

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

65- Jesus Demonstrates His Absolute Authority- Part 3
Jesus Has Authority Over Sickness and Disease- Part 3

Church August 13, 2023

Matthew 8:1-17

8 When Jesus came down from the mountain, large crowds followed Him.

2 And a leper came to Him and bowed down before Him, and said, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

3 Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

4 And Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest and present the offering that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

5 And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, imploring Him,

6 and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented."

7 Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

8 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.

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."

10 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.

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;

12 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."

13 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.

14 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.

16 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.

17 This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "HE HIMSELF TOOK OUR INFIRMITIES AND CARRIED AWAY OUR DISEASES."

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

When Adam sinned in the Garden- God brought him to account. And in bringing the Father of all Mankind into Account- God cursed him and the Earth. In **Genesis 3: 17-19**, Moses *infallibly* wrote this:

17 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life.

18 "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field;

19 By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."

Now look again closely at the End of verse 17:

... Cursed is the ground because of you ...

And by placing a Divine Curse on the "**Ground**"- God was NOT limiting His Curse to the Dirt- but He was actually introducing several things that, before the Curse- was NOT found- including:

- Frustration and Opposition in Life
- Sorrow
- Thorns and Thistles
- Bacteria
- Viruses
- Disease

... and from these Elements of God's Curse- Man's natural Life on this Planet became filled with Hardship; Sickness; Pain; Misery; and even Death. And that has become "normal" to us today.

And as those things were introduced into a created World- that *before* the Fall of Adam- God said was "**very Good**" (**Genesis 1:31**); other Components were developed that plague us to this Day such as:

- Plagues
- Injustice
- Crime
- War
- Suffering

... that are commonly lumped together as, Evil; Wickedness; as well as numerous and innovative Sins- that serve to make Life on earth- very Hard and "Unfair". And these things have become "normal" to us today.

So, because of the "*Fall*"- these "*Bad Things*" are the Elements of this Life that are now "*Common*" to all Mankind. Because every human on earth experiences these "*Bad Things*" in one form or another. And then there is the "*Great Equalizer*" that affects every single human born of Woman- whether they are Great or Small; or Rich or Poor- and that is "Death".

Now even though God placed this "*Divine Curse*" on Mankind because of Adam's Sin- He still retains absolute Authority over them all. And so, for Example- "*Evil*" is NOT an animate Object like a chair or a building or a Person. "*Evil*" is the Result of ungodly people; having ungodly Thoughts and making ungodly Plans; and then- based on their own willful and sinful Nature- carrying out those ungodly Thoughts and Plans. And the Result of all that is what is called, "*Evil*".

And while God didn't create "*Evil*" or "*Wickedness*"- He has sovereignly *allowed* it to exist- because He has sovereignly *allowed* evil people to exist. And so, God uses both the evil people and their evil Thoughts and Plans for His own Glory- to cause His Will to come to pass in the earth.

And so, God sovereignly "*allows*" Evil to exist and to, sometimes, seemingly *flourish* and even temporarily *dominate*. Yet He ONLY does that- because by allowing that Evil to exist and flourish or dominate to that extent- a much greater "*Good*" comes to pass that would NOT have come to pass- if God had not allowed the Evil.

So, for example, periodically, there are great Plagues of various Diseases that sweep the earth and kill millions of people. We just experienced one back in 2020. And many wonder why a Good and loving God would allow that Evil and

NOT stop it. Those Plagues move through the earth- seemingly without Mercy; as they wreck Havok with many people. And yet, in the midst of that Evil- God is sovereignly working in many, many Ways to bring Himself Glory.

So, for example, during a terrible Plague- God causes some people to operate through His “*Common Grace*” and to discover Medicines and Surgeries and Treatments that will be used in the Future to heal many *more* Millions of people- saved or lost- than the Plague killed.

But God is also working to save the souls of many people- sometimes on their “*death-beds*”- because the Disease has humbled their arrogant Hearts that willfully rebelled against Him. And so, the terrible Evil of the Plague caused those people to desire to repent; and to put their Hope in Jesus. And so, when they die- they enter into unspeakable Joy in Heaven instead of screaming in unspeakable Agony in Hell. And so, in their Case- the “Evil” of that Plague was actually God’s Mercy!

So, while the Plague is casting its awful Shadow over the people of the world- God stands absolutely Sovereign; and He controls the Plague- with masterful Precision- so that those who die- do so- at God’s Allowance; while those who live- do so- based on the unequal Distribution of God’s Mercy. And God is glorified!

