

## Matthew 8

### Outline (Modified from "The Outline Bible")

- I. Curing the sick (Matthew 8:1-17)
  - a. The leper (Matthew 8:1-4)
    - i. The cry (Matthew 8:1-2): he begs the Savior to heal him.
    - ii. The compassion (Matthew 8:3): Jesus restores the man by touching his hand.
    - iii. The command (Matthew 8:4): the cleansed leper is instructed to tell no one about his miracle.
  - b. A centurion's servant (Matthew 8:5-13)
    - i. The favor desired by the centurion (8:5-7): He wants Jesus to visit his home and heal his servant, which the Lord agrees to do.
    - ii. The faith demonstrated by the centurion (8:8-13)
      1. The confidence (8:8-9): He feels the Lord can heal the servant without even coming to his home!
      2. The commendation (8:10): Jesus commends him for so much faith!
      3. The conclusion (8:11-12): Jesus says his kind of faith will result in the eventual salvation of a number of Gentiles, while many faithless Jews will suffer eternal loss.
    - iii. The cure (8:13): The servant is healed at that very hour.
  - c. *Peter's mother-in-law* (8:14-15)
    - i. The suffering hostess (8:14): Jesus finds her in bed with a high fever.
    - ii. The serving hostess (8:15): After Jesus touches her hand, she gets up and begins to wait on him.
  - d. *A number of demon-possessed people* (8:16-17, 28-34)
    - i. On the western side of the Galilean Sea (8:16-17)
    - ii. The possessed (8:16): Many of these people are brought to Jesus for deliverance.
    - iii. The prophecy (8:17): He heals them all, that Isaiah's prophecy might be fulfilled (Isa. 53:4).
- II. THE MANDATE OF JESUS (8:18-22): He describes the cost of true discipleship to several would-be followers.
  - a. **Concerning one's finances** (8:18-20): They will have no place to lay their heads.
  - b. **Concerning one's family** (8:21-22): They must forsake their families in order to follow Jesus.
- III. **Calming the sea** (8:23-27)
  - a. *The furious storm* (8:23-24): A terrible storm threatens to sink the disciples' boat.
  - b. *The fearful sailors* (8:25): In desperation they awaken the sleeping Jesus, crying out for him to save them.
  - c. *The faithful Savior* (8:26-27): He quickly stills the waters, to the amazement of the disciples!
- IV. Curing the sick on the eastern side of the Galilean Sea (8:28-34)
  - i. The Gadarene maniacs, controlled by demons (8:28): Demons have made these two men violent, causing them to live among the tombs!

- ii. The panic of these demons (8:29): They are filled with fear as the Savior approaches.
- iii. The plea from these demons (8:30–31): They beg Jesus to send them into a herd of nearby pigs!
- iv. The Galilean Messiah, controller of demons (8:32–34)
  - 1. The release (8:32): He delivers the two men by ordering the demons into the herd of pigs!
  - 2. The rejection (8:33–34): The foolish people living in that area plead with Christ to depart and leave them alone.<sup>1</sup>

IVP BBC OT:

*Matthew groups together nine stories containing ten specific miracles (some commentators have suggested that Matthew wants his readers to remember Moses' ten miracles) in chapters 8–9: three miracles in 8:1–17, then teaching on true discipleship (8:18–22); three more miracles (8:23–9:8), then teaching on true discipleship (9:9–17); and finally three more miracle stories, one of which includes two miracles (9:18–33).*

*Ancient writers used examples to illustrate points: Jesus' authority over sickness, demons and nature summons people to recognize his authority over their lives. In ancient thought, miracles could call attention to or attest teachers or their views (in contrast to modern rationalistic attempts to deny them).<sup>2</sup>*

Detailed notes: Using NASB translation

- I. Curing the sick (Matthew 8:1-17)
  - a. The leper (Matthew 8:1-4)

Matthew 8:1–4 (NASB95)

- 1 When Jesus came down from the mountain, large crowds followed Him.
- 2 And a leper came to Him and bowed down before Him, and said, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."
- 3 Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "*I am willing; be cleansed.*" And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.
- 4 And Jesus *\*said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest and present the offering that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."*
  - i. The cry (Matthew 8:1-2): he begs the Savior to heal him.
  - ii. Notice the Jesus is coming down from the mountain, why? This is because he was giving the sermon on the mount. In Matthew 5:1, it says that he went up on the mountain.
  - iii. It says that "large" crowds followed Him.

