria

²² Chronologically, the episode in Samaria was earlier, taking place while the Lord was on his way to Galilee after the arrest of John (concurrent with Matt 4:12). The strong similarity between the passages suggests a literary dependence, which probably goes in the other direction, since on any of the synoptic theories, John is the last gospel written. John is probably echoing Matthew to show the Lord’s persistence in offering the gospel to the Gentiles, and supplementing Matthew by showing that sometimes the message is received. In any event, the parallel offers strong evidence against the argument of Gardner-Smith, *St. John and the Synoptic Gospels* (Cambridge, 1938) that John does not know the synoptics.

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offer the gospel even to those whom we think unlikely to receive it.

9:1 And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city.--He stayed two days with the Samaritans (John 4:40), but here he follows his own later instruction to his disciples (10:14) to “shake off the dust of your feet” from a city that does not receive the gospel. When people reject the message, we are not to argue with them. Our job is to present the good news. Whether or not they receive it is up to the Lord. Having given them the news, we are to move on.

9:2-8, The Man with the Palsy

This final episode in the central triad (chart, Figure 2, page 2) emphasizes the two common points that run throughout the triad: response of the witnesses, and our Lord’s deity.

- There are two responses in this section: the secret response of the scribes, and the public response of the multitudes.
- All three of the synoptics include this episode, but Matthew’s version has been trimmed down. He eliminates all the details about the teaching in which the Lord was engaged, and the crowd, and the lowering of the man through the roof, to focus directly on the forgiveness and its implications for who he is.

2 And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed:--For the second time, the Lord heals a palsied man (the first being the Centurion’s servant). Again, the miracle brings to mind the prophecy of Isaiah,

Isa 35:5 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.

and Jesus seeing their faith—Jesus “sees” two things in this episode that would be inaccessible to us (chart). The first is the faith of the sick man and those who bore him. The second (obscured by the KJV translation) is the skepticism of the scribes in v. 3.

Heb 4:13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

More deeply, and to the point of the miracles in this section, such ability to see into people’s thoughts is a mark of divine power:

1Sa 16:7 for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer;--Compare this exhortation $\theta\alpha\rho\sigma\epsilon\iota < \theta\alpha\rho\sigma\epsilon\omega$ with the more common “fear not.”²³ The main difference is that “fear not” is meant to blunt the apprehension from some negative event that preoccupies the hearer, while “be of good

23 See the notes for an extensive discussion of these expressions.

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cheer” calls attention to some good outcome that they are overlooking. In this case, the next clause identifies that outcome:

thy sins be forgiven thee.--This is far more than the sick man could have hoped or expected. He simply wanted to walk again. But every person grapples with an inner sense of sin, and the Lord here liberates him from that.

Strictly speaking, the verb is the perfect passive, “Thy sins have been forgiven thee.” The Lord is not removing them, but declaring that they are removed.

3 And, behold, certain of the scribes—The scribes were students of the law. Originally, this was the responsibility of the priests (chart):

Deu 33:8 And of Levi he said, ... 10 **They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law:** they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar.²⁴

In the OT, “scribe” usually refers to an office in the royal court, but there is a hint of its NT meaning of a religious scholar in Ezra:

Ezr 7:11 Now this *is* the copy of the letter that the king Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest, the scribe, **even a scribe of the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of his statutes to Israel.**²⁵

By the NT, they have become a recognized group within the society, mostly allied with the party of the Pharisees (while the priesthood in our Lord’s time was mostly Sadducees).²⁶

We have seen this group twice before in Matthew, both times in a positive light:

Mat 2:4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and **scribes** of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. 5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet,

Mat 8:18 Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side. 19 And a certain **scribe** came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

Yet another positive reference is coming:

Mat 13:52 Then said he unto them, Therefore every **scribe** *which is* instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure *things* new and old.

But there have been tensions:

Mat 5:20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the **scribes** and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

24 Cf. also Lev 10:11; 2 Chr 15:3

25 Also Ezra 7:12, 21; Neh 8:9; 12:26; 36

26 The agreement in 2:4 between the two groups is thus noteworthy.

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Mat 7:29 For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as the **scribes**.

9:3 is the first time we detect animosity on their part, which grows throughout the rest of the book, until by ch. 23 he rebukes them seven times (vv. 13, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29),

Mat 23:14 Woe unto you, **scribes** and Pharisees, hypocrites!

said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.--In fact, according to Mark 2:7 and Luke 5:21, they say even more: "Who can forgive sins but God only?" It might seem that Matthew's omission of this note weakens our interpretation of these three miracles as emphasizing the Lord's deity. But there is another explanation: Matthew's immediate audience consists of Jewish believers, who would not need any explanation of what "blasphemy" means, while Mark and Luke, writing for Gentile audiences, have to include more background. The situation is analogous to the handling of the fornication clause, except that there, accommodating Gentile readers requires omitting the clause, which they would be likely to misunderstand, leaving Matthew with the fuller text.

4 And Jesus knowing their thoughts—Literally, "seeing their thoughts." The expression, ἰδὼν οἱ Ἰησοῦς, is exactly the same as in v. 3, and appears only these two times in Matthew. Some think he saw them whispering to one another. But Mark 2:6 says that they were "reasoning in their hearts." His ability to see their thoughts, and the faith of the petitioners, is evidence of his deity.

said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?--Some came to the Lord with open minds, and were seeking to understand who he was. Not so, these scribes. They are pondering ἐνθυμεομαι about him, and in an accusatory, evil fashion. They are trying to interpret his works as sinful.

5 For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? 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.--This is the second "son of man" statement, and merits our careful attention.

"Power" ἐξουσία is "authority," as in 28:18—not a show of force, (that would be δύναμις, which is used of the miracles, and of his return), but of God's endorsement and authorization.²⁷ God holds the ultimate authority, but the Lord's claim here is that he has authority, not as God, but as the son of man. We might amplify his words: "You are offended that I claim to be able to forgive sins. This is indeed a divine prerogative. But you must recognize that God has authorized me, as his designated representative, to do this work. I do it as the son of man." Thus his use of this title here is consistent with the use of the term by Ezekiel.

This notion that man can authoritatively declare God's forgiveness comes up later in Matthew (chart):

Mat 16:19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

²⁷ See the Notes for some speculation on this term.

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Mat 18:18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

And John records something similar after the resurrection:

Joh 20:22 And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: 23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained.

In all three cases, as here in v. 2, nobody says, “I forgive your sins,” but verb is passive: in Matt 9:2 and John 20:23, in the present tense; in the other cases in Matthew, the perfect. The authority claimed by our Lord as son of man is the authority to tell people clearly and absolutely that God has forgiven their sins, and this same authority we now possess, by virtue of the Holy Spirit.

The scribes’ discomfort does not necessarily mean that they missed the passive voice of the verb. The world views it as presumptuous to assert authoritatively that one’s sins are forgiven. In their view, only God can forgive sin, and only God can know for sure that sin is gone. Only the gospel truth of God’s sovereign and finished work in Christ can give the troubled heart peace—and it can give us peace, as John reminds us:

1Jo 5:13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life,

7 And he arose, and departed to his house.--Thus he gives irrefutable evidence of his healing.

8 But when the multitudes saw *it*, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power *ἐξουσία* unto men.--Our Lord demonstrates the dominion over the earth that Adam forfeited. People were helpless before physical sickness, and the temple rituals could not cleanse their consciences from guilt. The world was controlling them. They were not controlling it. But now there comes into their midst a man who can control the world, both physical and spiritual, and they rejoice. “Men” is a fine translation for the Greek *τοῖς ἀνθρώποις*, which in Matthew is always generic, not particularizing (see Notes). The sense is in keeping with the Lord’s choice of “Son of Man” to associate with his authority to forgive sin. God has made it possible for men to declare God’s forgiveness. There is no reference to a specific group of men (namely, the disciples). The authority is given to men as men, not to the twelve as a specific group.

9:9-17, Discipleship

The center three miracles emphasize the response of the witnesses. The disciples are filled with wonder; the people of Gergesa reject the Lord; and when he heals the paralytic, there is a mixture of rejection (by the scribes) and recognition of divine power (by the multitudes). These varied responses lead naturally to the second discussion of discipleship (chart, Figure 2, page 2).

This discussion has two parts. First, the Lord calls somebody whom most righteous Jews would avoid, a tax collector. Second, two groups of Jews, the Pharisees and the disciples of John, challenge the Lord’s orthodoxy.

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Both discipleship sections emphasize the cost of discipleship. The first section emphasized the *personal cost*: self-deprivation. This second section raises the stakes, and confronts us with the *social cost*: being rejected by others.

9:9, Call of Matthew

9 And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom:--When we discussed the centurion in 8:5-13, we observed that Capernaum was a border town between the territory of Herod Antipas, in which it lay, and two areas outside his jurisdiction most readily reached by boat (chart, Figure 3, page 9). The north-eastern shore was ruled by Philip the Tetrarch, the brother of Antipas, while the south-eastern shore (starting at Gergesa) was the Decapolis, ten Greek cities that were independent of Jewish rule. As the nearest town to the border, Capernaum would have been an important point for the shipment of goods back and forth between Herod's territory and these other two regions, and Matthew was involved in collecting taxes for Herod.²⁸ Mark's account (2:13-14) shows that the toll booth was near the seaside, where Matthew could inspect the cargo of incoming boats.

and he saith unto him, Follow me.--In all three synoptics, the encounter is equally abrupt. The Lord sees Matthew and with no further elaboration, invites him, "Follow me." Certainly, Matthew will have known of this teacher, who has already made Capernaum his base and healed many. We can only imagine how the Spirit has been preparing him, but the Lord perceives that the fruit is ripe, and harvests it with a single word.

And he arose, and followed him.--Matthew, for his part, does not hesitate. The Lord's invitation is all he needs to move him to a decision.

The example of Matthew is important for our outreach. As we live our lives openly as believers, and speak the gospel to all, people will be watching and thinking. Salvation is not the result of our preaching persuasive sermons, but of the Spirit's work in their hearts. When it comes to pressing for a decision, we need to pray for wisdom to discern each person's condition, and then gently present the need to make a choice. When the fruit is ripe, it will fall easily from the tree.

The example of Matthew also bears comparison with the two candidates in the first discipleship section, the scribe²⁹ and one who was thought of as a disciple. Both would appear to be much more likely candidates than a tax collector, and both (unlike Matthew) took the initiative in coming to the Lord, but the Lord discourages them. They are coming to him on their own terms, and the Lord challenges their motives. His response to them is a warning against the modern fascination with "seeker-friendly churches." Our Lord was certainly not "seeker-friendly" toward the scribe and the disciple of 8:18-22.

