

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 15 January 2024

Greetings.

I set out below a study entitled '**Down from the mountain**'.

This document comprises notes (edited and revised) of a devotional message which I gave some time ago.

I have chosen to circulate these notes now on account of a 'musing' which came to me when I 'communed with my own heart on my bed' (Psa. 4. 4) in the early hours of one night last week. (The connection is made clear under the first point of the following 'musing'.)

Three of the many things which Jesus did.

1. *The Lord Jesus once did that which others **shouldn't** do.*

He stretched out His hand and touched a leper (Matt. 8. 3; Mark 1. 41; Luke 5. 13).

See the comments under the heading 'Physical contact' towards the top of page 4 of the attached article.

2. *The Lord Jesus once did that which others **wouldn't** do.*

Shortly before His suffering and death, He took a towel and a basin full of water and washed the feet of His disciples—including those of Judas Iscariot (John 13. 4-17).

In New Testament days, the task of washing the feet of others was often performed by a slave—although to the Jews of the time, feet-washing was regarded as such a menial and demeaning task that no Jewish slave could be required to wash the feet of his Jewish master. That duty was reserved for gentile slaves. Yet, He, their 'Lord and Teacher' stooped (quite literally) to perform the lowly task which not one of the Twelve would carry out.

3. *The Lord Jesus once did that which others **couldn't** do.*

At Golgotha, He suffered for the sins of others: 'Christ also once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust' (1 Pet. 3. 18).

Mrs C. F. Alexander captured the point very well:

*'There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin,
He only could unlock the gate
Of heaven and let us in'.*

Now it's time to turn to the study below.

Happy reading,

Malcolm

'Down from the mountain'.

INTRODUCTION

I want to consider two occasions in the gospels where the Holy Spirit links a miraculous healing with our Lord's coming down from a mountain.¹

(i) In the one case, the account of the healing follows what we call '*the Sermon on the Mount*'. Note the expression, 'When He came down from the mountain'.²

(ii) In the other case, the account of the healing follows what we call '*the Mount of the Transfiguration*'. Note the expression, 'When they had come down from the mountain'.³

SCRIPTURE

(i)

When Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at His teaching, for He was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

When He came down from the mountain, great crowds followed Him.

And behold, a leper came to Him and knelt before Him, saying, 'Lord, if you will, you can make me clean'.

And Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, 'I will; be clean'.

And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus said to him, 'See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to them'.⁴

(ii)

And after six days Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them ...

And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, 'This is my beloved Son; listen to Him'.

And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.

And as they were coming down the mountain, He charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of man had risen from the dead ...

And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them.

And immediately all the crowd, when they saw Him, were greatly amazed and ran up to Him and greeted Him.

And He asked them, 'What are you arguing about with them?'

And someone from the crowd answered Him, 'Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So, I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able'.

And He answered them, 'O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me'.

And they brought the boy to Him. And when the spirit saw Him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth.

And Jesus asked his father, 'How long has this been happening to him?'

And he said, 'From childhood. And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us'.

And Jesus said to him, "'If you can"! All things are possible for one who believes'.

Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, 'I believe; help my unbelief!'

And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, 'You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again'.

And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, 'He is dead'. But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

And when He had entered the house, His disciples asked Him privately, 'Why could we not cast it out?' And He said to them, 'This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer'.⁵

EXPOSITION

There are many fascinating points of contact between the two incidents recorded here, particularly when we take account of the parallel accounts of each incident as provided by the other gospels.

Mountains of revelation.

1. First, both mountains were **mountains of revelation**, where those with the Lord Jesus discover something of His *authority*.

(i) From the close of Matthew 7, we learn that His was an authority which exceeded that of the scribes: 'when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes'⁶ ... 'as the scribes', who relied on the supposed wisdom and teaching of the past and who droned on and on, quoting rabbi after rabbi, rattling off precedent after precedent, tradition after tradition —such as, 'Rabbi Jose ben Jehuda said ...', 'Rabbi Jose ben Hanina said ...'. I suspect that the teaching of the scribes added a whole new dimension to the word 'boring'!

(ii) From the account of the Mount of the Transfiguration we learn that our Lord's authority exceeded not only that of the scribes but even that of Moses and Elijah.

