

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

May 5, 2019

“Faith or Unbelief,” Part 2

9:00 ~ Fellowship.

10:00 ~ Service with the King’s Kid’s & Communion for all who are Christians

NEWS

Mother’s Day, next Sunday

VBS June 17th to the 21st

Church Camp August 23rd to the 25th

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776

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1) Who do you think Jesus is? Who is the Father? The Holy Spirit? Who do you say God is?

2) How well does your image of Him match the Biblical depiction?

3) What do you intend to do about that?

The fundamental question is will you accept Jesus for Who He is and what He demands, or is it all too much?

Matthew 11:5&6, John 6:60&61

Do not _____ over the “Rock of Offense” Isaiah 8:14,
Romans 9:33, I Peter 2:8

MATTHEW 9:27-31 ~ ²⁷As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!” ²⁸When He entered the house, the blind

men came up to Him, and Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” They said to Him, “Yes, Lord.” ²⁹Then He touched their eyes, saying, “It shall be done to you according to your faith.” ³⁰And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them: “See that no one knows about this!” ³¹But they went out and spread the news about Him throughout all that land.

One purpose is to provide _____ for Matthew 11:5, where Jesus combined several Messianic passages, primarily from Isaiah 26, 29, 35, 42 and 61.

God’s Messiah will have _____ on them holistically.

Physical issues also carry a _____ meaning. Blindness stands for _____ blindness, etc.

They don’t shout out heal us, they ask for “_____.” They publicly address Jesus, not as Rabbi, but by the Messianic title, “_____.”

Why did Jesus _____ these two blind men and wait to address them until they all away from the public?

Why did Jesus asked them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?”

What was clarified is that Jesus can heal physically, because He is the promised
 _____ Who will make everything right.

Why did Jesus say, "It shall be done to you according to your faith."

It has nothing to do with proportion. It's not about their quantity of faith or even their _____ of faith, it's about the _____ of their faith.

Why did, Jesus sternly warn them, "See that no one knows about this!"

The very next words are, "But they went out and spread the news about Him throughout all that land." What?

First, why did Jesus ignore them outside? The men were publicly declaring Him to be the long-awaited _____. Any action by Jesus then, would have Him confirming or denying the _____.

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

Second, why, before Jesus healed them in the house, did He first clarify their faith? It was about confirming their belief that Jesus could and would heal them because He was the _____.

Third, what did He mean by "This"? Not the miraculous restoration of their eyesight, but that they knew He was the _____. It is technically called the Messianic Secret.

The Greek word translated as "But," is δέ (dě).

Because of their _____, the role of Messiah came with a lot of baggage.

Matthew 16:20, Mark 8:30, Matthew 17:9, Mark 9:9, Luke 9:21, Mark 3:11&12, Luke 4:41

MATTHEW 9:32-34 ~ ³²As they were going out, a mute, demon-possessed man was brought to Him. ³³After the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel." ³⁴But the Pharisees were saying, "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons."

The word is κωφός (kō-fōs). The normal meaning is a deaf-mute. Jesus cast out the demon and the man was restored. The people "Were amazed" by the _____.

