

## Dr. Craig Keener, Matthew, Session 10

### Matthew 8-9

### Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

#### 1. Abstract of Keener, Matthew, Session 10, Matthew 8-9, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

**Dr. Craig Keener's lecture** analyzes Matthew chapters 8 and 9, focusing on Jesus' miracles. **Keener interprets** these miracles not just as acts of healing but as **demonstrations of Jesus' authority** over various aspects of life—physical ailments, demons, and even death itself. He also explores **the social and cultural context** of the miracles, examining the reactions of different groups (e.g., Pharisees, common people) and highlighting Jesus' compassion for the marginalized. The lecture further **explores the significance of faith** in receiving these miracles, emphasizing the commitment and cost involved in following Jesus. Finally, **Keener uses the text** to discuss the importance of compassion, forgiveness, and the urgency of following Jesus' teachings.

**2. 21 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Keener, Matthews, Session 10 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Gospels – Acts → Matthew).**



**Keener\_Matthew\_S  
ession10.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Craig Keener's lecture on Matthew 8-9:

#### **Briefing Document: Dr. Craig Keener on Matthew 8-9**

##### **Introduction:**

This document summarizes the key themes and ideas presented in Dr. Craig Keener's lecture on Matthew chapters 8 and 9. The lecture focuses on Jesus' miracles and how they reveal his authority, compassion, and the nature of his mission. Keener also emphasizes the cost of following Jesus and how these accounts prefigure the expansion of the gospel beyond the Jewish people.

##### **Key Themes & Ideas:**

##### **1. Jesus' Authority Over All Things:**

- **Miracles as Demonstrations of Power:** The lecture highlights the many miracles performed by Jesus in these chapters - healing, exorcisms, calming storms, and even raising the dead - emphasizing that they're not just acts of kindness but also demonstrations of his authority over sickness, nature, demons, and death. As Keener states, the miracles demonstrate Jesus' "authority, his reign, and his rule."
- **Authority through a Word:** Keener emphasizes that Jesus performs exorcisms and heals simply by speaking a word, contrasting this with the magical rituals and formulas employed by others at the time. This underscores his divine authority, as "Jesus simply speaks and it happens."
- **Authority to Forgive Sins:** Keener points out that Jesus' declaration "Your sins are forgiven" is a bold claim of authority, as only God was traditionally believed to be able to forgive sins. This highlights Jesus' association with God's power. The healing that follows serves as a verification of this authority: "His authority to heal supports his authority to forgive."

##### **1. Jesus' Compassion and Ministry to the Marginalized:**

- **Reaching Out to Outcasts:** Keener underscores that Jesus consistently ministers to those who are marginalized in society: the sick, the possessed, tax collectors, and Gentiles. Keener notes that Jesus was not "hobnobbing with the rich and the powerful" but rather "going to people who are not popular, to the marginalized, to outsiders."

- **Embracing Uncleaness:** Jesus' willingness to touch a leper, a woman with a flow of blood, and a dead body shows his willingness to "embrace uncleaness," paying a price to make people whole.
- **Motivated by Faith:** Keener notes that Jesus' healing is often initiated by the faith of those who come to him or the faith of those who bring others. He says of the woman with the issue of blood that "sometimes faith isn't like you have everything figured out... Sometimes faith is desperation where you say, God is the only one who can help me. And God, I'm not letting go."

#### 1. **The Inclusion of Gentiles and the Expansion of the Kingdom:**

- **The Centurion as an Exception:** The healing of the Roman centurion's servant is highlighted as a crucial moment. Although Romans were not favored by Jewish people, this centurion is an example of faith, and is called a "Roman exception" that prefigures the inclusion of Gentiles in God's kingdom. Keener quotes the centurion who stated, "I know that because I'm a person under authority, I understand that you also, speak with authority and things obey you." Jesus then recognizes this as faith greater than what he has seen from his own people.
- **Kingdom Beyond the "Children":** Jesus foretells that many will come from the east and west to sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom, while those who consider themselves "children of the kingdom" will be cast out into outer darkness. This emphasizes the fact that the kingdom is not solely for those with a cultural or religious inheritance.

