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a *Grace Notes* course

## **Life of Christ 300**

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### **Lesson 307**

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## Healing Incidents

Matthew 9:27-34

Exposition.

The Incident of the Blind Men.

Their plea, v.27, "And while passing on from there, two blind men followed after Jesus, crying out and saying, 'Have mercy on us, Son of David!'"

So Christ leaves Jairus's house and moves on. It does not indicate His ultimate destination within this passage, but the next part of the narrative has our Lord in Nazareth - that is where He will eventually go.

Whether the crowd has dispersed is not evident; it seems like Christ is alone, or at least only with His disciples. In any event, two blind men followed after Jesus - but what is wrong with this picture?

How could they follow if they were blind? Apparently unmentioned are their guides. Family or friends could guide them to Jesus Christ hoping that He would do something about their condition.

So He goes on His way and these two follow after Him, and they cry out. The word is *KRAZO*, and it really does denote desperation here. These men are desperate for relief from their condition.

Although the substance of their plea is common enough, 'Have mercy on us,' what they call Jesus is interesting indeed - 'Son of David.'

(1) This way of addressing Jesus Christ was a way of identifying His lineage and right to the throne of Israel.

(a) John 7:42, "Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the descendants of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?"

(b) Romans 1:3, "Concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh."

(c) 2 Timothy 2:8, "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel."

(2) It is impossible to know for sure the motive that these blind men have for this mode of address. It is either respect or flattery, and Christ

knows it could go either way. He is going to reserve judgment until He can inquire further.

Jesus' testing of their faith, and their reply, v.28, "And after coming into the house the blind men approached Him, and Jesus says to them, 'Do you believe that I am able to do this?' They said to Him,

So Christ comes into a house, and the blind men approach Him.

And so Jesus tests their faith with the question. By this He will know for certain whether they are grace oriented.

But when you are blind, grace orientation seems almost an assumption. Christ does not assume, but asks them whether they trust in His ability to heal them.

They answer simply and quickly and respectfully, *NAI, KURIE*.

Jesus' healing of them, and His admonition, vv.29-30, "(29) Then He touched their eyes, saying According to your faith let it happen to you.' (30) And their eyes were opened. And Jesus warned them, saying, 'Let no one know that you see!'"

Again there is touch. He touched their eyes. You can imagine Christ reaching out with both hands, and their moment of anticipation, because they do not know what He is going to do. Then they feel His touch, and instinctively their eyelids close.

And with the touch the words, *KATA TEN PISTIN HUMON GENETHETO HUMIN*.

(1) The sentence describes a pattern, and the pattern is the faith of these two men.

(2) Christ communicates not to the men, but to God. This is a prayer.

(3) The imperative of entreaty is the function of the verb *GENETHETO*. This is a polite way of issuing a command, and the command is a prayer command to God.

(4) Christ has supreme confidence in the faith of these men; He places that confidence in God, knowing that God the Father will be completely faithful to the faith of these men.

And so these men hear the words as Christ touches their eyes, and then His touch recedes, and their eyes instinctively open again... and they can see.

It doesn't say how long their condition had lasted, but with blindness it would hardly matter. A lifetime or a matter of weeks would not make a difference to their desperation, and now to their most definite joy.

And He adds a command to them. Again publicity is a great concern for Jesus, and He has apparently shucked the crowd for the time being. But if these men should make public their healing at Christ's hand, then He is likely to be mobbed again.

Their disobedience, v.31, "But after they went out [from the house] they spread it around in that whole area."

Again we don't know the motive, we can only observe the disobedience. They went out from the house and spread it around the whole area. They did so right away.

DIEPHEMISAN is the verb which means 'spread around.' It means literally to 'speak throughout.'

So these men leave the house and go on a tour of the whole region, and speak everywhere they go about how Jesus healed them of their blindness.

It's not like Christ was using reverse psychology on them, and He wanted them to spread publicity about Him. They disobeyed, and gave disrespected to the compassion of Jesus Christ.

The Incident of the Demon-possessed Mute.

His condition, v.32, "And behold! While He was going they brought to Him a dumb man who was demon-possessed."

This is really as good a place as any to arrange this little incident. Since Matthew's gospel is arranged topically, it does not follow a chronology of Christ's life. Sometimes it is difficult to determine the chronology of events from Matthew's gospel alone.

