

## BASIC NEW TESTAMENT

### LESSON 6--THE HEALING WORK OF JESUS

"Healing was an important part in the work of Jesus, and as he demonstrated what he taught, his demonstrations were the embodiment of what must ever be known as true Christianity. All the ministers that Jesus sent out, were to preach the Gospel and heal the sick; the words of the Gospel when applied, or spoken for healing, were to do their perfect work; hence his disciples healed and did the things that Jesus did."

--Malinda E. Cramer, in Divine Science and Healing

"Because men did not understand the law by which such wonderful things could be accomplished, they placed their own interpretation upon them and called these works of God miracles." --Fannie B. James, in Truth and Health

What is miraculous, and what is not, is relative to the individual's point of view. To Jesus' contemporaries, an airplane would have been a miracle. Yet today we know how to apply the laws governing flight, and a plane takes off and flies. There are certainly wonderful things, such as a rose bush, that are "miracles" of growth and beauty in a colloquial sense. If we mean, however, that there are actions that contradict the laws of the universe, there are no miracles. A basic human problem has been a too limited view of what constitutes Universal Order and its inherent laws.

As viewed in Divine Science, Jesus' works were not miracles in the sense in which the term is sometimes used. All of his work was divinely natural. He understood and exercised the perfect principles of the spiritual universe. It never changes; it is as much with us today as it was with him.

### THE HISTORICAL FACT OF JESUS' HEALING MINISTRY

Howard Clark Kee of Boston University has succeeded admirably in placing the healing activity of Jesus and of the early Church in historical perspective. This is genuine history, being present in the earliest layer of tradition in the Gospels. He concludes: "The phenomenon of healing in the gospels and elsewhere in the New Testament is a central factor in primitive Christianity, and was so from the beginning of the movement. It is not a later addendum to the tradition."<sup>1</sup>

### CONDITIONS IN PALESTINE

In considering the healing work of Jesus, it is helpful to understand conditions in Palestine at the time. There was little scientific knowledge in Jesus' day. However, a widespread belief in miracles had existed for centuries. The Jewish people considered miracles to be an indispensable mark of the divine, and a sign of the prophetic calling.

A great need for Jesus' work existed, because of deplorable conditions in Palestine. Wrong thinking and wrong living had caused the mental and physical ills from which many people suffered. Blind and lame beggars confronted one at every turn. Many mentally disturbed people were considered to be possessed by demons. Resentment against Rome had caused great mental unrest. Jesus knew that their ills resulted from resentment and hatred, and from a belief in separation from God.

## JESUS' ATTITUDE TOWARD MIRACLES

Note the striking difference between Jesus, attitude toward miracles, and that of the Scribes and Pharisees. These people, especially the leaders, were looking for a specific type of sign which was to appear in the sky. They believed that the one who would meet their messianic expectations would be attended by miraculous "sky-writing" of this kind.

Jesus' reply to that kind of messianic expectation was clear and decisive (Mark 8:11-12):

The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, asking him for a sign from heaven [i.e., in the sky], to test him. And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, "Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign shall be given to this generation."

Jesus never refused to perform healing works when there was faith. However, he tried in every way to show that his mission was spiritually based. His work was to teach people how to find God--to realize, as he did, that "The Father and I are one," (John 10:30) and that "the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:21, KJV)

## JESUS' METHOD OF HEALING

Jesus did not see disease, but was conscious of Reality, the Unity of Being and the truth of the individual. He did not discuss symptoms or conditions, but held in consciousness the perfect man or woman for all who came to him for help.

"Wilt thou be made whole?" was his question. If the one who had asked for help had come in faith, the work was done. As Truth students, each of us must answer this question for ourselves. We must decide to know Truth and, by persistent faith, stand true to Truth; Jesus has shown us the way.

Jesus could touch a life, no matter what the degree of development, and lift it to a higher level of consciousness if there were faith and cooperation. He recognized the discord, mistake, or misperception, but he did not condemn or give power to it. His universal love included all individuals and all nations.

