

# Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

March 10, 2019

## “The Authority of Jesus”

9:00 ~ Fellowship.

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

### NEWS

<https://40daysforlife.com/local-campaigns/whitefish/>

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

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- 1) Why are there differences in the Biblical accounts of the same event?
- 2) What Theological point is made by sharing the three healings?
- 3) How do the three healings show Jesus' ministry to the marginalized?

**MATTHEW 8:5-13** ~ <sup>5</sup>NASB “And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, imploring Him, <sup>6</sup>and saying, “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented.” <sup>7</sup>Jesus said to him, “I will come and heal him.” <sup>8</sup>But the centurion said, “Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>9</sup>“For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, ‘Go!’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come!’ and he comes, and to my slave, ‘Do this!’ and he does it.” <sup>10</sup>Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those who were following, “Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel. <sup>11</sup>“I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; <sup>12</sup>but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” <sup>13</sup>And Jesus said to the centurion, “Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed.” And the servant was healed that very moment.”

The encounter is told quite differently in Luke's Gospel. I was going to ignore Luke's account because talking about it is a \_\_\_\_\_ from the point Matthew is trying to make.

**LUKE 7:1-10** ~ <sup>1</sup>NASB When Jesus had completed all His discourse in the hearing of the people, He went to Capernaum. <sup>2</sup>And a centurion's slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die. <sup>3</sup>When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders asking Him to come and save the life of his slave. <sup>4</sup>When they came to Jesus, they earnestly implored Him, saying, "He is worthy for You to grant this to him; <sup>5</sup>for he loves our nation and it was he who built us our synagogue." <sup>6</sup>Now Jesus started on His way with them; and when He was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not worthy for You to come under my roof; <sup>7</sup>for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>8</sup>"For I also am a man placed under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it." <sup>9</sup>Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following Him, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith." <sup>10</sup>When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.

- 1) Theological \_\_\_\_\_ drives the narrative
- 2) Storytelling always requires \_\_\_\_\_ of the details
- 3) The cultural \_\_\_\_\_ make a difference

The Centurion was a Gentile. He was wealthy and powerful, and he was also a good man. It is highly unlikely that he was a \_\_\_\_\_.

Herod Antipas' professional soldiers operated as a police force, border, immigration & customs officers, enforcers for the tax collectors, as well as a \_\_\_\_\_ protective force.

Before Jesus could enter, the Centurion, in a display of deep understanding, concern for Jesus and remarkable \_\_\_\_\_, urged Him to command the slave to be healed at a distance.

Jesus “Marveled” at the insight and the faith. The Centurion reasoned that as he had authority from Caesar, so Jesus had the authority from \_\_\_\_\_.

Jesus stopped and said, “I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.” You see Israel was expecting Jesus, but had no real \_\_\_\_\_.

They believed God would send someone, but they thought it would be so \_\_\_\_\_ that it wouldn’t require faith.

Jesus went on to say what He had already said in a variety of ways... There are only \_\_\_\_\_ possible positions in this life, and they will result in only \_\_\_\_\_ possible destinations afterward.

**MATTHEW 8:14&15** ~ <sup>14</sup>NASB When Jesus came into Peter’s home, He saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever. <sup>15</sup>He touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she got up and waited on Him.

*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!*

This pericope is told by Luke and Mark. From their differing accounts, owing to their different theological purposes, we know that it was the \_\_\_\_\_ and that they had come from the synagogue service.

Matthew dispenses with many of the \_\_\_\_\_ because he's pushing his most important point, that Jesus has the power and authority of God Himself, and so we should "Listen to Him!"

Jesus saw the need, and He touched her hand and as He did, she was not made well, she was fully \_\_\_\_\_ as if she had never been ill.

**MATTHEW 8:16** ~ <sup>16NASB</sup> When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill.

The primary point is to show His authority.

**MATTHEW 8:17** ~ <sup>17NASB</sup> This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "He Himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases."

This closing quotation confirms that Jesus is unique - He has authority and power. His will is identical to the Father's Will and when He wills it - it \_\_\_\_\_.