Check all that apply – detach and place in the offering or the prayer box

_____ I want to talk with the pastor about _____

_____ I want prayer for _____

_____ I want to volunteer to _____

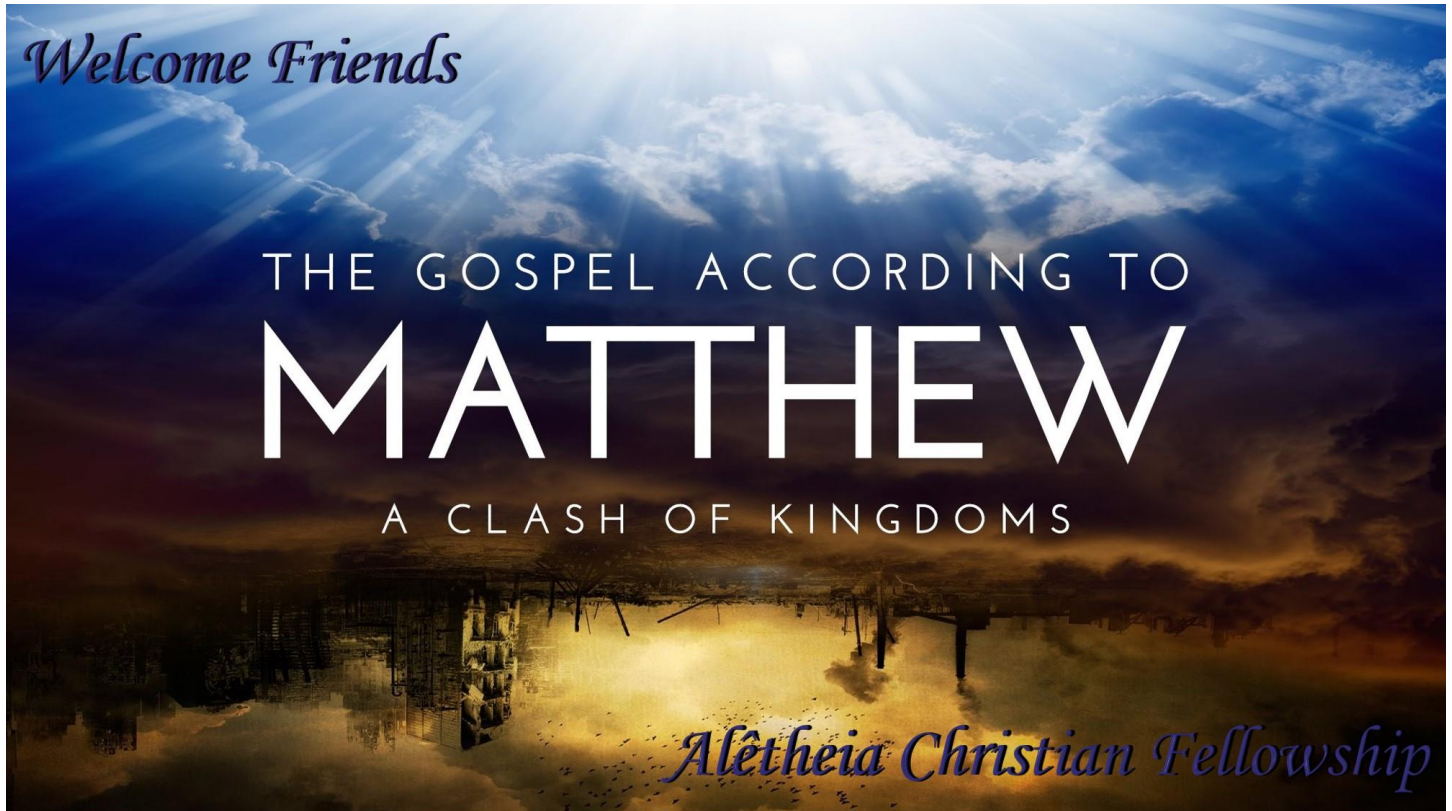
_____ I want more information about _____

_____ Other _____

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Alêtheia ~ Matthew 9d ~ 050519



We are in the middle of the third and final set of three miracles that show us Who Jesus is and specifically how people react to Him.

Along with seeing the power and authority of Jesus over Satan, sickness and death, we are also coming to understand Him better.



We've seen Him be incredibly compassionate, kind, gentle and caring, and we've seen Him be remarkably recalcitrant, blunt, intractable and demanding.

We've seen Him make radical demands on His own authority and we've seen that following Him is an all or nothing proposition.

The fundamental question is will you accept Jesus for Who He is and what He demands, or is it all too much?

As I said last week, most people don't want to reject Jesus out-of-hand, so they recreate a Jesus that better fits their proclivities, idiosyncrasies and comfort zone.