Divine Science accepts, and endeavors to practice, the Christ way of healing. It teaches that health, wisdom, strength, and supply are ours now. For we are all children of the One Divine Father-Mother, heirs to all of the riches of the spiritual kingdom.

Jesus claimed no special power to heal. Again and again he said, "I can do nothing on my own." (John 5:30) "The Father who dwells in me does his works." (John 14:10) "Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these." (John 14:12)

## SPECIFIC HEALING ACCOUNTS

In viewing the healing records in the gospels, we must consider not only the factual nature of the healings themselves, but also the interpretations which Jesus' contemporaries placed upon them. The two do not necessarily coincide.

For example, take the man with an unclean spirit in Mark 1:21-28. Jesus freed this man, but we can validly ask whether his problem was an outside entity, or a mental fixation or complex that had kept him in bondage. Also, the Aramaic term for an unclean spirit, "rokha tamtha," can refer to any wrong or negative inclination. In the experience of New Thought leaders, the factor to be cast out is not anything external, but some discord in the soul that is contrary to the perfect, eternal Mind of God.

In Mark 1:29-31, Jesus touches Peter's mother-in-law and cures her of a feverish condition. While we do not emphasize the laying on of hands, it is sometimes a valid component in the healing process. Dolores Kneger, in her book The Therapeutic Touch writes: "Therapeutic Touch effects a profound relaxation response; it helps to alleviate and, frequently, to eradicate pain; and, in a large majority of test cases, it does accelerate the healing process."<sup>2</sup>

The leper whom Jesus cleanses in Mark 1:40-45 did not doubt Jesus' ability to channel God's healing power to him. Rather, he doubted God's willingness to heal him. We can learn from this text that God's will is always for harmony and wholeness. The very nature of God, and of God in and as us, is harmony and perfection.

The paralytic carried by four men (Mark 2:1-12) apparently was beset by inner rage and hostility, which became diverted against his own body. Jesus enabled him to accept forgiveness, which was instrumental in his healing. His faith in the possibility of healing was also of basic importance, as generally in Jesus' healings. The Greek word translated "sin" is hamartia. It actually means an error, a wrong state of mind or soul. It is, in turn, from hamartanō, an archery term meaning "to miss the mark." Jesus, therefore, is not only referring to wrongdoing, but to false and negative attitudes of any kind.

The sick man at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:2-18) had much to overcome, not the least of which was an initial reluctance to be healed. Thus, Jesus asked him, "Whit thou be made whole?" (John 5:6, KJV) He did, however, rise up and walk at Jesus' word. Later, Jesus said to him: "See, you have been made well! Do not sin any more, so that nothing worse happens to you." (John 5:14) Jesus tells him, in effect, that he would have to continue to work to establish positive patterns of thought and action, to replace the negative ones that had ruled him in the past.

This is only a small sample, giving a few key points regarding the healing records in the gospels. Taken as a whole, these accounts are consonant with over 100 years of experience in the healing ministry of New Thought, including Divine Science.

## HEALING MEDITATION

The universe is maintained by the presence and power of God. The great truth of God's infinite Presence is wholeness here and now. I am the living expression of Divine Wholeness.

Within each one of us is the power that heals the inner self; it is Love, divine and universal. I am the living expression of Divine Love.

Since God is infinite Presence, health is the eternal state of the universe, in which we live, move, and have our being. I am a living expression of Divine Health.

We have the right to what God is--harmony, health, peace, power, joy, love. We are eternally in the presence of God. Divine power within us is health this moment. I am a living expression of Divine Power.

Father-Mother God, we rejoice that you have made us whole, and that we may enter into your consciousness and your wholeness. We rejoice that we may know the blessing of your Presence, in all its richness and beauty every moment of this day, and every moment of every day. We rejoice in the knowledge that we are free and whole in Thee. I am a living expression of Divine Freedom.