28 Sherwin-White shows that at this period, Capernaum and the surrounding territory was not under direct Roman rule. The centurion of 8:5-13 would have been part of the Roman force put at Herod's disposal; see France.

29 In my reconstruction of the chronology (see notes), both of these confrontations (Matthew and the scribe) would have happened as the Lord is about to board the boat for the trip to Gerasa, suggesting that the original comparison between the two is driven by their proximity in *time*. Matthew leads us to the comparison by arranging them symmetrically in the *structure* of the passage.

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They were coming on their own terms; Matthew was willing to respond to the Lord's unvarnished command, "Follow me." We must not judge people based on their outward appearance or class, but spread the seed of the word to all.

9:10-17, The Cost: Rejection

Matthew's conversion leads to an opportunity for the Lord to interact with more needy people:

10 And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house,--Luke says that this was in fact Matthew's house (5:29).

behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.--Apparently, Matthew invites his friends and former colleagues.

This interaction brings rejection by two groups of people, focused on two aspects of the Lord's conduct, in chiasmic order. The Pharisees disapprove of his association with sinners, while the meal itself raises questions from John's disciples (chart, Figure 16).

9:11-13, Response of the Pharisees

11 And when the Pharisees saw it,--We have heard of Pharisees only twice so far in Matthew. John already questioned the sincerity of the Pharisees in his ministry:

Mat 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

In 5:20, our Lord groups them with the scribes as those whose righteousness is insufficient to enter the kingdom of heaven.

We had two positive examples of the scribes (2:4; 8:19) before they turn in 9:3, but we see no corresponding encouragement concerning the Pharisees. Here, in their first interaction with the

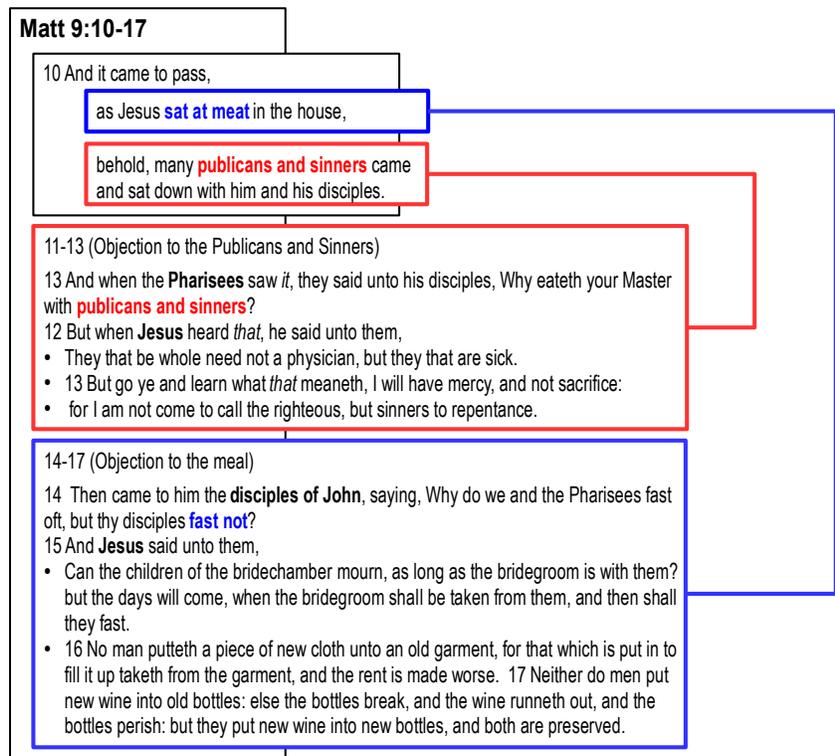


Figure 16: The Structure of Matt 9:10-17

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Lord, they are negative.

they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?--The heart of Pharisaic practice is avoiding defilement, which means avoiding contact with people who are themselves defiled by sin.

12 But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them,--He responds in two ways: a proverb, makes his message *understandable*; a Scripture quotation gives it *authority*.

It is worth noting this rhetorical pattern, which we see later in the NT (chart).³⁰ When Paul writes to the Corinthians about the right of an itinerant to support, he starts with practical examples:

1Co 9:7 Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

But then he clinches the argument with Scripture:

8 Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? 9 For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn.

Understandable teaching must connect with what people already know. *Authoritative* teaching must be grounded in the Scriptures. We should seek to do both in our ministry.

They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.--This was no doubt a common proverb. Plutarch, a pagan Roman author of the first century, attributes a very similar statement to the 5th century BC Pausanias of Sparta.³¹ A person of Laconia asked him Pausanias why he had not remained in Sparta. He replied, "Because neither are doctors accustomed to spend their time with healthy people, but where the sick are."

13 But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice:--The Lord is quoting Hosea:

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

Like the other seventh century prophets (Isaiah, Micah, Amos), Hosea records the Lord's displeasure with superficial ritual from insincere worshipers. The scribes were more concerned with ceremonial purity and avoiding defilement from an unclean person than they were with the covenant responsibilities of Jews to care for one another.

for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.--Here he interprets the proverb about the sick in terms of his immediate lesson.

³⁰ See notes for examples.

³¹ France cites Apophth. Lac. 230F. Available online in Greek at

<http://remacle.org/bloodwolf/historiens/Plutarque/apophthegmesgr.htm#230f>, and in French at

<http://remacle.org/bloodwolf/historiens/Plutarque/apophthegmesgr.htm#230f>. Ἐπαινοῦντος δ' αὐτοῦ ἐν Τεγῆα μετὰ τὴν φυγὴν τοὺς Λακεδαιμονίους, εἶπέ τις « Διὰ τί οὖν οὐκ ἔμενες ἐν Σπάρτῃ ἀλλ' ἔφυγες; » « Ὅτι οὐδ' οἱ ἰατροὶ » ἔφη « παρὰ τοῖς ὑγιαίνουσιν, ὅπου δὲ οἱ νοσοῦντες, διατρίβειν εἰώθασιν. »

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9:14-17, Response of John's Disciples

14 Then came to him the disciples of John,--Recall from 4:12 that John is now in prison. His disciples (among whom our Lord was once numbered) naturally seek to understand from the Lord the relation between John's ministry and the Lord's new one.³²

saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?--Their complaint is that the Lord's disciples do not follow the Jewish practice of regular fasting. In Luke 18:12 the Pharisee in the temple claims to fast twice a week.³³

15 And Jesus said unto them,--This time he does not quote scripture outright, but responds with parables, one about the bridegroom and two about the conflict of the new with the old. But Alford notes that the notion of the wedding runs through all of them: the bridegroom, the garment, and the wine, and this imagery comes directly from the OT, where God casts the restoration of Israel after captivity in terms of his (re)marriage to her (chart):

Isa 62:4 Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. 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.

Hos 2:19 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.

So his exhortation about the new age is firmly grounded in the OT.

Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them?--Our Lord here recalls the earlier statement of John, while John was still free and preaching openly.

Joh 3:28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. 29 He that hath the bride is the **bridegroom**: but the friend of the **bridegroom**, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the **bridegroom's** voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. 30 He must increase, but I *must* decrease.

John no doubt has the verses from Isaiah and Hosea in mind in describing the Messiah as the "bridegroom." He sees Jesus as the fulfillment of these prophecies, the Messiah who has come to restore Israel to her place of joy and blessing.

Note, by the way, that in the OT passages the bridegroom is Jehovah. In making Jesus the bridegroom, both John and our Lord claim that he is divine.

but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.--In fact, after his ascension, we do find the church fasting, at the commissioning of

32 Compare 11:2, where John sends his disciples to determine whether Jesus is the Messiah. Matthew's only other mention of John's disciples is 14:12, where they retrieve the body of John after he is murdered by Herod.

33 The prevalence of non-biblical fasts is attested in the Mishna, 1.4-6.

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Barnabas and Saul:

Act 13:1 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers;... 2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. 3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

And when Paul and Barnabas ordained elders at the end of the first missionary journey:

Act 14:23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

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 worse.--The old garment is already shrunken, but the new cloth is not, and when it shrinks, it will pull away from the older cloth.

17 Neither do men put new wine into old bottles:--Not a glass or ceramic container, but a wineskin, the skin of an animal with the limbs tied off and the neck used for access (chart, Figure 17).

else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish:--Here the image is that gas produced by fermentation will crack old, brittle bottles.

The images of the garment and the wineskin probably refer to the Jewish ceremonial system, to which Christian practice cannot be added as a patch. You can't just continue with the Pharisaic fasting practices. The early church is neither a reformed synagogue nor a reformed temple. It is something altogether new. Attempts to merge the two are doomed to destroy the old and compromise the new.

but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.--The parable of the wine bottle goes beyond that of the garment. Nothing was said about what to do with the new cloth, but we are told what to do with the new wine. It needs a new container, new forms. Acts 15 and Galatians carry on this warning, and throughout Acts we see the form of the new wineskin, the pattern of the church through which the gospel is spread and believers are built up.

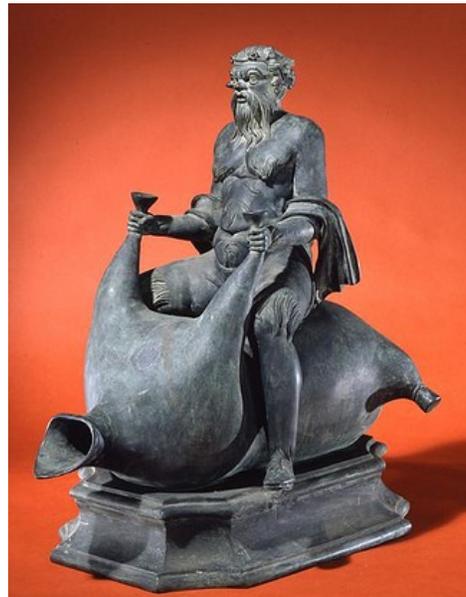


Figure 17: Wineskins. Top: <http://www.ivanveldhuizen.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/wineskins.jpg> Bottom: replica of a statue from Pompeii, pre-Vesuvius (AD 79), of Silenus (an associate of Bacchus) riding a wineskin, Penn Museum object MS3688.

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9:18-34, Third Triad

The emphasis on response continues, but now making explicit that it goes abroad throughout “all that land,” “the whole country,” and in the third, the secret opposition to the Lord that we saw in the healing of the palsied man (in the inward thoughts of the scribes) now becomes outward and official.

