

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 12 – January 12th – Matthew 9:1-17

Works frequently referenced in these notes on Matthew

- Hagner, Donald A *Word Biblical Commentary Vols.33a & 33b: Matthew 1-13 & Matthew 14-28*, Word Books, Dallas, 1993 & 1995
- Morris, Leon *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1992

Matthew 9 Verses 1-8

Cf. Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26.

Verse 1

Καὶ ἐμβὰς εἰς πλοῖον διεπέρασεν καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν πόλιν.

ἐμβαινῶ get into, embark
 πλοῖον, οὐ n boat, ship
 διαπεραῶ cross over
 ἰδῶς, α, ον one's own
 πολίς, εως f see 8:33

Capernaum is clearly meant (cf. 4:13). These words indicate "that he now lived in the lakeside city and not simply that he paid it an occasional visit. It was the centre for his ministry." Morris.

Verse 2

Καὶ ἰδοὺ προσέφερον αὐτῷ παραλυτικὸν ἐπὶ κλίνης βεβλημένον. καὶ ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὴν πίστιν αὐτῶν εἶπεν τῷ παραλυτικῷ· Θάρσει, τέκνον· ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι.

προσφερῶ present, bring, bring before
 παραλυτικός, οὐ m paralytic, cripple
 κλίνη, ης f bed, stretcher, sickbed
 βεβλημένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n
 nom/acc s βαλλῶ throw, place; perf
 pass ptc laid (aside)

Matthew omits the lowering of the man through a roof "which makes such an impressive feature of the other accounts." Morris.

ἰδὼν Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s ὄραω see
 πιστις, εως f faith, trust, belief
 θάρσει (only in imperat) Courage! Take
 courage! Cheer up!
 τέκνον, οὐ n child
 ἀφίενταί Verb, pres pass indic, 3 pl ἀφίημι
 cancel, forgive
 ἁμαρτία, ας f sin

"In the early part of this Gospel we were told that Jesus would save his people from their sins (1:21), but this is the first occasion when we read of him giving anyone forgiveness." Morris.

"In the biblical view (Gen 3), all sickness and suffering, like death itself, trace back to the entry of sin into the world. In this sense all sickness is caused by sin. But apart from the immediate cause-effect connection between some sin and some sickness (e.g., abuse of the body), there is no direct or immediate correlation between individual's sin and his or her sickness or suffering. This is only to say that most sinning does not receive its due punishment in the present time. In this age there is nothing unusual about the righteous suffering and the wicked prospering. The present pericope suggests neither that the man's sickness was caused by his sin nor that his sin needed to be forgiven before he could be healed. The point of this narrative is that the problem of sin, though not as apparent to the eye as paralysis, is a fundamental – indeed, as becomes obvious as the Gospel proceeds, *the* fundamental – problem of humanity that Jesus has come to counteract. Compared to the healings, the forgiveness of sins is by far the greater gift Jesus has brought in his ministry. If the healings done by Jesus presuppose the invasion of the kingdom of God into the realm of suffering caused by evil (as can most graphically be seen in the demon exorcism of the preceding passage), then the healing of diseases is only a part of a much larger picture, wherein sin itself, and not just its symptoms, is dealt a final blow. The primary mission of Jesus is the overcoming of sin through the cross (cf. 1:21; 20:28; 26:28); the healings are only a secondary indication of that fact. This connection, indeed, has already been seen in the citation of Isa 53:4 in 8:17. In Isa 53 the sin-bearer is also the disease-curer; and the same connection is made quite explicit in Ps 103:3, 'who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases' (cf. Pss 25:18; 32:1-2; 41:5; 79:9)." Hagner.

Verse 3

καὶ ἰδοὺ τινες τῶν γραμματέων εἶπαν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς· Οὗτος βλασφημεῖ.

γραμματεὺς, εὼς m scribe, expert in Jewish law, scholar

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself
βλασφημεῶ slander, speak against God, blaspheme

"In the NT the concept of blasphemy is controlled throughout by the thought of violation of the power and majesty of God." Byer.

"As the scribes saw it, for Jesus to forgive sins was to assume the divine prerogative." Morris. Cf. Mk 2:7.

Verse 4

καὶ εἰδὼς ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὰς ἐνθυμήσεις αὐτῶν εἶπεν· Ἰνατί ἐνθυμεῖσθε πονηρὰ ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν;

ἰδων see v.2

ἐνθυμησις, εὼς f (inmost) thought, idea
ἵνατι why? for what reason?
ἐνθυμεομαι think about, think
πονηρός, α, ον evil, bad, wicked

"The scribes would surely have argued it was a good thing to desire to protect the name and honour of God. Yet from Matthew's perspective, to oppose Jesus is to oppose God, and the resistance to Jesus that begins here will lead to his death." Hagner.