#### 1. **The Cost of Following Jesus:**

- **Radical Discipleship:** Jesus calls for a radical form of discipleship that may involve leaving behind family, security, and societal expectations. When a man asks to bury his father first, Jesus' response is, "Let the dead bury the dead. You go preach the kingdom of God." This exemplifies the radical call of discipleship which must take precedence over even deeply held filial responsibilities.
- **No Place to Lay His Head:** Jesus' statement that he has nowhere to lay his head illustrates the sacrifice and vulnerability required to follow him. Keener suggests that this may be a form of "hyperbole," but that "we need to count the cost. Jesus is worth everything."

- **Prioritizing the Kingdom:** Jesus' call is that following him and his mission is to be prioritized even over essential social obligations and family roles. Keener states, "Jesus takes precedence over other obligations. That much is clear." This prioritizes the Kingdom of God above even familial relationships.

#### 1. **Understanding the Context of Jesus' Actions:**

- **Jewish Burial Customs:** Keener explains Jewish customs around death and burial in detail, including the use of mourners and secondary burials. This helps clarify Jesus' seemingly harsh response to the man who wanted to bury his father, explaining it as an allusion to possibly a secondary burial which may involve a delay of up to a year, not an actual immediate burial.
- **Tax Collectors:** Keener offers background about tax collectors and how they were perceived to be traitors in Jewish society. This helps the audience understand why Jesus' association with tax collectors was so scandalous. Keener notes that, "They were viewed as collaborators with the occupying power."

#### 1. **Jesus as the Fulfillment of Prophecy:**

- **Suffering Servant:** Keener connects Jesus' healing ministry to the suffering servant of Isaiah, particularly Isaiah 53, emphasizing that Jesus' acts of healing and compassion were costly to him.
- **Restoration of Creation:** Keener points out how Jesus' mission includes the restoration of not just humanity, but of all creation, drawing from Isaiah 35, where the prophets spoke of "spiritual healing, healing from sin, but also as a foretaste of the coming age."

#### **Key Quotes:**

- On the Centurion: "The point of this Roman exception here is that Gentiles could be reached."
- On Jesus' exorcisms: "Jesus simply speaks and it happens."
- On faith: "Sometimes faith isn't like you have everything figured out... Sometimes faith is desperation where you say, God is the only one who can help me. And God, I'm not letting go."
- On radical discipleship: "Jesus takes precedence over other obligations. That much is clear."

- On the cost of following Jesus: "We need to count the cost. Jesus is worth everything."
- On Jesus' authority: "His authority to heal supports his authority to forgive."
- On Jesus' mission: "Jesus came not just to save us from sin in terms of forgiveness, but he came as a restorer of all that had been broken and lost."

**Conclusion:**

Dr. Keener's lecture provides a rich overview of Matthew 8-9, highlighting Jesus' unparalleled authority, deep compassion, and the far-reaching implications of his ministry. The lecture emphasizes that Jesus' miracles are not merely acts of power, but also invitations to faith and calls to radical discipleship. These chapters are shown to prefigure the expansion of the Kingdom of God to people beyond the Jewish people, and invite all to consider the cost of following Jesus.

## 4. Matthew Study Guide: Session 10, Matthew 8-9

### Matthew 8-9 Study Guide

#### Quiz

1. Why is the healing of the centurion's servant significant in Matthew's Gospel?
2. The centurion was a Roman, and thus a Gentile, making his faith a prefiguration of the Gentile mission. His faith demonstrates that even those outside of the Jewish covenant could have great faith.
3. How does Jesus respond to the centurion's request for healing?
4. Jesus initially seems to present an obstacle, perhaps asking if he should come. However, after the centurion professes his faith in Jesus' authority, Jesus immediately heals the servant from afar.
5. What is the significance of Jesus' healing of Peter's mother-in-law?
6. The healing of Peter's mother-in-law is a personal miracle that demonstrates Jesus' healing authority, and as a sign of gratitude, she immediately ministers to those in the home. This healing also suggests the restoration of relationships and familial harmony.
7. How does Jesus' method of exorcism differ from common practices in his time?

Unlike the magical rituals and incantations used by others, Jesus simply commands demons to leave with his voice. This demonstrates his authority over the spiritual realm and his power as the Son of God.