So, there is NEVER a Time when God sleeps; or when He is NOT aware of what is going on with the crown Jewel of His Creation: Man. So, God is NEVER apathetic with us. He is ALWAYS concerned; ALWAYS aware; and God is ALWAYS moving so that three things ALWAYS happen:

1. God’s Will is done on the earth to the SAME extent; and with the SAME degree of Urgency as His Will is done in Heaven
2. God is glorified
3. Our Joy is made Full

... so, there is NEVER a Time when Evil; Disease; or Demons operate outside of God’s absolute Authority.

And such is the Case here in **Matthew 8:14-17**- so, let’s read that Passage again together:

14 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.

16 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.

17 This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "HE HIMSELF TOOK OUR INFIRMITIES AND CARRIED AWAY OUR DISEASES."

Now last week- I told you that now that Jesus has entered His 3-1/2- year earthly Ministry- Matthew is going to prove to all who have an ear to hear; and an eye to see; and a heart to believe- that, in addition to Jesus being a full and true Man- Jesus is also God Almighty in human Flesh!

So, we have come to a place in our verse-by-verse "Journey" through the **Gospel Record of Matthew** that contains the "*Historical Narratives*" of the absolute Authority of Jesus being demonstrated here on the earth. And so, over the next several Lord's Days- I want to ask and answer several Questions pertaining to what Matthew infallibly wrote here:

1. What is God's "*Absolute Authority*"?
2. Did these supernatural Events really happen?
3. *Why* did Jesus demonstrate His Authority?
4. Is this Authority active today?

Now over the last few weeks- I have been trying to ask and answer these four Questions from the Text that the Apostle Matthew wrote here. And so far- we have covered verses 1-13. And in going over these first 13 verses- we have begun to realize that the Apostle Matthew gave us this "*Historical Narrative*" at the beginning of Chapter 8- so that we would believe that these supernatural Events really did happen.

And so, today- we will see that Jesus has Authority over:

1. Infection (v. 14&15)
2. ALL Diseases (v. 16)
3. Demons (v. 16)

But then in verse 17- Matthew is faithful to tell his Jewish readers (and us) that Jesus also fulfilled the "*Burden*"¹ of the Old Testament Prophet about the Messiah from **Isaiah 53:4** that says:

Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted.

... which was designed to help the Jew of Matthew's Day to believe that Jesus was:

¹ The "*Burden*" of the Old Testament Prophets was the "*Word of the Lord*" that God had given to them to speak to the people.

1. The Messiah (the anointed One)
2. Immanuel (God with us)
3. The 2nd Moses (to bring in the promised New Covenant)

From **Matthew 5:3** all the way to **Matthew 7:27**- Jesus- acting as the 2nd Moses- gave the *first* of five major Sections of perfect Teaching that Matthew wanted the Jews to recognize as resembling the five Books of Moses (the Torah).

Now the fact that Jesus taught what we now call, the “*Sermon on the Mount*” while on the side of the Mountain- doesn’t mean that much to us today. But to the Jew of the 1st Century- the fact that Jesus taught about the *deepest* and *truest* Meaning of the Ten Commandments while sitting on the Mountain- meant EVERYTHING to them because it resembled Moses going into the Mountain to get the Law of God. And that allowed the Jew to relax and realize that, while many Jews saw Jesus as trying to “Undo” what God through Moses had done- the Reality is that even Moses himself promised that God was going to bring in the final, full, and completed Revelation of God to Man through the Lips of the incarnate God Himself.

So, we need to try to walk in the shoes of the average Jew of the 1st Century as best as we can- to understand the Quandary that they found themselves in. For example, in their mind- order for the Jew to believe in Jesus; and to strive to obey what He taught- in the radical Revelation of the New Covenant- required that they DISOBEY/DISREGARD many things that God through Moses had *commanded* in the Law, such as:

- Animal Sacrifices
- The Hierarchical Levitical Priesthood
- The Sanhedrin Court
- Temple Worship
- The Dietary Laws
- The Ceremonial Laws
- The Importance of the Nation of Israel

... and forever *replace* these temporary Signs, Symbols, and Types with the Reality of the heavenly and eternal Aspects brought about through the Life; Death; and Resurrection of one Man: Jesus, the Christ.

