

The Kingdom Restoration Miracles

📖 Matthew 9:18-34

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Matthew has divided his gospel into five narrative-discourse sections. Each section closes with the expression, "And it happened when Jesus had finished..." (cf 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). We're studying the second narrative followed by discourse section which is Matthew 8:1-11:1. This second narrative-discourse section is designed to demonstrate Jesus' credentials as the King by way of His authenticating miracles. Matthew groups the miracles thematically into three, three and three respectively, with two sections on discipleship in between the groups. His thematic arrangement continues to advance the argument that Jesus is the King. Jesus has the genealogy of the King, He is the Son of David; He is qualified to rule as the King, He is not disqualified by Jeconiah; He fulfills prophecy of the King, He is virgin born, born in Bethlehem, came out of Egypt, grew up in Nazareth; He is preceded by a prophetic forerunner who prepared the way, John the Baptist; He is given divine approval, the Father's voice out of heaven; He has the character of the King, having overcome temptations; He has orthodox teaching of the King, a right explanation of the Law in the Sermon on the Mount; and now we are seeing that He does the miracles of the King, things completely unheard of. These authenticate that He is from God and He is the King.

The first group of miracles demonstrate His authority over the kingdom program for history. Jesus' kingdom program includes an initial offer of the kingdom to the Jews, a prediction of the rejection of the offer followed by a time of great Gentile faith and after that a re-offer of the kingdom to the Jews. Then he has a section on discipleship that demonstrates the costs of committed discipleship. One must be willing to put Jesus first above all other loyalties to be His disciple. Then a second group of miracles that demonstrate His authority to establish the kingdom conditions on earth. Jesus could defeat Gentile kingdoms, a necessary precursor to the establishment of the kingdom, He could cast out demons, another necessary precursor to establishing a kingdom on earth and He could forgive sins so as to eliminate the effects of sin, another necessary precursor to establishing the kingdom conditions on earth. Then a second discipleship section demonstrates that Jesus' program of discipleship was distinct from that of the Pharisees and John the Baptist. Jesus called His disciples from the ranks of those classified as sinners, not from among the righteous. He came to heal those who were sick and in need of a physician, not those who considered themselves healthy. His discipleship program involved

living a life distinctly different from that of the disciples of John and the Pharisees because His presence was cause of celebration; His presence indicated that the kingdom was near. It was a time of feasting and rejoicing, not fasting and mourning.

Tonight we come to the third and final group of miracles. These demonstrate His authority to restore the kingdom to Israel. Israel had been without a visible kingdom since 586BC when the Davidic throne was left vacant due to God's discipline of Judah by way of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar who razed Jerusalem to the ground. From that time forward Israel had always been under the power of a Gentile kingdom, whether it was Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and now Rome. During this time of captivity any right of return, any right to rebuild, any right to worship, was always authorized by a Gentile king. In light of their subjugation to Gentile kingdoms Messiah would have to come and defeat them in order to restore the kingdom to Israel. These three miracles show that Jesus has the power to restore the kingdom to Israel. The first miracle demonstrates Jesus' ability to restore Israel from the dead. The second demonstrates His ability to restore Israel from spiritual blindness. The third demonstrates His ability to do anything and everything necessary to restore the kingdom to Israel. His power is overwhelming.