1. Why did Matthew, in 8:17, choose to use a different translation of the Hebrew than the Septuagint?
2. Matthew's translation focused on physical healing rather than a spiritualized interpretation as a direct quote from Isaiah, highlighting the fact that Jesus was healing physical illnesses and not merely spiritual ailments.
3. What does Jesus mean when he says "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head?"
4. This is a warning to potential followers that following Jesus may involve a rejection of worldly comforts. It illustrates that discipleship requires a willingness to sacrifice basic securities, like having a home.

5. What are the two possible interpretations of the man who wanted to "bury his father" before following Jesus?
6. The first is that he was asking to wait until his father died before following Jesus. The second interpretation was that he was referring to a secondary burial, a year later, and requested the year's delay.
7. How is Jesus portrayed in the miracle of the stilling of the storm?
8. Jesus is portrayed as having power over nature, as he calms the storm with a word. His ability to sleep through the storm is also presented as a testament to his faith, which contrasts with the disciples' fear.
9. Why does Matthew include two demoniacs instead of one?
10. It is possible Matthew did this to emphasize the extent of Jesus' power by increasing the number of healings recorded. It might also be compensation for omitting other stories from the same account.
11. Why does the healing of the paralytic in chapter 9, verses 1-8, highlight Jesus' authority to forgive sins?
12. Jesus' pronouncement of forgiveness before the physical healing was deemed blasphemous by religious authorities, but by demonstrating his power to heal, Jesus also proves his authority to forgive sins, a divine right.

## Essay Questions

1. Analyze the significance of the various types of healings performed by Jesus in Matthew 8-9, and discuss how they contribute to Matthew's overall presentation of Jesus' identity and mission.
2. Compare and contrast the roles of faith in the different healing accounts in Matthew 8-9. How does Matthew demonstrate the diverse ways in which faith is expressed and received by Jesus?
3. Explore the theme of discipleship in Matthew 8-9, focusing on Jesus' calls to potential followers and the demands he places on them. How does Matthew present the radical nature of following Jesus in this section of the Gospel?

4. Discuss the recurring theme of Jesus' authority in Matthew 8-9. How is this authority demonstrated, and what are the implications for understanding Jesus' divine nature and mission?
5. Examine the way that Matthew highlights the conflict between Jesus and the religious authorities in Matthew 8-9. How do their opposing views on key issues like purity, sin, and the kingdom shape Matthew's narrative?

## Glossary of Key Terms

**Centurion:** A Roman military officer in command of a century of soldiers (about 100 men); this particular centurion likely ethnically Assyrian.

**Gentile:** A person who is not Jewish; in the context of Matthew's Gospel, often referring to non-Jewish peoples who are to be included in the Kingdom of God.

**Kosher:** The term for food that adheres to Jewish dietary laws, which prohibit certain foods and practices.

**Am haretz:** A Hebrew term for "people of the land", referring to common people who were not considered learned in religious matters; they were often viewed as "sinners" by the Pharisees because they did not follow the letter of the law.

**Blaspheme:** In the New Testament, generally means to speak against or insult God, or to claim a power that only God possesses.

**Decapolis:** A region of ten largely Gentile cities located east of the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee; most of these cities followed Greek culture, but they were under Roman rule.

**Shiva:** The Jewish tradition of sitting and mourning for seven days after the death of a close family member.

**Ossuary:** A box or container for holding the bones of a deceased person, especially in a secondary burial.

**Septuagint:** The Greek translation of the Old Testament used by many Jews and early Christians.

**Synagogue:** A Jewish place of worship and community gathering.



## 5. FAQs on Keener, Matthew, Session 10, Matthew 8-9, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

### FAQ: Key Themes and Ideas in Matthew 8-9

1. **How does the story of the Roman centurion in Matthew 8:5-13 highlight the inclusion of Gentiles in God's kingdom?**
2. The centurion, a Roman (likely ethnically Assyrian), was an exception within a Jewish context where Romans were not highly regarded. His faith, expressed by his understanding of Jesus' authority to heal from a distance, demonstrates that God's grace is not limited to the Jewish people. This prefigures the broader Gentile mission and the idea that people from all backgrounds can have faith in Jesus. The story emphasizes that exceptions can become the rule, showing that transformation is possible for groups and people that society may be prejudiced against.
3. **Why does Jesus sometimes seem to present obstacles to faith, as seen in his interaction with the centurion and in Matthew 15:27?**
4. Jesus sometimes initially presents obstacles to faith, like questioning if he should visit the centurion or seeming to dismiss the Canaanite woman. This is not intended to reject those seeking help, but rather to test and affirm the depth of their faith. By creating a hurdle, Jesus highlights and validates the extraordinary nature of their belief when it persists. The obstacles are often designed to reveal the faith of those who might be viewed as outside the traditional boundaries of God's favor. In the case of the centurion, the question challenges the man to express his belief in Jesus' authority to heal from a distance, rather than a physical presence.

