

The Identity Of *Pais* In Matthew 8:5-13: A Response To Jennings And Liew's Article On Matthew 8:5-13

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Abstract – *This study critically examines the interpretation of the Greek word pais in Matthew 8:5–13, particularly in response to Jennings and Liew's controversial claim that the term implies a pederastic relationship between the Roman centurion and his servant. Jennings and Liew argue that pais denotes a "boy-lover," drawing on Greco-Roman military customs and classical sources, and suggest that Jesus' healing of the pais without moral reprimand implies tacit acceptance of such a relationship. The author challenges this view by conducting a semantic and contextual analysis of pais in the Septuagint and New Testament. The study demonstrates that pais is variously used to mean "servant," "child," or "son," depending on context, and never explicitly as a romantic or sexual partner. A comparison with the parallel Lukan account (Luke 7:1–10) further supports the interpretation of pais as a servant, as doulos and pais are used interchangeably. The author also critiques Jennings and Liew's reliance on questionable historical analogies and highlights flaws in their assumptions about Roman military and social practices. He argues that the centurion's expression of unworthiness stems from cultural sensitivity to Jewish customs rather than hidden motives. The centurion's faith, affirmed by Jesus as unparalleled in Israel, undermines the hypothesis of a concealed immoral relationship. Ultimately, the article concludes that pais in Matthew 8:5–13 should be understood as a valued servant and that Jennings and Liew's reading is linguistically and contextually unfounded.*

Keywords: *pais*, servant, boy-lover, Jesus, Matthew 8:5-13, identity, Jennings, Liew

I. INTRODUCTION

Jennings and Liew (2004) published an article claiming two mistakes made by interpreters of Matthew 8:5-13, namely the identity of the sick person and the motive of Jesus in reference to the centurion. They contend that the person the centurion desired for healing is not a servant but "his 'boy-love' within a pederastic relationship" (p. 468). *En route* to their conclusion, Jennings and Liew examine the Greek word *pais* in the Gospel of Matthew and observe that the word is either rendered as "son" or "servant" by scholars, but they surmise that *pais* and *doulos* are "not synonymous for Matthew." Their usage in 8:5-13 is evidence against the synonymous hypothesis. Of *pais* as "son," Jennings and Liew state the view is problematic because of the ban for soldiers to get married by the Roman Emperor Augustus, which was only lifted in 197 A.D. (pp. 468, 470). That is, the centurion could not have any biological son who could be referred to by the term *pais*.

Moreover, it is observed that Matthew employs the word *huios* at least 90 times in which each usage is seemingly denoting a "lineage or relationship of descent (biological or metaphorical) that is absent from Matthew's use of $\pi\alpha\iota\varsigma$ " (Jennings & Liew, 2004, p. 472). By this, to understand *pais* as a son in reference to the centurion is improbable. Also in the narrative, Mathew employs *huios* (v. 12), which may rule out any possibility of Matthew's interchangeable use of the terms. Finally, Jennings and Liew argue for a meaning of *pais* that is absent in the standard New Testament lexicons yet "familiar to most classics scholars" ((Jennings & Liew, p. 472). They contend that *pais* is often referred to as "beloved" or "the passive member (...) of a same-sex relationship" (Jennings & Liew, pp. 472-473). After citing various Greco-Roman sources, Jennings and Liew assert that the use of *pais*, implying pederastic relationship, is "well attested concerning Greco-Roman military in general and Roman centurions in particular" ((Jennings & Liew, p. 474). On the motive of Jesus, Jennings and Liew surmise that the centurion's rhetoric of being unworthy of Jesus's visit to his house is his evasion of a possible usurpation by Jesus of the boy's affection. The authors explain that the centurion understands authority based on his Roman military point of view. Jesus is understood to be his "authoritative competitor or challenger" ((Jennings & Liew, p. 485) to whom he might lose his boy-love. The key leading to this assumption is Jennings and Liew's interpretation of the word *pais*.

