



Chapter 9

Healings

Call of Matthew

Jairus' Daughter

Woman with issue of blood

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In the previous chapter we have seen six miracles which demonstrate that the King has the dynamic, the power, to enforce the ethic He has pronounced, and the chapter before us continues the same thought. We see Him performing physical miracles of healing, one that I classify as supernatural (the raising of the dead) and the spiritual miracle of casting out a demon.¹

Matthew 9:1

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

[own city] Jesus came back across the lake to Capernaum.

His headquarters (Matthew 4:13; Matthew 8:5)

“His own town” was Capernaum, a good choice for Jesus’ base of operations. It was a wealthy city due to fishing and trade. Situated on the Sea of Galilee in a densely populated area, Capernaum housed the Roman garrison that kept peace in the region. The city was a cultural melting pot, greatly influenced by Greek and Roman manners, dress, architecture, and politics.

He came into his own city—Viz. Capernaum, where he seems to have had his common residence at the house of Peter. See Matthew 4:13, and Matthew 8:14. This verse properly belongs to the preceding chapter.²

Jesus returned to **his own city**, Capernaum, the home base of his ministry in Galilee. The healing probably took place in Peter's home (cf. 8:14–15).³

Spurgeon: Many times he crossed the lake of Galilee; but this time, more in sadness than in anger, he left a people behind him who had prayed him to depart. He had made Capernaum his own city by the privileges wherewith he had exalted it. What a name! “His own city.” It was its highest honor that he came sailing into its port, even he who was Lord High Admiral of all seas. Yet the favored city refused him, and knew not its day. May none of us be thus favored, and prove thus unworthy!⁴

Matthew 9:2

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

[palsy] A paralytic (Matthew 4:24).

¹McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:52). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² Adam Clarke’s Commentary

³ ESV Study Bible

⁴ Spurgeon’s Commentary on Matthew

paralytic. Jesus had already cured paralysis (4:24; 8:6), and these people had no doubt heard of his miraculous powers. **Your sins are forgiven** implies that in this case sin and sickness are related but also that, of the two, sin is the more fundamental problem. Though individual sin is not always the direct cause of a person's disease or illness (John 9:2–3), ultimately all corruption and death result from the entrance of sin into the world (see Gen. 2:17; 3:16–19).⁵

[bed] A portable mat, which could be rolled up and carried by one man (Mark 2:3; Luke 5:18; John 5:8-12; Acts 5:15).

[thy sins be forgiven thee] First fulfillment of Matthew 1:21 on record. This and many other cases of remission of sins were before and without water baptism and other rituals demanded by some modern teachers (Matthew 9:2,22; Mark 5:34; Mark 10:52; Luke 7:36-50; Luke 8:48; Luke 18:9-14; Luke 9:1-9; Luke 23:43; John 4:49-53; John 7:31; John 8:30-31; John 11:45; John 12:11,42; Acts 3:1-16; Acts 4:12; Acts 10:43; Acts 11:14; Acts 15:9).

Also mentioned in Mark 2 and Luke 5. Some think that this is the same story as the one where the friends took the tiles off the roof of where Jesus was speaking and lowered their paralyzed friend down into the place so Jesus could heal him. Some think that Matthew just left off these details, it being the same healing. Jesus is talking about healing something far deeper than physical.⁶

Seeing their faith—The faith of the paralytic person, and the faith of those who brought him; (see Mark 2:4 note).

Be of good cheer—Θαρσει τεκνον, Son, take courage! Probably he began to despond, and Christ spoke thus to support his faith.

Thy sins be forgiven thee—Moral evil has been the cause of all the natural evil in the world. Christ goes to the source of the malady, which is sin; and to that as the procuring cause we should refer in all our afflictions. It is probable that this paralytic person had, in the earnest desires of his heart, entreated the cure of his soul, leaving his body to the care of others, as the first miracle of healing is wrought on his soul. In a state of helplessness, when we seek above all things to please God, by giving him our hearts, he often inspires others with the care of our temporal necessities. It may be necessary to be observed, that it was a maxim among the Jews that no diseased person could be healed till all his sins were blotted out. See Nedarim, fol. 41. Hence our Lord first forgives the sins, and then heals the body of the paralytic person. This appears to have been founded on Psalm 103:3. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, and healeth all thy diseases. Here pardon precedes health. See also Psalm 41:3, 4. It may be observed, also, that most people are more in earnest about their souls when in sickness than in health, and therefore are more earnest in prayer for salvation.⁷

⁵ ESV Study Bible

⁶ Chuck Missler, Commentary on Matthew, khouse.org

⁷ Adam Clarke's Commentary

Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. It may seem remarkable that, since the man came only to be *healed*, Jesus should have at first declared his sins forgiven. For this the following reasons may be suggested:

1st. The man might have brought on this affection of the palsy by a long course of vicious indulgence. Conscious of guilt, he may have feared that he was so great a sinner that Christ would not regard him. He therefore assured him that his offences were pardoned, and that he might lay aside his fears.

2nd. Jesus might be willing to show his power to forgive sins. Had he stated it without any miracle, the Jews would not have believed it, and even his disciples might have been staggered. In proof of it, he worked a miracle; and no one, therefore, could doubt that he had the power. The miracle was wrought in *express attestation* of the assertion that he had the power to forgive sins. As God would not work a miracle to confirm a falsehood, or to deceive men, the miracle was a solemn confirmation, on the part of God, that Jesus had the power to forgive sins.

3rd. The Jews regarded disease as the effect of sin, John 9:2; James 5:14,15. There is a *real* connexion between sin and suffering, as in the case of gluttony, intemperate drinking, lewdness, debauchery. Jesus might be willing to direct the minds of the spectators to this fact; and by pointing them to a manifest instance of the effect of sin, to lead them to hate and forsake it. Diseases are sometimes the direct judgment of God for sin, 1 Corinthians 5:3-5, 11:30, 2 Samuel 24:10-14. This truth, also, Christ might have been desirous of impressing on the people.⁸

CHART: JESUS AND FORGIVENESS

<i>Jesus forgave</i>	<i>Reference</i>
the paralytic lowered on a mat through the roof.	Matt. 9:2-8
the woman caught in adultery.	John 8:3-11
the woman who anointed his feet with oil.	Luke 7:47-50
Peter, for denying he knew Jesus.	John 18:15-18, 25-27; John 21:15-19
the criminal on the cross.	Luke 23:39-43
the people who crucified him.	Luke 23:34

Jesus not only taught frequently about forgiveness, he also demonstrated his own willingness to forgive. Here are several examples that should be an encouragement to recognize his willingness to forgive us also.⁹

[seeing their faith] Faith can be seen (Mark 2:5; Luke 5:20; Acts 14:9) as well as unbelief (Mark 6:6; Mark 16:14).

⁸ Barnes' Notes on the New Testament

⁹ Life Application Notes

We are given details in Mark's account concerning this event. Mark tells us how this man was let down through the roof of a house, and the Lord both healed him and forgave him his sins. Healing and the forgiveness of sins are related.¹⁰

Spurgeon: Here our King displays his power over weakness. The man is sad and paralyzed; the weight of sin is on his conscience, and his body is in bonds. Yet he has good friends, who band themselves together, and four of them carry him up to the roof of the house wherein our Lord is preaching, and let him down, in his bed, by ropes. They have faith in Jesus, and so has he; and the Lord answers to their faith with a cheering word, in which he called him "child." How sweet a word for a young man, and for one so feeble! His mental distress was the hardest to suffer, and our Lord removed it with a word. Perhaps the youth's sin had some connection with his palsy, and hence his double distress. None but Jesus could pardon sin; but with a royal word he pronounced effectual absolution. This he gave first, because most longed for by the paralytic, because the greatest boon, because the evil it removed lies at the root of every other, and because he thus unveiled his majesty, and had an opportunity to instruct opposers. How the youth's face brightened as he felt the comfort of that effectual forgiveness! He could not as yet walk, but he felt more happy than tongue could tell. "thy sins be forgiven thee" is a note which never fails to bring "good cheer" to the saddest heart.

Matthew 9:3

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

They are saying that only God can forgive sins.

This man blasphemeth—βλασφημεω comes either from βλαπτειν την φημην, to hurt or blast the reputation or credit of another, or from βαλλειν ταις φημαις, to smite with reports. Whenever it is used in reference to GOD, it simply signifies, to speak impiously of his nature, or attributes, or works. Injurious speaking is its proper translation when referred to man.

The scribes were the literati of that time; and their learning, because not used in dependence on God, rendered them proud, envious, and obstinate. Unsanctified knowledge has still the same effect: that light serves only to blind and lead men out of the way which is not joined with uprightness of heart. The most sacred truths often become an occasion of delusion, where men are under the government of their evil passions.¹¹

This man blasphemeth. The word *blaspheme* originally means to speak evil of any one, to injure by words, to blame unjustly. When applied to God, it means to speak of him unjustly, to ascribe to him acts and attributes which he does not possess, or to speak impiously or profanely. It also means to say or do anything by which his name or honour is insulted, or which conveys an impress on unfavourable to God. It means, also, to

¹⁰ McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:52). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹¹ Adam Clarke's Commentary

attempt to do or say a thing which belongs to him alone, or which he only can do. This is its meaning here. Christ was charged *with saying a thing in his own name, or attempting to do a thing which properly belonged to God*; thus assuming the *place* of God, and doing him injury, as the scribes supposed, by an invasion of his prerogatives. "None," said they, (see Mark and Luke,) "can forgive sins but God only" In this they reasoned correctly. See Isaiah 43:25, 44:22. None of the prophets had this power; and by saying that *he forgave sins*, Jesus was understood to affirm that he was Divine; and as he proved this by working a miracle *expressly* to confirm the claim, it follows that he is Divine, or equal with the Father.¹²

Matthew 9:4

And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, *Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?*

Jesus knowing (seeing) their thoughts—In telling them what the thoughts of their hearts were, (for they had expressed nothing publicly), he gave them the fullest proof of his power to forgive sins; because God only can forgive sins, and God only can search and know the heart. Jesus pronounced the man's sins forgiven; and gave the scribes the fullest proof of his power to do so, by telling them what, in the secret of their souls, they thought on the subject.

God sounds the secrets of all hearts—no sin escapes his notice; how senseless then is the sinner to think he sins securely when unseen by men! Let us take heed to our hearts, as well as to our conduct, for God searches out and condemns all that does not spring from, and leads not to himself.

Jesus knowing their thoughts. Mark says, "Jesus perceived *in his spirit that they so reasoned*". The power of searching the hearts, and knowing the thoughts of men, belongs only to God, 1 Chronicles 28:9, Romans 8:27, Revelation 2:23, Jeremiah 17:10. In claiming this, as Jesus did here, and often elsewhere, he gave clear proofs of his omniscience, John 2:24,25.

Spurgeon: He is the great thought-reader. Just now we met with the expression, "seeing their faith", and now we read, "knowing their thoughts." He puts the questioners to the question. His whys and wherefores go to the root of the matter. We are responsible for secret thoughts, and the Lord will one day call us to account concerning them. Accusations against Jesus are always unreasonable, and when fairly faced are put to silence. It would be well if many of our Lord's enemies today could be brought to ponder the question, "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts" What is the cause of it? What is the good of it? Why not cease from it?