Recall the overall structure of this section: ABABA, where each A section is a triad of miracles and the B sections deal with discipleship. The first triad ends, not with a single miracle, but with a complex of miracles, the healing of Peter’s mother and also of multitudes who came seeking help. Symmetrically, the last triad begins with a multiple healing. So, in more detail, if we use “a” for a single miracle and “A” for a cluster, we have aaABaaaBAaa (chart, Figure 2, page 2).

9:18-26, *The Ruler’s Daughter and the Unclean Woman (complex)*

This miracle, introducing the third triad, links back to the first triad in two ways.

1. Like the third scene in the first triad, the first scene in the last triad is not a single miracle, but a cluster.
2. Like the first scene in the first triad, it shows a petitioner worshipping the Lord. As we saw in our study of the leper in 8:2, the consistent use of this term throughout the NT implies a recognition of the Lord's deity. This feature thus frames and reinforces the persistent theme of the second triad.

18 While he spake these things unto them,--In general Matthew is not chronological, but this clause appears to require a connection with what has gone before. Yet Mark (5:21) and Luke (8:40), who in general are much more chronological, place this immediately after the return from the land of the Gergesenes. See Notes for the resolution.

behold, there came a certain ruler,--We know from Mark and Luke that this man was a ruler of the synagogue. Religious opposition is growing against the Lord, but not all religious people oppose him.³⁴

and worshipped him,--The first miracle of the third section, like the first miracle of the first section, begins with worship. As we saw in our study of the leper in 8:2, the consistent use of this term throughout the NT implies that the ruler, given his understanding of the OT, recognizes the Lord as divine.

saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.--As we see throughout these healings, those who come seeking the Lord’s help are marked by faith.

- The leper (8:2) says, “If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.”

³⁴ Mark and Luke report that the request of the centurion in 8:5 was conveyed by the elders of the city; this man may well have been among them. There, he made request for another. Here, he brings his own need.

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- The centurion (8:8) says, “Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.”
- The multitudes who came in 8:16, came because they believed he could heal them.
- The Lord “sees the faith” of the palsied man and his friends (9:2).

Matthew repeatedly confronts us with the need for faith. The disciples experience a failure of faith during the storm (8:25), but the Lord rebukes their lack of faith (v. 26, “Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?”). It would be a mistake to contrast Matthew with Paul’s emphasis on salvation by faith. Paul is repeating the teaching of his Master.

19 And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples.--Faith is not only necessary, but it is effective. The Lord responds to it.

But on the way, he is interrupted by yet another instance of faith:

20 And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years,--This was a condition that, like leprosy, rendered the victim unclean (chart):

Lev 15:19 And if a woman have an issue, *and* her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be put apart seven days: and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even. ... 25 And if a woman have an issue of her blood many days out of the time of her separation, or if it run beyond the time of her separation; all the days of the issue of her uncleanness shall be as the days of her separation: she *shall be* unclean.

So, like the leper, she would have been an isolated person. Her condition was not obvious outwardly, so the crowd did not shun her as it would a leper, but those closest to her would stand apart from her.

came behind *him*, and touched the hem of his garment:--Note two details.

First, she approaches him secretly. Capernaum was not a large town, perhaps 600 to 1500 in the first century,³⁵ and in such a small community, there are no secrets. If the woman is a resident of Capernaum rather than one of the throngs who came from afar to seek the Lord (4:24), she fears that Jesus would know her condition and avoid her because of her uncleanness.

Second, she specifically reaches for the hem of his garment, where he, like every pious Jew, would wear a badge of his commitment to the Lord:

Num 15:37 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 38 Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments

35 James H. Charlesworth, “Jesus Research and Near Eastern Archaeology: Reflections on Recent Developments,” in Aune, D.E., Seland, T., and Ulrichsen, J.H., *Neotestamentica et Philonica*. Brill, 2003, pp. 37-70, who as his source cites J.L. Reed, *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus: A Reexamination of the Evidence* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2000). “By measuring the circumscribed area of the ruins and the density of the population, evident from extant private dwellings, and by comparing these with what can be known about Ostia Antica and Pompeii, Reed estimates that the population of Capernaum during the time of Jesus could have been as high as 1700. Because of tombs 300 meters north of the shore, Reed estimates the size of Capernaum to be only six to ten hectares; thus, about 600 to 1500 dwelt in it during Jesus’ time. If Nazareth was less than 400, then Capernaum was ‘one of the larger villages’ [Reed p. 152]. It nevertheless contrasts with the largest cities in Lower Galilee, Sepphoris and Tiberias, which had slightly less than 12,000 inhabitants.”

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throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue: 39 And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring: 40 That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God.

She recognizes him as a holy man, as one who wholly follows the Lord, and this, not just his demonstrated success in healing, is the basis of her faith. By touching the fringe she shows that she is seeking God's help, not just the intervention of a medicine man.

21 For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.--As with the palsied man and the scribes, the real focus of activity is internal, invisible to ordinary men.

22 But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole.--As with the palsied man, the Lord knows her heart and recognizes her faith.

And the woman was made whole from that hour.--As throughout this section, the response is immediate.

Trench comments,

And if we keep in mind how her uncleanness separated her off as one impure, we shall have here an exact picture of the sinner, drawing nigh to the throne of grace, but out of the sense of his impurity not 'with boldness,' rather with fear and trembling, hardly knowing what there he shall expect; but who is welcomed there, and all his carnal doubtings and questionings at once chidden and expelled, dismissed with the word of an abiding peace resting upon him.

23 And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise,--It was customary to hire mourners, who would wail and sing dirges not out of their own sense of loss, but because that was their job. Here are some examples from the OT (chart):

2Sa 14:2 And Joab sent to Tekoah, and fetched thence a **wise woman**, and said unto her, I pray thee, **feign thyself to be a mourner**, and put on now mourning apparel, and anoint not thyself with oil, but be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead:

Amo 5:16 Therefore the LORD, the God of hosts, the Lord, saith thus; Wailing *shall be* in all streets; and they shall say in all the highways, Alas! alas! and they shall call the husbandman to mourning, and **such as are skilful of lamentation** to wailing.

Jer 9:17 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Consider ye, and **call for the mourning women**, that they may come; and send for cunning *women*, that they may come:

This man was a ruler of the synagogue, a respected and probably wealthy person, and he was putting on the best funeral he knew how.

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24 He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth.--The Lord's words have been taken to mean that this is not a real resurrection, but only a resuscitation. But in that case, the "miracle" would hardly have been remarkable. It appears to be the true resurrection reported to John in ch. 11 (chart),

Mat 11:4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: 5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. 6 And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

More likely, the point of the Lord's words is to remind them of what Daniel had already taught:

Dan 12:2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt.

Before the coming of Christ, death was an absolute end. Recall the mockery with which Paul's claim of resurrection was greeted in Athens:

Act 17:18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

Act 17:32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked:

But our Lord's work includes the abolishing of death:

2Ti 1:10 the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

Note how Paul describes the culmination of his work:

1Co 15:25-26 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death.

As a result,

Rev 20:13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

The point of our Lord's comment is to declare this new order, in which death is finally overcome.

And they laughed him to scorn.--Contrast their attitude with that of the ruler. He exhibited reverential faith in the Lord; they mocked.

Earlier, we saw a contrast in faith between Matthew and the scribe. Now we see a contrast between the ruler and the minstrels, but the order is reversed. Here, it is the religious one who has faith, and the more secular ones who mock.

25 But when the people were put forth,--That is, the professional mourners. Mark makes clear that Peter, James, John, and the girl's parents stayed with him. But Matthew omits them, perhaps

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to emphasize the parallel with Elisha and the son of the Shunammite woman (chart):

2Ki 4:32 And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, *and* laid upon his bed. 33 He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the LORD. 34 And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm. 35 Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.

he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.--The Lord's superiority to Elisha is seen in how easily he does the work, compared with the effort that Elisha expended.

26 And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.--Here is the distinctive mark of the last three miracles: the spread of the Lord's fame (and the rise of opposition).

9:27-31, Two Blind Men

The next miracle fulfills Isaiah's prophecy about the blind (chart, Figure 18):

Isa 35:5 **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.

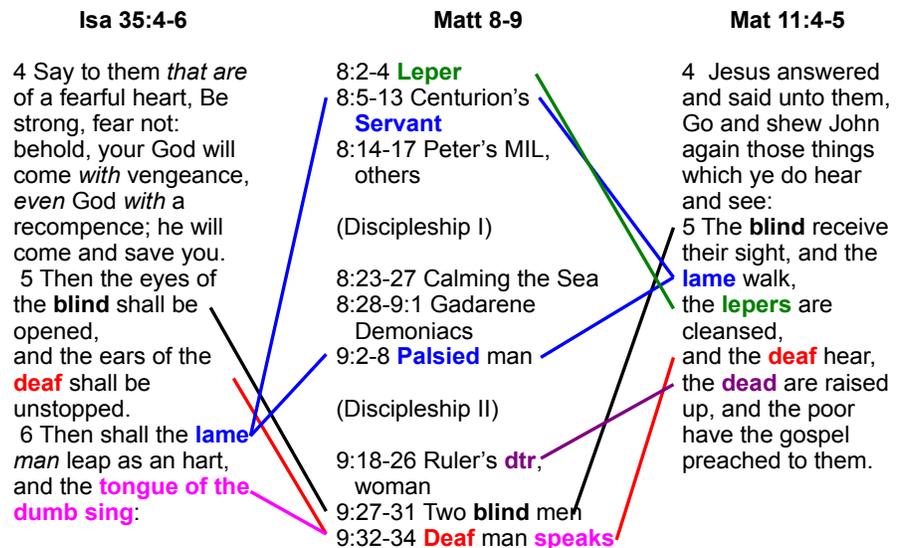


Figure 18: Messiah's Miracles, Anticipated by Isaiah and Reported to John

27 And when Jesus

departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us.--This miracle is remarkably similar to the last healing in Matthew, in 20:29-34. In both cases,

- Two people with the same ailment come to the Lord for healing.
- The sickness is blindness.
- They call on him as "son of David."

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This last detail is remarkable. The title appears 16x in the KJV,³⁶ all in the synoptics, but Matthew's 10 instances dominate (leaving three each for Mark and Luke). Trace the recognition of the title through the book (chart).

