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The Historical Jesus and the Slave of the Centurion: How the Themes of Slavery, Sexuality, and Military Service Intersect in Matthew 8:5-13

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Abstract

When the identity of the slave in the Gospel narrative of "The Healing of the Centurion's Slave" is studied through historical-critical research, the written and earlier oral traditions of the story indicate that the miraculous act is true to the historical Jesus. Also, by exploring the slave's identity as a slave, same-sex love interest, and military recruit—and the 1st century C.E. implications thereof—the author concludes that the historical Jesus understood the sexual relationship between the centurion and his slave, and healed the latter based on the faith of the former. Jesus never spoke negatively about homosexuality and never offered sociological or theological discourse pertaining thereto.

Introduction

In the field of historical-critical research, very few scholars have made explicit attempts to discuss the topic of sexuality—much less homosexuality.¹ Commonly, Christian faith communities adhering to strict biblical authority view sexuality, especially homosexuality, in a negative light. However, positive biblical references to both sexuality and same-sex love are often misunderstood through the hetero-patriarchal lens most often used to read, teach, and understand the Bible. I drew upon the dual concept of hetero-patriarchy to denote the reality that, historically, the Bible has been written, edited, and interpreted mostly by heterosexual males; consequently,

the biblical worldview is fraught with androcentrism and a complete lack of the modern notion of sexual orientation.² One of these misunderstood stories is that of the distance healing of the centurion's slave found in Matthew 8:5-13.³ Most of the previous scholarship regarding this story has standardized the androcentric assumption that the centurion loved the slave as a father does his son. Instead, my research offers the realistic possibility that the centurion and his slave were in a sexual relationship. By examining the prevailing social constructs of slavery, sexuality, and military service, we can better understand the true circumstances of this story and its meaning for the historical Jesus.

The text of Matthew 8:5-13 is a pericope, that is, a specific selection within a broader section of the Bible. The word *pericope* is used here to isolate the story of "The Healing of the Centurion's Slave" from the rest of the stories in the chapter, consisting only of verses 5-13 of chapter 8. Preference is given to the word *pericope* over *story* because the latter often calls to mind fictional stories, such as myth or fable, while the former allows the text to be understood as historical. The pericope of "The Healing of the Centurion's Slave" centers on three characters: Jesus, the centurion, and a slave belonging to the centurion. Here, the centurion understood Jesus as a worker of miracles, and we do not know whether or not the centurion valued Jesus as a faith leader, but he believed in Jesus' abilities enough to ask him to heal his slave. The centurion's title denotes that he was an officer in the Roman army charged with overseeing a legion of 100 men. The slave in this pericope is denoted using the Greek word *pais* and is a slave within the centurion's household; yet the meaning of the word *pais* is much more complex than simply *slave*. So in order to do justice to the identity of the *pais* in this pericope, and shed light on his true identity, I will provide evidence for the historical nature of the pericope and then outline the cultural circumstances in which the *pais* lived.

The first step toward substantiating that a pericope is authentic to the historical Jesus is to return to its earliest sources. Since we do not have written sources from Jesus himself, we must rely on the secondhand accounts of Jesus' life and ministry as recorded in the Gospels. Furthermore, since the biblical Gospels were not written during Jesus' lifetime, we must demonstrate that the pericope had a strong tradition within the oral period—30-50 C.E.⁴ This period creates a bridge between Jesus' ministry ending with his crucifixion around 30 C.E. and the earliest written Gospels that preserve the pericope of Jesus healing the centurion's slave.⁵

The modern biblical canon preserves this pericope in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, both written after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. (Funk, Scott & Butts, 1988, pp. 12-13), and John, written in approximately 100 C.E. (Witherington, 1995, p. 28; Kysar, 1992, pp. 918-919). However, the Gospel Q and the Signs Source are the predecessors of the canonical Gospels and the earliest sources of this pericope, both argued to have been written before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. and as early as 50 C.E. (Funk, Scott, & Butts, 1988, p. 13; Kloppenborg, Meyer, Patterson, & Steinhäuser, 1990, p. 5).