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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 \_\_\_\_\_

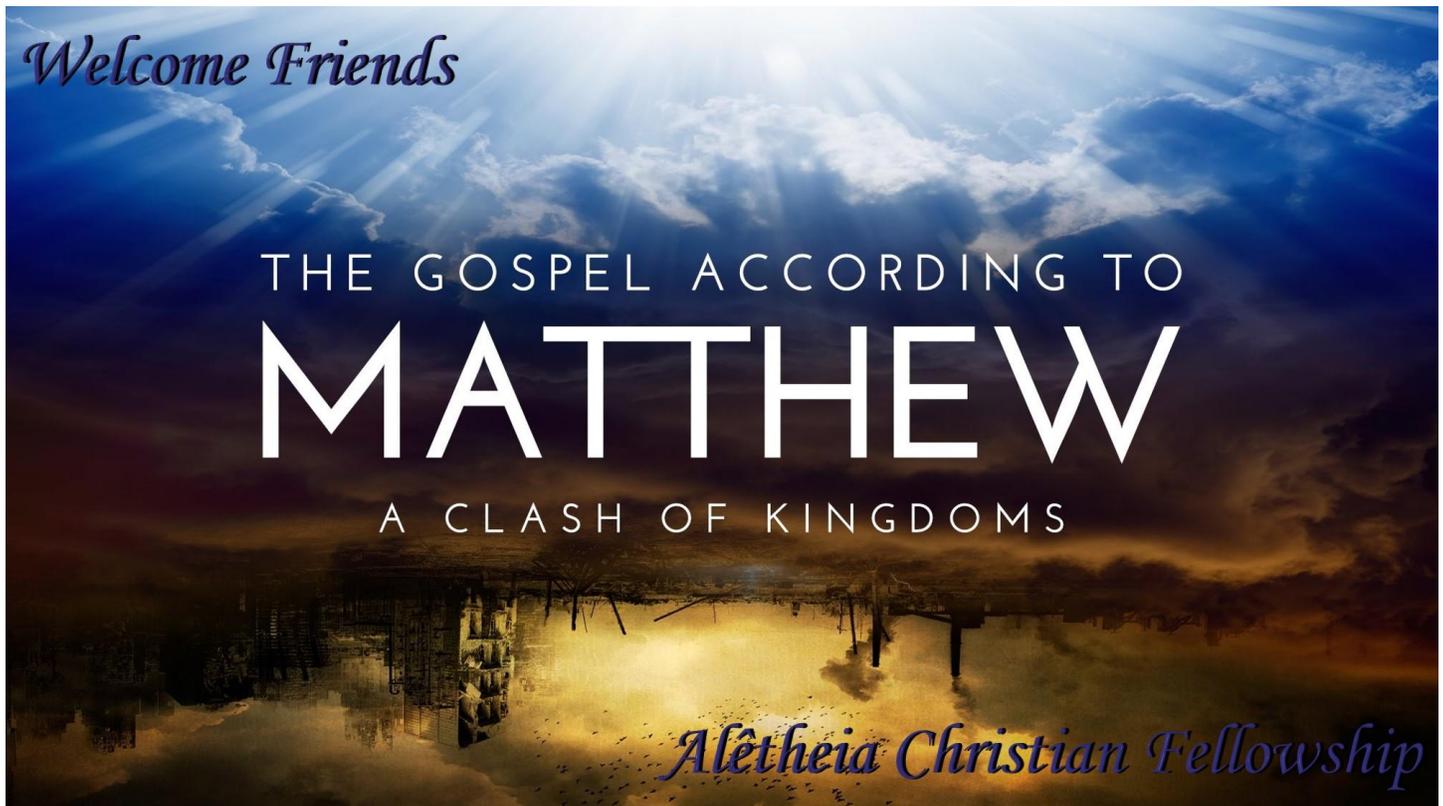
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Alêtheia ~ Matthew 8a ~ 031019

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Last week's sermon concluded with a supernatural healing that was a physical demonstration of the authority, and so the person, of Jesus.



The point was “Listen to Him.” “Listen to Him,” in the sense of submit yourself fully to Him as your one and only Lord and do what He says.

To listen without obeying is the evidence that proves one is a false disciple.

I have a close friend who is an amazingly wonderful person - stubborn, but wonderful. This person often asks for my advice, attentively listens to that advice and then promptly ignores it, doing whatever they were going to do beforehand.

For them, my advice has no meaningful effect on their life.

So many people claiming Jesus as their Lord eagerly listen to Him, but still do what they think is best.

It is more than subtle - it's insidious.

We don't just disobey - we hear only the parts we want to hear and fill in the gaps with our own desire - we rationalize why God won't really care that much...

Most of the time we don't even recognize our disobedience and the rest of the time we fall back on how much God loves us and will readily forgive us.

