

# HEALING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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## INTRODUCTION

### Old Testament Background

An interest in physical healing was common to the nations of the ancient world. In most instances, healing was closely related with the religion of the people and often mixed with magic and superstition. Those who practiced medical healing were also versed in divination and magic.<sup>1</sup> Since secular and religious practices of healing were closely tied together, it appears that both were not encouraged among the Hebrews. Unlike in other ancient writings,<sup>2</sup> the secular practice of medicine is barely mentioned in the Old Testament. Physicians are hardly referred to except in a derogatory way.<sup>3</sup> When King Asa was afflicted with a severe disease, "he did not seek the help of the Lord, but only from the physicians" (2 Chr 16:12). The physicians here probably refer to pagan practitioner, the only ones to whom the early Hebrews could turn.

In the Old Testament, health is presented as more important than healing. Health, in the Old Testament concept, means the well-being of the whole man. For the purpose of the prevention of sickness and epidemic, practical guidelines on diet, sanitation, and the isolation of infectious disease were given by Yahweh to his people. Remarkably, 213 of the 613 commandments in the Old Testament are of medical nature, especially concerning leprosy.

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<sup>1</sup> M. Kelsley, **Healing**, p.39; K. Bailey, **Divine Healing**, p.24. Cf. H. van der Loos, **Miracles**, p.295f; Amundsen & Ferngren, "Medicine and Religion: Pre-Christian Antiquity," in **Health/Medicine**, ed. Marty & Vaux, pp.53f.

<sup>2</sup> The Persians, Chaldeans, and Egyptians wrote about medicinal treatment and use of prayer and even mentioned the fee given to the physicians. M. Kelsley, **Healing**, p.39; Amundsen & Ferngren, "Medicine and Religion: Pre-Christian Antiquity," in **Health/Medicine**, ed. Marty & Vaux, pp. 56-61.

<sup>3</sup> In the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus (38:1-15) the physician is mentioned in a non-derogatory manner.

To protect the public health of the whole community, hygiene and prophylaxis were strictly observed as religious dogma.<sup>4</sup> The priests were responsible for endorsing the injunction pertaining to social hygiene and public health. This role of the priest evidently continued in the New Testament times. Cured lepers were sent to them for examination and observance of the required religious sacrifices for purity reasons.

A major strand of belief about sickness and healing in the Old Testament is concept that Yahweh is the sole source of both sickness and health.<sup>5</sup> This point of view is clearly and consistently developed in the book of Deuteronomy.<sup>6</sup> Health and wealth are seen as God's rewards while sickness and misfortune are considered punishments for man's sin.<sup>7</sup> Many historical references show how God's power is manifested in punishing and directing men by striking them with sickness. Yahweh punished the people of Israel when they rebelled against Moses and Aaron (Nu 14:11-12,36-37; 17:12-15; 25:3-9,17-18; 31:16). Miriam was stricken with leprosy for slandering Moses (Nu 12:10). Because of avarice, Gehazi was stricken with the same disease (2 Ki 5:26-27). Leprosy was also inflicted on Uzziah because of his pride (2 Ki 15:3-5; 2 Chr 26:16-20). Jehoram was struck down by an incurable disease for deserting Yahweh (2 Chr 20:14-15). Numerous other examples included even those outside the covenant community.<sup>8</sup> The Deuteronomic theory of illness as coming from the Lord himself is expressed in several ways in the Psalms. The Psalmists expressed despair about illness and prayed for deliverance (e.g. Pss 6,22,38,39,78,88,101,102,106). The same recurring theme is found in the Proverbs (e.g. 3:7-8,11-12).

Yahweh is described in the Old Testament not only as the one who caused sickness to fall upon his people. He is also presented as the only one who could bring real healing. After the

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<sup>4</sup> S. Ailon, **Faith Healing**, p.45.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Dt 32:39; Ex 4:11; Am 3:6; Is 45:7.

<sup>6</sup> The Law lists details about the kind of diseases that God would send upon those who willfully violate his commandments (see Dt 28:22,27-29,59-61; Lv 26:16,25).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. O. Witt, **Krankenheilung**, I. p.17f. Since sickness represented a breach between God and man, no man could serve before the Lord as a priest who was deformed or ill (cf. Lv 21:18-23). The illness and physical handicap which were attributed to sin made a person unworthy to approach holy things.

<sup>8</sup> The household of Pharaoh was struck down by severe plagues because he had taken Sarah into his harem (Gn 12:17f. Gn 19:10; 20:18). The Egyptians suffered from plagues which included physical illness and culminated with the death of their firstborn because of the hardness of Pharaoh's heart (Ex 9:8-10; 12:29. Cf. 2 Ki 6:18-20; 1 Sam 5:6-6:1-12).

Exodus from Egypt, while in the desert, God gave the Israelites a promise of healing on the condition that they obey his commandments (Ex 15:25,26). A remarkable healing provision in the context of the covenant relationship with God is further verified by a revelation given to Moses on Mount Sinai (Ex 23:25). The theme of a healing God is found scattered through the Psalms.<sup>9</sup> God is blessed for healing diseases (Ps 103). Other Psalms express confidence in God as healer (e.g. 41,46,62,74). The Old Testament healings were considered manifestations of divine power. Healing was completely in the hands of Yahweh. Therefore, it is hardly logical that secular healing would be considered effective or be encouraged.

Yahweh healed in the Old Testament through some of his prophets.<sup>10</sup> Elijah and Elisha healed children through the power of Yahweh (1 Ki 17:17-23; 2 Ki 4:18-37). Elisha was also instrumental in cleansing Naaman of leprosy (2 Ki 5:1-14). By sending Naaman to the Jordan to do seven dips in the river, Elisha wanted that Naaman recognize God and not the prophet as behind the healing. Here, obedience was a necessary factor for healing. The prophet Isaiah who announced to Hezekiah the fatal nature of his disease also delivered God's message to the king that he would further live for fifteen years (2 Ki 20:1-7; cf. 2 Chr 32:24-26; Is 38:1-22). In some stories of healing, prayer was a means by which physical healing came (cf. Ps. 30:2-3). Elijah prayed for the power of healing.

Provisions were also made for the purpose of healing. A fig poultice was prescribed for Hezekiah's boil which saved him from death earlier decided by Yahweh (2 Ki 20:7). While the Israelites were still in the wilderness, a bronze serpent was fashioned that saved anyone bitten by the venomous snakes Yahweh had sent (Nu 21:8,9). To obtain healing, the Philistines had to deliver to the people of Israel five golden models of tumours and five golden models of rats Yahweh had inflicted on them (1 Sam 6:4-5). A plague was halted when Aaron offered incense and made atonement for the grumbling and rebellious Israelites (Nu 16:46-48). David built an altar to the Lord and offered sacrifices there so that the plague on Israel might be stopped (2 Sam 24:25).

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<sup>9</sup> To be healed in the Psalms is always spoken of as the privilege of the believer in a redemptive context. K. Bailey, **Divine Healing**, p.77.

<sup>10</sup> Israel's expectations of healing were also part of their Messianic hope. The Messiah will be the healer when he comes (cf. Is 61:1-3, Mal 4:2).

Another strand of belief about healing in the Old Testament is found in some healing stories<sup>11</sup> which do not support the Deuteronomic theory of sickness and healing. For instance, in the story of the healing of the Shunammite's son, there was no sin imputed to the child or his mother (2 Ki 4:18ff.). No sin was also attributed to Naaman who was cleansed of leprosy through Elisha (2 Ki 5:1ff.). But the great protest against the orthodox Old Testament view of sickness and healing is exemplified in the life of Job. Job was a righteous man but was struck down by adversity and serious illness. The reactions of his wife, friends, and neighbors represented the actual attitude of those days. They thought that Job had lost God's favor because of his own fault and wickedness. Maintaining his innocence, Job was in the end justified and healed by God. This strand of experience and belief about physical healing was obviously not the accepted code which directed the Jewish people at the time of Jesus. The conviction that sin is the root cause of illness continued to be the attitude in the rabbinic schools of later Judaism.<sup>12</sup> However, in the less orthodox region of Galilee, where a rich demonology had grown up, the unpopular strand of belief had its influence.<sup>13</sup> The Galilean people understood sickness, in part at least, as the work of evil spirits rather than as coming solely from God. It was this element upon which Jesus based his teachings and actions.<sup>14</sup> It put him at odds with the strict guardians of the Jewish official religion.

### Healing in the Greco-Roman World

In the Greco-Roman world, people were familiar with religious healings. Healing cults, such as those of Seraphis, Amphiaraus, Trophonius,<sup>15</sup> and the well-developed cult of Aesculapius,<sup>16</sup> attracted many followers. Archaeological evidences

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<sup>11</sup> M. Kelsey sees this strand of belief also in some of the Psalms (e.g. 73,94) and in the hopes of certain passages in Isaiah (e.g. 26:19, 29:18; 35:56; 61:1-11). **Healing**, p.42.

<sup>12</sup> For instance, Rabbi Jonathan is quoted as saying: "Plague comes from seven sins, for bloodshed, perjury, unchastity, pride, embezzlement, pitilessness, and slander" (Babylonian Talmud, Arakin 16a).

<sup>13</sup> M. Kelsey, **Healing**, p.45.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p.42.

<sup>15</sup> See C.A. Meier, **Antike Inkubation**, pp.53ff., 87ff.

<sup>16</sup> According to Greek mythology, Aesculapius was the son of Apollo and the human princess Coronis. His father entrusted him to the care of the wise centaur Chiron, who taught him the art of healing. As a physician, he surpassed his teacher and could even restore the dead to life. Because of his healing ability, he drew the anger of the gods. Zeus unleashed a thunderbolt that killed him. See C. Kerényi, **Asklapios: Archetypal Image of the**

proved the popularity of Aesculapian healing in the Hellenistic period. Plato is said to have accepted the kind of healing that took place in the temples of Aesculapius. The Aesculapian shrines<sup>17</sup> where the god was worshipped were also places of healing. The principal rite involved was that of "incubation." A sick person came to the temple, slept within its confines and asked for a vision or dream from the god to heal him or to show him the way of healing.<sup>18</sup> Other activities included various symbolic acts such as the sacrifice of small animals, ritual bathing, programs in stadiums and gymnasiums which stressed the importance of the physical body, and drama in great amphitheatres designed for healing effect.

The idea that sickness is caused by the gods was prevalent in ancient Greece and Rome.<sup>19</sup> Like Yahweh of the Old Testament, the gods caused disaster and suffering. The persons afflicted by the gods were, for the most part, considered unlucky people to be shunned and avoided, just like what the Jews did with the lepers. But unlike the Judaistic view of sickness as punishment for sin, the Greeks connected it with fate or destiny. This was due to the belief that they were subjects to the gods, but maintained no relation with them by way of agreement or covenant. Thus, sickness is seen as a matter of fate rather than as punishment resulting from failure to live according to the provisions of a covenant. The gods were also believed to have turned about and brought healing. The shrines of few minor gods were the only appropriate places to seek relief from sickness.

In the days of Jesus, there was a particularly strong wave of demonism that had broken over the world of Palestine.<sup>20</sup> Belief in the existence of demons became deeply rooted in the Jewish people, especially in Galilee.<sup>21</sup> Some Greek authors admitted the

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**Physician's Existence** (New York: Pantheon Books, 1959), pp. 38f. Cf. C.A. Meier, **Antike Inkubation**, p. 29.

<sup>17</sup> Later many of these shrines were transformed into Christian churches. M. Hamilton, **Incubation (or the Cure of Disease in Pagan Temples and Christian Churches)** (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., 1906), pp. 109ff. Cf. C.A. Meier, **Antike Inkubation**, p. 29.

<sup>18</sup> C.A. Meier, **Antike Inkubation**, p. 59-68. Cf. Mcgill & Ormond, **Mysteries**, p.68.

<sup>19</sup> R. Passian, *Neues Licht*, p. 47.

<sup>20</sup> R. Otto, *Reich Gottes*, p. 29; L. Köhler, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Tubingen: Mohr, 1947), p. 147. On the demonic in Hellenistic thinking see W. Foerster, "dai, mwn," TWNT 11.6-9; F. Hauck, "kaqaro, j, ktl," TWNT HI.416f.; H. Kleinknecht, "pneuma, ktl," TWNT VI.333f.

<sup>21</sup> H. Loewe, "Demons and Spirits (Jewish)", ERE IV.613; A. Neander, *Das Leben Jesu Christi*. 6. Aufl. (Hamburg: Perthes, 1862), p. 249.

existence of possession by unclean or evil spirits.<sup>22</sup> The demons were also recognized in intertestamental literature as agents of disease.<sup>23</sup> Various factors brought about this prevalent belief in demons. Heavy political pressure, poverty, mental and physical degradation, apocalyptic speculations, and their messianic expectation contributed to the development of the Jewish belief in spirits.<sup>24</sup> The sickness of a person was often ascribed to a demon and the type of ailment was determined by the type of demon causing it. A certain demon caused deafness, another blindness, still another leprosy, etc. (cf. Mk 9:25; Lk 13:11).

Among the Jews in Jesus' time, there was healing in spite of the fact that rabbis looked upon incidents of cures with great suspicion.<sup>25</sup> There were also rabbinic healings performed in answer to prayer,<sup>26</sup> but these were occasional incidents because healing was not a characteristic activity of their ministry. A sect of religious purists called the Essenes was believed to have medical knowledge.<sup>27</sup> Their name was sometimes interpreted as *asaya* which means "healers." It is suggested that Jesus had contact with the Essenes before he started his public ministry.<sup>28</sup> If this were true, did he derive his inspiration from the sect to incorporate healing in his ministry? This, however, cannot be supported by evidences. Although there are similar elements in the teachings of Jesus and the Teacher of Righteousness of the Qumran community,<sup>29</sup> they are no proof that Jesus had been associated with or had been influenced by the Essenes. As M. Kelsey puts it, "If Jesus saw himself as the Messiah, then he represented the essential nature of God himself and was his specific messenger, and his healings, therefore, sprang from the essential nature of God."<sup>30</sup> Jesus' concern for the salvation of man is an expression of his very nature and name (cf. Mt 1:21).

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<sup>22</sup> E. G. Socrates, *Ajax* 244; Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* IV.xxiii.4.

<sup>23</sup> D. A. Carson, *Mt*, EBC, p. 205. Cf. E. Mally who says, "In antiquity sickness was ascribed to evil spirits" (Mk, JBC, p. 26).

<sup>24</sup> G. Traub, *Die Wunder im Neuen Testament*. 2. Aufl. (Tubingen: Mohr, 1907), p. 34: Cf. J. Klausner, *Jesus von Nazareth*, p. 266.

<sup>25</sup> M. Kelsey, *Healing*, p. 40.

<sup>26</sup> R. H. Fuller, *Miracles*, p. 33.

<sup>27</sup> S. Allon, *Faith Healing*, p. 45; H. P. Chajes, *Markus-Studien* (Berlin: Schwetschke & Sohn, 1899), p. 36.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. M. Burrows, *More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Becher & Warburg, 1955), pp. 107-110.

<sup>29</sup> See S. E. Johnson, *Jesus in His Homeland* (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1957), pp. 48ff.

<sup>30</sup> M. Kelsey, *Healing*, p. 59.

## THE HEALING MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST

The earthly ministry of Jesus is characterized as threefold - a ministry of teaching, preaching, and healing. "Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the Kingdom and healing every disease and sickness" (Mt 9:34; cf. 4:23). Much of the life of Jesus was given to caring for the physical ills of the people. Multitudes sought him for healing so that at times he did not even have a chance to eat (Mk 6:31; cf. Jn 6:2). In a message at Capernaum, he said that he was anointed partly to bring healing to men (Lk 4:18ff.). Peter reaffirmed this in his sermon at Cornelius' house when he said: "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him" (Ac 10:38). Jesus made healing a central theme in his ministry, and its great significance is further reflected in his words for Herod Antipas: "Go, and tell that fox, I will drive out demons and heal people today and tomorrow, ..." (Lk 13:32).

There is no evidence in the Synoptics that the critics of Jesus ever disputed the facts of his healings. His opponents did not try to contest the fact that he healed. What they tried to do was to cast doubts upon the power through which he healed, by attributing it to the authority and power other than God. The record of the healings in the Gospels is only partial and numerous of them were expressed only in a number of summary statements (Mk 1:34; 3:10; Mt 4:24; 12:15; Lk 4:40, 5:15 etc. Cf. Jn 20:30; 21:25). Besides the New Testament narratives, an evidence of the healing ministry of Jesus is found in the Jewish Talmud.<sup>31</sup> The rabbinic tradition reports that Jesus was hanged because he practised "sorcery," which means that he healed through the help of evil forces.<sup>32</sup>

### 1. Healing as Prophetic Fulfilment

Of the three Synoptists, it is Matthew who explicitly connects some events in the life and ministry of Jesus with Old Testament prophecy (1:22,23; 2:5,14-15; 2:16-18; 3:3; 8:16-17; 12:17-21). He alludes to or quotes the writings of Micah, Hosea, Jeremiah, and more often Isaiah. He usually prefaces it with the words: "This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet." Sometimes, the

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<sup>31</sup> For other disputed evidences, see H. van der Loos, **Miracles**, pp. 152-155.

<sup>32</sup> Tractate Sanhedrin 43a of the Babylonian Talmud. See Strack-Billerbeck, KNTTM 1.631. Cf. H. van der Loos, **Miracles**, pp. 156ff.

name of the prophet is added to his usual formula before introducing a fulfilment quotation.<sup>33</sup> The warning of Jesus to the people not to tell who he was after he healed all their sick<sup>34</sup> was interpreted by the evangelist as the fulfilment of what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah (Mt 12:15-21; Is 42:1-4). Here, the Servant passage is quoted not from LXX but from the MT and is translated very freely. The application of this Servant passage to Jesus is probably intended to show a striking contrast to the accusation of the Pharisees in the following passage<sup>35</sup> (12:22-29).

Matthew interprets the healing work of Jesus as the fulfilment of prophetic words. One evening while Jesus was in Peter's house, "many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick" (8:16).<sup>36</sup> "This was," according to Matthew, "to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases"<sup>37</sup> (v. 17; Is 53:4). The author quotes not from the LXX but writes according to the sense of the Hebrew original (MT). The Hebrew *achen cholayenu Hunasa umachoveinu sh'valam* is rendered *avtoj ta.j avsqeni,aj* (LXX: *a`marti,aj*) *h`mwn elaben kai. ta.j no,souj evba, stasen*. The Old Testament passage which pictures the vicarious suffering of the Servant of the Lord is here applied to Jesus' healing work. Jesus took the infirmities and carried the diseases, not in the sense of transferring them to himself, but of removing them, for there is no evidence that he endured physical maladies.<sup>38</sup> Although the substitutionary suffering of the Servant

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. the exegetical traditions where the fulfilment of the prophecy was expected in the days of the Messiah (Genesis Rabba 95; Midrash Tehilin 146:8).

<sup>34</sup> The material from Mark (3:7-12) is sharply reduced by Matthew into a brief summary of Jesus' ministry in Galilee and an allusion to Mark's "Messianic Secret." Similar summary is found in 4:23-25. The purpose of the summary in 12:15ff. was to introduce the quotation from Is 42: 1-4.

<sup>35</sup> J. McKenzie, Mt, JBC, p. 84. The quotation refers to the mission of the Servant to the Gentiles and is relevant to the interpretation of 10:5 and 15:24. The quotation is to give an explanation of Jesus' injunction to the people not to make him known before a wider public. Cf. L. Barbieri, Mt, BKC, p. 46; R. V. G. Tasker, Mt, TNTC, p. 126.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. the parallel accounts in Mk (1:32-34) and Lk (4:40,41) without a comment about the fulfilment of what was spoken through a prophet. The fulfilment quotation from Is 53:4 is Matthew's addition.

<sup>37</sup> Matthew interprets the words *evlaben* and *evba, stasen* as "took away" which Jesus did by healing. J. McKenzie, Mt, JBC, p. 77. Cf. T. Martin, Kingdom Healing, p. 73. Some Jewish Rabbis literally interpreted the whole passage in Isaiah, but most spiritualized it. R. E. Nixon, Mt, NBC, p. 826.

<sup>38</sup> R. V. G. Tasker, Mt, TNTC, p. 90. Cf. W. Hendriksen, who sees two ways in which Jesus took infirmities and diseases upon himself. It was by means of his



has its final accomplishment in his redemptive death on the cross, Matthew already saw it being partially fulfilled in Jesus' driving out of demons and healing of diseases. Probably, the evangelist wanted to point out that the healings are not just works of mercy, but are part of the all-out attack of Jesus on every kind of evil which plagues God's creation.

### 1.1. The Synagogue Sermon at Nazareth (Lk 4:16-21)

After Jesus' baptism by John, he returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit (Lk 4:14).<sup>39</sup> The initial response to his teachings in Galilean synagogues was positive. He was glorified or praised by all (v. 15). His fame spread throughout Galilee including his hometown Nazareth where he grew up. He was known by the inhabitants of that small town as Joseph's son (v. 22) and probably honored him as a perfect man (cf. Lk 2:52). Jesus' visit to Nazareth<sup>40</sup> could have caused sensation among his fellow Nazarenes who wanted to personally hear his teachings and see mighty works.<sup>41</sup> Jesus' custom (v. 16) to go to the synagogue probably reflected his habit since childhood, but it may also refer to his regular use of the synagogue for teaching<sup>42</sup> (cf. Ac 17:2). During Jesus' time, the synagogue was not only a place of worship but was also used primarily for teaching.

We have in the text the earliest description of a synagogical service, and Luke gives a picture as to what was done at that time.<sup>43</sup> Reconstruction of the Sabbath synagogical service is based on somewhat later practices. Assuming that the pattern was the same in Jesus' time, the service would have included: A public confession of the Jewish faith in the Shema (Dt 6:4-9; 11:13-21;

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deep sympathy or compassion and by means of his vicarious suffering for sin. Mt, NTC, pp. 400f.

<sup>39</sup> According to Matthew's accounts, the return to Galilee was occasioned by the news of John's arrest (4:12). L. Morris interprets the phrase "in the power of the Spirit" as being filled with the Spirit, Lk, TNTC, p. 105.

<sup>40</sup> The visit to Nazareth (Lk 4:16ff.) is also described by Mark (6:1-6) and Matthew (13:53-58) who mention of few healings done in that town because of the people's unbelief there. Some scholars are inclined to consider the section as a redaction of Mark by Luke, but examining the two accounts would show that the narrative is from Luke's special source or from Q. Marshall, Lk, NIGTC, pp. 179, 180. Cf. T. Schramm, **Das Markus-Stoff bei Lukas** (Cambridge: University Press, 1971), p. 37.

<sup>41</sup> In the accounts of Mark and Matthew, Jesus has done mighty works before his return to Nazareth. It is significant to note that his authoritative teaching is closely connected with his casting out of demons (Mk 1:27).

<sup>42</sup> For further explanation of this custom of Jesus see A. Plummer, Lk, ICC, pp. 118f. Cf. E. Ellis, Lk, NCB, p. 97; H. Schürmann, Lk, HTKNT, 1.227,257.

<sup>43</sup> L. Morris, Lk, TNTC, p. 105.

Nu 15:37-41; Cf. Lk 10:27); Prayers including the Tephillah, the Shemoneh Esreh (Eighteen Benedictions); Readings from the Torah and from the prophets (earlier or latter prophetic books); an explanation or homily (cf. Acts 13:15); and the Aaronitic Blessing (Nu 6:22-27).<sup>44</sup> The readings in Hebrew were usually accompanied with an Aramaic translation or paraphrase by the reader or someone else. There were no regular ministers as we presently understand the term. The synagogue leaders appointed or invited people to do the readings and to deliver the sermon. It is not indicated whether Jesus was appointed on that Sabbath to read from the prophets or whether he made a request to do it.<sup>45</sup> On account of his rising popularity as a teacher in Galilee, it is safe to assume the former.

When Jesus stood up, the *bibli, on* (here means "scroll") of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him (vv. 16, 17). Since it is not established that at that time there already was a fixed lectionary on the reading from the prophets, it is assumed that Jesus himself chose the particular scroll and passage to read.<sup>46</sup> It is also possible that the scroll of Isaiah may have been selected by the ruler of the synagogue and was given to Jesus when his turn to read came.<sup>47</sup> Jesus then opened or unrolled the scroll and found the place<sup>48</sup> where it was written: The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of

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<sup>44</sup> E. Schürer, **Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi** (Leipzig: Hinrichs' sche Buchhandlung, 1886), 11.375-386; Strack-Billerbeck, KNTTM, IV.1.154-171; W. Schrage, "sunagwgh, , ktl." TWNT, VII. 798-850; P. Billerbeck, "Em Synagogengottesdienst in Jesus Tagen," ZNW 55 (1965): 143-161; L. Morris, **The NT and the Jewish Lectionaries** (London: Tyndale Press, 1964), pp. 11-34.

<sup>45</sup> H. Schürmann argues that it was the first time that Jesus had stood up to read in the synagogue and that he did it on his own initiative, contrary to the standard procedure. Lk, HTKNT 1.227. Cf. W. Grundmann, Lk, THNT, p. 120. H. Marshall considers this assumption as not sufficiently well grounded. He sees on the other hand, the possibility that Jesus had informally requested permission to read before the service began and Luke did not bother to include the details of the arrangement. Lk, NIGTC, p. 182. Cf. A. Plummer, Lk, ICC, p. 119; A. Leaney, Lk, BNTC, p. 118.

<sup>46</sup> K. Staab, Lk, EB, p. 38. Cf. Strack-Billerbeck, KNTTM, I.153ff.

<sup>47</sup> L. Morris, Lk, TNTC, p. 17.

<sup>48</sup> H. Preisker thinks that the opening of the scroll to a passage in Isaiah was accidental. "euriskw," TWNT IL767f. Cf. W. Grundmann who thinks that it was not accidental, but that Jesus was guided by the Spirit. Lk, THNT, p. 120. Cf. also J. Ernst, Lk, RNT, p. 170. On the other hand, majority of the commentators hold that it was done by deliberately seeking the exact spot. So N. Geldenhuys, Lk, NICNT, p. 167; A. Plummer, Lk, ICC, p. 120.

sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (vv. 18, 19).