- It first appears in the very first verse of the book, "Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham." Clearly, this is a title that is important to Matthew. He wants us to recognize that Jesus is the Son of David.
- Then it appears twice in the triumphal entry, 21:9, 15, when the crowds cry, "Hosanna to the son of David." Interestingly, though the other three gospels also report the triumphal entry, none of them records this use of the title. (John 12:13 and Luke 19:38 report that the people called him "King.") Matthew's point is to show that the people finally recognize what he set out to demonstrate in ch. 1.
- Five instance of the title are in connection with healings. The Jews recognized the title as Messianic (22:42), and we have seen how the healings are prominent in the prophetic vision of the new age that the Messiah was to bring in (Isa 29:18; 35:5, 6).
 - The crowd in general tentatively recognizes the implications of the healings in 12:23: "And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?"
 - But the only ones to commit themselves to the identification are four blind men (these two in 9:27, and the two near Jericho in 20:30, 31), and the Syro-Phoenician woman (15:22).

Those who recognize the title most clearly are a gentile and those who are physically blind. The contrast we saw between the two discipleship sections continues. Those who recognize the Lord and submit to him are those we would least expect, from a human perspective.

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.--He seems to ignore them until they declare their faith.

29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.--Once more, the healing follows their faith.

30 And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See *that no man know it*.--Throughout the gospels, when the Lord heals people, he commands them to be silent (chart; see notes). The only exceptions I can find are for the Gergesene demoniacs (Gentiles) and the woman of Samaria (on the fringe of Judaism).

The prohibition in ch. 12 explains the Lord's motive:

Mat 12:15 But when Jesus knew *it*, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; 16 And charged them that they should not make him known: 17 **That it might be fulfilled** which was spoken by Esaias the

³⁶ This count includes Matt 22:42, where "son of" is not explicit but understood, and Mark 12:35, where a verb disrupts the title.

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prophet [42:1-4], saying, 18 Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. 19 He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. 20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. 21 And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

Isaiah promised that the Servant of the Lord would not be a self-promoter, but would work quietly, with his eye on the Gentiles. The blind men recognized him, correctly, as the “son of David,” who would reestablish David’s kingdom from Jerusalem. But the response of Jews to this insight was driven by carnal enthusiasm that did not tend to the conversion of the Gentiles—compare John 6 (chart),

Joh 6:15 When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

When he receives his kingdom, it must not be at the hand of human zealots who would too readily exclude the Gentiles, but from his heavenly father, who will include them in the kingdom:

Psa 2:7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee. 8 Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession.

So he uniformly discourages human support and enthusiasm. How different his approach is from the self-promoting attitude of many contemporary ministries, and of worldly politicians in general! We would all do well to remember his exhortation to the Jews,

Joh 5:44 How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that *cometh* from God only?

31 But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.--What shall we say about their disobedience?³⁷ Some Catholic commentators suggest that the Lord gave the command out of humility but was actually pleased with their publicity. But ch. 12 shows that his command was deliberate and principled. Farrar writes,

These disobedient babblers, who talked so much of Him, did but offer Him the dishonouring service of a double heart; their violation of His commandment served only to hinder His usefulness, to trouble His spirit, and to precipitate His death.

Those who think they know better than the Lord as to how to honor him, are like Saul, saving the Amalekite herds for sacrifice in 1 Sam 15. Now, as then,

1Sa 15:22 to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams.

We should be careful in our worship of the Lord to offer him what he commands, and not “strange fire . . ., which he commanded them not” (Lev 10:1).

³⁷ See notes for some well-stated comments by Trench and Farrar.

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9:32-34, A Dumb Man

Isaiah anticipated the healing of the deaf and dumb. It is important to note the Greek words used in the LXX for these two ailments (chart):

Isa 35:5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the **deaf** [LXX κωφος] shall be unstopped. 6 Then shall the lame *man* leap as an hart, and the tongue of the **dumb** [LXX μογιλαλος] sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

32 As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil.--The first question is to identify the ailment from which the man suffers.

The Greek word translated “dumb” κωφος almost always means “deaf” in the LXX, though it also reflects an inability to speak in Wisd 10:21, and here (v. 33) and in 12:22; 15:31; Luke 1:22; 11:14 the healing of the κωφος brings speech. (Mark always distinguishes the two: 7:32, 37; 9:25.) In Isaiah's references to the coming kingdom, it always means “deaf,” and 35:5 uses a different word for “dumb.”

It is often said that κωφος can mean both “deaf” and “dumb,” but in fact there are special words for “dumb” (μογιλαλος, αλαλος). If one becomes deaf before acquiring language, the victim rarely learns to speak. and indeed the two often occur together. So it is likely that “dumb” is a secondary meaning due to the common association of the two afflictions. Our version translates “dumb” because the result in the next verse is that he speaks, but the Greek word points to “deaf” in Isa 35, and 11:5 appears to refer to this incident when the Lord tells John that “the deaf hear” but doesn't mention the dumb.

The second observation is the cause of the impairment. It is associated with demonic oppression. We aren't told that the demon causes the deafness, though Mark 9:17-27 records a dumb (αλαλος) boy whom the Lord diagnoses as having a πνευμα αλαλον και κωφον, associating the disability with the demon.

It's interesting that these two cases of demonic illness are associated with speech. We know that they can also cause structural impairment:

Luk 13:11 And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up *herself*.

And they are associated with blindness, though the remedy is described as “healing,” not “casting out”:

Mat 12:22 Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.

But the most common ailment is inability to communicate, which is significant because language is the central feature of God's person, and something that Satan would want to attack first of all in God's image.

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33 And when the devil was cast out,--Interestingly, this healing just “happens.” There is no description of any action by the Lord, not even the one-word permission “Go” of 8:32, just the passive verb, “was cast out.”

Not all demons yield so easily:

Mat 17:21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

It may be that the Lord spoke to this one as well. Matthew’s terse account of this last miracle may be intended as a summary device: before the Lord Jesus, both sickness and Satan are powerless. They evaporate like the dew on a hot summer day.

the dumb spake:--This detail may be intended to encompass *μοιγίλαλος* in Isa 35:6.

and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.--Again, the response indicates the scope of the Lord’s reputation. Nothing comparable is known in all Israel.

34 But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.--The last two miracles, and the Pharisees’ response, anticipate a later report of the Lord’s ministry (chart, Table 8).

| 9:32-34 | 12:22-24 |
|---|---|
| 32 As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. | 22 Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: |
| 33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: | and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. |
| and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel. | 23 And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? |
| 34 But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils. | 24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. |

Table 8: Opposition in 9:32-34 and 12:22-24

They cannot deny the reality of what the Lord is doing, but to preserve their own authority they must still condemn it. This response warns us that opposition to the true message of Christ will not be moderate or considered. Our message is in direct opposition to Satan’s claims. We should not expect those who reject it to be moderate or courteous in their disagreement. They will often polarize the case.

9:35, Summary of Teaching and Healing

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.--This summary corresponds to 4:23, bracketing the detailed discussions of teaching (ch. 5-7) and healing (ch. 8-9), and anticipates 11:1. Figure 19 (chart) shows how these summaries anchor two other kinds of material:

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| | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|--|---|--|---|
| Calling Disciples | 4:18-22 the Four | | 9:36-10:4 the Twelve | | 11:2-30 Broader Invitation (v. 28) |
| Summary | 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. | | 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. | | Mat 11:1 And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities. |
| Detail | ch. 5-7 Content for Teaching | | ch. 8-9 Examples of Healing | | 10:5-42 Exhortations for Preaching |

Figure 19: Structure of ch. 4-11

- successively broader calls of disciples, starting with the four, then the twelve, and finally the general invitation in 11:28 to “all ye that labor and are heavy laden”
- illustrations of the three kinds of activity described in the summaries: teaching (5-7), healing (8-9), and preaching (10).

Next time, we will consider the difference between teaching and preaching when we study the Lord’s commission to his disciples.

Matthew 8-9, Healings

Notes

The Centurion's Servant in Matthew and Luke

| Matthew 8 | Luke 7 |
|--|--|
| 5 And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, | 1 Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum. |
| | 2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. |
| there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, 6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. | 3 And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. |
| | 4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this: 5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue. |
| 7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. | 6 Then Jesus went with them. |
| 8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: | And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: 7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: |
| but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. | but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. |
| 9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this <i>man</i> , Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth <i>it</i> . | 8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth <i>it</i> . |
| 10 When Jesus heard <i>it</i> , he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. | 9 When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. |
| 11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. | |
| 13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. | |
| And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour. | 10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick. |

Matthew 8-9, Healings

“Under Authority” υπο εξουσιαν

Other than v. 9 and Luke’s parallel, the only instance I can find in Perseus Tufts is in Diodorus Siculus (90-30 BC), Bibliotheca Historica, Book I, ch. 58, v. 4:

ἐπὶ τοσοῦτο δ’ ἴσχυσε καὶ διέτεινε τοῖς χρόνοις ἡ δόξα τούτου τοῦ βασιλέως ὥστε τῆς [p. 101] Αἰγύπτου πολλαῖς γενεαῖς ὕστερον πεσοῦσης **ὑπὸ τὴν ἐξουσίαν** τῶν Περσῶν, καὶ Δαρείου τοῦ Ξέρξου πατρὸς σπουδάσαντος ἐν Μέμφει τὴν ἰδίαν εἰκόνα στήσαι πρὸ τῆς Σεσοῦσιος, ὁ μὲν ἀρχιερεὺς ἀντεῖπε λόγου προτεθέντος ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ τῶν ἱερέων, ἀποφηνάμενος ὡς οὐπω Δαρεῖος ὑπερβέβηκε τὰς Σεσοῦσιος πράξεις, ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς οὐχ ὅπως ἠγανάκτησεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦναντίον ἠσθεῖς ἐπὶ τῇ παρρησίᾳ σπουδάσειν ἔφησεν ὅπως κατὰ μηδὲν ἐκείνου λειψθείη βιώσας τὸν ἴσον χρόνον, καὶ παρεκάλει συγκρίνειν τὰς ἡλικιώτιδας πράξεις: τοῦτον γὰρ δικαιοτάτον ἔλεγχον εἶναι τῆς ἀρετῆς.

4 So great became the fame of this king and so enduring through the ages that when, many generations later, Egypt fell under the power of the Persians and Darius, the father of Xerxes, was bent upon placing a statue of himself in Memphis before that of Sesoösis, the chief priest opposed it in a speech which he made in an assembly of the priests, to the effect that Darius had not yet surpassed the deeds of Sesoösis; and the king was far from being angered, but, on the contrary, being pleased at his frankness of speech, said that he would strive not to be found behind that ruler in any point when he had attained his years, and asked them to base their judgment upon the deeds of each at the same age, for that was the fairest test of their excellence.

Note that the effect of Egypt being “under the power of the Persians” is that it is expected to impose their rule on its subjects.