He will forgive us - in fact He already has - but that's only for those who are His in Christ Jesus. If a person doesn't do what Jesus says, are they that person?

Full and total dedication to obeying all of what Jesus Wills is the proof that you are His. Anything less than that is disobedience - it is "Lawlessness," and such people will be turned away... According, not to Scott, according to Jesus Himself.

What does Jesus Will? His Sermon can be boiled down to the principle of Agapê.

Unconditionally love God and because you do, unconditionally love others starting with those closest to you. Family, church, coworkers, associates, neighbors, and radiating out from there into the whole world.

“For God so unconditionally loved the world that He selflessly, sacrificially, gave up what was most precious to Him.”



Matthew 8:5-13 ~ 5NASB “And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, imploring Him,

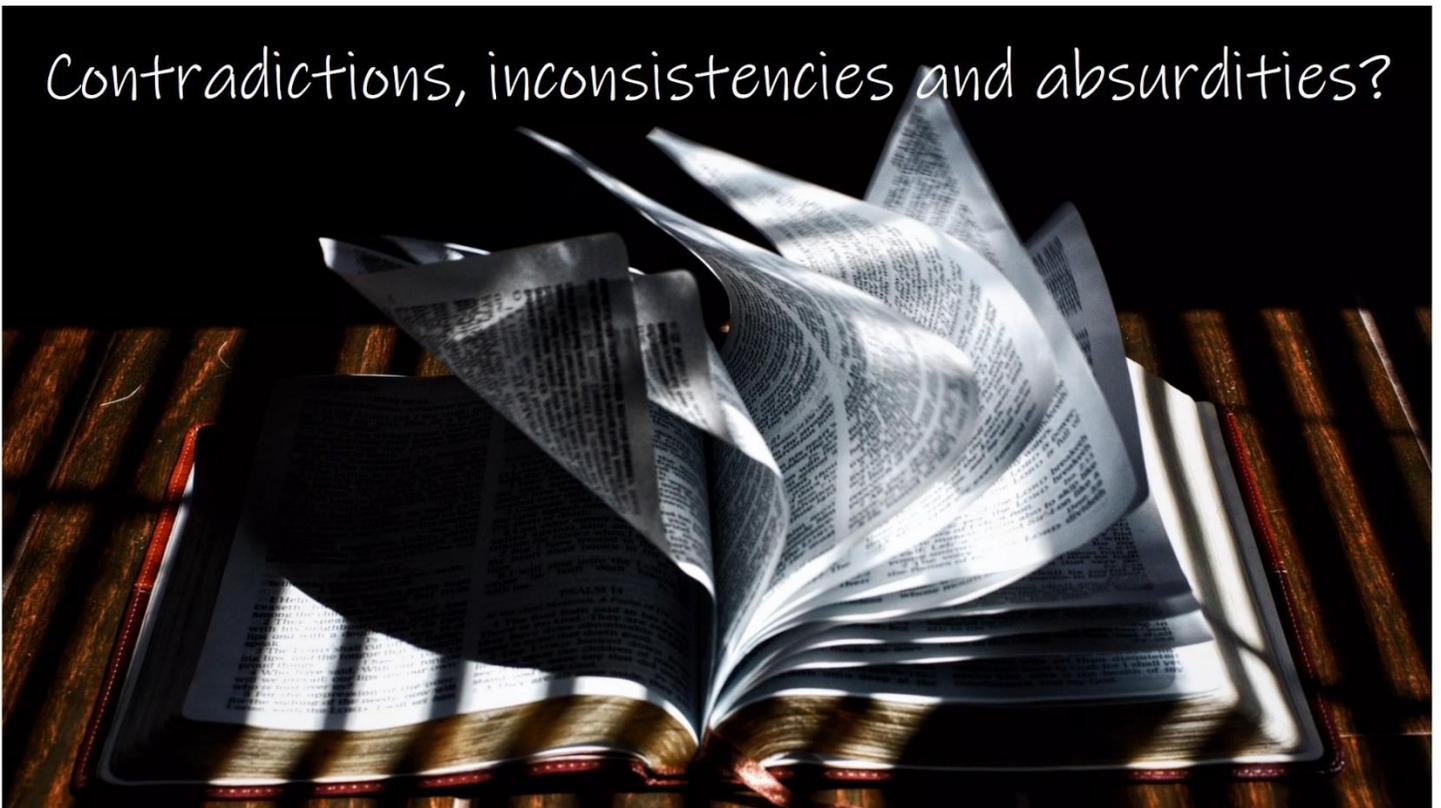
6and saying, “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented.” 7Jesus said to him, “I will come and heal him.” 8But the centurion said, “Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9“For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, ‘Go!’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come!’ and he comes, and to my slave, ‘Do this!’ and he does it.” 10Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those who were following, “Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel. 11“I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; 12but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” 13And Jesus said to the centurion, “Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed.” And the servant was healed that very moment.”