¹² Barnes' Notes on the New Testament

Matthew 9:5

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

Controversy over this question still rages. They knew He could heal for this was being done daily, but to forgive sins by the same authority from God was considered blasphemy. Today we believe that God can and will forgive all sin, but to teach that He still can and will heal all diseases is considered fallacy. God's ability to heal all is not questioned, but His willingness is. Why is this? Is it because God does not love people today as then? Is it because He has made no provision to do so today? Is it because the atonement has failed, prayer is a farce, and the promises are now untrue? God forbid! It is because man has changed, the church has failed, and preachers have refused to carry on the gospel program as started by Christ and guaranteed in the New Testament (Matthew 28:20; Mark 16:15-20; John 14:12-17; Acts 1; 1 Cor. 12; James 5:14-16).

It is just as easy for God to heal a body as to save the soul. He wills to do both today on the same basis—faith in the name of Jesus (Mark 16:17-18; John 14:12-15; John 15:16; John 16:23-26; Acts 3:16; Acts 4:12). If God could at all do both and He refused to do so, then He would not be the infinite Father Jesus said He was (Matthew 7:7-11; Luke 11:9-13). He would be less loving and good than an evil father who would gladly heal his child if he had the power.¹³

Both are equally easy, and equally difficult; for both require unlimited power to produce them. And every thing is equally easy to that power which is unlimited. A universe can be as easily produced by a single act of the Divine will as the smallest elementary part of matter.

The common punctuation of the above passage almost destroys the sense: the comma should be placed after easier, and to say, made the first part of the question.

which is easier. The implied answer is that it is easier to say “Your sins are forgiven,” for there is no way to verify whether or not this has happened.

Matthew 9:6

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

But that ye may know, etc.—External miracles are the proofs of internal ones. Three miracles are wrought in this case. (I mean, by miracle, something produced or known that no power is capable of but that which is omnipotent, and no knowledge adequate to but that which is omniscient). The miracles are these:

- 1st. The remission of the poor man's sins.
- 2d. The discernment of the secret thoughts of the scribes.
- 3d. The restoring of the paralytic, in an instant, to perfect soundness.

¹³ Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

Thus one miracle becomes the proof and establishment of another. Never was a clearer proof of omnipotent energy and mercy brought under the senses of man. Here is an absolutely perfect miracle wrought; and here are absolute incontestable proofs that the miracle was wrought; and the conclusion is the fullest demonstration of the Divinity of the ever-blessed Jesus.

Arise, take up thy bed—Being enabled to obey this command was the public proof that the man was made whole. Such a circumstance should not pass without improvement. A man gives proof of his conversion from sin to God who imitates this paralytic person. He who does not rise and stand upright, but either continues grovelling on the earth, or falls back as soon as he is got up, is not yet cured of his spiritual palsy. When we see a penitent enabled to rejoice in hope of God's glory, and to walk in the way of his commandments, he affords us all the proof which we can reasonably require, that his conversion is real: the proof sufficient to satisfy himself is the witness of the Holy Spirit in his own heart; but this is a matter of which those who are without cannot judge: they must form their opinion from his conduct, and judge of the tree by its fruits.

It's easy to tell someone his sins are forgiven; it's a lot more difficult to reverse a case of paralysis! Jesus backed up his words by healing the man's legs. Jesus' action showed that his words were true; he had the power to forgive as well as to heal. Talk is cheap, but our words lack meaning if our actions do not back them up. We can say we love God or others, but if we are not taking practical steps to demonstrate that love, our words are empty and meaningless. How well do your actions back up what you say?

When this palsied man got up and walked, it meant that the One who could make him walk was the One who could forgive his sins.

Matthew 9:7

And he arose, and departed to his house.

Jesus' **authority on earth to forgive sins** is an explicit evidence of his divinity, since only God has that prerogative. That the man **rose and went home** is visible evidence of Jesus' authority.

Matthew 9:8

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

[**power**] Greek: *exousia* (GSN-1849), delegated authority and liberty to exercise the full power of attorney in all God's interests; complete authority to act in God's stead as if God Himself were here doing the work; power to act as freely of his own will as one has power to eat and drink (1 Cor. 9:4-6). Christ's power was unlimited in doing the will and works of God on earth (Matthew 9:6; Matthew 4:23-24; Matthew 8:17; Matthew 10:1-8; Mark 1:27; Luke 4:36; Luke 10:19; John 5:27; John 17:2). He now

has all power in heaven and in earth (Matthew 28:18; Ephes. 1:20-23; Col. 2:9-17; Hebrews 1:3; Hebrews 7:25; 1 Peter 3:22). He now promises to share His earthly power with believers (Matthew 18:18, refs.).

When the multitudes saw it, they marveled—Instead of εθαυμασσαν, wondered, the Codex Vatic. and Cod. Bezae, with several other MSS. and versions, have εφοβηθησαν, feared. In the Gothic, and one copy of the Itala, both readings are conjoined, thus: And the multitudes seeing it, wondered and feared, and glorified God. Wondered at the miracle; feared to offend against such power and goodness; and glorified God for the works of mercy which he had wrought.

That which to the doctors of the law, the worldly-wise and prudent, is a matter of scandal, is to the humble an occasion of glorifying the Most High. Divine things make a deeper impression on the hearts of the simple multitude than on those of the doctors, who, puffed up with a sense of their own wisdom, refuse to receive the truth as it is in Jesus. The conversion of one rebellious soul is a greater miracle, and more to be admired than all that can be wrought on inanimate creatures. He who sees a sinner converted from the error of his way sees a miracle wrought by eternal power and goodness. May such miracles be multiplied! ¹⁴

They glorified God. Matthew 5:16. To *glorify* God, here, means to *praise* him, or to acknowledge his power. The expression, *which had given such power to men*, was a part of *their* praise. It expresses no sentiment of the evangelist about the nature of Christ, but is a record of their feelings and their praise.

Said a *b·rakhoh*. A *b·rakhah* (“blessing”; plural *b·rakhoh*) in Judaism is a sentence or paragraph of praise **to God**; usually commencing with the formula, *Barukh attah, Adonai* (“Praised be you, *Adonai*,” quoting Psalm 119:12); and continuing with a description of the specific reason for praising God at that moment. Thus here God is praised as **the Giver of such authority to human beings**. A similar *b·rakhah* is said by observant Jews upon seeing a person of profound secular learning: “Praised be you, *Adonai* our God, king of the universe, who has given of his wisdom to flesh and blood,” i.e., to human beings. Likewise, on seeing an exalted ruler: “Praised be you, *Adonai* our God, king of the universe, who has given of his glory to flesh and blood.” For more on *b·rakhoh* see 14:19N, 26:27–29N, Lk 5:26&N, 2 Ti 4:6–8N, 1 Ke 1:3–4N. ¹⁵

Matthew 9:9

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

Follow me—That is, become my disciple.

¹⁴ Adam Clarke’s Commentary

¹⁵ Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 9:8). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

Named Matthew—Generally supposed to be the same who wrote this history of our blessed Lord. Mathai signifies a gift in Syriac; probably so named by his parents as implying a gift from God.

The receipt of custom—The custom-house, τελωνιον—the place where the taxes levied by the Romans of the Jews, were collected.

And he arose, and followed him—How blessed it is to be obedient to the first call of Christ—how much happiness and glory are lost by delays, though conversion at last may have taken place!

Missler: Matthew adds an autobiographical note here. Matthew is apparently a tax collector in Capernaum. He is hated more than a Gentile among the Jewish body because he is a collaborator with the Romans and helping them subjugate his people.

The Call of Matthew

The call of Levi was the culmination of the previous two miracles: the cleansing of the leper; and the Man taken with palsy. Jesus had demonstrated His authority to make a person ceremonially clean and to forgive sins. Now those two authorities were brought to bear on one who was to become His disciple.

A Tax Collector

He was sitting at the place of toll, the customs house (Mt 9:9). The Romans collected taxes through a franchise system called “tax farming”: they assessed a fixed tax figure and then sold the right to collect them to the highest bidder. The buyer then had to hand over the assessed figure at the end of the year and could keep any excess. This invited extortion. Duties and tolls were collected from using roads, docking in harbors, and other import and export duties. (There was even a cart tax, by the wheel!)

(Luke 5:27- 28) And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me. And he left all, rose up, and followed him.

Levi

Jesus gave him a new name: Matthew, “Gift of God” (Mt 9:9). He left all: made a decisive break from the old life—the Greek aorist participle (imperfect indicative) means, literally, “was continuously following him.” That was quite a franchise to abandon: he left his toll; left his calling; broke it off with Herod and abandoned any future with the Roman Empire. He was probably collecting tolls from the boats on the seashore; an employee of Herod, a vassal of Rome. As a lackey of the Romans, this position would have alienated him from the religious community of his day: he would have been excommunicated from the synagogue and he could not serve as a witness in court.

Shorthand Skills

One of the obligatory, qualifications among the professionals in the Graeco-Roman world was that of a *tachygráphos*, or shorthand writer.

Matthew, a former customs official, would have had a working knowledge of *tachygraphy*, and thus may have been able to transcribe the Sermon on the Mount verbatim, just as Tertius and others were able to transcribe Paul’s more verbose utterances.

(Psalm 45:1) *My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a **ready writer**.*

sawfer mahir, a quick, skilled, scribe; ovxugra,foj(*oxygràphos*, a synonym for *tachygràphos*, “shorthand writer.” This technical term must have been common enough among Greek-speaking Jews in the third century B.C. for its use in the Septuagint to have any purpose.

By hand: “*manu*-scripts.” Many are specifically named:

- Romans 16:22 Tertius
- 1 Corinthians 1:1 Sosthenes
- 2 Corinthians 1:1 Timothy
- Philippians 1:1 Timothy
- Colossians 1:1 Timothy
- 2 Thess 1:1 Silvanus
- Philemon 1:1 Timothy
- 1 Peter 5:12: Silvanus

(Luke 5:29-32) *And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them. But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners? And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

Sitting at the receipt of custom. That is, at the place where *custom*, or *tribute*, was received; or, in other words, he was a *publican*, or tax-gatherer. Matthew 5:47. This man was Matthew, the writer of this gospel. The same account is found in Mark 2:14, Luke 5:27,28. Both those evangelists call him *Levi*. That it was the same man is known by the circumstances in which he was called being the same in all the evangelists, and by all concurring in the statement that our Saviour was present at a feast soon after he called him, and by the fact that Levi is not mentioned in the catalogue of the apostles. The Jews were in the habit of giving several names to the same person. Thus Peter was also called Simon and Cephas. It is worthy of remark, that Luke has mentioned a circumstance favourable to Matthew, which Matthew himself has omitted. Luke says, "*he left all.*" Had Matthew said this, it would have been a commendation of himself, utterly unlike the evangelists. No men were ever farther from praising themselves than they were.¹⁶

When Jesus called Matthew to be one of his disciples, Matthew got up and followed, leaving a lucrative career. When God calls you to follow or obey him, do you do it with as much abandon as Matthew? Sometimes the decision to follow Christ requires difficult or painful choices. Like Matthew, we must decide to leave behind those things that would keep us from following Christ.