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<sup>1</sup> H. L. Willmington, [The Outline Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), Mt 8:17–34.

<sup>2</sup> Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Mt 8:1–4.

- iv. It literally says, “many” crowds followed Him.
- v. Imagine Him now not being left alone.
- vi. IVP BBC OT: *The authorities viewed mobile teachers with followings of large crowds as threats to social stability; the Romans were always concerned about uprisings in Jewish Palestine. Readers familiar with this situation in pre-70 Jewish Palestine might recognize here a hint of impending conflict.*<sup>3</sup>
- vii. The leper came out of the crowd. Notice the context with Matthew chapters 5-7.
- viii. Jesus had this major sermon, we have a major crowd, and then the leper.
- ix. Now, verse 2: this leper is very humble. He comes to Him. He bows down...
- x. If you are willing...: he knows that Jesus can do this.
- xi. The leper would be an outcast. He probably had shame.
- xii. Psalm 51:17 (NASB95) *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.*
- xiii. ESV SB: *The OT provided specific guidelines for the examination and treatment of those with a variety of skin diseases, generally called leprosy, many of which were highly contagious (see Leviticus 13–14).*<sup>4</sup>
- xiv. IVP BBC OT: *Leprosy was an unattractive skin disease for which the Bible had prescribed quarantine from the rest of society (Lev 13:45–46). Lepers were thus outcasts from society, and most healthy people preferred to ignore them. “Lord” in personal address could also mean “Sir” and need not connote a recognition of Jesus’ deity.*<sup>5</sup>
- xv. The compassion (Matthew 8:3): Jesus restores the man by touching his hand. *This touch would have rendered Jesus ceremonially unclean (Lev 14:46; also Mishnah, m. Nega’im 3.1; 11.1; 12.1; 13.6–12).*<sup>6</sup>
- xvi. Swindoll compares this to a mother sitting with her sick child, holding her hand.
- xvii. The magnetic presence of Jesus draws us closer to Him.
- xviii. The quiet, compassion of Jesus invites us to ask for relief.
- xix. The transforming touch of Jesus changes us deep within.
- xx. Immediately, he is cleansed.
- xxi. The command (Matthew 8:4): the cleansed leper is instructed to tell no one about his miracle. Lev. 14:1-32 gets into this.
- xxii. IVP BBC OT: *Jesus here follows the injunctions detailed in the Old Testament law of leprosy (Lev 14:1–32). The instructions not to tell anyone else resemble the clandestine activity of some Old Testament prophets; on the messianic*

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<sup>3</sup> Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Mt 8:1.

<sup>4</sup> Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1835.

<sup>5</sup> Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Mt 8:2.

Mishnah *Mishnah*, a codification of Jewish rabbinic oral tradition collected c. A.D. 200–220

<sup>6</sup> Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Mt 8:3.

*secret see further the discussion of Mark's message in the introduction to Mark.*<sup>7</sup>

- xxiii. Mark's gospel says that he told everyone.
- xxiv. Witherinton III: *The first miracle story is an abbreviation of the account found in Mark 1:40–45, and it is not a surprise that the first miracle is about the healing of a Jew, whereas the second one involves a Gentile. [A Sapiential Reading of 8:1–4]*<sup>8</sup>
- xxv. Further, *This leper (if he was such) has come to the conclusion that Jesus could heal him if he would. The implication is that he has seen or heard of Jesus' previous miracles, even though in the narrative outline the First Evangelist has not recounted any such stories, only mentioning the fact in passing in Matthew 4. The statement of faith is as follows: "if you want to, sir, you are able to cure me."*<sup>9</sup>