In his brief critique of the article of Jennings and Liew, Saddington (2006) points out certain flaws in the evidence presented from Greco-Roman practice and military. Saddington says that Jennings and Liew's reading of *pais* as referring to the centurion's boy-love and the hesitancy of the centurion to let Jesus come to his house for the thought of usurping the boy's affection is neither "supported by the Roman evidence" (p. 140). Moreover, Saddington questions Jennings and Liew's reference to the relationship of the poet Tibullus, his lover Delia, and the general Messalla to show the interchange in the "patronage system of the Greco-Roman world" (Jennings and Liew, 2004, p. 483). In this evidential illustration, Jennings and Liew state that Delia is a maiden (not a boy), yet the "dilemma, or the fear, is the same regardless of the sex of one's beloved" (p. 483). In his evaluation, Saddington states, "Tibullus belonged to the upper level of Roman society; Messalla was one of the most distinguished statesmen of the day; and Delia was a highly sophisticated courtesan. The interchanges between them (...) hardly throw any light on the relationship between a fairly junior officer in a small provincial town, his boy, and a Jewish healer" (Saddington, p. 140). He adds that the "patron-client relationships were a peculiarity of late Republican politics" that "did not filter down into the provinces or client kingdoms such as Galilee" (Saddington, p. 140).

On the interpretation of the term *pais* by Jennings and Liew as "boy-love," Saddington has the following objections. First, the Roman ban on marriage operates as a "status determinant and in the area of inheritance law." But "soldiers might, and did, form customary unions and raise families while on service" (Saddington, p. 141) only that the union is not a legal marriage and the children are illegitimate. This ban, according to Saddington, is applied only to "Roman citizens serving in the legions" (Saddington, p. 141). In that period, the soldiers stationed in Judea were not legionaries but non-Roman auxiliaries. In the case of Galilee where the spatial context of Matthew 8:5-13 is, Saddington argues that the Roman empire did not directly rule Galilee, but an

independent kingdom ruled by Herod Antipas. The usual practice of Roman client kings was to pattern their armies to the empire.

Moreover, the evidence of Jennings and Liew on the behavior of Roman centurions prone to homosexuality is based on instances where centurions and Roman army officers raped boys in wartime or the unwilling recruits. The only indication of a relationship between a centurion and a boy is in a satirical poem by Martial and not in real life. In other words, Saddington argues that Rome cannot be used to interpret Galilee.

Nonetheless, what Saddington fails to clarify is the meaning of *pais* in the context of Matthew 8:5-13. What he did is to parallel the passage with the Lukan version in which the Greek word used is *doulos* (7:2). What is intriguing is the closing statement of Saddington in his article. He says that "the centurion in Matthew was a Gentile (. ...) He may have had a homosexual relationship with his *pais*—who can tell?" (Saddington, p. 142). It suggests that Saddington has a certain agreement with Jennings and Liew on the relation of the centurion and his *pais*.

Other commentators have varied views on the identity of the *pais*. Morris (1992) identifies the *pais* to be a slave. While France (1985) assumes the *pais* to be more of a personal attendant than a son or an ordinary servant. For Hagner (2002), he views the *pais* being more of a son than a servant. Thus the *pais* in Matthew 8:5-13 remains ambiguous.

Nonetheless, what precipitates this investigation is the assumption of Jennings and Liew (2004) that the *pais* is contextually meant "boy-lover," implying the centurion having a pederastic relationship. By Jesus healing the *pais* without any words or hint of reprimand; instead, a commendation on the centurion's faith may imply a toleration on the supposed pederastic relationship. This study seeks to reevaluate the term *pais* to assess if it implies a "boy-lover" meaning as proposed. It employs a semantic and contextual analysis of *pais* in Matthew 8:5-13 and elsewhere in the NT and LXX.

II. BACKGROUND OF MATTHEW 8:5-13

When Jesus sends out his twelve disciples, he specifically instructs them to "go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 10:6, NASB). When a Canaanite woman approaches Jesus seeking help for her severely demon-possessed daughter, Jesus says that he "was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (15:24). Nonetheless, Jesus's statement is not meant to dismiss the woman but to expose her faith. For afterward, Jesus commends the woman for having a great faith (v. 28). Earlier in the Gospel of Matthew is the healing narrative of the centurion's servant (8:5-13). If there is uncertainty about the identity of the servant, Bible commentators agree that the centurion is not a Jew. He is a Gentile, yet he manifests a kind of faith that, in the words of Jesus, is nowhere found in Israel.

