

# WORKS OF HEALING Sunday School- January 17, 2010

## Unifying Topic: DEMONSTRATED IN ACTS OF HEALING

### Lesson Text

I. Blind Men Request Mercy (Matthew 9:27-31)

III. Conflicting Reactions (Matthew 9:32-34)

III. John's Question, Jesus' Answer (Matthew 11:2-6)

**The Main Thought:** The blind receive sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. (Matthew 11:5, KJV).

**Unifying Principle:** Although we live in a world where many people want to be able to explain all events scientifically, many mysteries remain. To whom can we turn when we are confronted by the inexplicable? Jesus performed healing miracles that led people to place their faith in him.

**Lesson Aim:** To show how the blind man's faith brought healing and how the healing of the blind was evidence of Jesus' Messiahship.

**Life aim:** God responds to the faith of His people. If we call out to Him in faith, He will answer our call.

9:27 And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us.

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.

9:29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.

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

9:31 But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.

9:32 As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil.

9:33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.

9:34 But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.

### **HISTORY:**

The end of *Chapter 8:34*, Jesus honors the people's wishes. They wanted Him to leave, after casting out the demons, as Matthew says two possessed with devils coming out of the tombs. "*And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought [him] that he would depart out of their coasts.*" And so Jesus left\* the Gergesenes or Gadarenes and entered his own city, Capernaum.

### **NOTE:**

\*This is a warning to every man, city, or nation. He will not force Himself upon any person or society.

### **9:1-8 Healing The Man Sick of the Palsy**

When He returned to Capernaum, friends brought a man who was sick of the palsy (*paralyzed*), believing that Jesus could heal him. Jesus is deeply touched by men who diligently sought Him and persevered in that diligence. These men could not get through the door because of the people, but they would not give up. They removed the roof and lowered the sick man down to Jesus. Four things about the friends:

1. The friends cared deeply for the man.
2. They were obsessed with the mission to get this disabled friend to Jesus.
3. The friends acknowledged Jesus' power to help.
4. The friends persisted even to the point of rudeness.

### **POINT:**

*All men are disabled and sick spiritually. Therefore, we must possess the same qualities as the friends of the disabled. We have friends and loved ones where we must be obsessed with the same mission of getting them to Jesus. We must acknowledge Jesus' power and His along; and we must persist and persevere until the disabled come to Christ.*

When Jesus saw the faith of the paralytic's friends, he said, "*Son be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven.*" Before Jesus healed the paralyzed man, He first forgave his sin. The greatest need this crippled man had, was to be

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forgiven of his sins. The sickness was caused by sin (*sin resulting in sickness*). The religious people in the crowd were offended. V7 says, "And he arose." They knew that only God could forgive sin. But Jesus proved His power to forgive by demonstrating His power to heal.

1. Jesus revealed something: He knew the rejection of the religionists. He knows all thoughts.
2. Jesus suggested something: That He be put to the test, that proves His deity by act and not just by word.
3. Jesus did something: He healed the man.
4. Jesus commanded something: go to thy house. Why did Jesus send the man to his house? Our homes are to be the first recipients of our witness. He had been a burden to his loved ones. He could now be a servant who could minister to his loved ones.

Jesus' power to forgive sins brought glory to God.

#### POINT:

- *Two things should stir us to glorify God: The demonstration of Jesus' power and the salvation of people whose sins are truly forgiven.*
  - *Two things should stir unbelievers to glorify God: The fact that the Messiah has really come Jh.3:16; and the fact that unbelievers can be forgiven their sins, and that is" saved" Heb.7:25.*
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He healed the paralytic. It was "their faith" that saved this man: both the faith of the man and his friends (because he allowed them to bring him, so he had to have some faith also). When the paralyzed man got up and walked home, the crowds "were awestruck, and glorified God." However, the multitudes still didn't understand that He was the Messiah.

