

Matthew 8 The centurion understands faith and authority

5 And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, 6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. 7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. 8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. 9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. 10 When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

A centurion would be like a captain today. A captain is over a company of men which consist of four to six platoons, about one hundred soldiers. It is believed the centurion was a gentile and not Jewish but would like to become Jewish.

Luke 7:1-10 King James Version (KJV)

1 Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum. 2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. 3 And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. 4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this: 5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synaogue. 6 Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: 7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. 8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. 9 When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. 10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

The first thing I notice, between Matthew and Luke, is there are some differences. Matthew refers to the centurion as actually meeting with Jesus, while Luke indicates the centurion sent some of his Jewish friends to meet with Jesus. Which version is correct? They both are correct. What is the focus of both stories? The faith of the centurion. He understood that Jesus the Christ performed great miracles, because Jesus represented God the Father and had the Father's full authority, because Jesus carried out the Father's will.

In the version found in Matthew, it appears Jesus is talking to the centurion. Jesus is actually talking to men who represent the centurion. When they speak, it is the same as when the centurion speaks, because they are on a mission for the centurion. This is an actual picture of the centurion's authority at work. Why didn't the centurion come himself? Did he think he was too good to come to Jesus? No, when you look at the story in Luke, you understand the centurion didn't believe he was good enough to come to Jesus. Acts 10: 28 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

In Luke, Jesus is met by the Jewish friends of the centurion. It's amazing the centurion had many Jewish friends. Jews were not to enter the home of a gentile, because gentiles were considered unclean. The fact that the centurion had many Jewish friends, good friends, said a lot about the man. He was probably a proselyte, a gentile who was learning about the Jewish faith, because he wanted to convert to Judaism. He was a man, who was aware of idols worship, Greek gods and Emperor worship, but realized there was only one true God and He was the God of the Jews. He probably grew up in a home that had someone Jewish, who told him stories of the God of Abraham. This could have been a parent or a servant. It might have been the servant that was ill. Many Roman children were raised by family servants.

Can you imagine growing up and having a servant who told stories of the God of Abraham. He would have heard how God created the heavens and the earth. He would have heard the story of Abraham and three hundred servants defeating an army of five kingdoms, just to save Abraham's nephew Lot. He would have heard about Moses confronting the Pharaoh of Egypt and demanding him to let God's

people go. He would have heard about the plagues on Egypt. He would have heard of Moses and all Israel walking across the Red Sea and not even getting their feet wet. He was thrilled when he heard the story of a small Shepard boy named David defeating the giant Goliath, with a sling and a rock. He had hope when he heard of God promising Abraham to give him a promised land where there would be no fear, no sorrow, no death and the lamb would lay by the lion. The centurion believed these stories and he wanted to be part of what the Jews were blessed to have.

Recently he had probably heard of John the Baptist and Jesus. John was known to be a prophet of the one true God. John preached and prophesied with the authority of the prophet Elijah. The centurion had probably sat and listened to the stories of Elijah praying and the rain stopped for years. He had heard how Elijah challenged the priest of the false gods and how Elijah's God sent fire from heaven and consumed the sacrifice and the alter, Elijah had built to God. The centurion had such faith that he sent his friends, who were Jewish elders, to meet with Jesus. He gave the Jewish elders the authority to speak for him. He, being a gentile, didn't feel worthy to meet with Jesus the Christ. He knew the humility of John the Baptist, who didn't feel worthy to latch the sandals on Jesus feet.

The centurion had a better understanding of God the Father and the son of man, the Messiah, than the people who were born Jewish. He understood that everything Jesus did was because one of higher authority wanted it done. Jesus carried out the will of God the Father. The scribes and Pharisees were comparing Jesus to Moses and judging him under Mosaic law. The centurion was comparing Jesus to the authority of the God of Moses. The scribes and Pharisees should have searched the scriptures and realized Jesus was the fulfillment of prophecy, the long-awaited Messiah.

The centurion knew Jesus represented the creator of everything. He knew all Jesus had to do was speak a word and the servant would be healed. Jesus let the people know, he had not seen this strong of faith in all of Israel. The centurion had true faith in Jesus the Christ. The servant was healed from a distance with just a word from Jesus.

11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

What does it mean, many will come from the east and west? Many Jews will come, who are not from Israel. They've been scattered across the land throughout many countries, since the time Babylon overran and destroyed Jerusalem. It is believed there are more Jews in New York city today, than there are in Israel. There will also be many gentiles sitting down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. Do you realize Abraham and Isaac were not of Israel? They were gentiles. There was no Israel until the late years of Jacob, whom God changed his name to Israel. The twelve sons of Jacob (Israel), were the twelve tribes of Israel. They did not become a nation, until hundreds of years later, when they left Egypt. Abraham and Isaac were the fathers of all of Israel and many of the gentiles.

12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Many of the scribes and Pharisees believed they were guaranteed to inherit the promise to Abraham, because they were blood descendants of Abraham. Many who are born Jewish and called of Israel are not actually sons of Abraham, because they never had the faith of Abraham. Many will be cast out into darkness.

The bible says, John 1:1-5 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

There are some who say Jesus never claimed to be God. The first chapter of John says Jesus was there when the universe was created. He was there, at the beginning and walked in the garden with Adam. Jesus said, I and the Father are one.

Jesus performed miracles to prove he had the authority from the God of Abraham. Many were healed and believed in his healing but didn't believe in HIM. They did not have saving faith in Jesus to forgive their sins. Some who represented the Jewish faith, the scribes and Pharisees, believed Jesus healed by the power of

Satan. They did not accept Jesus as the Messiah and set out to kill him. Jesus says of them, 12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. This speaks of judgement of unbelieving Jews.

Revelation 20: 11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

The lake of fire is judgement. Jesus is the light, those who don't believe on Jesus will be cast away from the light, which is outer darkness. The scribes and Pharisees and anyone else whose name are not written in the Book of life will be cast into the darkness of the lake of fire.

13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

According to Luke 7: 6 Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: 7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

Jesus didn't speak to the centurion, but to the friends of the centurion. The centurion spoke to Jesus by prayer. Jesus could hear men's thoughts and prayers. The centurion didn't really know how to pray, he was a gentile. So he also sent his friends to intercede for him to Jesus. The moment Jesus spoke the word for the servant to be healed, he was healed. Jesus continues to heal the sick and proclaim the message repent for the kingdom of heaven is near.

This is not the end of the centurion. He would later come to hear the full gospel of the resurrected Jesus. You can see this story in the book of Acts chapter 10.

14 And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever. 15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.

Jesus goes to Peter's house. Peter's mother in law is usually scampering around and waiting on everyone, especially Jesus. When Jesus arrives the lady is sick, so sick she is laying down, she never laid down when there were visitors. She's the kind of person who doesn't stop helping others unless she is very sick. She has a fever, so there is an infection. Luke 4 says she had a great fever. In that day a fever was serious, there were no antibiotics, like today. There were also many diseases that are seldom seen in the U.S. like typhoid and malaria and don't forget the flu. Even the flu was very deadly, before the discovery of antibiotics. Jesus simply touches her hand and the fever leaves. She got up and started ministering to Jesus and his disciples. She not only was healed of the fever, but probably felt better than she had in years.