

# The Gospel of Health

*Luke 6:19*

When Jesus walked the face of this sin-sick and groaning earth—with great compassion he healed many who were sick. By God's power, he also miraculously fed thousands—on more than one occasion. He even raised the dead—three of them.

Did Jesus succeed in establishing Judea and Samaria as an oasis of health and freedom from hunger in the earth? The hungry he fed, no doubt, hungered again and the sick once healed, no doubt, in most cases, fell sick again and Lazarus, in the end, died again. Did Jesus lack enough of God's power to accomplish real success?

## Healing and Faith

When Jesus healed the woman, who was seriously sick for twelve years, he said, "Thy faith hath made thee whole" (Matthew 9:22). When Jarius' daughter died, Jesus said, "Believe only, and she shall be made whole" (Luke 8:50). Did lack of belief and faith alone stand in the way of Jesus healing everybody? Why did Jesus tell Jarius and his wife, "Tell no man what was done" (Luke 9:56)? To the healed leper, why did Jesus say, "See thou tell no man" (Matthew 8:4)?

Although Jesus performed thirty-six miracles during his ministry, physical healing was incidental to his main mission. Although on some occasions Jesus may have healed "all" in a particular crowd, he certainly did not heal all in the land of Israel.

At the Pool of Bethesda, there were a multitude of sick, but Jesus only healed the one "invalid" man (John 5:1-9). There is no record that this man had more faith in the Lord than had the others. On the contrary, the context shows that he had no faith—that he did not even know who Jesus was and did not learn until afterward who had helped him! Did Jesus then call the others to step up to be healed? He quietly slipped away anonymously in the multitude. Why?

Jesus did not wish to over-stimulate the popular support of the people by these miracles of healing. But with tender yearning, Jesus desired to heal

the hardness of heart of his Jewish brethren which causes spiritual "blindness," but they would not be healed (John 12:37-40). "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him." In reality, the physical miracles were merely a means to an end—spiritual healing!

Jesus' main purpose on earth was to preach the Gospel and die on the cross as a "ransom for all." The miracles were designed to serve as a testimony to his messiah-ship and as a token illustration of what his Kingdom—when established—would actually do for all people.

## **Healing and the Early Church**

In the Apostles' day, gifts of the spirit—including healing—were given to establish the earth church in its infancy. But Paul pointed to the more superior ("best") gifts—the fruits of the spirit of love (I Corinthians 12:28-31; 13). Speaking in the first person as representing the growing church, Paul said, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, but when I became a man, I put away childish things." The gifts of tongues (foreign languages) and healing (physical) were as "toys" of childhood in comparison to the fruits of the spirit belonging to the mature Church of later years. Just like tongues, healing was a "sign" to unbelievers, not to believers (I Corinthians 14:22).\*

Paul's dearest spiritual son, Timothy, was frequently very sick. Did the Apostle lay hands on him and heal him? Surely Timothy had sufficient faith. No, Paul suggested Timothy "use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities."

The great Apostle Paul himself asked the Lord three times if he could be relieved of his great handicap of bad eyesight (Galatians 4:14,15). Surely the Lord could have blessed this sincere request so that Paul's ministry in the gospel would not be hampered. But Paul was denied this request. Instead, the Lord told him, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (II Corinthians 12:7-9). Paul saw clearly the reason for suffering: "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me." He gloried in his infirmities. He saw God's power in a way he could never have experienced if he had been physically healed.

No one likes pain and suffering. Naturally, we appreciate and long for physical health for ourselves and our loved ones. God can and does overrule in some cases to give remarkable health and strength for labor in His service. The Christian way, though, is a walk of sacrifice, not of bodily preservation and prosperity. Spiritually minded Christians know the purpose of suffering and desire spiritual healing and growth. In James 5:14, the Apostle encourages those who are spiritually "sick" (Gk., *asthaneō*, "without strength, weak") to go to spiritual leaders for prayer.

Unresolved sins cause spiritual sickness. Or these sick may simply go to other Christians and confess their sins "that they might be forgiven him" (Vs. 15). Who that has experienced healing of the soul has not realized it of more value than the healing of any earthly disease?

\* Related to the subject of healing, tongues speaking is another popular phenomenon of our day. For an in-depth treatment of the subject, send for the booklet offered with the coupon.

## **Healing in Our Day**

Many today claim to be healers in Christ's name. Many even claim to be healed. How do we account for this phenomenon?

There are several possible explanations: Medical science today has demonstrated a very vital link between a positive mental attitude and good health. The body naturally has wonderful immunity and recuperative powers. From *THE HEALING BRAIN*, Dr. Ornstein says, "The brain communicates with and controls the body through this continuous flow of chemical messages. In this sense each nerve cell and the brain itself, is like an internal pharmacy dispensing a stream of powerful drugs to influence and control moods, thoughts and bodily functions."

Many who present themselves to healers believe so intently that they can find relief and recovery, that they actually do by their own positive attitude—if even temporarily.

Another explanation is a sad one. A lot of fraud exists. Investigative reporting has recently uncovered some of the sensationally "successful" healers—both on and off television. In a recent ABC broadcast by "Primetime Live," Diane Sawyer identified several frauds perpetrated by popular evangelical faith healers.

The third explanation lies in the possibility of the fact that people are so desperate to be healed that they would be glad to be healed even if they were assured the cures were performed by Satan himself. Satan and his fellow fallen angels, in fact, do transform themselves into "angel[s] of light" and "ministers of righteousness" (II Corinthians 11:14). Especially in these "last days" can we expect such increased activity. The time of Jesus return is marked by "the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (II Thessalonians 2:9).

Jesus intimated this very turn of events: When accused by the Pharisees that he was casting out devils and healing by the power of Satan, Jesus replied, "Can Satan cast out Satan unless his house be divided?" (Luke 11:15) He not only silenced their logic, but gave us a prophecy. In the future when Satan's house of fallen angels would be "divided," Satan would actually revert to healings and miracles. Satan has had considerable

power over death, including disease. When he does do good and blesses—as an angel of light—his purpose is to delude Christians and counterfeit God's plan. Such apparent healings detract from real spiritual healings and growth for Christians. They are also Satan's pseudo attempt to rival the incoming blessings of God's Kingdom.

Therefore, regarding episodes of healing that cannot be explained by natural healing or by fraud, the power, alas, is attributable to Satan and his crumbling house. In these last days before God's Kingdom, Satan's house is to be divided before it falls.

## **The Gospel to Abraham**

Who can blame a poor groaning creation for desiring that the sorrow, sighing and tears of sickness and death be alleviated? All have received a heritage of sin and the penalty of sin laid upon father Adam—"dying thou shalt die"—which has made us all heirs of suffering as well as death. Fortunately, the Kingdom for which we pray, "Thy Kingdom come," is very close.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." (Rev. 21:1-4)

The time for permanent, universal healing-spiritual and physical-is when the "river of water of life" flows from the "throne of God" in Christ's Kingdom.

"And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life which bare twelve manner of fruits and the leaves of the tree [grove] were for the healing of the nations." (Revelation 22:1,2)

When this "New Jerusalem," God's Kingdom, comes to earth, then all people—not just a few—will have an opportunity to be healed of their spiritual, mental and physical sicknesses. Then the "eyes of the blind will be [literally] opened and the ears of the deaf shall be [physically] unstopped" (Isaiah 35:5,1).

The Gospel originally preached to Abraham was that "In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Galatians 3:8) How are all to be blessed? This Gospel of the Kingdom given to Abraham and confirmed by Jesus actually embraces all in the Gospel of Healing and Health.