Let's take up the first one, the restoration of a dead girl, in Matthew 9:18. **While He was saying these things.** While He was saying what things? The things of verses 15-17. Who was He saying them too? The disciples of John. They had asked in verse 14, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?" Jesus' answer was two-fold. First, Jesus was the bridegroom and because He was present it was not proper to fast and mourn. It was a time to feast and rejoice. To fast was a tacit denial that He was the bridegroom. Second, Jesus had not come to patch up 1st century Judaism which had accumulated many traditions and rituals. He had come to introduce a new order altogether, His kingdom. This again meant that fasting was not proper at this time though He predicted there would come a time when He would be violently taken away and then His disciples would fast. But to fast at this time and follow the traditions of 1st century Judaism was to stand in opposition to the King. These are the things He was saying and so verse 18, **While He was saying these things to them, a synagogue official came...** It was in the midst of this discussion that **a synagogue official came.** The Greek merely says "a ruler" but he was a ruler of the **synagogue** since the parallel in both Mark and Luke make this identification certain. Seeing that they were at Capernaum he was a ruler of the synagogue in Capernaum. Those who go with us to Israel will see the ruins of this synagogue under the remains of a later synagogue built in the 4th century AD. Jesus frequently attended this synagogue and so this ruler already knew Him. It would have been this ruler who actually permitted Jesus to read from the Law, the Prophets and the Writings during synagogue. What was the name of this ruler? Matthew doesn't tell us the ruler's name but Mark and Luke tell us his name was Jairus.

And having come to Him he **bowed down before Him.** The Greek word for **bowed**, may again signify "worship" or "respect." Mark and Luke merely say that he "fell." Matthew probably interpreted the gesture as one of

worship because He is demonstrating that Jesus is the King. It is proper to bow in worship of the King. Jesus was apparently sitting down, as indicated by verse 19, as if He were on a throne. If so the picture is of a man bowing in worship before the enthroned King.

It is significant to note that here we find a religious leader that had trusted in Jesus as the Messiah. As a synagogue ruler he would have been well-qualified to evaluate His Messianic credentials. He had obviously concluded that Jesus had the right credentials.

Note that he knew that Jesus was capable of healing his daughter for he says, **“My daughter has just died; but come and lay Your hand on her, and she will live.”** Again we note that it was well-known that Jesus could do the miracles. In this ruler’s estimation He could even raise someone from the dead! The synagogue ruler had probably seen several of Jesus’ miracles at Capernaum and heard of others around the Galilee. He was convinced that, in light of his daughter’s situation Jesus could give life to his daughter. Luke says this was his “only daughter” and I would highlight the fact that this man had a great love and concern for his daughter. It’s simply not true that Jewish fathers had concern only for their sons. Here is a Jewish father who has great love and concern for his “only daughter.”

Luke doesn’t say she had “died” but that “she was dying” and Mark that she was “at the point of death.” All three agree that when Jesus arrived she was dead. Matthew was telescoping the events in order to get to the main point. In verse 19 **Jesus got up and began to follow him, and so did His disciples.** Jesus evidently recognized this man’s faith and began to follow him, clearly intent on raising the girl from the dead.

In verse 20 His trip was interrupted and we see a miracle within this miracle, what might be seen as a fourth miracle but I read as one within the framework of the other. All three synoptic gospels record this miracle as happening on the way to Jairus’ home. **And a woman who had been suffering a hemorrhage for twelve years, came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak. 21 for she was saying to herself, “If I only touch His garment, I will get well.”**

Luke mentions that there was a crowd in addition to the disciples following Him. It was from within the crowd that the woman felt she could sneak in and touch Him without drawing attention to herself. This is indicated by the fact that she **came up behind Him.** Her condition was one of a constant **hemorrhage** or bleeding. This bleeding would render her ceremonially unclean. It would ostracize her from fellowship in the community. Anyone she touched would also be rendered ceremonially unclean. Luke notes that her bleeding “could not be healed by anyone” (Luke 8:43). The Talmud lists at least eleven possible remedies to the condition and she must have tried them all, but none were successful. The bleeding could not be stopped. It had been **twelve years** since the onset of the constant bleeding. She now saw an opportunity to be restored to ceremonial cleansing. No doubt she had seen Jesus’ demonstrations of power which is why, in verse 21 **she was saying to herself, “If I only touch His garment, I will get well.”** Pentecost saw her gesture as royally significant. He says, “A subject