This quotation comes from the LXX version of Isaiah 61:1f. with certain changes. Jesus leaves out three of the lines, i.e. "to bind up the brokenhearted" (v. 1), "the day of vengeance of our God,"<sup>49</sup> and "to comfort all who mourn" (v. 2b). A line is added from Isaiah 58:6 (LXX), "to release the oppressed" (*teqrausme, nouj evn avfe, sei*), because of its obvious fitness to describe his ministry.<sup>50</sup>

After reading, Jesus rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the synagogue attendant. He sat down taking the position of a teacher<sup>51</sup> while all eyes of those present were focused upon him (v. 20). The worshippers were all expectantly waiting for the exposition of the passage from Isaiah. What was said when Jesus expounded the text is unfortunately not reported by Luke. Surely the hearers were not disappointed for "they all spoke well of him, and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips" (v. 22). Luke summarizes Jesus' message in one sentence: "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing"<sup>52</sup> (v. 21). This statement amounted to a declaration that in his own person the words that were read had come to fulfilment. The functions of the OT figure are fulfilled in Jesus who has been anointed by the Spirit. It is not the identification of the speaker as the messianic figure or a public declaration of his messiahship. Otherwise, the reactions of the crowd would be far more than amazement because of his gracious words, and the questioning of his family background (v. 22).

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<sup>49</sup> The emphasis upon the punishment is deleted by Luke (cf. 7:22). The phrase *kai hmeran antapodosewj* (LXX) which refers to divine judgement on the nations, is probably deliberately omitted in order to stress the grace of God.

<sup>50</sup> H. Marshall, Lk, NBC, p. 896; N. Geldenhuys, Lk, NICNT, p. 167. The use of the quotation at Qumran is in connection with the work of the Teacher of Righteousness (1 QH 18:14). See H. Braun, **Qumran und das Neue Testament**. 2 Bde. (Tubingen: Mohr, 1966), 1.87.

<sup>51</sup> It was a custom for a reader in the synagogue to stand while reading the scripture and to sit down while making an explanation of the passage (cf. Mt 16:55). G. Schneider, "ka, qhmai, kt1" TWNT 111.443- 447; J. Martin, Lk, BKC, p. 214. On other occasions, we find Jesus sitting down to teach (Mt 5:1; Mk 4:1).

<sup>52</sup> Originally, the context of the prophecy may refer to the self-consciousness of the prophet, that he is anointed by Yahweh to announce the good news of his intervention to help his people, expressed in a variety of metaphors. H. Marshall, Lk, NIGTC, p. 183. It has been interpreted in terms of the Servant of Yahweh. Cf. F. F. Bruce, **This is That** (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1969), p. 90; C. H. Dodd, **According to the Scriptures** (London: Nisbet, 1952), p. 94. Cf. Qumran's connection of Is 61:1f. with the Servant of Yahweh in A. J. van der Woude, "Ilq Meichizedek and the NT," NTS 12 (1965-66): 301-326.

The ministry of Jesus in helping people in distress, i.e., the poor, the captives, the blind and the oppressed, fulfilled what was foretold by Deutero Isaiah. The word *ptwco, j* without an article refers to a quality or state rather than to individual poor persons.<sup>53</sup> It therefore refers to the unfortunate conditions of persons including those who are plagued with physical illness. Preaching good news to them would mean deliverance from their undesirable state of life. Jesus was also sent to bring sight to the blind. The meaning of *tufloij* here, as some interpreters hold, is metaphorical and that it refers to those who were spiritually blind,<sup>54</sup> as it does in Is. 61. However, Jesus' healings of many physically blind people would also fit well to the literal meaning of the text (cf. Lk 7:22 ;; Is 42:7). Besides, the Messiah was expected to restore sight to the blind (cf. Is 35:5). *Avna, bleyij* presupposes that the blindness referred to here is not from birth. Through Jesus' healing, many received recovery of their sight. "To proclaim freedom for the prisoners"<sup>55</sup> and "to release the oppressed" might have been fulfilled in Jesus' driving out of demons, if we understand demon possession as demonic captivity and oppression. The acceptable or favorable year of the Lord was to be proclaimed (v. 19). The allusion here is to the "Year of Jubilee" held every fifty years (Lv 25). It is a year when the land lays fallow, people return to their own homes, debts are relinquished and slaves are set free. It is a year of liberation among the Jews appointed by Yahweh. Jesus took the prophet's announcement of proclaiming the year of the Lord's favor as symbolic of his own acts.

## 1.2. Jesus' Reply to John's Inquiry (Lk 7:18-23)

The correspondence between Matthew's (11:2-6) and Luke's accounts of the story about John's inquiry to Jesus is extremely close.<sup>56</sup> Although Luke omits that John was in prison,<sup>57</sup> he has

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<sup>53</sup> C. Stuhmueller, Lk, JBC, pp. 131, 137. The word *ptwco, j* suggests abject poverty and had always a bad meaning until it was ennobled by the Gospels. A. Plummer, Lk, ICC, p. 121.

<sup>54</sup> N. Geldenhuys, Lk, NICNT, p. 168. It is suggested that the various acts described in the passage are to be taken spiritually rather than literally (H. Marshall, Lk, NBC, p. 896).

<sup>55</sup> *Aivcmalw, toij* literally refers to prisoners of war and those living in slavery. Since Jesus did not literally free prisoners of war and slaves, the meaning of the text could be understood as spiritual captivity. Cf. G. Maier, Mt, BK, p. 317; W. Grundmann, Lk, THNT, p. 120.

<sup>56</sup> This story and the following sayings about John are from Q and are placed by Matthew and Luke in different contexts.

<sup>57</sup> Luke has already recorded the imprisonment of John in 3:19f. John was imprisoned by Herod Antipas in the palace fortress of Machaerus built by

additions to the common narrative which are absent in Matthew. He adds some details on how John sent his two disciples to Jesus who repeated the question they were commanded to ask him. Moreover, he includes Jesus' healings done in the presence of John's messengers. Matthew's version agrees with Luke's in the rest of the details. This section of the Gospel narratives as recorded by the two evangelists is an "apothegma" or pronouncement-story<sup>58</sup> which tells of John's question and Jesus' answer.

When the disciples of John reported to him about Jesus' mighty works, John commissioned two of them to make an inquiry on the person of Jesus. "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?"<sup>59</sup> (v. 19) is the question they had to ask him. The question of John has puzzled commentators ever since the time of the early church fathers. It is difficult to determine the reason why John posed this question to elicit an open profession from Jesus. Was it for the sake of his disciples or for his own sake? It is less likely that it was for the benefit of his disciples,<sup>60</sup> for it would be unnecessary for Jesus to say, "Go back and report to John ..." (v. 22). We are left to assume that the problem came from John himself.<sup>61</sup> It is not clear whether it was doubt or just impatience on his part that led him to raise such

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Herod the Great on a desolate heights of Moab near the east central shore of the Dead Sea (Ant IXX.119; Wars VII.164-77).

<sup>58</sup> W. Manson, **Jesus the Messiah**, p. 38.

<sup>59</sup> R. Bultmann's historical scepticism led him to maintain that this part of the narrative is a secondary or ideal element supplied by the Christian community for the purpose of upholding Jesus' messiahship against the denials of John's followers. **Geschichte**, p. 22. H. Marshall holds that "even if the pericope reflects the church's discussions with the followers of John, it rests on a historical situation." Lk, NIGTC, p. 289.

<sup>60</sup> W. Hendriksen, Mt, NTC, p. 484. "It is perhaps the least likely solution ... that John himself had no qualms but his followers did. So he sent his disciples with a message, knowing that Jesus would give a satisfactory answer." L. Morris, Lk, TNTC, p. 141.

<sup>61</sup> It is suggested that John was besieged by a moment of doubt because of Jesus' slow accomplishment of the messianic plans, Jesus' seemingly vague identity, and his own personal discouragement, like Jeremiah (Jer 15:10ff.). C. StuhimueLLer, Lk, JBC, p. 137. Cf. Tertullian who contends that John's own faith was failing because Jesus did not seem to conform with what he and the people had expected and with what he had foretold (cf. Lk 3:17) (Marcion iv.18). Another suggestion is that of John's doubt on the significance of the deeds of Jesus which were reported to him. R. E. Nixon, Mt, NBC, p. 830. It is possible that John was just plain puzzled. His prophecy that the coming One would do striking works of judgment did not find fulfilment in Jesus' works of mercy. He, therefore, wanted to know if someone else would do these works of judgment. L. Morris, Lk, TNTC, p. 142. Cf. N. Geldenhuys, Lk, NICNT, p. 226; E. Ellis, Lk, NCB, p. 119; W. Grundmann, Lk, THNT, p. 164.

question. Scores of suggestions have been advanced to explain John's action. Probably, he was expecting Jesus to do something spectacular and because nothing happened, he sent his two disciples to Jesus to find out why and to provoke some action.<sup>62</sup> This, however, must always remain a possibility. The most likely solution is that which suggests that he only needed reassurance and confirmation of his belief in the messiahship of Jesus.<sup>63</sup> It should be noted, however, that John's messianic concept was different from what Jesus was trying to portray. His heavy emphasis on eschatological judgment (Mt 3:1-10) did not appear in the preaching of Jesus.

Ο ` evrco, nenoj, i.e. "the One who was to come" or "the coming One" is not an attested title for the Messiah in Jewish literature.<sup>64</sup> The term is thought to have been derived from Mal 3:1, where it designates a figure expected in Palestinian Judaism.<sup>65</sup> In our text, the term is understood to refer to the eschatological prophet<sup>66</sup> who will bring in again the paradisaical conditions of the wilderness period. On the other hand, other commentators may be right in maintaining that "the One who was to come" is a messianic designation based on Gn 49:10, Ps 118:26 (cf. Mk 11:9; Lk 13:35) and Mal 3:1<sup>67</sup> (cf. Hab 2:3; Dan 7:13; Heb 10:37; Rev 1:4). The prophets announced and the nation Israel expected the Messiah who was to come. John himself bore witness of the mighty One who would come (Lk 3:16). Most likely, he used the title with messianic sense. For him, the "coming One" was the Savior of Israel and the hope of all people.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> L. Morris, Lk, TNTC, p. 141. John's expectation was for the Messiah to set up the Kingdom he had been announcing and in his imprisonment he could not understand why the Kingdom still had not come. In his anxiousness concerning the Messiah, he sent disciples to ask Jesus. J. Martin, Lk, BKC, p. 222. Probably he thought that the Messiah would secure his release from prison. R. V. G. Tasker, Mt, TNTC, p. 114; A. Schlatter, Mt, ENT, p. 172; R. E. Nixon, Mt, NBC, p. 830.

<sup>63</sup> T. Zahn, Mt, KNT, pp. 141-142; L. Barbieri, Mt, BKC, p. 43; A. Schlatter, Mt, ENT, p. 172; J. Kallas, **Miracles**, p. 84.

<sup>64</sup> J. McKenzie, Mt, JBC, p. 82; L. Morris, Lk, TNTC, p. 141. Besides the Messiah, others were expected to come. In Jn 6:16 a prophet was to come into this world and in Mt 11:14 Elijah is the one who was to come.

<sup>65</sup> C. Stuhlmueller, Lk, JBC, p. 137.

<sup>66</sup> O. Cullmann, **Die Christologie des Neuen Testaments** (Tübingen: Mohr, 1963), p. 25; F. Hahn, **Christologische Hoheitstitel** (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), p. 393f.; G. Friedrich, "profh, thj, kt1."

<sup>67</sup> K. Staab, Mt, EB, p. 64; L. Barbieri, Mt, BKC, p. 43; R. E. Nixon, Mt, NBC, p. 830; Strack-Billerbeck, KNTTM IV.858,560; W. Grundmann, Lk, THNT, p. 163. Cf. Jn 11:27 where "the Christ, the Son of God" was to come into the world.

<sup>68</sup> O. Betz, **Jesus und das Danielbuch**, p. 101.

When the two disciples came to Jesus, he was busy performing works of mercy through healing<sup>69</sup> (v. 21). It appears that Jesus continued healing before he gave a response to John's question. His answer is not a plain "yes" but a reference to his works of healing which were already known to John. The disciples were to report to John what they have seen and heard. Jesus' answer consists of six brief parallel clauses followed by a closing comment.<sup>70</sup> The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, ... (v. 22). This is not a mere enumeration of Jesus' healings but a description of them in terms derived from the prophecy of Isaiah.

The *tufloi*, *cwloi*, *leproi*, *kwfoi*, *nekroi*, and *ptwcoi*, are the beneficiaries of Jesus' ministry of mercy. The list based on OT language appears to refer to the words and works of Jesus as a whole since it does not correspond to the healings mentioned in verse 21. Jesus quoted the essence of Is 29:18f.; 35:5f. and 61:1. He wanted to show that his actions were signs foretold in the book of Isaiah. The cleansing of lepers has no obvious OT prophecy behind it, but an Elisha typology (2 Ki 5; cf. Lk 4:27) may be evident. The raising of the dead replaces the liberation of captives in Is. 61:1 (cf. Is 26:19). It has also parallel with the Elijah-Elisha tradition (1 Ki 17:17ff.; 2 Ki 4:18-37). Jesus might have thought of his healing ministry not only as a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy<sup>71</sup>, but also as an analogy of Elijah-Elisha miracles.<sup>72</sup>

Jesus' reply was to draw attention to his works of healing. He pointed to his mighty works of healing persons of various diseases. The answer is a reminder to John of the Isaianic passages, where these works are mentioned as signs and blessings of the Messianic Age. In effect, these mighty acts of healing demonstrated the fact that Jesus is the Messiah who was foretold by the prophet (Is 61:1ff.).<sup>73</sup> The messiahship is not explicitly claimed but its substance is evident in the text. The

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<sup>69</sup> Though not mentioned by Matthew, it is implied in the words, "Go and report to John what you hear and see" (11:4).

<sup>70</sup> Aramaic original is believed to have a poetic rhythm of six two-beat lines and one three-beat line. Cf. J. Jeremias, *Neutestamentliche Theologie* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1971), I:25ff.; C. F. Burney, *The Poetry of Our Lord* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), p. 117.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. H. Schürmann, Lk, HTKNT, 1.411.

<sup>72</sup> O. Betz & W. Grimm, *Wunder Jesu*, p. 31.

<sup>73</sup> A. Plummer thinks that the enumerated healings of Jesus were the clearest signs of his messiahship (Lk, ICC, p. 204). Cf. J. Martin, Lk, BKC, p. 222; K. Staab, Lk, EB, p. 52; L. Morris, Lk, TNTC, p. 142.

healing ministry of Jesus was one basic credential and an evidence that he was the Messiah.<sup>74</sup>

The message of Jesus to John probably gave him comfort and made him realize that he had not preached and baptized in vain. Moreover, by the allusions to Isaianic passages, John was reminded of the type of messiah-ship that Jesus wanted the people to see and understand. It was not the kind of messiahship that he had been preaching. The Messiah was not an eschatological judge who will execute judgment of wrath upon the enemies of God's people (cf. Mt 3:12), nor will he establish a messianic empire over all kingdoms of the earth. The messiahship of Jesus is one which brings healings and confers blessings. John had to be informed that the ministry of the Messiah is one of mercy and not of judgment. Jesus' words to him concludes with tender rebuke and admonition containing a blessing: "Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me" (v. 23).

## 2. Casting Out Demons "by the Finger of God"

The evidence of Jesus' driving demons out is strongly attested not only by the earliest strata in the synoptic Gospels<sup>75</sup>, i.e. Mark and Q, but also by a Jewish source.<sup>76</sup> Aside from the general statements of Jesus' casting demons out and healings (e.g. Mk 1:39; Mt 8:16; Lk 13:32), the Synoptics bear specific accounts of demon-possessed persons who were healed by Jesus (e.g. Mt 9:32f.; Mk 1:23-27; Lk 4:33-36).<sup>77</sup> In the NT, demon possession means having a pneuma, or a daimonion/dai,mon,<sup>78</sup> daimonia or avka,qarton pneuma. It also means that a person is dominated by a demon and tormented by him. Some persons who suffered from physical disease or mental illness (e.g. Mt 8:28ff.; 12:22) are referred to as

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<sup>74</sup> M. Kelsey, **Healing**, p. 58. Cf. D. A. Carson, Mt, EBC, p. 229.

<sup>75</sup> Driving out demons possessed a peculiar and indeed primary evidential value as part of the early Church conception of the revelation of God in Jesus. This is shown by the obviously popular development and expansion which some of the exorcism narratives have undergone. W. Manson, **Jesus the Messiah**, p. 44. Cf. W. Grundmann, Mt, THNT, p. 237; J. McKenzie, Mt, JBC, p. 85.

<sup>76</sup> The Jewish Talmud mentions that Jesus practiced sorcery, which refers primarily to his casting out of demons (Sanh. 43a). Cf. Snack-Billerbeck, KNTTM 1.631.

<sup>77</sup> The conflict between Jesus and the forces of evil is depicted by the Synoptists by showing that he constantly cast out demons. Demon possession is frequent and integral to the Gospel narratives and it should not be discarded as a Hellenistic superstition. W. Liefeld, Lk, EBC, p. 872.

<sup>78</sup> Dai,mon occurs only once in the Gospels (Mt 8:31).



daimonizo,menoi (“demonized”). The demon is believed to have taken abode in a person and dominated and controlled the possessed individual.<sup>79</sup> The Gospels show that victims of demon possession suffer from physical illness (Lk 11:14) and some times insanity<sup>80</sup> (Mk 5:5; Lk 8:27,35). A demoniac in Capernaum had a supernatural insight into the person and purpose of Jesus (Mk 1:24,34; cf. Ac 16:16-18; 19:15).<sup>81</sup> Some demon-possessed in the NT are docile and non-violent but others are violent and even dangerous (Mt 8:28; cf. Ac 19:16).

The Greek word *dai,mwn* in classical writings refers to a god or a divine power, but in the NT it refers to an evil spirit and is used always in a bad sense. The *dai,monej* are agents of Satan who help him in his rebellion against God. The Bible does not provide a clear statement of the origin of demons. Some think they were the disembodied spirits of a pre-Adamic race that were aligned with Lucifer before his fall. Others believe that they were fallen angels<sup>82</sup> that were driven out of heaven with Satan (cf. Gn 6:1-4). Although these theories have supporting evidences, they are not strong enough to be conclusive and dogmatic.<sup>83</sup> It appears that evil spirits in the Gospels are of different kinds. There is a *av,,,lalon kai, kwfo,n pneuma* (Mk 9:25), *pneuma*

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<sup>79</sup> W. Hendriksen describes demon possession as “a condition in which a distinct and evil personality, foreign to the person possessed, has taken control of an individual.” He maintains that demon possession in the NT is not another name for insanity or multiple personality or dissociation, like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Mt, NTC, p. 437. Cf. N. Geldenhuys, Lk, NICNT, p. 174; W. Lane, Mk, NICNT, p. 79. H. Marshall argues against the view that demon possession in the NT is mental illness by saying that demoniacs in the Gospels possessed a supernatural knowledge of things unknown to ordinary man. Lk, NBC, p. 896.

<sup>80</sup> The case of the lunatic boy (Mt 17:14ff.) shows that demons have the intention to destroy or kill. W. C. van Dam lists in his book **Dämonen und Besessene** 9 symptoms and effects of demon possession in the NT (Aschaffenburg: Paul Pattloch Verlag, 1970), p. 112.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. similar features in rabbinical and Hellenistic literature. See P. Fiebig, **Jüd Wundergeschichten**, 25f. In the Talmud the demons are said to have six properties resembling that of angels and of men. See E. Ebstein, **Medizin**, p. 174. Thomas Aquinas and Calvin believed that demons have natural knowledge exceeding that of man (Summa Theologiae 11.2, qu. CLXXII, art. V; Instit. I.XIV.19). Jesus did not allow the demons to speak “because they knew who he was” (Mt 1:34). It is more specific in Luke: “because they knew he was the Christ” (4:41).

<sup>82</sup> Origen, *De Principiis*, Praefatio 6. Cf. Tertullian: the demons are “the spirits of the slain sons of the fallen angels” (Ad Nationes 11.13); Calvin, Instit. I.XIV.16; Enoch 15; Book of Jub. 5:1; 10:1

<sup>83</sup> Jeter, **By His Stripes**, pp. 108f. Cf. W. Foerster, “*dai,mwn*,” TWNT II. 1ff. People believed that demons were spirits of the departed who were ghosts at first and later became evil spirits. See H. van der Loos, **Miracles**, pp. 342f.

avsqenei,aj (Lk 13:11), and avka,qarton pneuma (Mk 1:23).<sup>84</sup> In Luke, the terms “demon(s)” occur 16 times and “evil spirit(s)” or “unclean spirit(s)” occur 8 times. The demon is believed to be a “supernatural force.”<sup>85</sup> Jesus did not deny the existence of demons and evil spirits. In fact, his words and works against them are strong evidences of their existence.<sup>86</sup>

It has been suggested that all of the healings of Jesus were originally casting out of demons,<sup>87</sup> and certainly there are traces of depicting healings as demon expulsion (e.g. Lk 13:11,16). This theory maintains that Jesus saw the hand of the evil one even in the field of ordinary physical maladies, and that he ascribed these things directly to the perversity of Satan. His underlying attitude, therefore, is one that considers the physically ill as under the influence or control of an evil power.<sup>88</sup> However, while it is true that many of the healings were effected by rebuking a “spirit of infirmity” or casting out demons (Mk 9:22-24; Mt 12:22; Lk 4:38,39), not every illness was regarded as the work of a demon.<sup>89</sup> The Gospels clearly made a distinction between physical sickness and demon possession (e.g. Mt 8:16; 10:8; Mk 6:13; Lk 4:40,41). W. Hendriksen rightly says that the evangelists do not ascribe all

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<sup>84</sup> Cf. pla,na pneumatata “deceiving or lying spirits” (1 Tim 4:1; 1 Ki 22:21, 22), and ruach kin-ah “jealous spirit” (Nu 5:14) Avka,qarton pneuma which is Marcan designation is translated “unclean spirit” (RSV) or “evil spirit” (NIV). There seems to be no difference because “an evil spirit is unclean in contrast to the holiness of God, and may well cause both moral and physical filth in a possessed human.” W. Liefeld, Lk, EBC, p. 872. Cf. F. Filson, Mt, BNTC, p. 125; E. Ellis, Lk, NCB, p. 100; R. K. Harrison, “Demon, Demonic, Demonology,” ZPEB 2:92-101. “Among men they are also the instigators of filthy thoughts, words and deeds.” W. Hendriksen, Mt, NTC, p. 449. Cf. A. Leaney, Lk, BNTC, p. 120; H. van der Loos, **Miracles**, p. 351.

<sup>85</sup> W. Foerster, “daimwn,” TWNT 11.2.

<sup>86</sup> It has been said that in his teachings Jesus was in conflict with his human enemies and in his miracles he is in conflict with the demons and with sickness. R. H. Fuller, **Miracles**, p. 70.

<sup>87</sup> It is illustrated by the tendency of the tradition to assimilate all other acts of healing and even nature miracles (Mk 4:39) to the exorcistic form of procedure. S. Mowinckel, **He that Cometh**, pp. 44, 45. Although the healing of Simon’s mother-in-law was originally a biographical reminiscence, for Mark, it is a constitution of the conflict with the powers of evil. R. H. Fuller, **Miracles**, p. 70. Cf. Ac 10:38.

<sup>88</sup> M. Kelsey, **Healing**, p. 89. Cf. E. Langton, **Demonology**, p. 151; H. Jeter, **By His Stripes**, p. 110. W. Barclay points out that in the ancient eastern world, all illness including mental and psychological illness was ascribed to the malignant power of demons and devils. Exorcism was therefore very commonly practiced (Mt, 11.38). “Disease and disfigurement are ultimately Satan’s work.” W. Wessel, Mk, EBC, p. 639.

<sup>89</sup> J. McKenzie, Mt, JBC, p. 77. Cf. W. Liefeld, Lk, EBC, p. 874; N. Geldenhuys, Lk, NICNT, p. 174.

physical illnesses and abnormalities to the presence and operation of evil spirits.<sup>90</sup> He cites the example in Mt 4:24 where demoniacs are distinguished from epileptics, paralytics, and other various diseases. Some afflicted with certain physical illness are demon-possessed (e.g. Mt 12:22); while others who may have the same illness are not (e.g. Mt 15:30). It indicates that the demoniacs were regarded as special victims.<sup>91</sup>

In his ministry, Jesus is always in conflict with the forces of evil. This conflict with demons, however, does not affect his attitude towards demoniacs. Notice how he deals with the persons who are victims of demonic power. While most people looked at demoniacs as especially wicked people who, through their perversity, had sold themselves to the devil,<sup>92</sup> Jesus felt compassion upon them. He healed and encouraged the demoniacs after the expulsion of the demons. He saw the demoniacs not as especially sinful people but as supremely unfortunate sufferers, who by no fault of their own were dominated by demons. For him, demon possession did not mean an alliance with Satan but a bondage to Satan.<sup>93</sup> Jesus saw the strength of the demons that could enter into a man even without or against that man's will.

Jesus' authority over demons is recognized by his enemies (Mt 12:22f.) and by the demons themselves (Lk 4:37ff.; 8:28ff.).<sup>94</sup> The crowds were always amazed by his power to drive out demons (Lk 4:36; 9:42-43). In their amazement at one time they debated among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching -- and with authority? He even gives orders to evil spirits, and they obey him" (Mk 1:27). His casting out of demons are accomplished by a simple command. It also happened that demons would resist and would not come out from their victims. Notice how the disciples failed to exorcise the demon in Mk 9:18,28. Their attempt to drive the demon out failed, that they later asked Jesus the

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<sup>90</sup> Mt, NTC, pp. 436f. Cf. F. Filson, Mt, BNTC, pp. 125f. Although exorcism and healing are related, they are not one and the same. K. Bailey, **Divine Healing**, p. 161.