And yet here we have an event that is only in Matthew's gospel. We will put it here, but it could be anywhere. To be honest, it feels like this occurs more toward the beginning of Christ's ministry, because of the response of the crowd.

In any event, there is a man who cannot speak, and he has a demon. The demon is the one who causes this affliction - it is the demon that is mute, or at least refuses to speak.

Christ had to know that the problem was demonism. Perhaps God the Holy Spirit gave Him guidance to this end, or perhaps people who knew the man could tell Him.

The exorcism and its effect on the crowd, v.33, "And after casting out the demon the dumb man spoke. And the crowd marveled, saying, 'Nothing like this was revealed in Israel.'"

It seems so simple a miracle. Christ casts out the demon, and then the man speaks. It is obvious to all present that the demon caused the problem in the first place.

The crowd marvels: this comes from the verb ETHAUMASAN. They thought this was something fantastic, and they say these words: OUDEPOTE EPHANE HOUTOS EN TO ISRAEL. 'Nothing like this was revealed in Israel.'

They review the history of their nation, and find nothing like this. Nothing from Moses until the present time that matches this criteria of a demon exorcism.

But of course they are wrong on one count, because they have forgotten their Old Testament.

The exorcisms that Christ performed were for more than compassionate reasons; they were kingdom signs.

(1) Christ is indeed demonstrating that He is the Son of David. There is something that I failed to mention when we undertook the Messianic potential of Christ previously in this passage.

(2) 1 Samuel 16:14-23 is the record of the only exorcism in the Old Testament: "(14) Now the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit terrorized him. (15) Saul's servants then said to him, 'Behold now, and evil spirit from God is terrorizing you. (16) Let our lord now command your servants who are before you. Let them seek a man who is a skillful player on the harp; and it shall come about when the evil spirit from God is on you, that he shall play the harp with his hand,

and you will be well.’ (17) So Saul said to his servants, ‘Provide for me now a man who can play well and bring him to me.’ (18) The one of the young men said, ‘Behold, I have seen son of Jesse the Bethlehemite who is a skillful musician, a mighty man of valor, a warrior, one prudent in speech, and a handsome man; and the Lord is with him.’ (19) So Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, ‘Send me your son David who is with the flock.’ (20) Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread and a jug of wine and a young goat, and sent them to Saul by David his son. (21) Then David came to Saul and attended him; and Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor bearer. (22) Saul sent to Jesse, saying, ‘Let David now stand before me, for he has found favor in my sight.’ (23) So it came about whenever the evil spirit from God came to Saul, David would take the harp and play it with his hand; and Saul would be refreshed and be well, and the evil spirit would depart from him.”

(3) So David is the only Old Testament believer who exorcised demons, and he did it by means of music and the Spirit of God.

(4) So Christ now reasons that if by the Spirit of God He is casting out demons, then the kingdom must be upon them, and He Himself must be the Son of David, the Messiah.

The response of the Pharisees, v.34, “But the Pharisees were saying, ‘By means of the authority of the demons He casts out the demons.’”

The Pharisees, on the other hand, do not believe them to be kingdom signs, but rather again claim that Christ is casting out by the authority of the demons.

This by now is an old accusation, and one that Christ completely refuted not so long ago in His ministry. Well, here it comes again.

And do you remember how cleverly and accurately Christ refuted those accusations? This occurred in Mark 3:20-30.

(1) That a house divided against itself cannot stand.

(2) That if someone is casting out demons, then the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

(3) If you are not a demon, you at least must be stronger than a demon in order to cast one out.

(4) And if you are not with Christ, then you are His enemy. And if you are the enemy of Christ, the one who has power over demons, then you just might be in a heap of trouble!

(5) He finally tells them that He is giving the gospel, and they are interfering; they are blaspheming against God the Holy Spirit, and preventing others from being saved. This kind of sin has the gravest of consequences.

### Christ Returns to Nazareth

Matthew 13:54-58

Mark 6:1-6

Exposition.

The transition to Nazareth, and who was with Him, “And He went out from there and came into His home town, and His disciples followed Him.”

