

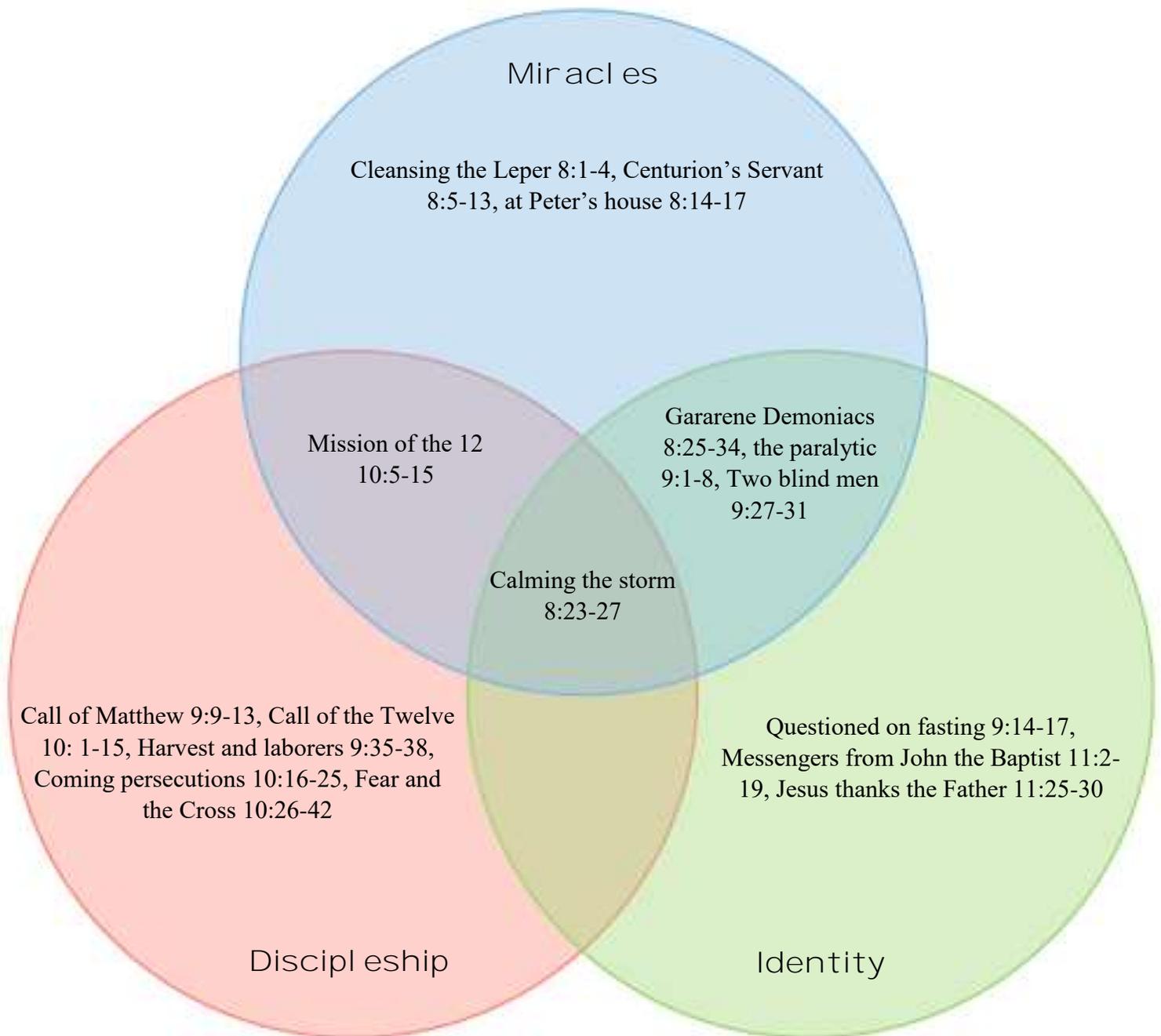


# THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

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# Miracles, Discipleship and Identity (Matthew 8-11)



## Miracles

- Jesus cleanses the leper:
  - ◊ Jesus speaks the word and it happens
  - ◊ Jesus is in union with the Mosaic Law- "show yourself to the priests and offer the gift Moses commanded"-
- Healing the Centurion's Servant
  - ◊ The centurion demonstrates a faith in Christ and he has care for those beneath him (his servant).
  - ◊ This foreshadows the mission to the gentiles. Jesus hints at this when he says that many will come from every direction to sit with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

- The healings at Peter's house
  - ◇ Matthew quotes Isaiah and sees the parallels between Jesus' ministry and Isaiah's Suffering Servant Songs.
  - ◇ See Isaiah 42:1–4; Isaiah 49:1–6; Isaiah 50:4–7; and Isaiah 52:13–53:12 .
  - ◇ We see a connection between physical and spiritual health.
- Jesus calms the Sea
  - ◇ Jesus and Jonah (see insert).
  - ◇ Jesus as creator of the universe has power over it.