<sup>91</sup> H. van der Loos, **Miracles**, p. 371. Demoniacs are placed in a class by themselves, separate from those afflicted with ordinary disease. E. Gould, Mk, ICC, p. 26.

<sup>92</sup> E. Langton, **Demonology**, pp. 149, 152, 153.

<sup>93</sup> J. Kallas, **Synoptic Miracles**, p. 63. After being freed by Jesus from the control of the spirits, the person accepted his deliverance with joy and gratitude (Mk 5:11ff.; Lk 8:21). In connection with his driving out of demons, Jesus nowhere speaks of forgiveness of sins or of purification-sacrifices. N. Geldenhuys, Lk, NICNT, p. 174.

<sup>94</sup> His authority over demons is interpreted as a sign of his messianic power (Lk 7:21; 13:32).

reason of their failure. On one occasion, while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum, Jesus was interrupted by a demoniac who possessed a supernatural insight into his person and purpose (Mk 1:24). In another instance, the Gadarene demoniac, who had also this supernatural insight, pleaded not to be tormented (Mk 5:7). Both demoniacs mention the name of Jesus, perhaps in the hope of overpowering him by using his name.<sup>95</sup> Jesus' authoritative words cast the demons out.

## 2.1. Healing of the Dumb Demoniac and the Reactions of the Crowds (Lk 11:14-16)

The scholars agree that the pericope comes from Q tradition. The account of the healing of the dumb demoniac is also reported by Matthew who added that the demoniac is also blind<sup>96</sup> (12:22). Parallels of the following verses are also found in Mark (3:22f.), but there seems to be no trace that Luke used Mark as an additional source.<sup>97</sup> Matthew on the other hand, shows some evidences of Mark's influence, although he relied mainly on the Q source.<sup>98</sup> On account of the different versions of the story, it is difficult to ascertain the original wording in Q, but it has been suggested that it is close to Luke.<sup>99</sup> The context in Q, in comparison to Mark, is the driving out of a spirit causing dumbness. Such a healing was among the signs of the

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<sup>95</sup> This is a common ancient superstition. H. Marshall, Lk, NBC, p. 896. Cf. S. Johnson, Mk, BNTC, p. 102. The demons, being spiritual beings recognized the person of Jesus. S. Johnson, Mk, BNTC, p. 50.

<sup>96</sup> Some scholars think that the healing of the dumb-blind demoniac in Mt 12:22f. is a repetition of the accounts in 9:32f. although the demoniac in chapter 9 is only dumb. So E. Schweizer, Mt, NTD, p. 184; E. Kbstermann, Mt, HNT, p. 107; K. Staab, Mt, EB, p. 71; A. Sand, Mt, RNT, pp. 210, 260. It is argued that Matthew has used the same theme twice, once to illustrate the healing power of Jesus, and once to introduce the theme of the opposition to Jesus. H. Marshall, Lk, NIGTC, p. 472. T. Zahn is probably right in saying "Die Meinung, dais das Ereignis mit demjenigen in 9,32ff. identisch sei, da aber Matthäus, urn dasselbe noch einmal also em verschiedenes erzählen und weiteres anknupfen zu können, hier die Blindheit zugeichtet habe, ist in jeder Einsicht unhaltbar." Mt, KNT, p. 454. Moreover, Jesus could have healed many blind and dumb persons.

<sup>97</sup> K. H. Rengstorf, Lk, NTD, p. 148. Cf. W. Schmithals, Lk, ZB, p. 133. "Er beweist, daE Lk 11,16-23 in Q schon in fester Form vorlag." E. Schweizer, Lk, NTD, p. 185.

<sup>98</sup> E. Schweizer, Mt, NTD, pp. 184f. Cf. D. A. Carson, Mt, EBC, p. 288. R. Bultmann thinks that the original story is only recognizable in Mk 3:22-26; Mt 12:24-26 and Lk 11:14-15,17-18. **Geschichte**, pp. 10-12.

<sup>99</sup> S. Schulz, Q - **Die Spruchquelle der Evangelisten**, p. 204. According to H. Marshall the story in Mt 9:32-34 seems likely to give the original Q. Lk, NIGTC, p. 472.

messiahship that Jesus reminded John (Lk 7:22). The healing event also shows the real nature of the growing opposition Jesus faced.

The pericope begins in verse 14 with the expulsion of a *daimo,nion kwfovn*.<sup>100</sup> *Kwfo,j* means “dumb,” or “deaf” or both.<sup>101</sup> In ancient Jewish literature, the equivalent of *kwfo,j* are *ilem* (dumb) and *cheresh* (deaf). *Cheresh* is more common in rabbinical writings than *ilem*, where it commonly means “deaf-mute.”<sup>102</sup> It appears that the demon described in verse 14 is itself dumb. The dumb demon causes the dumbness of his victim. The loss of speech is not of a physiological nature but is viewed as the effect of the diabolical control over the person. This is one case in the Gospels where physical malady is ascribed to the demonic influence. After the demon was driven out of the man, the latter spoke.<sup>103</sup> Here, the healing is described only in bare essentials, obviously because the interest is in the discussion that follows. It is not stated how this happened and what method of demon expulsion Jesus applied, but it is certain, like in other instances (cf. Mk 1:25), that it was accomplished through his word of command for the demon to leave the person.

The healing of the dumb demoniac drew three types of reactions from the audience. First, the crowds were utterly astounded when they witnessed the casting out of the dumb demon and the restoration of the power of speech to the liberated man. Luke uses the verb *evqau,masan* (cf. Mt 9:33), while Matthew has *evxi,stanto* (12:23) which is a stronger expression of the crowds amazement as they felt God’s presence in their midst.<sup>104</sup> In Mt 9:33, the people express their astonishment

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<sup>100</sup> Various authorities (Ac C K W X D Q P Y) insert *kai. auvto. h=n* between *daimo,nion* and *kwfo,v* (Aland-Nestle). While considered a Lukan style, it is weakly attested. B. Metzger, **Textual Commentary**, p. 158. In Matthew’s accounts, the demoniac is not only *kwfo,j* but also *tuflo,j* who was brought to Jesus by a third party. It is suggested that it is probable that the blind-dumb demoniac was brought by Jesus’ opponents. His especially unfortunate condition could be a good test case for Jesus. Being blind and dumb, communication with him is almost impossible. L. Barbieri, Mt, BKC, p. 46; A. Plummer, Lk, ICC, p. 301.

<sup>101</sup> W. Gemoll, “*kwfo,j*,” GDSH.

<sup>102</sup> Strack-Billerbeck, KNTTM 11.526.

<sup>103</sup> *Evkba,llwn* and *evxelqo,ntoj* are used by Luke while Matthew prefers *evqera,peusen*. Probably Luke wants to emphasize the driving out of demons and Matthew the healing of the dumbness and blindness.

<sup>104</sup> Jesus’ words and works in the Gospels’ accounts aroused surprise and wonder. Various Greek words are used to describe the astonishment and amazement of Jesus’ audience. In addition to *evqau,masan* and

by saying, "Never was anything like this seen in Israel." In another of Matthew's accounts, the crowds raise a question with a messianic overtone, Can this be the Son of David ? 12:23.<sup>105</sup> The form of the question in Greek suggests that the crowds are none too sure<sup>106</sup> and that it calls for a negative answer.<sup>107</sup> In any case, it implies their common belief that the Messiah they are expecting will perform miracles (see Targum Is 53:8).

In verse 15, we find the second type of reaction aroused by Jesus' demon expulsion. His critics who witnessed the healing were not at all amazed of what he did. Instead, they charged him of doing such work with the help of a demonic power. While Luke mentions that the accusers of Jesus are *tine.j evx auvtwn*, Matthew specifies them as *oi` Farisaioi*.<sup>108</sup> The critics did not deny the reality of the healing and did not doubt that Jesus had power over demons. They saw in Jesus a power which is more than human. Since they could not contest the fact that Jesus healed, they tried to cast doubts upon the agency through which he did it. They accused Jesus of casting out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of the demons.<sup>109</sup> They tried to discredit him by saying that the source of his power is not God but the devil. The accusation is more grave than the one raised against John the Baptist who was accused of having a demon (Mt. 11:18). It was to

*evxi, stanto*, the verbs *evxeph, ssonto* (Mt 7:28; Mk 7:37), *evfobh, qhsan* (Mt 9:8; Mk 4:41). *Evdo, xasan* (Mt 9:8; Lk 4:15), the nouns *qa, mboj* (Lk 4:36) and *ev, kstasij* (Lk 5:26) appear in the Gospel narratives.

<sup>105</sup> The Jewish messianic expectation waits for the "Son of David" who would inaugurate and rule an earthly kingdom. The "Davidic hope" is explicit and implicit in the Gospels. Cf. J. Kallas, **Synoptic Miracles**, pp. 14ff.

<sup>106</sup> Schlatter, Mt, ENT, p. 193.

<sup>107</sup> W. Hendriksen, Mt, NTC, p. 524. It is introduced in the Greek by *pf11.*, which expects the answer "No" but allows for the faint possibility that it may be "Yes." R. V. G. Tasker, Mt, TNTC, p. 129.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. Mark's *oi` grammateij avpo. Iverosolu, mwn* (3:22). Some think that Luke is original here. S. Schulz, **Q - Die Spruchquelle**, p. 304 n. On the contrary, H. Marshall thinks that Luke may have altered the wording of Q, since *tij evk* is a favorite phrase of his, and also since he has a further group of speakers in the next verse. Lk, NIGTC, p. 472. W. Grundmann suggests the playing down of the hostility of the Pharisees for the moment in view of 11:37. Lk, THNT, p. 237.

<sup>109</sup> The same accusation occurs twice in Matthew (9:34; 12:24). It occurs in Mark without the miracle story where Jesus was accused of being possessed by Beelzebul (3:22). It seems he was also named Beelzebul himself (Mt 10:25). In the context of Matthew (12:23), the Pharisees made the charge when the crowds were discussing about the possibility that Jesus is the "Son of David." The Pharisees have at once taken the steps to destroy Jesus' reputation to prevent the people from placing their messianic hope on his person.

the enabling influence of the prince of demons that they ascribed Jesus' power to drive out demons. The charge may also imply that Jesus is possessed by Beelzebul himself.

The spelling in Greek of the name of the prince of the demons varies in the MSS. The form *beelzebou, l* has better Greek MSS support than the abbreviated *beezebou, l*.<sup>110</sup> The variant form "Beelzebub" comes from the Latin Vulgate and probably due to assimilation to 2 Ki 1:2,3,6<sup>111</sup> where the god of Ekron is called *Baal z'vuv*<sup>112</sup> Beelzebub means "Lord of flies," presumably as a Hebrew estimate of his worth. The name may also mean the "god of manure." Since the sacrifices to the idols are worthless, they are "manure."<sup>113</sup> C. Stuhmueller suggests that the original name of the chief god of the Philistine city of Ekron was *Baal z'vul*, which means "Lord of the divine abode" but the Israelites mockingly changed the name to *Baal z'vuv*<sup>114</sup> It is probably a derisive pun ("Lord of flies") on an original "Baalzebul."<sup>115</sup>

The first word "Beel" in the name Beelzebul is equivalent to "baal," i.e. "lord." The second word "zebul" has a number of derivations. It has been traced to *zebul* which means "house," "high place" or "temple" (1 Ki 8:13; Is 63:15), giving the meaning "lord of the house, high place or temple."<sup>116</sup> This etymology sheds light on the reference to the divided house in verse 17, on the reference to the strong armed man guarding his palace (v. 21) and on the words of Mt 10:25, where the master of the house is called Beelzebul. Zebul has also been traced to the Aramaic equivalent *Beel dibaba* which is phonetically like *Beel debaba*, i.e. "enmity" or "enemy."<sup>117</sup> A. Schiatter supports this view by saying that Beelzebul "war wahrscheinlich nichts anderes als 'der Feind' (Mt 13:39), wobei der Laut des Namens absichtlich etwas entstellt

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<sup>110</sup> *beelzebou, l* is found in Pap 47.75, A C D (L) R, etc., while *beezebou, l* occurs in k B (Nestle-Aland). The shorter form is apparently no more than an easier way of pronouncing the same name. L. Morris, Lk, TNTC, p. 197.

<sup>111</sup> Beelzebub is also found in Syriac MSS (sys.c) (Nestle-Aland).

<sup>112</sup> *Baal z'vuv* is only found in the Hebrew text. LXX renders it *ba, al muian*. (2 Ki 1:2,3,6). Cf. Josephus, Ant. IX.ii.1.

<sup>113</sup> H. van der Loss, *Miracles*, p. 407. Cf. Strack-Billerbeck, KNTTM, 1.632.

<sup>114</sup> Lk, JBC, p. 145. J. McKenzie suggests that the MT has corrupted *Baal z'vul* to *Baal z'vuv* i.ir Mt, JBC, p. 85.

<sup>115</sup> W. Foerster, "beezebou, l," TWNT I.605f.

<sup>116</sup> N. Geldenhuys, Lk, NICNT, p. 332. Cf. L. Gaston, "Beelzebul," ThZ (1962): 247ff.

<sup>117</sup> Strack-Billerbeck, KNTTM, 1.631. Cf. W. Foerster, "beezebou, l," TWNT 1.605.

wurde, weil man den Teufel nicht rufen wollte.”<sup>118</sup> A third suggested origin of zebul is the name zbl found in a Ras Shamra text (c. 1400 B.c.), where the word may be a proper name or may mean “prince,” in the phrase zbl b’L.<sup>119</sup> It is further suggested, although less probable, that the ending in “l” may also be derogatory in Hebrew usage if it were derived from “zebul,” i.e. “dung.”<sup>120</sup>

As shown above, the derivation of the word “Beelzebul” is disputed, but whatever is its etymology, the meaning of the name in the text is clear. It appears that it is a popular name for the prince of the demons. Moreover, the wording in verse 18 (cf. Mt 12:26) suggests that Beelzebul was another name for Satan.<sup>121</sup> To the Pharisees, the name Beelzebul refers to the prince of demons, but Jesus identified it with Satan. Although the name is not attested elsewhere in Jewish literature as the name of a demon<sup>122</sup> or Satan,<sup>123</sup> it appears to represent the same figure as Belia in the inter-testamental literature.<sup>124</sup> “Er entspricht dem Finsternisengel Belial der Qumrantheologie.”<sup>125</sup> The absence of the article *tw* before *av, rconti* in Mt 12:24 could suggest that Beelzebul is only one among other princes of demons. However, it is clear in Luke’s *tw wav, rconti tw n daimoni, wn* that there is only one prince in the kingdom of demons. The enemies of Jesus charged him of being in league with Beelzebul with the intention of destroying him (cf. Mt 12:14). The accusation is designed to reduce Jesus to the level of a common sorcerer. The practice of sorcery is strictly forbidden in the Jewish Law (Dt 18:10-12; Cf. Mal 3:5). It implies too that demonic power can do “signs and wonders” (cf. Mt 24:24; Dt 13:iff.).

Verse 16 mentions the third type of reaction to the demon expulsion by Jesus. The identity of *e`, teroi*<sup>126</sup> is not clear. It is

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<sup>118</sup> Mt, ENT, p. 194.

<sup>119</sup> H. Marshall, Lk, NIGTC, p. 473. For the different opinions about the meaning of zbl see W. Foerster, “beezebou, l” TWNT 1.605, n. 4.

<sup>120</sup> R. E. Nixon, Mt, NBC, p. 832. Cf. L. Morris, Lk, TNTC, p. 197. Cf. also K. Staab who says, “Beelzebul heigt ‘Herr der Mistes’, wobei unter ‘Mist’ jede Art von götzendienerischem Kult zu verstehen ist.” Mt, EB, p. 71.

<sup>121</sup> It is unlikely that this prince of the demons is to be understood as an inferior being serving Satan’s cause. W. Liefeld, Lk, EBC, p. 952.

<sup>122</sup> W. Foerster, “beezebou, l” TWNT 1.605f.

<sup>123</sup> Strack-Billerbeck, KNTTM, I.631f.

<sup>124</sup> H. Marshall, Lk, NIGTC, p. 473.

<sup>125</sup> W. Grundmann, Lk, THNT, pp. 237f. Cf. 1QS 1:18; 3:20-26; 4:24; 1QM 13:2. See O. Betz, “Jesu Heiliger Krieg,” in idem, **Jesus, Der Messias Israels**, p. 90.

<sup>126</sup> Matthew does not mention this group of people in the context. Verse 16 is probably not part of the original accounts in Q but is deemed a necessary



likely that they were Pharisees who did not openly charge Jesus of an alliance with Beelzebul, but asked for a sign from heaven.<sup>127</sup> They might not be sincere at all because they only wanted to test Jesus.<sup>128</sup> Their motive may be to place Jesus in a more difficult situation. Notice the same verb *peira,zw* is used in the temptation story (4:2). The sign-seekers did not deny the reality of Jesus' exorcism but were not convinced that his work in casting out demons is a sufficient evidence of his divine authorization or his messiahship.<sup>129</sup> The kind of sign they were asking for is one which Jesus himself would not originate in order to avoid the mistake of considering him as an ordinary wonder-worker or magician.

The meaning of *shmeion evx ouvranou* here is not clear. Jesus' critics were aware of his works but did not interpret them as signs for the poor and needy.<sup>130</sup> Numerous healings and banishment of demons have been done by Jesus at this point. They were, however, for the critics not enough and therefore, they desired a different kind of sign -- a sign from heaven.. In the Old Testament, a "sign" is an extraordinary or paradoxical event that manifests the present activity of God.<sup>131</sup> Usually, it is a phenomenon in nature, such as what was done in Egypt through Moses (Ex 7-12; 14:13ff.). The sign being asked by Jesus' critics would be for them something spectacular. C. Stuhlmüller suggests that this sign is in the nature of national splendor or military victory for the nation.<sup>132</sup> Referring to Mk 8:11, O. Betz says

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addition by Luke. W. Schmithals, Lk, ZB, p. 133. H. Marshall suggests that the verse is intended by Luke to prepare for the later saying about the sign of Jonah (vv. 29-32). Lk, NIGTC, p. 473.

<sup>127</sup> In the context after the feeding of the 4,000, the Pharisees (and Sadducees in Mt 16:1) test Jesus by asking him to show a sign from heaven (Mk 8:11). The casting out of demons is rejected as a sign.

<sup>128</sup> J. Martin, Lk, BKC, p. 266. Their purpose may be to ascertain whether Jesus has the right credentials for his ministry. H. Marshall, Lk, NIGTC, p. 473. They, therefore, demanded for a confirmatory sign before they make their judgment. W. Grundmann, Lk, THNT, p. 238.

<sup>129</sup> In Matthew's context, the request is directed toward messianic sign. J. McKenzie, Mt, JBC, p. 85. Cf. N. Geldenhuys, Lk, NICNT, p. 329; K. Staab, Mt, EB, p. 75; L. Morris, Lk, TNTC, pp. 130f.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. the "mighty works" of Jesus called "signs" in the Gospel of John.

<sup>131</sup> In Is 7:10ff., the prophet invites king Ahaz to ask for a sign as "deep as Sheol or high as heaven." It is important to note that the essential feature of a sign is not its marvelous character but its significance, for it is an event that admits an obvious interpretation. J. McKenzie, Mt, JBC, p. 85.

<sup>132</sup> Lk, JBC, p. 145. If those asking the sign from heaven were Pharisees (and Sadducees), the suggestion is less likely because these religious leaders were not so eager, unlike the Zealots, in waging war against the occupation forces of Rome.

that “the ‘sign from heaven’ that the Pharisees had demanded from Jesus must have been a ‘sign of liberation’ corresponding to the spectacular deeds of God in Israel’s history.”<sup>133</sup> Less likely is the suggestion that the sign from heaven has to do with a heavenly body, i.e., a sign involving the sun, moon or a star.<sup>134</sup> Whatever is meant here, it would be a sign to be interpreted as an unmistakable indication from God and has to do with their messianic expectation.

## 2.2. Defence Against the Accusers (Lk 11:17-23)

It appears that the accusers of Jesus did not venture to utter their negative interpretation of his casting out of demons openly before him. Apparently, they were discussing it among themselves and probably spreading it also among the people. But Jesus knew their thoughts (v. 17a). Luke uses here the word *dianoh,ma* which is probably original, while Matthew has preference for *evnqu,mhsij* (12:25a), perhaps associating it with evil and incorrect thoughts.<sup>135</sup> Knowing their thoughts by the power of the Holy Spirit in him is probably what is meant here (Cf. Is 11:2). However, it does not exclude the possibility that he was informed by others,<sup>136</sup> especially by his disciples. Consequently, Jesus defended his questioned authority, not by quoting scriptures but through logical arguments.

The introduction to the sayings of Jesus (v. 17a) agrees with that in Matthew (12:25a), but with two minor differences -- the inclusion of *avvto,j* and the use of *dianoh,ma*. The first part of Jesus reply (v. 17b) is shorter than that in Matthew (12:25b; cf. Mk 3:25), prompting some to think that the latter is probably the original form.<sup>137</sup> Jesus’ answer consists of pictures of a divided *basilei,a* and *oivkos* falling upon *oivkon*.<sup>138</sup> Matthew (12:25)

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<sup>133</sup> “The Concept of the So-Called ‘Divine Man’ in Mark’s Christology,” in idem, **Jesus, Der Messias Israels**, pp. 280f. Cf. the *shmeion evleuqerias* (“sign of salvation”) in Josephus (War 11.258-260).

<sup>134</sup> W. Grundmann, Lk, THNT, p. 238. Grundmann points out that Jewish theology believes in the possibility of this kind of sign. Cf. Strack- Billerbeck, KNTTM, I.726f.

<sup>135</sup> H. Marshall, Lk, NIGTC, p. 473. Cf. the use of the verb *evnqume, omai* in Mt 9:4.

<sup>136</sup> G. Maier, Mt, BK, p. 423. Cf. Lk 4:23; 6:8; 9:47; Mt 9:4; Jn 2:24f. Knowing the thoughts of his critics “may be seen as part of Jesus’ prophetic powers.” H. Marshall, Lk, NIGTC, p. 214. Cf. G. Schneider, Lk, OTNT, p. 134.

<sup>137</sup> W. Schmithals, Lk, ZB, p. 133. Cf. T. Zahn, Lk, KNT, p. 459.

<sup>138</sup> *Oivkoj evpi oivkon pi,ptei* is not clear. It seems to present the idea of a nature catastrophe and not as a result of a political chaos or civil war. T. Zahn, Lk, KNT, p. 459. The most likely view is one which suggests an

follows that of Mark (3:25) which provides a double metaphor by adding a picture of a divided  $\rho\omicron, \lambda\iota\varsigma$  or  $\omicron\iota\upsilon\kappa\iota, \alpha$ . The point is clear in both Luke and Matthew. A kingdom, a city, or a house divided in itself cannot stand for it will inevitably destroy itself. Historically, the Jewish kingdom became part of the Roman empire partly due to their internal strife. The Greek empire experienced the same fate. By a divided house, one can easily remember the divided family of the Maccabees which was destroyed by internecine quarrel.

From a universal rule, Jesus goes on to draw a particular application. From a general truth, he moves to the specific with the question, "And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say I cast out demons by Beelzebul." There is here the equivalence of Satan and Beelzebul. Jesus regards Satan and Beelzebul as the same person. The Hebrew word "Satan" means "adversary" and "accuser."<sup>139</sup> It is here clear that Satan has a kingdom and exercises authority among his minions.<sup>140</sup> The point of the argumentation in verse 17 holds true for the kingdom of Satan. The truth that all civil war has always disastrous results applies also to the kingdom of Satan when it is divided. It is, therefore, preposterous to suggest that Satan works against his demon subordinates by casting them out of their victims; for by doing so, he is promoting internal strife in his kingdom, and thereby destroying his works. In effect, Jesus is saying that it would be ridiculous for Satan to drive out his own demons and work against himself. He makes a *reductio ad absurdum* of their argument. The first answer of Jesus shows the absurdity of his accusers' charge.

Jesus poses another counter question to refute the accusation of his enemies. "But if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out?"<sup>141</sup> (v. 19a). Many scholars suggest that  $\omicron\iota\` \upsilon\iota\` \omicron\iota. \upsilon\` \mu\omega\upsilon\eta$  ("your sons") here means the

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aftermath of a civil strife. This can hardly refer literally to houses falling in ruins on each other (B. Klostermann, Lk, HKNT, p. 127), but to one household attacking another. It is translated, "and house falls upon houses" (RSV) in view of the conflict between families and households. N. Geldenhuys, Lk, NICNT, p. 332. Cf. J. Wellhausen, Lk, p. 58; B. S. Easton, Lk, p. 180; W. Grundmann, Lk, THNT, p. 238.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. 1 Sam 29:4; 2 Sam 19:23; 1 Ki 11:14ff.; Nu 22:22,32; 1 Chr 21:1; Job 1:6ff.; 2:1ff.; Ps 109:6; Zech 3:1f.

<sup>140</sup> In the fourth Gospel, Satan is referred to as the ruler of this world (12:31; 16:11). Cf. H. Kruse, "Das Reich Satans," *Biblica* 58 (1977): 29-61.

<sup>141</sup> This mode of turning the argument against the arguer is particularly Hebraic. A. Edersheim, *The Life and Time of Jesus the Messiah* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1931), 11.198.

pupils,<sup>142</sup> followers<sup>143</sup> or members of the Pharisaic party.<sup>144</sup> Objection to this view is raised on the fact that there is no evidence that these exorcists had been instructed by the Pharisees.<sup>145</sup> J. McKenzie thinks that the expression *oi` ui`oi . u`mwn* is a semitism for “yourselves,” “members of your own group.”<sup>146</sup> People in your midst, your own people,<sup>147</sup> “your flesh and blood” who were not necessarily pupils of the Pharisees may be what is meant here. In any case, it is certain that these exorcists were their fellow Jews.<sup>148</sup> It is possible that the “sons” were among those present who wanted to observe how Jesus cast out demons.