Moses and Elijah represent the line of genuine prophets of God, who, in contrast to the scribes, mount the platform to thunder their characteristic, '*Thus says the Lord*'. I say 'characteristic' not only because we encounter the expression some 360 times in the Old Testament but, in particular, with my eye on how James describes them in his epistle: 'Take as an example of suffering and of longsuffering, my brethren, the prophets *who spoke in the name of the Lord*'.⁷

But the Lord Jesus was neither scribe nor mere prophet! He was the Son of God and, as such, used neither formula ('Rabbi So-and so said' nor 'Thus says the Lord') for He had His own

In marked contrast to the scribes and to the prophets, He stands up and simply announces, '*I say to you*'. He affirms, for example, 'You have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But *I say to you* not to resist the evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also'.⁸ And it is almost impossible to exaggerate the change in tone and atmosphere between the last book of the Old Testament and the first in the New Testament. Within the space of just four chapters, the prophet Malachi declared his, 'Thus says the Lord', no less than 25 times. In marked contrast, in the Gospel of Matthew alone, Jesus declares His distinctive, '*I say unto you*' over 55 times.⁹

Hence, the voice out of the bright cloud on what Peter calls 'the holy mount'¹⁰ declares, '*This is my beloved Son ... hear Him*'.¹¹ It is now time for the two great prophets Moses and Elijah to step down, leaving 'Jesus only'.¹²

The presence of great crowds and men who knelt before Jesus.

2. Not only is the Lord Jesus surrounded by '**great crowds**' at the foot of both mountains¹³ but also, on both occasions, He is met by a man who **kneels** before Him:

(i) 'There came a leper to Him', Mark says, 'beseeching Him, and kneeling down to Him';¹⁴

(ii) 'when they were come to the multitude (at the foot of the Mount of the Transfiguration), there came to Him a man (the father of the young boy), kneeling down to Him'.¹⁵

Tremendous needs.

3. Both men confront Him with a **tremendous need** for, on both occasions, the case presented to Jesus is extreme:

(i) The man not only has leprosy but he also is, according to doctor Luke, 'full of leprosy'.¹⁶ This was, that is, a case where the leprosy had spread over his whole body, covering him from head to foot.

In this case the leprosy affected:

(a) Not merely the man's *hand* as leprosy had affected Moses temporarily at 'the Bush': 'Put your hand into your bosom ... when he took it out, behold, it was leprous as snow'.¹⁷

(b) Not merely the man's *forehead* as leprosy had affected Uzziah, King of Judah, permanently, of whom it is said, 'he was marvellously helped, until he was strong'.¹⁸ Note that

word, 'until'; it is a rather scary word—the mood music has changed—it means that something is about to happen. And happen it does!

'But', the scripture continues, 'when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense', with the sequel that 'while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead ... and Uzziah the king was a leper until the day of his death'.¹⁹

But, doctor Luke notes, *the man who knelt before Jesus* is an altogether exceptional case—this man is full of leprosy.

(ii) The second extreme case is that of a young boy who is not only possessed by an unclean spirit but also by a particularly nasty, strong and malicious spirit. The Lord's statement '*this kind* does not come out except by ...'²⁰ singles out this spirit as exceptional; this is no ordinary, run-of-the-mill demon. And the obstinacy and power of resistance displayed by this particular demon stands in marked contrast to the cowed, supplicating attitude shown by the 'legion' which inhabited the man among the tombs in Gadara,²¹ who, we read, twice 'besought Jesus'.²²

Sad and distressing cases.

4. But these are not only two extreme cases; they are also two very **sad and distressing cases**..

(i) According to the Mosaic Law, the leper was cut off from all social contact—forbidden even to come near the dwellings of his fellow-men: 'He is unclean, and he shall dwell alone; his habitation shall be outside the camp'.²³ The rabbis carried this many steps further. If a leper were seen on a public street, it was considered permissible to pelt him with eggs or even stones.²⁴ A leper was to keep at least two yards from a healthy person, or fifty yards if the wind was blowing from the leper's direction.²⁵

(ii) As for the boy, he is the last of the three '*only*' children entered in Dr Luke's casebook in chapters 7 to 9 of his gospel. First, there is the instance when Jesus 'came nigh to the gate of the city, and there was a dead man carried out, the *only* son of his mother, and she was a widow'.²⁶ Second, 'a man named Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue: who fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house: for he had *one only* daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying'.²⁷ And, third, here at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration, 'behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is my *only* child'.²⁸

And, on account of the presence of the unclean spirit, this 'only child' is not only epileptic but is also both deaf and dumb ('Dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him'²⁹), unable, therefore, either to express anything of his own anguish, fears and distress or to hear his parents' words of loving comfort.