knelt to touch the hem of a king's robe to show loyalty and submission to his authority. Such an action preceded the presentation of a request to the king by the subject. Hence the woman's act showed her recognition of the royal authority that belonged to Christ."¹ The Greek word translated **get well** is $\sigma\omega\zeta\omega$, the typical word for "save." This word was chosen in connection with many of those Jesus healed. When they were healed they were saved or delivered from the sickness such that they were now whole. Sickness is a consequence of sin² and it renders us in a state where we are not whole. So the choice of this word is appropriate to demonstrate that if Jesus can save us from our sicknesses and make us physically whole then He can save us from our sins and make us spiritually whole. He had showed this connection earlier in the healing of the paralytic. Rather than saying, "Get up and walk" He told him the more difficult thing, "Your sins are forgiven." He could have said either one and He only said the former in order to demonstrate that He as the Son of Man had authority on earth to forgive sins in heaven.

Now when the woman touched His garment Luke reports that she wanted to slip away into the crowd unnoticed (Luke 8:47). **But** verse 22, **Jesus turning and seeing her said, "Daughter, take courage; your faith has made you well."** Matthew does not state what prompted Jesus to turn around but both Mark and Luke report that Jesus perceived that power had gone forth from Him (Luke 8:46). He did not know who the power rested upon but He knew the general direction His power went forth. Having turned, when He saw her He addressed her directly with the endearing family term of **daughter** and commanded her to **take courage** or "be of good cheer!" He then notes the cause for which the power had gone forth as her **faith**. We are to assume that if the woman did not have faith the power would not have gone forth from Him and she would not have been made well. Not all recipients of Jesus' miracles had faith but some of them were conditioned on faith in order to demonstrate to others the proper response to His person. The result Matthew says was that **At once the woman was made well**. Jesus was not made unclean but she was **made well**, and at the very instant she touched His cloak, not when Jesus turned and uttered the words. The flow of blood stopped at the instant she touched His cloak. At that point she was made whole and ceremonially cleansed. Such is the power of Jesus Christ to make one whole in an instant of time. His healing does not require a series of doctor checkups to monitor progress or a series of treatments. His power is able to resolve whatever internal problems were causing the constant bleeding.

What exactly was her problem? We don't know the disorder. Obviously something was wrong with this woman's blood clotting mechanism in her body. Biochemist Michael Behe refers to the blood clotting system as "ultra-complex"³ and compares it to the "ultimate Rube Goldberg machine"⁴ showing that if just one part is not working the entire system collapses. He concludes, "the clotting cascade is a breathtaking balancing act in which a menagerie of biochemical—sporting various decorations and rearrangements conferred by modifying enzymes—bounce off one another at precise angles in a meticulously ordered sequence until, at the denouement, Foghorn Leghorn pushes off the telephone pole and gets up from the ground, the bleeding from his wounds stopped."⁵ But by a mere touch of faith Christ's power resolved whatever the problem was in this

woman's blood clotting system. Such a capability is reserved for the One who created the system and oversees its constant fine-tuning and regulation. The word's **At once the woman was made well** are a shocking revelation of Jesus' non-quantifiable knowledge and power. Once again the expression **made well** is the same Greek word for saved. She was saved from the hemorrhage of blood that had continued for **twelve years** unabated.

In verse 23, having continued His journey, **When Jesus came into the official's house, and saw the flute players and the crowd in noisy disorder.** The scene was typical in a Jewish home upon death of a loved one. The Talmud required as a duty for even "the poorest Jew, on the death of his wife, to provide at least two flutes and one mourning woman." The house was full of both professional mourners as well as genuine, and thus described as a **crowd in noisy disorder.**