Jewish exorcism is not only attested by the NT (Mk 9:38; Lk 9:49; Ac 19:13ff.) but also by some other sources.<sup>149</sup> Josephus mentions that there were many exorcists during his time and describes a case which he himself witnessed. A certain Jew named Eleazar is reported to have cast out demons in the presence of Vespasian (69-79 A.D.), his sons, his officers and soldiers (Ant. VIII.45-48). In the apocryphal book of Tobit, an angel instructed Tobit how to drive away a wicked demon who fell in love with his bride (6:16; 8:1-4). Later, Justin Martyr makes mention of Jewish exorcism in his Dialogue (85).

According to Jewish tradition, the practice of exorcism originated from David whose music helped Saul, and also from Solomon who received wisdom from God including the skill of expelling out demons. The words used in exorcism and the instructions on how to do it are believed to have come from Solomon himself.<sup>150</sup> The NT does not describe the Jewish method of banishing demons out apart from the information that some of them used the name of Jesus (Mk 9:38; Ac 19:13ff.). Josephus describes in some details the use of a certain root, smoke, water,

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<sup>142</sup> This suggestion is especially relevant in the context of Matthew where the critics are specifically named Pharisees. Cf. R. E. Nixon, Mt, NBC, p. 832; J. Schniewind, Mt, NTD, p. 159; E. Schweizer, Lk, NTD, p. 186; W. Hendriksen, Mt, NTC, p. 525; G. Maier, Mt, BK, p. 425; H. Marshall, Lk, NIGTC, p. 474; A. Leaney, Lk, BNTC, p. 189; F. Filson, Mt, BNTC, p. 150; H. van der Loos, **Miracles**, p. 147.

<sup>143</sup> TEV; L. Morris, Lk, TNTC, p. 198. W. Schmithals thinks that *oi` ui`oi . u`mwn* is a Semitic expression meaning “followers” (Lk, ZB, p. 134).

<sup>144</sup> T. Zahn, Mt, KNT, p. 437.

<sup>145</sup> F. Godet, Lk, p. 363.

<sup>146</sup> Mt, JBC, p. 85.

<sup>147</sup> W. Grundmann, Lk, THNT, p. 238.

<sup>148</sup> G. Eder, **Wundertäter**, pp. 133f.

<sup>149</sup> See H. van der Loos, **Miracles**, pp. 353ff. Cf. W. Grundmann, Lk, THNT, p. 238.

<sup>150</sup> Cf. W. Allen, Mt, ICC, p. 135.

utterance of Solomon's name and his composed incantations as means of exorcism (Ant VIII. 45-48; Wars VII.185).<sup>151</sup> It is highly probable that Jewish exorcists in Jesus' time used long complicated rituals,<sup>152</sup> and applied some material objects, sympathetic manipulations and recited Solomon's invented incantations.

The Jewish exorcists claimed to have the power to expel demons. At the time of Jesus, there was the consensus among the Jews that when a rabbi or other Jew cast out demons, it was an indication that God worked through him. In verse 19, the exorcism done by Jewish exorcists is not called in question. Jesus neither affirmed nor denied it. There is an assumption of its reality and that they were carried out by the power of God. Jesus' second argument is drawn from the practice of exorcism among the Jews. He accuses them of inconsistency in attributing his driving out of demons to the power of Beelzebul, for both he and his contemporary Jewish exorcists are doing the same type of work.<sup>153</sup> He points out the double standard of his accusers. Their "sons" who are engaged in casting out demons shall therefore be their judges. They are in a position to attest the implication of a successful exorcism. Jesus makes here a logical dilemma<sup>154</sup> which would embarrass his opponents whatever verdict the Jewish exorcists would pass.

After presenting two logical arguments to refute the accusation of his enemies, Jesus goes on to make a statement on his authority to drive out demons and its consequence. He says, "But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the

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<sup>151</sup> The apocryphal book of Tobit mentions that ashes of perfume are laid upon some heart and liver of the fish and burned so that the evil spirit will smell it and flee away (6:16).

<sup>152</sup> J. McKenzie, Mt, JBC, p. 85. The recitation of the **Shema**, the third and ninety first Psalms was regarded by the Jews as powerful agent against evil spirits. The 91st Psalm was even called "the song against the demons." H. van der Loos, **Miracles**, p. 401.

<sup>153</sup> In essence, Jesus is saying, "If you believe exorcists work by the power of God in casting demons out, why do you not think I have that same divine power?" L. Barbieri, Mt, BKC, p. 46.

<sup>154</sup> This type of argument usually silenced the opponents of Jesus. Oftentimes, it is in the form of a question, which, if his opponents would answer, would either incriminate them or prove him to be right. Cf. Mt 21:13-27; Mk 3:1-6; Jn 8:1-11. It is an **argumentum ad hominem**. "He is saying, 'your sons' cast out demons on occasion, and I do this so powerfully that great damage is done to Satan's kingdom. So if I who do so much damage to his kingdom by my exorcisms perform by Satan's power, by whom do your sons drive out demons?" D. A. Carson, Mt, EBC, p. 289. Cf. F. Filson, Mt, BNTC, p. 149f.; A. Plummer, Lk, ICC, p. 302.

kingdom of God has come upon you" (v. 20).<sup>155</sup> The statement assumes that the charge has been rejected. Jesus casts out demons *evn daktu, lw qeou*. The phrase *da, ktuloj qeou* has an OT background where the singular form occurs three times. The Law is written on tablets of stones by the finger of God (*beetzba Elohim* Dt 9:10; Ex 31:18; cf. Dan 5:5ff.). When the Egyptian magicians failed to duplicate the third plague brought about through Moses and Aaron, they said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God" (Ex 8:19).<sup>156</sup> They admit that it is God at work. A plural form is used in Ps 8:3 where it states that the creation of the heavens is the work of God's fingers. In the OT usage, the finger of God is a natural metaphor for God's activity.<sup>157</sup> The metaphor further denotes the power of God and his creative omnipotence.<sup>158</sup>

The corresponding passage in Matthew (12:28) has *pneuma qeou* instead of *da, ktuloj qeou*. Many scholars hold that Luke has preserved the saying more literally as the "Finger of God" which gives a direct allusion to the OT, and that Matthew's "Spirit of God" is secondary<sup>159</sup> and an interpretative rendering.<sup>160</sup> "Spirit of

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<sup>155</sup> W. G. Kümmel holds that verse 20 is an independent saying. **Verheißung und Erfüllung**, pp. 98f. Others think that verse 20 itself consists of two originally unrelated sayings -- the driving out of demons by the finger of God and the coming of the Kingdom. It is argued, however, that the logical connection is sound enough and does not justify the conclusion that they are independent sayings gathered together. H. Marshall, Lk, NIGTC, pp. 474f. Applying form criticism to verse 20 will lead one to safely assume that it is a genuine saying of Jesus himself (R. H. Fuller, **Miracles**, p. 27).

<sup>156</sup> The magician said this not to give glory to God but to protect their own honor, that Moses and Aaron might not be thought to be superior to them in virtue or knowledge. C. Keil & F. Delitzsch, Ex, COT, pp. 483f. The rabbis play down the significance of the statement by changing "finger of God" to "plague of God." K. Groß, "Finger," RAC, VII. 93 f.

<sup>157</sup> The same metaphor in essence appears either as "God's hand" (1 Sam 5:11) or "God's arm" (Job 40:9). The more common metaphor is the "hand of God" (Ex 7:4f.; 9:3,15; etc.) (D. Wiseman, Ex, TOTC, p. 93). In the OT, the power of God is personified in his hand. H. van der Loos, **Miracles**, p. 313. Cf. H. E. Beck, "Finger of God," 1DB 11.268; K. GroB, "Finger," RAC VII.936ff.; H. Schlier, "da, ktuloj," TWNT 11.21.

<sup>158</sup> C. Keil & F. Delitzsch, Ex, COT, pp. 483ff. Cf. G. Eder, **Wundertäter**, p. 68. On the contrary, it is suggested that the singular form is never used as a picture of power in the OT. K. GroB, "Finger," RAC, p. 935.

<sup>159</sup> W. Schmithals, Lk, ZB, p. 166; F. Hahn, **Christologische Hoheitstitel**, pp. 298-300.

<sup>160</sup> S. Schulz, **Q - Die Spruchquelle**, p. 205, n. 218; F. Hauck, "ba, llw, kt1" TWNT VI.395; E. Schweizer, "pneuma, pneumatiko, s," TWNT VI. 395; J. McKenzie, Mt, JBC, p. 85; R. E. Nixon, NBC, p. 832; E. Ellis, Lk, NCB, p. 165. Cf. R. G. Hamerton-Kelly who holds that *rv3ia Oou* is original. "A Note on Mt 12:28 par Lk 11:20," NTS 11 (1964-65): 167-169. The same view is maintained by C. H. Dodd, "Spirit or Finger," ExpT 72 (1960-61): 107f.

God” explains the metaphor “Finger of God.”<sup>161</sup> Thus, the difference in the rendering of Luke and Matthew is of little consequence for they both refer to the same thing,<sup>162</sup> and both phrases indicate the action of God. Here, Jesus is affirming that the source of his power in casting out demons is God himself. He drives out evil spirits by God’s power and not by the assistance of Beelzebul. Obviously, it means that Jesus’ casting out of demons are not acts of a human exorcist but the direct and concrete act of God<sup>163</sup> against the realm of evil and its prince.

Jesus says that the consequence of his driving out of demons by the finger of God is the coming of the Kingdom of God (11:20b)<sup>164</sup> The word *fqa,nw* means “to come before,” “to precede” (cf. 1 Thes 4:15), “to have just arrived,” hence “to arrive,” “to come.”<sup>165</sup> The addition of the prepositional phrase *evfvu`maj* is significant for it secures the meaning that the Kingdom has actually arrived. Verse 20b is variously translated, “The Kingdom of God has come your length or has lighted upon you,”<sup>166</sup> “The Kingdom of God has overtaken you” (JB), and commonly, “The Kingdom of God has come upon you” (RSV, NASB). We have in verse 20b a strong affirmation of the breaking in of the Kingdom.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> N. Geldenhuys, Lk, NICNT, p. 332, n. 8; F. Rienecker, Lk, WSB, p. 290. Matthew may have avoided an anthropomorphism. He makes a clearer connection with 12:18 (Is 42:1) and a more specific contrast with Beelzebul. H. Marshall, Lk, NIGTC, p. 475; D. A. Carson, Mt, EBC, p. 289. Moreover, the change to Spirit of God leads into the saying about blasphemy, which Luke has in a different context (12:10). W. Grundmann, Mt, THNT, p. 85.

<sup>162</sup> The OT usage indicates that “Spirit of God” and the “hand of God” (a synonymous metaphor of the “finger of God”) have the same meaning (1 Chr 28:12,19; Ezek 8:13) R. G. Hamerton-Kelly, “A Note on Mt 12:28 par Lk 11:20; NTS 11 (1964-65): 167ff. Cf. A. Sand, Mt, RNT, p. 262.

<sup>163</sup> R. H. Fuller, **Miracles**, p. 41. Cf. H. Schlier, “*da, ktuloj*,” TWNT 11.21. It is significant to note that in the OT both prophetic words and prophetic acts are theophanies; God’s word, power, spirit, finger are all his presence. So in Jesus’ word and mighty works by the “finger” or “Spirit” signifies God’s presence. R. A. Lambourne, **Church and Healing**, p. 42, n. 1.

<sup>164</sup> In spite of Matthew’s preference in using “kingdom of heaven,” he preserves in the corresponding verse what probably is in Q. It is only in four places that “kingdom of God” occurs in Matthew (11:28; 19:24; 21:31,43). His Use of the “kingdom of God” may reflect his following a source or as a matter of style to go with “Spirit of God.” D. A. Carson, Mt, EBC, p. 289.

<sup>165</sup> H. Marshall, Lk, NIGTC, p. 476; W. Liefeld, Lk, EBC, p. 952; G. Fitzer, “*fqa,nw, profqa,nw*” TWNT IX.9Off. Cf. K. W. Clark who says that *fqa,nw* means “to draw near, even to the very point of contact” but no more. “Realised Eschatology,” JBL 59 (1940): 367ff. Cf. Also W. G. Kümmel, **Verheißung und Erfüllung**, 99f.

<sup>166</sup> C. H. Dodd, **Parables of the Kingdom**, p. 44.

<sup>167</sup> For more discussion on the presence of the Kingdom, see G. E. Ladd, **Theology of the NT**. 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1975), pp.

The concept of the Kingdom was a loaded phrase with many connotations and overtones which were well known to the hearers of Jesus.<sup>168</sup> The Jews who had different ideas about the Kingdom from what Jesus was teaching yearned for it and fervently expected it to come.

In the context, the coming of the Kingdom of God is associated with the defeat of evil. Unlike in Jewish apocalyptic which hope for the defeat of the power of darkness in the future, Jesus has accomplished it in his ministry and consequently ushered in the presence of the Kingdom. The hope for the coming of God's Kingdom became a reality in his works. His casting out of demons constitutes evidence that the reign of God has arrived. They are signs of God's rule and a demonstration of the nature of the Kingdom. They also show that God's power over Satan and his subordinates is active in the person of Jesus. The reign of God has, in a real sense, arrived, though not yet in its fullness. It clearly implies that the end of Satan's reign has begun, and that the battle between God and Satan has already been decided.<sup>169</sup> It also implies Jesus' messianic claim without explicitly affirming it.<sup>170</sup> His driving out of demons by the finger of God can be rightly interpreted as a messianic sign.

Jesus' further answer to the slanderous charge of his critics is a parabolic saying about a strong man (vv. 21-22). Luke's

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65-68. C. H. Dodd regards the verse as an important evidence for his theory of "realized eschatology." He holds that the wording in verse 20b expresses in the most vivid and forcible way the fact that the Kingdom of God has actually arrived. **Parables**, pp. 43f. Cf. W. G. Kümmel, **Verheißung**, pp. 98ff. J. W. Campbell disputes this interpretation by arguing that *ev, fqasen* is a "timeless" aorist with a future meaning. He translates the phrase: "The Kingdom of God will be upon you immediately" or "The Kingdom of God has come close upon you." "The Kingdom has Come," *ExpT* 48 (1936-37): 91-94. Cf. T. Lorenzmaier, "Zum Logion Mt 12:28; Lk 11:20," in H. D. Betz, **Neues Testament und christliche Existenz** (Tubingen: Mohr, 1973): pp. 289-304; E. Grässer, "Zum Verständnis der Gottesherrschaft," *ZNW* 65 (1974): 3-26.

<sup>168</sup> J. Kallas points out that one can distinguish two main concepts of the Kingdom of God at the time of Jesus. These were embodied into two "hopes" -- the Davidic and the Danielic hopes which were in the course of time sometimes confounded and confused, co-mingled and combined. *Miracles*, pp. 14ff.

<sup>169</sup> W. Schmithals, *Lk, ZB*, p. 133. J. Kallas sees the ministry of Jesus as an eschatological event. He agrees with S. Mowinckel (*He that Cometh* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1956), pp. 125f.), who says, "Every eschatology includes in some form or other a dualistic conception of the course of history and implies that the present state of things and the present world order will suddenly come to an end and be superseded by another of an essentially different kind." **Miracles**, p. 17, n. 6.

<sup>170</sup> D. A. Carson, *Mt, EBC*, p. 289; J. Schniewind, *Mt, NTD*, p. 158; J. McKenzie, *Mt, JBC*, p. 85.



wording differs considerably from that of Matthew (12:29) which followed Mark's version of the parable (3:27).<sup>171</sup> While Matthew's picture is an ordinary case of burglary, Luke's is of battle. Luke's version is more elaborate vividly describing a victory of a stronger man over a strong man.<sup>172</sup> The sayings make allusions to Deuterol-Isaiah's description of the liberation of the exiled Israelites and the division of the spoil (49:24f.; 53:12). There is no doubt that in the context the strong man represents Satan and the stronger man represents Jesus himself<sup>173</sup> (cf. vv. 20,23). An analogy of an earthly battle is applied to the spiritual realm, emphasizing the defeat of the power of evil.<sup>174</sup> The term *panpli*,a (armor) and *skula* (generally "spoil" or "booty") are pictorial and they stand for the complete inability of Satan to stand before the power of God.<sup>175</sup> The distribution of the spoil demonstrates a complete victory.

A fifth element in the saying complex that is not found in Mark is added in Q. Jesus says, "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters" (v. 23).<sup>176</sup> The

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<sup>171</sup> The wordings in the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas (Nr. 36) are close to Mt-Mk's version.

<sup>172</sup> Cf. the Qumranic concept of a messianic war. In Qumran theology, the battle is between the prince of light and the angel of darkness (1 Qs 11.18-20); Cf. O. Betz, "Jesu Heiliger Krieg," *NovT* 2 (1947): 116-137. The saying about the strong man and his goods had probably become proverbial (cf. Ps Sal 5:4; Is 49:24). W. Allen, Mt, ICC, p. 135.

<sup>173</sup> W. G. Kümmel, **Verheißung und Erfüllung**, p. 101. Cf. O. Betz, "Jesu Heiliger Krieg," in idem, **Jesus, Der Messias Israels**, p. 90. Jesus had invaded Satan's territory and by expelling demons from the possessed was spoiling his goods. W. Allen, Mt, ICC, p. 136. F. Danker claims that the strong man is Israel which does not realise the source of her peace (19:41-44) in God and is in danger of being overpowered by the stronger man who is Satan. **Jesus and the New Age**, pp. 138ff. Although this interpretation fits in with verses 23,24-26, it lacks a convincing basis in the text. H. Marshall, Lk, NIGTC, p. 478.

<sup>174</sup> Many scholars think that the meaning of the parable had already been partly fulfilled during the wilderness temptation. A. Schlatter, Mt, ENT, p. 196; W. Liefeld, Lk, EBC, p. 951; G. Maier, Mt, BK, p. 426. Jesus can therefore undo Satan's evil work in people and cast out demons by his mighty words. The defeat of Satan is further demonstrated on the cross and in Jesus' resurrection. W. Liefeld, Lk, EBC, p. 951; G. Maier, Mt, BK, p. 426; W. Hendriksen, Mt, NTC, p. 527. A very concrete interpretation of the parable is found in the casting out of demons by Jesus. T. Zahn, Lk, KNT, p. 198; K. Staab, Mt, EB, p. 72. Cf. J. Kallas, **Miracles**, pp. 60f. Cf. also the fall of Satan as lightning from heaven in connection with the successful exorcisms of the seventy (Lk 10:17,18). The victory of Jesus is manifested every time he drives demons out. In his work of banishing demons, he shows complete control over demonic power.

<sup>175</sup> L. Morris, Lk, TNTC, p. 198; Cf. W. Grundmann, Lk, THNT, p. 239.

<sup>176</sup> Matthew (12:30) has the same wordings with Luke. In another context, the saying is rendered in an inverted version: "For he that is not against us, is for

meaning of the first half of the saying is obviously clear. It affirms that Jesus demands a decision that cannot be evaded. The hearers of Jesus have to take a stand for or against him who ushers in the Kingdom. In the face of the great struggle between Jesus and Satan as revealed in the previous sayings, neutrality toward him is impossible.<sup>177</sup> There is no middle Kingdom between God's Kingdom and Satan's.<sup>178</sup> The second half of the saying expands the idea of the first. Some understand it as a harvest figure (cf. Mt 3:12; 6:26; Jn 4:36),<sup>179</sup> but the saying could be rightly understood as an imagery of gathering a flock together.<sup>180</sup> Jesus as the Good Shepherd gathers the sheep,<sup>181</sup> and those who do not help scatter (cf. Jn 10:12; 16:32). The saying could have served a double purpose -- as a rebuke to his critics and as a warning to the crowds that a failure to follow him wholeheartedly is equivalent to outright opposition.

## JESUS' METHODS OF HEALING

In addition to more than twenty individual healing stories recorded in the Synoptics, a number of multiple healings are mentioned in generalized summaries. Many references summarize the healings of large number of persons.<sup>182</sup> Jesus healed many who came from all the regions around who sought him for healing. In all probability, the people of Galilee and surrounding places have seen and heard of his healing activities, so that wherever he went, people brought their sick to him. These works of mercy to many persons at a time may be called mass healings but not as we understand the term today and the manner the present-day healers practise it. There is no record that Jesus ever had a group healing session or used mass healing method.<sup>183</sup> From the

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us" (Mk 9:40). Cf. Lk 9:50 where the second person plural *u`mwn* takes the place of the first person plural *h`mwn*.

<sup>177</sup> W. Grundmann, Lk, THNT, p. 239.

<sup>178</sup> F. Rienecker, Lk, WSB, p. 290.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*; D. A. Carson, Mt, EBC, p. 290.

<sup>180</sup> W. Grundmann, Lk, THNT, p. 239; W. Schmithals, Lk, ZB, p. 267; B. S. Easton, Lk, p. 181; L. Morris, Lk, TNTC, p. 199; K. Staab, Mt, EB, p. 72.

<sup>181</sup> Cf. Is 40:11; 49:6; Jet 3:15; 23:lff.; 31:10; Ezek 34:aff.; Zech 11:4ff.; Mt 9:36.

<sup>182</sup> Nineteen places in the first three Gospels state that a number of people were healed without much details about the diseases concerned. E.g., Mt 4:24; 9:35; 12:15; 14:14; Mk 1:34; 3:10; Lk 4:40; etc. The individual cases of healing which are separately described were probably the most dramatic ones.

<sup>183</sup> MacNutt, **Power to Heal**, p. 186. Cf. T. Dearing, **Healing**, p. 40. The healing of the ten lepers (Lk 17:11-19) may be an exception here. The story may also be classified as distant healing.

detailed accounts of some healings in the Gospels, it may be safe to assume that even though Jesus was nearly overwhelmed by crowds which gathered for healing, he gave every case of sickness his personal individual attention and healed them one by one. Sensitive to human individuality, he responded on every occasion according to the needs of the persons to whom he ministered.

Jesus did not seem to be a reluctant healer for he did his work boldly. He ministered indoors and outdoors, in synagogues, houses, streets, hillsides, in the presence of few witnesses or multitudes. At times, when the situation called for privacy, he separated the sick from the crowds (Mk 7:31-37; 8:22-26; cf 5:35-43). It is suggested that the reason for this private healing was to eliminate an atmosphere of antagonism.<sup>184</sup> It should be noted, however, that Jesus did heal even in this type of atmosphere (Mk 3:1-6; Lk 13:10-17). It is likely that the purpose of the healing in private is to avoid the clamor and excitement of the people, and most probably, to establish a personal contact with the person away from the commotion of the crowds in order to help his faith.<sup>185</sup>

Though Jesus made no attempt to seek the sick, crowds continued to flock to him wanting to benefit from his healing powers. Most often, the healthy ones brought to him their sick relatives and friends (Lk 4:40). Only once did he intentionally go to a house to restore the life of a girl<sup>186</sup> (Mt 9:18-26). Usually, he ministered in response to the pleas of the sick, relatives or friends, but his compassion also reached out to those who did not verbalize their needs. In a synagogue gathering, he saw the bent woman who suffered for eighteen years (Lk 13:10-17). He called her to him and healed her without being requested.

The healing stories in the Synoptics reveal variations in procedure. The Gospels do not mention that Jesus prescribed medicines for the sick.<sup>187</sup> Instead, he used various methods and

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<sup>184</sup> R. K. Carter, "Faith Healing," p. 141.

<sup>185</sup> W. Wessel, Mk, EBC, p. 691. Cf. J. Grassmick, Mk, BKC, p. 136. W. Schmithals suggests that the separation of the sick was for the purpose of keeping secret the use of saliva as a magical means of healing (Mk, OTNT, p. 357). Cf. R. Bultmann, *Geschichte*, p. 239; E. Klostermann says: "Zum Zweck der Geheimhaltung des Heilungsprozesses vor Unberufenen." Mk, HNT, p. 73; R. Meyer, "ov, cloj" TWNT V.586. For other suggested reasons see H. van der Loos, *Miracles*, p. 327.

<sup>186</sup> He also intended at first to go to the house of the centurion but was stopped on the way at the centurion's suggestion (Lk 7:1-10).

<sup>187</sup> Cf. the beginning of the letter from Abgar of Edessa which was quoted by Eusebius: "Abgar Uchama, Ruler, greets Jesus, the good Savior, who has appeared in the area of Jerusalem. I have heard speak of you and your cures,

performed various actions to heal the sick who came to him. Most often, he uttered words<sup>188</sup> or/and touched the sick persons. In at least two instances, an application of physical means was made (Mk 7:32-35; 8:22-26). A combination of two or three of these ways of healing are found in the Gospels. In few cases, he healed at a distance. It appears that Jesus did not have a ritualistic formula for dealing with everyone in an identical manner. So diverse are his methods as the kinds of diseases he healed.

## 1. Spoken Word

The most common means of healing used by Jesus was through the spoken word. Usually in this way of healing, he actually addressed the afflicted person or the evil spirit in the case of demon possession. His words of healing were expressed by ways of command, rebuke, and pronouncement. He rebuked and commanded the demons to come out of their victims.<sup>189</sup> He never touched a demoniac. His authoritative words were enough to cast a demon out. The demons who recognized who Jesus was were muzzled. A demoniac in the Capernaum synagogue cried out at the top of his voice saying, "Ha! what do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are -- the Holy One of God" (Lk 4:33,34). The demon penetrated Jesus' incognito and perceived that he is the "Holy One of God" (cf. Ac 3:14). Jesus rebuked him to keep quiet and to come out of the man<sup>190</sup> (v. 35). The verb *evpitima,w*<sup>191</sup> which means "rebuke," "command" or "order" is used here and in many other places where Jesus drove Out demons (cf. Lk 4:41; 9:42; Mt 17:18; Mk

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namely that these are done by you without medicines and herbs" (Hist. eccies. I.XIII.6).

<sup>188</sup> See C. Kittel, "le, go, ktl" TWNT IV.107.