Charged to tell no one.

5. Again:

(i) At *the close* of the first incident, Jesus '**charges**' ('sternly warns/strictly admonishes', that is) the cleansed leper to **tell 'no one'** what had happened to him.³⁰

(ii) Immediately *before* the second incident, Jesus '**charges**' ('orders', 'commands', that is) His disciples to **tell 'no one'** what had happened to Him on the Mount of the Transfiguration.³¹

The compassionate Saviour.

6. And again, in both narratives, we read the word '**compassion**':

(i) The leper: 'Jesus, moved ('filled') with *compassion*, put forth His hand, and touched him'.³²

(ii) The boy: it was the father who pleaded, 'if you can do anything, have *compassion* on us, and help us'.³³

And in both cases, as always, the Lord's feelings of pity move Him to works of love and kindness. For Jesus, 'compassion' is no empty sentiment—it is a heartfelt pity which expresses itself in action. The Lord is not only sensitive to feel, He is ever ready to act ... and He is mighty to deliver.

And I note that Jesus heals the leper, even though He knows that, in spite of His explicit stern warning, the man would later broadcast and 'blaze abroad' ('spread all around') what He has done for him.³⁴ As a result of the leper's widespread proclamation, the Lord is no longer able to enter the city to preach there (as He desired and for which purpose He says He had come: 'Let us go into the next towns', He had said, 'that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth'³⁵) but was compelled to stay outside 'in desert places'.³⁶

And here lies a sad twist to the story, in that Jesus now faces a situation not dissimilar to that which had previously faced the leper himself; I recall the words of the Mosaic Law, which requires that the leper's 'habitation shall be *outside* the camp',³⁷ where the Greek Old Testament uses the same word³⁸ which Mark uses when describing our Lord's location as '*outside* in desert places'.³⁹

But although the leper's misplaced zeal and testimony was to limit and hamper our Lord's future activity in the region, He still heals the man. What a wonderful, compassionate Saviour!

Physical contact.

7. Yet again, in both cases we read of the **physical contact** made by Jesus.

(i) In the case of the leper, our Lord doesn't send him—as Elisha had once sent Naaman, the Syrian leper—to wash seven times in the Jordan.⁴⁰ Nor did the Lord do as Naaman had expected Elisha to do; namely, to 'wave his/His hand' over the leprosy and to heal it.⁴¹ Our Lord doesn't 'wave His hand' ... He 'stretches out'⁴² His hand and actually touches him'.⁴³ Doubtless, the Saviour 'stretches out (not just 'puts out') His hand' to touch the leper because the leper has not dared come close enough for Him to touch him otherwise. What a moment that must have been! I wonder when the man had last felt a human touch.

By touching a leper leper, any ordinary person would, of course, automatically become ceremonially defiled. But at Jesus' touch nothing remains defiled. Far from becoming unclean Himself, Jesus makes the unclean to be clean: immediately the leprosy leaves him.⁴⁴

(ii) When the boy lies on the ground 'as if dead',⁴⁵ the Lord reaches down to take hold on ('to grip firmly'⁴⁶) the hand of the boy.

Complete cures.