“Healed that very moment” without a touch, without any contact at all, simply with a Word.

The encounter is told quite differently in Luke’s Gospel. Even though it seems significant, I had decided not to bring that up in the sermon today. Well, our son Scotty

was visiting last week before his first operational deployment and as he periodically does, he asked me a question about our faith. Thursday, seemingly by coincidence - if you believe in the sort of thing - he asked me to explain why there are differences in Biblical accounts of the same event. Things that naysayers claim are proof of contradictions and error.

*Contradictions, inconsistencies and absurdities?*



I mentioned this pericope in Matthew and the very different telling in Luke. He said, “Yes, that’s one of the examples I was looking at.” If Scotty has a question, I’m confident others do as well.

Let's start with why I had decided not to bring it up today. I was going to ignore Luke's account because talking about it is a distraction from the point Matthew is trying to make.

And, my friends, therein lies the crux of the matter. Matthew and Luke use this same historical episode for different theological purposes and so, while they both relate the story truthfully, they each tell what's relevant to their point and disregard those details that distract from their purpose.

Remember, the Gospels are not biographies of Jesus' life. They are not intended to be detailed chronological histories of His ministry. What they are is theological works designed to encourage faith - whether initial faith, or strengthening existent faith,

When you 1) understand that the theological purpose drives the narrative and you 2) recognize that people who tell stories well, do so by judiciously editing their material - relating certain details and ignoring others and add to that 3) a basic understanding of how Middle Eastern people operated culturally... The whole thing becomes obvious.

A couple of years ago, I told Jerry K. a hunting story. My purpose in telling the story was to relate to him that I was 5 yards from a bear standing broadside, but didn't have an arrow nocked.

Later, Rob told him the same story and revealed details that I left out. Jerry thought I tried to deceive him. No, Rob and I had very different purposes in telling the story. I left out details that were irrelevant to my point and would distract from the drama of my point. Rob told details that I left out and ignored details I mentioned to make his point.

We do it every time we relate an event - we never give every detail. In fact, one of the characteristics of a bad storyteller is giving too many irrelevant details, no matter how true they are. We pick and choose how we share the story based upon our purpose in sharing it in the first place.

Luke was not an eye witness. By his own admission he acted like a diligent reporter. His personality and training make him more detail oriented. Where he places this pericope in his Gospel and how he tells it fits his purpose.

Matthew has a different point to make. Matthew has taken us through the Sermon on the Mount where the culmination was that Jesus was unique, He had authority and so everyone who wants to be saved must “Listen to Him,” in the sense of actually acting on His words. Obeying Jesus.

To further impress upon the audience the need and the correctness of obeying Jesus, Matthew shares three supernatural healing events and stresses the elements of those events that enhance his point.

Luke’s telling goes like this...

Luke 7:1-10 ~ 1NASB When Jesus had completed all His discourse in the hearing of the people, He went to Capernaum. 2And a centurion’s slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die. 3When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders asking Him to come and save the life of his slave. 4When they came to Jesus, they earnestly implored Him, saying, “He is worthy for You to grant this to him; 5for he loves our nation and it was he who built us our synagogue.” 6Now Jesus started on His way with them; and when He was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, “Lord, do not trouble Yourself

further, for I am not worthy for You to come under my roof; 7for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. 8“For I also am a man placed under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, ‘Go!’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come!’ and he comes, and to my slave, ‘Do this!’ and he does it.” 9Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following Him, “I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith.” 10When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.

Here’s a description of another historical event from a scholarly article: “The Battle of Actium was between Octavian and the combined forces of Mark Antony and Cleopatra in 31 BC. Octavian's victory enabled him to consolidate his power over the Roman Empire and be named Caesar Augustus.”

Octavian never fought in the battle - he was nowhere near the battle - he wasn't the hero, he didn't save the day, he wasn't the one who inspired the men or came up with the battle strategy. The Roman general Marcus Agrippina was in command, but every history you'll

read, talks about Octavian defeating Antony and Cleopatra to become Caesar Augustus.