Verse 5

τί γάρ ἐστιν εὐκοπώτερον, εἰπεῖν· Ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι, ἢ εἰπεῖν· Ἐγειρε καὶ περιπάτει;

εὐκοπώτερος, α, ον (comparative from εὐκοπος easy) easier

ἀφίενταί Verb, perf pass indic, 3 pl ἀφημι ἢ or

ἐγειρω raise

περιπατεῶ walk, walk about

"The obvious answer is that it is easier to say that sin is forgiven, for it is impossible for the bystanders to confirm or refute what has been said, whereas when a paralysed man is told to get up and walk anybody can see whether the command is obeyed or not. On a deeper level, however, it is the second statement that is the easier: a healer can say that, but it takes deity really to forgive sins." Morris.

Verse 6

ἵνα δὲ εἰδῆτε ὅτι ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας – τότε λέγει τῷ παραλυτικῷ· Ἐγερθεὶς ἄρῶν σου τὴν κλίνην καὶ ὑπάγε εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου.

εἰδῆτε Verb, perf/pres act subj, 2 pl οἶδα

(verb perf in form but with present meaning) know, understand

ἐξουσία, ας f authority

γῆ, γῆς f earth

The meaning here of ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς is "now, in advance of the coming of the eschaton... If the Son of Man is the person of Dan 7:13-14 and he begins through his presence to bring the blessings of the eschaton (one of which was the forgiveness of iniquity [cf. Isa 33:24; Jer 31:34...]), then it is no surprise that he has authority to forgive sins on earth as an intrinsic part of his ministry." Hagner.

ἀφιέναι Verb, pres act infin ἀφημι

τοτε then, at that time

ἄρῶν Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s αἶρω take, take up, take away

κλίνη, ης f see v.2

ὑπάγω go, go one's way, depart

Verse 7

καὶ ἐγερθεὶς ἀπῆλθεν εἰς τὸν οἶκόν αὐτοῦ.

Verse 8

ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ ὄχλοι ἐφοβήθησαν καὶ ἐδόξασαν τὸν θεὸν τὸν δόντα ἐξουσίαν τοιαύτην τοῖς ἀνθρώποις.

ἰδόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl ὄρω see v.2

ὄχλος, ου m crowd, multitude

φοβεομαι fear, be afraid (of)

C L Θ f¹³ TR sy^h substitute ἐθαυμασαν, 'they marvelled,' as apparently more appropriate and perhaps by influence of other passages where the word occurs.

"They reacted as in the presence of God." Morris.

δοξαζω praise, honour, glorify

δόντα Verb, aor act ptc, m acc s δίδωμι

ἐξουσία, ας f see v.6

τοιουτος, αυτη, ουτον correlative pronoun and adjective such, of such kind

Hagner suggests that Matthew may have had ecclesiastical concerns in mind in the plural τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, cf. 18:18.

Verse 9

Καὶ παράγων ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐκεῖθεν εἶδεν
ἄνθρωπον καθήμενον ἐπὶ τὸ τελώνιον,
Μαθθαῖον λεγόμενον, καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ·
Ἀκολουθε μοι· καὶ ἀναστὰς ἠκολούθησεν
αὐτῷ.

παράγω pass by, pass on
εἶδεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ὄρω see,
observe
καθημαί sit, sit down
τελώνιον, ου n tax office, tax collector's
booth

These taxes would have been collected on goods being transported either by land, with the booth beside the main road, or by sea, with the booth by the shore.

Matthew is called Levi in the other Synoptic Gospels. It was not uncommon for people in New Testament times to be known by more than one name – Simon/Peter, Saul/Paul, Joseph/Barnabas, John Mark etc. This change of name, "together with the reference to 'Matthew the tax collector' in 10:3 ('the tax collector' being unique to Matthew at this point), is sometimes taken to be tied in with the attribution of the Gospel to Matthew." Hagner.

ἀκολουθεῖω follow, be a disciple
ἀνίστημι rise, stand up

Matthew may have known of Jesus and his work since this incident seems to have occurred in Capernaum. His response was instant and would have involved loss of his livelihood.

Verse 10

Καὶ ἐγένετο αὐτοῦ ἀνακειμένου ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ,
καὶ ἰδοὺ πολλοὶ τελῶναι καὶ ἁμαρτωλοὶ
ἐλθόντες συνανέκειντο τῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τοῖς
μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ.

ἐγένετο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s γίνομαι
ἀνακειμαι be seated at table, be a dinner
guest

Suggests a special dinner, cf. Lk 5:29.