This is all pretty straightforward as far as translation is concerned, but what seems strange is that Christ is returning to Nazareth at all. It is strange considering what happened the last time He was there:

Luke 4:16-31a, “And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book, and found the place where it was written, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.’ And He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him. And He began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’ But all were speaking well of him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips; and they were saying, ‘Is this not Joseph's son?’ And He said to them, ‘No doubt you will quote this parable to Me, ‘Physician, heal yourself!’ We heard certain things were happening

at Capernaum, do them here in your home town as well.' And He said, 'Truly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his home town. But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land; and yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian. And all in the synagogue were filled with rage when they heard these things; and they rose up and cast Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff. But passing through their midst, He went His way.'"

What a disaster, and He said some very frank things about the people of His hometown, and they were so angry that they even tried to kill Him.

A year or more has passed, and time enough for passions to settle down somewhat. In the interim, Christ's fame and popularity have grown. He has spent months and months in the region of Galilee, healing and teaching.

It was His former custom to teach in the synagogue. As a young man, He was often allowed to give dissertation there on various Old Testament passages and subjects. But on that previous occasion, He finally identified Himself as the Messiah, and the people were not interested.

Because they were so interested in miracles, they were distracted from His Bible teaching, and as a result He told them that He would not do any miracles at all.

They were outraged at this prohibition, and tried to kill Him, but He slipped away before anything could happen.

So the conclusion is that it took courage to go back there.

On observation: on the previous occasion, He had no disciples with Him. It was just after He escaped from Nazareth that Christ first called the four,

Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John. Although Christ was no coward, and He had no compulsion to go alone, there were twelve entering Nazareth this time, that that would likely deter any attempts on His life.

His teaching in the synagogue and the response of the crowd, "And after the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue, and many while hearing Him were 'knocked out,'"

He taught once again on the Sabbath, which was His old custom back home. As a young man, it was very common for Him to teach in the synagogue and now He has returned to do the same thing.

The people of Nazareth had no idea as to what they had. This young man who was so very knowledgeable of the Old Testament taught often, but they were pointedly uninterested in His ideas.

Yet the sermons of the young man Jesus had to be dynamic so as to change lives. How sad that so few benefited from what was the greatest pulpit ministry in history. Perhaps only His mother and one or two more really understood what He was saying.

While they heard Christ, they were 'knocked out.' The verb is EXEPLLESSONTO. The uncompounded form of this verb simply means to 'strike someone with force.' That is, it portrays the violent act of hitting someone. EKPLESSOMAI meant to hit them and knock them out.

But of course this could be good or bad. They could be struck violently in taking offense, or they could be struck violently and knocked out in amazement.

Well, this passage goes on to say that they are having a negative reaction to His teaching.

We can assume that Christ taught a solid and appropriate message here. We can assume that there was plenty of spiritual growth available in this message. But these people of Christ's hometown hate it with a violence.

This message has caused them rage and vitriol that left them knocked out - beside themselves.

And this gives us insight on the town where Christ grew and developed into a young man. To say that it was spiritually arid would be an understatement.

But how He developed character by preaching all those great sermons to people who were flatly uninterested!

And yet in this most arid of spiritual climates, Luke 2:51-52 has this to say about our Lord: “(51) And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and he continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart. (52) And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”

He grew in favor with god and men. He had a good reputation among the men of Nazareth. But couldn't this have to do with the establishment and business side of Christ's life?

Another possibility is that they only developed this negative attitude after Christ became famous. They could handle His sermons, and they were supportive of Him, but when He became famous, they became petty and judgmental. But this seems less likely than the other possibility.

Regardless, they did not like what He had to say, and for the most petty of reasons.

“saying, ‘From where did these things come to Him and what is the wisdom given to Him and the miracles such as what happens through His hands? Isn't He the carpenter, and the son of the carpenter and Mary, and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And aren't His sisters with us? Therefore when did all these things come to Him?’ And they took offense at Him.”

The crowd stated their reasons, and they are plain for us to see and analyze. They say, “Where did these things come from?” The demonstrative pronoun TAUTA points to the object most immediately at hand, and they go on to define it as the wisdom given to Him and the miracles such as what happens through His hands. We will look at each in turn.

First is the wisdom given to Him.

So if you think about it, the crowd knows that this is wisdom and insight that comes from the mouth of their hometown boy.

And even though they know that it is wisdom, they cannot stand the fact that it comes from Him.

And they deny Him as having much to do with that wisdom. Their denial goes beyond the point of grace orientation.

They employ this phrase (recorded in Mark 6:2) TIS HE SOPHIA HE DOTHEISA TOUTO. “What is the wisdom given to Him?”