Shaffer (2006) contends that the two versions of the healing of the centurion's servant in the Synoptic (Matthew 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10) should be harmonized. He identifies three

approaches by commentators on the two accounts. The first is the view that Matthew and Luke employed a common source—the Q. The other position states that Luke has recorded the actual event while Matthew has abbreviated it. The last approach, which has rare proponents, holds that both Matthew and Luke have faithfully recorded the event and that both accounts could be harmonized. Shaffer argues that the first two views impugn the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures while the third is the most viable for it preserves inspiration. He says that the dissimilarities of the accounts should be seen in the variant emphasis made by the Gospel authors.

Moreover, Shaffer acknowledges specific objections to doing harmony, yet he proposes remedies to such difficulties. Finally, Shaffer suggests a narrative putting together the accounts of Matthew and Luke on the healing of the centurion's servant. It is undeniable that among those who espouse a high view of the Scriptures, biblical harmony would be taken as the solution to the supposed discrepancies, particularly in the Gospels. On the other hand, the uniqueness of each Gospel should not be set aside, for the Gospels are not only complimenting but enriching each other.

I would surmise that the identification of the sick person in Matthew 8:5-13 whom Jesus healed is dependent on the meaning of the term *pais*. To do this, let us survey the usages of this word in the Septuagint (LXX) and the New Testament (NT), having conscious of their contexts.

III. PAIS IN THE SEPTUAGINT

Beale (2012) declares that it is "very important" to check how the Hebrew OT is translated into Greek. The LXX is the earliest Greek translation of the Hebrew OT. Although there is ambiguity on the number of Jewish elders who did this translation, there is consensus that it was made in Alexandria, Egypt, beginning in the mid-third century BC (Bruce, 1984, pp. 136-138). It is not a literal translation, and there are instances in which passages are paraphrased. Therefore, the LXX is best reckoned as not a translation, but an interpretation and a commentary of the OT Hebrew. Nonetheless, the significance of the LXX is because it is the OT version available during the NT times in which it reflects the Greek used by NT writers though some nuances might be present (Beale, pp. 108-109). Thus, it provides significant help, particularly to word meanings in the NT.

In the LXX, *pais* occurs as the translation of the words *'ebed*, *na'ar*, *yeled* in the Hebrew Bible. The Greek *pais* occurs 469 times in the LXX (including the apocryphal books) as the translation of the Hebrew word *'ebed*, meaning "slave," "subject," and "servant" (Holladay, 1988) as compared to *doulos*, appearing 385 times as the translation of the same Hebrew word. In some instances, *pais* is the LXX word for *na'ar*, being understood as "boy-servant" in Genesis 18:7; 22:3, 5, 19; Numbers 22:22; Nehemiah 6:5; Proverbs 1:4; Job 1:15, 17. But in Job 29:5 *pais* is the word for *na'ar* in reference to the children of Job and as the girl daughter of a father in Deuteronomy 22:15, 16, 23, 25, 28. *Pais* is also the translation of the Hebrew word *yeled* ("boy") in 2 Kings 2:24 and Ecclesiastes 4:13. Interestingly, it occurs once as a translation of the Hebrew *ben* in Proverbs 4:1. But the word *ben* in the passage is used not as familial but as a class being addressed to. Thus, the word *pais* in the LXX is generally employed in reference to "servant" being

synonymous with *doulos* and about eight times occurs as "boy," "girl," or "children," but there is no hint that the term is referred to a boy or girl lover.

IV. PAIS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the NT, *pais* occurs 24 times. The BDAG lists three categories on the meaning of *pais* and its diminutive *paidos*: (1) "a young person normally below the age of puberty with focus on age rather than social status, boy, youth;" (2) "one's immediate offspring, child as son or daughter;" and (3) one who is committed in total obedience to another, slave, servant" (Danker, 2000, p. 749). Moreover, the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* defines *pais* as "child," denoting descent ("son") or social position ("servant") (Kittel et al, 1985, pp. 759-760).

A. *Pais in the Gospel of Luke*

In Luke, *pais* is a designation for a person with reference to age and social position. Three times *pais* occurs as a description of a young person. It is used to describe Jesus when he was left at Jerusalem—"the boy Jesus" (2:43). In the narrative of the healing of Jairus's daughter, both the narrator and Jesus use the term *pais* (vv. 51, 54). But in the story of the boy the disciples are unable to heal, Jesus is consistent with the term the father uses—*huios* (9:38, 41), but the narrator uses the term *pais* (v. 42:)—which is translated "the child" in the English Bible. Moreover, *pais* with reference to a social position occurs in Luke. Both Israel and David are called *paidos autou* ("his servant") in which the referent of the pronoun is God (1:54, 69).