Matthew humbly allows himself only one brief reflection on his own call. Brevity, however, does not conceal the phenomenon of the Lord's selection of a hated tax

¹⁶ Barnes' Notes on the New Testament

collector, nor does it overlook the instantaneous response of the customs officer who becomes the author of this Gospel.

he saw a man, named Matthew—the writer of this precious Gospel, who here, with singular modesty and brevity, relates the story of his own calling. In Mark and Luke he is called *Levi*, which seems to have been his family name. In their lists of the twelve apostles, however, Mark and Luke give him the name of Matthew, which seems to have been the name by which he was known as a disciple. While he himself sinks his family name, he is careful not to sink his occupation, the obnoxious associations with which he would place over against the grace that called him from it, and made him an apostle. (See on Mt 10:3). Mark alone tells us (Mk 2:14) that he was “the son of Alphaeus”—the same, probably, with the father of James the Less. From this and other considerations it is pretty certain that he must at least have heard of our Lord before this meeting. Unnecessary doubts, even from an early period, have been raised about the identity of Levi and Matthew. No capable jury, with the evidence before them which we have in the Gospels, would hesitate in giving a unanimous verdict of identity.¹⁷

Unexpected Discipleship, Miracles, and Workers. Jesus reveals his unexpected definition of discipleship (vv. 9–17) and demonstrates extraordinary compassion through his unexpected miracles (vv. 18–34). The underappreciated are called to follow him, while the religious leaders continue to resist him.¹⁸

Matthew sitting at the tax booth. The Jews probably considered Matthew a traitor, since collecting taxes entailed cooperation with the Roman occupiers of Palestine. **rose and followed him.** Matthew had likely witnessed Jesus' public teaching and healings and was now ready to join him.¹⁹

Matthew 9:10

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

[house] Matthew's house (Luke 5:27-30)

Sat at meat in the house—Viz. of Matthew, who it appears, from Luke 5:29, made a great feast on the occasion, thus testifying his gratitude for the honor done him; and that his friends and acquaintances might profit by the teaching of his new master, he invites them to the entertainment that was honored by the presence of Christ. His companions, it appears, were not of the most creditable kind. They were tax-gatherers (see Matthew 5:46) and sinners, ἀμαρτωλοὶ, a word which I believe in general signifies heathens, throughout the Gospels, and in several other parts of the New Testament. See, among

¹⁷ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 9:9). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

¹⁸ ESV Study Bible

¹⁹ ESV Study Bible

others, Matthew 11:19 (note); 26:45 (note); Mark 2:15-17 (note); 14:41; Luke 5:30-32 (note); 6:32-34 (note); 7:34, 37, (note); 7:39; Luke 15:1, 2, 7, 10 (note); 19:7 (note); 24:7 (note); John 9:16, 24, 25, 31 (note); Romans 5:8 (note); Galatians 2:15 (note); Hebrews 7:26 (note); 1 Peter 4:18 (note); in most, if not all of which places, it evidently refers to the character or state of a Gentile, or Heathen. See also the notes on these passages.²⁰

And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house. This feast was given to him by *Levi*, or *Matthew*, Luke 5:29. This is another circumstance favourable to Matthew, but omitted by him, and recorded by Luke; showing, also, that the apostles were averse to praising themselves. To receive Christ hospitably and kindly was a commendable act, and it strongly evinces Matthew's freedom from ostentation that he has supposed the fact. It thus illustrates the command of the Saviour, as recorded by himself, Matthew 6:1-4.²¹

And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house—The modesty of our Evangelist signally appears here. Luke says (Lu 5:29) that “Levi made Him *a great feast*,” or “reception,” while Matthew merely says, “He sat at meat”; and Mark and Luke say that it was in Levi’s “own house,” while Matthew merely says, “He sat at meat *in the house*.” Whether this feast was made now, or not till afterwards, is a point of some importance in the order of events, and not agreed among harmonists. The probability is that it did not take place till a considerable time afterwards. For Matthew, who ought surely to know what took place while his Lord was speaking at his own table, tells us that the visit of Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, occurred at that moment (Mt 9:18). But we know from Mark and Luke that this visit of Jairus did not take place till after our Lord’s return, at a later period from the country of the Gadarenes. (See Mk 5:21, &c., and Lu 8:40, &c.). We conclude, therefore, that the feast was not made in the novelty of his discipleship, but after Matthew had had time to be somewhat established in the faith; when returning to Capernaum, his compassion for old friends, of his own calling and character, led him to gather them together that they might have an opportunity of hearing the gracious words which proceeded out of His Master’s mouth, if haply they might experience a like change.²²

Sinners. This term came to be used by the *P.rushim* to refer to prostitutes, thieves and others of low reputation whose sins were blatant and obvious, not the kind the establishment winked at. Yeshua taught that those who considered themselves not sinners but “righteous” (v. 13) were in fact worse, because they made themselves unteachable (see also Yn 9:38–41).²³

²⁰ Adam Clarke’s Commentary

²¹ Barnes’ Notes on the New Testament

²² Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 9:10). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

²³ Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 9:10). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

Spurgeon: In Matthew's house the Savior "sat at meat." The new convert most naturally called in his old friends, that they might have the advantage of our Lord's teaching: they would come to a supper more readily than to a sermon, and so he gave them a feast, and thus attracted them to the place where Jesus was. We may use all lawful means to bring others under the sound of the Word. A lot of the riff-raff came. "Sinner" by occupation, as well as sinners by character, ventured in to the publican's house, and dared to sit "with him and his disciples" as if they had been members of his society. Probably they had been Matthew's boon companions, and now he wished them to become his brothers in Christ.

Our Lord willingly accepted Matthew's hospitality; for he desired to do good to those who most needed to be uplifted. He allowed persons of ill-fame to "sit down with him and his disciples." Here was a fine opportunity for the sneering Pharisees. They insinuated that the Lord Jesus could be but a sorry person, since he drew such a rabble around him, and even allowed them to be his table-companions. They were very careful of their company when any saw them; for they thought that their superior holiness would be debased by allowing sinners to sit with them; and now they have a handy stone to throw at Jesus while he eats with publicans and sinners.

The Pharisees were cowardly enough to speak their cavil to his disciples rather than to the Master; but the Leader put himself in the front, and soon baffled the adversaries. His reasoning was overwhelming, and his justification ample. Where should a physician be but among the sick? Who should come to a doctor's house but those who are diseased? Thus our Lord was more than justified in being the center to which the morally sick should gather for their spiritual healing.

Lord, grant that if ever I am found in the company of sinners, it may be with the design of healing them, and may I never become myself infected with their disease!

Matthew 9:11

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

[publicans] Tax-gatherers. Used 17 times. They were despised by the Jews, so any reference to being less than this class was the lowest thing that could be said of anyone religious. They were classed with sinners (Matthew 9:10-11; Matthew 11:19; Matthew 21:31-32). Many repented and were baptized (Luke 3:12; Luke 7:29). One of them—Matthew—became an apostle (Luke 5:27-29; Luke 19:1-10).

[sinners] A despised class to the religious Jews, perhaps because they lived in open sin and made no profession of religion. They are mentioned with publicans 9 times (Matthew 9:10-13; Matthew 11:19; Mark 2:15-16; Luke 5:30; Luke 7:34; Luke 15:1). It was believed that God would not hear their prayers (John 9:31). All Gentiles were classed as sinners (Galatians 2:15-17). The New Testament classes all men out of Christ as sinners (Romans 3:19-23; Romans 5:12-21).

When the Pharisees saw *it*—He who, like a Pharisee, never felt himself indebted to infinite mercy for his own salvation, is rarely solicitous about the salvation of others. The

grace of Christ alone inspires the soul with true benevolence. The self-righteous Pharisees considered it equal to legal defilement to sit in company with tax-gatherers and heathens. It is certain that those who fear God should not associate, through choice, with the workers of iniquity, and should only be found with them when transacting their secular business requires it, or when they have the prospect of doing good to their souls.

Why eateth and drinketh, etc. To eat and drink with others denotes intimacy and familiarity. The Pharisees, by asking this question, accused him of seeking the society of such men, and of being the companion of the wicked. The inference which *they* would draw was, that he could not be himself righteous, since he delighted in the company of abandoned men.

Matthew 9:12

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

Christ came to save sinners, not the righteous (Matthew 9:12-13; Romans 5:8; 1 Tim. 1:15).

They that be whole need not a physician—A common proverb, which none could either misunderstand or misapply. Of it the reader may make the following use:—

1. Jesus Christ represents himself here as the sovereign Physician of souls.
2. That all stand in need of his healing power.
3. That men must acknowledge their spiritual maladies, and the need they have of his mercy, in order to be healed by him.
4. That it is the most inveterate and dangerous disease the soul can be afflicted with to imagine itself whole, when the sting of death, which is sin, has pierced it through in every part, infusing its poison everywhere.

They that be whole, etc. Jesus, in reply, said that the whole needed not a physician. Sick persons only needed his aid. A physician would not commonly be found with those that were in health. His proper place was among the sick. So, says he, "If you Pharisees are such as you think yourselves, already pure and holy, you do not need my aid. It would be of no use to you, and you would not thank me for it. With those persons who fed that they are sinners I may be useful; and there is my proper place." Or, the expression may mean, "I came on purpose to save sinners. My business is with them. There are none righteous; and as a physician is in his proper place with the sick, so am I with guilty and miserable sinners."²⁴

those who are well . . . those who are sick. The Pharisees considered themselves "healthy" before God because of their observance of the law, and thus they were blind to their spiritual sickness. Jesus' point is that only those who realize their need come to him to receive the help they need.

²⁴ Barnes' Notes on the New Testament

Matthew 9:13

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

[I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance] Old Testament concept. Quoted from Hosea 6:6; 1 Samuel 15:22. I desire acts of mercy on your part rather than sacrifices. If your religion makes you exalted and self-righteous and you consider yourself to be defiled by associating with sinners, your sacrifices are in vain.

I will have mercy, and not sacrifice—Quoted from 1 Samuel 15:22. These are remarkable words. We may understand them as implying,

- 1st. That God prefers an act of mercy, shown to the necessitous, to any act of religious worship to which the person might be called at that time. Both are good; but the former is the greater good, and should be done in preference to the other.
- 2dly. That the whole sacrificial system was intended only to point out the infinite mercy of God to fallen man, in his redemption by the blood of the new covenant.
And
- 3dly. That we should not rest in the sacrifices, but look for the mercy and salvation prefigured by them. This saying was nervously translated by our ancestors, *I will mild-heartedness, and not sacrifice.*²⁵

Go ye and learn—**צא ולמד** *tse velimmed*, a form of speech in frequent use among the rabbins, when they referred to any fact or example in the Sacred Writings. Nothing tends more to humble pretenders to devotion than to show them that they understand neither Scripture nor religion, when, relying on external performances, they neglect love to God and man, which is the very soul and substance of true religion. True holiness has ever consisted in faith working by love.²⁶

I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners—Most of the common editions add, *εις μετανοιαν*, unto repentance; but this is omitted in the Codex Vaticanus and Bezae, sixteen others, both the Syriac, both the Persic, Ethiop. Armen. Gothic, Anglo-Saxon, all the Itala except three, the Vulgate, Clemens Roman, Origen, Basil, Jerome, Augustin, Ambrose, and Barnabas. The omission is approved by Mill and Bengel. Griesbach leaves it out of the text.