<sup>189</sup> That "he drove out spirits with a word (Mt 8:16) emphasizes Jesus' easy exercise of power." J. McKenzie, Mt, JBC, p. 77. W. Hendriksen sees the driving out of evil spirits by Christ's word of power as a sign of the Kingdom of God asserting its claims in a very special way, in which Satan's power was being curtailed, and "the strong man" was being bound. Mt, NTC, p. 400. Cf. Mt 12:29; Lk 10:18; Rev 20:2,3.

<sup>190</sup> The imperatives *fimw, qhti* (lit. "be muzzled") and *ev, xelqe* ("come out") to demonstrate Jesus' authority to command a demon who had no choice but to obey, for he is powerless before him.

<sup>191</sup> *vEpitima,w* technically may also mean "exorcise." In the LXX it translates *gaar* which means "rebuke" (Zech 3:2. Cf. Jubilees 10:5-9; 1 QM 14:10). E. Mally, Mk, JBC, p. 26. Cf. A. Plummer: "In the NT *evpitima,w* has no other meaning than rebuke" Lk, ICC, p. 134. Rebuking a demon implies that it ought not to have possessed a man (L. Morris, Lk, TNTC, p. 110) and means authoritative control over evil power. E. Ellis, Lk, NCB, p. 100.

1:25; 9:25). It shows the position of Jesus as the Lord over the demons<sup>192</sup> and demonstrates that he can bend them to follow his order.

Some demons confess that Jesus is the Son of God, but he did “not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ” (Lk 4:41). They knew the messianic office of Jesus, but they were not allowed to proclaim the fact. The naming of Jesus and the confession that he is the “Holy One of God” (cf. Lk 4:34) and the “Son of God” may represent an attempt of the demons to render him harmless. The demons’ cries of recognition were designed to control Jesus and to stop him of his power, in accordance with the belief that knowledge of the precise name and quality of a person confers mastery over him.<sup>193</sup> It was widely believed in antiquity that knowledge of the name gave power over an adversary. It may also be understood as a confession of the superior power of Jesus on the part of the defeated evil spirits.<sup>194</sup> Jesus silenced the testimony of the demons probably because he wanted no confession of his messiahship from them with whom he has nothing in common<sup>195</sup> (cf. 2 Cor 6:14ff.). The demons were hardly appropriate heralds of Jesus. Besides, the time was also not yet ripe for the clear revelation of who he was<sup>196</sup> -- the kind of Messiah which he was declaring by word and deed.

The evil spirits which possessed a man in the region of the Gerasenes<sup>197</sup> made a frantic appeal to Jesus not to inflict immediate punishment on them (Mk 5:1-13). While on his knees, the demoniac shouted at the top of his voice addressing Jesus the “Son of the most High God” (v. 7). It is remarkable that an exorcistic formula, “I adjure you by God” (RSV) is used by the demons. In this story, Jesus had a short dialogue with the demoniac who was asked of his name. His Latin name legio

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<sup>192</sup> E. Stauffer, “*evpitima, w*,” TWNT II.620ff.

<sup>193</sup> W. Lane, Mk, NICNT, p. 130. Cf. A. Jirku, **Die Dämonen und ihre Abwehr im Alten Testament** (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1912), p. 26; H. Bietenhard, “*ov, noma, ktl*,” TWNT V.242ff.; O. Bauernfeind, **Die Worte der Dämonen im Markusevangelium** (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1927), p. 28; R. Bultmann, *Geschichte*, p. 223; C. E. Swift, Mk, NBC, p. 862.

<sup>194</sup> H. Schürmann, Lk, HTKNT, p. 253. The demons addressed Jesus as the “Holy One of God,” not in flattery but in horror. They could expect nothing from the Holy One but destruction. A. Plummer, Lk, ICC, p. 134.

<sup>195</sup> N. Geldenhuys, Lk, NICNT, p. 177. Moreover, the demonic confession was likely non-voluntary, unwilling recognition of an empirical fact. R. A. Cole, Mk, TNTC, p. 62. Cf. J. Calvin, **Comm. in quatuor Evangelistas**, re Mk 1:34.

<sup>196</sup> W. Wessel, Mk, EBC, pp. 628, 641; Cf. E. Ellis, Lk, NCB, p. 101. His messiahship was quite different from the popular concept and expectation. A. Plummer, Lk, ICC, p. 139.

<sup>197</sup> Gadarenes in some MSS and Gergesenes in others (see Nestle-Aland).

suggests to the people under Roman rule number, strength, and oppression.<sup>198</sup> The demon-possessed man felt himself to be a conglomeration of evil forces and his alternate use of singular and plural pronouns showed his divided personality. Interestingly, Jesus granted the plea of the demons to go into the pigs, which later ran into the lake and were drowned.<sup>199</sup> They were not just ordered to come out of the man (v. 8), but also given permission to go where they wanted (v. 13).

Jesus rebuked not only evil spirits but also an impersonal fever (Lk 4:38, 39). The Greek word *evpitima*,<sup>w200</sup> used when Jesus cast out demons is also applied in the healing of Peter's mother-in-law. The high fever<sup>201</sup> was treated by Jesus as if it were a person when he rebuked it to leave her.

It has led some to assume that the fever was caused by a personal evil force.<sup>202</sup> However, though Luke seems to regard physical illness as ultimately due to the influence of Satan (13:16; Ac 10:38), it is not so certain that a demon was behind the fever. Probably, Luke was simply personifying it by using a vivid verb, or just emphasizing the active force of Jesus' word.<sup>203</sup> The woman

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<sup>198</sup> C. E. Swift, Mk, NBC, p. 862. H. van der Loos says that the use of the word legion proves that the Roman occupation was a heavy burden. **Miracles**, p. 388. Legion is a unit in the Roman military consisting of about 6,000 soldiers. P. Winter suggests that the story alludes to the Legio Decima, the Roman military contingent which had a boar as its emblem and operated in Galilee during the First Jewish Revolt. On the Trial of Jesus (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1961), p. 129. Cf. O. Betz who thinks that legion does "not necessarily refer to a military unit and a historical event. More probably it points to the well-disciplined world of demons that are under the rule of Satan and organized in a military fashion." "The Concept of the So-Called 'Divine Man' in Mark's Christology," in idem, **Jesus, Der Messias Israels**, pp. 281f.

<sup>199</sup> For the suggested reasons why Jesus granted the demons' request, see H. van der Loos, **Miracles**, pp. 391f. Cf. the similar stories of the healing of demoniacs in the Talmud (Pesabim 112b/113c and by Apollonius of Tyana (Vita Apoll. IV.20).

<sup>200</sup> Cf. how the verb is also used in rebuking the wind and waves (Mt 8:26).

<sup>201</sup> *Me, gaj pureto, j* is a technical medical term used by Luke. He is the only one among the Synoptists to say that it was a high fever. Fever is usually a symptom of an illness, but it is not indicated here what caused it.

<sup>202</sup> So E. Klostermann, Lk, HNT, p. 67. Cf. A. Leaney, Lk, BNTC, p. 121; K. Weib, "pure, ssw, pureto, j," TWNT VI.958f.; E. Ellis, Lk, NCB, p. 101. H. van der Loos says, "It is quite clear that Luke has a demon in mind who had to be driven out." **Miracles**, pp. 551f. S. Eitrem thinks that the simple and vivid story told by Mark had been changed by Luke into a scene of exorcism. **Demonology**, p. 29f. With this view, the storm could also be suspected as due to the influence of demonic forces (Mk 4:39). Cf. O. Betz, "The Concept of the So-Called 'Divine Man' in Mark's Christology," in idem, **Jesus, Der Messias Israels**, p. 279.

<sup>203</sup> W. Liefeld, Lk, EBC, p. 873. Cf. H. Marshall, Lk, NIGTC, p. 195.

was immediately healed without any trace of weakness. The completeness of the cure is shown by her standing up and serving her guests.

In some instances, Jesus' word of command was directed to the sick person himself. The healing of the man with a shriveled hand on a Sabbath demonstrates the effectiveness of his command<sup>204</sup> (Mk 3:1-6, par). The man suffered from some form of muscular atrophy or paralysis on his right hand.<sup>205</sup> First, Jesus asked him to get up and stand in front so that everyone could see him. Then he posed a question to the Pharisees and teachers of the law as to the legality of doing good or evil on the Sabbath. Knowing the thoughts of his critics and spies, he was filled with holy indignation (metv ovrghj) and was deeply distressed (sullupou,menoj) because of the stubbornness of their hearts (Mk 3:5). The man was then ordered to stretch out his hand which he unhesitatingly did. At that very moment, his hand was completely restored.<sup>206</sup> It should be noted that the man's act of obedience was a factor in the cure of his hand. Jesus' command required obedience based on faith in the reliability of the speaker.

The word of command of Jesus which restored the strength of a powerless hand also brought back the life of the dead. The dead body of the only son of a widow at Nain was reawakened to life (Lk 7:11-17). As Jesus witnessed the funeral procession, he was moved with pity for the mother, whom he comforted not to cry. He commanded the young man to get up. Neani, ske, soi. le, gw, evge, rqhti were the words of Jesus which raised him

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<sup>204</sup> According to the apocryphal Gospel to the Hebrews, the man with a withered hand was a stonemason. He pleaded with Jesus for healing that he might not remain a beggar, shamelessly begging for his bread. See A. Plummer, Lk, ICC, p. 169. Cf. W. Bauer, **Das Leben Jesu**, p. 367. R. V. G. Tasker takes this as an illustration of how biographical details tended to be added to canonical stories as time went on. Mt, TNTC, pp. 126.

<sup>205</sup> It is only Luke who specifies that it was the *cei, r dexia*, which was afflicted (6:6). It is probably to accentuate the handicap which "impeded his way to full joy of living and full usefulness." N. Geldenhuys, Lk, NICNT, p. 203. Mark has the participle *evxhrame, noj*, while both Matthew and Luke have *xnro, j* which means "lifeless" and "shrunken."

<sup>206</sup> The verb *avpekatesta, qh* is the aorist indicative passive of *avpokaqi, stamai* which in the present context means "was restored," "was cured" or "was made well." W. Hendriksen, Mt, NTC, p. 518, n. 500. Cf. the use of the verb in Mt 17:11; Mk 9:12 and Heb 13:19. The restoration of the hand is understood in the light of the Isaianic sign in 35:3. "Diese Heilung bezeichnet auch als Wiederherstellung der Hand." O. Betz & W. Grimm, **Wunder Jesu**, p. 33.

back to life.<sup>207</sup> The three Synoptists record the raising of Jairus' daughter.<sup>208</sup> In the presence of her parents, Peter, James, and John, Jesus said to the young girl, *taliqa koum* which means to. *kora,sion, so. le,go, ev,geire* (Mk 5:41).<sup>209</sup> The twelve-year-old girl immediately stood up, walked around, and was given something to eat. The two stories illustrate how the words of Jesus brought life to the dead, "those obviously in the ultimate condition of being incapable of response."<sup>210</sup>

In the healing of the blind man at Jericho, Jesus' words of command is accompanied with the pronouncement, "Your faith has healed you" (Mk 10: 46-52. Cf. Mt 8:13; 9:29, 15:28). In spite of the rebuke from the crowd telling him to be quiet, the blind beggar named Bartimaeus was persistent in pleading for mercy with Jesus whom he addressed as "Son of David."<sup>211</sup> When he got the attention of Jesus who summoned him, he was asked what he wanted.<sup>212</sup> According to his longing, Jesus said to him, "Go, your faith has healed you."<sup>213</sup> Immediately, he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road. In the case of the paralytic at Capernaum, Jesus first made a declaration of the forgiveness of

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<sup>207</sup> Cf. the call to Lazarus to come out of the tomb (*La, zare, deuro ev, xw, Jn 11:43*).

<sup>208</sup> Mt 9:18-19, 23-26; Mk 5:21-24, 35-43; Lk 8:40-42, 49-56. It is said that the young man at Nain and the daughter of Jairus were only cases of "suspended animation." H. Seng, *Heilungen Jesu*, p. 21; F. Fenner, *Krankheit*, p. 64; E. Ebstein, *Medizin*, p. 106. Cf. H. Rengstorf who does not think that the death of the young man at Nain was a case of suspended animation. Lk, NTD, p. 97, Cf. also F. Barth, *Hauptprobleme*, p. 134.

<sup>209</sup> Cf. Luke who has no Aramaic form of the command but has only *h`paij, ev, geire* (8:54). Instead of regarding the phrase as "barbarism" as suggested by R. Bultmann (*Geschichte*, p. 238), it is more likely concerned with Palestinian memories, J. Schniewind, Mk, NTD, p. 90. Cf. G. Kittel, "le, gw, ktl." TWNT IV.107.

<sup>210</sup> T. Dearing, *Supernatural Healing*, p. 39.

<sup>211</sup> Cf. the accounts of Luke (18:35-43) with that of Matthew (20:29-34) who mentions two blind men. The story indicates that the blind recognized Jesus as the Messiah. A. Plummer, Lk, ICC, p. 431.

<sup>212</sup> At this point, Bartimaeus was only asking for mercy, and mercy might take any one of a number of directions. Jesus wanted him to crystallize his desire. L. Morris, Lk, TNTC, p. 271. The question has a two-fold purpose: to make him define his need and to demonstrate to the crowd that this time he was not merely asking for alms. C. E. Swift, Mk, NBC, p. 874. Most likely, however, Jesus' question is designed to elicit faith rather than information because it is obvious enough what the blind wanted. H. Marshall, Lk, NIGTC, p. 694. Cf. J. Grassmick who says, "to encourage Bartimaeus to articulate his need and express his faith." Mk, BKC, p. 155. Cf. A. Sand, Mt, RNT, p. 203.

<sup>213</sup> Cf. Luke's *vAna, bleyon: h` pi, stij sou se, swke, n se* (18:42).



his sins (Mk 2:1-12). Then after a talk to his critics on his procedure of healing the man and his authority to forgive sins, he commanded the invalid saying, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home"<sup>214</sup> (Mk 2:1-12, par). The healing was complete and instant for "he got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all." Like in many other healings, the people who witnessed the cure were amazed and they glorified God (cf. Ps 103:1ff.).

## 2. Healing at a Distance

Related to healing through spoken word is healing at a distance. It is also called absent healing because the healer is not with the patient when healing occurs. In the NT time, such cures were believed to have occurred among the Jews.<sup>215</sup> The Synoptics record this method of healing in connection with the cures of Gentiles and the ten lepers, one of whom was a Samaritan. It is suggested that the inclusion of these healing narratives has a missionary motive.<sup>216</sup> The stories demonstrate how Jesus broke the barrier separating the Jews and Gentiles, and show that his ministry was not only for Israel but also for non-Jewish people.

Both Matthew (8:5-13) and Luke (7:1-10) bear accounts of the healing of the centurion's servant.<sup>217</sup> Since there were no Roman forces in Galilee before A.D. 44,<sup>218</sup> the centurion (ο` e`katovta, rchj) must have been an officer of Herod Antipas' auxiliary force which was organized on Roman lines.<sup>219</sup> Though his

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<sup>214</sup> The command to get up is understood as a test of faith, while the command to take his mat and go home is seen as a demand of obedience. J. Grassmick, *Mk*, BKC, p. 113.

<sup>215</sup> Mishnah b. Berachot 34b. See P. Fiebig, *Jüd Wundergesichten*, p. 21. Cf. Strack-Billerbeck, *KNTT* 11.441; W. Dittenberger, Hrsg., *Orientalis Graeci inscriptiones selectae: Supplementum Sylloges inscriptionum Graecarum*. Nachd. d. Aufl. Leipzig, 1903-1905 (Hildesheim: Olms, 1960), I.803ff.

<sup>216</sup> R. H. Fuller, *Miracles*, p. 48. Cf. W. Wessel, *Mk*, EBC, pp. 681f.; K. Kertelge, *Wunder Jesu*, p. 154.

<sup>217</sup> The two accounts agree in the dialogue but not in the details of the story. Some were omitted by Matthew, who had the habit of abbreviating some narratives, leaving out those inessential to his purpose. L. Morris, *Lk*, TNTC, p. 137. The centurion's son is identified with the nobleman's son in *Jn* 4:46ff. So R. Brown (*The Gospel According to John* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1971), I.192f.) who thinks that *Jn* 4:46ff. is a development of the narrative about the centurion's slave. Cf. J. McKenzie who does not doubt that in 4:46ff. is a variant of the same story, *Mt*, JBC, p. 77, Cf. also J. Ernst, *Lk*, RNT, p. 237.

<sup>218</sup> Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the NT* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), pp. 123f.

<sup>219</sup> Cf. H. Schürmann, *Lk*, HTKNT, 1.391; E. Klostermann, *Mt*, HNT, p. 74. Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, had the right to levy troops which formed

nationality is not stated, it is certain that he was a Gentile (Lk 7:5,9) stationed in Capernaum, a Jewish territory. He is presented as one who loved the Jewish nation and a benefactor of the Jews.

He helped in the building of the synagogue<sup>220</sup> in Capernaum (Lk 7:4,5). He must have been a rich man because opportunities for making money in the police force were good, even for an honest man.<sup>221</sup>

The slave<sup>222</sup> of the centurion, according to Matthew, was paralyzed and suffering terribly (paralutiko,j, deivwj basanizo,menoj), while Luke points out that he was sick and at the point of death (kakwj ev,cwn jv,mellen teleutan). The centurion was so concerned over him because he highly valued (ev,ntimoj) him. He probably have heard how Jesus had healed other sick people, so he sent elders of the Jews as his emissaries and intercessors to plead with Jesus for his servant, requesting him to come and heal him (Lk 7:3).<sup>223</sup> Filled with a deep realization of his own unworthiness, the centurion sent another group of friends while Jesus and the elders were on their way to his house. This second group of emissaries delivered a message to Jesus as if the centurion himself were actually saying it. The officer felt unworthy to have Jesus under his roof and to approach him personally. His humility over against Jesus was probably due to

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his auxiliary forces. o` e`katovta,rchj was an officer whose command was normally a hundred soldiers, but the number could be more or less. Cf. W. Grundmann, Lk, THNT, p. 156. In the Roman empire, centurions were stationed in small posts and garrisons and were the military backbone of the empire in maintaining discipline and executing orders. It is striking that centurions are positively pictured in the NT (Cf. Mt 27:54; Lk 23:47; Ac 10:22, etc.).

<sup>220</sup> Contributions of Gentiles towards the maintenance of synagogues are well attested. Strack-Billerbeck, KNTTM IV.1.142f. Cf. J. M. Creed, Lk, p. 101; W. Schrage, "sunagwgh,, ktl." TWNT VII. 810ff. It is probable that the centurion was a "god-fearer," one who worshipped God but declined to embrace Judaism. E. Ellis, Lk, NCB, p. 117.

<sup>221</sup> B. S. Easton, Lk, p. 95.

<sup>222</sup> Matthew has paij ("boy," cf. Lk 7:7) instead of douloj (Lk 7:2) which suggests that the slave was young. Paij is a common designation of a young slave. It can also mean "son" (w. Gemoll, GDSHW), and therefore, some exegetes, like R. Bultmann, insist that paij in the present text means "son." **Geschichte**, p. 39, n. 1. However, only one out of the twenty four occurrences in the NT means "son," viz., Jn 4:51. D. A. Carson, Mt, EBC, p. 200. Cf. R. T. France, "Exegesis in Practice: Two Samples," in **NT Interpretation**, ed. H. Marshall, p. 256.

<sup>223</sup> In abbreviating the story, Matthew omits this detail of sending Jewish messengers. In an attempt to harmonize the narratives, Augustine appealed on the principle that "he who does something through another does it also through himself." Cited by R. V. G. Tasker, Mt, TNTC, p. 89.

his realization of being a Gentile and his unworthiness to receive a Jewish teacher in his residence.<sup>224</sup> Moreover, it cannot be ruled out that the man was aware of a Jewish custom of not entering the house of a Gentile lest one be defiled<sup>225</sup> (cf. Jn 18:28; Ac 10:28; 11:2,3). He did not want Jesus to incur ritual uncleanness by entering his house.

The centurion's message to Jesus does not only show his humility but above all his great faith in the power of Jesus to heal even without seeing his servant. For him, it was not necessary for Jesus to be present in person in order to effect a cure. Jesus had only to say the word (lo, goj) and his servant would be healed. He trusted and was confident that the spoken word of Jesus would be as powerful as his physical presence. It is a strong declaration that Jesus had the power to heal at a distance. It is significant to note that up to this point, there is no recorded evidence in the Synoptics about healing at a distance. The centurion illustrated from his own experience as a man under authority (u`mo. evxousi,an) who can command his soldiers and slaves and get instant obedience and execution from them.<sup>226</sup> It was not necessary for him to be present in order to have his order accomplished. He understood the principle of authority which he applied to the authority of Jesus to quell disease through a command.<sup>227</sup> He had faith that the authoritative utterance of Jesus will accomplish the healing of his servant.

Jesus was amazed (evqau,masen)<sup>228</sup> at the centurion's deduction from the character of military discipline to the nature of his own authority under God. He commended the great faith of the

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<sup>224</sup> K. H. Rengstorf, "i`kano, j, ktl." TWNT 111294ff. Cf. J. D. M. Derrett, **Law in the NT** (London: DLT, 1970), p. 176; R. T. France, "Exegesis," in **NT Interpretation**, ed. H. Marshall, p. 258; R. Trench, **Miracles**, p. 224.

<sup>225</sup> Cf. A. Plummer, Lk, ICC, p. 196; O. Betz, **Jesus und das Danielbuch**, p. 33; G. Maier, Mt, BK, p. 258.

<sup>226</sup> Some think that the centurion is contrasting his own position under authority with the position of Jesus who is not under authority. So H. Schürmann, Lk, HTKNT, p. 393. Cf. W. Hendriksen, Mt, NTC, p. 396; J. McKenzie, Mt, JBC, p. 77. Most likely, however, is the view that the centurion thought that Jesus had the authority from God, just as he had authority from his superiors. So H. Marshall, Lk, NIGTC, p. 282; W. Liefeld, Lk, EBC, p. 898; L. Morris, Lk, TNTC, p. 138; D. A. Carson, Mt, EBC, p. 202. Cf. O. Betz, **Jesus und das Danielbuch**, pp. 33ff.

<sup>227</sup> Cf. E. Klostermann, Mt, HNT, p. 74. W. Allen suggests that the centurion believed that Jesus had spiritual agencies at his command who could carry out his order that the patient should be healed. Mt, ICC, p. 77. This suggestion, however, lacks evidential support.

<sup>228</sup> There are only two records in the Gospels of Jesus having marvelled at people, here on account of the centurion's great faith and at Nazareth because of the people's unbelief (Mk 6:6).

military man, not so much because he believed in his power to heal from a distance, but because of the degree to which he had penetrated into the nature of his person and authority.<sup>229</sup> It was not a Jew but a Gentile who first acknowledged his authority in this way. Such faith of a Gentile who lacked the heritage of OT revelation was surprising and something new to Jesus. Jesus shared his commendation of the centurion's exceptional faith with the crowd that followed him by saying to them: "I tell you, I have not found such faith even in Israel" (Lk 7:9). The centurion's faith is greater than any found among the chosen people of God up to that time. In the light of his faith,<sup>230</sup> Jesus healed his servant that very moment even without seeing him. Thus, when the messengers returned to the centurion's house, they found the servant well.

Parallel to the story of the centurion is the narrative about the Syrophenician woman<sup>231</sup> (Mt 15:21-28; Mk 7:24-30). The two stories possess common features and make the same theological point.<sup>232</sup> The daughter of the woman, whose non-Jewish character is emphasized by Matthew and Mark, was possessed by an evil spirit and was suffering terribly.<sup>233</sup> The woman had no previous contact with Jesus but no doubt had heard about his healing powers. At this stage, information about Jesus' curing diseases and casting out demons was widely spread in Galilee and in surrounding regions (cf. Mt 4:24,25). The intense love of the woman for her daughter brought her in the presence of Jesus who happened to be in the vicinity, to plea with him for her possessed

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<sup>229</sup> D. A. Carson, Mt, EBC, p. 202.

<sup>230</sup> Matthew includes a saying of occurrence to the centurion. "Go! It will be done just as you believed it would" (8:13).

<sup>231</sup> The woman is introduced as a Greek (Mk 7:26), i.e., either Greek-speaking or "Gentile." By nationality, she was a Phoenician of Syria. Hence, the name Syrophenician to distinguish from Libyophoenician of North Africa. These Phoenicians came from the Canaanites, thus Matthew describes her so (15:22). Cf. E. Klostermann, Mt, HNT, p.183. She was a Gentile by birth, religion and culture. Cf. the story of the Zarephath woman whose son was revived by Elijah (1 Ki 17:9ffj. In later tradition, the woman was given the name Justa and her daughter Berenice (Pseudo-Clementine Homilies 11.19; 111.73; IV.1,4,6; XIII.7). See W. Bauer, **Das Leben Jesu**, p. 517.

<sup>232</sup> Through faith, the barrier between Jew and Gentile is overcome and the Gentiles are admitted to the people of God. R. H. Fuller, **Miracles**, p. 59.

<sup>233</sup> Cf. the symptoms of possession in a young boy (Mk 9:17f.,20,26) where the accounts describe his suffering from acute convulsions and uncontrollable falling into fire or water. The condition of the girl is described as very serious and grievous.

child. She fell at his feet,<sup>234</sup> crying out and begging that her daughter be delivered from demon possession.

The cry of the Syrophenician woman pleading for her afflicted child did not at first draw a positive response. Jesus did not say a word and his disciples were not at all sympathetic (Mt 15:23). They even urged him to send her away. Perhaps they thought that the woman was a nuisance to their Master or that they themselves were irritated by her. Her persistent and pathetic cry finally got her a chance of having a dialogue with Jesus. Jesus was seemingly harsh with her when he said: "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs."<sup>235</sup> This aphorism supposes that the "children" are the Jews and the "dogs" are the Gentiles. It implies Jesus' consciousness of his immediate mission being restricted to the lost sheep of Israel<sup>236</sup> (cf. Mt 15:24). In her persistent humility, she did not resent to be compared with the "dogs." She accepted her inferior position and neatly turned it to her advantage. Certainly, the dogs get the crumbs that fall from their master's table. On these terms, she persisted to claim healing for her daughter.