#### 9:9 THE Calling OF Matthew

Then Jesus encountered a Publican sitting in the tax collector's booth. The Roman Empire had an interesting way of collecting taxes. They would determine the amount of money which should be collected from a certain area and then auction off the job to the highest bidder. The agreement was that whatever the man could collect above and beyond the determined amount would be his income. Thus, the job of tax-collector had a built-in temptation towards corruption. In the Jewish nation, those Jews who took the tax collector job were hated as traitors and thieves.

This man had his life set. He was writing his own ticket of wealthy success. Jesus saw a man, a sinner who needed a cause. The people saw not a man, but Matthew\*, a tax collector for the Romans. Jesus saw where he was sitting and what he was doing. He saw everything about Matthew. He saw his heart, his mind, his thoughts, his hurt, his pain, his loneliness, his lack of purpose and meaning in life. He saw a man who needed a Savior, a Savior who could meet every need of his existence. But Jesus said, "Follow Me," and he did. He left everything behind. This is what Jesus is calling each person to: "Abandon what you've established for yourself, and follow Me. I won't promise you earthly riches, but I do promise you a heavenly reward." If that doesn't sound like an appealing petition, then consider this question: Mark 8:36 "...What does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?" As it turns out, this tax collector was Matthew, the author of this gospel.

#### NOTE:

\*Matthew was a working man. He was not a lazy or slothful person. After hearing Jesus' words, "Follow me", a dramatic change took place in Matthew. It's hard for a rich man to enter heaven because they are so attached to the material world. However, Matthew was one of the few who had been willing to give up all in order to follow Jesus. Therefore the kingdom of Heaven became his.

#### 9:10-13 I Came To Call Sinners

Matthew wasn't the only tax-collector who hung around Jesus. There were many of them. As a matter of fact, there were many other sinners of different kinds hanging out with Him and Matthew introduced his sinful friends to the Savior. They felt comfortable with Him. That is a vitally important point in your understanding of Who Jesus is. You see, Jesus is around the worst of sinners and sinners were comfortable having dinner with Him. Jesus didn't drive away sinners, He drew in sinners. Well the religionists (Pharisees) questioned Jesus' fellowship with sinners, speaking not to Jesus but to the disciples. Jesus, hearing, and said, "They that be whole need not a <http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

*physician, but they that are sick.”* When the religious people gave him trouble about this, He said in effect, *“Doctors who want nothing to do with sick people aren’t doctors. They’re worthless. I’m here to call sinners, not those who think they are righteous because of their religion.”* Today, if you are a sinner, Jesus wants to eat with you. He says to everyone, *Rev. 3:20 “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.”*

### **9:14-15 The Bridegroom Will Be Taken Away**

Let’s give a little intro on John: John was in prison and the threat of capital punishment hung over his head. His disciples were naturally concerned. They were in his behalf, fasting, as taught by John, often (*twice a week*), asking God to deliver him. They could not understand why Jesus and his disciples had not joined in fasting for John’s release. Jesus seemed to break the traditional ritual of fasting. Jesus enlarged the question of fasting. He used three illustrations to show that He was ushering in a new life and a new covenant between God and man.

The *first illustration* was that of the Bridegroom:

1. He is the Bridegroom. The children are the attendants.
2. His presence was an occasion of joy and rejoicing. When He is present, there is no reason to mourn.
3. His presence was going to be taken from them (removed through Death, Resurrection, and Ascension), then, His disciples would mourn and fast. The absence of His presence would be cause for mourning and fasting.

The truth of the old religion and its practices were to be preserved; they were not to be done away with (v17). However, the focus of this new life was His presence, the presence of the Bridegroom. Christ is the Bridegroom of the new life and new covenant. He is the Bridegroom of the church.

<sup>1</sup>John the Baptist’s followers had focused in on turning from sin. This meant frequent denial of their flesh, and practicing the resisting of temptations by denying themselves food. The Pharisees also fasted, although their intention was not self-denial, but simply for the purpose of appearing righteous. Whichever group you looked at, it would appear that good religion meant difficulty and discomfort for religious people. But Jesus’ disciples had not been instructed to fast. The day would come when He would be killed, and that would be the proper time to fast. This was unheard of to John’s disciples, and to the Pharisees. This would be the occasion for Jesus to point out that He wasn’t just another religious leader in a long line of religious leaders. He was someone and somewhat entirely new...