In verse 24, **He said, "Leave; for the girl has not died, but is asleep."** There was no need for mourning, the King was present, it was a time for rejoicing. The statement **the girl has not died** does not mean that the girl had not truly died, she had, her spirit had departed as both Mark and Luke attest. All Jesus means is to teach the doctrine of resurrection. This is why He refers to her as merely **asleep**. The OT used the term **asleep** as a euphemism for death. Isaiah said, "you who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy" (Isa 26:19). The angel said to Daniel, "Many of those who sleep...will awake" (Dan 12:2). The euphemism of the body sleeping is a fitting reminder of the resurrection and may be the main reason we "sleep." Scientists still do not know why our bodies need sleep every night. An article from the Division of Sleep Medicine at Harvard Medical School says, "Scientists have explored the question of why we sleep from many different angles. They have examined, for example, what happens when humans or other animals are deprived of sleep. In other studies, they have looked at sleep patterns in a variety of organisms to see if similarities or differences among species might reveal something about sleep's functions. Yet, despite decades of research and many discoveries about other aspects of sleep, the question of why we sleep has been difficult to answer."⁶ There are some theories about why we need to sleep. The current consensus is that we know some of the benefits of sleep but we do not know why. While agreeing with the benefits of sleep my hypothesis is that we need sleep to teach us daily about the resurrection that is coming for all human beings. Every morning we "awake" and even after our bodies die one day they will awake. Jesus intended to teach this doctrine here. When Jesus stated that the girl was merely asleep his audience **began laughing at Him.** The imperfect tense indicates that the laughing continued as they exited the house.

In verse 25 we are told, **But when the crowd had been sent out, He entered.** Luke reports that no one was allowed in "with Him, except Peter and John and James, and the girl's father and mother." Once inside **He...took her by the hand, and the girl got up.** To touch a dead body would render one unclean but when Jesus touched this **girl she got up!** The Greek word for **got up** is "raised" and is often used of resurrection (cf *εγειρω* - Matt 16:21; 17:9, 23; 20:19; 26:32; 27:52, 63, 64; 28:6, 7) though here it is used of resuscitation. The difference between resurrection and resuscitation is that in resurrection the person's body is transformed into another body similar

but different than the original whereas in resuscitation the person's body is revived as the original. Jesus Christ is the first person to ever be resurrected and so this girl was resuscitated, as was Lazarus, though some came out of the tomb *after* Christ's resurrection and they were resurrected (Matt 27:52, 63).

The length of time she was dead is not precisely known. As mentioned earlier Luke says that when Jairus petitioned Jesus "she was dying" and Mark says that she was "at the point of death" whereas Matthew says she "had died." All accounts agree that when Jesus arrived she was dead. Mark, however, adds that while Jesus was still speaking to the woman healed of the hemorrhage that some people came from the house and notified Jairus saying, "Your daughter has died; why trouble the Teacher anymore?" From their perspective the situation was a hopeless one. We may surmise that she had not been dead that long, perhaps only a few minutes. The nature of what happens when a person dies is called ischemia. Ischemia refers to the lack of oxygenated blood being carried to the organs of the body which causes damage. The heart and brain can undergo irreversible damage in as little as 3-4 minutes. The kidneys are also quickly damaged. Other tissues vary but most undergo some irreversible damage after 20 minutes and all within a few hours. It's possible to presume from the presence of the flute players and mourners that she had been dead for some time but they may have been on standby since the girl's death was imminent. Nevertheless, it is likely that she had been dead for more than 3-4 minutes and already had brain and heart trauma. She would not be able to walk, speak or control her body without months of rehab. What happens in verse 25 is impossible in an instant of time. He merely **took her by the hand, and the girl got up**. He didn't do CPR, He just took her by the hand. Mark says He spoke in Aramaic saying, "Talitha kum!" and Luke records the translation of those words into Greek, "Child, arise!" The point is that upon His command she was brought back to life and she did not need assistance to get up. He merely took her **by the hand and the girl got up** by her own power. Luke, a medical doctor, reported that "...her spirit returned, and she got up immediately; and He gave orders for something to be given her to eat." Why the command to give her something to eat? To demonstrate to those in attendance that she was not a ghost, but true flesh and blood raised from the dead!