8. In both cases, stress is laid on **the completeness of the cure**.

(i) The leper is sent to the priest, among other reasons, to obtain official confirmation that his leprosy is well and truly cleansed—that he is a leper no more. This was Jesus' normal practice with healed lepers, as witness the ten lepers cleansed later: 'who stood afar off and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us". And seeing them, He said to them, "Go show yourselves to the priests"'—one of the ten being, Luke notes, 'a Samaritan'.⁴⁷

And we remember well that scripture makes it clear that only *God* can cure biblical leprosy. Hence, the words of Jehoram the king of Israel, when he suspected that, in sending Naaman (the commander of the Syrian army) to him to be cured, Benhadad II, the king of Syria, was seeking some quarrel with him: 'Am I God', 'to kill and to make alive, that this man sends to me to recover a man of his leprosy?'.⁴⁸ Hence also, the message the Lord sent to John the Baptist when John sent two messengers to Jesus to enquire, 'Are you the coming one, or are we to look for another?'.⁴⁹

Jesus tells them to tell John that, not only did the blind receive their sight and the dead were raised up, but also 'lepers are cleansed'.⁵⁰ But, whatever the healing of this leper has to say about our Lord's status (both as Son of God and as the Messiah⁵¹), this once leper was a leper no more!

(ii) Jesus explicitly commands the unclean spirit to 'come out' of the boy and to 'enter into him *no more*'.⁵²

In both cases, the healings are not only instantaneous (demonstrating that they are achieved, not by natural means or processes but by divine power)—but also they are permanent.⁵³

Yes, there are many fascinating points in common between these two incidents.

One striking difference.

But, as I very much hope you noticed, the one stark contrast —the one **striking difference**—between the stories.

In the one, the man (the leper) implores Jesus, '*If you will, you can ...*'. But in the other, the man (the father of the afflicted boy) implores Him, '*If you can ...*'.

(i) I stand in awe of the leper's faith. He may well have known of our Lord's previous healing activity throughout the district,⁵⁴ but we have no record of a leper's being healed by Jesus then or at any time before. Yet the man entertains no doubts about the Lord's healing power; he feared only that, because of his defiled condition, the Lord would not want to cleanse him and that he might therefore be passed by.⁵⁵

(ii) But what of the other man, the boy's father? We may be tempted to regard his, 'If you can', as an extremely foolish and silly thing for him to say. But we must not be too hard on the man. We cannot blame him for his doubts. Indeed, it would have been surprising if he hadn't been disappointed and thoroughly disheartened by the Lord's disciples' earlier proven inability to expel the demon.

The man's original intention had been to bring his son to Jesus Himself: 'I brought my son to you'.⁵⁶ But, when he found that the Teacher was absent (still up the mountain with Peter, James and John), quite understandably he had turned to the Lord's disciples and referred the case to them: 'I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able ('they could not')'.⁵⁷ Is it any wonder, therefore, that he now asks, 'If you can do anything ...'.

Clearly, the combined power of nine apostles⁵⁸ is baffled by this particular demon. We can readily understand therefore why the Lord later directs His seventy⁵⁹ disciples (whom had He sent into the towns and villages ahead of Him⁶⁰) to rejoice, not that they exercised authority over the demons in His name, but that their names are written in heaven.⁶¹ The Saviour directs them to base their joy, not on *the power of His name on earth* but on *the presence of their names in heaven* ... not on the ebb and flow of successful and effective service for Him but on that which can never fluctuate or change.⁶²

'Bring him to me', Jesus commands.⁶³ The question 'How long has this been happening' to the boy⁶⁴ is addressed by the Lord, not to the young sufferer himself but to the father—not only because the sufferer is just a boy but also because the poor lad is both deaf and dumb and could, therefore, have neither heard nor answered.

In effect, Jesus says to the father, 'The question, sir, isn't "if I can" but "if you can". The point at issue really isn't *my power* but *your faith*. To no small extent, sir, the cure of your boy depends, *not on me, but on you*. Do you believe I can do this?'

What a predicament for the man ... to be told that his son's healing rested on *his* faith.

He had earlier pleaded, '... have compassion on us and *help us*', linking himself with his son, but now he focuses his request for 'help' on himself alone and on what he has been told is his greatest need at that moment, '*help my unbelief*'. It is as though he pleads, 'Yes, Lord, I do believe—I really do believe—but I fear that my very faith is weak and defective. I desperately need you to increase and strengthen it. I need you to remove whatever remaining doubts or unbelief lurk within me, that I may secure the healing of my son—who means everything in the world to me'.

It is enough!