More details:

### **Matthean Editing**

*It is interesting to note what the First Evangelist leaves out of the account, as it reflects the general pattern of Matthean editing: (1) the phrase "being moved with compassion" (Mark 1:41) is omitted; (2) "very sternly warning him" (Mark 1:43) is likewise deleted, as the First Evangelist plays down the emotions of Jesus; (3) "for your purification" (Mark 1:44) is omitted, perhaps as Hagner says because our Evangelist wants to emphasize that it is Jesus who made this man clean; and (4) the consequences of the healing for Jesus are omitted, namely when the man goes out and disobeys Jesus' command to keep silent, it leads to a situation where Jesus can no longer afford to go out in public lest he be thronged by miracle-seeking crowds (Mark 1:45). These editorial changes do not reflect an editor merely cramped for space, but rather one who has his own agendas as to how he wants to present these stories. One of the things at play here is trying to remove some of the ambiguities from the story, and another is trying to downplay Jesus' emotions and the rather hysterical frenzy of excitement his miracles stirred up, as the author wants Jesus to appear to be the quintessential sage, always making wise, sensible decisions and in control of his emotions, always able to teach and try and get his wisdom across. Notice this story is prefaced with a remark about how large the crowds were that had just heard Jesus' teaching.*

*D. Hagner, Matthew (WBC; Nashville: Nelson Reference, 1993), 197.*<sup>10</sup>

#### b. A centurion's servant (Matthew 8:5-13)

Matthew 8:5–13 (NASB95)

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<sup>7</sup> Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Mt 8:4.

<sup>8</sup> Ben Witherington III, [Matthew](#), ed. P. Keith Gammons and R. Alan Culpepper, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, Incorporated, 2006), 177.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

Alpha & Omega Language

wBC Word Biblical Commentary

<sup>10</sup> Ben Witherington III, [Matthew](#), ed. P. Keith Gammons and R. Alan Culpepper, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, Incorporated, 2006), 178.

5 And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, imploring Him,  
 6 and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented."  
 7 Jesus \*said to him, "I will come and heal him."  
 8 But the centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just  
 say the word, and my servant will be healed.  
 9 "For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!'  
 and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he  
 does it."  
 10 Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those who were following, "Truly I  
 say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.  
 11 "I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with  
 Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven;  
 12 but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there  
 will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."  
 13 And Jesus said to the centurion, "Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed." And  
 the servant was healed that very moment.

- i. The favor desired by the centurion (8:5–7): He wants Jesus to visit his home and heal his servant, which the Lord agrees to do.
- ii. *Capernaum was a town on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee, 680 ft (204 m) below sea level. It was a major trade and economic center in the North Galilean region.*<sup>11</sup>
- iii. *A centurion was a noncommissioned officer in the Roman army or one of the auxiliary territorial armies, commanding a centuria of (nominally) 100 men. The responsibilities of centurions were broadly similar to modern junior officers, but there was a wide gap in social status between them and officers, and relatively few were promoted beyond the rank of senior centurion. The Roman troops stationed in Judea were auxiliaries, who would normally be rewarded with Roman citizenship after 25 years of service. Some of the centurions may have served originally in the Roman legions (regular army) and thus gained their citizenship at enlistment. Others may have inherited it, like the apostle Paul did.*<sup>12</sup>
- iv. *During their twenty or so years of service in the Roman army, soldiers were not permitted to marry. Many had illegal local concubines, an arrangement that the army overlooked and the concubines found profitable; but centurions, who might be moved around more frequently, would be less likely to have such informal families than most soldiers. By ancient definitions, however, a household could include servants, and household servants and masters sometimes grew very close—especially if they made up the entire*

<sup>11</sup> Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Mt 8:5.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

*family unit. Centurions were paid much better than lower-ranking troops; servants were too expensive for common soldiers.*<sup>13</sup>