### **9:16-17 New Wineskins**

The *second illustration* was that of the new cloth v16.

1. The new cloth illustrates a stronger life than the old life.
2. The new cloth meant that He could not take His teachings and patch up the old teaching. It would not only detract from the good of the old, but it would cause a tear that would be greater than what was going to naturally happen.

Jesus wasn’t just another patch on an old religious system. God was doing something entirely new. The Jews had gotten so locked in to their religion, that they had lost relationship with God. They had made themselves impossible to be used by God in a new way.

- Many worship tradition, not God
- Many worship ritual, not God
- Many worship religion, not God
- Many worship ceremony, not God
- Many worship fellowship, not God

*“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” 2Tim.3:5*

Saints, this is so important for us to understand. If we ever stop being flexible to be led by the Spirit of God; if we get rigidly locked into saying, *“We’ve always done it this way before. That’s outside of our comfort zone,”* then we’ll cease to be used by the Lord and He’ll move on to some other group that is flexible and pliable.

The *third illustration* is the new and old wine v17.

1. The new and old wine illustrates a new life (a new covenant life) of more power. The pressure would

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.rondaniel.com/library/40-Matthew/Matthew0914.html>  
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

burst the old bottles.

2. The answer to handling old and new wine is to preserve the good of both. The old religion was not to be cast aside. It had some strengths and some benefits. The answer was not to reform it, but to fulfill it by ushering in a new life and new covenant between God and man. The old bottles (restrictions) were not strong enough to contain the new life which Christ was bringing.

### **9:18-19 The Synagogue Official**

This passage includes four examples of people who had desperate, hopeless needs. They demonstrate two things: Christ is beyond question, the Messiah, the "Son of David" (v27); and Christ has the power to meet our desperate, hopeless needs, even the need of conquering death. A certain ruler (Jarius), a synagogue official comes because his daughter lay on her deathbed. He realized in his terrible time of trauma that Jesus was his only answer. The ruler was so desperate that he interrupted Jesus, while Jesus was preaching and teaching. First, he came and "worshiped Him" saying, "My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live." He asks Jesus to come and touch his daughter. Jesus' response to the father's desperation is that He agrees to go to his house. But first, an interruption...!

### **9:20-22 The Woman With The Hemorrhage**

The crowds were surrounding Jesus, jostling Him as He was on His way to the official's house. One woman in particular is focused on here. For twelve years, she'd suffered from hemorrhaging. According to the law, she was not even supposed to be in the crowd. Some afflictions just aren't appropriate to discuss publicly. But you might imagine her suffering when the gospel of Mark tells us that she...*Mark 5:26 ...had endured much at the hands of many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was not helped at all, but rather had grown worse.* But, she had heard so many wonderful things about Jesus. Therefore, she knew Jesus was her only hope. If she could just get near Him, touch Him, touch even the edge of His coat, she knew she would get well. And she did. Jesus turned, knowing that someone had touched Him! How?

1. Her faith touched Him.
2. Virtue (power and life) went out from Jesus to her.
3. He saw her desperation, her confession of hopelessness, her need, her faith, and had compassion.
4. He called her daughter because there was a change in relationship (from "Woman" to "Daughter").

*"And the woman was made whole from that hour."*

### **9:23-26 Healing Jarius' Daughter**

After stopping to talk with the woman, Jesus again continues on His way to the official's house. Mark also tells us that Jesus told him, *Mark 5:36 ..."Do not be afraid any longer, only believe."* Jesus gets to Jarius' house, and sees the noisy\* crowd outside of the house. In our day, when someone dies, we hire funeral homes to perform the expected duties. In Bible days, the first people you hired when someone died were the mourners. They would make lots of noise weeping and wailing, and playing mournful music on musical instruments. But when Jesus told them to leave because the girl wasn't really dead, they showed their lack of emotional attachment: they started to laugh. The people were put out because they were not worthy to witness the Lord's power; only the meek and receptive are. After which, He did two things:

1. He went in. He wouldn't go in until all the skeptics left.
2. He took her by the hand. He raised her from the dead; Life touched Death.