Even people who loathe Christianity, usually accept a version of Jesus acceptable to them. Jesus was a noble idea of love. Jesus was a man Who was kind and gentle like the Dalai Lama. Jesus was wise like the Buddha. Jesus was a prophet like Mohamed.

Any such Jesus is a false Jesus. We have also seen that Jesus will accept such a person with their imperfect faith and their imperfect theology, if they sincerely seek Him for Who He truly is. Even then, we've seen that Jesus immediately begins to correct their faith and their theology.

Christianity is a process where we should be ever learning better Who He is and properly aligning our faith and theology accordingly. No one ever became a Christian after first learning everything there was to know, and no Christian should ever be content with their present understanding of Christ however advanced it might be.

Now, for all people, Christian and non-Christian alike, as you know Jesus more accurately, more fully, will it engender in you, greater faith, or a bit more unbelief?

Jesus will tweak you - will you allow the tweak to mold you, or will you chafe against it? Jesus said, 6NASB“Blessed is he who does not take offense at Me” (Matthew 11:5&6). In John chapter 6, Jesus told them they must eat His body and drink His blood. Verses 60&61 say, 60NASBTherefore many of His disciples, when they heard this said, “This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?” 61But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, “Does this cause you to stumble?”

My friends, do not stumble over the “Rock of Offense” (Isaiah 8:14, Romans 9:33, I Peter 2:8). No matter what happens, follow Jesus.



Matthew 9:27-31 ~ 27As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!” 28When He entered the house, the blind men came up to Him, and Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” They said to Him, “Yes, Lord.” 29Then He touched their eyes, saying, “It shall be done to you according to your faith.” 30And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them: “See that no one knows about this!” 31But they went out and spread the news about Him throughout all that land.

Before we delve into the particulars of the passage, I want us to be aware of a couple of less obvious things.

First, as I've alluded to before, one of the purposes for this narrative is to provide confirmation of what Jesus will say about His Own ministry in chapter 11. Second, while this narrative relates true historical events, there is also a deeper spiritual meaning.

So, to the first point, the additional purpose, we'll see that in chapter 11, Jesus will describe His ministry by saying, ⁵NASBthe blind receive 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 11:5).

Those are not just phrases that characterized His activity - those are Old Testament quotations. Jesus combined several Messianic passages, primarily from Isaiah 26, 29, 35, 42 and 61. The prophetic theme woven throughout, is that God Himself will Save His people and that He will do so by sending His Anointed One Who will "Have mercy" on them.

As a reminder the Anointed One in Hebrew gives us Messiah and in Greek it gives us Christ - all three mean the same thing and Biblically, that One was prophesied in the Old Testament to be the Son of David, the Son of Man, the Son of God.

Because of His mercy, the people will not only be Saved eternally, they will be healed presently. The human ills mentioned will be remedied. God's Messiah will have mercy on the people holistically - physically, emotionally and spiritually - presently and eternally.

The second point is that the physical issue also carries a spiritual meaning. Blindness stands for spiritual blindness. Lepers healed points to the spiritually unclean, being made clean. The physically dead being brought back to life foreshadows the spiritually dead being eternally saved, etc.

So, the two blind men, in addition to being two dudes who could not physically see, also stand for the spiritual blindness of mankind. Without a direct intervention by God, we are all stumbling around in the dark - even the Children of Israel could not see over their own self-serving preconceived and strongly-held ideas.



The two guys followed Jesus and kept crying out publicly, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!” Their actions first show that they had the same kind of faith we’ve seen from others. A belief that Jesus was special and that He could perform all kinds of miracles. So they believed that He could give them their sight, but far more than that, these guys demonstrate something else, well beyond what others exhibited.

In typical ironic fashion, God has the physically seeing, spiritually blind and the physically blind, spiritually seeing. The blind men, who could not physically see anything, received an insight that made their vision

better than all the miracle-seeking sighted people we've met thus far.