<p>Jonah</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Both set sail on a boat (Jon 1:1-16)</li> <li>2. Both are caught in a storm on the sea (Jon 1:4,11)</li> <li>3. Both are found asleep (Jon 1:5)</li> <li>4. Both are accompanied by frightened sailors (Jon 1:5)</li> <li>5. Both groups of sailors call upon the Lord for deliverance (Jon 1:14)</li> <li>6. Both are instrumental in bringing about a great calm (Jon 1:12)</li> <li>7. The sailors in both marvel at the outcome (Jon 1:16)</li> </ol>	<p>Jesus</p> 
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- The healing of the Gadarene Demoniacs
  - ◇ Gadara (part of the Decapolis) was about 6 miles southeast of the Sea of Galilee.
  - ◇ Probably made of mostly Gentiles (the tending of the swine makes this more likely)
  - ◇ Demons recognize who Jesus is.
  - ◇ The sea is a symbol of deliverance or hostile forces in the Old Testament: Jesus symbolically drives back the forces of evil.
- Jesus heals the paralytic
  - ◇ Jesus forgives sins which the Jewish authorities rightfully recognize as Jesus claiming divinity.
  - ◇ Jesus' assertion is backed by his working of the miracle to make the paralytic whole again as sin paralyzes us and makes us less than we were made to be.
  - ◇ This foreshadows the sacrament of penance whereby Jesus invests men with the authority to forgive sins.
- The Girl and the Woman
  - ◇ The woman touches the fringe of Jesus' garment which probably refers to the tassels that Jews wore that were outward reminders to follow the Mosaic Law.
  - ◇ The girl is raised from the dead proving that Jesus is the Lord of life.
- The Two Blind Men
  - ◇ The two men use a Messianic title for Jesus, "Son of David".
  - ◇ Jesus indicates it is faith in him that brings about their healing.
- Healing the Mute
  - ◇ Evil can mute the presence of God within us. When the demons are cast out, that man is able to speak.
  - ◇ Jesus is accused of casting out demons by the prince of darkness. They are looking for reasons not believe what they have clearly seen in front of them-Jesus has divine authority.

## Discipleship

- The Call of Matthew
  - ◇ As a tax collector in the region of Galilee, Matthew is seen in two negative lights: 1. he takes money from Gentiles and 2. he is a sinner by trade.
  - ◇ Ignoring the convention of his day Jesus calls Matthew to put aside his past life and follow him.
  - ◇ When challenged by the authorities, Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6-God is about mercy.
- The Harvest, the Laborers and the Twelve
  - ◇ Israel is the sheep and historically the leaders of the Jews were to be the shepherds (Moses, Joshua and David). Jesus' recognition of them as without a shepherd is a condemnation of the current Jewish leadership.
  - ◇ Jesus selects 12 men as the laborers sent to reap the harvest and shepherd the New Israel.



- ◇ The selection of the 12 is important. Jesus is creating a new Israel. He names these men apostles from the Greek ἀπόστολος or “apostolos” which literally means “one sent forth (with orders)”.
- ◇ Jesus confers upon them the authority to heal and exorcise demons. One day they will be sent forth by Jesus into the world to spread the Gospel.
- ◇ Jesus first sends the apostles only to minister to the Jews. Again, this is in union with salvation history which begins with the Jews and goes forth to all mankind.
- ◇ Shaking the dust off of one’s sandals was a custom of the Jews when they left Gentile territory and reentered Jewish territory. It was a denouncement of the uncleanness of the Gentiles.
- The Cost of Discipleship
  - ◇ I am sending you like sheep among the wolves.
  - ◇ Jesus does not lie to us but tells us that following him will lead to rejection and persecution.
  - ◇ Families will be divided by their faith in Christ.
  - ◇ Jesus does remind us that we should not fear these things because God will still take care of us. Men can injure the body but they cannot touch the soul.
  - ◇ In telling his followers to take up their cross and follow him Jesus assures us that being his disciple takes self-denial, sacrifice and may cost us our lives.
  - ◇ In all of this we must be aware that the reward of heaven is worth anything here on earth.

## Identity

- The Question of Fasting
  - ◇ Throughout the Old Testament God is depicted as the husband of Israel. In calling himself the groom Jesus is announcing that he is God.
  - ◇ Jesus also is taking the role as the spouse of the New Israel which he constitutes by calling the 12, making a new and eternal covenant, giving them a new Temple with a new sacrifice.
- The Messengers of John the Baptist
  - ◇ Even John has his doubts because Jesus is not what anyone was expecting (the Essenes had their own ideas of what the Messiah would look like).
  - ◇ Jesus responds with what he has done—he is gathering the tribes and tending to their injuries (one of the tasks of the Messiah).
  - ◇ John is praised by Jesus as the last great Old Testament prophet and the herald of the Messiah (in the spirit of Elijah).
  - ◇ He denounces the lack of faith of this generation: Jesus compares his ministry and John’s. We piped to you and you did not dance— the joy of a wedding (Jesus’ ministry of healing). We wailed and you did not mourn—the solemnity of a funeral (John’s message of repentance).
  - ◇ This generation was looking for reasons not to believe: “John has a demon” because he did not eat nor drink and “(Jesus is) a glutton and a drunkard” because he ate and drank.
- Jesus Thanks the Father
  - ◇ Jesus’ language hint at an intimate and unique relationship between the Father and the Son.
  - ◇ Jesus’ words compare closely to Sirach when he talks about the yoke of wisdom. See Sirach 51.
  - ◇ The rest Jesus promises is in contrast to the earthly rest that the Sabbath offered. Jesus offers heavenly rest in the kingdom of his father.



Old Israel	New Israel
• 12 Tribes	• 12 Apostles
• Blood	• Faith/Baptism
• Covenants	• New & Eternal Covenant
• Law	• Beatitudes
• Sacrifices	• Jesus’ Sacrifice
• Temple	• Christ’s Body (Church)

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTERS 8-11

How do you feel that the centurion's words which we paraphrase at each Mass sum up the entire Christian faith?

We see a comparison between Jesus and Jonah when Jesus calms the storm. What other Old Testament figures can we see brought to greater light in Jesus Christ?

How does the cleansing of the leper demonstrate Matthew's emphasis of Jesus' ministry?

How do "miracles, discipleship and identity" sum up Matthew 8-11?

What miracle or teaching from this section impacted you the most? Is there one that you began to see differently?