I am not come to call the righteous No human beings are by nature righteous, Psalms 14:3; Romans 1:18-32, 3:10-18. The Pharisees, however, *pretended* to be righteous. Christ might have meant, by this answer, that it was not the design of his coming to call such persons to repentance, knowing that they would spurn his efforts, and that, to a great extent, they would be vain; or, more probably, he meant to affirm that his proper and only business was to call to repentance such men as he was now with. He came to seek and save such, and it was his proper business, therefore, to associate with them.

²⁵ Adam Clarke's Commentary

²⁶ Adam Clarke's Commentary

Sin, Alienation—Jesus' ministry focused on sin. This fact shocked the religious establishment of His day. They focused on the society of the righteous, excluding and condemning all others. Jesus recognized all are sinners alienated from God. He offered mercy rather than ritual as the way back to God. Alienation does not have to be our permanent state. We can receive God's mercy and be reconciled.

I came not to call the righteous, but sinners. Jesus' offer of salvation to sinners threatens the Pharisees' way of life, yet it is at the heart of the gospel he came announcing. "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice" is a quotation from Hos. 6:6 (see note). "Sacrifice" summarized observance of religious rituals. More important to God was "mercy" (the Septuagint rendering of Hb. *hesed*, meaning "steadfast love"), which would have led the Pharisees to care for these sinners as Jesus did.

(**note**) rather than burnt offerings. God prefers real participation in the covenant on the part of his people, here expressed as steadfast love and knowledge of God, to the polluted ceremonies of the northern kingdom that ignore these qualities (cf. notes on 4:15; Amos 4:4-5).²⁷

Vs. 11-13: This is an important section. Here, a group of Pharisees is critical of Yeshua for associating with those whom they consider to be sinners. Yeshua responds by gives these Pharisees a direct command to go "learn something." Later, in Matthew 12:7, we see Yeshua will criticize them again, for not doing as He told them to do here.

Yeshua's instruction to them is a quote from the prophet Isaiah. The context in Isaiah's original message and that of Yeshua's is similar. In each case you had people "going through the motions" of the instructions God gave in His Torah. What Yeshua is telling these Pharisees is that their reliance on performing God's commands, although absolutely part of their faith, was secondary to what God wants first -- a trusting relationship with Him. In no way does this mean the Torah is not to be followed. Rather, the message here is that, just as faith without works is dead (James, chapters 1 and 2), the same goes for works without faith.

This is the message God has given his chosen people throughout the Bible:

(Isaiah 64:6) *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*

(Romans 2:28-29) *For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.*

(Hebrews 4:2) *For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.*

If these Pharisees had gone back to learn what Isaiah was talking about, they would have seen that they were just as much in "need of a physician" as these other people were. One could say that their "legalistic view" of the Torah made them more in need of Yeshua than the people they were criticizing.

²⁷ ESV Study Bible

It is evident to most that these Pharisees were outwardly performing the commandments of God but lacked the humility and trust God desired. This caused them to not recognize Yeshua for who He was. They made themselves "blind."

It should be noted however, that there is a "flip side" to this situation that is prevalent today. Anyone claiming to "believe in the Messiah," but who rejects the Torah as God's instruction, (i.e., "we're not under the Law") is no better off than these Pharisees. You cannot separate the "Torah in the flesh" from the Torah of Scripture. Yeshua said so (Matthew 5:17-21, 7:21-29), Paul said so (Romans 2:13, 3:31) and James said so (James, chapters 1 and 2). John goes so far as to have said that if you claim to know God but don't obey His commandments (His Torah), you are a liar and the truth is not in you (1 John 2:3-4).

Of course this message goes against the overwhelming consensus today -- just as it did in Yeshua and Isaiah's times.²⁸

Spurgeon: Our Lord, having gloriously defended himself from the insinuations of the proud Pharisees, now carries the war into the enemies' territory. He says to them, "Go ye and learn"; and this alone would be distasteful to men who thought they knew everything already. They were to learn the meaning of a Scripture in Ho 6:6; and this would teach them that to have mercy upon sinners is a work more pleasing to God than the presenting of expensive sacrifices, or the performing of religious exercises. They would learn that he had rather do mercy himself, and have them do mercy to others, than accept of their most punctilious observances.

The Lord Jesus also gave them a clear word as to his object in coming among men. He came not to be served by the good, but to save the evil. He had come to call to repentance those who needed repentance, and not those just ones who required no amendment, if such there were. This was a very just satire upon the Pharisees' self opinionated notions; but, at the same time, it was, and is, and for ever will be, a grand consolation for those who own their guilt. Our Savior King has come to save real sinners. He deals not with our merits, but with our demerits. There would be no need to save us if we were not lost: the Son of God does no unnecessary work; but to those who need repentance he has come to bring it.

Lord, I am one who needs thy call; for surely if anyone hath need to repent, I am that one. Call me with thine effectual call. "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned."

Matthew 9:14

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

This was the first visit of John's disciples. The next was in Matthew 11:1-15.

Thy disciples fast not?—Probably meaning that they did not fast so frequently as the others did, or for the same purposes, which is very likely, for the Pharisees had many superstitious fasts. They fasted in order to have lucky dreams, to obtain the interpretation

²⁸ www.yashanet.com

of a dream, or to avert the evil import of a dream. They also fasted often, in order to obtain the things they wished for. The tract, Taanith is full of these fasts, and of the wonders performed thus by the Jewish doctors.

We know from Scripture that John the Baptist was raised in the Wilderness area and had a following of his own (Matthew chapters 3 and 11, Acts 18:25; 19:3). Discoveries in the Dead Sea Scrolls have shown a very Messianic-oriented community in the Wilderness, dating from about 100 BCE to 135 CE. These people included Essenes, a community that formed their own system of sacrifices, due to corruption of Saducees. The latest research indicates that John and his followers probably were a break-away group from the Essenes.²⁹

Matthew 9:15

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

Bridegroom: a provocative title! Cf. Ancient Jewish wedding pattern Fasting: appropriate for today...

The Jewish Wedding

- The *Ketubah*, Betrothal: payment of the purchase price and the bride is set apart (sanctified)
- Bridegroom departs to Father's House and prepares room addition; his bride prepares for his imminent return.

The Marriage Fulfilled

- Covenant established: 1 Cor 11:25.
- Purchase price: 1 Cor 6:19-20.
- Bride set apart: Eph 5:25-27; 1 Cor 1:2; 6:11; Heb 10:10; 13:12.
- Reminded of the covenant: 1 Cor 11:25-26.
- Bridegroom left for the Father's house...
- Returns by surprise to gather His Bride: 1 Thess 4:16-17.³⁰

[children of the bridechamber] They were companions of the bridegroom, who went with him to bring the bride from her home to his home. Marriage feasts lasted 7 days, but the woman was considered a bride for 30 days. See John 17:12.

[when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast] Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9-11.

Can the children of the bride-chamber—Νυμφωνος. Or, νυμφιου, bridegroom, as the Cod. Bezae and several versions have it. These persons were the companions of the bridegroom, who accompanied him to the house of his father-in-law when he went to bring the bride to his own home. The marriage-feast among the Jews lasted seven days;

²⁹ www.yashanet.com

³⁰ Chuck Missler, Commentary on Matthew, khouse.org

but the new married woman was considered to be a bride for thirty days. Marriage feasts were times of extraordinary festivity, and even of riot, among several people of the east.³¹

The **bridegroom** in the OT was Yahweh (cf. Isa. 62:5; Hos. 2:19–20). The arrival of the kingdom of heaven is cause for a time of rejoicing, similar to what is experienced during marriage ceremonies (cf. Matt. 25:10).

Matthew 9:16

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

[**new cloth**] New flannel, undressed or unfilled cloth which is easily torn. It is also unshrunk.

No man putteth a piece of new cloth—Ουδεις δε επιβαλλει επιβλημα ρακους αγναφου επι ιματιω παλαιω. No man putteth a patch of unscoured cloth upon an old garment. This is the most literal translation I can give of this verse, to convey its meaning to those who cannot consult the original. Ρακος αγναφου is that cloth which has not been scoured, or which has not passed under the hand of the fuller, who is called γναφευς in Greek: and επιβλημα signifies a piece put on, or what we commonly term a patch.

It—taketh from the garment—Instead of closing up the rent, it makes a larger, by tearing away with it the whole breadth of the cloth over which it was laid; αιρει γαρ το πληρωμα αυτου—it taketh its fullness or whole breadth from the garment; this I am persuaded is the meaning of the original, well expressed by the Latin, or Itala of the C. BEZAE, *Tollit enim plenitudo ejus de vestimento*. “It takes away its fullness from the garment.”³²

This verse and the next speak to the issue of whether faith in Yeshua the Messiah can be combined with Judaism. Here the **old coat** is Judaism. The **unshrunk cloth** is Messianic faith which has not been adapted (“shrunk”) to the framework of Judaism as currently practiced. (“Shrinking” here is simply an aspect of Yeshua’s “patch” metaphor. It does not imply that Messianic faith must be diminished in order to fit into Judaism.) Combining unadapted Messianic faith with traditional Judaism doesn’t work—**the patch tears away from the coat**; that is, faith in Yeshua apart from Judaism—and, later on in the case of Gentiles, faith in Yeshua apart from the foundational truths about God taught in the *Tanakh*—is useless and worthless. Not only that, but it **leaves a worse hole**—attempting to combine unadapted Messianic faith with traditional Judaism leaves Judaism worse off than before. The implication is that one must shrink the new cloth—adapt Messianic faith to Judaism—for Yeshua does not imply that there is anything wrong with patching an old coat! The early Messianic Jews did adapt Messianic faith to Judaism, but the later Gentile Church did not. Instead, some forms of Gentile Christianity became

³¹ Adam Clarke’s Commentary

³² Adam Clarke’s Commentary

paganized precisely because the *Tanakh* was forgotten or underemphasized. Messianic Jews today are once again trying to bring New Testament faith back to its Jewish roots.³³

Matthew 9:17

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

[**new**] Greek: *neos* (GSN-3501), freshly made, new in time.

[**old bottles**] Old dried out wine skins unfit for liquids, especially for wine to ferment in, because the violence of the fermentation would burst them.