οἰκία, ας f house, home
τελώνης, ου m tax collector
ἁμαρτωλός, ου sinful, sinner

"Tax collectors, or tax farmers, in that culture were despised as greedy, self-serving and parasitic. They grew rich at the expense of the poor by extorting from them more than was required by their superiors in order to fill their own pockets. They furthermore often compromised regulations for purity in their handling of pagan money and their dealings with Gentiles. That Jesus should call a tax collector to be a disciple would have been in itself scandalous." Hagner.

'Sinners' were probably those who similarly failed to keep the ceremonial law in a way satisfactory to the Pharisees.

συνανακειμαι sit at table with, eat with
μαθητης, ου m disciple, follower

"It must be noted here that table fellowship in that culture was regarded as a very important symbol of the closeness, indeed the oneness, of those participating. This is one reason, for example, that Jews were not allowed to sit at the same table with Gentiles. For Jesus and his disciples to be at the same table with tax collectors and sinners implied a full acceptance of them. (With this background, the symbolism of the messianic banquet in 8:11 becomes all the more remarkable.) Thus the question of the Pharisees, who were guardians of such separation in the cause of righteousness, comes as no surprise. For Jesus' association with tax collectors and sinners challenges a basic principle of the Pharisees and from their perspective calls into question his real commitment to doing God's will... Parallel to the present story in many respects is that concerning another tax collector, in this instance a 'chief tax collector,' Zacchaeus in Luke 19 (see the specific charge in Luke 19:7; cf. 15:2)." Hagner.

Verse 11

καὶ ἰδόντες οἱ Φαρισαῖοι ἔλεγον τοῖς μαθηταῖς
αὐτοῦ· Διὰ τί μετὰ τῶν τελωνῶν καὶ
ἁμαρτωλῶν ἐσθίει ὁ διδάσκαλος ὑμῶν;

ἰδόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl ὄρω
ἐσθίω and ἐσθῶ eat, consume
διδασκαλός, ου m teacher

Verse 12

ὁ δὲ ἀκούσας εἶπεν· Οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχουσιν οἱ
ισχύοντες ἰατροῦ ἀλλὰ οἱ κακῶς ἔχοντες.

Many MSS, followed by the TR, read ὁ δε
Ἰησοῦς ἀκουσας.

χρεῖα, ας f need, want
ἰσχυῶ be strong, be able
ἰατρός, ου m physician, doctor

This may have been a proverbial saying.
Parallels can be found in Greek literature.

κακῶς badly, severely; κακῶς ἔχω be sick

Verse 13

πορευθέντες δὲ μάθετε τί ἐστίν· Ἐλεος θέλω
καὶ οὐ θυσίαν· οὐ γὰρ ἤλθον καλέσαι δικαίους
ἀλλὰ ἁμαρτωλούς.

πορευομαι go, proceed
μάθετε Verb, 2 aor act imperat, 2 pl μανθάνω
learn, find out

The following quotation is from Hosea 6:6.

ἐλεος, ους n mercy, compassion
 θελω wish, will
 θυσια, ας f sacrifice

I.e. mercy and compassion are more important than strict obedience to the letter of the ceremonial law.

ἦλθον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3 pl ἔρχομαι
 δικαιοσ, α, ον righteous, just, conforming to the standard

Many MSS, followed by the TR, include at the end of the verse, εἰς μετανοιαν, conforming the text to the parallel in Luke 5:32.

Commenting on the latter half of this verse, Hagner writes, "For this reason Jesus can be described as *τελωνων φιλος και ἀμαρτωλων*, 'a friend of tax collectors and sinners' (11:19). Again, therefore, as in the preceding pericope (cf. vv 6,8), we are brought to the centrality of the forgiveness of sin in the ministry of Jesus. It is for this reason that he comes to call sinners (cf. Luke 19:10) and that sinners are often the quickest to respond to him. In 21:31 Jesus will say, 'Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.' It would be a mistake on the basis of vv 12-13 to conclude that the references to the 'healthy' and the 'righteous' imply, either for Jesus or for Matthew, that there are some who do not need Jesus or for whom he has not come. On the contrary, it is clear that those who perhaps had most reason to be included in that category, the Pharisees, are paradoxically among those who need Jesus the most. From the standpoint of the kingdom and the ministry of Jesus, culminating in his death, all are unworthy and in need of forgiveness."

Verses 14-17

Cf. Mark 2:18-22; Luke 5:33-39.

Verse 14

Τότε προσέρχονται αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ Ἰωάννου λέγοντες· Διὰ τί ἡμεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι νηστεύομεν πολλὰ, οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ σου οὐ νηστεύουσιν;

τοτε then, at that time
 προσερχομαι come or go to
 μαθητης, ου m see v.10
 νηστευω fast, go without food

A few MSS, followed by the TR, omit *πολλά* and some have the variant reading *πυκνα*, 'frequently.'

