

HEALING IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

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I spoke a few weeks ago about the Healing Ministry of Jesus.

We know that Jesus often healed great multitudes ... hundreds or thousands would congregate around the Lord Jesus ... and got their healing. But then there are fifteen to twenty individual healing miracles where we get more detail. We looked at most of them ... the leper ... Roman centurion's servant ... Jairus' daughter ... the man who was born blind.

It is interesting that Jesus never refused to heal. All were healed. They had to take some action ... come to Jesus ... grab the hem of His garment ... one occasion a man lowered through the roof ... etc. But ... all got healed. To the leper who queried Jesus' will: Jesus answered that question for all time ... "I am willing".

Yet today ... we often hear all sorts of excuses or reasons as to why God doesn't heal today.

One reason is that Jesus healed purely to demonstrate that He was the Prophesied Messiah. The miracles were to be a witness. Hence ...the conclusion is formed that healings ceased once Jesus finished His physical ministry.

Is that so? It is easy to check ... we'll now look at the book of Acts and see whether healing continues after Jesus' ascension. What's the evidence?

Just before we turn to the Book of Acts ... let's look at:

Matthew 14:13-14 (NKJV)

13 When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities.

14 And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.

Why did Jesus heal in this instance? Jesus was moved with compassion. Jesus is the Good Shepherd and the Shepherd responds to the needs of His sheep. Has Jesus' compassion ended? If Jesus still has compassion now ... then He would be healing now too.

What does the scripture say?

Mark 16:14-18 (NKJV)

14 Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.

15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He who believes and is baptised will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

17 And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues;

18 they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

Here are the instructions for the New Church ... for the future ... lay hands on the sick ... and they will recover. For something after Jesus has gone.

So Jesus commanded healing action! As an integral part of the Gospel Proclamation.

Mark 16:19-20 (NKJV)

19 So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.

20 And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen. *(They did as they were commanded)*

Some people don't believe that the last 12 verses or so are authentic ... they are missing in some translations ... but ... 99.5% of the numerous Greek manuscripts contain all of those verses.

Acts 1:1-3 (NKJV)

1 The former account I made, *(the Gospel account of Luke)* O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen,

3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

The Book of Acts reveals what Jesus continued to do from heaven. What He continues to do in 2017. He hasn't stopped!!

Acts 3:1-16 (NKJV)

1 Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.

2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple;

3 who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms.

4 And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us."

5 So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them.

6 Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

7 And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

8 So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God.

9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God.

10 Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

11 Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed.

12 So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?

13 The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go.

14 But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,

15 and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.

16 And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

This man was lame from birth (aged:40 ... see Acts 4:22). In verse 12 we can read that neither Peter or John had any special power. NB: They didn't pray ... merely spoke. Just a command ... an instruction. (Speaking to the mountain). They did what they had seen Jesus do: to the leper ... "be cleansed". To Jairus' daughter: "Arise".

Maybe this healing was just a "one-off"? No! The believers expected to see a lot more of this!

Acts 4:21-31 (NKJV)

21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done.

22 For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.

23 And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them.

24 So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them,

25 who by the mouth of Your servant David have said:

'Why did the nations rage,

And the people plot vain things?

26 The kings of the earth took their stand,

And the rulers were gathered together

Against the Lord and against His Christ.'

27 "For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together

28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.

29 Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word,

30 **by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.**"

31 And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

They have complete expectation of more of God's healings.

Acts 5:12-16 (NKJV)

12 **And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people.** And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch.

13 Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly.

14 And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women,

15 so that **they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them.**

16 Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, **bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.**

Just like in Jesus' day! So. Did healing cease when Jesus went back to heaven? Clearly not!!

People always seem to look for an excuse to dismiss signs ... wonders and healings. They say it was only for the original Apostles. Specially anointed ... to endorse their ministry. That seems so illogical?

Do people today need healings as much as back then? Does the Church need signs and wonders as much now as then? Yes. Just for the Apostles ... no! Unbiblical!

Acts 8:5-8 (NKJV)

5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them.

6 And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. (*Philip was a deacon ... not one of the "original Apostles"*)

7 For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralysed and lame were healed.

8 And there was great joy in that city.

Here's a deacon preaching ... and healing ... and doing what Jesus said to do.

Cp: **Mark 16:17 (NKJV)**

17 And these signs will follow those who believe: (*not just Apostles*)

Acts 9:32-35 (NKJV)

32 Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all parts of the country, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda.