And the Truth is that most of the Jews simply could NOT make that Transition. Even those Jews who believed in Jesus and who had trusted Him alone for Salvation- were still engaged in these Old Covenant Signs and Symbols and Types almost 40 years AFTER Jesus rose from the Dead! They just couldn’t

understand how to break away from the obsolete Old Covenant and embrace the New- even four decades AFTER Jesus fulfilled every Tenet of the Law! And that is *why* God the Holy Spirit sovereignly moved on an unknown writer to write the **Epistle to the Hebrews**.

So, today, I want to look at the final Example that Matthew gave us here at the beginning of Chapter 8:

C. Jesus has absolute Authority over Infection; Disease; and Demons

Now many Protestants zero in on the fact that Matthew tells us that Peter had a mother-in-law which meant that Peter was married and had a Wife. And since none of the Priests of the Roman religious System can marry- they think this catches those people with a Contradiction. But it doesn't- because the Roman System freely admits that early on- they didn't enforce their Man-made Rule that Priests can't marry.

But what is amazing here is that, before antibiotics- Jesus *organically* healed Peter's mother-in-law by simply touching her hand. And Matthew offers proof that this Woman was really healed of some type of Infection- which had caused the Fever- by telling us that she *immediately* began to wait on them. So, by showing us this- Matthew was showing his Jewish readers (and us) that Jesus had absolute Authority over this Infection.

Now what was actually happening is that Jesus- acting as God Almighty in human Flesh- was granting a temporary "*Reprieve*" from the Divine Curse that God had placed on ALL Humanity because of the Fall- which ONLY God had the Right or the Authority or the Power to do.

But it is also important to realize that Jesus was NOT permanently "lifting" the Curse from Mankind. He was NOT bringing the Curse that God placed on us- to an End. The Curse was still in full Effect even though Jesus had granted a temporary Reprieve to that Woman for a certain time-frame. Now how do I know that? Because that Woman is NOT still alive. And if Jesus had completely ended the Curse- that Woman would have NEVER gotten sick again; her bodily functions would have not ceased to work properly as she grew older; she would not have died; and she would still be alive today.

Remember, the Bible teaches that physical Death is an ENEMY.
1Corinthians 15:25&26 says,

25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.

26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

... and the Bible also teaches that Death is caused by Sin. **Romans 5:12**
Says,

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—

So, why does God *continue* to keep us under the Enemy of Death even after we have been born again? Because Death is a vivid Testimony that the Divine Curse that God placed on all Mankind is still in force- and that Reality serves to humble us. But it also illustrates the Divine Hatred that God has with Sin. Because Sin brought about Death. So, our physical Death is the unmistakable Proof that we are ALL living underneath that Divine Curse- even if we are saved!

So, all through the History of the Church- some of the most- godly of the Redeemed suffered terrible Diseases and died very painful Deaths. Why? To demonstrate that even with them- they were wicked Sinners, who were saved *by* God's Grace; and *through* the Gift of saving Faith and NOT because they were either Good or Righteous on their own.

So, experiencing the Miracle of the New Birth; being forgiven of all Sin and having the Righteousness of Jesus imputed to us; being adopted into the Family of God; and being progressively made Holy- does NOT remove the Divine Curse that God placed on all Mankind.

So, even when a person *is* physically healed- either by a sovereign Miracle or through the "*Common Grace*" of Medicine; Surgeries; and Treatments- that person will get sick again. And that person will also die at God's appointed Time. So, in the Case of Lazarus- he had *two* Deaths and *two* Funerals. He was miraculously raised from the Dead by Jesus when he died the *first* Time (**John 11:43**); but the fact that Brother Lazarus is NOT with us today- proves that even though Jesus temporarily gave him a "Reprieve" from the Divine Curse- that Curse was still in effect. And the man that Jesus raised from the Dead- died again!

Now let's look again at verse 16:

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.

Now the "**they**" here are the many, many people who were following Jesus everywhere He went. And even when it was Evening- and they had been following Jesus all day- many of them didn't go home. They stayed right there- *wherever* Jesus was- in order to get what they wanted. Some had traveled many miles- either walking or riding an animal- just to get to Jesus and they had nowhere to go or

sleep. So, they just laid down on the ground as close as they could to the Man they had heard could heal them and make them whole.

Now this shows us the level of Desperation these people had. And I'm going to get into that in great Detail next week- but when a person is sick enough- or he has been sick long enough- he is desperate to do or to believe just about *anything* in order to be healed. And that makes those people ripe to be taken advantage of. And that is the Situation with many of these people. They were truly desperate! But woe to anyone who takes advantage of that Desperation and uses people like that for his own Benefit!