Perseus Chicago has more ([http://perseus.uchicago.edu/perseus-cgi/search3torth?dbname=GreekFeb2011&word=%CF%85%CF%80%CE%BF+%CE%B5%CE%BE%CE%BF%CF%85%CF%83%CE%B9%CE%B1%CE%BD&OUTPUT=conc&ORTHMODE=MOD&CONJUNCT=PROXY&DISTANCE=5&author=&title=&POLESPAN=5&THMPRTLIMIT=1&KWSS=1&KWSSPRLIM=500&trsortorder=author%2C+title&editor=&pubdate=&language=&shrtcite=&filename=&genre=&sortorder=author%2C+title&dgdivhead=&dgdivtype=&dgsdivwho=&dgsdivvn=&dgsdivtag=&dgsdivty](http://perseus.uchicago.edu/perseus-cgi/search3torth?dbname=GreekFeb2011&word=%CF%85%CF%80%CE%BF+%CE%B5%CE%BE%CE%BF%CF%85%CF%83%CE%B9%CE%B1%CE%BD&OUTPUT=conc&ORTHMODE=MOD&CONJUNCT=PROXY&DISTANCE=5&author=&title=&POLESPAN=5&THMPRTLIMIT=1&KWSS=1&KWSSPRLIM=500&trsortorder=author%2C+title&editor=&pubdate=&language=&shrtcite=&filename=&genre=&sortorder=author%2C+title&dgdivhead=&dgdivtype=&dgsdivwho=&dgsdivvn=&dgsdivtag=&dgsdivtype=)):

1. Demosthenes. *Speeches* [Dem. [speech 26 section 13](#)]

ἓνα κύριον τῆς ὅλης πολιτείας καταστήναι, τὸ δ’ ὑπὲρ τοῦ τὰ τουτωνὶ δόγματα καὶ νόμιμα ἐκ παλαιοῦ παραδοθένθ’ **ὑπὸ** τῶν προγόνων σοὶ μόνῳ δεδοσθαι **ἐξουσίαν** ἀδεῶς παραβαίνοντι καὶ πράττοντι ὅ τι ἂν βουλευθῆς. ἡδέως δ’ ἂν ἔγωγ’ αὐτὸν ἐρωτήσαιμι πότερ’ ἔννομον

(υπο > προγονων)

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2. Diodorus Siculus. *Library* [Diod. Sic. [book 10 chapter 19 section 2](#)]

φέρειν τὸν Δαρεῖον καὶ εἰπεῖν βούλεσθαι τὸν Μεγάβυζον, εἰ δυνατὸν ἦν, ἄρτιον γενόμενον ἢ δέκα Βαβυλῶνας λαβεῖν **ὑπὸ** τὴν **ἐξουσίαν**, καίπερ ἀπράκτου τῆς ἐπιθυμίας οὐσης. ὅτι οἱ Βαβυλώνιοι στρατηγὸν εἴλαντο Μεγάβυζον, ἀγνοοῦντες ὅτι τὴν

we are told that Darius was deeply moved and declared that he would rather have Megabyzus whole again, if it were possible, than bring ten Babylons **under his power**, although his wish could not be achieved.

3. Flavius Josephus. *Antiquities of the Jews* [Joseph. AJ [book 15 section 405](#)]

δεξαμένον τοῦ πλήθους αὐτὸν λαμπρότατα πάνυ θέλων αὐτοὺς τῆς εὐποίας ἀμείψασθαι, ἐπεὶ παρεκάλεσαν τὴν ἱερὰν στολὴν **ὑπὸ** τὴν αὐτῶν **ἐξουσίαν** ἔχειν, ἔγραψεν περὶ τούτων Τιβερίῳ Καίσαρι κάκεῖνος ἐπέτρεψεν, καὶ παρέμεινεν ἡ ἐξουσία τῆς στολῆς τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις μέχρις

Ant 15:405 under whose reign Vitellius, the governor of Syria, when he once came to Jerusalem, and had been most magnificently received by the multitude, he had a mind to make them some requital for the kindness they had shown him; so, upon their petition to have those holy vestments **in their own power**, he wrote about them to Tiberius Caesar, who granted his request; and this their power over the sacerdotal vestments continued with the Jews till the death of King Agrippa;

4. Flavius Josephus. *Antiquities of the Jews* [Joseph. AJ [book 18 section 345](#)]

ὄρᾳν οὖν, μὴ τὰ πολλὰ τῇ ἡδονῇ τοῦ σώματος συγχωρῶν ἀπολέσειε τὴν ἀρχὴν τοῦ εὐπρεποῦς καὶ τὴν εἰς νῦν **ὑπὸ** τοῦ θεοῦ προελθοῦσαν **ἐξουσίαν**. ἐπεὶ δὲ οὐδὲν ἐπέβαινον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τινα αὐτῶν τὸν μάλιστα τιμώμενον ὅτι πλέονι παρηρησία χρῆσαιτο ἀπέκτεινε,

(υπο > θείου)

5. Flavius Josephus. *Antiquities of the Jews* [Joseph. AJ [book 20 section 7](#)]

ἀναγκάση, πρῶτον μὲν αὐτοῖς ἐπιτρέψαι πρέσβεις ὡς Καίσαρα πέμψαι τοὺς αἰτησομένους παρ' αὐτοῦ τὴν ἱερὰν στολὴν **ὑπὸ** τὴν αὐτῶν **ἐξουσίαν** ἔχειν, εἶτα δὲ περιμεῖναι μέχρις ἂν γνῶσιν, τί πρὸς ταῦτα Κλαύδιος ἀποκρίναιτο. οἱ δὲ ἐπιτρέψειν αὐτοῖς

Ant 20:7 Now the Jews dared not oppose what he had said, but desired Fadus, however, and Longinus, (which last was come to Jerusalem, and had brought a great army with him, out of a fear that the [rigid] injunctions of Fadus should force the Jews to rebel,) that they might, in the first place, have permission to send ambassadors to Caesar, to petition him that they may have the holy vestments **under their own power**; and that, in the next place, they would tarry till they knew what answer Claudius would give to that their request.

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6. Flavius Josephus. *Antiquities of the Jews* [Joseph. AJ [book 20 section 12](#)]

ἢ πεποιήμαι τοῦ ἔθνους ὑμῶν κηδεμονία, καὶ αἰτησαμένων σπουδαίως καὶ φιλοτίμως τὴν ἱερὰν ἐσθήτα καὶ τὸν στέφανον ὑπὸ τὴν ἐξουσίαν ὑμῶν εἶναι, συγχωρῶ καθὼς ὁ κράτιστος καὶ μοι τιμιώτατος Οὐιτέλλιος ἐποίησεν. συγκατεθέμην δὲ τῇ γνώμῃ ταύτῃ

Ant 20:12 Upon the representation of your ambassadors to me by Agrippa, my friend, whom I have brought up, and have now with me, and who is a person of very great piety, who are come to give me thanks for the care I have taken of your nation, and to entreat me, in an earnest and obliging manner, that they may have the holy vestments, with the crown belonging to them, **under their power**, [??? ὑμων ???] I grant their request, as that excellent person Vitellius, who is very dear to me, had done before me.

7. Flavius Josephus. *Jewish War* [Joseph. BJ [book 4 section 593](#)]

ἡγεμονίαν καὶ πρὸς ἐλπίδα λημμάτων ἀποδεικνύουσιν αὐτοκράτορας, αὐτοὶ δὲ διὰ τοσοῦτων κερωρηκότες πόνων καὶ γηρῶντες ὑπὸ τοῖς κράνεσιν ἐτέροις χαρίζονται τὴν ἐξουσίαν καὶ ταῦτα τὸν ἀξιώτερον ἄρχειν παρ' αὐτοῖς ἔχοντες. ᾧ τίνα δικαιοτέραν ποτὲ τῆς εἰς αὐτοὺς εὐνοίας (υπο > κρανεσιν)

8. Flavius Josephus. *Life of Flavius Josephus* [Joseph. Vit. [section 89](#)]

καθεστάκειν τῆς Τιβεριάδος στρατηγόν, ὡς προεῖπον, τὴν τῶν Τιβεριέων γνώμην ἀπαγγέλλων κάμει σπεύδειν παρακαλῶν· βραδύναντος γὰρ ὑπὸ τὴν ἐτέρων ἐξουσίαν γενέσθαι τὴν πόλιν. ἐντυχὼν οὖν τοῖς γράμμασι τοῦ Σίλα καὶ διακοσίου ἀναλαβὼν ἄνδρας δι' ὅλης τῆς

Lif 1:89 for a messenger had come to me from Silas, whom I had made governor of Tiberias, as I have said already, and had told me of the inclinations of the people of Tiberias, and advised me to make haste there; for that, if I made any delay, the city would come **under another's jurisdiction**.

9. Flavius Josephus. *Life of Flavius Josephus* [Joseph. Vit. [section 112](#)]

λήψεσθαι παρ' αὐτῶν δίκας. Κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν καιρὸν ἀφικνοῦνται πρὸς με δύο μεγιστᾶνες τῶν ὑπὸ τὴν ἐξουσίαν τοῦ βασιλέως ἐκ τῆς τῶν Τραχωνιτῶν χώρας ἐπαγόμενοι τοὺς ἐαυτῶν ἵππους καὶ ὄπλα, χρήματα δ' ὑποκομίζοντες.

Lif 1:112-113 At this time it was that two great men, who were **under the jurisdiction** of the king [Agrippa] came to me out of the region of Trachonitis, bringing their horses and their arms, and carrying with them their money also; 113 and when the Jews would force them to be

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circumcised, if they would stay among them, I would not permit them to have any force put upon them, {j} but said to them, "Everyone ought to worship God according to his own inclinations, and not to be constrained by force; and that these men, who had fled to us for protection, ought not to be so treated as to repent of their coming here." And when I had pacified the multitude, I provided for the men that were come to us whatever it was they wanted, according to their usual way of living, and that in great plenty also.