33 There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralysed.

34 And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed." Then he arose immediately.

35 So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

God endorses His Word with signs and wonders.

Acts 9:36-42 (NKJV)

36 **At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did.**

37 **But it happened in those days that she became sick and died.**

When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room.

38 And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring him not to delay in coming to them.

39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them.

40 But **Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up.**

41 Then he gave her his hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive.

42 And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord.

Peter raised Tabitha from the dead. He put the mourners out ... just like Jesus did at Jairus' home. Maybe there was an attitude of unbelief here too? Surprising that Peter raised someone from the dead? Does that happen? Can it happen? Yes. It just happened. No surprise. These things are certainly possible.

John 14:12-14 (NKJV)

12 **"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.**

13 And **whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.**

14 **If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.**

Jesus has left it wide open ... the only limit is on the belief of the believers (little faith or great faith). Jesus' willingness is not under question. According to Jesus ... we can do greater works than He did. We should be able to raise the dead.

In passing ... notice:

Acts 10:36-38 (NKJV)

36 The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all—
37 that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached:
38 **how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.** (*Has He changed? Is He different now to what He was then? No. He's the same*)

Acts 14:4-12 (NKJV)

4 But the multitude of the city was divided: part sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles.
5 And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them,
6 they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region.
7 And **they were preaching the gospel there.**
8 **And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother's womb, who had never walked.**
9 **This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed,**
10 said with a loud voice, "Stand up straight on your feet!" And he leaped and walked.

11 Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!"

12 And Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker.

This man had the "faith to be healed". How? Just random? Or ... had Paul and Barnabas been preaching about healing? Paul saw that this guy had "got it" ... understood about healing. Because faith comes by hearing ... and hearing about healing.

Faith comes by hearing. Today ... there is very little preaching about God as Healer ... so ... how can you expect people to have faith for healing if they never hear about healing.

We can't say that healing has stopped.

Acts 16:16-22 (NKJV)

16 **Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling.** *(Some people say that there is no demon activity today. It ceased "at the cross". That is nonsense).*

17 This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us a way of salvation."

18 And this she did for many days.

But **Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her."** And he came out that very hour. *(This was part of the commission of Mark chapter 16)*

19 But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities.

20 And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, "These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city;

21 and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe."

22 Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods.

Paul is just carrying on with the commission.

It is interesting that Paul waited "many days" before dealing with the issue. Maybe he gave her time to respond to his message? Maybe he didn't want to necessarily go against her will ... leaving her potentially worse off?

And so we carry on ... still seeing more miracles of healing etc. Jesus still has a 3 part ministry ... preaching ... teaching and healing.

Acts 19:11-12 (NKJV)

11 **Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul,**
12 **so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.** *(Healings and demons cast out)*

Paul's handkerchiefs probably gave the recipients a "point of faith" ... like the woman with the issue of blood ... who touched the hem of Jesus' garments?

Acts 20:6-12 (NKJV)

6 But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

7 Now on the first day of the week*, *(the days start at sunset ... ie Saturday evening in this instance)* when the disciples came together

to break bread, (*eat a meal*) Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.

8 There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together.

9 And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead.

10 But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing him said, "Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him." (*"Do not trouble yourselves" ... is identical Greek to what Jesus said: "why make this commotion" in Mark 5:39 at Jairus' home*)

11 Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed.

12 And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted.

*Acts 20:7 (GNB)

7 On Saturday evening we gathered together for the fellowship meal. Paul spoke to the people and kept on speaking until midnight, since he was going to leave the next day.

Acts 28:1 (NKJV)

1 Now when they had escaped, they then found out that the island was called Malta.

Acts 28:3-9 (NKJV)

3 But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

4 So when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow to live."

5 But **he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm.**

6 However, they were expecting that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had looked for a long time and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

7 In that region there was an estate of the leading citizen of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us and entertained us courteously for three days.

8 **And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him.**

9 **So when this was done, the rest of those on the island who had diseases also came and were healed.**

The islanders "kept on coming" (Amplified Bible) ... for several months. So ... there was likely to have been dozens/scores of healings? Quite a lot anyway.

This is the last chapter of the history of the New Testament Church. Still find plenty of healings taking place. This is circa 60 AD.

Did the healings stop then? Did God's compassion stop then? Has God's power diminished since 60 AD? The answer is no.

We're still in the "Book of Acts" ... we're writing the last chapters. Jesus has not changed. It's the Book of Acts of Jesus.

People needed healing then. People still need healing now. And Jesus is still doing the healing.