The woman's perseverance, humble acceptance of the comparison, and clever reply demonstrate her great confidence in Jesus' power and good will to help her daughter. Like the centurion, she was praised for her great faith (*pi, stij mega, lh*). She was then commanded to go home with the assurance that the demon has left<sup>237</sup> her daughter (Mk 7:29). The word of healing was not spoken but only a strong assurance was given to the mother that her child was freed from demon

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<sup>234</sup> Her kneeling before Jesus was an expression of deep respect as well as a personal grief over her daughter's condition (cf. Mk 9:17-18, 20-22, 26). J. Grassmick, *Mk, BKC*, p. 135. It is also a recognition of Jesus' known powers of healing (cf. Mk 1:40; 3:11; 5:22-23).

<sup>235</sup> Here, *kuna, rion* means pet dog or house dog and not the large, savage, ugly wild dog which prowled about the garbage thrown into the streets. W. Hendriksen, *Mt, NTC*, p. 623. Cf. O. Michel, "*ku, wn, kuna, rion*," *TWNT IV.1103*; W. Grundmann, *Mt, THNT*, p. 377; W. Allen, *Mt, ICC*, p. 168. This is reflected in the NIV translation "their dogs." Cf. R. V. G. Tasker who thinks otherwise. *Mt, TNTC*, p. 151. So D. E. Haenchen, *Weg Jesu*, p. 275. Whether the term "dog" is used contemptuously here as suggested by E. Gould (*Mk, ICC*, p. 136) is not clear. Jesus' blunt answer is understood not as a literal statement, but as a parable or proverbial statement to make clear that his ministry is with his own people. F. Filson, *Mt, BNTC*, p. 180. Cf. H. van der Loos, *Miracles*, p. 413; O. Michel, "*ku, wn, kuna, rion*," *TWNT 111.1104*.

<sup>236</sup> Earlier Jesus sent his disciples to the lost sheep of Israel and instructed them not to go to the Gentiles and Samaritans (Mt 10:5).

<sup>237</sup> The perfect tense *evxelh, luqen* indicates that the healing was already complete.

possession. The woman was deeply convinced that Jesus had power to heal at a distance. Indeed, her child was instantly delivered from the evil spirit (Mt 15:28), that when she reached home she found her well (Mk 7:30). The girl was lying on a bed presumably exhausted, which suggests a state of calmness. This is the only record in the Gospel of Jesus' casting out of a demon at a distance<sup>238</sup> without uttering any word of command. Here, the distance was probably greater than that of the centurion's son and it proves that Jesus' power was effective over miles of distance.

The last healing narrative in the special Lucan tradition about the ten lepers<sup>239</sup> (Lk 17:11-19) is another example of healing at a distance. However, unlike the stories about the centurion's servant and the Syrophenician woman's daughter, the lepers<sup>240</sup> had contact with Jesus before they were cleansed. The scene of the story is a village in a border between Galilee and Samaria where Jesus met the ten Jewish and Samaritan lepers.<sup>241</sup> Observing the legal regulations of the Levitical law which prohibits physical contact with other people (Lv 13:45f., cf. Nu 5:2), they stood at a distance. No doubt they had heard about Jesus' healing in Galilee and elsewhere that when they met him, they sought his help with an urgent call for mercy. They addressed Jesus *evpista, ta*<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> Cf. P. Fiebig, **Jüd Wundergeschichten**, p. 19.

<sup>239</sup> The story is considered by some scholars as a mere parable and not a healing miracle. It is taken to be a Lucan construction based on Mk 1:40-45 (cf. R. Bultmann, **Geschichte**, p. 33; E. Klostermann, Lk, HNT, p. 173; W. Grundmann, Lk, THNT, p. 335) and 2 Kings 5 or a case when "details of a parable were passed over into a miracle story" in the process of oral transmission. See C. Stuhmueller, Lk, JBC, p. 150; E. Ellis, Lk, NCB, p. 208. Moreover, it is argued that the episode like a parable ends with a statement. However, the vividness of the story and the personal involvement of Jesus show that it really did happen. Besides, Mk 1:40-45 is already recorded in 5:12-16. Cf. H. van der Loos, **Miracles**, p. 495.

<sup>240</sup> *Le, pra* in the Bible is a general term for skin diseases and not always necessarily equivalent to what we know as Hansen's disease (cf. Lv 13-14). It refers to a number of skin ailments, which may have included ringworm, psoriasis, leucoderma and vitiligo, though Hansen's disease may have been known also. S. Johnson, Mk, BNTC, p. 52; W. Grundmann, Mk, THNT, p. 70. J. Preuss who studied the provisions in Lv 13 is of the opinion that it concerned with Hansen's disease. **Medizin**, pp. 369ff. Cf. H. Seng who says that leprosy in the Bible does not mean our leprosy. **Heilungen Jesu**, p. 18. The disease was looked at by the Jews as a direct punishment from God. H. Schürmann, Lk, HTKNT, 1.276; J. Preuss, **Medizin**, pp. 388f.; W. Grundmann, Mk, THNT, p. 68. See Strack-Billerbeck, KNTTM IV.2.747.

<sup>241</sup> The dreadful malady of the Jewish and Samaritan lepers broke down the barrier between them. The Jews and Samaritans, who were normally not in good terms, were together and shared their common misery. For lepers grouping together, cf. 2 Ki 7:3.

<sup>242</sup> This manner of address is found only in Luke. Cf. 5:5, 8:2425; 9:3ff.

(Master), and without specifying their request, asked for pity. They wanted him to cleanse them from their dreadful disease.

Jesus, who had mercy especially on social outcasts, upon seeing and hearing the plea of the ten lepers, commanded them to go and show themselves to the priests.<sup>243</sup> Jesus neither came to them nor spoke words of healing on the spot, but instructed them to do what the law requires. Normally, the command to visit a priest followed after being cured of leprosy, but here Jesus told them, leprosy as they were, to go to their priests. The priest had the duty like that of a health inspector to examine and certify that the healing had really taken place (cf. Lv 14:2ff.). He also supervised the observance of the purification ritual and the offering of sacrifices. It is not indicated whether it was necessary to go to the temple in Jerusalem but it is assumed based in the OT law that it was so, since sacrifice had to be offered.<sup>244</sup> The purpose of going and showing oneself to the priest was not merely to observe the requirements of the law, but also for the sake of the cured leper, that he might officially resume his place in society.

Jesus was probably putting the faith of the lepers to the test by instructing them to act as though they were cured.<sup>245</sup> Their faith must be shown in obedience, and as they obeyed, they received what they wanted. "As they went, they were cleansed" (v. 14). It implies that the cure was delayed and took place at a distance without Jesus having touched any one of them.<sup>246</sup> Jesus' command was at the same time his authoritative utterance through which they were cleansed. In this case, he caused the healing to occur while they were on their way to the priests in obedience to his command and trusting in his power. The story mentions that only one of them, a Samaritan, returned to Jesus, praising God in a loud voice. He was so overwhelmed in his thanksgiving to Jesus, that he threw himself at his feet (v. 16). After a question about the other nine, Jesus told the Samaritan to rise and go, and

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<sup>243</sup> The plural *i`ereij* indicates that they were a mixed group of lepers—Jewish and Samaritan. This is another instance where Jesus gave an instruction for the compliance of the Mosaic Law (cf. Mt 5:27; Lv 14: 1-32).

<sup>244</sup> Cf. E. Klostermann, Lk, HNT, p. 173. A. Plummer thinks that each leper would go to the priest near his own home. The Samaritan would go to a priest of the temple on Mt. Gerizim, while the others to Jewish priests. Lk, ICC, p. 404; Cf. H. van der Loos, *Miracles*, p. 497.

<sup>245</sup> L. Morris, Lk, TNTC, p. 258; W. Grundmann, Lk, THNT, p. 337. Cf. A. Plummer, Lk, ICC, p. 404; E. Ellis, Lk, NCB, p. 209; G. Schneider, Lk, OTNT, p. 351. The obedience to Jesus' command shows that they had the fullest confidence in Jesus' power as a healer. H. van der Loos, *Miracles*, p. 498.

<sup>246</sup> Cf. the story of Naaman, who was healed without the presence of Elisha (2 Ki 5:10-14).

pronounced that his faith has made him well. He was not only “cleansed” but also “made well” in the fullest sense of the word.

### 3. Physical Contact

In most instances, Jesus combined his spoken word with physical touch in healing which became known in the later history of the church as “laying on of hands.”<sup>247</sup> The practice of laying on of hands in connection with healing is not mentioned in the OT and in rabbinical writings except in IQGen-Apocryphon 20:28f., but it is found in the Hellenistic accounts of miraculous cures.<sup>248</sup> Jesus spoke to the sick person and at the same time laid hands upon him. The use of his hands was as much a feature of his healing ministry as was the use of his lips. His healing touch is repeatedly mentioned in the Gospels (e.g. Mt 8:15; Mk 8:23; Lk 13:13). The evangelists state that in some cases, he simply laid his hands on needy recipients, resulting in their healing. On account of the unbelief of the people of Nazareth, Jesus laid hands on only a few sick people and healed them (Mk 6:5). At Capernaum, each of those who were brought to him received the laying on of his hands and were healed of various kinds of sickness (Lk 4:40). Perhaps, Jesus had normally placed his hands on the head of the sick person, as representing the whole body, but at times might have touched the afflicted part of the body (see Mk 7:31-37; 8:22-26).

Jesus’ healing by means of touch became known so that some people came to him requesting that their sick be touched. Jairus, a ruler of a synagogue fell at Jesus’ feet pleading that he might come to his house and touch his dying<sup>249</sup> daughter “so that she will be healed and live” (Mk 5:22-23). He believed that his touch had special efficacy. Jesus was at Bethsaida when some people brought to him a blind man and begged that he touch him

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<sup>247</sup> Touching by the hand played an influential part in the religious life of peoples. The hands of the gods or persons with power in them was believed to bring blessing or destruction. See S. Eitrem, **Demonology**, p. 33. It was said that a healing force flowed to those who sought healing from Aesculapius and Hygieia, O. Weinrich, **Antike Heilungswunder**, pp. 1-75.

<sup>248</sup> E. Lohse, “*cei, r, ktl.*” TWNT IX.417,420; David Flusser, “Healing Through Laying-on of Hands in a Dead Sea Scroll,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 7 (1957):107f. Laying on of hands was a generally recognized symbol of transmission, especially of conferring blessing (cf. Gn 48:14ff.; Lv 9:22,23). Jesus placed his hands on children brought to him by their parents (Mt 19:13ff.). Moreover, through the laying on of hands, certain groups like the scribes were set apart for religious service. J. Jeremias, “*grammateu, j,*” TWNT I.740ff. But it is uncertain whether this goes back to the first century. H. Marshall, *Ac*, TNTC, p. 127.

<sup>249</sup> Matthew has *av, rti evteleu, thsen* (“has just died,” 9:18).



(Mk 8:22ff). Jesus took him by the hand and brought him outside the village. After Jesus spat on his eyes and touched him, he saw people like trees walking around. Only after the second touch<sup>250</sup> on his eyes that his sight was completely restored and he saw everything clearly. The laying on of hands for two times not only conveyed to the blind man Jesus' intention to heal him but also encouraged his will to cooperate.

Healing by physical contact is reported in the Gospels even of a leprous man (Mk 1:40-45, par). Luke notes the nature and extent of the disease of the man<sup>251</sup> who fell with his face to the ground<sup>252</sup> and begged Jesus for cleansing.<sup>253</sup> "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean" (Lk 5:12). In his miserable condition, the leper did not keep distance from Jesus as the law demanded, but dared to step right in front of Jesus and prostrated himself before him. It may be presumed that he had some knowledge of Jesus' remarkable powers of healing. He had no doubt about his ability to remove from him the ravages and stigma of his dreadful disease. He was so daring in his faith because leprosy is known to be difficult to cleanse.<sup>254</sup> He was not sure,

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<sup>250</sup> The second touch, in this case, is unique for nowhere else is such twofold action recorded of Jesus' healing. Lack of sufficient faith on the part of the blind man is suggested as the reason for the second touch. R. A. Cole, Mk, TNTC, p. 133. Another suggestion which seems more likely is that Jesus was demonstrating his sovereign freedom. "He did so most probably for the purpose of proving, in the case of this man, that he had full liberty as to his method proceeding, and was not restricted to a fixed rule ...." J. Calvin, **Harmony of the Evangelists**. 11.285.

<sup>251</sup> Plh, rhj le, praj is apparently a medical term which indicates that the disease is in advanced stages. His hands and face were probably covered with ulcers and sores. A. Plummer, Lk, ICC, p. 148. Cf. H. van der Loos who thinks otherwise. "This characterization need not point to an extra serious case, nor need it imply medical terminology." **Miracles**, p. 482.

<sup>252</sup> Pesw.n evpi. Pro, swpon while Matthew has proseku, nei (8:2) which also means "worshipped" in other contexts (cf. 2:11). Cf. Mark's gonupetwn ("kneeling"). What the leper did was an act of reverence and adoration. W. Hendriksen, Mt, NTC, p. 391. W. Liefeld on the other hand says, "Just as Peter fell at Jesus' feet for shame at his sinfulness, this man falls face downward for shame at his uncleanness." Lk, EBC, p. 878.

<sup>253</sup> The request of the man was not to be healed but rather to be cleansed. Cf. H. Schurmann, Lk, HTKNT, 11.274. The verb kaqari, zein occurs 12 times in the Synoptics in clinical contexts where it is always a leper who is cured (e.g. Mt 8:2; 10:8). In the Scriptures, leprosy is never said to be healed. It is always said to be cleansed. It suggests that leprosy is a dirty disease and that it defiles a person. But to be cleansed is also equivalent to being healed.

<sup>254</sup> Healing of leprosy was rare and there are only two records in the OT that God healed lepers (Nu 12:10-15; 2 Ki 5:9-14; cf. Lk 4:27). It is affirmed by the rabbis that it was as difficult to heal a leper as to raise the dead. Strack-

however, if Jesus would be willing to help him. His only reservation seemed to be Jesus' willingness to grant his request. The man can be characterized as one who was conscious of his own state, earnest in his desire to be cleansed, humble enough to request for cleansing and believing that Jesus had power to heal him.<sup>255</sup>

In response to the leper's request, Mark states that Jesus reached out his hand<sup>256</sup> and touched the man, saying, "I am willing, be clean!" The reaching out of Jesus' hand is understood as reminiscent of the way in which God stretches out his hand to accomplish mighty acts (Ex 6:6; 14:16; 15:12; Jer 17:5, cf. Acts 4:30), and also the action of Moses<sup>257</sup> (Ex 4:4). More probably, however, Jesus had to reach out his hand because the leper was keeping distance from him.<sup>258</sup> He stretched out his hand not in repulse but as a gesture of healing. More significantly is that Jesus touched the leper. Leprosy, as it has been noted above, rendered a man and anyone who came in contact with him ceremonially unclean<sup>259</sup> (cf. Lv 13:14; M. Nega'im 111.1). A devout Jew greatly feared ceremonial uncleanness because it means exclusion from religious observances. The touching of the leper revealed Jesus' attitude toward the ceremonial part of the law. He showed that he was not bound by rabbinic regulations regarding ritual

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Billerbeck, KNTTM, VI.1.747ff. Cf. W. Michaelis, "le, pra, lepro, j," TWNT IV.240; W. Grundmann, Mk, THNT, p. 69.

<sup>255</sup> R. A. Cole, Mk, TNTC, p. 63. A. Plummer suggests that the man considered Jesus to be endowed with divine power. Lk, ICC, p. 148. Leprosy was believed to be incurable by human means because it was "the stroke" of God which cannot be removed by the hand of man. Cf. H. Schürmann, Lk, HTKNT, 1.276.

<sup>256</sup> Cf. the use of the phrase *evktei, naj th, n ceira* in the LXX where it commonly occurs in connection with an act of punishment (e.g. Ex 7:5,19; 8:1,2; 9:22,23; Ezk 6:14; 14:9; Zph 1:4; 2:13; Jer 6:12, etc.). The phrase as used in the NT has rarely this meaning.

<sup>257</sup> H. Marshall, Lk, NIGTC, p. 209. Cf. R. Pesch, **Jesu ureigene Taten?** (Freiburg: Herder, 1970), p. 68. J. D. Kingsbury suggests that "reaching out his hand" symbolizes the exercise of authority (cf. Ex 8:5; 14:21; 1 Ki 8:42). "Retelling the Old, Old Story," **Currents in Theology and Missions 4** (1976):346. "Das Ausstrecken der Hand hat mehr symbolische (Apg 4,30) als medizinische Bedeutung." J. Ernst, Lk, RNT, p. 190. It may be just a gesture of healing. S. Johnson, Mk, BNTC, p. 52.

<sup>258</sup> D. A. Carson, Mt, EBC, p. 198. According to W. Grundmann the purpose of the stretching of the hand to touch the leper was for the transference of Jesus' cleansing power. Mk, THNT, p. 68f.

<sup>259</sup> The rabbis, by their interpretation of the Mosaic Laws, imposed many practical difficulties upon a leper. A leper was not permitted to enter any house, for his presence would make both men and vessels in the house unclean (M. Kelim 1.4; M. Nega'im XI11.ii). Even a chance encounter with a leper would convey uncleanness to a non-leper (M. Nega'im XII1.7). See R. Meyer, "kaqaro, j, ktl." TWNT III.421f.

defilement.<sup>260</sup> Here, and in other instances, “the ceremonial laws give place to the law of love when the two come into collision.”<sup>261</sup> Significantly, by touching the “untouchable,” he made clean the unclean.

The touch and the authoritative word of Jesus effected immediate and complete cure which was visible to all who met the leper. The leprosy left him and he was cleansed. Jesus then instructed the man not to tell anyone about his cleansing and to go show himself to the priest and offer the prescribed sacrifices (Lv 14:2-31). Like in the case of the ten lepers, Jesus followed the ceremonial law of cleansing by sending the leper to the priest who alone could declare him ritually clean. The purpose of the sending to the priest and offering sacrifice would ultimately be for a testimony to them. *Eivj martu,rion auvtoij* could be interpreted both in positive sense (a convincing witness) and negative sense (an incriminating witness) to the people in general<sup>262</sup> or to the priests in particular.<sup>263</sup> Since there was only one Israelite in the entire history of the nation who was cured of leprosy (Nu 12:10-15), the cleansed leper would be a witness to his claim that he possessed supernatural powers to heal diseases including leprosy. The priest who would examine the circumstances surrounding the healing would inevitably learn about Jesus and would investigate his claims.<sup>264</sup>

The only example of the healing of a wound occurred under an unusual circumstance during the arrest of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane (Lk 22:50,51; Mt 26:51; Mk 14:47). It is said to be the “last healing miracle” which Jesus performed.<sup>265</sup> When Jesus

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<sup>260</sup> J. Grassmick, Mk, BKC, p. 111; R. E. Nixon, Mt, NBC, p. 630; S. Johnson, Mk, BNTC, p. 52.

<sup>261</sup> A. Plummer, Lk, ICC, p. 149. Cf. H. van der Loos, **Miracles**, p. 484, n. 151; R. V. G. Tasker, Mt, TNTC, p. 87; N. Geldenhuys, Lk, NICNT, pp. 185f.; F. Filson, Mt, BNTC, p. 110. “He boldly placed love and compassion over ritual and regulations.” R. E. Nixon, Mt, NBC, p. 630.

<sup>262</sup> It was a testimony to the people so that he could be admitted again into the community. Cf. E. Klostermann, Mk, HNT, p. 21; W. Grundmann, Mk, THNT, p. 69f. It was also to demonstrate to the people that Jesus does not disregard the law. A. Plummer, Lk, ICC, p. 150; H. van der Loos, **Miracles**, p. 487.

<sup>263</sup> The negative sense gives *martu,rion* the meaning a proof to serve as incriminating evidence, and *auvtoij* refers to the priests. J. Grassmick, Mk, BKC, p. 111. Cf. H. Strathmann, “*ma,rtuj*,” TWNT, IV.508ff.; Strack-Billerbeck, KNTTM, I.474f. It would be a testimony to the priests that Jesus had not disowned the OT Law. F. Filson, Mt, BNTC, p. 110; W. Allen, Mt, ICC, p. 75.

<sup>264</sup> Barbieri, Mt, BKC, p. 37. R. H. Fuller sees the cleansing of the leper as a proof of Jesus’ messiahship (**Miracles**, pp. 49f.) while J. Kallas Jesus’ claim of divinity. **Miracles**, p. 31.

<sup>265</sup> Cf. H. van der Loos, **Miracles**, p. 556.

was about to be seized by the temple policemen, an impulsive disciple<sup>266</sup> struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his ear. Luke mentions that it was the right ear (cf. Jn 18:10) that was wounded. He is also the only one who reports that Jesus touched the man's ear and healed it.<sup>267</sup> This brief account of the healing of the servant's ear assumes that the bleeding stopped and the ear was instantly cured by the power of Jesus' touch. Significantly, the story shows that even an enemy of Jesus benefited from his healing powers.<sup>268</sup>

It is also reported that healing occurred when the sick touched Jesus or his garment. The people did not only beg for his touch; they also touched him themselves. The fame of Jesus as a healer was so widespread that multitudes from Galilee and surrounding regions followed him, and those who were sick pushed forward to touch him, hoping to be relieved of their sufferings (Mk 3:7-10). On another occasion, when Jesus landed at Gennesaret,<sup>269</sup> the people instantly recognized him (Mk 6:53ff., par). By word-of-mouth reports, information about his presence spread in the villages and towns, so that whenever he went, he saw sick people in the market places waiting for his arrival.<sup>270</sup> Those who brought their sick relatives and friends implored Jesus to let their sick touch even the edge of his cloak as he passed by. The people were deeply convinced that a touch of the fringe of his garments would restore their health, and their confidence did not go unrewarded. All who touched him were healed. The touch in reverse is reported to be equally effective.

The unnamed woman who suffered from hemorrhage is one concrete example of the healing through touch in reverse (Mk

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<sup>266</sup> John specifies Peter as the disciple who drew his sword and struck the servant whose name is Malchus (18:10).

<sup>267</sup> Luke, the physician, is the only one who records this solitary "miracle of surgery." A complete restoration of the ear is meant here. A. Plummer, Lk, ICC, p. 513. Cf. W. Grundmann, Lk, THNT, p. 414. E. R. Micklem doubts that the ear was completely severed. **Miracles**, p. 127f.

<sup>268</sup> A number of exegetes do not regard this healing as an act of mercy. It was to avoid an accusation of being a dangerous element to the state. A. Plummer, Lk, ICC, p. 513. Cf. F. Godet, Lk, p. 555.

<sup>269</sup> Located on the northwest side of the lake and described by Josephus as a fertile plain (War 111.516-521). The area is said to be a resort for invalids because of several medicinal springs that were found there. J. Grassmick, Mk, BKC, p. 132.

<sup>270</sup> This short pericope stresses the coverage of Jesus' public ministry and shows that his ministry extended to all the people. Moreover, in contrast to the Pharisees and the Essenes, Jesus did not count it as an abomination to rub shoulders with a crowd. D. A. Carson, Mt, EBC, p. 347.

5:25-34, par).<sup>271</sup> The woman, who previously was treated by many doctors and spent all she owned, had not improved.<sup>272</sup> Rather, her condition had grown worse. The hemorrhage refused to yield to medical treatment. It is not clear what caused the hemorrhage, but it is common to think of a chronic menstrual disorder or uterine hemorrhage.<sup>273</sup> Her gynecological problem afflicted her for twelve years. It is not possible to know whether the drain of blood was constant without intermission or the excessive loss of blood occurred periodically within those years. In either case, her condition made her ceremonially unclean and would also convey uncleanness to all who came in contact with her<sup>274</sup> (cf. Lv 15:19-33). Just like a leprous person, the woman's ritual uncleanness barred her from normal social relations and especially from fellowship with God's congregation in worship. She was an outcast, despised and solitary, on account of her disease.

In her desperate need, i.e. in her suffering from an incurable illness and socio-religious isolation, she had heard about Jesus. After all human help failed, she knew of Jesus' power of healing and decided to trust her case on him in a secret way. Probably, for fear that she would be noticed by the crowd,<sup>275</sup> she cleverly forced her way through the multitude and approached Jesus from behind<sup>276</sup> with an intense conviction that a mere touch of his clothes would heal her. Most likely, she had known that others who had touched Jesus were made well (cf. Mk 3:10; 6:56). Her

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<sup>271</sup> The "sandwiched" story of the miraculous healing of the woman is set in the context of the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead. Matthew (9:20-22) abbreviates the accounts, and Luke (8:43-48) omits the comments about the failure of many doctors to help her and her worsened condition after she had spent all she had. He simply substitutes the brief statement that "no one could heal her."

<sup>272</sup> Cf. Tobit 2:10. For the prescribed remedies of her malady see J. Preuss, **Medizin**, pp. 439ff. and Strack-Billerbeck, KNTTM, 1.520.

<sup>273</sup> E. Ebstein, **Medizin**, pp. 97f. S. Eitrem, **Demonology**, p. 35; J. Preuss, **Medizin**, p. 439; R. V. G. Tasker, Mt, TNTC, p. 102; H. Seng, **Heilungen Jesu**, p. 18. Menorrhagia is its name in modern medical terminology. E. R. Micklem, **Miracles**, p. 120.

<sup>274</sup> A woman who had her kind of disease was called a **zabab**. The tractate **Zabim** of the Mishnah is devoted for the regulation of the life of persons like her. See Strack-Billerbeck. KNTTM, 1.520; Cf. F. Hauck, "kaqaro, j, ktl." TWNT III.416ff. Restriction imposed by Lv 15:19ff. and by Jewish custom as codified in the **Zabim** could have greatly affected her life.

<sup>275</sup> The woman would have been avoided by the people who knew her for fear of contracting ritual uncleanness, which, though temporary, was troublesome. L. Morris, Lk, TNTC, p. 159.