Interestingly, in three episodes, the words *pais* and *doulos* occur together. In the Parable of the Faithful and Evil Servant (Luke 12:37-48), the narrative is quite consistent in using the word *doulos* (vv. 37, 43, 45, 46, 47), but in v. 45, the words *doulos* and *pais* are used together. The blessed *doulos* turned evil when he assumes his master delays his return. He is the head servant called in the passage *oikonomos* ("steward"). The household has other servants under his care—*tous paidas kai tas paidiskas* ("the male servants and female servants"). The *doulos* and *pais* (plural usage in the parable) are two different entities. The one referred to as *doulos*, which is also the *oikonomos*, should be distinguished from the *paides*. The use of two terms for a servant in this parable might be to distinguish the slaves, although the possibility of a slave hierarchy in the household is implied. The *paides* in this context may denote younger ones as opposed to the older *oikonomos*.

The second instance in which both *pais* and *doulos* are together is in the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32), in which both words appear spoken by Jesus. The father responds to his son's memorized entreaty with the instruction to his *tous doulous* to do something for his lost and found son (v. 22). A few hours later, the older son arrives home from the field and notices music and dancing. Having no idea of the situation, he calls *ena tōn paidōn* ("one of the servants") (v. 26). The parable is not about the servants. So, the assumption of a possible division of servants in that household, using two terminologies for servant, is immaterial. Instead, the use of *pais* and *doulos* in this parable may imply synonymity.

But the third and clearest paired occurrences of *pais* and *doulos* in a single episode in which both terms are meant for the same person is the Lukan version of Matthew 8:5-13. Luke 7:1-10 narrates the centurion's servant. In this narrative, the word *doulos* occurs four times (vv. 2, 3, 8, 10), while the word *pais* is used once (v. 7). The narrator says that a certain centurion's *doulos* (v. 2) is sick. When he hears about Jesus, he sends elders of the Jews to plead on his behalf for the healing of his *doulos* (v. 3). Jesus responds to the request and goes to the centurion's house. Not so far away from the house, the centurion sends his friends to meet Jesus. The centurion tells the very words his friends would say to Jesus. Remarkably, the centurion employs two terms for servants—*pais* as referring to his sick servant (v. 7) and *doulos* to illustrate obedience to his order (v. 8). The synonymous usage of the two terms for servant is portrayed clearly in this narrative. When referring to the servant of the centurion who is sick, the narrator employs the word *doulos* (vv. 2, 3, 10), while the centurion uses the term *pais*.

B. *Pais in the Gospel of John*

The single occurrence of *pais* in John is with reference to the healing of the royal official's son (4:46-53). The Greek word *huios* is employed by the narrator (v. 46), by Jesus (v. 50), and again by the narrator in his restatement of what Jesus said (v. 53). Interestingly, the royal official's servants, who meet him along the way, use a different terminology in their report about the son. Instead of using *huios*, they use *pais* (v. 51). Thus, in this healing narrative, the words *pais* and *huios* are employed interchangeably. It is the only instance in the NT that *pais* is clearly meant *huios* (Davies & Allison, 2004, p. 21).

C. *Pais in the Book of Acts*

Pais occurs six times in Acts. Twice it occurs in the sermon of Peter at Solomon's portico and three times employed in the prayer of the disciples. In these five occurrences, the term is referred to Jesus four times. In the sermon of Peter, Jesus is identified as *pais* of God in 3:13, 26. Following Peter and John's arrest and release, the disciples come together to pray. The word *pais* is used three times in their prayers instead of the usual word *doulos*. David is called *paidos sou* ("your servant") (4:25), and Jesus is addressed as *ton hagion paida sou Iēsoun* (v. 27) and *tou hagiou paidos sou Iēsou* (v. 30) in which both expressions translate as "your holy servant Jesus." The word *pais* in these instances may suggest a close relationship. On the other hand, the disciples are called *douloi* (v. 29). The last occurrence of *pais* is in relation to the boy that fell from a window named Eutychus whom Paul resurrected. It is used here with reference to age—*ton paida* ("the boy") (20:12).

So far, our survey on the meaning of *pais* in the LXX and the NT do not, in any way, suggest a "boy-love" meaning. Instead, the definitions of *pais* as shown by various contexts are a boy or girl in relation to young age, a servant in unreserved obedience to a master, and a synonym for son. Now, let us turn to Matthew, where the debated occurrence of *pais* is found.