According to Fortna (1992), the Signs Source (*Semeia* Source) is as follows: Hypothetical document comprising accounts of Jesus' miracles and held by a number of scholars to underlie the narratives in chapters 1-12 of the Fourth Gospel ([The Gospel of] John). Quite unlike

the Synoptics, this gospel characteristically refers to the miracles performed by Jesus as “signs” (in Greek, *semeia*): demonstrations of his messiahship, even his divinity. The [author of John] would have derived this use from a distinctive narrative source, the Signs Source. (p.18)

The Gospel Q is a hypothetical document considered to be a written source that accounts for the direct literary parallelism between the Gospels of Matthew and Luke that are not found in Mark (Kloppenborg, 2000). The Gospels of Matthew and Luke were authored contemporaneously, but neither author had knowledge of the other’s work. Scholars agree that the authors of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke used the Gospel of Mark as a source, which accounts for only some of the parallelism between them. Current scholarship agrees that the common early source, Gospel Q, accounts for the parallels between the Gospels of Matthew and Luke not found in Mark (Kloppenborg, et al., 1990, p. 7).

The parallels between Matthew’s and Luke’s versions of the pericope of Jesus healing the centurion’s *pais* are striking:

- Jesus was in Capernaum in Galilee (Mt 8:5; Lk 7:1);
- A Roman centurion was the petitioner (Mt 8:5; Lk 7:2);
- The centurion asked for healing for his *pais* (Mt 8:8; Lk 7:7);
- The centurion recognized his hierarchical inferiority to Jesus (Mt 8:8; Lk 7:6);
- The centurion stated that Jesus’ word alone would effect the cure (Mt 8:8; Lk 7:7);
- The centurion offered a short discourse naming parallels between his authority and that of Jesus (Mt 8:9; Lk 7:8);
- Jesus listened to, and was amazed by, the faith of the centurion (Mt 8:10; Lk 7:9);
- Jesus addressed the crowd (Mt 8:10; Lk 7:9);
- The affected was healed at a distance (Mt 8:13; Lk 7:10).

This parallelism suggests that Matthew and Luke used the Gospel Q as a source apart from their more well-known common source, the Gospel of Mark. Furthermore, since both Matthew and Luke preserved this pericope and the consistent use of the word *pais* to refer to the affected person, in all likelihood the Gospel Q also included this pericope using the word *pais*. A reconstruction of Q by Robinson, Hoffman, and Kloppenborg (2002) confirms this assertion (pp. 90-91). So not only does Q preserve *pais*, but it is an early source that predates the canonical Gospels, bringing us one step closer to Jesus’ lifetime.

The date commonly associated with the Gospel Q is early, around 50-70 C.E. (Funk, Hoover, & The Jesus Seminar, 1993, p. 18; Funk & The Jesus Seminar, 1998, p. 8; Kloppenborg et al., 1990, p. 5). What Q preserved is probably more accurate because it was written closer to when the actual event happened and closer to Jesus’ lifetime than the other Gospels. As mentioned earlier, the Gospel Q is not the only early source for the pericope that preserves this pericope with the word *pais*.

The other early source where this pericope can be found is the Signs Source that, like Q, was not preserved in its original form in the modern biblical canon. According to Fortna (1988), the Signs Source preserved this pericope just as it appears

in the Gospel of John: using the Greek word *huios* (the English word *son*) in vss. 46-47, but preserving the word *paidion* (a diminutive of the word *pais*) on the lips of the Roman official (vs. 49) and *pais* in vs. 51 (p. 59). Fortna bases his conclusion on the assertion that the verbatim text of the Signs Source can be lifted directly from the Gospel of John (p. 7). John's reputation as a creative editor suggests a different conclusion based on his intention to use Jesus' miraculous acts to prove that he was the Son of God.

As mentioned before, the Gospel of John preserves a version of Jesus healing the centurion's slave but with several variations compared to the pericope found in the Gospel Q. The Gospel of John holds that the affected person was a "son" of a Roman elected officer—not a centurion—and that Jesus was in Cana, not Capernaum. The author of John also replaced the discussion of authority in QLuke 7:8, with Jesus proclaiming, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe. Go, your son [huios] will live" (John 4:50). Thus, the author of the Gospel of John shifted the focus away from the subversiveness of Jesus' praising the faith of the centurion—a Gentile or non-Jewish person—and remains focused on the act itself. Further, the author of John showed the officer's faith. The officer believed only after he was told by his household that his son recovered, and he linked the time of recovery with the exact time Jesus spoke the cure. Consequently, the version in John does not have Jesus effecting a cure based on the faith of the officer, but instead has the officer gaining faith after seeing that Jesus' miracle worked. It is likely that the author's attempt to remove all subversiveness from this pericope also motivated him to change *pais* in vss. 46-47 to *huios*—in order to remove evidence of sexual relationship.