(1) The passive voice of the articular participle DOTHEISA indicates that they did not believe Christ to be the source of this SOPHIA, wisdom.

(2) And this is where they are incorrect. Wisdom is applied truth. Look at this:

(a) You make four decisions with regard to the truth:

- To Hear it;
- To Believe it;
- To Inculcate it;
- And to Use it.

(b) God the Holy Spirit does two things.

- He processes it after you believe in it;
- He recalls it when you need it, before you use it.

(c) God the Father does four things with regard to the truth.

- He is the source of the all truth;
- He caused it at various times to enter human history;
- He sustains it in human history.
- He brings us to it through guidance and discipline.

(3) Now you can summarize this by saying:

(a) That God is the source of truth, and the ultimate source of all wisdom.

(b) That God enables us so that we are brought to the truth, and can process it, and apply it.

(c) That we are responsible through our free will for taking what is provided, for believing and inculcating, and for using it.

(4) It is fair to say that without God, there would be no truth, and without His grace we could have no wisdom whatsoever.

(5) But it is also fair to say that we obtain wisdom by means of good free will decisions, and that we possess wisdom.

Because of the negative tenor of these comments, we can assume that they think the wisdom could not possibly have come from Christ. What follows is their analysis of Christ's roots.

They identify that He was a carpenter, and His father was the carpenter.

So this is menial and humble labor. His father was a carpenter, and He had followed in His Father's business.

Now when we think of carpentry, we think of building houses and decks and even more ambitious projects.

But this was not the case, since most homes in Israel were not made of wood, so much as of stone and brick. There was, after, a shortage of trees that could be made into beams.

The noun TEKTON encompasses a wide variety of skills, including crafts and artifice. Wood-carving, weaving, and perfume-making are just a few of the things possible.

What is difficult is that Christ does not allude to His former profession in His discourses and conversation. There is no solid clue as to what this was.

This comment from the people of Nazareth is meant to be demeaning. They are identifying this as a common profession; even an inferior one. It is a background from which you would not expect greatness.

Their implication is that this is not fair. These people apparently have an elitist view of the Messiah. He is, after all, supposed to be the king of the people of Israel. And He is, after supposed to be a descendant of King David.

How could this lowly man, a man of such a low profession, be the Messiah? How could He be wise, and have such miraculous powers? You can almost feel their bitterness.

It would be like a janitor, or the guy who does your lawn, or a construction worker ended up being the Messiah. You just don't expect that guy to be the Messiah.

They also go through a checklist of names in Jesus' family.

Mother, sons, and daughters are all mentioned. But of course this is part of discourse that registers incredulity at Christ the wise man, and Christ the miracle worker.

They look at His family, and their conclusion is that this is just not right. They cannot believe that the Messiah came from this family.

How they turn up their noses at this notion. Once again there is a general attitude of elitism about Christ. It couldn't be, and it is wrong!

This does not mean that Christ came from a bad family; it does indicate that His was a family of generally low estate. There may have been plenty of virtue, and I am sure that if Mary was involved, there must have been a good upbringing.

Can you imagine, however, being a brother or sister to Jesus Christ? Wow. How truly challenging to be imperfect, and to have a sin nature, and to live in the same house with the boy Messiah! Only Christ's guardian angel had it harder... James is the only one we know for sure came out right. He wrote the first epistle of the New Testament.

One note: two different names are employed by Matthew and Mark for one of Christ's brothers. Matthew says Joseph while Mark says Joses. The latter was probably a nickname.

So they have maligned Christ, His family, and His profession. How could they do this? Christ was after all a good man.

And then it says that they took offense at Him. The verb is SKANDALIZO, which means to stumble, or take offense. This of course sounds familiar. Where was this quoted?

Jesus Christ is one of two stones in everyone's life: The cornerstone or the stumbling stone.

As the cornerstone, He is the foundation for thought, motive, decision, and action.

As the stumbling stone, He is the object of bitterness and motivation for cosmic involvement.

1 Peter 2:6-8 identifies this syndrome: "(6) Therefore it is contained [somewhere] in



Scripture, 'Behold I place a stone in Zion, a choice precious cornerstone, and the one who believes in Him will certainly not be ashamed.' (7) Therefore, the honor is for you who believe, but for those who disbelieve, 'The stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief corner,' (8) and, 'The stone of bruises and rock of stumbling;' they stumble against the word, disobeying into what also they were appointed."