<sup>276</sup> Another reason why she desired to go unnoticed was probably to avoid an embarrassing public disclosure of her disease. J. Grassmick, Mk, BKC, p. 124; L. Morris, Lk, TNTC, p. 159. Cf. Strack-Billerbeck, KNTTM, I.519f.

touching of the tassel<sup>277</sup> of his outer garment brought immediate relief from her malady. The bleeding instantly stopped and she experienced a sound feeling in her body that she had been healed. The woman thought that she would not be noticed by Jesus as she touched the tassel which loosely hanged at the back of his robe. Unfortunately, but rather fortunately for her, she did not escape unnoticed. Jesus realized that du,namij has gone out of him and asked who touched him.<sup>278</sup> His disciples were unable to pinpoint the one who intentionally touched him because of the number of people which crowded against him. Aware that she was the one searched for, the woman came forward and fell at his feet fearfully confessing the whole truth. Instead of rebuking the woman, Jesus affectionately addressed her quga,thr, proclaimed that her faith<sup>279</sup> has healed her and dismissed her in peace with the assurance of being freed from her suffering. The woman went away assured that her healing was complete and permanent.

#### 4. Use of Spittle

In addition to the spoken word and touch, application of material means is reported by Mark. It is not stated that Jesus used oil<sup>280</sup> which the disciples did in anointing “many sick people and healed them” (Mk 6:13). Mark reports the use of spittle in two episodes. Since the recorded stories of healings in the Gospels are the dramatic ones and can be considered representatives of the other generally summarized healings, Jesus could have

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<sup>277</sup> Matthew and Luke specify that it was the kra,spedon of Jesus' garment which was touched by the woman. Kra,spedon means “hem,” “edge” or “border” of a garment, or the “tassel” worn by pious Jews on the four corners of his outer garment as prescribed in Nu 15:38f. and Dt 22:12 which served as reminder to obey the Law. See G. Schneider, “kra,spedon,” TWNT 111.904; Strack-Billerbeck, KNTTM, IV.277-292. Probably, the latter is what is meant here. H. Marshall, Lk, NIGTC, p. 344; L. Morris, Lk, TNTC, p. 159; R. E. Nixon, Mt, NBC, p. 828; J. McKenzie, Mt, JBC, p. 79. Cf. W. F. Albright, **The Archaeology of Palestine** (Harmondsworth: Pelican Books, 1949), p. 216.

<sup>278</sup> Jesus knew that the woman touched his garment and wanted to bring her into open for her sake. The cure must be publicly made known so that she would be received back into normal religious and social intercourse. L. Morris, Lk, TNTC, pp. 159f.; N. Geldenhuys, Lk, NICNT, p. 261. Another purpose of summoning the woman was for her to express openly her faith which caused her to touch him. J. Martin, Lk, BKC, p. 227; C. E. Swift, Mk, NBC, p. 863.

<sup>279</sup> “Nicht eine geheimnisvolle Kraft, sondern Wort und Glaube schaffen Heilung und Heil.” E. Lohmeyer, Mk, p. 104. Cf. W. Grundmann, Mt, THNT, p. 275.

<sup>280</sup> M. Kelsey thinks it is probable that Jesus did use oil in healing. **Healing**, p. 60. Cf. E. R. Micklem, **Miracles**, p. 105.

applied spittle in more than two instances.<sup>281</sup> At Bethsaida, a number of persons brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him (Mk 8:22ff.). Instead of just touching the man, Jesus performed a double action. He spat on the man's eyes<sup>282</sup> and laid his hands on him. The man was completely healed only after a second touch from Jesus. Eitrem considers the case a difficult one<sup>283</sup> on account of the two-fold treatment of spitting on the eyes and laying on of hands followed by a question and then a second laying on of hands.

The other occurrence of the use of spittle is in the healing of a deaf man who had also a speech impediment (*kwfo.n kai. mogila, lon*<sup>284</sup> Mk 7:32-35). Like the blind man at Bethsaida, he was brought by some people who interceded for him, begging Jesus to place his hand on him. The man certainly could not make an intelligible request for himself because of his speech problem. After separating him from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears, spat and touched the man's tongue. Grassmick thinks that Jesus spat on the ground because it is not clearly indicated that the spittle was directly applied to the man's tongue.<sup>285</sup> However, it is likely that the saliva was for the anointment of his tongue,<sup>286</sup> as it was done on the blind man's eyes. Looking up to heaven and with a deep sigh,<sup>287</sup> Jesus uttered a command in

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<sup>281</sup> Cf. Jn 9:6-15 where a blind was anointed with clay mixed with spittle and told to go and wash in the Pool of Siloam.

<sup>282</sup> There are various peculiar remedies against blindness mentioned in the Talmud. Strack-Billerbeck, KNTTM, 1.524. Cf. E. Ebstein, **Medizin**, pp. 281ff.; J. Preuss, **Medizin**, pp. 320ff.

<sup>283</sup> **Demonology**, p. 45.

<sup>284</sup> *Mogila, lon* is an uncommon word occurring only here and in the LXX of Is 35:6 which translates the Hebrew *ilem* ("dumb," RSV). Mark must have had Is 35:6 in mind, which describes in a poetic language the Messianic Age. The rabbinic understanding of this Isaianic passage about the fulfilment of the prophecy in the Days of the Messiah is contained in Genesis **Rabba 95** and Midrash **Tehillim 146.8**.

<sup>285</sup> Mk, BKC, p. 136. Cf. R. A. Cole, Mk, TNTC, p. 125.

<sup>286</sup> So W. Grundmann, Mk, THNT, p. 201; W. Lane, Mk, NICNT, pp. 166f.; W. Wessel, Mk, EBC, p. 684; J. Calvin, Harmony, 2.271f.; K. Kertelge, **Wunder Jesu**, p. 157.

<sup>287</sup> The Lord's upward glance has been interpreted as a prayer posture (So H. van der Loos, Miracles, p. 327; S. Johnson, Mk, BNTC, p. 139; R. A. Cole, Mk, TNTC, p. 125), and to show the blind where his help comes. W. Grundmann, Mk, THNT, p. 202. Dibelius calls it as one "that calls for power and bring down from above." **Formgeschichte**, p. 82. The deep sigh which was a standard procedure of wonder-workers (K. Kertelge, **Wunder Jesu**, p. 160) is said to be reflective of Jesus' compassion for the afflicted man (w. Grundmann, Mk, THNT, p. 202), and his strong emotion as he battled against the demonic forces that enslaved him. J. Grassmick, Mk, BKC, p. 136. Demonic possession is supposed to be further supported by the statement, "his tongue was

Aramaic, “Ephphatha!”<sup>288</sup> (i.e., “be opened”). The man was immediately healed of his deafness and could speak plainly (ovrqrwj).<sup>289</sup> By touch, application of saliva, and a command, Jesus opened his ears and loosened his tongue.

Saliva was supposed to have a therapeutic effect at that time and was regarded as an important curative force in Judaism and Hellenism.<sup>290</sup> Among the ancient peoples, there was a belief in the power of spittle used both for good and evil not only by the deity, but also by the devil.<sup>291</sup> Some think, however, that the use of saliva by Jesus was unlikely for any supposed medicinal value.<sup>292</sup> Most likely, it was not used for its claimed healing properties, but to establish significant contact<sup>293</sup> with the person healed and designed to evoke in him the cooperation of faith.<sup>294</sup> By applying spittle, Jesus entered into the thought world of the person and indicated his intention to restore the concerned physical organs to their normal use. In every case, it was the divine power in Jesus that brought healing.

## THE HEALING BY THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS

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loosened” which has parallels in Hellenistic texts. See W. Lane, Mk, NICNT, p. 267. This view, however, is not so indicated in the Marcan text. Besides, there is no evidence that Jesus had ever touched a demoniac.

<sup>288</sup> vEffaqa, is a contraction of the *ethpeel* form of *etpetach* (fem: *etpatcha*) and is addressed to the ears.

<sup>289</sup> It indicates that he was not completely mute and confirms that he had not been born deaf and dumb. Cf. H. van der Loos, **Miracles**, pp. 523ff.

<sup>290</sup> W. Grundmann, Mk, THNT, pp. 201f.; Cf. J. Preuss, **Medizin**, pp. 99ff., 321ff.; F. Fenner, **Krankheit**, pp. 91f.; Strack-Billerbeck, KNTTM, 11.15ff. The belief in the curative properties of spittle is reflected in some Babylonian inscriptions. A. Jeremias, **Babylonisches im Neuen Testament** (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1905), p. 108.

<sup>291</sup> W. Schmidt, “Endsynthese der Religionen der Urvölker Amerikas, Asiens, Australiens, Afrikas,” in **Der Ursprung der Gottesidee, eine historisch-kritisch und positive Studie** (Münster: Aschendorff, 1935): VI.39. The Assyrians spoke of a “spittle of life” and a “spittle of death.” S. Eitrem, **Demonology**, p. 46.

<sup>292</sup> So W. Wessel, Mk, EBC, p. 684; W. Lane, Mk, NICNT, p. 132; H. Jeter, **By His Stripes**, p. 137. It is argued that if saliva possessed curative properties, it would be employed today. *Ibid.*, p. 51. Cf. E. Gould who says that the use of saliva was an actual means of cure and not as symbol or sign. Mk, ICC, p. 150.

<sup>293</sup> M. Kelsey thinks that saliva was the carrier of Jesus personality and power. **Healing**, p. 80. Cf. W. Lane, Mk, NICNT, p. 285; J. Ernst, Mk, RNT, p. 216.

<sup>294</sup> C. E. Swift, Mk, NBC, p. 867; J. Grassmick, Mk, BKC, p. 138. Cf. Strack-Billerbeck, KNTTM, 11.17.



The Gospel of Mark clearly states the two-fold purpose<sup>295</sup> of the appointment of the Twelve (3:14,15). First, “that they might be with him,” i.e. to share his life like the disciples of a rabbi.<sup>296</sup> Their appointment involved communion and companionship. The disciples were to be brought into the closest association with the life of their Teacher, to live, travel, and converse with him, in order to learn from him. They were to receive formal and informal instructions through listening to his wise words, casual sayings, conversations with friends and critics, and observing the conduct of his ministry. During their constant companionship with Jesus, the Twelve had shared his experiences and witnessed his power over demonic forces, diseases and death. Second, “that he might send them out to preach and to have authority (*evxousi, a*) to drive out demons.” In the actual sending out, this *evxousi, a* given to the disciples included also the healing of diseases and raising of the dead. In a sense, they were to do what Jesus was doing. The second purpose is to be understood as the commencement of their own ministry while their Master was still physically present with them, which would then become their main occupation in the post-resurrection period. With authority from Jesus, they were to do his work of preaching and healing.

## 1. Commission to Heal

During a tour of preaching and healing in the towns and villages of Galilee, Jesus saw the need for more “workers” who would do exactly what he was doing (Mt 9:37-38). His compassion for the people led him to call “fellow-laborers.” The Twelve<sup>297</sup> disciples whom he had chosen and had been closely associated with him were now equipped for more direct involvement in his work. It was time for them to be sent out in order that, through them, his ministry would be extended and multiplied. He,

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<sup>295</sup> R. A. Cole calls them the intensive and extensive purposes. Mk, TNTC, p. 108. For the meaning of Jesus’ call to his disciples, see M. Hengel, **Nachfolge und Charisma**, pp. 80ff.

<sup>296</sup> The practice of gathering disciples was common among OT prophets, Jewish rabbis, as well as philosophers like Socrates and Confucius. However, the discipleship which Jesus demanded differs from the other teachers of religion and philosophy. See M. Hengel, **Nachfolge und Charisma**.

<sup>297</sup> The number twelve has an analogy to the twelve tribes of Israel (Mt 19:28). Cf. the Council of Twelve of the Qumran community (IQS 8.1ff.). The Twelve probably represented “the new Israel in embryo” (w. Wessel, Mk, EBC, p. 642) and pointed to “the eschatological renewal of the people of God.” D. A. Carson, Mt, EBC, p. 236. Cf. E. Mally, Mk, JBC, p. 28.

therefore, summoned<sup>298</sup> the Twelve together to commission them for the task they had been called for (Mk 6:7-13, par). This is the first time that Jesus sent out (avposte, llw) his disciples to represent him in word and deed. They were his official representatives in accordance with the Jewish judicial practice.<sup>299</sup> In the Jewish Law, the *shaleyach* (a man's representative) was considered as the man himself. In its simplest form, "the sent one is as the man who commissioned him"<sup>300</sup> (cf. M. Berakoth 5:5; Mt 10:40). The legal formulation also included the provision of giving report to the sending person (cf. Mk 6:30).

The disciples were empowered to perform their task. The Synoptists clearly state that Jesus shared his *evxousi, a* with his disciples. Luke adds *du, namij*, i.e. spiritual power similar to that which enabled Jesus to heal (cf. Lk 4:14,36; 6:19; 8:46; Ac 10:38). Thus, the Twelve were adequately equipped with power and the right to use that power. Their power and authority were given for their battle against demons.<sup>301</sup> Part of their task was to exorcise demons, just as Jesus was engaged in the expulsion of evil spirits from their victims. With *du, namij* and *evxousi, a*, the disciples were also "to heal every disease and sickness"<sup>302</sup> (Mt 10:1; cf. 4:23; 9:35). This responsibility is further elaborated by Matthew in the charge to the missionaries. They were to "heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers and drive out demons" (10:8). The Twelve were to perform the task which Jesus had been doing in the demonic realm and in the physical realm of disease.

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<sup>298</sup> Mark and Matthew (10:1-8) use the verb *proskale, w* while Luke (9:1-6) prefers *sugkale, w*. The commission given at this time was a stage in their training and preparation for their work after Pentecost.

<sup>299</sup> K. H. Rengstorf, "avposte, llw, ktl." TWNT 1.40. Cf. A. Plum mer, Lk, ICC, p. 121; G. Maier, Mt, BK, p. 259.

<sup>300</sup> W. Lane formulates it in relation to the sending of the Twelve as follows: "Jesus authorized the disciples to be his delegates with respect to both word and power. Their message and deeds were to be an extension of his own." Mk, NICNT, p. 206f. Cf. O. Betz, "The Concept of the So-Called 'Divine Man' in Mark's Christology," in idem, *Jesus, Der Messias Israels*, p. 278; J. Grassmick, Mk, BKC, p. 127; W. Hendriksen, Mt, NTC, p. 449. The disciples represented Jesus in the same manner he himself represented the Father (cf. Jn 5:19).

<sup>301</sup> *vEpi, pa, nta ta. daimo, nia* in Luke and *pneu, mata avkaqa, rta* in Matthew and Mark. Matthew adds the information *w`ste evkba, llen auvta, .*

<sup>302</sup> *Qerapeu, ein pa, san no, son kai. pa, san malaki, an* is missing in Mark, and Luke has the sort form *vo, souj qerapeu, ein* (9:1).

According to Mark, Jesus sent his disciples “two by two.”<sup>303</sup> The sending of messengers by pairs was a custom among the Jews<sup>304</sup> and became a common practice among the early believers (cf. Ac 13:2; 15:27; 39-40; 17:14, 19:22). There seem to be two reasons for sending the Twelve two by two. First, it was in accordance with the provision of the Mosaic Law that the truthfulness of a testimony is to be established by the mouth of at least two witnesses<sup>305</sup> (Dt 17:6; 19:15; Nu 35:30; cf. Mt 18:16). Here, the testimony about Jesus and his message would be established by the witness of two disciples. Second, it was for practical reasons. The two were to provide mutual help and comfort. Companionship and protection are essential in carrying out their mission.

Matthew mentions that the disciples’ mission was to be restricted to “the lost sheep of Israel”<sup>306</sup> (10:5,6). They were to avoid entering Gentile territory or any Samaritan village. Their attention was to be confined to the Israelites, for the good news was for the Jew first (cf. Rom 1:16). They were also instructed to travel with a minimum of equipment. There are at least two logical suggestions which explain the reason why Jesus commanded them not to encumber themselves with unnecessary outfit and to travel light. Firstly, it indicates the brevity of their mission and that their task was urgent.<sup>307</sup> They had to concentrate on the task at hand, and they needed no material preparations for the journey in order not to lose time. Secondly, it was intended that the Twelve would put their absolute trust in God to provide their material needs through the people while fulfilling their mission.<sup>308</sup> Jesus

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<sup>303</sup> Luke does not mention this sending by pairs and Matthew has the same omission. Matthew, however, seems to indicate this grouping by the way he lists the names. After the names of the two pairs of brothers, he puts kai, between the names of each pair and leaving it out between pairs.

<sup>304</sup> For the OT and rabbinic evidence see J. Jeremias, “Paarweise Sendung im Neuen Testament,” in **NT Essays**, ed. A. J. B. Higgins (Manchester: University Press, 1959), pp. 136-39. Also by the same author in Abba, pp. 132-39.

<sup>305</sup> Idem., **New Testament Theology**. Eng. tran. (New York: Scribners, 1971), p. 235. Cf. H. van Vliet, **No Single Testimony**. A Study on the Adoption of the Law of Dt 19:15 (Utrecht: Kemink & Zoon, 1958).

<sup>306</sup> This instruction pertained only to that particular brief mission during Jesus’ lifetime. Jesus himself saw his earthly ministry as restricted to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Mt 15:24), although he also ministered to some Gentiles (Mt 8:6ff.; 15:22ff.). The “lost sheep of Israel” may refer to the entire nation of Israel (K. Staab, Mt, EB, p. 60), but more likely to the ‘am ha’ ares, the people of the land, who were despised as ignorant. R. E. Nixon, Mt, NBC, p. 829.

<sup>307</sup> J. Martin, Lk, BKC, p. 228; W. Liefeld, Lk, EBC, p. 918; N. Geldenhuys, Lk, NICNT, p. 265; J. Grassmick, Mk, BKC, p. 127; W. Wessel, Mk, EBC, p. 667.

<sup>308</sup> H. Schürmann, Lk, HTKNT 1.502; W. Grundmann, Lk, THNT, p. 184; G. Maier, Mt, BK, pp. 346f.; J. Ernst, Lk, RNT, p. 285f.; E. Ellis, Lk, NCB, p. 137;

knew that those who would believe the message would be glad to supply the physical needs of his messengers. At the same time, it would be an indication whether or not the people would accept the message preached to them and acknowledge that God was behind the healing they would perform.

The Twelve were sent “to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick” (Lk 9:2). The substance of their preaching is similar to that of John (Mt 3:2), and that of Jesus (4:17). In preaching the Kingdom of God, they were to summon the people to true repentance (Mk 6:12). Their spiritual message was to be combined with the care for the physical well-being of the people by driving out demons and healing the sick<sup>309</sup> (Mk 6:12,13; Lk 9:6). Moreover, Jesus directed them to render their services free. The preaching and healing were to be gratis. “Freely you have received, freely give”<sup>310</sup> (Mt 10:8). They had received freely the good news of the Kingdom, Jesus’ *du, nami j* and *evxousi, a*, and the commission to go, preach, and heal. So, it was also necessary that they exercise such power and authority and carry out their mission with an equally lavish generosity.

Nothing is told about the course of the mission of the disciples, except the summary of what they did. Luke states that “they went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere” (9:6). Their successful mission is also briefly summarized by Mark. “They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them” (6:12,13). In obedience to their commission, they toured the Galilean region, bringing the good news of the Kingdom, liberating people from demonic captivity, and restoring the health of the physically ill. After their missionary tour, they reported to Jesus “all they had done and taught” (Mk 6:30). They went to the villages as Jesus’ representatives and brought deliverance and healing in the most comprehensive terms. What Jesus did in his own power as commissioned by God, the Twelve did in his power.<sup>311</sup>

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G. Schneider, Lk, OTNT, p. 202; L. Morris, Lk, TNTC, p. 163; H. Marshall, Lk, NIGTC, p. 351. This point recalls the acceptance by Elijah und Elisha of continuous hospitality (1 Ki 17:15; 2 Ki 4:8). Cf. 1 Cor 9:14; 1 Tim 5:18

<sup>309</sup> It is suggested that the healing ministry of the Twelve was to authenticate their preaching ministry and that it was subordinate to the proclamation of the message. J. Martin, Lk, BKC, p. 228. Cf. R. H. Fuller, *Miracles*, pp. 73, 112.

<sup>310</sup> NEB: “You have received without cost, give without cost.” Cf. *Didache* 11-13; *Pirke Aboth* 1:13. A number of rabbinical sayings in the Talmud warn the rabbis from accepting fee for instruction in the Law. A scribe should have a trade in order to support himself. Strack-Billerbeck, *KNTTM*, 1.561-64.

<sup>311</sup> W. Lane, Mk, NIGNT, pp. 209f.

Aside from the twelve disciples, Luke records that Jesus appointed seventy- two<sup>312</sup> others (10:1ff.). They, too, were commissioned by him to go to towns and villages and do mission work for him.<sup>313</sup> The number appears to be symbolic in meaning. Probably it alludes to the seventy-two nations of the world in Genesis 10 (LXX, 70 in MT), giving the significance that the gospel is for the whole world.<sup>314</sup> It suggests the inclusion of the Gentile nations in the overall mission of Jesus. This is also implied in the lack of restriction to Jewish population in the commissioning of the seventy-two missionaries. Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem when he sent such a large number of messengers. Like the Twelve, they were sent in pairs “ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go.” The places of their missionary work were probably all located in Transjordan, where some Jewish inhabitants were treated with much indifference by the Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem.<sup>315</sup>

The seventy-two were forerunners who would prepare the people for Jesus’ coming to their towns and villages. Unlike the Twelve who were sent to work and preach independently, they were to carry out a preparatory ministry to the inhabitants before Jesus himself arrived in their place. But the instructions given to them were practically the same, especially resembling in several respects the accounts of Matthew.<sup>316</sup> Since the time was limited

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<sup>312</sup> Other MSS have seventy in vv. 1 and 17. Both *e`bdomh,konta* and *e`bdomh,konta du,o* have strong support. Certainty is therefore impossible because the external evidence is evenly balanced. See B. M. Metzger, “Seventy or Seventy-two Disciples,” *NTS* 5 (1958-59): 229-306. Metzger summarizes his discussion of the problem concerning the number of messengers in his **Commentary on the Greek Testament**, pp. 150f. Seventy-two is preferred here, since it is slightly more likely. Cf. L. Morris, *Lk, TNTC*, p. 181; W. Grundmann, *Lk, THNT*, p. 208; H. Marshall, *Lk, NIGTC*, p. 415.

<sup>313</sup> Some modern critics (E. Klostermann, B. S. Easton, J. M. Creed and H. K. Luce) reject the historicity of the mission of the seventy-two by considering it as a doublet of the mission of the Twelve or just an invention of Luke in his attempt to justify Paul’s ideas. Noted by N. Geldenhuys, *Lk, NICNT*, p. 302. However, there is no conclusive evidence to prove that Luke’s accounts here is unhistorical.

<sup>314</sup> So K. H. Rengstorf, “*e`pta, , ktl.*” *TWNT* IL630f.; W. Liefeld, *Lk, EBC*, p. 937; N. Geldenhuys, *Lk, NICNT*, p. 303. For a discussion of other symbolical references see A. Plummer, *Lk, ICC*, p. 169, and H. Marshall, *Lk, NIGTC*, p. 415.

<sup>315</sup> N. Geldenhuys, *Lk, NICNT*, p. 299. At this point of Jesus’ ministry, Luke seems to convey that the ministry in Galilee and Samaria has been completed. Cf. T. Zahn, *Lk, KNT*, p. 406.

<sup>316</sup> Cf. *Mt 10:3ff.* This similarity leads some to think that this passage is a variant of Matthew’s accounts of Jesus’ charge to the Twelve. However, it could be argued that the mere repetition of some travel instructions given the

and the mission was urgent, they were not to take all kinds of provisions. They were to trust that God would provide all their needs while performing their work. Their time was not also to be wasted along the road by avoiding the customary long greetings. Above all, they were specifically commanded to heal the sick and to proclaim that the Kingdom of God is near them (v. 9). They were entrusted the same responsibility as that given to the Twelve. It is implied that they were also given the *du, namij* and *evxousi*, a necessary to carry out their task (cf. v. 19). Listening to them as representatives of Jesus means listening to Jesus himself. On the other hand, rejection of them is also rejection of him who sent them, and in the highest instance also rejection of the Father who sent the Son (v. 16).

As in the case of the mission of the Twelve, there is no account about the course of their campaign.<sup>317</sup> Luke does not tell the duration of their mission, but in due course, they again joined Jesus. Probably, the time and place were they would again link up with him was prearranged. It can be deduced from their report that their task was successfully accomplished. When they returned, they joyfully (*meta. caraj*) reported to Jesus saying that even the demons submitted to them in Jesus' name (v. 17). Evidently, they did not experience too many rejections so that they were happy as they reported in. It could be conjectured that many people received their message about the Kingdom of God and that many sick were healed. It may be that that good feeling was intensified when they saw people suffering from various diseases being healed through their ministry. Although exorcism is not mentioned in their commissioning, the *evxousi*, a given to them by Jesus included the power to exorcise.<sup>318</sup> This authority, as explained later by Jesus (v. 19), can overcome all the power of the enemy. Their experience might have caused great excitement on their part because it was their first time to do such task and much more with phenomenal success. Furthermore, the power over evil spirits might not have been expected, and it was a "joyful extra" for them.

Jesus responded to the joyful report of the missionaries by saying, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" Cv. 17; cf. jn

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Twelve does not constitute a doublet (W. Liefeld, Lk, EBC, p. 303) and in A. Plummer's phrase, "will not bear criticism." Lk, ICC, p. 270.

<sup>317</sup> This is understandable because the Gospel writers were more interested to write about the things Jesus said and did than what the disciples did when they were not in his company.

<sup>318</sup> A. Plummer thinks that the seventy-two were especially elated at possessing the power to exorcise. Lk, ICC, p. 277.

