

Mount Zion A.M.E. Church of New Brunswick, NJ
04/14/2024

By Paul T. Bennett Church School Superintendent

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Examining Our Faith

The Measure of Faith

■ 4/7 – Luke 5:17 – 26

The faith of four friends had to overcome the obstacle of a crowd to get to Jesus to intercede for their friend. Their faith was rewarded, their friend healed and forgiven, and the Pharisees had a testimony

Quarter Preview

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Examining Our Faith

The Measure of Faith

Faith of a Centurion

Luke 7:1 – 10

Background

- A Roman Legion consisted of nearly 5000 men, split into units called cohorts.
- A cohort consisted of up to 60 centuries which could be from a hundred to several hundred men

Background

- A Roman centurion was a professional military officer commanding of a century
- Roman centurions represented the bridge between enlisted troops and commissioned officers, in much the same way as warrant officers do in the modern U.S. military.

Background

- Centurions were held to high standards of conduct and were expected to fight on the front lines with their men.
- As a result, Roman centurions were well paid and held in high esteem making them influential in society.

Background

- For these men to make a request of anyone, let alone Jesus, a Jew, would have required great faith and great humility.

Background

- Synagogues were the weekly gathering places of people for worship, teaching and instruction on the Sabbath. In many ways, they function more like our modern-day churches than the temple in Jerusalem did, which for most people was only visited annually
- Synagogues were governed by the Pharisees

Background

- After last week's lesson, Jesus remained in Capernaum, continuing to teach, heal, and establish the 12 Apostles
- Today's lessons is also recorded in **Matthew 8:5 – 13**

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Lesson Text

Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant

LUKE 7:1 (NKJV)



¹ Now when He concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum.

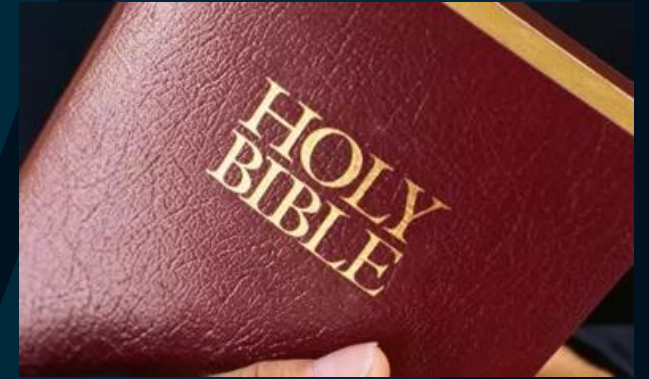
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Lesson Text

Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant

LUKE 7:2 – 3 (NKJV)

² And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die. ³ So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant.



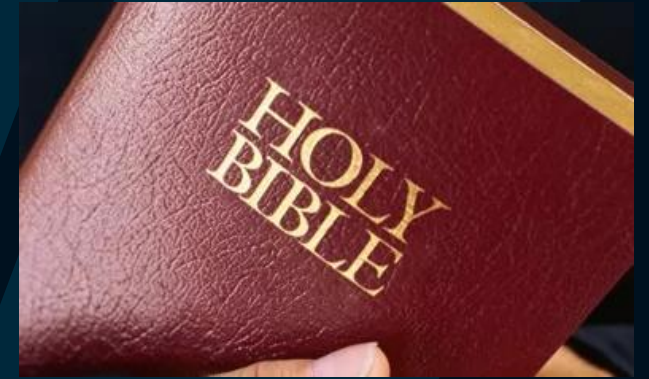
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Lesson Text

Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant

LUKE 7:4 – 5 (NKJV)

⁴ And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving, ⁵ “for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue.”