It's the way we get to the point. It is correct to call it Octavian's victory even though he was far from the battle.

Matthew was completely uninterested in muddying his point by giving a bunch of details that change nothing for the point he was making.

The two delegations spoke on behalf of the Centurion, conveying his words and so in effect, he was talking to Jesus through those intermediaries. By ignoring the intermediaries Matthew can streamline the story and eliminate questions that divert one's attention from his thrust.

Who were the Jewish Elders? How many of the traditionally seven village Elders participated? We know it was more than one, but less than them all. What Synagogue did the Centurion build - was he the sole benefactor, or just a big donor? And on and on... You see?

Matthew wants us to see Jesus's Will as compassionate. He wants us to see Jesus reaching out to the marginalized members of society. He wants the focus of his narrative to be on Jesus as much as possible. Most of all, in this chapter, he is trying to dramatically show that all people need to obey Him. All the extra details of Luke's telling, get in the way - Matthew gets to the point.



The Centurion was a Gentile. He was probably the wealthiest guy around and definitely the most powerful person in the area. He was also a good man. Considerate and fair, a supporter of the local community and kind to the people.

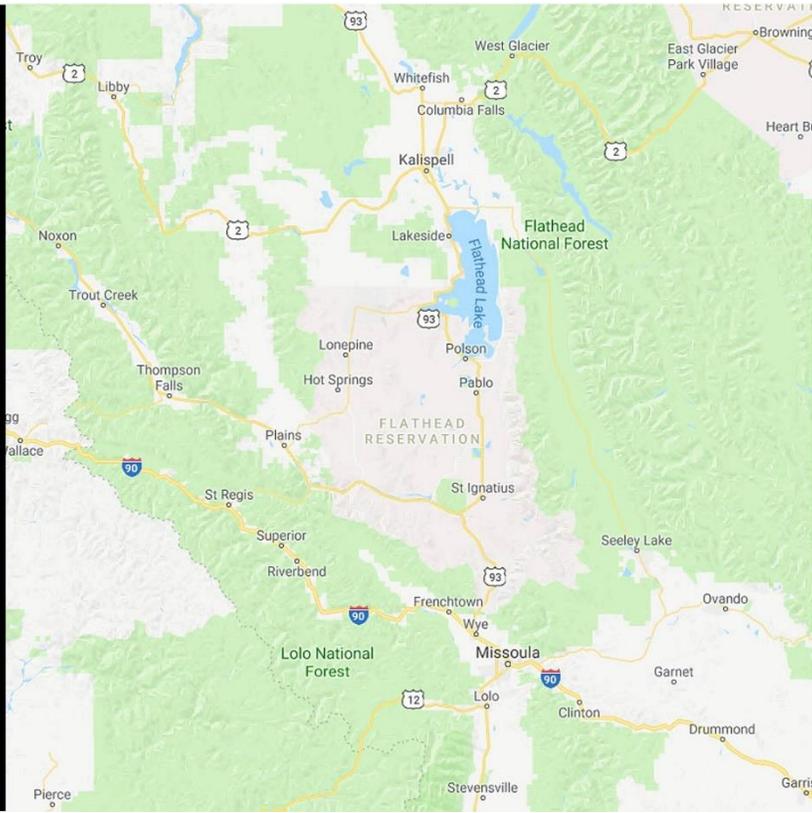
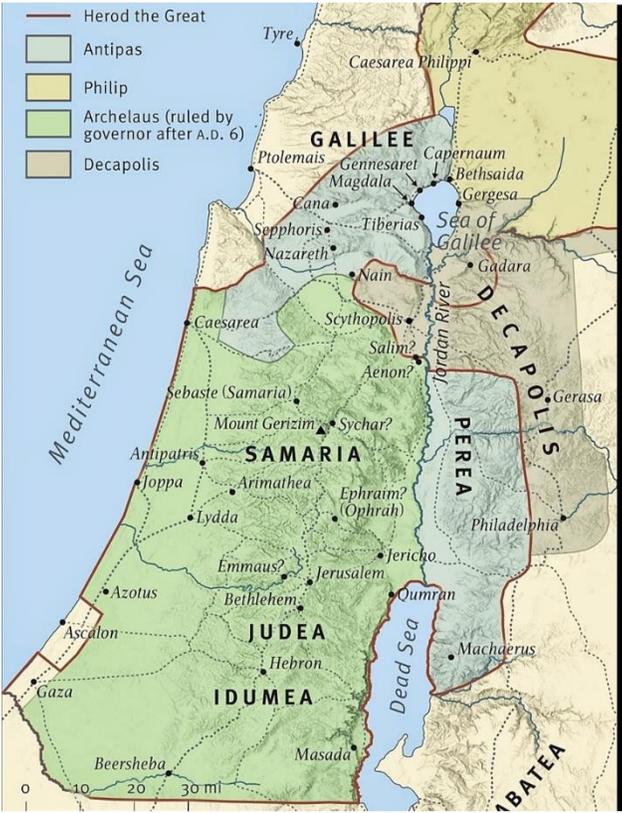
It is highly unlikely that he was a Roman Centurion. Herod the Great's son, Herod Antipas, ruled the province of Galilee from his capital 10 miles down the road in Tiberias. Like his father before him, he had his own army sanctioned by Rome.