Now look again at what the Apostle Matthew wrote:

... they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word ...

Now in my Lifetime- there have probably been more Books; and Tapes; and Teachings about Demon-possession and how to cast out Demons than the entire time the Church has been on the earth. And that is true because part of what it means for us to be "Fallen" is that we are very curious about the Unknown and the Supernatural. Now when I refer to the Supernatural, I am talking about that Realm of Creation where unexplained things occur; and where Beings exist- that are "Super" or "Above" the Natural.

But simply because something is "above" the Natural- does NOT mean that they are Good or Holy. In fact, it usually isn't Good or Holy. There is great Evil in the Supernatural realm; and there is much Confusion; and also much false Teaching. And it is in that Realm where demons, many times, operate.

Now the Bible speaks about "Demons" and "Unclean Spirits" and "Spirits" and "Devils". And that means they are real. So, demons exist. And that means that those Churches and people who deny the existence of demons and chalk it up to uneducated people trying to explain mental illness and some diseases. There is mental illness and there is demon possession. And there are diseases and there is demon possession and the two are NOT the same.

Now "demons" or "devils" or "spirits" are simply different titles for that group of Angels, that agreed with Lucifer when he rebelled in Heaven and was cast out of Heaven by God with him. Look at **The Revelation 12** with me:

**1 A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars;
2 and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth.**

3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems.

4 And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.

5 And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.

6 Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

7 And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war,

8 and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven.

9 And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.

11 "And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.

12 "For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time."

13 And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child.

14 But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

15 And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood.

16 But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth.

17 So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Now I have many Sermons on this one Chapter. Back in 1995-96- I preached **The Revelation 12** every Lord's Day for 15 straight months- so, there is a lot in this Chapter that doesn't have anything to do with the Passage in **Matthew 8**. But there are many Questions about satan and demons that are legitimate Questions that deserve Answers. And I promise I will get to all of them as we "journey on" through this Book.

But suffice it to say that in this Chapter- satan is labeled as, the "**accuser of our Brethren**" in verse 10; the "**Dragon**" or the "**great red Dragon**" in verses 3, 4, 7, 9, 13, 16 & 17; as the "**Serpent**" in verses 14 & 15; and as the "**Devil**" in verse 9. But these are NOT four different "Beings" they ALL refer to satan.

Now the entire **Book of the Revelation** is a very "*Spiritual*" Book. And what that means is that this Book is filled with Symbols that represent something else. And the Key to understanding this Book correctly is to be able to correctly interpret the Symbols. And with all due respect to the many people who have tried to teach this Book- in my Opinion- they fail to fully grasp what many of the Symbols mean. And that is why there are as many different "Takes" on this Book as Jimmy Carter has peanuts. And I certainly don't lay Claim to understand it all, either.

But my best "Take" on *this* Chapter is that the Accuser; and the Dragon; and the Serpent; and the Devil; are all the same Being- satan. Now look at verses 7-9:

**7 And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war,
8 and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven.
9 And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.**

Now this is when the arch-Angle, Lucifer waged War in Heaven. And he was cast down to the earth and BECAME satan. And in verse 9- the Bible says,

... he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Now the Angels, who sided with Lucifer in that War were thoroughly defeated and were cast down to the earth with Lucifer. Jesus Himself said this in **Luke 10:18:**

I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.

And as Lucifer BECAME satan- the rebellious Angels BECAME “demons”. And I say, “BECAME” because God created Lucifer. But God did NOT create EVIL. Evil is the Result of people rebelling against God and thinking and doing sinful things. And the collected Result of all the sinful people doing sinful things is Evil.

So, God created Lucifer and the other Angels- and it was “Good”. But when God cast them down to the earth- what God created was warped and perverted into satan and demons. Now, normally God would have provided a Way for that which had been warped and perverted to be redeemed and restored. But in the Case of satan (and I assume with the Angels as well)- God has NOT granted them with the Ability (or Desire) to repent and be restored. So, they know there is a Time coming when God will cast them into the Lake of Fire to be tormented forever- yet they CANNOT repent. And that is why the Apostle John said this in verse 8:

... there was no longer a place found for them in heaven.

