

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS
Commentary by Michael Sigler
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Evidences of Jesus as Messiah...
Demonstrated in Acts of Healing

Matthew 9:27-34 & Matthews 11:2-6

Key verse: “The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them” (Matthew 11:5).

Does miraculous healing still occur today? When prayers for healing are offered, why are some people seemingly healed while some are not?

These are important questions, and our Bible texts for this week offer some help with them. However, the primary focus of these Scriptures is not *divine healing today* but rather *Jesus’ healing ministry as evidence that He is the messiah.*

In Matthew 11:2-6, John the Baptist sends some of his followers to Jesus with the question, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” (v. 3). Jesus answers: “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them” (vv. 4-5).

With these words, Jesus is claiming to be the promised messiah of Israel. He is saying that, in Him, the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament are fulfilled. For example, Isaiah 42:6 tells of the messiah who would come and fulfill the covenant that God made with Israel through David: “I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.”

Our other passage, Matthew 9:27-34, provides two accounts of Jesus’ healing ministry. In verses 27-31, “the blind receive their sight.” In verses 32-34, Jesus demonstrates His power over Satan’s kingdom, restoring to the mute demoniac his ability to speak.

The main focus for Matthew in our two texts is this: Jesus’ healing ministry provides evidence that He is Israel’s promised messiah and king. The healings described there are *signs of Christ’s kingship and of His kingdom.*

OK, so what does this have to do with our questions about divine healing today? Think of it this way: Jesus came to earth the first time to begin God’s great work of

redemption. Jesus came the first time to begin the work of undoing the effects of the Fall.

The Bible teaches that in the Fall, when sin came in, not only was the image of God in humanity broken and distorted, but all of creation was effected: “We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time” (Romans 8:22).

One of the effects of the Fall is human sickness and death. These maladies were not a part of God’s plan in the original creation. And when Christ returns, He will complete the work that He started when He came the first time. A part of that finished work is described in Revelation 21:4 – “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order has passed away.”

We live now *between the times*, that is, between the time of Christ’s first coming and His promised return. It is obvious that, for now, sickness and death remain a part of the human experience. (See, for example, 2 Corinthians 4:16.) In fact, for now, death is the only way a Christian can get to heaven!

So, does miraculous healing occur today? I am convinced that the answer is yes. Jesus heals today, and such healings are signs of Christ’s kingdom breaking through. *Why are some healed and some are not?* That, of course is a question only God can fully answer. However, remember that we live now *between the times*. For now, sickness and death remain, although God sometimes sends miraculous healings. And the Bible tells us we ought to pray for divine healing. (See, for example, James 5:13-16.)

When Jesus came the first time, the miracles He performed were evidences of His messiahship. They also were signs of His eternal kingdom breaking through—a kingdom that will be fully restored when Christ comes again.

In the meantime, the ministry of Jesus *sometimes breaks through in our lives with healing power—as a sign of the kingdom*. At other times, His ministry to us is not immediate healing but grace to cope with sickness and suffering. (See, for example, 2 Corinthians 12:9.) Best of all, we look forward to the day when “there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order has passed away”!

Thanks be to God.

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