#### **NOTE:**

\*Loud noise and grief do not create the proper atmosphere for Jesus to work and meet our needs. We should rid ourselves of such distraction—get quiet, meditate, pray, and trust the Lord to do His work.

#### **LESSON:**

### **Matthew 9:27-31: Blind Men Request Mercy**

#### **9:27-31 Healing The Blind Men**

Jesus kept moving, and people kept following. After leaving Jarius' house "two blind\* men following and crying out, saying, *Thou son of David\*\* have mercy\*\*\* on us.*" He had heard their cries but He didn't stop immediately,

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.rondaniel.com/library/40-Matthew/Matthew0914.html>

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but entered into the house (probably Peter's house).

## NOTE:

\* Apparently, for some reason, blindness was fairly common in the days of Jesus. We do not know if the cases were all the same, whether they were blind from birth, or were blinded in some way. But to be blind then, as at any time, was a terrible handicap. Blindness also was symbolic of spiritual ignorance, just as sight was symbolic of understanding. A good example in the bible would be Saul before becoming Apostle Paul. Jesus used this same symbolism in some of His teachings. In *John* "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind" (9:39). Jesus healed the blind man, and found a good deal of opposition for it from the spiritual leadership.

\*\*The two blind men were not simply interested in Jesus' lineage from David and His right to be a king. They used "son of David" in the sense of "the Son of David," par excellence (of highest quality). Every legitimate king was a son of David; but one Son of David would be the great One whom they longed for with great longing. Since Jesus had been doing the miracles, these blind men believed that He was the One, and they pleaded for mercy from Him. If Jesus was Messiah, He would heal them.

\*\*\* "Mercy" in the Bible, sometimes translated with the idea of "grace" or "favor," describes some act of compassion that is undeserved--a free gift, a kind act. It is usually reserved for prayers to God, such as in seeking forgiveness for sin, protection from enemies, healing from disease, or any other number of needs.

He asked them if they had faith; "Do you believe I am able to do this? When they said they did, "Yes Lord", Jesus healed them. He touched their eyes saying, *Matt. 9:29 ...* "according to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened." Three lessons about the blind men:

1. The men **PERSEVERED** and kept after Jesus. They followed Him right up to the house and somehow gained entrance.
2. The men were **PERSISTENT**. Persistence, a true cry for help is not rudeness to Jesus. How many have been interrupted in their homes and counted it rudeness? How we need to learn that the first order of the day is to minister! Pessimistic.
3. The two men **PULLED TOGETHER** by helping each other. Believers with common needs can help each other reach Jesus.

Just like the woman with the hemorrhaging problem, they were healed by God because of their faith. Many people complain that God never does anything to make them believe. But in the Bible, we see that God does things for people who do believe. *Heb. 11:6* "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." Jarius' reward for his daughter was because of his faith in the only One who could raise the dead. Jesus told the blind men not to tell anyone, and they departed spreading his fame abroad in all that country.

## Matthew 9:32-34: Conflicting Reactions

### 9:32-34 Casting Out Demons

Moving on again, Jesus went out from the house and a dumb man possessed of the devil was brought to Him. This encounter brought crowds. Jesus cast out the demon, and the crowds were amazed. But the Pharisees couldn't stand what was going on. They hated the fact that the crowds are following Jesus. Why?

1. Their religious authority had been by-passed.
2. Their control over the people was weakening.
3. Their personal beliefs were being challenged.
4. Their insincere motives were being exposed.

They can't stand playing second fiddle to Jesus who isn't one of them, comes from the wrong part of Israel, and never attended the right schools.

For example, the subject of disapproval: "What seminary did you graduate from?" I didn't. "No masters of divinity?" Nope. "Oh... I see. Then how would you possibly know what to teach?" I teach the Bible, plain and simple. But the Bible says, "Ye shall know them by their fruits" *Matt. 7:16*. People are gathering; People are getting the Word; and people are getting saved. If you take the Pharisee's route then you'll take what God is doing, and blame the devil. *Matt. 9:34 ...* "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons." While the Pharisees questioned, debated, and dissected Jesus, people were being healed right in front of them and lives

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were being changed. Their skepticism was not based on insufficient evidence, but on jealousy of Jesus' popularity. Jesus can break the greatest of bondages, even the grip and power of Satan when Satan totally possesses the life of a person.

