

CCO Inductive Bible Study Series

# CCO COMMUNITY

Scripture & Ministry

# TOGETHER

## MATTHEW 8

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CCO A RESOURCE OF THE CCO



The CCO calls college students to serve Jesus Christ with their entire lives.

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## CCO Community, Scripture & Ministry Together

**1. The idea is to be more collaborative in our study of scripture as a CCO community.** We miss out on the insights of others if we think our observations and interpretations are the only ones that students really need to hear. Can we make our robust Bible studies even better? How will the scriptures shape our imaginations for life and ministry in new ways? Can we continue to add to the knowledge base for generations to come through something like Google doc or another open source platform?

**2. The idea is to actually study the scriptures together.** This resource is only as good as the people who can lead it. The only way for these resources to come to life is through active engagement with communities of faith who will take up the call in their context. We must not only study together, but must allow this narrative to reshape our lives together in mission.

# The Flow of Information

**Background:** Give a paragraph on the background on the author, context within redemptive history, and genre. And list key terms that may be unfamiliar to someone new to the text—think of a glossary for the passage.

**Observations:** Make note of patterns, repetition, contrasts, cause/effect, progression, key verbs, verb tenses, pronouns, physicality, and quotations.

**Questions:** List all the questions the text prompts in and for you.

**Interpretation:** What does this text tell us about God's character? How is a Christian worldview distinctive here? What does this text tell us about the nature of our sin? What does it tell us about human nature and our telos? How are faith, hope, and love displayed here? In dealing with an Old Testament passage, how do you understand Jesus' relationship to the particular text?

**Application:** While the text may have a particular interpretive focus, the applications may be quite broad. Think about three spheres of possible application:

## ***Personal***

Is there a command to obey? A promise to claim? Do I need to pray about something from the text? What should I give thanks for? Does the passage tell me about something to resist or recognize?

## ***Community***

How does the text shed light on our experience in relationship to others? On our use of time? How does the text reorient our values, goals, expectations, or priorities? How can we live it out before a watching world? How can we communicate it in a winsome way?

## ***World Engagement***

How does the text inform our engagement with different spheres: medicine, government, the arts, family, higher education, sports, business, and media? Can you identify common objections a non-Christian might raise and develop reasonable answers?

## Matthew 8:1-17



### *Jesus Cleanses a Leper*

**1** When Jesus had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him; **2** and there was a leper who came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean." **3** He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I do choose. Be made clean!" Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. **4** Then 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, as a testimony to them."



### *Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant*

**5** When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, appealing to him **6** and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible distress." **7** And he said to him, "I will come and cure him." **8** The centurion answered, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed. **9** For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and the slave does it." **10** When Jesus heard him, he was amazed and said to those who followed him, "Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith. **11** I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, **12** while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." **13** And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; let it be done for you according to your faith." And the servant was healed in that hour.



### *Jesus Heals Many at Peter's House*

**14** When Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever; **15** he touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she got up and began to serve him. **16** That evening they brought to him many who were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and cured all who were sick. **17** This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah, "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases."

# Background

The Gospel of Matthew was written for a Jewish audience, thus the Old Testament quotations and allusions are very significant as they give insight into particular characteristics of Jesus that speak powerfully to Israel's worldview and praxis. Using much of the material found in the Gospel of Mark, the author sets the life of Jesus in a framework of five great teachings corresponding to the five books of Torah, indicating that he is the fulfillment of the Mosaic Law. Jesus has just given the Sermon on the Mount and will now show the world his authority as one who perfectly lives out the law of love, breaking down all social and cultural barriers to demonstrate the power and priorities of the Kingdom of God.

## Key Terms

**leprosy** — various skin diseases associated with uncleanness and separation from others. In the ancient world, lepers were the living dead. They wore ragged clothing and symbolized the tragic element of life and human vulnerability.