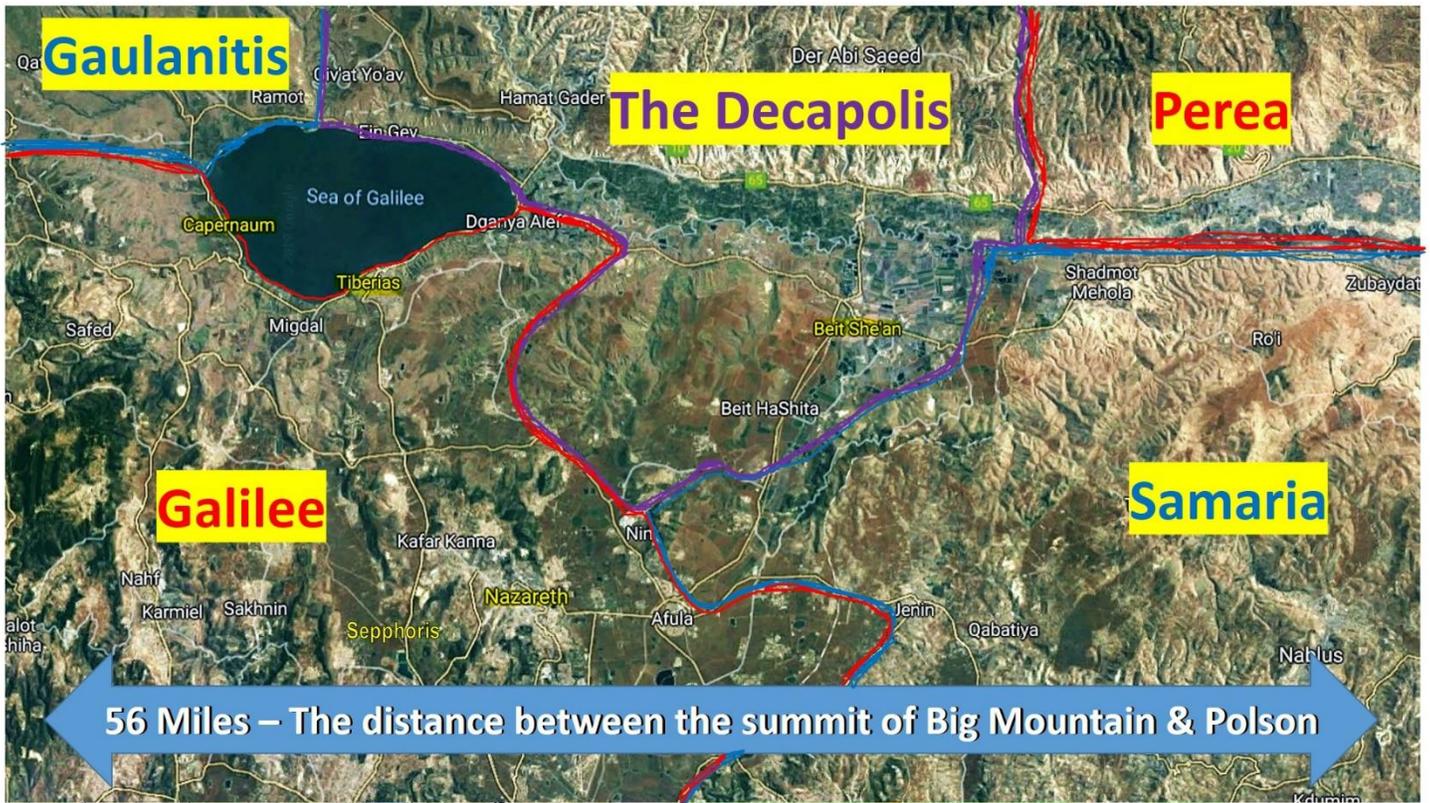
It mimicked the Roman army, but was made up of mercenaries. It was sort of like the French Foreign Legion. Professional soldiers from many nationalities joined together for the pay.