Verse 26 almost goes without saying, **This news spread throughout all that land**. That **land** refers to the Galilee. The report shows that Jesus' fame was still spreading. Who could undo in an instant of time irreversible damage to the brain, the heart and the kidneys such that immediately she could do all that she could do before her death? Only the One who created the brain, the heart and the kidneys.

Now as impressive as this miracle is it was chosen thematically by Matthew to demonstrate a further truth related to the kingdom; if Jesus could raise people from the dead then He could restore Israel from the dead. Israel must be brought back to life as a precursor to the kingdom. Ezekiel 37 portrays the whole house of Israel in the last days as a valley of dry bones. Ezekiel asks, "Can these bones live?" In two stages God answers by restoring Israel to life. The first stage is portrayed by the bones coming together and attaching by sinews and being covered with flesh, but there was no breath. The second stage is portrayed by breath coming into them.

These two stages picture God's restoration of Israel. In the first stage Israel is restored in unbelief and in the second stage Israel is restored in belief. The Lord God says in Ezek 37:12, "Behold, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel." Is this not what Matthew said this miracle of raising the little girl illustrated? The one who could raise this little girl from the dead could raise Israel from the dead, give Israel life and restore Israel to the kingdom. That in my estimation is the ultimate intent Matthew has for this miracle. If they would only come to Him as Jairus, knowing that He could restore them, He would restore them and bring them into the kingdom!

The second miracle in this sequence is Matthew 9:27, the healing of two blind men. **As Jesus went on from there**, from Jairus' house, **two blind men followed Him, crying out...** Now how two blind men followed Him I don't exactly know, but blind people typically have their other senses heightened from increased dependence and so we see this possibility. They were probably quite near Jairus' house and most people were preoccupied with the little girl. And note what they were **crying out**. "**Have mercy on us, Son of David!**" The title **Son of David** is unquestionably Messianic. Toussaint says, "This is the first time Jesus is called by this title... The term is decidedly Messianic."⁷ This shows that the word was getting out that Jesus' descent was from the royal house of David. The idea that Jesus was the Messiah was gaining followers. Pentecost says, "Since "Son of David" was a messianic title, these men were revealing that they had heard Christ's presentation of Himself as Messiah and were appealing to Him for a messianic miracle."⁸ What they request from the Messiah is **mercy**. **Have mercy on us**. This attitude reveals that they understood that they did not deserve to receive anything from Him. In a way they are like the Gentile Centurion who said, "I am not worthy for you to come under the roof of my house." Apparently Jesus ignored them as he walked along.

In verse 28, **When He entered the house**. House with the definite article refers to Peter's house, where Jesus seems to have stayed in Capernaum. He probably did not have His own house based on what He said in 8:20, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have roosting branches, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." **When He entered the blind men came up to Him, and Jesus** finally responded saying, "**Do you believe that I am able to do this?**" Jesus did not always require someone to have faith for Him to perform a miracle but when someone requested a Messianic miracle He did require them to have faith. That the healing of blindness is a Messianic miracle is seen in that it fulfills Isa 35:5-6 which discusses the blessings the Messiah will bring in the kingdom. Isaiah says, "Then the eyes of the blind will be opened And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. 6Then the lame will leap like a deer, And the tongue of the mute will shout for joy." Only the Messiah could do such things. When He questioned whether they **believed that He was able to do this** they answered, "**Yes, Lord.**" **Lord** is another Messianic title confirming that they had indeed been convinced that Jesus was the Messiah.