## NOTES

1. Kee, Howard Clark; Medicine Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times; Cambridge, U.K., Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 128
2. Kneger, Dolores; The Therapeutic Touch: How to Use Your Hands to Help or to Heal; Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1979, p. 89

## BASIC BIBLIOGRAPHY--DIVINE HEALING

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Galipeau, Steven A.; Transforming Body and Soul: Therapeutic Wisdom in the Gospel Healing Stories; Mahwah, N.J., Paulist Press, 1990

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## SCRIPTURAL INDEX OF JESUS' HEALING WORKS

### Healing in Accounts in the Gospels

The man with an unclean spirit--Mark 1:21-28 (Luke 4:31-37)  
 Peter's Mother-in-law--Mark 1:29-31 (Matthew 8:14-15; Luke 4:38-39)  
 A leper cleansed--Mark 1:40-45 (Matthew 8:1-4; Luke 5:12-16)  
 Ten lepers cleansed--Luke 17:11-19  
 Paralytic carried by four men--Mark 2:1-12 (Matthew 9:1-8; Luke 5:17-26)  
 Sick man at pool of Bethesda--John 5:2-18  
 The man with a withered hand--Mark 3:1-6 (Matthew 12:9-14; Luke 6:6-11)  
 The centurion's servant--Luke 7:2-10 (Matthew 8:5-13)  
 The nobleman's son--John 4:46-54  
 Exorcism near the Sea of Galilee--Mark 5:1-20 (Matthew 8:28-34; Luke 8:26-39)  
 The woman with an issue of blood--Mark 5:25-34 (Matthew 9:20-22; Luke 8:43-48)  
 Raising of Jairus's daughter--Mark 5:21-24, 35-43 (Matthew 9:18-19, 23-26; Luke 8:40-42, 49-56)  
 Two blind men indoors-- Matthew 9:27-31  
 The Syrophenician woman's daughter--Mark 7:24-30 (Matthew 15:21-28)  
 Deaf man with speech impediment--Mark 7:31-37  
 Blind man at Bethsaida--Mark 8:22-26  
 The epileptic boy--Mark 9:14-29 (Matthew 17:14-21; Luke 9:37-43)  
 The man born blind--John 9:1-12ff  
 Raising of widow's son--Luke 7:11-17  
 Resurrection of Lazarus--John 11:1-44  
 Exorcism of dumb man--Luke 11:14-23 (Matthew 9:32-34; 12:22-30)  
 Woman with spirit of infirmity--Luke 13:10-17  
 The man with dropsy--Luke 14:1-6  
 Bartimaeus's sight restored--Mark 10:46-52 (Matthew 20:29-34; Luke 18:35-43)

### Healing of Groups of People by Jesus

Matthew 8:16-17; 11:2-6; 12:15-21; 13:53-58; 14:13-14, 34-36; 15:29-31; 19:1-2; 21:14  
 Mark 1:32-34; 3:7-12; 6:1-6, 53-55  
 Luke 4:40-41; 5:14-16; 6:17-19; 7:18-23; 9:11

### General Statements about Jesus as Healer

Matthew 4:23; 9:35  
 Mark 6:56

### Sending Out of the Twelve

Matthew 10:1, 7-8  
 Mark 6:7-13  
 Luke 9:1-6

### Sending Out of the Seventy

Luke 10:1-20

REQUIRED BIBLE READINGS

Read the passages listed in the Scriptural Index of Jesus' Healing Works.

When a given account appears in the Gospel of Mark, and also in Matthew and/or Luke, the version in Mark is usually more reliable. The Gospel of Matthew condenses the accounts, and the Gospel of Luke reflects a belief in demon possession. Also, with respect to the Centurion's Servant, Luke 7:2-10 is probably more reliable than Matthew 8:5-13.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did the people of Palestine need healing at this time?
2. What was Jesus' method of healing?
3. How does Divine Science regard the miracles of Jesus?
4. Interpret one of the healings of Jesus in light of Divine Science.