Principle: Christ causes people to stumble because His life is confrontational. His life confronts us with eternal choices, and causes us to surrender our pride, totally surrender.

Taking offense means putting up a defense.

(1) This is the nature of the cosmic system; to lie about Christ's true nature, and about His work. Especially though His work.

(2) And with every lie comes a supermarket, a megamall of substitutes. There are substitute of every shape and color imaginable. Ways to attempt to replace what Christ has done.

(3) And with the replacements there must be a denigration of Christ's character and His work; even of His reality as a person.

(4) This is the rational nature of a human being. You have to do something with Christ, because He is there, and He does not go away.

Now Christ analyzes their words: "But Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not dishonored except in His home town and among His own relatives and in His own house.'"

Wow. This is pretty extensive. Our Lord expands this criticism to include His hometown, His relatives, and His immediate family.

Even His immediately family. This puts more of a face on the people who are surprised at His success.

Some were maligning His family, but Christ certainly here includes His own immediately family among those who were not welcoming Him.

There were some brothers and sisters who were maligning Christ with the others; questioning His Messiahship.

Christ had a heart for these people. After His last disastrous visit, He had no extraneous motivation to return. He came back because they were His people, and He wanted them to join His kingdom.

And there is risk involved here, especially considering the serious threat to His life which occurred last time He came to visit.

So He comes with the purest of motives, and a willingness to risk for these people. These are the ones He knows best. After all, He spent 27 years with them, and He has spent only a year or two with His disciples.

There was a certain amount of nostalgia here. Christ was experiencing old memories, fond and not so fond. But He comes back to Nazareth, and they reject him again.

This had to be one of the more difficult disappointments of His life up to this point. And yet He took it with grace.

The limited healing ministry in Nazareth, and the reason for the limit, "And He was not able to do any miracles there because of their unbelief (Except after laying hands on a few sick people He healed them.) And he marveled because of their unbelief."

Here is a reminder that no healing was done apart from the belief of the one with the ailment.

The reason is simple: Christ's healing ministry represents the healing atonement of the cross. The cross does not automatically save everyone, just as Christ did not automatically heal everyone. Both require belief.

This makes Christ's miracles and healing ministry a very potent vehicle for the gospel, and at the same time incriminates the people of Nazareth all the more.

This is reminiscent of the time that Christ pronounced woes upon Chorazin and Bethsaida, because there were many great miracles done there, and yet they did not repent.

And yet a distinction must be made. At least in those towns there was enough faith so that great miracles could be done. This could barely be said of Christ's home town. Therefore they were even

worse off than the two accursed towns of Northern Galilee.

And those towns were truly accursed, and pronounced as more cursed than Tyre and Sidon for the day of judgment.

Christ marveled because of their unbelief. This is the statement of Mark 6:6a, and the Greek word is the aorist indicative ETHAUMAZEN.

This means to perceive something as completely extraordinary, and even to have the inward emotional reaction on account of the perception.

If it is a good thing to marvel at, then there is joy; if bad, then revulsion. Christ here experienced a negative emotional reaction to what His senses perceived concerning His hometown people.

Now consider: Christ had seen all kinds of negative response to His ministry, and the Pharisees were even trying to kill Him. He had pronounced woes upon three cities in Northern Galilee because they were so stubborn regarding the object of His ministry.

And yet this unbelief is considered by Christ to be completely extraordinary. These were bad people indeed!

And yet certain principles must always apply:

They cannot be the object of blanket judgment.

If possible, the gospel must be given opportunity with them again and again.

### The Final Galilean Ministry

Matthew 9:35-38

Mark 6:6b

Exposition.

“And Jesus was going around all the cities and villages in a circle, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every sickness.”

This was a circular ministry. Mark brings out this detail with the word KUKLO. You are familiar with this word because you know 'Cyclops,' which means 'round-eye,' and of course anything in the 'cycle' word group.

So Christ went around the villages in a circle; He had a set path according to certain villages and

cities that He would visit. These formed a rough circle. It is not clear which cities and villages these are, but they are certainly in Galilee.

It is now winter coming into the spring of AD 29. Christ has been active in His ministry for almost two years.

It was His strategy to go into the synagogues and teach, and to preach His gospel of the kingdom, which He had introduced late in the previous autumn. He has been preaching the gospel of the kingdom for about four months.