It would seem that Jesus and his disciples did not practice regular fasting, though Jesus taught concerning fasting in Matt 6:16.

Verse 15

καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Μὴ δύνανται οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ νυμφῶνος πενθεῖν ἐφ' ὅσον μετ' αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ὁ νυμφίος; ἐλεύσονται δὲ ἡμέραι ὅταν ἀπαρθῇ ἀπ' αὐτῶν ὁ νυμφίος, καὶ τότε νηστεύσουσιν.

δυναμαι can, be able to
 νυμφων, ωνος m wedding hall; υἱος του ν.
 bridegroom's attendant, wedding guest
 πενθεω mourn, be sad, grieve over
 ὅσος, η, ον as much as, how far; ἐφ ὅσον
 inasmuch as, while
 νυμφιος, ου m bridegroom
 ἐλεύσονται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 pl
 ἔρχομαι
 ὅταν when
 ἀπαρθῇ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s ἀπαιρω
 take away
 τότε see v.14

"Though not quite a passion prediction (cf. 16:21), this is the first clear allusion to the future and unexpected death of Jesus (cf. 26:11; Luke 17:22)." Hagner.
 "Jesus did not command them to fast; he simply prophesies that they will. And they did (cf. Acts 9:9; 13:3; 14:23; 27:9[33])." Morris.

Verse 16

οὐδεὶς δὲ ἐπιβάλλει ἐπιβλημα ῥάκουσ ἀγνάφου ἐπὶ ἱματίῳ παλαιῷ· αἶρει γὰρ τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἱματίου, καὶ χειρὸν σχίσμα γίνεται.

οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμια, οὐδεν no one, nothing
 ἐπιβαλλω throw or place on
 ἐπιβλημα, τος n piece, patch
 ῥακος, ους n piece of cloth
 ἀγναφος, ον new, unshrunk
 ἱματιον, ου n garment, clothing, robe
 παλαιος, α, ον old, former
 αἶρω take, take away
 πληρωμα, τος n fullness, completeness
 χειρων, ον gen ονος worse, more severe
 σχισμα, τος n division, split

"This homely piece of wisdom would be immediately grasped by Jesus' audience, and it brings out vividly the point that Jesus is not trying to patch up a worn-out Judaism." Morris.

Verse 17

οὐδὲ βάλλουσιν οἶνον νέον εἰς ἀσκοῦσ παλαιούσ· εἰ δὲ μή γε, ῥήγνυνται οἱ ἀσκοί, καὶ ὁ οἶνος ἐκχεῖται καὶ οἱ ἀσκοὶ ἀπόλλυνται· ἀλλὰ βάλλουσιν οἶνον νέον εἰς ἀσκοῦσ καινούσ, καὶ ἀμφότεροι συντηροῦνται.

βαλλω throw, place, pour
 οἶνος, ου m wine
 νεος, α, ον new, fresh, young

New wine means wine that has not finished fermenting.

ἄσκος, οὐ μ wine-skin

παλαιός, α, ον old, former

γε enclitic particle adding emphasis to the word with which it is associated

ρήγνυται Verb, pres pass indic, 3 pl ῥηγνυμι and ῥησσω burst, tear in pieces

ἐκχεῖται Verb, pres pass indic, 3 s ἐκχεω and ἐκχυννω pour out

ἀπόλλυνται Verb, fut midd indic, 3 pl ἀπολλυμι destroy; midd be lost, perish

καινός, η, ον new

ἀμφοτεροί, αι, α both, all

συντηρεω keep safe, treasure up

"The two illustrations effectively make the point that Jesus was not simply bringing in a revised and updated Judaism, or even founding a new sect within Judaism. What he was teaching and doing were such things that could not be contained within the accepted Jewish system; to attempt to confine his followers within the limits of the old religion would be to invite disaster... Much the same point is, of course, made in the Fourth Gospel with its account of the changing of water into wine (John 2)." Morris.

And Hagner comments, "It must be affirmed from the start that the presence of Jesus necessarily means an alteration of previous definitions of the path of righteousness (cf. Rom 7:6). The gospel cannot be added to Judaism. It is not a matter of loyalty to Torah or God's righteousness that is in question. It is rather a matter of the *interpretation* of God's will. And it is exactly in this that Jesus, as God's Messiah, the one Teacher (cf. 23:8-12), excels, as will the Christian scribe (cf. 13:52). Because of the new era represented by the fulfilment brought by Jesus, a new possibility of understanding and obeying God's will becomes available. The disciples' new obedience turns on the unique person and mission of Jesus."