These guys operated as a police force, border, immigration & customs officers, enforcers for the tax collectors, as well as a military protective force in the Province.

A Centurion was roughly equivalent to an Infantry Captain. They had to be literate, over 30 years of age, and typically rose through the ranks. They were what we now call mustangers. I was a mustanger. They were commanders of approximately 100 soldiers, called a century - meaning 100 - cent means 100 - we have 100 cents in a dollar - 100 years in a century. In addition to leading his soldiers the Centurion was in

command of the garrison near the border with Gaulanitis.





He, like most of his troops, was probably from the Decapolis - the neighboring independent province. You might remember that the Decapolis, meaning ten cities, was primarily settled by veterans of Alexander the Great's army 350 years earlier. It was a very Hellenistic, pagan, Gentile, province. Even so, they generally had cordial relations with the Jews to their west and south. Many of the men of the Decapolis followed their family tradition by serving as soldiers.

Herod's soldiers spoke Greek as their primary language. It's doubtful the Centurion, or his men, would have been fluent in the local Aramaic dialect.

Like all people of the Roman Empire at the time, they each spoke their native language they grew up with, as well as the Greek language which enabled the Empire to function cohesively. Look at Beit She'an.



The Tel has and Canaanite art and Egyptian Hieroglyphs and other artifacts dating back to before Father Abraham more than 4,000 years ago.



Galilean Jews were well acquainted with the Gentiles in their region. If a Jew was traveling from Galilee to

Jerusalem it was far better to go through The Decapolis and the Greco-Roman city of Scythopolis, originally known as Beth Shean, now known as Beit She'an, then to go through the territory of the despised Samaritians.



The Centurion was deeply distressed about his slave who according to Luke was in serious trouble. Doctor Luke, as always in such cases, goes into greater medical and relational detail, but the bottom line is that the Centurion was so concerned, he reached out to Jesus for help.

Jesus agreed and made His way towards the Centurions house. Ruins from a large Roman Villa have been discovered just north of Capernaum.

In Greek it is transliterated, Καφαρναούμ (kä-fäř-nä-üm), from the Hebrew, כְּפַר נַחֻם (kě-fäř nă-ĉhüm), meaning Nahum's village.



While the Franciscan Monks control the village site, the Greek Orthodox church is in charge of the area with the villa. They will not allow further archeological investigation so we can't be sure, but it is likely that under those ruins lies the remains of our Centurion's

home. Just like the White Synagogue's ruins lie atop of the synagogue the Centurion built.

Before Jesus could enter the Gentile's, house and become ceremonially unclean, the Commander in a display of deep understanding, concern for Jesus and remarkable faith, urges the Lord to simply command the slave to be healed at a distance.

He incredibly discerns the nature of Who Jesus is in an analogous way to who he himself is. The way it worked in the Roman Empire is the Emperor, Tiberias at the time, had all the authority and power. That's the difference between the Empire Augustus created and the Republic Rome had before.



So, the Emperor, with all the power, as the divine representative of the gods, delegated his power out to others. In our case, he delegated his personal authority to Herod Antipas as ruler of Galilee and Perea. Antipas then delegated his authority out to others including the Centurion of our pericope.

It was a derived power and authority, which not only meant that it really belonged ultimately with the Emperor - it also meant that to disobey the Centurion was to disobey the Emperor himself.

That's why a flagrant disregard for a Centurion could easily result in a tortuous death - it was the Emperor who was disobeyed and insulted. That's called treason. It doesn't mean much in America today, but back then it could get you crucified. At other times in history it would get you drawn and quartered.



Jesus “Marveled” at the insight and the faith. The Centurion reasoned that as he had authority from Caesar, so Jesus had the authority from God to command whatever He willed. Even a life-threatening illness to be reversed with a thought.

Jesus stopped and turned to those accompanying Him and said, “Amen!” “Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.”