We skip Chapter 10 and take up the intro of **V1 Chapter 11**. Jesus had ended the commissioning of the twelve disciples. He sent them out and they were to learn through practical experience. And Jesus also began to minister alone. He went to preach and teach in their cities (the cities of the disciples, which were the cities of Galilee).

## **Matthew 11:2-6: John's Question, Jesus' Answer**

### **<sup>3</sup>11:2-6 Are You The One?**

Jesus is alone now; the Twelve are gone. They are out on their first mission. As Christ is ministering, He is approached by two disciples of John the Baptist. The disciples of John were poking around the crowds and hanging around the edges, watching what Jesus was doing, because it was utterly important to John to fulfill his task as the one who announced the Messiah. He wanted to be sure that the one whom he had announced was indeed the Messiah. So his disciples stayed close to Jesus, as well as to John. It also indicates that although he was a prisoner, they had some kind of access and could come and see him. Meanwhile, John the Baptist, sitting in prison, and getting Word of all that Jesus was doing brought a question. *"Was Jesus the One, the True Messiah, or do we look for another?"* The form of the question implies that he believed but was having some perplexity. It's as if he's saying, "I believe that You're the Messiah; am I wrong in believing that?" Why did John, who previously recognized Jesus as Messiah (John 1:29-36), ask this question?

- John's questioning began when he was in prison facing great trouble and trial. It is sometimes difficult to understand why we have to go through so much trouble—**difficult circumstances**.
- John had questions to arise in his mind. He was getting things secondhand instead of having a firsthand look. Even the strongest are not always strong, no matter who they are—**incomplete revelation**.
- John did not fully understand everything even though some of the things he predicted from his own mouth were from God. He had done exactly what God told him to do, and he had done it well. There were so many things that he didn't know that sometimes, he had difficulty interpreting what he did know, and to be honest, we all lack understanding. John just couldn't figure it out. Jesus was on a mission of mercy, and John's was a message of judgment. *"There comes one after me that is mightier than I, who comes with unquenchable fire, with a winnowing fan in His hand, by which He will separate the wheat from the chaff,"* which is judgment—**unfulfilled expectations**. However he trusted Jesus anyway.

Our doubts come when we convince ourselves that we belong to the Lord, and the Lord is going to care for us, and when something goes wrong, we have questions. We lose a child to death or unbelief, or lose a husband or wife, or mother or father, or a dear friend, or someone gets cancer or has a heart attack, or a child is struck by a car and crippled for life, and we begin to say, *"God, is this what it's supposed to be like when You care and love us?"* If everything doesn't go the way we think it should go, we wonder if God loves us, and we fall easily into doubt.

So, there is John sitting in prison. John, hearing of the works of Christ, sends two of his disciples to Jesus. Jesus answers in v4: "... *"Go and tell John the things which you hear and see."* *"Give him the revelation, give him the manifestation; tell him what I've done."* And Jesus' assurance comes in five examples<sup>3</sup>:

1. Jesus spoke as the Messiah, as One having authority. His words and the power of His message were evidence enough.
2. Jesus demonstrated the power and works of the Messiah. He did not just profess, He proved it.
  - a. He gave sight to the blind
  - b. He made the lame to walk
  - c. He cleansed the lepers
  - d. He opened the ears of the deaf
  - e. He raised the dead
  - f. He preached the gospel to the poor
3. Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of the Messiah.
4. Jesus preached the gospel of the Messiah. The fulfillment of ministering to the poor Ps.72:2, 4, 12-13; Zech.11:11.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.rondaniel.com/library/40-Matthew/Matthew1102.html>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