They don't shout out heal us, give us our eyesight, let us see, please. They Ask for "Mercy." "Have mercy on us." It is, of course, an appeal based upon their perception that Jesus is the Anointed One. Mercy from Him will mean physical sight, but so much more!

To confirm, they boldly, loudly, publicly address Jesus, not as Teacher, Master, Lord, Kind Sir, but by the Messianic title, "Son of David."

What did Jesus do with this two-fold, very public pronouncement about His true identity? He ignored them entirely and kept walking. Only once they were behind closed doors did Jesus interact with them. Why?

They want mercy. What's the problem? Jesus just saved a woman physically, emotionally and spiritually in the most public way He could. What's more merciful than that?

They want forgiveness. What's the problem? Earlier Jesus had publicly declared a paralytic man's sin

account with Almighty God, fully pardoned, zeroed out. What's more forgiving than that?

They want physical healing. What's the problem? Jesus just raised a girl from the dead. What's more healing than that?

Why did Jesus ignore these two blind men and wait to address them until they all away from the public? Jesus refused to engage with the men until they had some privacy.

Once in the home complex and away from the people, Jesus asked the two dudes, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?"

Jesus didn't ask because He wasn't sure if they had enough faith. He didn't ask because He was trying to grow their faith. He didn't ask so they would realize they truly believed. He didn't ask because He was trying to make the healing more dramatic.

Jesus asked them that question, to theologically clarify that their faith was in Him as the "Son of David," Who would have "Mercy" on them.

Their faith was not in tassels, or some magical power Jesus had access to, or even in a supernatural entity working through Jesus. Their faith was in Him as the Anointed Messiah sent by the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to save them fully.

What is clarified is that Jesus can heal them physically, because He is the promised Savior Who will make everything right.

To Jesus' question they said, "Yes, Lord."

Of course, Jesus healed them. Whatever it was that had caused their physical blindness was made whole, correct and healthy. Therefore, they had no choice, but to physically see - they could not, not see. Their physical vision was now as clear as their spiritual vision.

Notice the particulars of the healing. As He touched their eyes, Jesus said, "It shall be done to you according to your faith."

You might think that Jesus said that to a lot of the people He healed. No, not exactly. Jesus often talked about how a person's faith brought them into an

encounter with Him and He often correlated faith with His response to them.

He told the Centurion that things would be done as He had believed they would. He told many people that their faith made them well, or saved them.

Jesus also talked about the natural hinderance created by a lack of faith.

This is different. There's a nuance worth noticing here. "It shall be done to you according to your faith." The key difference is "According to." It has nothing to do with proportion. Let's get that straight right away. It isn't, your request will be granted in proportion to the quantity of faith you have. It's not your faith is an 8 out of 10 and so your eyesight will be 8 out of 10 as well. You'll see great, but need readers for the up-close stuff.

Not only is it not about the quantity of their faith, it isn't about the quality either. It has everything to do with what they believe - the object of their faith - the person in whom they trust.

Specifically, they said they believed Jesus could be tangibly merciful to them, because they believed that He is the promised Christ.

I'm certain they didn't fully understand what that meant - their faith and theology were imperfect, but they believed that the Messiah, God promised through His prophets, had arrived, and they knew that part of His prophesied role was to tangibly have mercy on the people.

They believed that He was the Messiah and accordingly they believed He could and would heal them and accordingly, He did.

Immediately, they could see and then, 'Jesus sternly warned them: "See that no one knows about this!"' Sternly is an intense word for intense feelings. It describes a horse snorting aggressively ἐμβριμάομαι. It can mean to be very angry or deeply troubled. Here, it means that Jesus was serious - He told them in no uncertain terms that they were to keep silent about "This."

Here's something to ponder; what did Jesus mean by "This"?

The very next words are, “But they went out and spread the news about Him throughout all that land.”