[**new**] Greek: *kainos* (GSN-2537), renewed, not *neos* (GSN-3501), new in existence. Old wine skins to hold wine must be soaked in water to soften them. Then they must be greased with oil or butter to prevent leaking and evaporation. People only put newly made wine in renewed wine skins and both are preserved. The idea here, if it refers to the saving of sinners of Matthew 9:10-13, means a complete renewal, as in 2 Cor. 5:17-18; Ephes. 4:23-24; Col. 3:10; Romans 12:2. But if it refers to keeping the old customs, as in Matthew 9:14-15, then it means that the two systems of religion—Jewish and Christian—cannot be mixed; to patch the old with the new would make things worse, and to combine the two systems would be destructive to both. The old covenant must give way for the new, but the new cannot be made part of the old because of the new life and freedom impossible with the old. The sinner is not merely reformed, neither are the old Jewish religion and customs merely given a new dress or container by Christianity. Both are new things. The sinner is a new creature and Christianity is a new religion.³⁴

New wine into old bottles—It is still the custom, in the eastern countries, to make their bottles of goat skins: if these happened to be old, and new wine were put into them, the violence of the fermentation must necessarily burst them; and therefore newly made bottles were employed for the purpose of putting that wine in which had not yet gone through its state of fermentation. The institutes of Christ, and those of the Pharisees, could never be brought to accord: an attempt to combine the two systems would be as absurd as it would be destructive. The old covenant made way for the new, which was its completion and its end; but with that old covenant the new cannot be incorporated. Christian prudence requires that the weak, and newly converted, should be managed with care and tenderness. To impose such duties and mortifications as are not absolutely necessary to salvation, before God has properly prepared the heart by his grace for them, is a conduct as absurd and ruinous as putting a piece of raw, unscoured cloth on an old garment; it is, in a word, requiring the person to do the work of a man, while as yet he is but a little child. Preachers of the Gospel, and especially those who are instruments in

³³ Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 9:16). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

³⁴ Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

God's hand of many conversions, have need of much heavenly wisdom, that they may know to watch over, guide, and advise those who are brought to a sense of their sin and danger. How many auspicious beginnings have been ruined by men's proceeding too hastily, endeavoring to make their own designs take place, and to have the honor of that success themselves which is due only to God.

Jesus did not come to patch up the old religious system of Judaism with its rules and traditions. If he had, his message would have damaged it. His purpose was to bring in something new, though it had been prophesied for centuries. This new message, the gospel, said that Jesus Christ, God's Son, came to earth to offer all people forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God. The gospel did not fit into the old rigid legalistic system of religion. It needed a fresh start. The message will always remain "new" because it must be accepted and applied in every generation. When we follow Christ, we must be prepared for new ways to live, new ways to look at people, and new ways to serve.³⁵

Whereas in v. 16 Messianic faith has to be adapted to Judaism, here it is Judaism which must be adjusted to Messianic faith. If one tries to put **new wine**, Messianic faith, into **old wineskins**, traditional Judaism, the faith is lost and Judaism ruined. But if Judaism is **freshly prepared**, reconditioned so that it can accommodate trust in Yeshua the Messiah, both the faith and the renewed Judaism, Messianic Judaism, **are preserved**.

This understanding is undergirded by the writer's careful choice of words: "new" (Greek *neos*) wine, "fresh" (*kainos*) wineskins. "*Neos*" means "new" in respect to time, implying immaturity or lack of development. "*Kainos*" means "new" or "renewed" in respect to quality, contrasting with "old" or "not renewed" and implying superiority. Old wineskins have lost their strength and elasticity, so that they cannot withstand the pressure of new wine still fermenting, although an old wineskin can be restored to service if its useful qualities are renewed.

The meaning of the figure is that the new wine of Messianic living cannot be poured into old religious forms if they remain rigid. But if the old religious forms become "fresh," they can accommodate Yeshua. When "*kainos*" is rendered "new," as in many translations, the implication seems to be that Judaism cannot possibly be a suitable framework for honoring Yeshua the Jewish Messiah—only the "new wineskin" of Gentilized Christianity will work. This is a peculiar conclusion, especially if it is recalled that Yeshua was speaking with his fellow Jews. As rendered here the point is that the only vessel which can hold the new wine of Messianic life in a Jewish setting is a properly renewed, restored, reconditioned and refreshed Judaism, such as Messianic Judaism was in the first century and aims to be now.

Taken together, verses 16 and 17 imply that both Messianic faith and Judaism should adjust to each other. However, the accommodating must be true to God's Word; on that there is no room for compromise. See 13:52&N.³⁶

Yeshua's statement of not placing new wine in old bottles (wineskins) is one of many Scripture verses often taken out of context to support some group's latest (non-Hebrew)

³⁵ Life Application Notes

³⁶ Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 9:17). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

doctrine. The proper interpretation of verse 17 would seem to be in relation to verse 14, as it is part of Yeshua's answer to the question posed to Him by John's followers about why His disciples were not fasting.

Fasting was part of following the Torah and Yeshua certainly never broke the commandments. Nor would we expect His immediate followers to do so, yet they seem to be at this time. Yeshua replies to this question using three consecutive and related images:

- You don't fast when the bridegroom is still with you - only later.
- You don't put a new piece of cloth on an old garment
- You don't put new wine in an old wineskin

There is a teaching in the Talmud that compares an experienced Torah teacher to a wineskin and his knowledgeable teaching to "old wine."

Mishna Avoth 4:20 - ... *he who learns from the young, unto what is he [to be] compared? Unto one who eats unripe grapes, and drinks wine from his vat; and he who learns from the old, unto what is he [to be] compared? Unto one who eats ripe grapes, and drinks old wine. ... regard not the container but that which is therein: there is a new container full of old [wine], and an old [container] in which there is not even new [wine].*

Yeshua's teachings were "old" as they were from God (John 7:16), and therefore He is the old wineskin with old wine.

The connection between these items can now be seen as follows:

new piece of cloth = new wine = fasting

old garment = old wineskin = Messiah still present

With these three examples, Yeshua is simply stating that there is a proper time and place for everything and this does not abrogate the Torah. The time while He (Elohim in the flesh) was walking among man, was a time for enjoyment (old wine) and not fasting.

A similar situation occurs in chapter 12, when his disciples are again accused of breaking Torah (by their picking and eating ears of corn). As we will see, Yeshua will counter their argument in a similar fashion as He did in this chapter. There He cites examples from the Tenakh showing how the Torah allows (in fact commands) for certain actions under specific circumstances.³⁷

Matthew 9:18

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

[there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him] Note the four things that Jairus did:

1. He came to Jesus personally (Matthew 9:18).
2. He fell down before Him (Mark 5:22).
3. He besought Him greatly (Mark 5:23).
4. He exercised absolute faith (Matthew 9:18).

³⁷ www.yashanet.com

There came a certain ruler. Mark and Luke say that his name was Jairus, and that he was a *ruler of the synagogue*; that is, one of the elders to whom was committed the care of the synagogue. Matthew 4:23.

[**now dead**] My daughter was dying when I left her and is by this time dead.

My daughter is even now dead. Luke says that this was his only daughter, and that she was twelve years of age. Mark and Luke say that she was at the point of death, and that information of her actual death was brought to him by one who was sent by the ruler of the synagogue, while Jesus was going. Matthew combined the two facts, and stated the representation which was made to Jesus, without stopping particularly to exhibit the manner in which it was done. In a summary way he says that the ruler communicated the information. Luke and Mark, dwelling more particularly on the circumstances, state at length the way in which it was done; that is, by himself stating, in a hurry, that she was *about to die*, or *dying*, and then in a few moments sending word that *she was dead*. The Greek word, rendered *is even now dead*, does not of necessity mean, as our translation would express, that she had actually expired, but only that she was *dying* or about to die. Compare Genesis 48:21. It is likely that a father, in these circumstances, would use a word as nearly expressing actual death as would be consistent with the fact that she was alive. The passage may be expressed thus: "My daughter was so sick that she must be, by this time, dead."³⁸

To be successful in our applications to God by prayer, four things are requisite; and this ruler teaches us what they are.

First, A man should place himself in the presence of God—he came unto him.

Secondly, He should humble himself sincerely before God—he fell down before him—at his feet. Mark 5:22.

Thirdly, He should lay open his wants with a holy earnestness—he besought him greatly. Mark 5:23.

Fourthly, he should have unbounded confidence in the power and goodness of Christ that his request shall be granted—put thy hand upon her, and she shall live.

He who comes in this way to God, for salvation, is sure to be heard. Imposition of hands was a rite anciently used by the servants of God, through which heavenly influences were conveyed to the bodies and souls of men. This rite is still used in certain Churches; but, as there is no Holy Ghost communicated by it, some suppose it may be as well omitted. But why is this? Is it not because there is an unfaithfulness in the person who lays on hands, or an unfitness in him on whom they are laid? Let the rite be restored to its primitive simplicity, and God will own it as he formerly did. But, however this may be, where is the man or number of men who have authority to abrogate a rite of God's own appointment? In the appointment of men to the sacred ministry it should never be omitted: even in these degenerate days, it may still serve as a sign of the necessity of the gifts and graces of that Holy Spirit without which no man can fulfill the work of the ministry, or be the instrument of saving the souls of them that hear him. When the

³⁸ Barnes' Notes on the New Testament

inventions of men are put in the place of the ordinances of God, the true Church of Christ is in great danger.³⁹

Mark and Luke say this man's name was Jairus (Mark 5:22; Luke 8:41). As ruler of the synagogue, Jairus was responsible for administration—looking after the building, supervising worship, running the school on weekdays, and finding rabbis to teach on the Sabbath.

Though Jairus was **a ruler** (cf. Mark 5:22 and Luke 8:41) and a man of considerable influence, he **knelt before** Jesus, the appropriate position to take before God. **she will live**. Evidence of Jairus's deep faith in Jesus, in the face of death.⁴⁰

Matthew 9:19

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

[**arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples**] Jesus could have healed the girl from a distance, as He did in Matthew 8:13; Matthew 15:28; and John 4:50-54; but He did as requested to teach His ministers not to spare time and labor in meeting the needs of each that comes to them.

Matthew 9:20

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

Two healings that may be connected... This same story is recorded in Mark 5:21-43 and Luke 8:40-56.

Hems

In ancient Mesopotamia, "to cut off the hem" was to strip one of his personality, authority, etc. A husband could divorce his wife by cutting off the hem of her robe. A nobleman would authenticate his name on a clay tablet by pressing the hem on the soft clay.

David cut off the skirt (hem) of Saul's robe in the wilderness of En Gedi (1 Sam 24). The genealogy was woven into the threads of the hem. David was conscience stricken because he had personally interrupted the lineage to the throne and symbolically taken away the authority from the Lord's anointed. Saul understood (1 Sam 24:20).

Fringes on Levitical garments (Num 15:38, 39; Deut 22:12; Ex 28:33,34).

God's Covenant with Israel: "I spread my (*shuwl*) over thee." (Ezek 16:8; Ex 39:25,26). Joseph's coat: Brothers were envious (Gen 37:3-4). The Lord's hem sought for healing (Mt 14:36; Mk 6:56). The goal of the woman with the issue of blood (Mt 9:20-21; Mk 5:31). Ruth & Boaz:

³⁹ Adam Clarke's Commentary

⁴⁰ ESV Study Bible

“Spread thy (*shuwl*) over thine handmaid...” (Ruth 3:9): she was thereby requesting him to exercise his authority over her.