- v. Swindoll points out that this is a centurion who cares about the Jews.
  - vi. Think about Oscar Schindler.
  - vii. *Luke indicates that the centurion appealed to Jesus through intermediaries (Lk 7:3–6)—because of his own sense of unworthiness (v. 8; cf. Lk 7:7). Matthew makes no mention of the intermediaries.*<sup>14</sup>
  - viii. In verse 6, he says that his servant is paralyzed....
  - ix. He is tormented.
  - x. Notice the quick response from Jesus. In verse 7, Jesus says that He will come and heal him.
  - xi. CSB: *Jesus’s willingness to enter the home of a Gentile shocked the centurion, for Jewish law banned Jews from doing this (Ac 10:28). God’s grace to Gentiles and his intention to include them in his redemptive plan is a prominent theme in Matthew. The centurion was confident that Jesus had the authority to heal his servant even though the servant was in another location.*<sup>15</sup>
  - xii. The faith demonstrated by the centurion (8:8–13)
    - 1. The confidence (8:8–9): He feels the Lord can heal the servant without even coming to his home! But he also feels unworthy of Jesus to enter his house. In verse 9 the centurion compares his authority to Jesus’s authority.
    - 2. The commendation (8:10): Jesus commends him for so much faith! Jesus marvels at his faith. He has not found this kind of faith in Israel. This man had stronger faith than the Jews.
    - 3. The conclusion (8:11–12): Jesus says his kind of faith will result in the eventual salvation of a number of Gentiles, while many faithless Jews will suffer eternal loss. MacArthur: *Gentiles, in the kingdom with Abraham, will enjoy salvation and the blessing of God (cf. Is 49:8–12; 59:19; Mal 1:11; Lk 13:28, 29).*<sup>16</sup>
  - xiii. The cure (8:13): The servant is healed at that very hour.
- c. *Peter’s mother-in-law (8:14–15)*

Matthew 8:14–15 (NASB95)

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<sup>13</sup> Craig S. Keener, [\*The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament\*](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Mt 8:6.

<sup>14</sup> John F. MacArthur Jr., [\*The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible\*](#). (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), Mt 8:5.

<sup>15</sup> Charles L. Quarles, [\*“Matthew,” in CSB Study Bible: Notes\*](#), ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1513.

<sup>16</sup> John F. MacArthur Jr., [\*The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible\*](#). (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), Mt 8:11.

**14** *When Jesus came into Peter's home, He saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever.*

**15** *He touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she got up and waited on Him.*

- i. The suffering hostess (8:14): Jesus finds her in bed with a high fever.
  - ii. I love these verses because they tell us something about Peter. Peter is married. Peter had a house. ESV SB: *The home belonged to both Peter and his brother Andrew (Mark 1:29). Peter's **mother-in-law** was afflicted with a **fever**, perhaps malaria.*<sup>17</sup> IVP BBC NT: *Archaeologists have found what is thought to be this home in a site close to the synagogue. Adult children were expected to care for their aged parents.*<sup>18</sup>
  - iii. The serving hostess (8:15): After Jesus touches her hand, she gets up and begins to wait on him. This shows the healing was instantaneous and complete.
  - iv. IVP BBC NT: *Some religious men refrained from touching women in general to avoid any possibility of becoming unclean, unless they had means by which they could ascertain their status (based on Lev 15:19). That Peter's mother-in-law was able to "serve" them at table, a common womanly role in antiquity (cf. Lk 10:40), indicates the extent to which she was genuinely healed.*<sup>19</sup>
- d. *A number of demon-possessed people (8:16–17, 28–34)*

Matthew 8:16–17 (NASB95)

**16** *When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill.*

**17** *This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "HE HIMSELF TOOK OUR INFIRMITIES AND CARRIED AWAY OUR DISEASES."*

- i. The possessed (8:16): Many of these people are brought to Jesus for deliverance.
- ii. Notice how simple this is for Jesus to cast out the demons. He cast out the spirits with a word and healed all of their diseases. IVP BBC NT: *Exorcists often used magical incantations and sought to manipulate higher spirits into helping them drive out lower ones; in contrast, Jesus simply drives out spirits "with a word."*<sup>20</sup>
- iii. REMEMBER: This verse is part of a narrative. It only says that he healed all of them that evening. It does not mean he always healed everyone.
- iv. *Note how the author distinguishes healing from exorcism here, implying that the two are not identical.*<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1836.