NB: he treats them with respect because of the authority under which they come

10. NA. *New Testament* [NT [book Matthew chapter 8 verse 9](#)]

τὴν στέγην εἰσέλθης· ἀλλὰ μόνον εἶπὲ λόγῳ, καὶ ἰαθήσεται ὁ παῖς μου· καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπός εἰμι **ὑπὸ ἐξουσίαν** τασσόμενος, ἔχων ὑπ' ἑμαυτὸν στρατιώτας, καὶ λέγω τούτῳ Πορεύθητι, καὶ πορεύεται, καὶ ἄλλῳ Ἔρχου, καὶ ἔρχεται, καὶ

11. NA. *New Testament* [NT [book Luke chapter 7 verse 8](#)]

ἤξιῶσα πρὸς σὲ ἐλθεῖν· ἀλλὰ εἶπὲ λόγῳ, καὶ ἰαθήτω ὁ παῖς μου· καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπός εἰμι **ὑπὸ ἐξουσίαν** τασσόμενος, ἔχων ὑπ' ἑμαυτὸν στρατιώτας, καὶ λέγω τούτῳ Πορεύθητι, καὶ πορεύεται, καὶ ἄλλῳ Ἔρχου, καὶ ἔρχεται, καὶ

12. Polybius. *Histories* [Polyb. [book 3 chapter 23 section 6](#)]

περὶ τῆς Λατίνης αὐτῆς χώρας ποιοῦνται τὰς συνθήκας, τῆς δὲ λοιπῆς Ἰταλίας οὐ μνημονεύουσι διὰ τὸ μὴ πίπτειν **ὑπὸ** τὴν αὐτῶν **ἐξουσίαν**. Μετὰ δὲ ταύτας ἑτέρας ποιοῦνται συνθήκας, ἐν αἷς προσπεριελήφασιν Καρχηδόνιοι Τυρίους καὶ τὸν

Similarly, the Romans include in the treaty Latium alone, making no mention of the rest of Italy as it was not then **subject to their authority**.

13. Polybius. *Histories* [Polyb. [book 6 chapter 17 section 9](#)]

καὶ πρὸς τὰς τῶν ὑπάτων ἐπιβολὰς δυσχερῶς ἀντιπράττουσι διὰ τὸ κατ' ἰδίαν καὶ κοινῇ πάντας ἐν τοῖς ὑπαίθροις **ὑπὸ** τὴν ἐκείνων πίπτειν **ἐξουσίαν**. Τοιαύτης δ' οὐσῆς τῆς ἐκάστου τῶν μερῶν δυνάμεως εἰς τὸ καὶ βλάπτειν καὶ συνεργεῖν

Similarly everyone is reluctant to oppose the projects of the consuls as all are generally and individually **under their authority** when in the field.

(speaks of the benefits that accrue to one because of such authority)

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14. Polybius. *Histories* [Polyb. [book 10 chapter 40 section 7](#)]

μὲν Καρχηδονίους, καὶ τὰ πλεῖστα καὶ κάλλιστα μέρη τῆς Λιβύης ἀπὸ τῶν Φιλαίνου βωμῶν ἕως Ἡρακλείων στηλῶν ὑπὸ τὴν τῆς πατρίδος ἐξουσίαν ἤγαγε, κατεστρέψατο δὲ τὴν Ἀσίαν καὶ τοὺς τῆς Συρίας βασιλεῖς, καὶ τὸ κάλλιστον καὶ μέγιστον μέρος τῆς

But much more must we admire this exceptional greatness of mind when we look at the close of his life, at the period when in addition to his exploits in Spain he had destroyed the power of Carthage and **subjected to the dominion** of his country the largest and finest part Libya from the altars of Philaenus to the pillars of Heracles, when he had reduced Asia and overthrown the kings of Syria and had made the greatest and richest part of the world subject to Rome, and had the opportunity of attaining royal power in whatever part of the world he chose to attempt it.

15. Polybius. *Histories* [Polyb. [book 16 chapter 32 section 4](#)]

τέκνων καὶ τῶν γυναικῶν μᾶλλον ἢ ζῶντες ἔτι πρόληψιν ἔχειν τοῦ πεσεῖσθαι τὰ σφέτερα τέκνα καὶ τὰς γυναῖκας ὑπὸ τὴν τῶν ἐχθρῶν ἐξουσίαν. διὸ καὶ μάλιστ' ἂν τις ἐπὶ τῆς Ἀβυδηῶν περιπετείας μέμψαιτο τῇ τύχῃ, διότι τὰς μὲν τῶν προειρημένων

But the people of Abydus, when thus completely surrounded and with no hope of safety left, resolved to meet their fate and perish to a man together with their wives and children rather than to live under the apprehension that their families would fall **into the power** of their enemies.

16. Polybius. *Histories* [Polyb. [book 18 chapter 15 section 3](#)]

φρουρὰν εἰσδεχόμενοι καὶ συγχρώμενοι ταῖς ἑξωθεν ἐπικουρίαις πρὸς τὰς ἰδίας ὁρμὰς καὶ προθέσεις ὑποβάλλουσι τὰς πατρίδας ὑπὸ τὴν τῶν πλεῖον δυναμένων ἐξουσίαν. τοὺς τοιούτους ὑπὸ τὸ τῆς προδοσίας ὄνομα μετρίως ἂν τις ὑποτάττοι πάντας. οἷς λυσιτελὲς μὲν

or still more justifiably to those who, admitting a garrison and employing external assistance to further their own inclinations and aims, submit their countries **to the domination** of a superior power.

17. Polybius. *Histories* [Polyb. [book 21 chapter 23 section 4](#)]

ναῦς· ὑμᾶς δὲ πάντων τούτων ἀπροσδεήτους οἱ θεοὶ πεποιήκασι, πάντα τὰ κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην τεθεικότες μὲν ὑπὸ τὴν ὑμετέραν ἐξουσίαν. τίνος οὖν ἔτι προσδεῖσθε, καὶ τίνος ἂν ἔτι δέοι πρόνοιαν ὑμᾶς ποιεῖσθαι τὴν ἰσχυροτάτην; δῆλον

But the gods have made all these things superfluous to you, by subjecting the whole world to your dominion.

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18. Strabo. *Geography* [Str. [book 9 chapter 4 section 15](#)]

γὰρ αὕτη παρόδων ἦν κυρία τῶν περὶ τὰ Τέμπη, τό τε Πήλιον ἔχουσα καὶ τὴν Ὀσσαν. ὕστερον δὲ πάντων ὑπὸ μίαν ἐξουσίαν ὑπηγμένων, ἅπαντ' ἀτελεύεται πᾶσι καὶ ἀνέωγε. περὶ δὲ τὰ στενὰ ταῦτα οἱ περὶ Λεωνίδαν μετὰ

But later, now that all peoples have been brought into **subjection to a single power**, everything is free from toll and open to all mankind.

Son of Man in the OT

The expression בן־אדם, which lies behind most of the LXX instances of υἱος ἀνθρώπου, appears 107 times in the OT. The vast majority (93) are in Ezekiel.

To understand the expression, we can pursue the general “son of X” idiom in Hebrew, and some noteworthy instances of the term that might anticipate its use of the Lord Jesus.

Son of X

The general expression is commonly used to indicate someone with the characteristics of X.

Jon 4:10 Then said the LORD, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and **perished in a night** [was the son of a night]:

1Sa 10:27 But the **children of Belial** said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace.

2Sa 1:4 And David said unto him, How went the matter? I pray thee, tell me. And he answered, That the people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are fallen and dead; and Saul and Jonathan his son are **dead** [sons of death] also.

So “son of man” would be somebody who is prototypically man. This appears to be the sense in which the expression is used in its first occurrence in the Bible:

Num 23:19 God *is* not a man אִישׁ, that he should lie; neither the son of man בן־אדם, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do *it*? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

The point is to distinguish God as God from man with his human limitations.

The parallelism of אִישׁ with בן־אדם commonly has this sense, emphasizing the weakness and limitations of humanity:

Job 35:8 Thy wickedness *may hurt* a man as thou *art*; and thy righteousness *may profit* the son of man.

Jer 49:18 As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour *cities* thereof, saith the LORD, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it.

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Jer 49:33 And Hazor shall be a dwelling for dragons, *and* a desolation for ever: there shall no man abide there, nor *any* son of man dwell in it.

Jer 50:40 As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour *cities* thereof, saith the LORD; *so* shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein.

Jer 51:43 Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth *any* son of man pass thereby.

Instances with אנׁישׁ instead of אישׁ:

Job 25:6 How much less man, *that is* a worm? and the son of man, *which is* a worm?

Isa 51:12 I, *even* I, *am* he that comforteth you: who *art* thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man *that* shall die, and of the son of man *which* shall be made *as* grass;

Isa 56:2 Blessed *is* the man *that* doeth this, and the son of man *that* layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.

Other instances:

Job 16:21 O that one might plead for a man with God, as a [son of] man *pleadeth* for his neighbour!

Psa 146:3 Put not your trust in princes, *nor* in the son of man, in whom *there is* no help.

So in general, “son of man” refers to one who is quintessentially human.

Applications to man

Review possible combinations: בן־אדם, בן־אישׁ, בן־אנושׁ, בן־גבר

בן־אדם

139x total, 107x singular. This is the regular source of $\tau\omicron\varsigma$ $\alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma$.

בן־גבר

Does not occur; homographs are proper names in 1 K 4:13; Ezr 2:20.

בן־אישׁ

13x in the OT, almost always in the sense of a specific person, and often used for patronymics and gentilics. Thus:

1Sa 17:12 Now David *was* the son of that Ephrathite בן אישׁ אפרתי of Bethlehemjudah, whose name *was* Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man went among men *for* an old man in the days of Saul.

But four times it refers to men generically:

Psa 4:2 O ye **sons of men**, how long *will ye turn* my glory into shame? *how long* will ye

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love vanity, *and* seek after leasing? Selah.

Psa 49:2 Both low and high איש גב-בני אדם גם-בני איש, rich and poor, together.

Psa 62:9 Surely men of low degree בני אדם *are* vanity, *and* men of high degree בני איש *are* a lie: to be laid in the balance, they *are* altogether *lighter* than vanity.

Lam 3:33 For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the **children of men**.

בן-אנוש

Only once, translated υιος ανθρωπου:

Psa 144:3 LORD, what *is* man, that thou takest knowledge of him! *or* the son of man, that thou makest account of him!

Dan 7:13 is the Aramaic בר-אנש

The Greek translation is almost completely correlated with the meaning: refs in KJV

| | No Greek | Υιος + gentilic | Υιος ανδρος | Υιος ανθρωπου |
|-----------------------------|--|-----------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Specific person or gentilic | Gen 42:13; 1 Sam 17:12 (verse lacking) | Lev 24:10 | 1 Sam 9:1; 2 Sam 1:13; 17:25; 23:20 (but different parsing); 2 Chr 11:22 | Gen 4:11 |
| Generic reference | | | | Psa 4:2; 49:2; 62:9; Lam 3:33 |

Parallels with Ezekiel

“heavens opened”

Here are the places in Scripture where “the heavens were opened” η νפתחו השמים + ανοιγω passive:

Eze 1:1 Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth *month*, in the fifth *day* of the month, as I *was* among the captives by the river of Chebar, *that* the **heavens were opened**, and I saw visions of God.