D. *Pais in the Gospel of Matthew*

In the Gospel of Matthew, the word *pais* occurs five times besides its three occurrences in 8:5-13. The term is twice used to refer to children—*tous paidas*. These are the children Herod the Great ordered killed in Bethlehem following the visit of the magi (2:16) and the children in the temple singing "Hosanna to the son of David" (21:15). Moreover, two times the word is rendered as a servant—*ho pais mou* (12:18) and *tois paisin* (14:2). The former is a quote from Isaiah 42 which Jesus speaks as referring to himself as a servant of God, while the latter is talking about the servants of Herod, the tetrarch. Once *pais* denotes a boy as a young person in the healing of the epileptic boy whom the disciples were unable to heal (17:18).

IV. PAIS IN MATTHEW 8:5-13

The word *pais* occurs three times in Matthew 8:5-13. Two times the word is found in the direct quotes by the centurion—*ho pais mou* (vv. 6, 8)—and once used by the narrator as a designation of the person healed by Jesus in that hour (v. 13). In its parallel passage in Luke 7:1-10, the narrator is consistent of using the Greek *doulos* that only the centurion uses *pais*. But the case is somewhat different in the Matthean version, for the narrator follows the terminology employed by the centurion. Another thing, the word *doulos* also appears in the passage being part of the centurion's rhetoric, suggesting that Jesus need not come to his house (v. 9).

The character of a centurion appears only twice in Matthew. The first is in this healing episode (8:5-13), and the last is the centurion who headed the guards in securing the tomb of Jesus (27:54). In both instances, these centurions recognize the authority of Jesus. At Capernaum, Jesus met a centurion entreating him for help on behalf of his *pais*. This centurion addresses Jesus as *kurios*. Hagner (2002) comments that although the centurion does not share Matthew's Christology, he possibly meant more than a polite address. The centurion probably regards Jesus as someone given by God with authority, particularly in relation to healing (Hagner, p. 203).

In trying to find out the behavior of a centurion that could be comparable to the centurion in Matthew 8:5-13, Philip Esler examines a Greek legal papyri document from 124 A.D. of a Roman centurion at En-Gedi (Esler, 2014, pp. 1-12). The P. Yadin 11 is a Greek loan document of 60 denarii between the lender Magonius Valens and the Judean debtor Judah, executed on May 6, 124 A.D. Further, Esler examines other extant records dated by the late first and second centuries A.D. in Egypt and the Egyptian papyri of forty extant petitions to centurions between 20 B.C. to 255 A.D., attesting to the active involvement of centurions in village life. Esler assumes that the conduct of the centurion Magonius in 124 A.D. and the "practice of petitioning centurions for help in local difficulties" (p. 8) might be similar to other centurions elsewhere in the Roman Empire.

According to the centurion in Matthew 8:5-13, his *pais* is sick of paralysis, but he is terribly in pain (v. 6) more than his inability to move. Intriguingly, the centurion does not request healing. He simply states the situation of his *pais* (Morris, 1992, p. 192). Two things should be noted here that help explains the centurion's relationship with his *pais*. His specific knowledge of the physical situation of his *pais* and his action of going to Jesus despite his high military rank indicate his relationship with his *pais*. In its parallel passage (Luke 7:1-10), an interesting word appears in

which absent in Matthew's account. The word is *entimos* meaning "honored," "respected," "valuable," or "precious" (Danker 2000, p. 340) Although this word is not employed in the Matthean version, the actions of the centurion of going to Jesus and talking about the physical condition of his *pais* of which he has thorough knowledge is proof that his *pais* is more than a servant. That is, he has a particular regard for him, yet it is apparent in the passage that the *pais* is not his son.