<sup>18</sup> Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Mt 8:14.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, Mt 8:15.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, Mt 8:16.

<sup>21</sup> Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Mt 8:16.



- v. The prophecy (8:17): He heals them all, that Isaiah’s prophecy might be fulfilled (Isa. 53:4).
  - vi. The healing is possible because of the atonement. It is because Jesus would die and atone for our sins. Through His atonement He was going to provide healing.
- II. THE MANDATE OF JESUS (8:18–22): He describes the cost of true discipleship to several would-be followers.

Matthew 8:18–22 (NASB95)

- 18** Now when Jesus saw a crowd around Him, He gave orders to depart to the other side of the sea.
- 19** Then a scribe came and said to Him, “Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.”
- 20** Jesus \*said to him, “*The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.*”
- 21** Another of the disciples said to Him, “Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.”
- 22** But Jesus \*said to him, “*Follow Me, and allow the dead to bury their own dead.*”

- a. **Concerning one’s finances (8:18–20):** They will have no place to lay their heads. **Most pastors love crowds. Jesus tells them to go away.**
- b. In verse 19, we see a scribe. *An expert in handling written documents. In Israel, scribes’ duties included teaching, interpretation, and regulation of the law.*<sup>22</sup>
- c. I like what MacArthur shares: *As a scribe, this man was breaking with his fellow scribes by publicly declaring his willingness to follow Jesus. Nonetheless, Jesus evidently knew that he had not counted the cost in terms of suffering and inconvenience.*<sup>23</sup>
- d. In verse 20: Jesus gives the comparison with animals and says that He does not have a home.
- e. This designation, “son of man” is important:
- f. **MacArthur: Son of Man.** This is the name Jesus used for Himself more than any other. It is used 83 times in the gospels, always by Jesus Himself. It was a messianic title (Da 7:13, 14), with an obvious reference to the humanity and the humility of Christ. Yet, it also speaks of His everlasting glory, as Da 7:13, 14 shows (cf. 24:27; Ac 7:56).<sup>24</sup>
- g. **IVP BBC NT:** *Disciples usually sought out their own teachers. Some radical Greek philosophers who eschewed possessions sought to repulse prospective disciples with enormous demands, for the purpose of testing them and acquiring the most worthy. Comparisons with animals constituted a reasonably common teaching technique (e.g., the now famous animal fables attributed to Aesop). Like fishermen and tax*

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<sup>22</sup> Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1836.

<sup>23</sup> John F. MacArthur Jr., [The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible](#). (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), Mt 8:19.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, Mt 8:20.



gatherers, carpenters had a much better income than agrarian peasants; Jesus' call, not involuntary poverty, summoned him and his followers to a sacrificial lifestyle.<sup>25</sup>

Swindoll tells a story:

*A missionary couple came home aboard a ship after many years of faithful service in Africa. It so happened that there was a very important diplomat also on the same ship who got special treatment and special attention. When the ship arrived, this couple stood back and watched from the deck as the band played and the people had gathered and there was great applause. As the diplomat walked down the gangplank and was whisked off in a lovely limousine to the sounds of music and applause, this dear fellow put his arm around his wife and he walked off with her and got into the streets of New York. "Honey," he said, "it just doesn't seem right after all of these years that we would have this kind of treatment and here this fellow gets that kind of special treatment." And she put her arms around her husband and said to him, "But, honey, we're not home yet."*

- h. **Concerning one's family** (8:21–22): They must forsake their families in order to follow Jesus.
- i. **MacArthur:** *This does not mean that the man's father was already dead. The phrase, "I must bury my father" was a common figure of speech meaning, "Let me wait until I receive my inheritance."*<sup>26</sup>
- j. *Let the world (the spiritually dead) take care of mundane things.*<sup>27</sup>

