

Matthew 9

by John Nelson Darby

Jesus' ministry is one of forgiveness and healing, presented as the true Redeemer and Deliverer of Israel, but is rejected by the Pharisees who do not desire His presence.

Scripture: Psalm 103:3, Matthew 9:12-13, Matthew 9:20-22, Matthew 9:36-38, Mark 2:17, Luke 19:10, John 3:17, Romans 5:8, Ephesians 2:8-9

Topics: "Faith", "Grace", "Healing"

Description

John Nelson Darby expounds on Matthew 9, illustrating how Jesus embodies the grace of God by forgiving sins and healing diseases, fulfilling the role of Israel's true Redeemer. He emphasizes that Jesus came to call sinners, not the righteous, and highlights the rejection of His ministry by the Pharisees and learned men who could not accept His divine authority. The chapter showcases the power of faith, as seen in the healing of a woman who touched Jesus' garment, and the compassion He had for the people, likening them to sheep without a shepherd. Despite opposition, Jesus continues His mission of grace, demonstrating that His power is for all who believe. Ultimately, the sermon reveals the transformative nature of grace that calls and heals, regardless of societal or religious barriers.

Transcript

In the following chapter (9), while acting in the character and according to the power of Jehovah (as we read in Psalms 103), "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases"; it is the actual grace in itself towards and for them, in which He came, which is presented. It gives the character of His ministry, as the previous one gives the dignity of His Person and the bearing of what He was. He presents Himself to Israel as their true Redeemer and Deliverer; and, to prove His title (which unbelief already opposed) to be this blessing to Israel, and to pardon all their iniquities which raised a barrier between them and their God, He accomplishes the second part of the verse, and heals the disease. Beautiful and precious testimony of kindness to Israel, and at the same time, the demonstration of His glory who stood in the midst of His people! In the same spirit, as He had forgiven, and healed, He calls the publican and goes to his house-come not to call the righteous, but sinners.

But now we enter on another portion of the instruction in this Gospel-the development of the opposition of unbelievers, of the learned men and the religionists in particular; and that of the rejection of the work and Person of the Lord.

The idea, the picture of that which took place, has been already set before us in the case of the Gergesene demoniac-the power of God present for the entire deliverance of His people, of the world, if they received Him-power which the devils confessed to be that which should hereafter judge and cast them out, which displayed itself in blessing to all the people of the place, but which was rejected, because they did not desire such power to dwell among them. They would not have the presence of God.

The narration of the details and the character of this rejection now commences. Observe that chapter 8:1-27 gives the manifestation of the Lord's power-this power being truly that of Jehovah on the earth. From verse 28 the reception this power met with in the world, and the influence which governed the world, are set forth, whether as power, or morally in the hearts of men.

We come here to the historical development of the rejection of this intervention of God upon the earth.

The multitude glorify God who had given such power to a man. Jesus accepts this place. He was man: the multitude saw Him to be man, and acknowledged the power of God, but did not know how to combine the two ideas in His Person.

The grace which contemns the pretensions of man to righteousness is now set forth.

Matthew, the publican, is called; for God looks at the heart, and grace calls the elect vessels.

The Lord declares the mind of God on this subject, and His own mission. He came to call sinners; He would have mercy. It was God in grace, and not man with his pretended righteousness counting on his merits.

He assigns two reasons which make it impossible to reconcile His course with the demands of the Pharisees. How should the disciples fast when the Bridegroom was there? When the Messiah was gone, they might well do so. Moreover it is impossible to introduce the new principles and the new power of His mission into the old Pharisaic forms.

Thus we have grace to sinners, but (grace rejected) now comes at once a higher proof that Messiah-Jehovah was there, from her bed of death, He obeys the call. As He goes, a poor woman, who had already employed every means of cure without success, is instantaneously healed by touching in faith the hem of His garment.

This history supplies us with the two great divisions of the grace that was manifested in Jesus. Christ came to awaken dead Israel; He will do this hereafter in the full sense of the word. Meanwhile, whosoever laid hold of Him by faith, in the midst of the multitude that accompanied Him, was healed, let the case be ever so hopeless. This, which took place in Israel when Jesus was there, is true in principle of us also. Grace in Jesus is a power which raises from the dead, and which heals. Thus He opened the eyes of those in Israel who owned Him to be the Son of David, and who believed in His power to meet their need. He cast out devils also, and gave speech to the dumb. But having performed these acts of power in Israel, so that the people, as to the fact, owned them with admiration, the Pharisees, the most religious part of the nation, ascribe this power to the prince of the devils. Such is the effect of the Lord's presence on the leaders of the people, jealous of His glory thus manifested among them over whom they exercised their influence. But this in no way interrupts Jesus in His career of beneficence. He can still bear testimony among the people. In spite of the Pharisees His patient kindness still finds place. He continues to preach and to heal. He has compassion on the people, who were like sheep without a shepherd, given up,

morally, to their own guidance. He still sees that the harvest is plenteous and the labourers few. That is to say, He still sees every door open to address the people and He passes over the wickedness of the Pharisees.

Let us sum up what we find in the chapter, the grace developed in Israel. First, grace healing and forgiving as in Psalms 103. Then grace come to call sinners, not the righteous; the bridegroom was there, nor could grace in power be put in Jewish and Pharisaic vessels; it was new even in respect of John Baptist. He comes in reality to give life to the dead, not to heal, but whoever then touched Him by faith-for there were such-were healed in the way. He opens eyes to see, as Son of David, and opens the dumb mouth of him whom the devil possessed. All is rejected with blasphemy by the self-righteous Pharisees. But grace sees the multitude as yet as having no shepherd; and while the porter holds the door open, He ceases not to seek and minister to the sheep.

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