

The Gospel of Matthew

Booklet 09– Two Lessons

Lesson 22 - Matthew 8:1-4

Lesson 23 - Matthew 8:4-13

*The Last Teachings of the
Sermon on the Mount.
Jesus as a Healer*



International ESL/Bible Lessons
Intermediate to Advanced Level

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Much of the material in these lessons come from *The Gospel of Matthew, Vol. I*, by William Barclay. Daily Study Bible Series. Other content comes from Bible Commentaries, Dictionaries and on-line sources. All pictures are from Google Images.

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Section Three

Description of sections

Material for these sections is from William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew: The Daily Study Bible Series*. The Westminster Press.

Philadelphia. 1975

Section One from Chapters 1-4 — The Genealogy of Jesus, The Birth Story, The John the Baptist Sequences, Baptism and Temptation of Jesus.

Section Two from Chapters 5-7 — The Sermon on the Mount, or the Teachings of Jesus. These are gathered into a group from all the time of Jesus's ministry. These are the *words* of Jesus.

Section Three from Chapters 8-28 — The actions or *doings* of Jesus.

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Lesson 22 - Matthew 8:1-4 Jesus Heals a Man With Leprosy

⁸ When Jesus came down from the mountainside, / large crowds followed him. / ² A man with leprosy / came and knelt before him / and said, / “Lord, if you are willing, / you can make me clean.”

³ Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. / “I am willing,” / he said. / “Be clean!” / immediately, he was cleansed of his leprosy. /

⁴ Then Jesus said to him, / “See that you don’t tell anyone. / But go, / show yourself to the priest / and offer the gift Moses commanded, / as a testimony to them.”

Vocabulary

1. Leprosy: Tropical skin and nerve disease.
2. Clean, cleansed: Healed
3. Testimony: Proof or evidence.

Questions

1. What has happened in modern medicine about leprosy?
2. Why would Jesus break the laws and touch an unclean man?
3. What does the word *unclean* mean to you?
4. What do we normally do when we get sick? What are the first, second and third actions we take.

Notes

1. Leprosy was a dreaded and hated disease of the ancient world. There was no cure. The society made rules to deal with this awful disease. So both the physical and the societal elements made this the worst of all afflictions for an individual to have.
2. The Physical: Two types: Ulcerated nodules or infected bumps appeared, and they gave off a foul or very smelly discharge. The eyes just stared, the vocal chords became ulcerated, and the breath wheezed. The hands and feet ulcerated, and this kind of slow death lasted about 9 years.
3. The second type of Leprosy came with nerve damage; the muscles wasted away, the tendons of the hands contracted making the hands like claws. The feet and hands ulcerated and often fell off. This type of loss of body parts and nerve endings could last twenty to thirty years before death.
4. The Rules of Society were equally bad for the infected person. The historian Josephus tells us that the lepers were treated like dead men. As soon as the diagnosis occurred, the leper was absolutely and completely banished from human society. The leper had to tear his clothes, mess up his hair, and he had to cry aloud wherever he went, "Unclean! Unclean!"

5. Even in the middle Ages, if a man became a leper, the priest would bring him into the church and read the burial service over him. For all human purposes the man was dead.
6. In Judea and Palestine in the time of Jesus, the leper was barred from Jerusalem and from all walled towns. The Jewish law listed sixty-one different contacts that made a man unclean or defiled, and the contact with a leper was the second most important, the contact with a dead body was the first.
7. No disease so separated a man from society as leprosy. Yet Jesus reached out and actually touched one.
8. It is a little miracle that the Leper approached Jesus at all. Normally a religious person would stone him and drive him away. But the Leper came with a level of confidence, belief and humility that Jesus would help. Remember he said, "If you can help..." The Greek word to describe his attitudes was *proskunein*, and that word is never used of anything but *worship*.
9. Jesus was compassionate, and he did heal. Jesus obeyed the law of love, but he also obeyed the law of the Jews. Jesus was not reckless, for he ordered the man to silence. He often told those he helped to remain silent about it. Why? Palestine was occupied by the Romans. They killed the people who were different or who spoke out against them. No one was allowed a following or to be more powerful than Rome. So Jesus had to take care that his

power was neither used for political power nor misunderstood in any way.