## 5. Jesus promised both the blessing and judgment of the Messiah.

Then He gives a closing Beatitude in *verse 6*. *"And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."* What does He mean by that? Well, it's a gentle rebuke, a gentle warning. *"If you want to be blessed,"* He says, *"Then don't stumble over Me. Don't doubt!"* The word 'offended' is *skandalizo*; it means 'a trap.' *"Blessed is the man who is not trapped."* A trap was a crooked stick, and the bait was on the crooked stick, and when the animal grabbed the bait, the crooked stick fell, and the trap got him and he was dead. It became a word that meant 'offended.' So the Lord is saying this, *"If you want to be blessed, don't allow anything I do or anything I say to lure you into the trap of doubt and make you stumble."* It was alright to ask! It was alright to question, but don't doubt. Don't fall into that trap. Don't doubt, because if you doubt, you won't be blessed. The Beatitude: *Blessed is the man who doesn't doubt, but trusts.* Jesus is saying that the Messianic blessing and judgment were coming—judgment of blessing or judgment of being offended, when He returns. That will be the day of fire and judgment. So He sends that little rebuke in *verse 6* and says, *"John, if you want to be blessed, don't doubt. Don't let anything lure you into the trap of doubt, not even difficult circumstances, incomplete revelation, or unfulfilled expectations."* I do care; can't you see that by the people I've touched? Some day, you'll be delivered, maybe not in this world, but in the next."

### SUMMARY:

<sup>4</sup>In this Chapter in Matthew the miracle of causing the blind to see shows yet another realm of the authority of Jesus the Messiah--the authority to give sight. So while the point of the story is that Jesus has this authority to give sight, the sub-theme of the story is the requirement of faith to be able to see.

There is a cry for mercy from the blind men. They followed Jesus, probably aware of His presence in the crowd because of the news that spread from the healing of Jairus' daughter. They cried, *"Have mercy on us, Son of David."* The faith of these two men is stressed in the story. *First*, they cried out to Jesus for help. They had to have formed an opinion about Jesus in order to do that; they had to have believed that He was able to heal them. Then, *secondly*, they followed Him indoors. This is an indication of their perseverance, persistence, and pulling together to reach Jesus. It was a bold move. These blind men, most likely helped by friends, came to Jesus, followed Him home, and would not give up until they heard His voice and felt His hand. *Thirdly*, their answer to Jesus' question affirms their strong faith. Jesus asked them, *"Do you believe that I am able to do this?"* Jesus was not trying to make it difficult for them; rather, He often gave people the opportunity to pour out their whole heart, to express their full faith and show their earnestness, before He answered. They convincingly responded, *"Yes, Lord."* Then Jesus touched their eyes and said, *"According to your faith will it be done to you."* This does not mean that the amount of healing depends on the amount of faith; rather, it simply means that because they had faith, they would receive their sight. And so because of their steadfast faith their sight was restored. The Lord was fully able to give them sight, but He waited until He was able to draw from them a statement of their faith.

When Jesus healed the men, He sternly warned them not to let anyone know about this. Why would He do this? Jesus was doing a *"Messianic"* work, and another one on the same day, but He did not want the word to get out. In fact, He waited to do this indoors, out of the sight of the public eye. The crowds were enthusiastically following Him for healing and for food; but His mission was first to deal with the problem of sin and that would not come through enthronement but through His sacrificial death. He had to control the crowd's response and understanding of His mission. Jesus was trying to avoid a premature king movement that was falsely based and ill-conceived. Publishing the news about the power of Jesus to heal without the primary focus on the spiritual healing through His death on the cross would be close to what Jesus was trying to prevent.