The Issue of Blood

The issue of blood makes one ceremonially unclean; anything touched was ceremonially unclean (Lev 15:19-33; 18:19; 20:18). She was a *Gentile*; otherwise she would not be allowed there in the crowd.⁴¹

[hem] Greek: *kraspedon* (GSN-2899), a tassel of twisted wool (Matthew 9:20; Matthew 14:36; Matthew 23:5; Mark 6:56; Luke 8:44). One was required at each of the four corners of the outer garment (Numbers 15:38-41; Deut. 22:12). Pharisees considered tassels special marks of sanctity and sought to enlarge them (Matthew 23:5). One thread of each tassel was to be deep blue to remind them of their duty to keep the law.⁴²

The hem of his garment—The **צִיצִית** *tsitsith*, or fringes, which the Jews were commanded to wear on their garments. See Numbers 15:38.

Mark says that the woman, fearing and trembling, came and told him all the truth. Perhaps she feared that, from the impure nature of her disease, he would be offended that she touched him.

Tzitzit (plural *tzitziyot*). Observant Jewish men in Yeshua’s time and today have worn fringes on the corners of their garments, in obedience to Numbers 15:37–41, the third of the three *Torah* passages recited in the *Sh.ma* portion of the synagogue service. These fringes are made in a special way and have a unique appearance. Their purpose is to remind God’s people to obey his commandments. Since they are not merely decorations, the usual renderings of Greek *kraspedon*—“hem,” “fringe,” “border,” “tassel”—are replaced here by “*tzitzit*.” Today Jewish men wear *tzitziyot* on a *tallit gadol* (“large *tallit*”), which is not an article of clothing but a ritual cloth donned primarily for synagogue worship, or on a *tallit katan* (“little *tallit*”), which is an undergarment especially designed with corners for the *tzitziyot*. But Yeshua wore his on his **robe**, a heavy blanket-like over-garment similar to that worn by Bedouins today.

A woman who had ... a hemorrhage approached him from behind and ... touched the *tzitzit*. She was in a state of ritual impurity because of her hemorrhage. She touched the holiest part of Yeshua’s garment. No wonder she approached from behind—she was afraid; this is also why she hesitated to answer Yeshua’s question, “Who touched my clothes?” (Mk 5:29–33). For normally the impure defiles the pure (see Haggai 2:11–13; also the Talmud, *Taharot*). But in this case, the opposite happened: the purity of Yeshua the Messiah and of his *tzitziyot* remained uncompromised, while instead the cause of the woman’s impurity was instantly removed. In the following incident, the raising of the dead girl, this principle is exemplified even more strongly, since Yeshua

⁴¹ Chuck Missler, Commentary on Matthew, khouse.org

⁴² Dake Study Notes, Dake’s Study Bible

himself initiates contact with what is regarded in Judaism as the primary source of all impurity, a dead body (v. 25; compare also above, 8:1–4).⁴³

Matthew 9:21

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

She said within herself, If I may but touch his garment—Her disorder was of that delicate nature that modesty forbade her to make any public acknowledgment of it; and therefore she endeavored to transact the whole business in private. Besides, the touch of such a person was by the law reputed unclean. By faith in Christ Jesus, little things are often rendered efficacious to our salvation. What more simple than a morsel of bread, and a few drops of wine, in the Lord's Supper! And yet, they who receive them by faith in the sacrifice they represent, are made partakers of the blessings purchased by the crucified body and spilled blood of the Lord Jesus!

Matthew 9:22

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

[turned him about] The pull of faith was strong enough to attract the sensitive spirit of Jesus. He could discern all diseases and who had them, because He had all the gifts of the Spirit of 1 Cor. 12; Isaiah 11:2; Isaiah 61:1.

[thy faith hath made thee whole] First of seven occurrences (Matthew 9:22; Mark 5:34; Mark 10:52; Luke 7:50; Luke 8:48; Luke 17:19; Luke 18:42). She knew that the blue in the tassel represented the Word of God and that here was a true Israelite whose hem was not worn in hypocrisy. It stood for the covenant of healing and the Word that had healed all Israel (Psalm 105:37; Psalm 107:20), so she acted upon her faith and it worked. She knew it because for the first time in 12 years the blood ceased to flow (Mark 5:29).

Daughter, be of good comfort—Θάρσει θυγατερ, Take courage, daughter. See on Matthew 9:2 (note). The reason of this kind speech was—Jesus, finding that virtue had proceeded from him; made inquiry who had touched him. The woman, finding that she could not be hid, came fearing and trembling, (Mark 5:33), and confessed the truth: to dispel these fears and to comfort her mind, Jesus said, Daughter, take courage.

[Be of good comfort] Jesus silenced her fears, commended her faith, and sent her away in peace. He used an endearing appellation, calling her *daughter*, a word of tenderness and affection, and dismissed her who had been twelve long and tedious years labouring under a weakening and offensive disease, now in an instant made whole. Her faith, her

⁴³Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 9:20). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

strong confidence in Jesus, had been the means of her restoration. It was the *power* of Jesus that cured her; but that power would not have been exerted but in connection with faith. So in the salvation of a sinner. No one is saved who does not believe; but faith is the *instrument*, and not the power, that saves.

This woman had suffered for 12 years with bleeding. In our times of desperation, we don't have to worry about the correct way to reach out to God. Like this woman, we can simply reach out in faith. He will respond.

Matthew 9:23

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

[minstrels and the people making a noise] Flute players, pipers, and paid mourners who attend houses of the dead (Jeremiah 9:17-21; Jeremiah 48:36; Amos 5:16). The poorest were required to have two pipers and one mourning woman.

[And when Jesus came in] Jesus admitted only three of his disciples, Peter, James, and John the brother of James, and the father and mother of the damsel, to go in with him where the corpse lay, Mark 5:37-40. It was important that there should be *witnesses* of the miracle, and he chose a sufficient number. *Five* witnesses were enough to establish the fact. The witnesses were impartial. The fact that she was dead was established beyond a doubt. Of this the mourners, the parents, the messengers, the people were satisfied. If she was presented to the people alive, the proof of the miracle was complete. The presence of more than the *five* witnesses would have made the scene tumultuous, and have been less satisfactory evidence of the fact of the restoration of the child. Five sober witnesses are always better than the confused voices of a rabble. These were the same disciples that were with him in the mount of transfiguration and garden of Gethsemane, Mark 9:2, 14:33, 2 Peter 1:17,18.⁴⁴

flute players and the crowd. Professional mourners were customarily hired to assist at funerals, usually including flutists and wailing women (making a commotion). Since bodies decomposed quickly in Palestine, mourners had to assemble fairly soon after a death.

Matthew 9:24

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

[not dead, but sleepeth] Not hopelessly dead, as you suppose, but I will wake her. This is not as much of a physical statement as possible spiritual.

⁴⁴ Barnes' Notes on the New Testament

They laughed him to scorn—Κατεγελων αυτον, they ridiculed him; from κατα, intensive, and γελαω, I laugh:—they grinned a ghastly smile, expressive of the contempt they felt for his person and knowledge. People of the world generally ridicule those truths which they neither comprehend nor love, and deride those who publish them; but a faithful minister of God, (copying the example of Christ), keeps on his way, and does the work of his Lord and Master.⁴⁵

The maid is not dead, but sleepeth. It cannot be supposed that our Lord means *literally* to say that the child was not dead. Every possible evidence of her death had been given, and he acted on that himself, and conveyed to the people the idea that he raised her *from the dead*. He meant to speak in opposition to their opinions. It is not unlikely that Jarius and the people favoured the opinions of the Sadducees; and that *they* understood by her being dead that she had ceased to be, and that she would never be raised up again. In opposition to this he used the expression *she sleepeth*; affirming mildly both that the *body* was dead, and *implying* that *her spirit* still lived, and that she would be raised up again. A similar mode of speaking is seen in John 11:11: "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." The sacred writers, who hold the doctrine of the resurrection, often spoke of the dead as sleeping, 2 Peter 3:4, Acts 7:60, 1 Corinthians 15:6, 18 1 Thessalonians 4:13-15. The meaning of this passage then is—the maid has not ceased to exist; but though her body is dead, yet her spirit lives, and she sleeps in the hope of the resurrection.⁴⁶

Matthew 9:25

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

“...dead”: Greek word not used in other places for dead, implies maybe she was not dead. See Mark Chapter 5 for a more detailed account.

Pattern Is Prophecy

- Is there a symbolic connection? She has had the issue of blood for 12 years, the daughter raised from the dead was 12 years old.
- Who is Jesus Christ *called on* to raise? A Daughter of Zion (Zech 9:9; 18x in the book of Lamentations alone; that is a title of Israel).

En route to raising the daughter of Zion, a Gentile woman is healed...

[were put forth] Mockers were put out to have quietness and reverence, not to get faith in operation.

[arose] One of ten resurrections: three by Jesus (Matthew 9:25; Luke 7:14; John 11) and seven by others (1 Kings 17:21; 2 Kings 4:34; 2 Kings 13:20-21; Jonah 2:1-10 with Matthew 12:40; Acts 9:40; Acts 14:20; Acts 20:10).

The maid is not dead, but sleepeth—That is, she is not dead so as to continue under the power of death; but shall be raised from it as a person is from natural sleep.

⁴⁵ Adam Clarke's Commentary

⁴⁶ Barnes' Notes on the New Testament

He—took her by the hand, and the maid arose—The fountain of life thus communicating its vital energy to the dead body. Where death has already taken place, no power but that of the great God can restore to life; in such a case, vain is the help of man. So the soul that is dead in trespasses and sins—that is, sentenced to death because of transgression—and is thus dead in law, can only be restored to spiritual life by the mighty power of the Lord Jesus; because HE alone has made the atonement, and HE alone can pardon transgression. If the spiritually dead person be utterly unconcerned about the state and fate of his soul, let a converted relative either bring him to Christ by leading him to hear the unadulterated Gospel of the kingdom; or bring Christ to him by fervent, faithful, and persevering prayer.

The synagogue ruler didn't come to Jesus until his daughter was dead—it was too late for anyone else to help. But Jesus simply went to the girl and raised her! In our lives, Christ can make a difference when it seems too late for anyone else to help. He can bring healing to broken relationships, release from addicting habits, and forgiveness and healing to emotional scars. If your situation looks hopeless, remember that Christ can do the impossible.

This is the first instance of raising the dead that we have in the Gospels. Three notable incidents of raising the dead are recorded. Again, Luke goes into more detail than Matthew. Luke adds that He spoke to the little girl in this lovely fashion, “Little lamb, wake up, I say.” The method of Jesus in raising the dead was always the same. He spoke to the person directly.

After healing the woman with the issue of blood and raising Jairus' daughter from the dead, the fame of Jesus spread.⁴⁷

took her by the hand. Touching a corpse rendered a person unclean for seven days (Num. 19:11–21), but Jesus brings the girl to life, transforming uncleanness into purity. Jesus' power over death anticipates his later raising of Lazarus and his own resurrection (Matt. 28:1–10; John 10:17–18; 11:25–26; etc.).⁴⁸

Matthew 9:26

And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

Matthew 9:27

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

Two blind men followed Jesus! “Son of David”; a very Jewish title.

⁴⁷ McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:54). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴⁸ ESV Study Bible

Son of David—This was the same as if they had called him Messiah. Two things here are worthy of remark:

- 1st. That it was a generally received opinion at this time in Judea, that the Messiah should be son of David. (John 7:42).
- 2dly. That Jesus Christ was generally and incontestably acknowledged as coming from this stock. Matthew 12:23.