This redaction of the Signs Source by the author of John suggests that faith in Jesus is inspired by proof-positive signs and further illustrates the intent of the author of John to use miracles alone to prove Jesus as the messiah (Fortna, 1988, p. 48; Malina & Rohrbaugh, 1998, p. 65; Morris, 1995, p. 254; Smith, 1999, p. 81). This theory is widely accepted by scholars, and I agree. The intentions of the author of John do not preserve the historical Jesus. It is probable that the Signs Source, like its early parallel source Q, preserved the word *pais*—not *huios*—in its original form.

A pericope must be linked to the oral period—30-50 C.E.—in order to be considered true to the historical Jesus. Because the oral period did not end one day and the written period begin the next, scholars conclude that "sayings or parables that are attested in two or more independent sources are older than the sources in which they are embedded" (Funk et al., 1993, p. 26). Consequently, because the Gospel Q and the Signs Source are both early sources of the pericope and its use of the word *pais*, one can conclude that they both originate from a strong early oral tradition.⁶

The discussion of the evidence about the identity of the *pais* raises even more complex issues. In the popular research on the identity of the *pais*, each author is reluctant to provide a complete and unambiguous definition of the *pais*. Definitions of the word *pais* include "boy," "girl," "child," "son," "daughter," "slave," "handsome young man," and "beloved" (Dover, 1978, p. 16; Corley, 1993, p. 66; Jennings & Liew, 2004, pp. 472-473). While many authors argue for one over the other, my research found a much more intricate, nuanced identity for the *pais* that does not depend on just one aspect of his persona.

Unlike the English language, every noun in Greek has a gender, and this is signified with a definite article preceding the word. This explains why the word *pais*

can have both masculine and feminine meanings. The Greek article *ho* is used to indicate the masculine and appears in the Greek text of the New Testament to refer to the affected person.⁷ Thus, the gender of the *pais* in the variations of the pericope goes undisputed.

Classicists agree that “slave” is a definitional possibility for the word *pais*; yet more convincing evidence indicates that the *pais* in this pericope was probably a slave. The author of the Gospel of Luke changed the word *pais* to the word *doulos* (a Greek word that means, simply, “slave”) to remove any doubt about the identity of the *pais* as a slave. Further contextual proof is found within and outside of the Bible and considers societal customs in the first-century Roman Empire in which Jesus lived.

The Roman Empire was structured as a strict social hierarchy that influenced life at every level. The hierarchy can be visualized as a triangle forcing citizens of the Roman Empire into conformity within a power structure that held freeborn male Roman citizens at its apex, with freeborn women and children placed below, and the underclass and slaves at the very bottom (Boswell, 1980, p. 74; Hallett & Skinner, 1997, p. 41). Those at the top of the hierarchy (e.g., freeborn Roman males) directed their power against those below them (e.g., women, children, and slaves both male and female), so any action that appeared to challenge the hierarchy was viewed negatively. For instance, a male who abandoned his masculine role and adopted that of a female was seen as surrendering power for passivity (Torjesen, 1993, p. 184). For a slave, every aspect of personhood, even sexuality, was controlled through ownership.

Many of Jesus’ sayings reveal that he understood this hierarchy as a part of daily life within the Roman Empire. Many scholars have explained that Jesus used the subversion of everyday ideas to challenge his audience’s point of view and to inspire them to employ critical thinking in their everyday lives. Corley confirms “Jesus’ interest in his parables to challenge his hearers to consider slave/master relations” (1993, p. 65). Glancy corroborates this view: “Because so many of Jesus’ sayings preserved in Luke and Matthew feature the figure of the slave, they create the impression that Jesus’ audience was as familiar with the world of slaveholding and enslavement as with the worlds of farming and fishing” (2006, p. 107).

The effects of the common attitudes toward slaves even permeate the colloquial language of the time—specifically regarding the word *pais*. Slave owners used the word *pais* in everyday language to refer to their slaves, and it referred to the slaves’ subordinate status within the household (Glancy, 2006, p. 24; Veyne, 1987, p. 61). This is one possible explanation for the centurion’s use of the word *pais* to refer to the ill male in his household. Another reason stems from an existing Roman law that applied to the centurion because of his rank in the Roman military. Jennings and Liew verify that “It is well known among classicists that, around 13 B.C.E., Augustus had legally banned soldiers below the ranks of senatorial and equestrian officers from marrying, and that this ban was lifted either temporarily or permanently by Septimus Severus around 197 C.E.” (2004, p. 470).⁸ As such, the centurion would not have had the opportunity to have children unless he did it on the sly; even then, why would there be so much confusion in the Gospel narratives if the *pais* was simply a son (the Greek word *huios*)? Thus, the change made by the author of John’s Gospel, from the word *pais* to the word *huios*, is a possible error.