**Important note from the IVP BBC NT: One of an eldest son's most basic responsibilities (in both Greek and Jewish cultures) was his father's burial. The initial burial took place shortly after a person's decease, however, and family members would not be outside talking with rabbis during the reclusive mourning period immediately following the death. It has recently been shown that what is in view here instead is the secondary burial: a year after the first burial, after the flesh had rotted off the bones, the son would return to rebury the bones in a special box in a slot in the tomb's wall. The son in this narrative could thus be asking for as much as a year's delay.**

**Nevertheless, Jesus' demand that the son place him above the greatest responsibility a son had toward his father would have sounded like heresy: in Jewish tradition, honoring father and mother was one of the greatest commandments, and to follow Jesus at the expense of not burying one's father would have been viewed as dishonoring one's father (cf. Tobit 4:3–4).**<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Craig S. Keener, [\*The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament\*](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Mt 8:19–20.

<sup>26</sup> John F. MacArthur Jr., [\*The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible\*](#). (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), Mt 8:21.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, Mt 8:22.

<sup>28</sup> Craig S. Keener, [\*The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament\*](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Mt 8:21–22.

There are several options for the meaning of Jesus' reply Leave the dead to bury their own dead: (1) Recent research suggests that burial customs in the vicinity of Jerusalem from about 20 B.C. to A.D. 70 involved a reinterment of the bones a year after the initial burial, once the flesh had rotted away. At that point the son would have placed his father's bones in a special box known as an ossuary to be set into the wall of the tomb. Thus Jesus could well be rebuking the man for wanting to wait around for as much as a year before making a commitment to follow him. In 1st century Jewish culture, to have followed Jesus rather than burying one's father would have seriously dishonored one's father (cf. Tobit 4:3-4). (2) The remark is an idiom (possibly a proverbial saying) that means, "The matter in question is not the real issue," in which case Jesus was making a wordplay on the wording of the man's (literal) request (see L&N 33.137). (3) This remark could be a figurative reference to various kinds of people, meaning, "Let the spiritually dead bury the dead." (4) It could also be literal and designed to shock the hearer by the surprise of the contrast. Whichever option is preferred, it is clear that the most important priority is to follow Jesus.<sup>29</sup>

### III. Calming the sea (8:23-27)

Matthew 8:23-27 (NASB95)

- 23** When He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him.  
**24** And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves; but Jesus Himself was asleep.  
**25** And they came to Him and woke Him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing!"  
**26** He \*said to them, "Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?" Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm.  
**27** The men were amazed, and said, "What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"

Notice something which Tim Keller points out in his book on preaching on page 78:

*But Mark [referring to the Mark account] is intentionally recapping the Jonah episode in Mark 4.6 He uses nearly identical words and phrases. Both Jesus and Jonah are in a boat. Both are in storms described in similar terms. Both boats are filled with others who are terrified of death. Both groups wake the sleeping prophets angrily, rebuking them. Both storms are miraculously calmed and the companions saved. And both stories conclude with the men in the boats more terrified after the storm is stilled than they were before. Every feature is the same—with one rather large apparent exception. Jonah is sacrificed into the storm, thrown into the deep, satisfying the wrath of God so the others will be saved from it—but Jesus is not. Or are the accounts really different at that point? No, they are not. As Jesus says in Matthew 12:41, he is the ultimate Jonah, who was thrown into the ultimate deep—of eternal justice—for us. How ironic it is that in Mark 4 the disciples ask, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" (Mark 4:38). They believe he is going to sleep on them in their hour of greatest need. Actually, it's the other way around. In the garden of Gethsemane, they will go to sleep on him. They will truly abandon him. And yet he loves them to the end. See? Jonah was thrown overboard for his own sin, but Jesus is*

<sup>29</sup> Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Mt 8:22.