In response, Jesus says, "*egō elthōn therapeusō auton*" ("I, having come, will heal him" [Morris, p. 192]). But the centurion answered that he was not worthy to welcome Jesus to his roof. His objection leads Jennings and Liew to surmise that the centurion is hiding something. He is afraid that Jesus might take the regard of his *pais* away from him, and instead of staying, he will follow Jesus. The question is, does the passage warrant such a view? The word used for "worthy" is *hikanos*, having varied lexical meanings (Danker, 2000, p. 472). This word occurs two times elsewhere in Matthew. It first appears in the baptism narrative of Jesus in which John exclaims that the one coming after him is mightier than he and that he is not even *hikanos* to carry his shoes (3:11). The other appearance of *hikanos* is in the episode of the elders bribing the soldiers who reported about the resurrection of Jesus. The first speaks of John's unfitness, while the latter usage denotes a significant amount. When the centurion says that he is not *hikanos* to welcome Jesus, he might not be thinking of his fitness, for in fact, he meets Jesus in Capernaum (Matthean version), but to the sensitivity of the Jewish religion (Morris, p. 192). Stationed in Galilee, the centurion might have known certain Jewish religious mores, which has the prohibition for Jews to associate with Gentiles and much more to go under their roof (see Acts 10:28) (Hagner, 2002, p. 204).

What is remarkable is the understanding of the centurion on authority. In the response of Jesus, it seems to suggest that the healing depends upon his proximity to the one in need of healing. But being a high-ranking official, the centurion understands what it means for authoritative utterance. Like himself, he does not need to be present with his troops in all situations. He simply commands his soldiers or his servants, and they will act according to his orders. Acknowledging the authority of Jesus, the centurion thinks that Jesus can do the same, and so he suggests that Jesus will simply say the healing word and his *pais* will be healed (vv. 8, 9).

The response of Jesus is vital in understanding the mind and motive of the centurion (France, 1985, p. 155). The passage says that Jesus marveled when he heard the centurion. The verb *thaumazō* occurs seven times in Matthew, except in this passage, the subject is always people. Of the seven references for *thaumazō*, four have miraculous events as the object of amazement while three for words uttered. The people who witnessed the calming of the storm marveled (8:27); the crowd who saw the healing of the dumb man possessed by a demon marveled (9:33); the multitude marveled upon witnessing the healing of the dumb, the crippled, the lame, and the blind people (15:31); the disciples marveled upon seeing the immediate effect of the cursed fig tree (21:20); the Pharisees and Herodians who wanted to trap Jesus about paying of taxes marveled over the subtle answer of Jesus (22:22); and Pilate marveled over the silence of Jesus to defend himself against his accusers (27:14).

Jesus's marvel is due to the *tosautēn pistin* ("great faith") of the centurion, which Jesus further says never seen such faith in Israel (v. 10). Jesus is talking to the centurion, but after hearing what the centurion says, Jesus turns to the people following him and say, "Truly I say to you [in plural form], I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel" (v. 10). The proposal of the centurion to simply say the healing words, as he does command people, is accounted by Jesus as a manifestation of his faith—great faith. But notice that after adding some eschatological implication to Israel (vv. 11, 12), Jesus turns back to the centurion and says, "Go your way; let it be done to you as you have believed [*episteusas*]" (v. 13). Jesus is saying that because you believe that your *pais* can be healed, although I need not go to your house, then so be it. The narrator indicates that his *pais* was cured in that hour.

The noun *pistis* and its verb form *pisteuō* are both employed by Jesus concerning the centurion. These two words clarify the mind and motive of the centurion. Two things should be said about him. First, the passage has no hint whatsoever to the claim of Jennings and Liew that the unworthiness of the centurion is due to his illicit male-to-male pederastic relationship with his *pais*. Secondly, the commendation of Jesus for the centurion's great faith, which has eschatological implications, rules out any hint of insincerity or a hidden sin on the part of the centurion. In two instances, Jesus reminds his audience about their sin. When Jesus finds the paralyzed person he healed at the pool of Bethesda in the temple, Jesus reminds him not to sin anymore so that nothing worse might come to him (John 5:14). After her accusers left, Jesus tells the woman charged with adultery that he does not condemn her, but he reminds her not to sin anymore (John 8:11). These instances indicate Jesus's boldness to condemn sin. It would be improbable for Jesus's absence of any condemnation against the centurion if the centurion was having a pederastic relationship with his *pais*.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on our examination of the various occurrences and usages of the word *pais*, there is no hint of a "boy-love" meaning in the LXX and NT. Depending on the context, the word means servant, boy or girl as to age, or even son. In Matthew 8:5-13, the *pais* should not be taken as a son but understood more as a servant. Yet the usage of *pais* instead of the usual word for servant in NT—*doulos*—may suggest that the centurion has a special regard for his servant but not to the extent of a pederastic relationship. Thus, the proposal of Jennings and Liew for a pederastic relationship between the centurion and his *pais* in Matthew 8:5-13 is improbable.

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