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Commentary: God-Fearing

- There's no evidence that the centurion converted to Judaism, but it seems evident that already had a faith in the God of Israel and supported their cause as other non-Jews:

<https://www.biola.edu/blogs/good-book-blog/2014/non-israelite-followers-of-yhwh-in-the-old-testament>

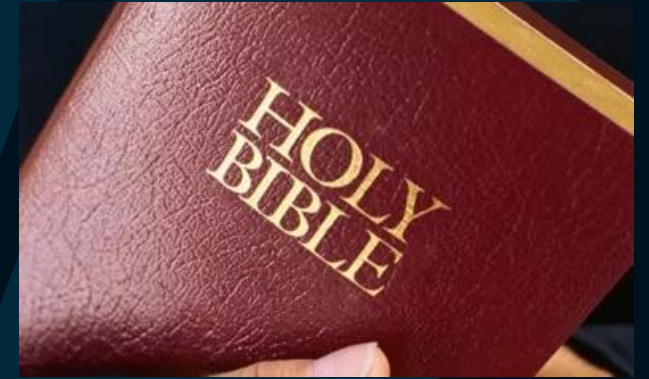
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Lesson Text

Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant

LUKE 7:6(NKJV)

⁶ Then Jesus went with them. And when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof.



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Lesson Text

Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant

LUKE 7:7(NKJV)

⁷ Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed.



Commentary: Faith Overcomes

- BARRIER

- Cultural differences

- In the OT, it was custom for Jews not to associate with Gentiles (**John 4:9; Acts 10:28, 11:3**)
- Being sensitive to the Jewish people the centurion sent others on his behalf

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Lesson Text

Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant

LUKE 7:8 (NKJV)

⁸ For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."



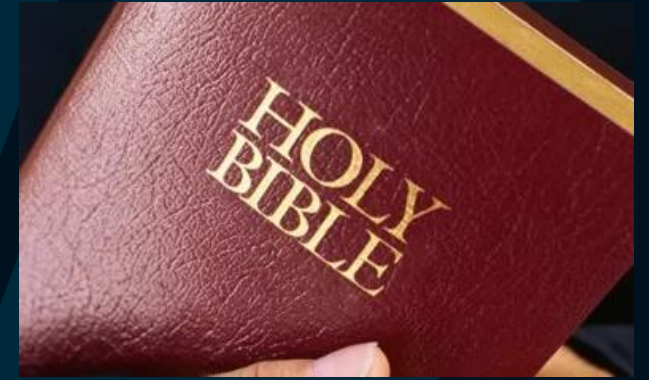
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Lesson Text

Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant

LUKE 7:9 (NKJV)

⁹ When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, "I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!"



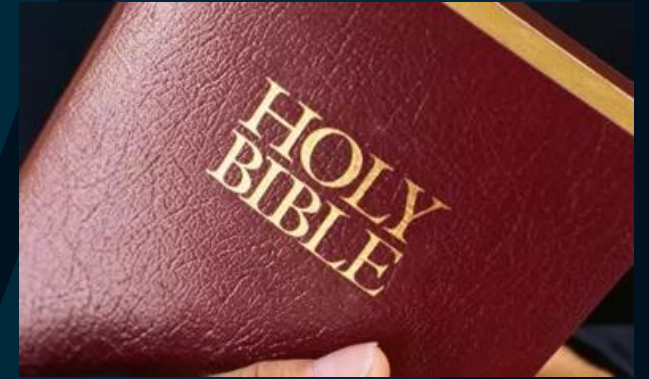
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Lesson Text

Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant

LUKE 7:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ And those who were sent,
returning to the house, found the
servant well ^[a]who had been sick.



Commentary: Faith Overcomes

- BARRIER

- Status & Position

- Israel was never it's own state after the exile. They were always ruled by another authority – by this time, it was the Roman Empire

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Commentary: Faith Overcomes

- The centurion however exhibited great **MEEKNESS** in his dealings with the Jewish people when he did not have to
- He could have easily ordered some of his men to arrest Jesus and have Him come to his home, but he humbled himself, putting his authority aside

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Commentary: Faith Overcomes

- For the rich, the powerful and the influential, to exercise faith, one must take off their title and recognize they are no different than anyone else
- We see in **Luke 18:9-14** – the parable of the tax collector the Pharisee would not humble himself as the sinner did