You see Israel was expecting Jesus, but had no real faith. They believed God would eventually send someone, but they thought it would be so obvious that it wouldn't require faith.

How many people today are like that? Well, I'll believe in Jesus, if Jesus does something that takes away any need to believe. Prove it unequivocally so that there is no possibility that it's not true. So many folks today cling to science because it's real, it's measurable, it's reproducible, it doesn't require any faith - it's just facts. How dumb. We want to be sure and so we want proof, but proof is always in the eye of the beholder, my friends... Everything requires faith.

The Centurion got it and Jesus was amazed. Jesus went on to say what He had already said in a variety of ways, something akin to what He closed His Sermon with... There are only two possible positions in this life, and they will result in only two possible destinations afterward.

You will either recline at the table with the Patriarchs or you will be cast out where things are ugly forever. What's still shocking is that many of those cast out, will be people who are convinced that they're in.



Matthew 8:14&15 ~ 14NASB When Jesus came into Peter's home, He saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever. 15 He touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she got up and waited on Him.

As I mentioned before, the entire village of Capernaum covers an area about the size of our church grounds - a walled-in town of roughly 6 acres with a max population of about 1,500 people. It was founded about

200 years before Jesus was born and lasted as a small fishing village for well over 1,000 years.

This is the view of Peter's house from the steps of the town synagogue built by the Centurion.

Peter was from Bethsaida two miles north in Philip's territory of Gaulanitis (John 1:44). It could be that this was Peter's wife's ancestral home or it's possible that it was an additional home that Peter's family owned for their fishing business.

Whatever the case, Peter's mother-in-law was the matriarch and she was extremely ill.

This episode is also told by Luke, as well as, Mark. From their different accounts, owing to the different theological points they're making by sharing the event, we know that it was the Sabbath and that they had all come over to the house from the synagogue service.

Luke goes into detail about the fever she had - from his account many people think she had malaria. Mark mentions that the house belonged to Peter and his brother Andrew and that John and James were there.

They both mention the brothers asking Jesus to help the lady of the house.

Matthew dispenses with all of that because he wants the focus on Jesus. He is making the points about His compassion, His reaching out to the marginalized and His willingness to become unclean to make others clean... And of course, Matthew's pushing his most important point, that Jesus has the power and authority of God Himself, and so we should "Listen to Him!"

Jesus saw the need, and He touched her hand and as He did, she was not made well, she was fully restored as if she had never been ill.

It wasn't like she felt better, but still needed to rest or regain her strength... She got up and waited on Jesus. The imagery of the Greek words is like she was thrown down by the disease and then she was raised up by Jesus.

The Leper was blocked from full access to God through Judaism because of his illness. The Centurion because of his ancestry. Peter's mother-in-law because of her gender.

Jesus doesn't care about all that - He touches the untouchable - He's willing to enter a home where no Jew should enter - He heals a woman by taking her hand on the Sabbath.



Matthew 8:16 ~ 16NASB When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill.

With the evening came the end of the Sabbath and so the people felt free to bring the sick and demon possessed to Jesus.

He complied with His typical compassion, but again the primary point is to show His authority.

***Surely He Himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. Isaiah 53:4&5***

Matthew 8:17 ~ 17NASB This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "He Himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases."  
This closing quotation is more important than it seems.

First, it confirms that Jesus is unique - He has authority and power. His will is identical to the Father's Will and when He wills it - it is.

This is 53rd chapter of Isaiah, universally acknowledged as a Messianic passage prophesying

the nature of God's future Salvation through His Anointed One.

It culminates in Jesus taking our sin to the Cross and paying the debt He did not owe and the one we could never pay.

Matthew can't go into all of that yet, because he hasn't gotten to that part of his Gospel yet.

Instead, Matthew focusses on a small portion of the Messianic prophesy that is applicable in a small way to the healing ministry just described.

Once again, Matthew shows us that Jesus is the Christ - He is currently healing people by His divine authority and soon, He will bring full restoration by His atoning death.

Jesus is God with us - "Listen to Him." You know why I keep saying it that way? Later in chapter 17, Jesus will allow a bit of His true nature show through His flesh in what is called His Transfiguration.

Peter, James and John are with Him when His face becomes as bright as the sun and His clothes as white as light. Moses and Elijah appear with Him. Peter says

this is fantastic - we'll construct three Tabernacles. God sternly responds... SHUT UP! "This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!"