*thrown into the ultimate storm for our sin. Jesus was able to save the disciples from the storm because he was thrown into the ultimate storm.*

IVP BBC NT: *Greek stories about those who could subdue nature were normally about gods or about demigods who had acted in the distant past. Jewish tradition reported some earlier teachers who could pray for rain or its cessation like Elijah. But absolute authority over waves and sea in Jewish tradition belonged to God alone. It is not difficult to understand why the disciples did not know what to make of Jesus!*<sup>30</sup>

- a. *The furious storm (8:23–24):* A terrible storm threatens to sink the disciples' boat. Jesus gets into the boat and the disciples follow Him. He is still being followed. In verse 24 we see the fierce storm. The boat is being covered with waves. Jesus is asleep. ESV SB: **great storm** (Gk. *seismos*, "violent shaking, earthquake"). *Although the Sea of Galilee is located in the earthquake-prone Jordan Rift Valley, Matthew also mentions "winds" (v. 26), which points in the direction of a powerful storm that created large waves that shook the boat. This boat may have been similar to the one discovered in Galilee in 1986 (see note on 4:21 and illustration).*<sup>31</sup> MacArthur: *The Sea of Galilee is more than 690 ft. below sea level. To the N, Mt. Hermon rises 9,200 ft., and from May to Oct. strong winds often sweep through the narrow surrounding gorges into this valley, causing extremely sudden and violent storms.*<sup>32</sup>
- b. *The fearful sailors (8:25):* In desperation they awaken the sleeping Jesus, crying out for him to save them.
- c. *The faithful Savior (8:26–27):* He quickly stills the waters, to the amazement of the disciples! This is showing Jesus' Lordship. *Who has authority over the seas and winds is discussed in the OT: Ps 104:3; 135:7; 107:23–30. When Jesus rebuked the winds and the sea he was making a statement about who he was.*<sup>33</sup> ESV SB: **Little faith** (Gk. *oligopistos*) is not "no faith" (Gk. *apistos*), but "ineffective," "defective," or "deficient" faith (cf. 6:30). *Jesus calls the disciples to a clearer understanding of who he is. rebuked. Jesus is able to command even the forces of nature, just as God in the OT "rebukes" the sea, showing his sovereign control over the natural world (2 Sam. 22:16; Ps. 18:15).*<sup>34</sup>

IV. Curing the sick on the eastern side of the Galilean Sea (8:28–34)

Matthew 8:28–34 (NASB95)

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<sup>30</sup> Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Mt 8:23–27.

<sup>31</sup> Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1836.

<sup>32</sup> John F. MacArthur Jr., [The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible](#). (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), Mt 8:24.

<sup>33</sup> Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Mt 8:26.

<sup>34</sup> Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1836.

- 28 *When He came to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs. They were so extremely violent that no one could pass by that way.*
- 29 *And they cried out, saying, "What business do we have with each other, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"*
- 30 *Now there was a herd of many swine feeding at a distance from them.*
- 31 *The demons began to entreat Him, saying, "If You are going to cast us out, send us into the herd of swine."*
- 32 *And He said to them, "Go!" And they came out and went into the swine, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the waters.*
- 33 *The herdsmen ran away, and went to the city and reported everything, including what had happened to the demoniacs.*
- 34 *And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they implored Him to leave their region.*

- i. The Gadarene maniacs, controlled by demons (8:28):
- ii. **Other side** often marks the movement from a Jewish to a Gentile territory and vice versa (e.g., 14:22; 16:5). **Gadarenes** refers to both the town of Gadara (modern Umm Qais), about 6 miles (9.7 km) southeast of the Sea of Galilee, and also the surrounding region (see Mark 5:1).<sup>35</sup>
- iii.
- iv. Demons have made these two men violent... *Violent behavior is still frequently associated with spirit possession in cultures that recognize the phenomenon.*<sup>36</sup>
- v. this is causing them to live among the tombs!
- vi. *Tombs were ceremonially unclean and were thought to be popular haunts for evil spirits (a belief the spirits were apparently happy to accommodate). Both Gadara (here) and Gerasa (Mk 5:1) were predominantly Gentile cities in the region of the Decapolis, but Gadara was much closer to the Sea of Galilee (Gerasa, a prominent and magnificent city, was over thirty miles southeast). Roughly six miles to the southeast, Gadara probably controlled the land where this narrative occurs.*<sup>37</sup>
- vii. Now, they are on the other side of the Sea.
- viii. The panic of these demons (8:29): They are filled with fear as the Savior approaches.
- ix. Who is talking? The demons are talking through the two men.
- x. The demons said "before the time."