Jesus addresses the unclean spirit: 'I' (the Greek is emphatic; in effect, 'not now one – or nine – of my disciples, but **I**) command⁶⁵ you, come out of him and never enter him again'. And this exceptionally strong demon at the foot of the mount is no more a match for the Lord Jesus and His authoritative word than had been the whole legion of demons which had possessed and ruled the man who dwelt in the tombs of Gadara.⁶⁶

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

So much for the stories themselves. But these stories hold several simple, practical lessons for each of us today:

(i) It isn't possible (or even desirable) that we dwell perpetually in the glow and glory of some mountain-top experience. Our pathway of service (as that of the Master) leads us down to the place where human need cries out for our compassion and action. Even Jesus wouldn't stay on the mountain! In the case of the Mount of the Transfiguration, love brought Him down from *the place of glory and splendour* to *the place of distress and misery*—from the place where heaven visited earth for a night to the place where the powers of darkness reigned.

Peter needed to learn that it is equally 'good ... to be here' *at the foot of the mount* among the needs of men as it is to be *on the top of the mount* in the presence of the glorified Lord.⁶⁷

It is interesting that Luke uses the very same word⁶⁸ to describe what astonished the men *at the foot* of the mountain as Peter uses to describe what had astonished James, John and himself *at the top of the mountain*: 'they were all amazed', Luke says, 'at the mighty power ('the magnificence', 'the majestic greatness') of God';⁶⁹ 'we', Peter says, 'were eyewitnesses of His majesty ('magnificence', 'majestic greatness').'⁷⁰ The Lord's true 'majesty' was as evident in His humble service for the needy as it was in the honour and glory which He received from God the Father on the holy mount.⁷¹

(ii) We need to pray with confidence—not 'if you can ...' but 'if you will, you can ...'. We ought to arm ourselves with the confidence that He is indeed 'able to do'⁷² superabundantly beyond whatever we ask or think'.⁷³

(iii) From the unwelcome effects of the leper's disobedience, we learn that **the commands of our Lord must be obeyed at all cost**. Jesus wanted to avoid becoming known simply as a mere wonder worker; He had come to fulfill His mission of sacrificial suffering before being publicly proclaimed as Messiah. As we noted earlier, the healing of lepers was one of the messianic signs of which John the Baptist had been reminded when in prison,⁷⁴ and the crowds were always ready to apply to Jesus their commonly held view of the Messiah as a military and political deliverer. But He had come 'to die, not to trounce the Romans'.⁷⁵

The cleansed leper's disobedience to Jesus' word (however well-meaning his intention) frustrated our Lord's work rather than advanced it. The Lord's ways are always best and ultimately all disobedience to His word will lead to loss.

(iv) Alas, **the disciples' failure at the foot of the mount reflected badly on Jesus**—leading the boy's father to question even the Lord's power and ability. It is sobering to reflect that it is often (perhaps, usually) by *my* actions and conduct that men measure and judge not only me but my Lord.

(v) Let us never permit the failure which we find (or perhaps *think* we find) in others of the Lord's people to cause us to doubt the Lord Himself—His power, His love or whatever. Let us determine to **press beyond our disappointment in other Christians** to focus on the Lord Himself, who never fails and who never disappoints.

(vi) From the incident at the foot of the Mount of the Transfiguration, we learn **that faith and prayer are absolutely necessary to sustain our God-given gifts and our service for the Lord**. In reply to the question, 'Why could we not cast it out?' Matthew reports Jesus' words, 'Because of your little faith',⁷⁶ while Mark draws attention to the Lord's comment about the need for prayer: "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer".⁷⁷

Earlier, the disciples had been given authority over the demonic world and had exercised that authority on many occasions.⁷⁸ It may well be that, in the light of their past successes, they took it for granted that the power to exorcise unclean spirits somehow now lay in themselves and that, as in the past, they would always be successful. They may therefore have felt no need for any renewed sense of dependence on God and therefore neglected to pray for His blessing and power. And without renewed trust in God and without prayer, they failed—and they failed miserably.

We too must ever remember that neither our spiritual gifts nor any past effective service can substitute for constant, conscious, prayerful dependence on God and His power.