There is a semantic difference between teaching and preaching.

Teaching is DIDASKON, which signifies teaching with authority. Teaching communicates and elucidates principles, leaving the motivation to students.

Preaching is KERUSSON, which signifies teaching with exhortation. Preaching is much more pushy than teaching; it cajoles and inspires to action.

When Christ went into the synagogues, He taught. The atmosphere in the synagogue demanded that method. It is opposite of what we are used to in our churches, but imagine that the synagogue is a school, and you will have a grasp of the situation.

When Christ was in the open air, He preached so as to motivate the crowds, especially regarding the good news of the kingdom.

The kingdom was good news - it was His offer of a millennial rule to the people of Israel.

And Jesus Christ was motivational in His speaking. You can well imagine just how skilled He was. He surely must have been a marvel at preaching, considering His knowledge and insight into Scripture.

Furthermore, He was authenticating all of this with His healing ministry, and every disease and illness was healed by Him. They all powerfully pointed to the healing of the cross.

“Now seeing the crowds He had compassion concerning them, because they had become completely distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd.”

Now this is a first indeed. The crowds have been a hindrance to Christ, and always something to avoid. He has had places to go and sermons to preach. Always the crowd is in the way; always they have the wrong motivation for seeing Him.

The present participle IDON is from the root verb HORAO, which means to both see and understand. Christ saw something for the first time in the crowd that He had been seeing all along. Christ has not changed, but the crowd finally has. Now for the first time they are developing a desire for a relationship with God.

He identifies that there is a leadership vacuum among them - that they are like sheep without a shepherd. And He has compassion for them. The word is ESPLAGCHNISTHE, which means 'guts,' the innermost part of man. Deep inside Himself, our Lord had emotion toward the crowd.

Two pluperfect periphrastic participles describe the countenance of the crowd in the strongest of terms.

This peculiar grammatical construction of the Greek language focuses the reader's attention on the action of the verb. This time, it is pluperfect, so it concentrates on a perfect state in the past. The proper translation is "They had become utterly..."

The first participle is ESKULMENOI, which means to be harassed. The original meaning of the verb SKULLO is to 'flay.' So when the bad news of life come one after another, it like being skinned. So Christ scans the crowd, and they look like they've been skinned by the events of their day.

The second is ERRIMMENOI, which comes from HRIPTO. This verb has a broad etymology with a common theme.

(1) The original idea was to toss away garbage - to throw away anything that was no longer useful.

(2) The Greeks employed this verb to denote a newborn child that had been 'exposed' by the parents - left out in the elements as a kind of post-partum form of abortion. The modern equivalent is tossing a newborn into a dumpster.

(3) It also came to describe the sick person who is cast down by his illness, and yet one more thing.

(4) It described the abandoned flock, which with no shepherd would just lie down and wait whatever disaster would come their way.

So now this is the flip side of their lack of direction, and their constant distortion and ignorance of Christ's ministry.

This was a generation of Jews who were lost. They had no decent leadership in the whole country. They had an identity as a people, and understood their glorious past and their great destiny. But it wasn't happening.

(1) They had David and Solomon looking over their shoulders; the pressure of the glory of the past, and the promise of the great kingdom of the future.

(2) That promise represented pressure on this generation, because of the failure of the Maccabean times, and the pressure and exploitation of Rome.

(3) This generation knew that they were slaves to Rome; they knew it whenever they saw the Roman fighting man in uniform; whenever they looked and saw another one of Herod's buildings; whenever they paid taxes.

(4) And they knew that they had not been equipped for greatness by their own leadership. Although the Scribes and Pharisees had attempted to put an iron grip on them through guilt and their monopoly on the temple, they had failed.

(5) These rugged and rebellious Galileans knew that the Pharisees were to a certain extent a sham, and they did not have such a great effect on them. This points out the moral dimension of leadership - that honest people will not follow corrupt leadership.

(6) And the Roman leadership was morally corrupt to an extreme. The Herodian dynasty of the region has seldom been exceeded in history for the issue of immoral degeneracy, just as the Pharisees have seldom been exceeded for the issue of moral degeneracy. It was that kind of time.

(7) But they were all thinking - what do we have to do to be free? What do we have to do to get what God has promised?