What? These guys who owe Jesus everything, and had such a profound understanding of His true nature, turned right around and betrayed His very severe, serious and solemn warning?

It's time to bring some thoughts together. Remember our somewhat unanswered question? Why did Jesus ignore the two men until they got inside away from the people? Remember a second somewhat unanswered question? Why did Jesus take the time to theologically clarify their faith as being in the “Son of David”? And now, this third somewhat unanswered question, what did Jesus mean by “This”?

First, why did Jesus ignore them outside? The men were publicly declaring Him to be the long-awaited Messiah. You have to realize that as they did, all the people were looking to see what Jesus would do. Any word or action on His part, other than ignoring them, would have served as proof that He either accepted the title, or rejected it. Jesus did neither.

Second, why, before Jesus healed them in the house, did He first clarify their faith. As we've already seen, it wasn't about finding out if they had faith - they obviously did. It wasn't about strengthening, improving, or stretching their faith - their physical healing would do that. This was about confirming their belief that Jesus could and would heal them because He was the merciful Savior.

The "This," that Jesus warned them to keep to themselves was not the miraculous restoration of their eyesight, it was the fact that they knew He was the Christ. It is technically called the Messianic Secret.

How ridiculous to think that two blind dude who could now see perfectly could hide that fact from all the people? How ridiculous to think that the people wouldn't figure out that it was Jesus who healed them. It is utter nonsense to tell them not to let anyone else know that they could see and that Jesus, Who was publicly casting out demons, healing all kinds of maladies and raising people from the dead wasn't the cause.

Jesus was never ridiculous, and nonsense was never His demand. He wasn't talking about their healing - He

was healing people left and right. He was talking about how, in their case, because of their insight, their physical healing proved that He was indeed the Christ.

They went out and told everyone that Jesus had healed them and in so doing never violated His wishes.

What they did not tell people is the thing Jesus told them not to tell... The thing that He Himself had admitted to them by His actions, that He was merciful, because He was the Messiah.

You may be hung up on the transition word “But,” that starts verse 31. Jesus told them this, “But,” they did that. The translation is based on the assumption that they did precisely what Jesus sternly warned them not to do, rather than realizing that they actually obeyed Him.

We can talk about it in more detail in Sunday school. but just let me say that Greek is not English. It isn't like it's the same thing just with different sounding words. Bible translation isn't plug and play. Just find the English word that corresponds to the Greek word and plug it in. The languages are very different in the way they work to communicate.

The Greek word translated as “But,” is δέ (dě). It does not mean “But.” It is a connective conjunction that simply ties things together in a rather weak association. It can be correctly translated as; and, but, so, even, then, now, also, on the one hand, on the other hand, at the same time, rather, instead, or it can oftentimes be left untranslated in English. How do you know how to translate? It is by context.

Traditionally, people assumed the two formerly blind men disobeyed Jesus and if that’s the correct context, translating as δέ as “But,” is best.

The assumption has been that these guys disregarded Jesus stern demand. I don’t think they did. I think news about the miracle was inevitable, news about a verification of Jesus as Messiah, was not.

The net effect was that they “Spread the news about Him throughout all that land” - the news that He had given them their sight, not that He had confirmed that He was the Christ.

What’s the difference? Why wouldn’t Jesus just admit Who He was? He wanted people to come to that

conclusion on their own, for the right reasons and with the right attitude towards Him.

Once He did or said anything that would overtly confirm that He was the Messiah, the people would expect Him to be and to do, what they expected the Messiah to be and to do.



Because of their expectations, the role of Messiah, came with a lot of baggage.

They expected a complete restoration of good health for all, wealth for all, pure happiness for all and a total

removal of all evil things and vile people from their lives
- see the prosperity Gospel is not new.

Along with the good life of Heaven on earth, it was payback time. Crush the vile Roman oppressors. eradicate the Greek culture. Destroy former enemies like the Egyptians, Arabs, Persians, Syrians, Turks and all who would not willingly submit to Jewish supremacy.