Mat 3:16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the **heavens were opened** unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: (+ Luke 3:21)

Joh 1:51 And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see **heaven open**, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the **Son of man**.

Act 7:56 And said, Behold, I see the **heavens opened** [so MT; NA27 reads διανοιγω], and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

Act 10:11 And saw **heaven opened**, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:

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Rev 19:11 And I saw **heaven opened**, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

A similar expression is used of sending rain or judgment, though it is the windows or doors of heaven that are opened:

Gen 7:11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the **windows of heaven were opened**.

Psa 78:23 Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and **opened the doors of heaven**,

Isa 24:18 And it shall come to pass, *that* he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high מַמְרִים are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake.

Rev 4:1 After this I looked, and, behold, a **door was opened in heaven**: and the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

Once, God is said to open the heavens, though the verb differs:

Isa 64:1 Oh that thou wouldest rend קרע the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence,

teaches in parables

Eze 20:49 Then said I, Ah Lord GOD! they say of me, Doth he not speak parables?

Mat 13:3 And he spake many things unto them in parables,

W. Harris, *Outlines of Sermons on the Miracles and Parables of the OT* (London, 1878), enumerates 1 for Ezekiel, 7 for Jeremiah, 19 for Ezekiel, 3 for Daniel, and 7 for Zechariah, but these are not exclusive (Amos has at least two: ch. 7 and ch. 8). And the definition of “parable” is not made clear.

Παραβολη is the dominant (27/49) and dedicated (28/37) translation of מִשְׁל. Consider the distribution of מִשְׁל in the OT: 7x in Numbers (in Balaam’s oracles), 14 in Job-Ps-Prov, twice each in 1 Samuel and 1 Kings, and only one each in other books, except for Ezekiel, which uses the term 8x (more than any other book).

bears the iniquity of his people

Like the sinner, the sacrifice, and the priest (to which company he belongs), he is said to “bear sin.” (Compare here Smeaton: Thus we find it applied—(1) to the sinner; (2) to the sacrifice; (3)

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to the priest; and (4) to God Himself³⁸).

The dominant instance in Ezekiel is ch. 4. Other instances where priests bear sin:

Lev 10:16-17 And Moses diligently sought the goat of the sin offering, and, behold, it was burnt: and he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron *which were left alive*, saying, 17 Wherefore have ye not eaten the sin offering in the holy place, seeing it *is* most holy, and *God* hath given it you **to bear the iniquity of the congregation**, to make atonement for them before the LORD?

Num 18:22-23 Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin, and die. 23 But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and **they shall bear their iniquity**: *it shall be* a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance.

Exo 28:36-38 And thou shalt make a plate *of* pure gold, and grave upon it, *like* the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. 37 And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. 38 And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that **Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things**, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD.

Gergesenes and Gadarenes (8:28)

There are three variants in the accounts of this passage: “Gadarenes,” “Gergesenes,” and “Gerasenes.”

Matthew MT reads “country of the Gergesenes,” while SBL favors “Gadarenes.” The only attestation of “Gerasene” is in Latin mss.

Mark 5:1 and Luke 8:26 have all three. In both cases, MT reads “Gadarenes” and SBL favors “Gerasenes”

Topographically (Rainey and Notley, 359-360),

- Gerasa = Jerash is 33 miles SE of the Sea, too far to be their destination.
- Gadara = Umm Qeis is six miles SE, but has a harbor. On the basis of a tower on the north side of the harbor, Notley thinks that Gadara’s territory does not extend north far enough to have any steep cliffs.
- The topography fits an identification of Gergesa with el-Kursi, farther north. This ID goes back to Origen and Eusebius.

Notley limits the northern extent of Gadara’s territory based on a tower on the north of the

38 Smeaton, G. (1871). *The doctrine of the atonement, as taught by Christ Himself* (Second Edition., p. 104). Edinburgh: T&T Clark.

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harbor. But this conclusion is interpretation. The very fact that Gadara had a harbor six miles from the city itself reflects considerable influence, and it is quite conceivable that the people of the area to the north could have been regarded as “Gadarenes.”

Carson suggests that the Gerasa reading may in fact refer to el-Kursi, a site on the eastern shore of Galilee with old ecclesiastical remains, with “Gergesa” an alternative spelling based on a gutteral “r.” One may add that Matthew might have preferred this spelling precisely to distinguish it from the better known Gerasa = Jerash, and Origen and Eusebius know it with the “g.” This theory has been reinforced by recent archaeological evidence (BAR July-August 1999; original publication by Mendel Nun in 1989) of a well-developed fishing village with a harbor at Kursi. The site also has the required topography of a steep hill adjacent to the sea.

The topology suggests that SBL is wrong on all counts, and in the MT, Matthew has it right. It’s ironic that the text critics reject the MT reading and yet there is increasing evidence that it is historically correct!

Demon Possession

Demonic activity certainly spikes with our Lord’s advent into the world, but it is not unknown in the OT. An excellent survey study is <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1998/06/old-testament-demonology>.

“Fear not” (μη + √φοβew impv) vs. “Be of good cheer” (√θαρσεw impv)

| | Θαρσεw | Μη √φοβew | Ου √φοβew | Μη √πτοεομαι | Other |
|------------------|---|-----------|-----------|--------------|-------|
| אל √ירא | 10 (6x in minor prophets, who never use μη φοβew) | 60 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| לא √ירא | | 8 | | | |
| מיראתך | | 1 | | | |
| אל תחת | | 2 | | | |
| √בתה | 1 | | | | |
| Different Hebrew | | 4 | | | |

64 instances of אל-ירא are not translated θαρσεw. Most of them represent μη φοβew. Exceptions:

- 2 Ch 32:7 μη πτοηθητε
- Prov 3:25 ου φοβew

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- Isa 41:14 lacking
- Jer 30:10 (entire verse should be LXX 37:10, but lacking)

Of the 75 instances of μη φοβεω, the following represent something other than אל-ירא:

- Gen 28:13, lacking in MT, added after the Lord's self-declaration.
- Deut 31:18; Psa 112:8; Job 5:21; 9:35; 11:15; Mal 3:5; Isa 8:12; Ezek 3:9 לא ירא
- Prov 7:1, lacking in MT; LXX adds at the end of the verse, "Pro 7:1 My son, honour the Lord, and thou shalt be strong; and fear none but him"
- Isa 13:2 inserts between "raise the voice" and "shake the hand."
- Isa 63:17 idiomatic translation of מִיִּרְאָתָךְ by τοῦ μη φοβεῖσθαι σε
- Jer 1:17; 10:2 אל-תהח
- Dan 11:12, apparently a different Hebrew: in place of Dan 11:12 וְלֹא יֵעֹז, Dan 11:12 και οὐ μη φοβηθῆ (Theodotion follows the Hebrew).

Clearly, negated φοβεω is both dominant and dedicated with respect to negated ירא. Six out of the ten LXX instances of θαρσεω are in the minor prophets, which never use negated φοβεω, so this is just a translation variant. But how about the other four?

Gen 35:17 And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also.

Exo 14:13 And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.

Exo 20:20 And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.

1Ki 17:13 And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go *and* do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring *it* unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.

Notably, all four of these are spoken by people, not by the Lord! Conversely, the plurality of instances of negated φοβεω (26x) translate the words of the Lord. There are 34 exceptions (other than the minor prophets): Joseph (Gen 43:23; 50:19; 50:21); Caleb and Joshua (Num 14:9); Moses (Deu 1:21; 20:3; Deu 31:6 [*But cf. Jos 8:1, spoken by the Lord*]); Joshua (Jos 10:25 [*Quoting what the Lord has twice (8:1; 10:8) said to him*]); Jael (Jdg 4:18); Boaz (Rut 3:11); Women (1Sa 4:20); Samuel (1Sa 12:20); David (1Sa 22:23; 2Sa 9:7; 1Ch 22:13; 28:20); Jonathan (1Sa 23:17); Saul (1Sa 28:13); Absalom (2Sa 13:28); Elisha (2Ki 6:16); Gedaliah (2Ki 25:24; Jer 40:9); Jehoshaphat (2Ch 20:17); Hezekiah (2Ch 32:7); Nehemiah: Neh 4:14); Eliphaz (Job 5:22); Sons of Korah (Psa 49:16); Solomon (Pro 3:25); Isaiah (but as the Lord's spokesman) (Isa 7:4; 35:4; 40:9; 54:4); Angel to Daniel (Dan 10:12, 19).

Only Genesis uses both translations (7 instances of negated φοβεω, one of θαρσεω). Exodus and 1 Kings have no instances of negated φοβεω. So the only place we can really formulate a contrastive analysis would be in Genesis.

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In the NT, all of the twenty instances of negated φοβέω are spoken by the Lord or an angel, and most seem to deal with the fear inspired by the appearance of the Lord or an angel, or in discussions of fearing the Lord. I find six exceptions:

Mar 5:36 = Luke 8:50 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe.

Luk 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Joh 12:15 Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. *Quote from Zech 9:9, where however both MT and LXX read "rejoice greatly" rather than "fear not." Carson suggests they come from Isa 40:9.*

Act 18:9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: *This is an appearance of the Lord, but the context is protection from persecution.*

Act 27:24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.

1Pe 3:14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy *are ye*: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

Here is an example that uses both words:

Mat 14:27 = Mark 6:50 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

Times in the NT that ordinary people say θαρσεω:

Mar 10:49 And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. *But they are speaking on the Lord's behalf*

With the instances in Acts where God tells Paul not to fear, compare

Act 23:11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

The instances of Paul in Acts suggest that θαρσεω emphasizes the positive outcome to be expected, while negated φοβέω promises protection from the negative consequences that could arise.

9:6, 8 εξουσια

Clearly, in the context, εξουσια is something that must be received from a higher power. The point in both verses is that a man is allowed to do something that is a divine prerogative. When

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God's absolute power is in view, we are more likely to read of δυναμις (e.g., 1 Chr 29:11-12; Matt 6:13).