Neither satan nor the demons can ever enter back into Heaven again. And that means that when satan came among the Sons of God in God’s Presence in the **Book of Job**- that Meeting took place on earth- NOT Heaven. Because the Bible clearly says here that satan CANNOT enter into Heaven again.

So, demons are “Fallen” Angels- that are trapped on the earth. Yet they still have much of the Power they had before they fell. So, for example, demons are NOT bound by the Law of Gravity and can fly through the air. You can’t lock them out of your house because they are NOT physical Beings. They are spiritual Beings- that can walk through walls and rise up through floors. So, they have much MORE power than a human. Yet Jesus has absolute Authority over them. And they know it! Now look at the first part of verse 10:

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come...

The “**loud voice**” said that NOW four things have “**come**”

1. **Salvation**
2. **The Power**
3. **The Kingdom of our God**
4. **The Authority of His Christ**

... WOW!

This Time; this Season; this “NOW” must be something very special for all four of these wonderful and glorious things to now COME! So, what was it- that allowed all four of these great things to now COME?

... for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.

... so, all four of these wonderful and glorious things have now COME because satan has been cast out of Heaven!

But wait a minute! Where was satan cast TO? The Bible says, “**he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.**” So, when satan was cast down to the earth with all of the rebellious Angels- THAT is the Time that all four of those wonderful and glorious things COME? Now look what else John wrote in verses 12&13:

... the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time." And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child.

So, it is AFTER satan has been thrown down to the earth. It is AFTER he has this “great Wrath”- because he realizes that God has thrown him down- which *causes* him to persecute the “Woman” (the Church) and the “male Child” (the Redeemed). And it is AFTER all of that- that those four wonderful and glorious things COME? Are you kidding me?

Wouldn't it have MUCH better for us- if God had cast satan to Neptune or Pluto rather than down to the earth? Why is it Time for Salvation; and the Power; and the Kingdom of God; and the Authority of His Christ to COME- AFTER satan and the other Angels are cast down to the earth and has “great Wrath”? Why then? Wouldn't it have been MUCH better for us for the Time for those four wonderful things to come to us when satan is NOT so angry and is NOT down here with us?

No, it wouldn't. Well, why do I say that? Because God wants us to OVERCOME! God desires for the Church of Jesus to be an overcoming Church. And if there is no Evil to overcome- we simply cannot be that kind of Church.

In other words, God receives MORE Glory when we are tempted by this angry fallen arch angel- and yet we do NOT yield to him. Jesus looks much MORE magnificent- when satan tempts us to complain; and to belly-ache; and to gripe; about what God has done; or what God has given; or what God has spoken-

and yet we have been so radically transformed (by what God alone has done for us)- that we can gladly trust that what God has done; or what God has chosen to give; or what God has spoken- is BETTER than ANYTHING this world or satan has to offer us! God receives MORE Glory when we can honestly and truthfully say with David,

Your Lovingkindness is BETTER than Life itself!

... and satan has to be here- on the earth- in order to tempt us and to fight against us.

But we also have to consider the “*Reality of Contrasts*”. In order for a “Good thing” to be seen and admired- there MUST be a corresponding “Bad thing” that offsets it. So, for example, we, who make up the Church of Jesus in the 21st Century are NOT discouraged by the Darkness that seems to be growing all around us. Why? Because we know that the Light of the Gospel shines BEST when it is the Darkest! Conversely- when so many, who lay claim to be saved- are capitulating to sexual Immorality- it emphasizes those of us who aren’t- all the more! And when people in America have the “Right” to be “Wrong”; and to freely spew their venom and acid and wickedness on the airwaves and in books and in magazines and on the Internet and on TV- many people despair. But we realize that we also have that SAME Right!

And so, we preach and teach and engage the Darkness all the more!

So, yes, in one sense- it is terrible that satan is among us. Yet in another sense- it is much BETTER that he is here! Because NOW Salvation; and the Power; and the Kingdom of God has COME! And that is true- because NOW Jesus has absolute Authority over all things!

So, Matthew is faithful to show us that Jesus cast out the Demons and healed the people of all sorts of terrible Diseases and Sicknesses- to prove beyond any shadow of Doubt- that Jesus- NOT satan; Jesus- NOT Man; that Jesus- NOT this world or the demons in this world- is God Almighty in human Flesh and He has absolute Authority over ALL things!

And Lord willing, next week- we will get into WHY Jesus demonstrated His Absolute Authority and whether it is still available to us today.

Amen. Let’s pray.

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