<sup>35</sup> Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1836.

<sup>36</sup> Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Mt 8:28.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

- xi. “Before the time” means before the day of judgment. Apparently even the demons did not expect the Messiah to come in two stages, a first and second coming.<sup>38</sup>
- xii. The demons recognize that one of Satan’s strongholds, the spirit world, is being invaded and overpowered. **before the time**. The demons know that they will be judged and punished at God’s appointed time.<sup>39</sup>
- xiii. I like what Piper shares:

*Demons learned a mystery here. They knew they were doomed. They knew the Son of God would be the victor. But they didn’t know until it happened that Christ was coming before the time of final defeat.*

*Christ is not going to wait for the end of the war to lead his troops into combat. He has begun to lead a subversive force into the territory of Satan. He has trained a “life-squad” to perform daring rescue operations. Christ has plotted many tactical victories before the time of the final strategic victory.*

*The resulting wartime mentality is this: Since Satan’s doom is sure, and he knows it, we can always remind him of it when he tempts us to follow him. We can laugh and say, “You’re out of your mind. Who wants to join forces with a loser?!”*

*The church is the liberated enemy of “the god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4). We are the guerrillas and the gadflies. We are the insurgency against the rebel kingdom of “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2).*

*It is not safe. But it is thrilling. Many lives are lost. Satan’s forces are ever on the lookout for our subversive activity. Christ has guaranteed resurrection for all who fight to the death. But he has not guaranteed comfort, or acceptance from the world, or prosperity in enemy territory.*

*Many have gladly given their lives behind the lines running errands for the Commander. I can think of no better way to live — or die!<sup>40</sup>*

- xiv. The plea from these demons (8:30–31): They beg Jesus to send them into a herd of nearby pigs!
- xv. The Galilean Messiah, controller of demons (8:32–34)
  - 1. The release (8:32): He delivers the two men by ordering the demons into the herd of pigs!

<sup>38</sup> Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Mt 8:29.

<sup>39</sup> Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1836.

<sup>40</sup> [https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/subversive-for-the-savior?utm\\_campaign=Daily%20Email&utm\\_source=hs\\_email&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=84380109&\\_hsenc=p2ANqtz--\\_Tr\\_CTiu\\_H5ATWo90NwpDXIYmfiGC6P5JfZe6deimPGexPtFWF\\_LL58hlfmH4ilDFOiinhOIJh7ZXsqCoqX0VwQdug&\\_hsmi=84380109](https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/subversive-for-the-savior?utm_campaign=Daily%20Email&utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&utm_content=84380109&_hsenc=p2ANqtz--_Tr_CTiu_H5ATWo90NwpDXIYmfiGC6P5JfZe6deimPGexPtFWF_LL58hlfmH4ilDFOiinhOIJh7ZXsqCoqX0VwQdug&_hsmi=84380109)

2. The rejection (8:33–34): The foolish people living in that area plead with Christ to depart and leave them alone.<sup>41</sup>

IVP BBC NT:

*Because magicians and sorcerers were usually malevolent and Jesus' coming had already cost these Gentiles from the Decapolis economically (he sank a lot of pork), they were naturally terrified of him.*<sup>42</sup>

CSB:

*Gentiles from the nearby town may have thought that Jesus personally destroyed the herd as a statement against Gentile idolatry and uncleanness, and they naturally feared destruction of other valuable herds (see note at v. 28).*<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> H. L. Willmington, [\*The Outline Bible\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), Mt 8:17–34.

<sup>42</sup> Craig S. Keener, [\*The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament\*](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Mt 8:33–34.

v. verse

<sup>43</sup> Charles L. Quarles, [\*“Matthew,”\*](#) in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1514.