The distinction is not absolute; God himself is spoken of as having εξουσια:

In the first instance, then, εξουσια signifies the absolute possibility of action which is proper to God, who cannot be asked concerning the relationship of power and legality in this εξουσια, since He is the source of both. Thus the word εξουσια arises in two passages which speak directly of God's incontrovertible freedom to act: Lk. 12:5: φοβήθητε τὸν μετὰ τὸ ἀποκτεῖναι ἔχοντα εξουσίαν ἐμβαλεῖν εἰς τὴν γέενναν, and Ac. 1:7: οὐχ ὑμῶν ἐστὶν γινῶναι χρόνους ἢ καιροὺς οὓς ὁ πατὴρ ἔθετο ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ εξουσίᾳ. Cf. also Jd. 25: μόνῳ θεῷ σωτῆρι ἡμῶν ... δόξα μεγαλωσύνη κράτος καὶ εξουσία πρὸ παντὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος καὶ νῦν καὶ εἰς πάντα τοὺς αἰῶνας (sc. ἐστίν), where εξουσία occupies an important place alongside κράτος. This εξουσία is that of the Creator. This is expressed by Paul in the metaphor of R. 9:21: οὐκ ἔχει εξουσίαν ὁ κεραμεὺς τοῦ πηλοῦ ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ φυράματος ποιῆσαι ὃ μὲν εἰς τιμὴν σκεῦδος, ὃ δὲ εἰς ἀτιμίαν; While Philo traces back creation to the ἀγαθότης of God, and dominion over what is created to the εξουσία, for Paul the process of creation itself is an exercise of the absolute power of God and its supreme expression, since what is created owes its being to the Creator and thus bears witness in its very existence to the εξουσία of the Creator. ... God has final εξουσία over the plagues, Rev. 16:9: ἐβλασφήμησαν τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἔχοντος τὴν εξουσίαν ἐπὶ τὰς πληγὰς ταύτας.³⁹

He does not receive this authority from anyone; it is intrinsic to himself. Nevertheless, it would repay study to consider the evolution of this term, and to find the earliest uses ascribing it to God, as opposed to cases where it is something that he gives to people.

In any case, in our verses it is clearly derivative.

9:8 τοῖς ἀνθρώποις

The expression is taken by commentators of an ecclesiastical bent to reflect the authority of the church to forgive sin (e.g., John Nolland in NIGTC). Carson, France, Morris and others disagree, and say that the articular plural is simply generalizing, leading to the AV's translation. Bengel suggests (as pointed out by his editor) that the dative is of benefit, "for men," expressing the wide scope of the benefit, as in 9:6.

Here's a survey of the articular plural of ἀνθρώπος in Matthew. It appears 26x in Matthew; the other 25 are all generic (with the possible exception of 13:25). It seems safe to say that leaning on the article to make the expression refer to the community or the disciples goes well beyond Matthew's usual use of the construction elsewhere.

- 5:13 trodden under foot of men

³⁹ Kittel, G., Bromiley, G. W., & Friedrich, G. (Eds.). (1964–). *Theological dictionary of the New Testament* (electronic ed., Vol. 2, pp. 566–567). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

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- 5:16 let your light so shine before men
- 5:19 shall teach men so
- 6:1 do not your alms before men
- 6:2 that they may have glory of men
- 6:5 that they may be seen of men
- 6:14 if ye forgive men their trespasses
- 6:15 if ye forgive men not their trespasses
- 6:16 that they may appear unto men to fast
- 6:18 that thou appear not unto men to fast
- 7:12 whatsoever ye will that men should do unto you
- 10:17 beware of men
- 10:32 confess me before men
- 10:33 deny me before men
- 12:31 shall be forgiven unto men
- 12:36 every idle word that men shall speak
- 13:25 while men slept (ESV “his men”)
- 16:13 whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?
- 16:23 thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men
- 19:12 which were made eunuchs of men
- 23:4 they lay them on men’s shoulders
- 23:5 to be seen of men
- 23:7 to be called of men, “Rabbi, Rabbi”
- 23:13 ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men
- 23:28 ye ... appear righteous unto men

Chronology of 9:18

While Matthew is organized more topically than chronologically, this clause clearly requires a close sequence between the Lord’s discourse with the Pharisees and disciples of John at Matthew’s dinner, and the coming of Jairus. This appears to be at variance with Mark and Luke, who put the call of Matthew and the dinner before the healing of the demoniacs (Mark 2:13-22; Luke 5:27-39) and the coming of Jairus after (Mark 5:23; Luke 8:40).

Carson appropriately suggests a division before the call of Matthew (which would be before the boat trip) and the dinner (which comes after). All gospels group them together, Mark and Luke before the trip, and Matthew after. On this suggestion, we can reconstruct the chronology as follows:

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| | Matt | Mark | Luke |
|---|----------|---|---|
| Call of Matthew | (9:9) | 2:13-14 | 5:27-28 |
| Healing of the demoniacs | 8:28-9:1 | 5:1-20 | 8:26-39 |
| Return and greeting by the crowds | | 5:21 And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him: and he was nigh unto the sea. | 8:40 And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people <i>gladly</i> received him: for they were all waiting for him. |
| Matthew's dinner and comments by the Pharisees and John's disciples | 9:10-17 | (2:15-22) | (5:29-39) |
| Jairus' Daughter | 9:18-26 | Mar 5:22-43 And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet, ... | Luk 8:41-56 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: |

This arrangement strongly suggests some additional insights.

1. Matthew is called from his seat at the custom post, just before the voyage. It appears that the Lord calls him and immediately takes him onto the boat. If this is so, there is a contrast with the scribe of v. 19. We are left to contemplate the contrast between the timidity of one who devotes himself to the study of the law, and the reckless obedience of the publican.
2. It is barely possible that Matthew *is* the scribe of v. 19! If his other name "Levi" reflects his tribal background, he might well have been a scribe, and certainly his use of the OT throughout the gospel shows a deep knowledge of them. Then the order would have been the call (9:9), the request to come on the boat ride (8:19), and so forth. But more likely they are two different people: the scribe appears to seek out the Lord on his own in 8:19, while the Lord takes the initiative in 9:9.
3. In any case, Matthew would be on the boat ride. Upon his return, the crowds are pressing on them, and Matthew takes them home for dinner, which leads to the comments of the Pharisees and the disciples of John, at which point they are interrupted (all three gospels record "behold") by Jairus' request.

Arguments that combine logic and scripture

Our Lord's argument to the Pharisees in 9:12-13 anticipates the combination of reason and biblical citation later in the NT

In arguing that an itinerant is entitled to support, Paul writes:

1Co 9:7 Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the

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flock? 8 Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? 9 For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? 10 Or saith he *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.

After an extended argument based on creation order in Genesis:

1Co 11:13 Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? 14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? 15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for *her* hair is given her for a covering.

To the Galatians:

Gal 3:15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though *it be* but a man's covenant, yet *if it be* confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. 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. 17 And this I say, *that* the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

James follows the same pattern:

Act 15:13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men *and* brethren, hearken unto me: 14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. 15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, 16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: 17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. 18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. 19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:

Revealing vs. Concealing Miracles

The Lord gives differing instructions as to whether those who benefit from his healings should reveal what has happened or not.

On some, he enjoins secrecy:

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

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

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Mat 12:15 But when Jesus knew *it*, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; 16 And charged them that they should not make him known: 17 **That it might be fulfilled** which was spoken by Esaias the prophet [42:1-4], saying, 18 Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. 19 He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. 20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. 21 And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

Mat 16:20 Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

Mat 17:9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

In other cases, he urges public declaration. This is the case with one of the demoniacs, though Matthew does not record it. The instances I have been able to find are among Gentiles or those of questionable orthodoxy:

Mar 5:19 Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. ~ Luke 8:38-39

Joh 4:16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

Perhaps the explanation in Matt 12:17 is the key. The Lord wants to avoid premature and inappropriate Messianic fervor (such as we see in John 6:15). Among those on the fringes (the Gergesenes; the Samaritans) this risk is lower, and in fact they are the “Gentiles” to whom Isaiah promised that the Servant would “shew judgment.”

The command to silence

As noted in the previous section, the Lord typically commands those he heals not to make him known.

Note Trench (Miracles, p. 213):

But of the interpreters of the Reformed Church, whose first principle is to take God's Word as absolute rule and law, and to worship Him not with self-advised services, but after the pattern which He has shown, all stand fast to this, that obedience is better than sacrifice, even though the sacrifice be intended for God's special honour (1 Sam. xv. 21). They see, therefore, in this publishing of the miracle, despite of Christ's word to the contrary, a blemish in the perfectness of their faith who thus disobeyed ; a fault which remained a fault, even while they recognize it as one which only grateful hearts could have committed.

And Farrar (Life of Christ, I.359):

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There are some who have admired their disobedience, and have attributed it to the enthusiasm of gratitude and admiration; but was it not rather the enthusiasm of a blatant wonder, the vulgarity of a chattering boast? How many of these multitudes who had been healed by Him became His true disciples? Did not the holy fire of devotion which a hallowed silence must have kept alive upon the altar of their hearts die away in the mere blaze of empty rumour? Did not He know best? Would not obedience have been better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams? Yes. It is possible to deceive ourselves; it is possible to offer to Christ a seeming service which disobeys His inmost precepts -- to grieve Him, under the guise of honouring Him, by vain repetitions, and empty genuflections, and bitter intolerance, and irreverent familiarity, and the hollow simulacrum of a dead devotion. Better, far better, to serve Him by doing the things He said than by a seeming zeal, often false in exact proportion to its obtrusiveness, for the glory of His name. These disobedient babblers, who talked so much of Him, did but offer Him the dishonouring service of a double heart; their violation of His commandment served only to hinder His usefulness, to trouble His spirit, and to precipitate His death.

“Son of David” in Matthew

The title appears 16x in the KJV,⁴⁰ all in the synoptics, but Matthew’s 10 instances dominate (leaving three each for Mark and Luke). In Matthew, the title appears

- 1x in our Lord’s description in v. 1: “Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham”
- 1x as a title of Joseph in 1:20
- 1x in dispute with the Pharisees, 22:42
- 2x in the greeting in the triumphal entry, 21:9, 15

The other five are all in connection with healings.

- 3x by the four blind men, 9:27; 20:30, 31
- 1x by the Syro-Phoenician woman, 15:22
- 1x as a conclusion voiced by the crowd after seeing his healings, 12:23.

From this we can suggest:

1. 1:1 shows that this title (like “Christ”) is central in Matthew’s mind. He wants to show that the title belongs to him.
2. The question of the multitudes in 12:23 anticipates their declaration in 21:9, 15. The healings are evidence that he is the promised Messiah (as Isa 35:5,6 shows).
3. But who before the triumphal entry actually acknowledges him as Son of David? Not the people at large, but a gentile woman (15:22) and four blind men! It is not physical sight or descent that qualifies one to recognize him, but the work of the Spirit.

⁴⁰ This count includes Matt 22:42, where “son of” is not explicit but understood, and Mark 12:35, where a verb disrupts the title.