Like almost every householder in the Roman Empire, military officials like the centurion commonly employed slaves in their households to take care of the day-

to-day housework. Jesus would have understood this aspect of the role of the *pais* in the centurion's household because he would have known that the centurion was not allowed to marry and thus had no wife or children to maintain the household. Furthermore, simple childhood does not explain the disciples' reaction to the *paidia* (the Greek plural of *pais*) in the Gospel of Mark.

What characteristic other than slavery would inspire the disciples to rebuke Jesus' blessing of the *paidia* in the Gospel of Mark (Mark 10:13; Corley, 1993, p. 66)? Here, the word *paidia* is often translated "little children"; yet why would the disciples be upset that Jesus was blessing children? Corley explained that in the next verses (Mark 10:14-15) "Jesus' hearers are told to identify themselves with the enslaved or those in positions of servitude. In fact, the reign of God belongs especially to them" (1993, p. 66). This made more sense within the context of the chapter and also fit with Jesus' overall style of subverting normal assumptions by stating that the kingdom of God belongs to slaves—those at the very bottom of the social hierarchy. The disciples found this view ridiculous since they also lived within the hierarchy and afforded no privileges to slaves. This evidence shows that the *pais* is someone other than a son and that Jesus would have rightly understood the slavery aspect of the identity of the *pais*, but further evidence reveals that he was also more than just a slave.

While the *pais* in the pericope in question was a male slave, another facet to the meaning of the word *pais* can be applied to his identity. The word *pais* was also used as a diminutive that implied affection (i.e., a pet name) to refer to the younger or more youthful partner in a homosexual relationship (Boswell, 1980, pp. 29-30; Dover, 1978, p. 16; Gagnon, 2002, p. 163; Jennings & Liew, 2004, pp. 472-473). In this way, the centurion was likely using the word *pais* with respect to his sexual relationship with the male slave.

Scholars overwhelmingly agree that the word *pais* was used in the Greek language as a synonym for the word *eromenos*—a Greek word meaning "the boy you love" and specifically denoting a homosexual relationship (Dover, 1978, p. 16; Gagnon, 2002, p. 162; Jennings & Liew, 2004, pp. 472-473; Nissinen, 1998, p. 58). This idea appears in numerous ancient sources, including Plato's *Symposium* (385 B.C.E.), in which the author acknowledges the positive morality of a homosexual relationship wherein the beloved (in Greek, *pais*) is made "wise and virtuous" by the more mature lover (in Greek, *erastes*) (Nissinen, 1998, p. 59). It also appears in *The History of the Peloponnesian War* (433-411 B.C.E.), in which Thucydides writes of the homosexual relationship between Pausanias and Agathon, using the word *pais* when referring to Agathon; and in *Against Timarchos* (345 B.C.E.), in which Aeschines discusses Timarchos' reputation for taking advantage of the older men with whom he had relationships, using the word *pais* when referring to Timarchos. Furthermore, Boswell notes that "an official Roman document of the second century [C.E.]" mentions a *pais* in a "specifically homosexual context" (1980, p. 30). Even though there is a large span between the dates of these documents, there is no change in the use of the word *pais* to refer to a man's same-sex devotee.

Additionally, the life and ministry of Jesus fall within the time period in which the word *pais* was used in such a way, suggesting that Jesus would have known this word as synonymous with the words *male lover*. Moreover, the Gospel of Matthew uses the word *doulos* apart from his use of the word *pais* to refer to slaves,

and the word *huios* apart from the word *pais* to mean son; thus these words are not synonymous for Matthew (Jennings and Liew, 2004, pp. 471-472). As I alluded to earlier, each of the Gospels that preserved a version of this pericope—Matthew, Luke, and John—preserved the word *pais* on the lips of the centurion/officer. Therefore, it is not inconsistent to suggest that Jesus heard the centurion utter: “Say the word and my youthful male lover will be healed!” (Mt 8:8, Lk 7:7).