In verse 29, after they confirmed that they did believe He was able to do this, **Then He touched their eyes, saying, "It shall be done to you according to your faith."** There was no need for Him to **touch their eyes**. A

mere word was sufficient. But his touching of their infirmities reminds us of His compassion and love for us and intimate knowledge of our weaknesses. He then announced **It shall be done to you according to your faith.** **Faith** in this case was required because they sought a Messianic miracle. Pentecost says, "...Christ, in ministering to the needs of people, sometimes performed miracles when faith apparently was absent (cf. Luke 22:51), in responding to a request for a messianic miracle, He demanded faith."⁹

In verse 30 we see the result, it is stated shortly and tersely, **And their eyes were opened.** Now we don't know the cause of their blindness. They may have been born blind or they may have acquired blindness. Usually acquired blindness occurs in older age as an accumulation of deterioration of the fluid in our eye, the macula or the retina. If left untreated total blindness will result from which there is no hope. What happened here in an instant of time is unparalleled. And to heal two blind men at one time makes the miracle all the more impressive. For the first time in who knows how long, these two men could see.

In conclusion, we're told that **Jesus sternly warned them: "See that no one knows about this!"** Why Jesus **sternly warned them** is not immediately apparent. The word translated **stern warning** borders on anger. The statement has caused a lot of discussion. Why would Jesus give a strict warning not to testify **about this** work? Perhaps because this miracle took place after His rejection in Matthew 12. These miracles, as we have pointed out, are not arranged chronologically, like the rest of Matthew's gospel, but thematically. If this miracle occurred after the leadership rejected Him in Matthew 12 it makes sense that He sternly warned them not to tell anyone about this. He had a mission to accomplish in preparing His disciples for His soon departure. Drawing attention to Himself at this time might result in an early departure, and it was not yet time. Thus He said, **See that no one knows about this! But** verse 31 reports that **they went out and spread the news about Him throughout all that land.** Whether they spread the news about Him healing them or about Him being the Messiah is unclear. It seems that Matthew placed this notice here to show that they did what He told them not to do.

In any case, His power is undeniable and yet this miracle pointed to a further truth about the kingdom. If Jesus could restore physical sight to the blind then He could restore spiritual sight to the spiritually blind Israel. If they would only receive Him. In light of the rejection Israel is presently in a state of partial blindness. Paul said in 2 Cor 3:14, "But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ..." In Romans 11:25 Paul says of Israel "For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; 26 and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB." The deliverer is Jesus and He demonstrated His ability to deliver them from spiritual blindness by delivering these two men from physical blindness. The lifting of Israel's spiritual blindness is a precursor to the kingdom being established on earth.

Finally, in verse 32 we see the third and final miracle, the healing of a mute, demon-possessed and possibly deaf man. **As they were going out, a mute, demon-possessed man was brought to Him.** Jesus was still in the doorway at Peter's house in Capernaum when they brought this man to Him. In verse 33 He healed him, **After the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke.** The Greek word translated **mute** is κωφος and simply means "dull." It was used in secular Greek of those both dull of speaking and hearing and the two are commonly associated. Probably the man was both mute and deaf and the cause, in this case, was demon possession. Demon is in the singular and so he had a single demon inflicting the inability to hear and speak. When the demon was cast out the man was able to both hear and speak. This is another fulfillment of Isa 35:5-6, "Then the eyes of the blind will be opened And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. 6Then the lame will leap like a deer, And the tongue of the mute will shout for joy." These were Messianic miracles; miracles that were predicted of the Messiah in the kingdom. The key to this miracle is the multitude of problems this man had which were easily solved by the Lord Jesus.

In response **the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel."** The message was clear; Jesus was the Messiah. Nobody had ever in the history of Israel seen anything like this coming from a man. They had seen many things in their history done by God through men; the parting of the Red Sea through Moses, the sun and moon stopping through Joshua, fire from heaven through Elijah and many, many other extraordinary miracles, but nothing like this had **ever been seen.**

Matthew's point is clear thematically. Anything necessary to restore the kingdom to Israel Jesus could accomplish. Nothing and no one could stand in His way, not even demons. If Israel would simply receive Him as their King He would deal with all these hindrances and restore Israel's kingdom conditions prophesied in the OT.