The expectation the Jews had for the Messiah was seared into the nation's collective consciousness. It was as much an old wineskin as any other part of Judaism as practiced then. There was no way to accept the Messiah mantle and not be swept up in a wave of misunderstanding and an open revolution.

It would be a violent revolution where Jesus would either lead, or be killed for not leading. It was not yet His time.

The thing that He repeatedly warned people not to divulge was the Messianic secret.

When you know what you're looking for it is easy to spot. Jesus asked the disciples who they thought He was. After Peter's correct answer Matthew 16:20 and

Mark 8:30 record, 20NASB Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ.

Later, after Jesus was Transfigured and God Himself confirmed His identity, Matthew 17:9, Mark 9:9 and Luke 9:21 all record that 9bNASB Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead."

Another example, Mark 3:11&12, 11NASB Whenever the unclean spirits saw Him, they would fall down before Him and shout, "You are the Son of God!" 12 And He earnestly warned them not to tell who He was. or Luke 4:41, 41NASB Demons also were coming out of many, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But rebuking them, He would not allow them to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ.

The secret wasn't that Jesus was performing exorcisms and miracles - that could have never been kept secret. The secret was not to promote Jesus as accepting the mantle of the Messiah that the people expected.



Matthew 9:32-34 ~ 32As they were going out, a mute, demon-possessed man was brought to Him. 33After the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed, and were saying, “Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.” 34But the Pharisees were saying, “He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons.”

The third miracle episode of the three sets of miracle episodes. The blind can see, the lame, or paralytic walk, the lepers are cleansed, the dead are raised up and the deaf can hear. This man is mute and while it is his ability to speak that is highlighted, the word is κωφός (kō-fös). The normal meaning is a deaf-mute.

Typically, a person unable to speak intelligibly, because they cannot hear - they are deaf.

This man was most likely deaf and certainly mute, as well as demon-possessed. While it could be two separate issues, most likely the demon is causing the man's inability to hear and speak.

The obvious spiritual meaning of the man's condition is that the realm of evil prevents people from hearing the Truth and from praising God with their voice.

Jesus cast out the demon and the man was restored. The people "Were amazed" by the miracle. Notice that they were focused on the change, not so much on Jesus as anything more than a mighty worker of miraculous results.

There's very little indication that they were connecting the exorcism and healing with His role as the Messiah. Of course, they were amazed, and they were probably speculating about who Jesus was and what His ministry meant, but there was no consensus.

The Jewish leaders, for their part, derisively dismissed Jesus out-of-hand as a charlatan to be repudiated.

They were the most righteous Jews - Jesus wasn't one of them - and so it logically followed that He must be evil.

They concluded that, "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons."

In a few chapters we will come to another similar event and by then the people have generally associated Jesus with the Messiah. They're still not entirely sure, because He won't overtly accept that mantle, but they are thinking that direction.

Matthew 12:22-24, 22NASB Then a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute was brought to Jesus, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw. 23 All the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?" 24 But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons." (Luke 11:14&15).

The average Israelite was so spiritually dead, so blind, so deaf, so oppressed by the demonic power that they couldn't accept the Messiah as given.

There predetermined erroneous ideas about Who the Anointed One would be, and where He would come from, and how He would act, and what He would do, were so strong that Jesus could not reveal Himself fully.

What was worse - the most religious Israelites - the ones who should have known better - were even more unmovable in their error.

Not only could they not tolerate a Christ, not to their liking - they had the power to exterminate Him - or so they thought.



The question is where are you? Are you still dead in your sins? Jesus can raise you into the newness of life. Are you blind and deaf to the real Jesus? Are you substituting a self-made effigy in His place and worshipping that?

Are you so rocked by this demon-controlled world that you want Jesus to be a magic-man Who will fix all your troubles, instead of the Word of God made flesh Who is standing by to be your Lord and Savior?