**Capernaum** — The town is cited in all four gospels (Matthew 4:13, 8:5, 11:23, 17:24; Mark 1:21, 2:1, 9:33; Luke 4:23, 31, 7:1, 10:15; John 2:12, 4:46, 6:17, 24, 59) where it was reported to have been near the hometown of the apostles Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John, as well as the tax collector Matthew. Jesus selected this town as the center of his public ministry in the Galilee.

**centurion** — a professional officer of the Roman army after the Marian reforms of 107 BC. Most centurions commanded groups of centuries of around 80 men, but senior centurions commanded cohorts or took senior staff roles in their legion.

# Observations

- We see a reversal of shame and contamination (Jesus should have been the one made unclean).
- Jesus affirms the ministry of the priesthood, rather than tearing it down.
- There is immediacy in Jesus healing.
- Jesus doesn't heal in the exact same way in each instance.
- Jesus is depicted as a new and greater Moses. He just finished giving his Sermon on the Mount and now is showing the people how the reality of the Kingdom has broken into the world.
- There are many Old Testament references here: Jesus coming down the mountain (like Moses), references to the Levitical law and priesthood, a feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, prophetic fulfillment in Isaiah.

## Questions



**ASK:** *What is Matthew showing us by the Old Testament references?*

**POSSIBLE RESPONSE:** Since Matthew is intended for a Jewish audience, the Old Testament references show how he is the true prophet, priest, and king of the universe. There are a variety of references from Israel's history that show that all things culminate in Jesus.



**ASK:** *What is Matthew showing us about Jesus?*

**POSSIBLE RESPONSE:** Matthew is showing us that Jesus has true authority. Through the various healings, conversation with the centurion, and implicit comparison with Herod (who kills), Jesus has ultimate authority, and uses this power to give life to all.



**ASK:** *What is he showing us about faith?*

**POSSIBLE RESPONSES:**

- Faith is exercised as response to Jesus.
- Faith is based on a new authority.
- Faith is open to the nations.
- Faith is active.
- Faith embraces mystery and mess.

## Interpretation

- Jesus does not reject culture but comes to redeem it.
- Matthew is using the Old Testament to reshape Israel's narrative and calls people to account.
- Jesus affirms the covenant of Israel, showing he is the fulfillment of the promises to put all things in right order.
- Position, caste, and privilege is immaterial when Jesus is Lord of all.

## Application

**Personal:** Our call to ministry is one of presence. Jesus came down the mountain as the new and greater Moses to heal through touch, and in so doing, he broke down social and cultural barriers. He calls us to take those risks as well.

**Community:** Shame prevents us from an active faith. It's in a community, living under the authority of Jesus, that we can boldly approach Jesus as the one true

healer. Faith is active and lived in relationship to God, and we are the conduits of his grace that create communities where people can take their sickness and shame to Jesus for healing.

**World Engagement:** Jesus affirms the priesthood in this passage. Rather than tearing them down, he invites the leper to offer gifts at the temple, honoring the system of sacrifice, yet subverting it. This indicates to us that there is great value in working within a given system or company, yet nothing is beyond the need for Jesus' new vision for the kingdom of God. Nothing could be more redemptive than to honor the cultural or company context, while at the same time bringing new life in the power of the Holy Spirit.

## Conclusion

Jesus is portrayed as one with ultimate authority. He is the fulfillment of Israel's hopes and desires; the one who will bring to full flower the covenant promises made centuries ago. Our faith can affirm the cultural and organizational structures in place while working toward their sanctification. We are called to follow Jesus as the new Moses of a greater Exodus, as the head of a new Kingdom family and the suffering savior foretold in Isaiah. All our lives and work depend on coming under his authority, an authority that grants us all dignity, freedom, life, and healing.

## Prayer

O gracious God,

Thank you for Jesus, author and perfecter of our faith. In him we find all freedom, healing, and true authority. Forgive us the ways we evade his Lordship and seek our own plans and priorities. Forgive our doubt and cynicism. Your Kingdom is without end and gives us renewed imagination for a different reality. Help us walk by faith today, bringing the Kingdom of God to earth as it is in heaven. in Jesus' name.

Amen.