Notes

¹ Matt. 8. 2-4; 8. 14-17; 9. 2-13 almost certainly took place before the Sermon on the Mount - cf. Mark 1. 29-34, 40-45, Luke 4. 38-41. Matthew does not purport to follow anything other than a topical arrangement, and most of his "time" indicators are very loose. This does not mean that Matthew's arrangement is haphazard but that it is governed by themes. Linkage from pericope to pericope is provided by ideas, catchwords, dominant motifs.

² Matt. 8. 1; the parallel accounts are in Matt. 17. 9 and Mark 9. 9.

³ Luke 9. 37.

⁴ Matt. 7. 28 – 8. 4 (ESV).

⁵ Mark 9. 2, 7-9, 14-29 (ESV).

⁶ Matt. 7. 28-29.

⁷ James 5. 10.

⁸ Matt. 5. 38-39.

⁹ In one sense, therefore, we can say that, whereas the prophets spoke *for* God, He spoke *as* God.

¹⁰ 2 Pet. 1. 18.

¹¹ Matt. 17. 5.

¹² Matt. 17. 8.

¹³ Matt. 8. 1; Mark 9. 14.

¹⁴ Mark 1. 40.

¹⁵ Matt. 17. 14.

¹⁶ Luke 5. 12.

¹⁷ Exod. 4. 6.

¹⁸ 2 Chron. 26. 15.

¹⁹ 2 Chron. 26. 16-21.

²⁰ Mark 9. 29.

²¹ Mark 5. 1; Luke 8. 26; cf. Matt. 8. 28—or 'Gerasa', as in many Greek manuscripts. Possible, the incident 'happened somewhere near both towns on the southeast coast of the lake', T. E. Constable, '*Expository Notes*', comment on Luke 8. 26-29..

²² Mark 5. 10, 12.

²³ Lev. 13. 46.

²⁴ John Ortberg, '*Love Beyond Reason*', page 50.

²⁵ 'No less a distance than four cubits (six feet) must be kept from a leper; or, if the wind came from that direction, a hundred were scarcely sufficient. Rabbi Meir would not eat an egg purchased in a street where there was a leper. Another Rabbi boasted, that he always threw stones at them to keep them far off, while others hid themselves or ran away ... He would have fled from a Rabbi; he came in lowliest attitude of entreaty to Jesus', A. Edersheim, '*The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*', Book III, chapter 15 (Volume 1, page 495).

²⁶ Luke 7. 12.

²⁷ Luke 8. 42.

²⁸ Luke 9. 38.

²⁹ Mark 9. 25.

³⁰ Mark 1. 43.

³¹ Mark 9. 9.

³² Mark 1. 41.

³³ Mark 9. 22.

³⁴ Mark 1. 45.

³⁵ Mark 1. 38.

³⁶ Mark 1. 45.

³⁷ Lev. 13. 46.

³⁸ The Greek word, 'ἔξω'.

³⁹ Mark 1. 45.

⁴⁰ 2 Kings 5. 10.

⁴¹ 2 Kings 5. 11.

⁴² Not simply 'put out' his hand but 'stretched out' his hand.

Contrast Jeroboam I, who 'stretched out' (the Greek Old Testament word ('ἐκτείνω') is the same as in Matt. 8.3) his hand ... which immediately 'dried up', 1 Kings 13. 4; in contrast, our Lord's stretched out hand healed someone else.

⁴³ Matt. 8. 3.

⁴⁴ Mark 1. 42.

⁴⁵ Mark 9. 26.

⁴⁶ The Greek word, 'κρατέω'—to be strong, mighty.

⁴⁷ Luke 17. 12-16.

⁴⁸ 2 Kings 5. 7. 'Healings (from leprosy) were ... considered as difficult as raising the dead', D. A. Carson, '*Matthew: Expositor's Bible Commentary*', comment on Matt. 8. 2-3.

'That the disease was not only serious but greatly feared is indicated by the rabbinic opinion that it is as difficult to cleanse a leper as to raise the dead', W. L. Lane, '*The Gospel According to Mark: New International Commentary on the New Testament*', page 85, note 143.