The assertion that the *pais* is the same-sex love interest of the centurion is further corroborated by the use of the word *pais* in the lexicon of the Roman Army. Boswell asserts that adult males “were still classed as ‘boys’ by Roman writers when they were serving in the Roman army,” and that this alludes to “youthful beauty rather than chronological minority” (1980, p. 81). The centurion’s *pais* may have been preparing to serve beside his master in the Roman army. While a man must be free to serve in the Roman military (Fitzgerald, 2000, p. 4), the centurion may well have chosen a trusted, physically fit, attractive male slave with plans to free him, allowing master and freed slave to fight side-by-side in battle.

Strong evidence confirms that the Roman army used pederastic relationships to their benefit in the organization of some legions of soldiers. In his work from the first century C.E. concerning the life of a Roman military captain Pelopidas, Plutarch described the Sacred Band of Lovers, a Roman battalion composed of homosexual partners:

[The] Sacred Band of three hundred chosen men...composed of young men attached to each other by personal affection...a band cemented by friendship grounded upon love is never to be broken, and invincible; since the lovers, ashamed to be base in sight of their beloved, and the beloved before their lovers, willingly rush into danger for the relief of one another. (2001, p. 396; cf. Boswell, 1995, pp. 64-65; Greenberg, 1988, pp. 110-116)

In this way, the less experienced soldier (the *pais* in Matthew) would model himself after the more experienced soldier (the centurion in Matthew) to fight the enemy with bravery (Nissinen, 1998, p. 58). Furthermore, since intimacy with a slave master would eventually lead to freedom for the slave (Boswell, 1980, p. 74; Veyne, 1987, p. 57; Fitzgerald, 2000, p. 13), and the positive treatment of slaves would reflect positively on their master (Fitzgerald, p. 5), it is possible to propose that the *pais* was a slave in the centurion’s household who, at some point, was chosen by the centurion as a lover in order to be later freed to fight beside him in the Roman army.

The modern understanding of pederasty as a relationship between a man and a boy evokes ideas of inappropriate contact between an adult and a child; interestingly, the ancient practice of pederasty was more complex than our modern ideology would let us believe. According to Jennings, “[*Pais*] is one of two roots that together form the word ‘pederasty.’ The other root is ‘erastes’ (from the Greek word *eros*) which means ‘lover.’ The term ‘pederasty’ means ‘lover of youths’ and was the technical term for male homosexual relationships in the Hellenistic world” (2003, p. 133). However, the *pais* as a lover, just like the *pais* as a slave, was referred to as such even when he was an adult displaying adult characteristics (i.e., facial hair, height) (Dover, 1978, p. 85; Glancy, 2006, p. 24). Furthermore, Boswell states, “In the majority of instances homosexual relations are described as occurring between fully grown persons, and

no disparity in age is implied or stated,” citing an extensive list of ancient works by authors including Plutarch and Clement of Alexandria (1980, p. 30). Jennings (2003) agrees, stating, “In the Hellenistic world, despite the literal connotation of ‘boy,’ the ‘beloved’ referred to in this way would not normally have been a minor” (pp. 133-134). Scholars have even found that some pederastic relationships were not temporary bonds, but lasted through adulthood (Nissinen, 1998, p. 67; Scroggs, 1983, pp. 130-139). Thus, the centurion’s *pais* may have been only slightly younger than himself or even a peer with the use of the word *pais* referring to his inferior social status as a slave. Finally, with the lawful ban on marriage looming over the centurion, his relationship with the *pais* was likely not a short-term tryst but a valuable solution to his lack of mutual affection and his vulnerability in the battlefield.

My research has shown that Jesus’ miraculous healing of the centurion’s slave is grounded in historical fact; that the slave was not a son or just a slave of the centurion, but his sexual partner, and that Jesus healed the slave with a full understanding that he was in a physical relationship with his master, the centurion. So what, finally, are the implications of Jesus’ healing of the centurion’s *pais*? First, this pericope is true to the historical Jesus, which I concluded by tracing the pericope from the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John through their earlier sources (the Gospel Q and the Signs Source). This then implies the existence of an oral tradition for the pericope dating back to within Jesus’ lifetime. Thus, it is implicit that the historical Jesus healed the male *pais* of a Roman army official. Second, as revealed by the evidence for the sociocultural context of the first-century Roman Empire, Jesus would have understood that the *pais* was a slave. Thus, this pericope can be seen as yet another example of Jesus’ empathy toward those on the lowest end of the social order and in positions of servitude, to the extent that their position is especially blessed by Jesus’ ministry.⁹ Third, the sociocultural context also indicates that the historical Jesus probably healed the centurion’s *pais* with the understanding that the two were involved in a deeply affectionate relationship that likely included sexual relations between the two males, and he gave no commentary—positive or negative, social or theological. If anything, Jesus’ impetus for healing the *pais* was based on the centurion’s faith (QLuke 7:9). This last conclusion calls into doubt the assertion by modern Christian conservatives that homosexual acts are inherently sinful. This pericope sheds light on a different point of view. It reveals the likelihood that Jesus healed the slave based solely on the faith of the centurion—even with knowledge of their possible physical relationship. Not only that, but he performed the miracle without even acknowledging their relationship. In my opinion, this action illustrates that Jesus did not disapprove of their bond.

