

# Session 7

## Jesus' Powerful Deeds: Mt 8-9

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Throughout the Gospel, Matthew links Jesus' teaching with his deeds. The teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7) flows over into his deeds of healing (Mt 8-9), the focus of the present session.

### Video Teaching Session 7

As a result of this video, you will:

- See how Jesus' deeds and healing actions are connected to his teaching. This forms a link between Jesus' words and deeds. They are different expressions of the same reality: the presence of God's "reign";
- Appreciate the evangelist's understanding of the meaning of miracles;
- Recognise the inclusive nature of Matthew's Jesus, whose actions touch the lives of all, men and women, including creation;
- Come to see the contemporary relevance of the miracle stories.



*The Calling of St. Matthew,*  
by Vittore Carpaccio, 1502.

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## Mt 8-9: Jesus' Healing Conduct

### Context

- This section of the Gospel is anticipated by Mt 4.23 with a summary of Jesus healing actions intimately associated with his proclamation of God's Reign. Jesus' teaching in Mt 5-7 and the intimate link with his healing deeds (Mt 8-9) leads to another summary in Mt 9.35 that again identifies Jesus' healing actions as associated with the proclamation of the "good news of the Kingdom":

4:23 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and **healing (therapeuo)** every disease and every sickness among the people.

1. Proclamation in Word: Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7)
2. Proclamation in Deed: Healing deeds (Mt 8-9)

9.35 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and **healing (therapeuo)** every disease and every sickness.

### Literary Structure

Mt 8-9 is marked off by three blocks of three healing stories interspersed with two summary "buffers":

Leper cleansed	(8.1-4)
Centurion's child/girl/boy healed	(8.5-13)
Peter's mother-in-law resurrected	(8.14-15)
<i>Buffer: healings and discipleship</i>	<i>(8.16-22)</i>
A storm calmed	(8.23-27)
Gadarene Demoniacs liberated	(8.28-34)
Paralytic enabled	(9.1-8)
<i>Buffer: Discipleship and purity</i>	<i>(9.9-17)</i>
Two women healed	(9.18-26)
The blind receive sight	(9.27-31)
A demoniac exorcised for speech	(9.32-34)



“THE MIRACLES ARE SIGNS  
POINTING TO A MORE COMPLETE  
WHOLENESS THAT IS GOD’S  
ULTIMATE INTENT FOR  
HUMANITY. THEY DISCLOSE  
GOD’S PURPOSE HERE AND NOW,  
EVEN IF THE FULL REALIZATION  
OF THAT PURPOSE MUST AWAIT  
THE FINAL ARRIVAL OF THE  
KINGDOM.....”

B. Byrne, *Lifting the Burden*, 75

## Summary

The notable Australian scholar on Matthew’s Gospel, Elaine Wainwright, summarises the implications of these chapters of the Gospel:

“...Participation in the transformative power of healing as constructed by the Gospel narrative for both women and men outside the officially sanctioned and commissioned group of males is not simply to

be recipients but, sanctioned by the initiative of the hemorrhaging woman and the new labels given to marginal women and men, to take up their new task of healing.

“This is to make a deep connection between our world and that of the Matthean recipients of the Gospel, to recognize our own authority to heal the brokenness and the sin of our world, our universe. This is to read the Gospel narrative symbolically and rhetorically for today’s world.

“Women and men as active participants in their own healing, in the healing of human relationships and human brokenness, and in the healing of the universe may be transformed by their faith to be healers as well as healed in the interplay of movement toward transformation. In this they continue the healing and being healed configured in the body of the Matthean Jesus who died and was raised up by divine power and authority given until the close of the age.”

Elaine Wainwright, “The Matthean Jesus and the Healing of Women,” *The Gospel of Matthew in Current Study*. D.E. Aune, editor (Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2001), 95.



Jesus heals Simon's Mother-in-Law  
(*Attribution: John Bridges, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons*)

## For Reflection

- How does this session challenge conventional understandings of miracles?
- What would you name as a miracle in your life? Why?