In verse 34 we see a response you thought you had to wait till chapter 12 to see. **But the Pharisees were saying, "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons."** I think this miracle happened after Matthew 12 and Matthew is plugging it in here for thematic reasons. This is after the rejection in Matthew 12 when He did a similar miracle and the Pharisees came out with this explanation. There are several things to observe about the explanation. First, note that they did not question whether He could cast out demons. It was clear that He could do it. What they saw was real. Second, seeing that the miracles were undeniable they had to have an explanation. They were the leadership of Israel. If they didn't have an explanation how were they going to stop the people from going after Him? Then they would lose their place. Third, their explanation is that **He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons.** This became the common explanation. Jesus will logically refute this explanation in chapter 12. For now note that the expression **ruler of the demons** is a reference to Satan. Their explanation is that Jesus had been sent by Satan and not God. Fourth, this attempt to explain away the obvious is a reminder that "evidence" is not sufficient to convince a wicked person. Later Jesus says that even if they see someone raise from the dead they won't believe. The problem is not that they don't have enough evidence but

that they don't believe the Scriptures. If they believed the Scriptures then they would be accepting who He very apparently was; the Messiah.

In conclusion, the three miracles in this group are all restoration miracles showing that Jesus could restore the kingdom to Israel. The first miracle shows He can restore from the dead. The second that He can restore from blindness. The third that He can restore from any and all opposition. The world had never seen anything like Him before and never since. His ultimate display of power in the kingdom still awaits.

One thing that is entirely clear is that Matthew has written a piece of theological art. His thematic arrangement of the miracles interspersed by sections on discipleship forms an impregnable fortress of evidences demonstrating that Jesus is the King. Only someone dead set against receiving Him as their Messiah would try to justify their unbelief with wild explanations, a common feature of unbelief. The door was still open, the kingdom was still "at hand." If Israel would receive Him as their King and enthrone Him the kingdom would come.

Some final remarks that show the progression of Matthew's argument. First, Jesus' fame was spreading throughout the land. This is noted several times throughout this narrative section by the number of people bringing sick people to Him for healing (8:16), by their response to His healing of the paralytic "when the crowds saw this, they were awestruck, and glorified God" and by such phrases as "the news spread throughout the land" (9:26, 31, 33). Second, opposition to Jesus was simultaneously rising throughout the land, particularly among the leadership. This is evidenced by the fact that after Jesus healed the demoniac in the country of the Gadarenes "they implored Him to leave their region" (8:34), by the scribes response to His statement to forgive sins that "This fellow blasphemes" (9:3), the Pharisees challenging of Jesus' eating with tax collectors and sinners and the Pharisees response that "He casts out demons by the ruler of demons" (9:34). Third, some religious leaders are believing in Jesus. Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue at Capernaum believed in Him. This man likely had more exposure to Jesus' teaching than any other. But even the disciples of John the Baptist eerily question what He is doing when they had initially promised to believe in Him whom John pointed out. They remain something of an enigma. Fourth, the recognition of Jesus as the Messiah is growing. The two blind men referring to Him as "the Son of David" is an undeniable recognition of His Messiahship (9:27). The people's response that "nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel" (9:33) has Messianic flavor. It's undeniable that in the early 1st century there was a kind of Messianic expectation in the air in Israel. Had the Messiah arrived? Was Jesus the long awaited Son of David?

Next time we'll move out of the narrative and into the discourse which the narrative has set the stage for. In this section Jesus is sending out His disciples to extend His ministry and the offer of the kingdom...

¹ Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, p 224.

² Not all sickness is due to personal sin. Sickness is primarily due to the sin of Adam in which we as a race participated (Rom 5:12).

³ Michael Behe, *Darwin's Black Box*, p 89, see discussion on pp 74-97.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p 97.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p 97.

⁶ <http://healthysleep.med.harvard.edu/healthy/matters/benefits-of-sleep/why-do-we-sleep>

⁷ Stanley Toussaint, *Behold the King*, p 133.

⁸ Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, p 225.

⁹ Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, p 225-6.