In fact, we have no opinion of same-sex relations from either the Jesus of history or the Christ of faith.¹⁰ If Jesus did have a strong opinion regarding the relationship between the centurion and his slave-boy, this would have been the prime opportunity for him to assert it. Was this a missed opportunity to condemn homosexuality or merely a non-judgmental miracle of faith? Or was homosexuality a non-issue for Jesus? I conclude that if Jesus did have a strong opinion about homosexuality, it would have been recorded and would appear in our modern Gospels. If anything, this research has at least created a dialogue, offering readers a different interpretation of the pericope.

Notes

¹ Baird, in his analysis of New Testament criticism for the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (1992) states that historical-criticism is a method of “higher criticism” focused on realizing a historical understanding of the texts of the New Testament, and that “to achieve this, the [New Testament] documents [have] to be viewed in their historical and cultural context” (pp. 730-736). This is what I attempt in my analysis: to understand the historical context in which the Centurion and his slave lived in order to more fully understand their relationship to one another.

² For further reading on religious and biblical based sexism, see Ruether, 1983.

³ Remus (1992) outlines the “typical form” of a healing miracle in the New Testament: “the sickness is described (e.g., its duration, life-threatening symptoms, the failure of physicians and medicines to effect a cure); the sick person and the healer encounter one another; the healer, through word or manipulations and use of substances (but sometimes none of these), works a cure, which usually is sudden; proof of the healing is supplied; the spectators (if any) are amazed.” “The Healing of the Centurion’s Slave” follows this form with the one exception that Jesus does not have direct contact with the afflicted slave. This exception defines the miracle as a distance healing in which Jesus need not have contact with the afflicted person, but needs only to speak the word to effect a cure (cf. Mk 2:1-12, Mt 9:1-8, Lk 5:17-26; Mk 7:24-30, Mt 15:21-28; Mk 11:12-14, 20-26, Mt 21:18-22; Remus, 1992, p. 850).

⁴ C.E. is an abbreviation for “common era,” a term that denotes a period in time analogous to A.D. (anno domini). This distinction is common within biblical scholarship because it does not use the name of the Lord; thus it communicates more effectively cross-culturally.

⁵ The Jesus Seminar relies on this “fundamental axiom” that “only sayings and parables that can be traced back to the oral period, 30-50 C.E., can possibly have originated with Jesus” (Funk, Hoover, & The Jesus Seminar, 1993).

⁶ It is the view of The Jesus Seminar that the Q and John (Signs Source) versions of the story of Jesus healing the centurion’s slave are derived from common oral tradition (Funk & The Jesus Seminar, 1998).

⁷ The phrase “*ho pais*” is found in Matthew 8:6, 8, 13, Luke 7:7, and John 4:49, 51. Luke uses “*hos doulos*” (male slave) in 7:3. John uses “*ho huios*” (male son) in 4:46-47, 50, 53.

⁸ According to Scheidel, “The state’s rationale for its disapproval of military marriage is not discussed in the extant sources and remains an object of debate. Modern notions that this policy was designed to create a pool of illegitimate sons who grew up in a military environment and had a strong incentive to join the army in order to gain citizenship are implausible: there is no evidence that such individuals would obtain citizen status upon enlistment, and the ‘internal replacement’ model of Roman recruitment is unlikely for demographic reasons as well... The Severan legalization of regular marriage (alongside a pay raise) was supposed to make military service more attractive, which (if true) implies that soldiers may somehow have perceived the ‘ban’ as a handicap as well” (2005, p. 3)

⁹ For further analysis of the historical Jesus concerning slavery, see Corley (1993, pp. 62-67).

¹⁰ This distinction is common within New Testament scholarship concerning the historical problem of Jesus compared to the contradictory information offered in the Gospels (Barnes Tatum, 1982, pp. 87-90).

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