

## Research: Healing of the Centurion's Servant

### Matt 8:5-10, 13

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

Capernaum was a small town, populated by about 1500 people, on the northern edge of the Sea of Galilee. Behind it ran the “way of the Sea” or the “Via Maris”, a caravan route from Egypt to Damascus. Capernaum was on the border on its eastern side, so the fishing trade had to be taxed. There was a Roman Garrison here, where the Centurion might have been stationed.

“*Centurion*. A Roman legionary officer commanding a century (i.e. from 50 to 100 men, the hundredth part of a legion), and occupying the social position of a modern sergeant or non-commissioned officer. . . . The centurion, being an officer, was probably a Roman” (Dummelow 653).

“Judea was a Roman province, and garrisons were kept there to preserve the people in subjection. This man was probably by birth a pagan” (Barnes 38).

“Though a heathen by birth and early training, he had become acquainted with the Jewish religion probably either while quartered at Capernaum or in some other Galilean town” (Jamieson 3.247).

“His character appears here in the most beautiful light. The value which he set upon this dying servant and his anxiety for his recovery – as if he had been his own son – is the first feature in it” (Jamieson 3.247).

“. . . it is plain from St. Luke that it was a favorite slave who was ill” (Dummelow 653).

6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

The text says he was “ready to die” which means that this was an emergency case and Jesus was needed immediately.

“*whom he prized highly*. Lit. ‘who was valuable to him.’” (AYB Luke i-ix.651).

“*deathly ill*. Lit. ‘being badly off, about to die.’ In Matt 8:6 the boy is ‘paralytic’ and ‘terribly tormented’; in John 4:47 he is ‘about to die’; as the story develops, it is because of a fever” (AYB Luke i-ix.651).

**7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.**

“And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. This answer of Christ's, which is short and full, not only shows the readiness of Christ to do good, how soon and easily he complied with the centurion's request, it being a prayer of faith, and so effectual, and was heard as soon as delivered; but also contains an absolute promise that he would heal him. He does not say that he would come and see him, and what his case was, and do what he could for him, as ordinary physicians do; but he would come and heal him at once” (Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, [www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com)).

**8 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.**

“*Lord, I am not worthy.* Both the centurion and the elders judged Jesus by Jewish standards. That Jesus should heal a Gentile at all, except for some very special reason, was thought impossible. Still more unlikely was it that he would enter a Gentile house, which was regarded as defiled, and defiling those who entered it (John 18:28)” (Dummelow 653).

“*I am not worthy,* etc. This was an expression of great humility. It was the expression of a humble spirit; a conviction of the great dignity and power of the Saviour, and a belief that he was so unlike him, that he was not fit that the Son of God should come into his dwelling” (Barnes 38).

“Entrance into the house of a Gentle would be a source of defilement for a Jew” (*AYB Luke i-ix.652*).

“In believing that Jesus could heal at a distance, the centurion showed remarkable faith” (Dummelow 653).

“*Speak with a word.* The centurion is further depicted as recognizing the power of Jesus' word and thinking that he can even cure at a distance” (*AYB Luke i-ix.651*).

**Citations on the Word of God:**

The Word of God is God's self-revealing activity, the Spirit bearing witness of itself (cf., Romans 8:16). The Word of God signifies an immediate cause-and-effect relationship. God's Word spoken, declared, affirmed, and acknowledged in thought IS the healing!

Ps. 33:9

For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.

Ps. 46:6

The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.

Hymn 171:1

Lo, the promise and fulfillment,

Genesis 1:3

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

Hymn 298:1

Felt ye the power of the Word?

Isa. 55:11

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Heb. 4:12

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Our challenge is to “know the Word” – to have it written on our hearts and to think and speak only what we hear from the Father. Jesus spoke only what he heard from the Father.

John 12:49

For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

John 14:24

. . . and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

John 8:28

Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

**9 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*.**

“I am a man, says he, under authority. That is, I am subject to the commands of others, and know how to obey. I have also under me soldiers who are accustomed to obedience. I say to one, go, and he goes; and to another, come, and he comes. I am prepared therefore, to believe that your commands will be obeyed” (Barnes 38).

“*Authority*” is *exousia* in Greek which means “the power of authority (influence) and of right (privilege); the power of rule or government (the power of him whose will and commands must be submitted to by others and obeyed); subject to authority or rule; one who possesses authority; right; jurisdiction” (Strong 225).

### **How was Jesus’ authority perceived by the multitudes?**

Matt. 7:29

For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Luke 4:36

And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

Authority must have the legal right to accomplish something and the ability and power and strength behind it to see that it is done. It must have a higher power to back it up. If we speak with the Word of Scripture, we speak with authority! Let us know that every treatment we give, every prayer we offer, has the power and authority of infinite God behind it!

Mary Baker Eddy writes of the authority that we all can demonstrate:

“This understanding casts out error and heals the sick, and with it you can speak ‘as one having authority’ ” (*S&H* 14:28).

“You have no law of His to support the necessity either of sin or sickness, but you have divine authority for denying that necessity and healing the sick” (*S&H* 390:23)

“Exercise this God-given authority. Take possession of your body, and govern its feeling and action. Rise in the strength of Spirit to resist all that is unlike good. God has made man capable of this, and nothing can vitiate the ability and power divinely bestowed on man” (*S&H* 393:10).

**10 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.**

“Jesus—*marvelled*. Or wondered at his faith; or deemed it remarkable” (Barnes 38).

The word *faith* in Greek is *pisteuo* which means “to think to be true, to be persuaded of, to place confidence in, to trust in Jesus or God as able to aid either in obtaining or in doing something” (Thayer 512).

“Jesus’ acknowledgement of the Gentile centurion’s faith contains a criticism of Israel’s faith in him. It is the ‘pronouncement’ addressed to the reader, challenging him/her to a similar response of faith” (*AYB Luke i-ix.653*).

Jesus commends and honors the thought of the centurion. This radical demonstration of faith serves as a lesson for Jesus’ followers: they must recognize and obey only the higher authority of God. Jesus criticizes Israel’s faith. It should have been found in Israel, but it was not. This is a challenge to the reader to have faith as deep as the centurion’s.

**13 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.**

*Whole* is *hygiaino* in Greek which means “to be sound, well, in good health; metaphorically, of Christians whose opinions are free from any mixture of error” (Strong 634).