Have mercy on us—That man has already a measure of heavenly light who knows that he has no merit; that his cry should be a cry for mercy; that he must be fervent, and that in praying he must follow Jesus Christ as the true Messiah, the son of David, expected from heaven.

“Son of David” was a popular way of addressing Jesus as the Messiah because it was known that the Messiah would be a descendant of David (Isaiah 9:7). This is the first time the title is used in Matthew. Jesus’ ability to give sight to the blind was prophesied in Isaiah 29:18; Isaiah 35:5; Isaiah 42:7.

And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him—hearing, doubtless, as in a later case is expressed, “that Jesus passed by” (Mt 20:30).

crying, and saying, Thou son of David, have mercy on us—It is remarkable that in the only other recorded case in which the blind applied to Jesus for their sight, and obtained it, they addressed Him, over and over again, by this one Messianic title, so well known—“Son of David” (Mt 20:30). Can there be a doubt that their faith fastened on such great Messianic promises as this, “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,” &c. (Is 35:5).⁹ and if so, this appeal to Him, as the Consolation of Israel, to do His predicted office, would fall with great weight upon the ears of Jesus.⁴⁹

This account of the healing of **two blind men** has significant differences from the healing of Bartimaeus (20:29–34; Mark 10:46–52; Luke 18:35–43) and should not be thought of as the same event. Jesus no doubt healed many blind people over the course of his ministry. **Son of David**. A reference to the promised messianic deliverer from the line of David whose kingdom will continue forever (2 Sam. 7:12–16), and the first of several times in Matthew that people refer to Jesus by this title (see Matt. 12:23; 15:22; 20:30, 31; 21:9, 15; 22:42; cf. 1:1). The messianic age was to bring healing to the blind (Isa. 29:18; 35:5).⁵⁰

Matthew 9:28

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

[house] To go back to the house of Matthew (Matthew 9:10,18,23,27-28).

⁴⁹Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mt 9:27). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

⁵⁰ESV Study Bible

Adam Clarke says -That is, the house of Peter at Capernaum, where he ordinarily lodged.

Believe ye that I am able to do this?—Without faith Jesus does nothing to men's souls now, no more than he did to their bodies in the days of his flesh.

They said unto him, Yea, Lord—Under a sense of our spiritual blindness we should have,

1st. A lively faith in the almighty grace of Christ.

2dly. A fervent, incessant cry for the communication of this grace.

3dly. A proper view of his incarnation, because it is through his union with our nature, and by his sufferings and death, we are to expect salvation.

Matthew 9:29

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

[According to your faith be it unto you] The law of faith (note, *Matthew 8:13).

Matthew 9:30

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

They did cast out demons before Jesus, so what is going on? The rabbis could cast out demons and they did. However, the procedure for exorcism in Judaism requires the demon to identify himself. Under Judaism, if you happen to be confronted with a demon whose specialty was to render his possession dumb, he was secure. That type of demon was NOT exorcisable under Judaism.

[**straitly charged**] Greek: *embrimaomai* (GSN-1690), sternly enjoin; to charge at risk of displeasure, indicating that He was definitely seeking to keep His identity unknown to His enemies as long as possible. See reasons Matthew 8:4.

"Tell no man" for four reasons:

1. He did not want to set forth His claim to Messiahship this early in His ministry and hasten the controversy He knew that His works would cause. Even later He forbade His disciples to make it known (Matthew 16:13-20). He made no public claim of it at first, but simply did the works that the prophets had predicted the Messiah would do (Matthew 11:1-6).
2. He wanted people to fulfill the law and offer the testimony that Moses commanded in such cases (Leviticus 14:4,10,21-22). In each case it would have to be known to the priests how one was cleansed and this should be sufficient proof of His Messiahship to the priests. The Jewish rabbis taught that cleansing lepers should be characteristic of the Messiah, so His very works proved it before He was forced by opposition to make such claim for Himself.
3. He wanted to shun popularity and human acclaim and the evil effects of mob clamor to make Him King. When this did happen He got away from it all (John 6:15-21). By this time He knew it was time to declare Himself to the people, so never again did He

say, "taell no man," as in Matthew 8:4; Mark 8:26,30; Luke 5:14; Luke 8:56; Luke 9:21.

4. Jesus set an example of putting healings to the test before testimony is given for them. Any real healing will stand any kind of test. Any person maintaining he is healed when he is not, is unscriptural.⁵¹

Why did Yeshua "play down" who He was? One thought is that He didn't want the masses taking up arms against Rome, as many had the false idea that this would be a role of the Messiah.

In addition to this idea, looking back at the Hebrew Tenakh, we find the following:

Isaiah 6:8-13 - *Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, And the LORD have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.*

Yeshua's actions are in accordance to what God told the prophet Isaiah. The people in Isaiah's time, just as in Yeshua's time, had strayed from God. As such, it was not for those who were haughty and arrogant to understand who He truly was. Those of a humble and contrite heart would receive the message however. As we will see later in this study, Yeshua makes a similar statement regarding His parables, which He says were not for all to understand.⁵²

Matthew 9:31

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

[spread abroad his fame in all that country] Took no heed to His charge of Matthew 9:30.

But they—spread abroad his fame—They should have held their peace; for to obey is better than sacrifice, 1 Samuel 15:22; but man must always be wiser than God, however, it may be profitable to remark,

1st. That honor pursues those who fly from it.

2dly. He who is thoroughly sensible of God's mercy cannot long contain his acknowledgments.

⁵¹ Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

⁵² www.Ysahanet.com

3dly. That God in general requires that what a man has received, for his own salvation, shall become subservient to that of others—Let your light so shine, etc.

Matthew 9:32

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

[went out] Out of Matthew's house (Matthew 9:9-10,18,27-28,32).

[dumb man possessed with a devil] Muteness caused by a mute demon.

Spurgeon: As a pair of patients leave the surgery, another poor creature comes in. Note the “behold.” The case is striking. He comes not freely, or of his own accord: “they brought” him: thus should we bring men to Jesus. He does not cry for help, for he is “a dumb man.” Let us open our mouths for the dumb. He is not himself, but he is “possessed with a devil.” Poor creature! will anything be done for him?

Matthew 9:33

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

And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake—The very miracle which was now wrought was to be the demonstrative proof of the Messiah’s being manifested in the flesh. See Isaiah 35:5, 6.

It was never so seen in Israel—The greatest of the prophets has never been able to do such miracles as these. This was the remark of the people; and thus we find that the poor and the simple were more ready to acknowledge the hand of God than the rich and the learned. Many miracles had been wrought in the course of this one day, and this excited their surprise.

Matthew 9:34

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

See Matthew Chapter 12. Don’t ever ascribe something that God is doing to the powers of Satan!

[**He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils**] First blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, showing their open opposition to Him. They maliciously and knowingly sinned against light (John 3:1-2; Matthew 12:31-32).

In Matthew 9, the Pharisees accuse Jesus of four different sins: blasphemy, befriending outcasts, impiety, and serving Satan. Matthew shows how Jesus was maligned by those who should have received him most gladly. Why did the Pharisees do this? (1) Jesus

bypassed their religious authority. (2) He weakened their control over the people. (3) He challenged their cherished beliefs. (4) He exposed their insincere motives.

He casts out demons by the prince of demons. The Pharisees were unable to recognize that God was doing something unique in the teaching and works of Jesus, so they attributed his powers to the only other existing source, since they could not deny the reality of the miraculous works that Jesus had done. But the truthfulness of Jesus' teachings, the moral excellence of his character, and his ministry of doing good should have convinced them otherwise (cf. 7:16; John 3:2; 9:31–33).⁵³

Matthew 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.

[went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom] Second general statement of His evangelistic work—teaching, preaching, and healing (Matthew 4:23-24; Acts 10:38).

1. Teaching, Greek: *didasko* (GSN-1321), to instruct; deliver a discourse; to impart knowledge; instill doctrine into another; to explain. Christ was the greatest teacher of men. They marveled at what He said, not at His gymnastics. Teaching should be carried on in an informal way. The teacher should permit questions until everything is clear (Matthew 13:11,51; Mark 8:11; Mark 12:34; Luke 2:46; Luke 23:9).
2. Preaching, Greek: *kerusso* (GSN-2784), to herald as a public crier; proclaim. Teaching is referred to 168 times and about equally in both Testaments, but preaching is referred to only 5 times in the Old Testament and 138 times in the New Testament. Preaching is for the purpose of calling the attention of men to truth while teaching is the work of making the truth clear. Every parent was to be a teacher of truth (Deut. 4:1-14; Deut. 11:19).
3. Healing. This was His ministry (Matthew 9:23-24; Matthew 9:35; Luke 4:16-21; John 10:10; Acts 10:38). Christ commanded every gospel minister to do this work (Matthew 10:1-8; Matthew 28:20; Mark 3:15; Mark 6:7-13; Mark 16:15-20; Luke 9:2; Luke 10:9; James 5:14-16).⁵⁴

[healing] Greek: *therapeuo* (GSN-2323), to wait upon menially, to relieve of disease. Translated "heal" 38 times and "cure" 5 times.

Jesus went about all the cities and villages—Of Galilee. See on Matthew 4:23, 24 (note). A real minister of Jesus Christ, after his example, is neither detained in one place by a comfortable provision made by some, nor discouraged from pursuing his work by the calumny and persecution of others. It is proper to remark, that, wherever Christ comes, the proofs of his presence evidently appear: he works none but salutary and beneficial miracles, because his ministry is a ministry of salvation.

⁵³ ESV Study Bible

⁵⁴ Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

Yashanet.com As previously mentioned, many today believe the "gospel message" is the death, burial and resurrection of the Messiah. This creates a conflict when faced with verses such as this one, or Hebrews 4:2, or other places where the disciples are preaching "the gospel" before Yeshua has died. To counter this, it is taught that the "gospel of the kingdom" is not the same as the "gospel of the Messiah's death, burial and resurrection." Scripture doesn't offer support for such a teaching however.

An alternative explanation is that there is one gospel message and it has never changed. It was indeed given to the Hebrews in Moses' time and preached by Yeshua Himself and his apostles. This "gospel" was "pictured" in the commandments regarding the Yovel Year, also called "Jubilees," where every 50 years, debts were forgiven and properties returned to their original owners. The Yovel Year has heavy Messianic significance in Jewish literature. The prophet Isaiah (chapter 61) makes the connection between the elements of the Yovel year commandment and their ultimate fulfillment by the Messiah.

Just as the Yovel year brought freedom to captives, forgiveness of debts and a restoration of things to their original order, the Messianic kingdom will bring freedom, forgiveness and a restoration of the the name of God, Israel and creation - complete and everlasting physical and spiritual healing (Revelation 21 and 22).

