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THE KING DEMONSTRATES HIS POWER AND IS REJECTED

STUDIES IN MATTHEW 8 BY LEAVELL

Jesus did not come to be a political King. He was interested in morals and not politics. The Caesars had nothing to fear from Him. He was not their rival. This is what the Jews wanted Him to be, but He refused to be the kind of King they wanted. As a King he had royal authority and power but He would not exercise it in the way they wished. In this chapter we see Him demonstrating power and then imparting this power to His disciples. We also see Him doubted by John the Baptist, and blasphemed by Pharaoh.

THE KING EXERCISING AUTHORITY AND POWER

Over sickness.

"When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them." Matthew 8:1-4.

In absence.

"And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,

And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour." Matthew 8:5-13.

By touch.

"And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them. When the even was

come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick." Matthew 8:14-16.

Over personal lives.

"Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side. And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead." Matthew 8:18-22.

Over elements of nature.

"And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!" Matthew 8:23-27.

Over demons.

"And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time? And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding. So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go, And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters." Matthew 8:28-32.

Over sin.

"And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city. And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house. But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men." Matthew 9:1-8.

Over social customs.

"And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that

are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Matthew 9:10-13.

Over religious observances.

"Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, 'Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?' These good men came with an honest question, seeking light. And Jesus said unto them, 'Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast. No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.'" Matthew 9:14-17. It was His way of saying that His kingdom belongeth to the new covenant and that the old covenant would pass away. The old covenant with its types and shadows would serve its day and vanish.

Over death.

"While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples." Matthew 9:18-19. "And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise, He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land." Matthew 9:18-23.

THE KING IMPARTING AUTHORITY AND POWER TO THE TWELVE

In Matthew 10:1-42 we have the selecting, and training of the twelve disciples. Like a President picking his cabinet, Jesus selects workers to be set apart and trained for carrying on His work after He is gone. The twelve are called apostles because He is sending them out.

"And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease." Matthew 10:1.

"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat. And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city. Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh

in you. And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come. The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household? Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. He that receiveth you receiveth me, and

he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." Matthew 10:5-42.

The training of the twelve was a very important and difficult part of Jesus earthly ministry. His disciples were slow to learn that he had come into the world to die as the Lamb of God, to atone for sins of men and then to rise from the dead. This was to be their message after He went back to heaven. Training them for such a task was not easy. It was training them for work entirely different from what they thought they were being trained to do. They began to follow him as politicians with no thought of becoming preachers of His death and resurrection for the salvation of sinners. They were expecting Him as the Messiah to set up a political world empire in which they would be administrators. They expected Him to destroy their enemies and bring peace to the world in their day. All this is seen in the way they disputed about who would be the greatest in the kingdom. And it explains why they forsook him when He was led to the cross to be crucified.

Now his way of changing their minds about His mission and their work was to present himself to them in the fullness of divine glory, so that no matter how differently he talked and acted from what they expected, they would still believe Him to be the Messiah or Christ. That was one purpose of His miracles and of the transfiguration. They were tested by many things and when some went back and walked no more with Him, "Then said Jesus to the twelve, 'Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him,

Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.'" John 6:67-69.

Near the end of His ministry Jesus spake to them in parables or veiled sayings that kept them in a state of bewilderment. If he had told them plainly at the first that he was going to be crucified, instead of erecting a throne, they would not have followed him. "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." Matthew 16:21-22. It was not until after the resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit that Christ's own disciples thought the kingdom was to be a spiritual kingdom into which sinners would be brought through faith in Him.

THE KING DOUBTED, BLASPHEMED AND REJECTED.

John the Baptist doubts.

"Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." Matthew 11:2-5.

Jesus does not let John's doubts lower His estimate of him. "And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John." Matthew 11:7. "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." Matthew 11:11. Broadus

thought this comparison was not in reference to personal character, but to position and understanding in the kingdom. He compared John to the landing in between two flights of stairs. He was above those who had preceded him and below those who should live to see further into the kingdom and understand it better.

THE PHARISEES ACCUSE JESUS OF BREAKING THE LAW OF THE SABBATH

"At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day." Matthew 12:1-2. In reply to their criticism, Jesus makes four arguments:

1. He appeals to history, to what David did when he was hungry. *"But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?"* Matthew 12:4-5. According to this argument necessity justifies departure from the strictness of the law about things consecrated. Jesus taught that works of necessity may be done on the Sabbath.

2. His second argument is drawn from the law itself. On the Sabbath day the priests offered sacrifices and this required the work of slaying animals and other acts prohibited on the sabbath and yet they were considered blameless. Jesus taught that works of religious nature may be done on the sabbath. *"Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?"* Matthew 12:5.

3. The third argument is taken from Hosea 6:6. *"I will have mercy, and not sacrifice."* Jesus said if ye had understood this, you would not have condemned my disciples. Jesus taught that acts of mercy may be done on the sabbath. *"And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore is it lawful to do well on the sabbath days. Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other."* Matthew 12:10-13.

4. His fourth argument is taken from the fact of His sovereignty. *"For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day."* Matthew 12:8. As Lord of the sabbath Jesus says, The sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath. Now all this in no sense justifies the way the sabbath is being disregarded today. Let Christians see that nothing but works of necessity, such as feeding stock, preparing meals; works of mercy, such as ministering to the sick and injured men and animals; works of religion, such as preaching, teaching are done.