'Rabbi Yoḥanan said ... "Leprosy ... an affliction that is considered to be equivalent to death, as it is written with regard to Miriam's leprosy: 'Let her not be as one dead'" (Num. 12. 12)', Sanhedrin 47a, Babylonian Talmud ... accessed at <https://www.sefaria.org/Sanhedrin.47a.10?lang=bi>.

⁴⁹ Matt. 11. 3.

⁵⁰ Matt. 11. 5.

⁵¹ 'Significantly, His work began [*this is our Lord's first recorded single miracle in the Synoptic gospels*] where that of the Rabbis, we had almost said of the Old Testament saints, ended. Whatever remedies, medical, magical, or sympathetic, Rabbinic writings may indicate for various kinds of disease, leprosy is not included in the catalogue ... Rabbinism confessed itself powerless in presence of this living death. Although ... the sacrificial ritual for the cleansed leper implies, at least, the possibility of a cure, it is in every instance traced to the direct agency of God', A. Edersheim, '*ibid.*', (Volume 1, pages 491-492).

⁵² Mark 9. 25.

⁵³ The one was a 'testimony' to the priests, Matt. 8. 4; the other a testimony to the scribes, who may well have been enjoying a case where the disciples of Jesus had failed and who would take full advantage of the opportunity to discredit Christ and his apostles before the people, Mark 9. 14, 26-27. The scribes had clearly felt uneasy about His sudden arrival and appear to have thought better of answering His question about the subject of the debate and dispute between them and the apostles ... leaving it to the father of the child to explain, perhaps breaking an embarrassing silence.

⁵⁴ Matt. 4. 24.

⁵⁵ Echoing D. A. Carson, *ibid.*, comment on Matt. 8. 2-3.

⁵⁶ Mark 9. 17.

⁵⁷ Mark 9. 18.

⁵⁸ Remember that the Lord had called the twelve disciples to Him and that He then 'gave them power ('authority') over unclean spirits', Mark 6. 7.

⁵⁹ Or 'seventy-two'; see, e.g., A. J. Thompson, '*Luke: Exegetical Guide to the New Testament*', comments on Luke 10. 1, and D. L. Bock, '*Luke: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*', Volume 2, Additional Note to Luke 10. 1.

⁶⁰ Luke 10. 1.

⁶¹ Luke 10. 17-20.

⁶² I note that in Philippians 4, the apostle Paul, having referred to some of his fellow-labourers as those 'whose names are in the book of life', immediately added his double 'rejoice', Phil. 4. 3-4— coming from a man who spent a lot of time with the author of the third gospel, an association of thought perhaps?

⁶³ Mark 9. 19.

⁶⁴ Mark 9. 21.

⁶⁵ The Greek word is '*ἐπιτάσσω*' and should be rendered 'command' and not 'charge' as in the King James Version. It is the word used in Luke 8. 25: 'What manner of man is this! for He *commands* even the winds and water, and they obey Him'.

⁶⁶ Mark 5. 1-15; Luke 8. 26-36; cf. Matt. 8. 28-34. See Note 21 above.

⁶⁷ Matt. 17. 4.

⁶⁸ The Greek word is '*μεγαλειότης*'.

⁶⁹ Luke 9. 43.

⁷⁰ 2 Pet. 1. 16.

⁷¹ 2 Pet. 1. 17.

⁷² That is, 'that He *can* do', the same word ('*δύναμις*') as in Matt. 8. 2.

⁷³ Eph. 3. 20.

⁷⁴ Luke 7. 22.

⁷⁵ Cf. John 6. 15. 'These commands to be silent show that Jesus is not presenting Himself as a mere wonder worker, who can be pressured into messiahship by crowds whose messianic views are materialistic and political. Jesus' authority derives from God alone, not the acclaim of men; He came to die, not to trounce the Romans', D. A. Carson, *ibid.*, comment on Matt. 8. 4..

⁷⁶ Matt. 17. 19-20. The failure of the disciples was not because of any insufficiency of power in Jesus, but was due to their own failure to appropriate that power by faith. Clearly, the disciples were part of the 'unbelieving' generation of which Jesus spoke, Mark 9. 19.

⁷⁷ Mark 9. 29.

⁷⁸ Mark 3. 14-15; 6. 13.