The "death, burial and resurrection of the Messiah" is not the Gospel. Rather, it is God's personal "signet" on Yeshua confirming that He was/is the one bringing in what is called the "Jubilee release" -- the "good news" or "gospel" from God. This will all come fully into place when the New Covenant is established in the Millennium.⁵⁵

Matthew 9:36

But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

[he was moved with compassion on them] Characteristic of God and Christ and should be of believers. Compassion is that drawing and agitation of the innermost parts at the sight of any distressed or miserable object. It causes revolting action in the innermost being to bring deliverance from such unlawful and inhuman misery and suffering. Used nine times of Christ (Matthew 9:36; Matthew 14:14; Matthew 15:32; Matthew 20:34; Mark 1:41; Mark 5:19; Mark 6:34; Mark 8:2; Luke 7:13).

[fainted] Exhausted, beginning to lie down like sheep abandoned by shepherds. The scribes and Pharisees had utterly neglected the common man whom they classed as cursed (John 7:49).

[as sheep having no shepherd] Lost men are compared to lost sheep (Psalm 119:176; Isaiah 53:6-7; Jeremiah 50:6; Matthew 10:6; Luke 15:4-6) and saved people are compared to saved sheep that were lost (Matthew 10:16; Matthew 26:31; John 10:1-29; John 21:16,17; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25).

⁵⁵ WWW.Yashanet.com

Moved with compassion—Εσπλαγγνισθη, from σπλαγγνον, a bowel. The Jews esteemed the bowels to be the seat of sympathy and the tender passions, and so applied the organ to the sense.

Εσπλαγγνιζομαι signifies, says Mintert, “to be moved with pity from the very inmost bowels. It is an emphatic word, signifying a vehement affection of commiseration, by which the bowels and especially the heart is moved.” Both this verb and the noun seem to be derived from σπασω, to draw; the whole intestinal canal, in the peristaltic motion of the bowels, being drawn, affected, and agitated with the sight of a distressed or miserable object. Pity increases this motion of the bowels, and produces considerable pain: hence σπλαγγνιζομαι, to have the bowels moved, signifies to feel pity or compassion at seeing the miseries of others.⁵⁶

[Because they fainted] The word used here refers to the weariness and fatigue which results from labour and being burdened. He saw the people *burdened* with the rites of religion and the doctrines of the Pharisees; sinking down under their ignorance and traditions, and neglected by those who *ought* to have been enlightened teachers, *scattered* and driven out without care and attention. With great beauty, he compares them to sheep wandering without a shepherd. Judea was a land of flocks and herds. The faithful shepherd, by day and night, was with his flock, He defended it, led it to green pastures, and beside the still waters. Without his care they would stray away. They were in danger of wild beasts. They panted in the summer sun, and knew not where was the cooling shade and stream. So, said he, is it with this people. No wonder that the compassionate Redeemer Was moved with pity!

Discipleship, Oppressed—Jesus looked with compassion upon the crowd of people following Him. They were spiritually destitute and worn out, like a neglected flock of sheep without a shepherd. A compassion for the oppressed seeks action to alleviate their need. Jesus sought to awaken compassion in His disciples and cause them to meet the needs of the spiritually neglected. Workers to reach out to spiritually neglected people were few then, and they still are too few today. See note on Lk 9:12-17. Jesus calls us to compassion, not to condemnation, for the oppressed.⁵⁷

The shepherds of the people were the priesthood. Just as in the days of Malachi, they had become corrupted, leaving the people without Godly leadership. But as the prophet foretold, the true Shepherd, God's Messiah, would one day come:

Malachi 3:1 - *Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the LORD, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.*

The book of Malachi closes with a reminder that God does not change. It also makes it clear that the end times and arrival of the Messiah are linked to the keeping of the Torah:

Malachi 4:1-6 - *For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the*

⁵⁶ Adam Clarke's Commentary

⁵⁷ Disciples Study Bible

day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts. **Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.** Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.⁵⁸

Matthew 9:37

Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;

[**harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few**] Christian work is compared to harvesting wheat (Luke 10:1-2; John 4:35).

The harvest—The souls who are ready to receive the truth are very numerous; but the laborers are few. There are multitudes of scribes, Pharisees, and priests, of reverend and right reverend men; but there are few that work. Jesus wishes for laborers, not gentlemen, who are either idle drones, or slaves to pleasure and sin, and *nati consumere fruges*. “Born to consume the produce of the soil.”

It was customary with the Jews to call their rabbins and students reapers; and their work of instruction, the harvest. So in Idra Rabba, s. 2. “The days are few; the creditor is urgent; the crier calls out incessantly; and the reapers are few.” And in Pirkey Aboth: “The day is short, the work great, the workmen idle, the reward abundant, and the master of the household is urgent.” In all worldly concerns, if there be the prospect of much gain, most men are willing enough to labor; but if it be to save their own souls, or the souls of others, what indolence, backwardness, and carelessness! While their adversary, the devil, is going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour; and a careless soul, and especially a careless minister is his especial prey.

The place of the harvest is the whole earth: it signifies little where a man works, provided it be by the appointment, in the Spirit, and with the blessing of God.⁵⁹

[**The harvest truly is plenteous**] Another beautiful image. A waving field of golden grain invites many reapers, and demands haste. By the harvest here, he meant that the multitude of people that flocked to his ministry was great. The people expected the Messiah. They were prepared to receive the gospel. But the labourers were few. Few were engaged in instructing the multitude. He directed them, therefore, to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send forth reapers. *God* is the Proprietor of the great harvest of the world, and he only can send men to gather it in.

⁵⁸ www.yashanet.com

⁵⁹ Adam Clarke’s Commentary

Matthew 9:38

Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

[labourers into his harvest] Laborers are still scarce who will carry on gospel work like Christ and the early church did.

Missions, Sending—Jesus’ balanced ministry included preaching, teaching, healing, and expressing the compassionate love for the multitudes that motivated Him. He wants His disciples to share His love for the needy multitudes. To have a missionary vision we must be close to Jesus, hear His words, and see our world as Jesus sees it. We may see the multitudes in many ways. Some of these make us ready to condemn the multitudes. Jesus, however, always sees people as a harvest, ready to be gathered. A harvest has several characteristics: (1) it is *valuable*; (2) it must be *gathered*, or it will be lost; and (3) it is *urgent*. Time moves quickly (Jn 9:4), and then the opportunity is gone. Jesus calls for harvesters who care for the multitudes. Prayer moves our own heart to the harvest and moves others to reach out in evangelism and missions. As Christians become concerned about multiplied millions who have never heard the good news of Jesus Christ, prayer is our first recourse. Prayer moves God and brings promise of response. Prayer also opens our vision and the vision of others. Prayer can open our eyes to see our spiritual resources (2 Ki 6:17-18) and to see the person of Christ (Lk 24:30). In this case, our prayer asks God to send harvesters into the field (Mt 24:14).⁶⁰

Spurgeon: His heavy heart sought solace among “his disciples”, and he spake to them. He mourned the scantiness of workers. Pretenders were many, but real “laborers” in the harvest were few. The sheaves were spoiling. The crowds were ready to be taught, even as ripe wheat is ready for the sickle; but there were few to instruct them, and where could more teaching men be found?

God only can thrust out, or “send forth laborers” Man-made ministers are useless. Still are the fields encumbered with gentlemen who cannot use the sickle. Still the real ingatherers are few and far between. Where are the instructive, soulwinning ministries? Where are those who travail in birth for their hearers’ salvation? Let us plead with the Lord of the harvest to care for his own harvest, and send out his own men. May many a true heart be moved by the question, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us? “to answer,” Here am I! Send me.”

Ten Miracles

Matthew groups together ten miracles to prove to his readers that Jesus Christ possessed the powers of the King that the Old Testament promised the Messiah would have.

In His first “sermon” He had announced that He would prove that the Spirit was upon Him by healing and helping the multitudes (Luke 4:18-19). Isaiah promised that in the Kingdom Age the blind would see, the lame walk, etc. (Isaiah 35:5,6). These chapters take us back to Mt 4:23-25:

⁶⁰ Disciples Study Bible

Christ's Credentials

- Power over Disease 8:1-17
 - Leprosy vv. 1-4
 - Palsy vv. 5-13
 - Fever vv. 14-17
- Power over Nature 8:18-27
- Power over Satan 8:28-34
- Power over Sin 9:1-17
- Power over Death 9:18-26
- Power over Darkness 9:27-31
- Power over Demons 9:32-38

Barnes: Remarks on Matthew 9

1. We are presented with an instance of proper perseverance in coming to Christ, Matthew 9:1,2. Nothing was suffered to prevent the purpose of presenting the helpless paralytic to the Saviour. So the poor helpless sinner should come. No obstacle should prevent him. He should lay himself at his feet, and feel that Jesus holds over him the power of life and death, and that no other being can save.

2. Jesus has the power to forgive sins, Matthew 9:6. He claimed it, and worked a miracle to prove it. If he had it then, he has it still. To him, then, the lost sinner may come, with the assurance that as he freely then exerted that power, so he is ever the same, and will do it now.

3. Jesus Christ is Divine. Nothing could prove it more dearly than the power to pardon rebels. God only can pronounce what shall be done with transgressors of his law, Isaiah 43:25. He that claims this right must be either an impostor or God. But no impostor ever yet worked a miracle. Jesus was therefore Divine. He can save to the uttermost all that come to God through him.

4. We see here the proper rule to be observed in mingling with the wicked, Matthew 9:10-13. It should not be of choice, or for pleasure. We should not enter into their follies or vices. We should not seek enjoyment in their society. We should mingle with them simply to transact necessary business, and to do them good, and no further, Psalms 1:1.

5. In the case of the ruler and the woman that was diseased, we have a strong instance of the nature of faith. They came not doubting his power-fully assured that he was able to heal. So all genuine believers come to him. They doubt not his power or willingness to save them. Poor, and lost, and ruined by sin, and in danger of eternal death, they come. His heart is open. He puts forth his power, and the soul is healed, and the sin and danger gone.

6. The young must die, and may die in early life, Matthew 9:18. Very short graves are in every burying-ground. Thousands and millions, not more than twelve years of age, have died. Thousands and millions, not more than twelve years of age, are yet to die. Many of these may be taken from Sunday-schools. Their class, their teacher, their parents, sisters, and brothers, must be left, and the child be carried to the grave. Many children of that age, that have been in Sunday-schools, have died happy. They loved the Saviour, and they were ready to go. Jesus was near to them when they died, and they are

now in heaven. Of every child we may ask, Are you ready also to go when God shall call you? Do you love the Lord Jesus so as to be willing to leave all your friends here, and go to him?

7. Jesus can raise up the dead, and he will raise up all that love him, *Matthew 9:25*. Many little children will be raised up to meet him in the last great day. He shall come in the clouds. The angel shall sound a trumpet, and all the dead shall hear. All shall be raised up and go to meet him. All that loved him here will go to heaven. All that were wicked, and did not love him here, will go to everlasting suffering.

8. We see the duty of praying for the conversion of the world, *Matthew 9:37,38*. The harvest is as plentiful as it was in the time of Christ. More than six hundred millions are still without the gospel; and there are not yet many labourers to go into the harvest. The world is full of wickedness, and God only can qualify those who shall go and preach the gospel to the dark nations of the earth. Without ceasing, we ought to entreat of God to pity the nations, and to send faithful men, who shall tell them of a dying Saviour.