Now we have a dumb man possessed with a devil being brought to Jesus. The Greek word translated *"dumb"* (NASB, *kophos*) refers to deaf people, mutes, and people who were both deaf and dumb. This man's condition was the result of demonic influence, though that was not the cause in all such cases (*Mark 7:32-33*). Here was someone with more power than anyone who had ever appeared before. The Messiah would heal the dumb

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<sup>4</sup> <http://bible.org/seriespage/authority-give-sight-matthew-927-31>

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(*Isa. 35:5-6*). The natural conclusion was that Jesus was the Messiah v34. The reaction of the Pharisees contrasts differently with that of the crowd, in the sharpest possible terms. They attributed Jesus' power to Satan, not God. They concluded that He came from Satan rather than from God. Instead of being the Messiah He must be a satanic counterfeit. Notice that the Pharisees did not deny the authenticity of Jesus' miracles. They could not do that. They accepted them as supernatural acts. However they ascribed them to demonic rather than divine power. The incident, this miracle of the dumb demon-possessed man illustrates Jesus' ability to enable people to speak who could not formerly do so. This was important in people confessing Jesus as the Son of God and the disciples bearing witness to Jesus. It also illustrates Jesus' compassion for needy people.

<sup>5</sup>Now we move to Chapter 11 of Matthew establishing the account of John's question from prison and Jesus' response to it. John's problem with Jesus was not one rooted in unbelief, but rather in his concern that Jesus was not fulfilling the Scriptures. John's question was that of a godly man, who believed in God and in His Word. His question was not a denial of God, or of His Word.

As we have already noted, John was aware of his role as the forerunner of Messiah in fulfillment of the prophecies of Isaiah (*Is.40:3; Matt.3:3; Malachi 3:1-3; 4:4-6; Matt. 11:10; Lk. 1:11-17*). When John spoke of the Messiah's coming, he spoke of Him coming in power and in judgment of the wicked, just as a number of Old Testament prophecies described His coming. John was a prophet, and as such, under inspiration, he spoke with divine authority. But as a prophet, he suffered from the same problem every Old Testament prophet experienced – he was not omniscient (all-knowing)! Jesus told John's disciples to tell him what they heard and saw. What did they hear? They must have heard, over and over, *"Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near"* *Matt. 4:17; 10:7; (see also Mk.6:12)*, the very same words that they and John preached. They may have heard segments of the Sermon on the Mount. From our Lord's own words, they must have heard the good news being proclaimed to the poor. Beyond what they heard, they had to have seen miracles of every kind – sight was given to the blind, the lame were made to walk, lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, and the dead were raised. All of these things were signs that Jesus was the Messiah, signs foretold by John's predecessors.

John's question and Jesus' response remind me of Job. Job's experience of suffering did not seem to square with the explanations of his friends or even with Job's understanding, of how God works in men's lives. For a while, Job was expecting God to give him an explanation. God did not explain the particulars (of the heavenly lesson being taught, of Satan's involvement, etc.). He simply pointed out that He was God; the sovereign God. When Job pondered this, he shut his mouth. He had no more words of protest, only confession. God was God, and He could do as He pleased. Knowing that God was God was enough for Job. The things Jesus told John's disciples to report to John were proof that Jesus was the Messiah that John had promised, baptized, and introduced publicly. Our Lord's last words in verse 6 are an exhortation for John not to be offended (or to stumble) on account of Jesus. And these are words of encouragement: "And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."

#### **APPLICATION:**

Our faith is always tested in one way or another. Are we persistent in our faith, in our prayer, in our hope, in Christ? There are many times when we go to the Word of God to hear His voice, and are burdened by the silence. However, in faith, we never give up. We persist in prayer and meditation upon his Word. He will never disappoint us. **He will answer!** And in that answer we will rejoice and give him all the praise and glory. You see, it's not in our current situation that we're to base faith in Christ, It's in *"Who He is!"*, and *"What He's done!"* If anytime we have difficulty in our lives, we begin to lose faith, then, we're never going to have any faith, because difficulty is par for the course. Instead of looking at your circumstances of the moment, look at what Jesus has done for you eternally. The Christian who abides in the Word of God will have sufficient truth to sustain and strengthen the faith given, by the grace of God. God will reward you if you seek Him with faith. He is asking you to first believe. As John's disciples were to go and tell John what they had seen, we are to do likewise. We are to go throughout the entire world telling of Jesus' Messiahship, and of His miraculous power. Go and tell what Jesus has done in your life and is still doing! Praise God!

<sup>5</sup> <http://bible.org/seriespage/jesus-john-baptist-and-jews-matthew-111-30>  
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>