(8) So there is a real leadership vacuum among the people of this region at this time, and the people of the region have been cast out like garbage, so that they are exceedingly depressed.

But let's consider why they have not followed Christ - at least up to this point.

(1) We can classify Jesus Christ as the greatest leader of all time; and these Galilean crowds are like sheep without a shepherd. Then why hasn't Christ become their shepherd?

(2) Christ's leadership begins in the spiritual realm; it requires a relationship with God the Father through Him in order to work.

(3) Furthermore, our Lord is leading into a spiritual realm. The content of His preaching about the kingdom concentrates on the spiritual distinctions of His kingdom.

(4) Yes, these crowds are in a leadership vacuum, but they neither do they want to go where Christ is leading.

(5) There are many unbelievers here, as evidenced by how many believe for the first time when they are healed by Christ, or when they meet Him personally.

(6) But even Christ's disciples have trouble with the parables, and with faith that goes beyond salvation.

"Then He says to His disciples, The harvest is great, but the workers few; therefore bind the Lord of the harvest so as to cast out workers into His harvest."

Christ identifies the possibility of positive volition among these crowds. He knows that their mode of function is according to their cosmic frame of reference.

That is, He makes a mature evaluation of their cosmic modus operandi. "Cosmic people act like it." These crowds are living under the authority of their cosmic frame of reference and responding as expected. Christ decides not to judge them for this, but rather to see their potential contained within their volition.

He considers this harvest to be great. He considers the historical trends involved with these people, and determines that they are the kind of people that are ripe for the gospel.

There were thousands of people that followed Christ; not to far in the future, He will feed five thousand of them.

But why doesn't He just give them the gospel while they are gathered about Him at every stop? A crowd is an efficient gathering. He could just do this, and wham! They will all become believers.

Part of the answer is that the workers are few. Christ is a worker; His disciples are workers, but they are few. He says this in such a way as to make them understand that although His preaching and teaching are excellent, there is a need among them to receive evangelism in a more personal way.

Principle: people who are in the cosmic system are weak. A combination of things must fall together in order for a person to believe in Jesus Christ, or to turn their lives around from reversionism.

They must have come to a point of humility, of readiness in their lives. This is the abode of God. He is the one who works the circumstances of lives so that men are humble.

They must hear the gospel by one means or another. Sometimes a person will wait for just the right method before they will respond. This is a reflection of their weakness that they want to hear the gospel on their own terms.

1 Corinthians 9 has a brief passage on the principle of meeting people where they are. Let's go there.

Christ employs the imperative mood of the verb DEETHETE to communicate a command. The meaning of the word is 'bind,' 'tie,' or even 'compel.' The idea is that you force someone to do something.

Again Christ communicates the idea commanding God the Father with reference to prayer. This also was very clear in the Lord's prayer, where so many of the clauses were in the imperative mood of command.

The idea exists in Christ's mind because He has a perfect understanding of the integrity of God.

(1) God's integrity is His perfect attitude toward His own communication. God is always honest and forthright and clear in the way that He communicates.

(2) And God the Father always keeps His word. What Christ says here is that we need to take advantage of that divine veracity, and because God the Father will keep His word, we can bind Him to it.

So what is the principle of binding with regard to the gospel?

(1) God is not willing that any should perish but for all to come to repentance - 2 Peter 3:9.

(2) There are many in the crowd willing to listen to the gospel if it is brought to them personally.

(3) There aren't enough workers to bring in the abundant gospel harvest.

(4) God can find the workers - it is His realm. So - keep God to His word; He will be faithful.

He asks them to pray for the Lord to 'cast out,' EKBALLO, workers into the harvest. The idea is that the leadership of God is quite compelling.

The workers will be so impressed with the need, that they will go to the harvest as though they were shot out of a catapult. God often leads in this manner.

10. But there is one more principle at work here. When you want someone to do something, have them pray for the fulfillment of that need.

This is a fine principle of leadership. Christ told His disciples to pray, and He did it with a great smile and a gleam in His eye, because He knew that they must be the harvesters.

Of course the next incident in the life of Christ is the commissioning of the twelve for their work of the harvest. When you compare the commissioning with this prayer, you can see what Christ is doing.

Christ sees a need, and the men who can fulfill that need. He figures that if He can get them to pray for the fulfillment of the need, the Lord will do the rest. And indeed God is faithful to His word, and the twelve disciples are willing.