10. Jesus sent the Leper to the priests. He knew the law and he knew the man must obey the law of the religion. After he did all the ceremonial and cleansing things, offered sacrifices, and fulfilled the letter of the law, he could receive a letter that declared him clean. Then he could re-enter the world of his friends and family.
11. Jesus told the man to go through the process. There is good guidance here. Jesus was telling that man not to neglect the treatment that was available for him in those days. We do not receive miracles by neglecting medical and scientific treatment open to us. Men must do all men can do before God's power may co-operate with our efforts. A miracle does not come by a lazy waiting upon God to do it all; it comes from the co-operation of the faith-filled effort of man with the illimitable grace of God.
(Barclay, p. 300)

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Lesson 23 - Matthew 8:5-13 The Faith of the Centurion

⁵ When Jesus had entered Capernaum, / a centurion came to him, / asking for help. / ⁶ “Lord,” / he said, / “my servant lies at home paralyzed, / suffering terribly.”

⁷ Jesus said to him, / “Shall I come and heal him?”

⁸ The centurion replied, / “Lord, / I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. / But just say the word, / and my servant will be healed. / ⁹ For I myself am a man under authority, / with soldiers under me. / I tell this one, / ‘Go,’ / and he goes; / and that one, / ‘Come,’ / and he comes. / I say to my servant, / ‘Do this,’ / and he does it.”

¹⁰ When Jesus heard this, / he was amazed / and said to those following him, / “Truly I tell you, / I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. / ¹¹ I say to you / that many will come from the east and the west, / and will take their places / at the feast with Abraham, / Isaac / and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. / ¹² But the subjects of the kingdom / will be thrown outside, / into the darkness, / where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

¹³ Then Jesus said to the centurion, / “Go! / Let it be done / just as you believed it would.” / And his servant was healed at that moment.

Vocabulary

1. Centurion: Ancient Roman army officer.
2. Paralyzed: Unable to walk or move.
3. Amazed: Surprised.

Questions

1. Jesus had chosen Capernaum as his “headquarter” during his ministry. Where is Capernaum?
2. Why would a military man, with authority, come to Jesus?
3. How do you think the Centurion knew about Jesus?
4. How powerful was the Roman Army in Galilee?
5. How did a person become a slave in ancient times?
6. How does one become a slave today?

Notes

1. The Centurion was the backbone of the Roman army.
The Roman Legion had 6,000 men.
It was divided into Sixty Centuries.
Each Century had 100 men. In command of a century was a Centurion. These Centurions were long-service, regular soldiers of the Roman Army. They were responsible for the discipline of the regiment, and they were the cement which held the army together.

2. Polybius was the Greek historian who described his era from 264–146 BC in detail. He wrote of the Centurion in the Roman Army: “They must not be so much venturesome seekers after danger as men who can command, steady in action, and reliable; they ought not to be over-anxious to rush into the fight, but when hard pressed, they must be ready to hold their ground, and die at their posts.”
3. It is interesting that every Centurion mentioned in the New Testament is mentioned with honor. There is the Centurion at the cross of Jesus, Cornelius, the first gentile convert to Christianity and many, many others.
4. This Centurion was very different in his attitude toward his slave.
5. The slave in the time of Rome and for thousands of years was no better than a thing. He had NO legal rights and his master could treat him as he liked.
6. Gaius, the Roman legal expert, writes in his work *The Institutes* “We many note that it is universally accepted that the master possesses the power of life and death over the slave.”
7. Varro, the Roman writer on agriculture, has a grim passage in which he divides the instruments of agriculture into three classes—the articulate, the inarticulate, and the mute. “The articulate comprising the slaves, the inarticulate comprising the

cattle, and the must comprising the vehicles.” The only difference between a slave and a beast or a cart was that the slave could speak. “

8. The Centurion was a Gentile and Jesus was a Jew. According to Jewish law, a Jew could not enter the house of a Gentile for all Gentile dwelling places were unclean. That is why Jesus asked, “Am I to come and heal him?”
9. The Centurion was a commander of men. He knew that Jesus could just speak and his servant would be healed. That spoke of his faith and his recognition that Jesus was powerful and more than equal to his task.
10. The miracle here was that Jesus could heal at a distance. He could heal with a word a slave he had never seen and never would see.