5. **How does Jesus' healing ministry in Matthew 8 and 9 demonstrate his authority and the nature of his mission?**
6. Jesus' healing ministry is portrayed as demonstrating his authority over sickness, demons, and even nature itself. His methods are often simple: a word, a touch, or just his presence, contrasting with the magical rituals and complex practices of other healers. These acts of healing are not merely compassionate acts, but also signs of the kingdom of God breaking into the world. Jesus demonstrates his authority by going to those who are marginalized, ill and those considered outside the religious and social norms, thus illustrating his mission to minister to the broken and demonstrate God's heart for all.
7. **What is the significance of Jesus' statement in Matthew 8:10 about the centurion's faith being greater than the faith of his own people?**
8. This statement reveals that faith is not tied to ethnic or religious background. It suggests that those who are close to the truth can sometimes take it for granted, while those who are further away can possess deeper and more vibrant faith. The centurion, a Gentile, exemplifies this principle by showing remarkable trust in Jesus' authority. This foreshadows the idea that many from outside the established religious community will be included in God's kingdom, while some within may miss it due to a lack of faith.
9. **How does Matthew emphasize the cost and sacrifice of following Jesus in the context of Matthew 8 and 9?**
10. The passages highlight that following Jesus is not without sacrifice. Jesus himself had nowhere to lay his head, showcasing a commitment that demands a willingness to forsake comfort and security. Discipleship may require prioritizing Jesus above family, social obligations, and even personal safety. Jesus' ministry leads him away from the popular, powerful and influential, towards the marginalized and broken. He also bears the cost of identifying with and absorbing people's uncleanness. These passages suggest that true discipleship involves counting the cost and committing fully to Jesus, a cost that Jesus himself endured to establish this ministry.

**11. Why does Jesus prioritize the forgiveness of sins over physical healing in the story of the paralytic in Matthew 9:1-8?**

12. While Jesus values both physical and spiritual well-being, the priority of forgiveness in this narrative suggests that it is a deeper, more essential need. The paralytic's physical ailment becomes a canvas upon which Jesus demonstrates his power to forgive sins—a power that his detractors immediately challenge, believing such authority was reserved for God. Jesus first addresses the man's spiritual ailment which is a greater and more urgent need. This illustrates that forgiveness is a foundational element of salvation and reconciliation with God. By doing this Jesus shows that the core issue is not physical but spiritual, emphasizing that he has come not just to heal bodies, but to save souls.

**13. What was the significance of Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners in Matthew 9:9-13, and how did the Pharisees react?**

14. In the culture of the time, sharing a meal was a significant act that implied social acceptance, even a covenant relationship. Jesus' willingness to eat with tax collectors and sinners was a radical act that defied social and religious norms. Tax collectors were viewed as traitors and the Pharisees criticized Jesus, believing that such an action showed approval of their sinful lifestyles. Jesus responds by saying that he had come to call sinners, not the righteous, using the imagery of a physician for those who are ill. His actions highlighted the importance of compassion and his mission of restoration, rather than condemnation or social exclusion, showcasing his heart for the broken. He prioritizes mercy over ritual sacrifice, challenging the rigid adherence of the law that the Pharisees held to.

**15. How do the stories of the woman with the flow of blood and Jairus's daughter (Matthew 9:18-26) demonstrate different aspects of faith and Jesus' power?**

16. These two stories, placed together, contrast the desperate faith of a socially ostracized woman and the urgent faith of a powerful, respected member of society. The woman with the flow of blood acts out of desperation and trusts in Jesus' power to heal her with a touch. Jairus approaches Jesus with an urgent plea to save his daughter from death. Jesus responds compassionately to both. He highlights that faith comes in many forms, and those with power and social standing are as in need of Jesus' healing as those considered less worthy. The stories show Jesus' willingness to cross social boundaries to bring healing and life to all who come to him with faith, and further establishes that he has power over both sickness and death.