12:31). This saying is understood as a vision<sup>319</sup> referring to Satan's fall which Jesus saw in his pre-existent life.<sup>320</sup> However, it is more likely that it is symbolical.<sup>321</sup> Heaven here stands for the height of power<sup>322</sup> (cf. Is 14:12; Lam 2:1). In the mission of the seventy-two, the forces of evil were shaken, symbolizing the defeat of Satan himself. It was a sign that Satan's throne was toppling down. Jesus saw that the prince of the demons suffered a notable defeat because his minions were subjected to his authority. Satan's might was already broken when Jesus rejected the temptation of the devil in the wilderness. This victory over the demonic forces continued throughout his public ministry which was manifested in casting out evil spirits and other manifestations of his power. That Satan had already lost his exalted position of power is further revealed in the grand offensive of the seventy- two against the demonic power in the name of Jesus.

## 2. Post-Resurrection Healing Ministry

The healing activity of the disciples did not stop after they have reported to Jesus the result of their first mission to preach and to heal. Evidently, Jesus intended that their ministry should be continued. It could be attested that even when Jesus was still with them, they did the task entrusted to them by their Master. Their unsuccessful attempt to exorcise a spirit from a boy, at the time when Jesus was transfigured on a mountain (Mk 9:1-4, 18,28), is an evidence of their ongoing healing ministry. Later, as reported in the book of Acts, their obedience to their commission<sup>323</sup> is shown in their boldness to preach and heal. Luke records how well the apostles after the Ascension of Jesus carried on the healing

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<sup>319</sup> J. M. Creed, Lk, p. 147; R. Bultmann, **Geschichte**, pp. 113,174; W. Grundmann, Lk, THNT, p. 212. H. Marshall thinks Jesus was speaking metaphorically of his vision of the spiritual defeat of Satan which took place at the cross and the exorcisms. Lk, NBC, p. 905. See W. C. Kümmel, **Verheißung und Erfüllung**, pp. 106f.

<sup>320</sup> Cf. G. Kittel, "le, gw, ktl." TWNT IV.133, n. 220. In this view, the purpose of the saying is to warn the messengers not to be proud of their achievements, for it would remind them that even Satan fell. L. Morris, Lk, TNTC, p. 185. The disciples should beware of spiritual pride. Gregory the Great, Moral. xxiii.6, Migne, lxxii.259.

<sup>321</sup> J. Schmid, Lk, RNT, p. 187. Cf. H. Marshall, Lk, NIGTC, p. 428. It is "a symbolic way of telling the disciples of the effect of their mission." C. Stuhlmüller, Lk, JBC, p. 143.

<sup>322</sup> So A. Plummer, Lk, ICC, p. 279. Satan's defeat was expected by the rabbis in the last times when the Messiah comes. Strack-Billerbeck, KNTTM, 11.2, 167f.

<sup>323</sup> Cf. the disciples' commission in the appendix to Mark's Gospel (16:1Sff.).

ministry in the power of the Spirit. The accounts affirm that the ministry Jesus did was continued by his followers.

In the sermon of Peter at Pentecost, he mentioned that God did mighty works (*du, namij*), wonders (*te, rata*) and signs (*shmeia*) through Jesus of Nazareth (2:22). The same words *te, rata* and *shmeia*<sup>324</sup> were used to describe the mighty works wrought by the apostles (2:43). The former are miraculous deeds which evoke awe and the latter are miracles which point to a divine truth.<sup>325</sup> These “wonders and signs” were not momentary phenomena but continued to happen during the apostolic days,<sup>326</sup> as shown by Luke’s accounts of the zealous missionary work of the disciples of Jesus. The ministry of healing played a very important role in the growth of the early church. The effectiveness of the apostles’ preaching was greatly aided by their healings. In the midst of persecution, the early believers not only prayed for boldness to speak God’s word but also petitioned for supernatural ability to heal and to continually perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of Jesus (4:29f.).

Despite the command from the religious authorities not to further speak and teach in the name of Jesus, the apostles remained faithful in obeying God rather than man (4:18ff.). In defiance of the Sanhedrin’s orders, they continued to carry on their ministry among the people, preaching and performing “many miraculous signs and wonders among them” (5:12). Their powerful healing ministry drew many people in Jerusalem and from surrounding towns and helped to spread their message outside the city. Crowds brought their sick and those tormented by evil spirits and were all healed (5:15f.). Peter, and later Paul, seem to have been especially used of God in the ministry of healing. Although very little is written on the work of the other followers of Jesus, it is safe to assume that they, too, had the similar ministry

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<sup>324</sup> Cf. the phraseology of Joel’s prophecy (2:30; Ac 2:19). It seems that the phrase suggests the presence of God with his people. In the ministry of Jesus, it is also shown that God was with him. R. Longenecker, *Ac*, EBC, p. 290. These signs and wonders authenticated the veracity of the apostles (cf. 2 Cor 12:12; Rom 15:18-19; Heb 2:3-4).

<sup>325</sup> S. Toussaint, *Ac*, BKC, p. 360. Just as the mighty works of Jesus were “signs” of the Kingdom of God, the miracles which the apostles did partook of the same character. F. F. Bruce, *Ac*, NICNT, p. 80. Cf. the use of *shmeia* in the Gospel of John (e.g. 2:11). *Te, rata* and *shmeia* are not a classification of phenomena but are synonyms which express different aspects of the same facts. The first word expresses the marvel of it as a portent, while the second points to its character as a token or note of something beyond itself. E. H. Plumptre, *Ac*, ECWB, p. 11.

<sup>326</sup> Cf. the use of the imperfect tense of *ginomai* (2:43).



which contributed to the rapid spread of the Gospel. Most probably, the other apostles were also zealously engaged in preaching about Jesus and healing in his name.

Before his ascension, the resurrected Lord instructed the disciples to stay in Jerusalem and to wait until they are clothed with power from on high (Lk 24:49; Cf. Ac 1:8). At Pentecost, the promise of receiving power was fulfilled. It was then that they resumed their ministry among the people. In Ac 3:1-10,<sup>327</sup> Luke gives a fuller account of one of the “wonders and signs” mentioned in 2:43. Luke singles this out as one of special importance probably because it received considerable publicity and resulted to a clash with the authorities. The story begins with a statement that Peter and John went up to the temple at the time of prayer at three o’clock in the afternoon (th.n evnath,n).<sup>328</sup> At the same time, a man lame from birth<sup>329</sup> was being carried by his friends in order that he might be laid down to beg at Gate Beautiful.<sup>330</sup> The description of the man crippled from birth and who was more than forty years old (4:22) emphasizes his hopeless condition. He had never walked, and all his life he had been dependent on others to carry him. Since he could pursue no normal occupation, he was forced to beg for his livelihood. Everyday, he was brought to the temple

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<sup>327</sup> The healing story which took place in the context of the visit to the temple mentioned in 2:43 has similarities to those related in the Gospels and is related with a fair amount of detail. It expresses the continuity of Jesus’ ministry in the witness of the early church. H. Marshall, *Ac*, TNTC, p. 86.

<sup>328</sup> Lit. “at the ninth hour.” The third, the sixth, and the ninth hours of each day were fixed as times for prayer in the traditions of later Judaism. Cf. Strack-Billerbeck who has early morning, ninth hour and sunset as stated time for prayer (KNTTM, II.696ff.). The ninth hour was the hour of evening sacrifice (Ant XIV.iv.3). Cf. E. Schürer, **History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus**. Eng. tr. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1892-1901), II.290f.

<sup>329</sup> Cwlo.j evk koili,aj mhtro.j avvtou, lit. “crippled from his mother’s womb.” Luke seems to be interested in recording the duration of the illness of persons healed (cf. Lk 13:16; Ac 9:33; 14:8). The fact that the man had been lame from birth underlines the wonder of the healing which was about to be performed.

<sup>330</sup> Many scholars think that this was the Nicanor Gate which was described by Josephus as overlaid with Corinthian bronze and “far exceeded in value those plated with silver and set in gold” (War V.201). The Mishnah (Middoth 1.3,4; 2.3) favors identifying this gate with the Beautiful Gate. Cf. J. Jeremias, “qu,ra,” TWNT 111.173, n. 5; G. Schrenk, “i`ero.j, ktl.” TWNT 111.235. G. Schneider, *Ac*, HTKNT, 1.300; F. F. Bruce, *Ac*, NICNT, p. 83; E. Stauffer, “Das Tor des Nikanor,” ZNW 44 (1952-53): 44ff. Almsgiving was regarded particularly meritorious in Judaism (cf. Strack-Billerbeck, KNTTM, 1.387-88), and a beggar who placed himself in a spot where pious Jews passed on their way to worship had a good chance of finding benefactors.

gates which normally were thronged with the blind, lame, and other mendicants.

To the lame beggar, all worshippers in the temple were potential benefactors. So when he saw Peter and John, he asked alms of them as he would of any who came toward him. Responding to the beggar's request for money, the two apostles fixed their eyes on him and asked him to look at them. The purpose of directing his attention to them is probably "to assist his powers of concentration in responding to a challenge which involved an act of will on his part."<sup>331</sup> But when the beggar looked up expectantly, astonishingly he heard the words: "Silver and gold I do not have,<sup>332</sup> but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk"<sup>333</sup> (v. 6). Peter's reply, "Silver and gold I do not have" would initially disappoint his hopes, but it was right away followed by an offer of something far more wonderful and valuable than the biggest amount of alms given to him by a generous passerby.<sup>334</sup> The offer went to the root of his problem, i.e. his need of healing, which was given by commanding him to walk.

The command to walk was combined with a gesture to help the lame man to be on his feet. Peter took him by the right hand and helped him up.<sup>335</sup> As a medical historian, Luke has a characteristic of precisely describing the healing process. The feet (*ba,sei,j*) and the ankles (*sfudra,*) of the man immediately

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<sup>331</sup> D. Guthrie, **Apostles**, p. 36. Cf. R. Pesch who says it was to win his trust (Ac, EKKNT, 1.138). Most likely the beggar's attention was caught by other people who were going to the temple as he searched for a responsive person to his call for alms. He had to look at them so that he might read in their pitying looks the wish to heal and the consciousness of power to carry the wish into effect. E. H. Plumptre, Ac, ECWB, p. 16.

<sup>332</sup> Although the apostles were treasurers and stewards of the communal property committed to their charge by the generous donors among the early believers (cf. 2:45; 4:34,35), Peter was not in a position to give alms. Probably, their money was for the benefit of members of their group of which Peter was a leader, or that they had no silver or gold with them at the time. Cf. G. Schille, Ac, THNT, pp. 124f.

<sup>333</sup> The reading *peripa,tei* is better attested externally (R B D, etc.). The variant reading *ev,geire kai. peripa,tei* appears widely in many sources (A C E P, etc. and in many church fathers). See Aland-Nestle, **Novum Testamentum Graece** 26. Aufl.

<sup>334</sup> F. F. Bruce, Ac, NLCNT, p. 82. Cf. R. Pesch, Ac, EKKNT, 1.138; G. Schneider: "Er erhält mehr als 'etwas': vollständige Heilung." Ac, HTKNT, 1.301.

<sup>335</sup> It is not indicated that the touch of Peter made the transference of power possible as pointed out by G. Schille (Ac, THNT, p. 125) and D. E. Haenchen. Ac, KKNT, p. 161.

became strong (evsterew, qhsan).<sup>336</sup> The man who had never been able to stand and walk was instantly healed. Feeling a strange strength in his legs and feet, he jumped up, stood and walked. For the first time, he enjoyed independence of movement and in his sheer joy, he joined Peter and John in entering the temple,<sup>337</sup> “walking and leaping and praising God” (RSV). As in Jesus’ lifetime, so now Isaiah’s prophecy was being fulfilled: “Then will the lame leap like a deer” (35:6a).

The man’s exuberant joy expressed in leaping and praising God in thankfulness for what had happened to him attracted the temple crowds’ attention. The temple courts must have echoed his shouts of grateful praise. At this hour of evening sacrifice, the temple would be naturally filled with worshippers, who, upon seeing the healed man were “filled with wonder and amazement (evplh, sqhsan qa, mbouj kai. evkta, sewj)<sup>338</sup> at what had happened to him.” After years of begging, the once lame man was a familiar sight at the Beautiful Gate, and therefore, was readily recognized by the crowds. Their reaction suggests that they were nonplussed to explain the phenomenon, for they knew that there was nothing fraudulent about his lameness. Later, even the religious leaders acknowledged the healing as a notable sign (4:16). They were also astonished at the apostles who had apparently been responsible for the healing (v. 12). Peter and John were men of the sea from the despised northern province of Galilee and had none of the culture of the city men. Yet they had performed a notable miracle. Peter then took the opportunity of preaching to these amazed crowds which gathered in the place called Solomon’s Colonnade. The starting point of his message was the miraculous healing of the lame man.

Peter’s ministry was not confined in Jerusalem. He is described as doing itinerant work among the believers outside the

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<sup>336</sup> On the medical nature of the author’s vocabulary in this text, see W. K. Hobbart, **The Medical Language of St. Luke** (Dublin: University Press, 1882), pp. 34ff. Cf. R. Pesch, Ac, EKKNT, I. 139. The terms *ba*, *seij*, *sfudra*, and *evsterew*, *qhsan* are more or less technical. The last word which is rendered “made or become strong,” “received strength,” lit. means “were consolidated, the flaccid tissues and muscles being rendered firm and vigorous.” E. H. Plumptre, Ac, ECWB, p. 17.

<sup>337</sup> Probably from the outer court (Court of the Gentiles) into one of the inner courts (Court of the Women).

<sup>338</sup> The description of wonder and amazement is a stereotyped feature at the end of a miracle story (e.g. Lk 4:36; 5:9,26; 7:16). Cf. G. Schneider, Ac, HTKNT, 1.302. But such reaction would precisely be expected.

city (9:32ff.).<sup>339</sup> He was not only engaged in teaching those who believed in Jesus but his activity also included evangelism and healing. In the course of his travels, “he went to visit the saints in Lydda,”<sup>340</sup> located in the west coast of Palestine. There he found a paralytic named Aeneas who had been bedridden for eight years.<sup>341</sup> Although Aeneas is a Greek name, he was presumably a Jew who became a believer.<sup>342</sup> His healing through Peter was the most notable event that happened in Lydda.

This second healing of a cripple by Peter was performed with utmost simplicity. He made an announcement and gave a command to Aeneas. Peter said to the man, “Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and take care of your mat” (v. 34). *vIatai, se vIhsouj Cristo, j* is in the present tense and is to be understood as an aoristic present meaning “this moment Jesus Christ heals you.”<sup>343</sup> The command portion of Peter’s word to Aeneas is understood in two possible ways. The expression *strwson seautw* is usually employed with the noun *kli,nh* (“bed,” “couch,” “cot,” “sickbed”). Hence the translation “make your bed” (RSV) or “take care of your mat.” This suggests tidying it up after sleep. However, the Greek phrase more naturally means preparing a bed in order to lie on it. It may then be translated, “set the couch” (used for reclining at table), i.e. “get yourself something to eat.”<sup>344</sup> This latter interpretation agrees with the interest shown elsewhere by the evangelists in nourishment for convalescents (cf. Mk 5:43; Lk 8:55; Ac 9:19a). In either case, the actions called for would indicate the reality of the cure.

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<sup>339</sup> Cf. the visit of Peter and John in Samaria (8:14ff.). It is probable that Peter in his itinerant ministry was following up the evangelism done by Philip in this area.

<sup>340</sup> The OT Lod (1 Chr 8:12; Ezr 2:33; Neh 7:37; 11:35). Josephus describes Lydda as “a village that was in size not inferior to a city” (Ant XIV.208). It is probable that the group of believers at Lydda had its nucleus in some who were originally at Pentecost and in refuge from the recent persecution in Jerusalem. Philip must have had contributed to its growth (cf. 8:40).

<sup>341</sup> *vEx evtwn ovktw* be translated “since eight years old,” but the usual interpretation is more likely.

<sup>342</sup> R. Pesch, Ac, EKKNT, 1.318. Cf. O. Bauernfeind who thinks that Aeneas was not yet a believer before he was healed. He said that the use of the name of Jesus in the act of healing was at the same time a preaching to Aeneas. Ac, THNT, p. 138.

<sup>343</sup> R. Longenecker, Ac, EBC, p. 181. Cf. N. J. Cadbury who suggests that the verb might be accented *iva, tai* meaning “has healed.” “A Possible Perfect in Ac 9:34,” ITS 49 (1948): 57f.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid. Cf. H. Conzelmann, Ac, HNT, p. 68; F. F. Bruce, Ac, NICNT, p. 211; H. Marshall, Ac, TNTC, pp. 178f.

Like the other healing stories in Acts, the cure was instant. Aeneas immediately got up. The news about his healing spread and created a stir not only among the residents of Lydda but also throughout the coastal Plain of Sharon. Many of the people<sup>345</sup> in that area saw Aeneas, no longer bedridden but healed of his long-standing illness. The word of Luke suggests that considerable number of people accepted the good news preached by Peter and "turned to the Lord."<sup>346</sup> As in so many other instances, the miraculous healing of Aeneas was an occasion for many to turn to the Lord. Many came to faith in Jesus Christ.

Another important incident which happened in the itinerant ministry of Peter took place in Joppa,<sup>347</sup> which is about 19 kilometers from Lydda. In Joppa, there was a group of believers<sup>348</sup> in Jesus, including a disciple (magh, tria)<sup>349</sup> named Tabitha (Aramaic) which means Dorcas or Gazelle (9:36-43). She is described as "full of good works and acts of charity"<sup>350</sup> (RSV). These were highly esteemed Jewish virtues. Many in the place were grateful to her for her charitable works. She fell sick, and while Peter was at Lydda, this well-beloved woman of the community died. Following the Jewish custom of purification of the dead (cf. M. Shabbath 23.5), her friends washed her body, but instead of anointing it for burial, they laid her in an upper room.<sup>351</sup> These actions may suggest that the friends had some hopes that Tabitha might be raised from the dead.<sup>352</sup> Most likely, they had

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<sup>345</sup> Pa, ntej oi` katoikountej is hyperbolic and is Luke's way of indicating a large number which probably included non-Jews, since the Plain of Sharon was semi-Gentile region.

<sup>346</sup> vEpe, streyan evpi. to.n ku, rion appears three times in Acts (9:35; 11:21; 15:19) to refer to the action of the people who were converted to the Christian faith. Cf. G. Schille, Ac, THNT, p. 238. D. E. Haenchen says that those who "turned to the Lord" were Jews because for the Gentiles the expression would be "turned to God." Ac, KKNT, p. 285f.

<sup>347</sup> The OT name of the place appears in 2 Chr 2:16; Ezr 3:7; Jon 1:3; Josh 19:46.

<sup>348</sup> The beginning of the group of believers in Joppa may be of similar nature with the one in Lydda.

<sup>349</sup> This feminine form of maghth, j appears only here (9:36). It is a Hellenistic word. G. Schille, Ac, THNT, p. 239.

<sup>350</sup> Plh, rhj ev, rgwn avgatwn is a form of expression which is characteristic of Luke. Cf. "full of leprosy" (Lk 5:12); "full of grace" and "full of faith" (Ac 6:5,8).

<sup>351</sup> Cf. the story of the son of the widow in Zarephath (1 Ki 17:19) and the Shunammite's son (2 Ki 4:10,21). Both were laid in upper rooms after they died and later were restored to life.

<sup>352</sup> Cf. R. Pesch, Ac, EKKNT, 1.323. So far as the records of Acts declare, no one had been restored to life through the apostles at this point. Their faith was so great that they expected the Lord to raise up Tabitha through Peter.

heard about Peter's healing of Aeneas and they must have had considerable faith even to consider that the apostle could help in their situation.

Since Lydda was not far from Joppa, they sent two men to urge Peter to come at once. Peter should not delay because interment would have come, as the matter of course, the next day. Although Luke does not mention what the friends of Tabitha expected from Peter, apparently they wanted him to restore her to life. When Peter arrived, he was taken to the upper room where the body of Dorcas was laid. The mourners, especially the group of widows, stood around him, weeping and showing him the coats (citwnaj) and garments (i`ma,tia) which Dorcas had made.<sup>353</sup> Like in the raising of Jairus' daughter (Mk 5:40), the mourners were sent out of the room. Peter needed silence and solitude in communion with God as he knelt and prayed (cf. 2 Ki 4:33).

After invoking God's power, Peter called to the dead woman, "Tabitha, get up"<sup>354</sup> (avna,sthqi). This phrase in Aramaic would be "Tabitha qumi," which differed in only one letter from Jesus' command to the daughter of Jairus, "Talitha qumi" (Mk 5:41). The dead woman responded by opening her eyes and sitting up. Peter took her by the hand and helped her to stand.<sup>355</sup> He did not touch the body until God restored it to life, probably to avoid ceremonial defilement (cf. Lv 21:1; Nu 5:2; 9:6-10; 19:11). Then Peter summoned the saints and the widows and presented Tabitha to them alive. A great joy and amazement on the part of the believers would have followed this most remarkable event that had yet happened in the early church. The miracle, like the previous one, had far-reaching results. The news of the restoration to life of Tabitha became widely known and led many to believe in the Lord (cf. 2:43,47; 4:4; 5:12,13; 8:6; 9:33-35). Many inhabitants of Joppa consequently joined the group of believers.

### 3. Signs and Wonders by Stephen and Philip

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<sup>353</sup> The middle voice *evpideiknu,menai* indicated that these were the clothes they were actually wearing. F. F. Bruce, Ac, NLCNT, p. 212. Most probably, the widows were the principal recipients of Dorcas' charity. It is possible that the demonstration was meant to encourage Peter to work a miracle. H. Marshall, Ac, TNTC, p. 180.

<sup>354</sup> The summon to get up implied the internal assurance that the prayer had been answered. E. H. Plumptre, Ac, ECWB, p. 65.

<sup>355</sup> P. Fiebig says that in the NT times, the resurrection of the dead was also ascribed to the rabbis. **Jüd. Wundergeschichten**, p. 36f. References to resurrection of the dead are also found in pagan literature. See Vita Apollonius IV. 45; Rudolf Herzog, **Die Wunderheilungen von Epidauros** (Leipzig: Dieterich, 1931), p. 142.

It is significant to note that the power to heal is not found exclusively in the hands of the apostles. As mentioned above, in the Gospel of Luke, the seventy-two are described to have been empowered to exercise and heal sick people. In Acts, Luke further gives the information that aside from the apostles, certain Christ-believing men were engaged not only in preaching but also in healing. Ananias was one of them who was used of God in the ministry of healing (9:10-18). Although it was only the healing of Paul's blindness by him that is mentioned in Luke's accounts, it could be inferred that he did other healings.<sup>356</sup> It is also right to conclude that other spiritually-gifted believers whose names do not appear in the book of Acts, were involved in the work of healing in the early church. Luke mentions only few who performed signs and wonders but who may be considered as representatives of a number of unnamed disciples through whom the mighty works of the Lord were manifested.

Two disciples are among those featured as specially used as instruments of God's powerful work in the early stages of the church's life. Stephen and Philip were two of the seven men chosen to serve tables, but were also equipped to do the task entrusted to the apostles. Their appointment resulted from a problem that arose in the church at Jerusalem<sup>357</sup> (6:1ff.)

The community of believers, which at this stage was rapidly increasing in number, looked after the welfare of the poor among them, especially the widows.<sup>358</sup> It appeared that the widows of the

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<sup>356</sup> It is to be noted that the records in Acts are not at all exhaustive. Even the specific works of many of the apostles are not featured. The author might have selected and written only the significant incidents of which he had actually witnessed or gathered from his informants.

<sup>357</sup> The early church was composed of Palestinian and Grecian Jews. Most likely, Gentile proselytes also formed part of the latter group, which spoke Greek. On account of their language, separate meetings for the Hellenists were held. The problem in the early church might not only concern the issue of food distribution. W. Manson thinks of the possibility that "the grievance in question was only the symptom of a larger tension between the two groups arising from broad differences of outlook and sympathy." **The Epistles to the Hebrews** (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1951), pp. 27f. Cf. F. F. Bruce, *Ac, NLCNT*, p. 128.

<sup>358</sup> The system of distributing food and supplies to the poor did not originate from the Christian community in Jerusalem. The Jews had a form of social service which catered to the wandering pauper and those living in Jerusalem itself. J. Jeremias, **Jerusalem**, pp. 126.-34. In the early Christian community, the expression of spiritual unity was done through communal sharing of possessions and charitable acts (cf. 2:44-45; 4:32-5:11). The Hellenistic widows of pious Jews of the diaspora who had moved to Jerusalem in their later years in order to be buried near it, apparently had no relatives near at

Greek-speaking Jews “were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food” (v. 1). The Twelve, who had hitherto looked after this matter<sup>359</sup> (4:35), responded to the complaint of the Hellenists by making a proposal of selecting seven men<sup>360</sup> who would take over the task of serving tables (*diakonein trape, xaij*)<sup>361</sup> By giving up this responsibility, the apostles would be free to devote their time and energy undistracted in their primary duty, namely, prayer and the ministry of the word of God (vv. 2,4). They recognized that the combined task of teaching and giving relief to the poor was at that early stage of the church too much for them.

The apostles entrusted to the community<sup>362</sup> the selection of the seven men, who would be actively involved for the care of the poor. It is suggested that these men who would be elected must be “full of the Spirit and wisdom.” They were to be distinguished by their possession of wisdom inspired by the Spirit which was necessary in administering and handling of the church’s property and finances. The apostolic suggestion gained the approval of the church and the seven men were duly selected. They chose Stephen, Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas. Their Greek names<sup>363</sup> may suggest that they all belonged to the Hellenistic section of the church which had raised the original complaint. If this was the case, it further suggests that the Hellenistic section had the majority, or that the Aramaic section generously voted for them to give them their own special representatives.<sup>364</sup> These seven men were then brought into the

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hand to support them. R. Longenecker, Ac, EBC, p. 330. Cf. G. Schille, Ac, THNT, p. 169; D. E. Haenchen, Ac, KKNT, p. 205.

<sup>359</sup> Cf. G. Schneider who thinks that the Twelve were not in charge of the food distribution and would not undertake the task after hearing the complaints of the Hellenistic widows. Ac, HTKNT, 1.425.

<sup>360</sup> The appointment of seven men may have its background in the tradition of choosing seven respected men in Jewish community for particular duties in official council. Strack-Billerbeck, KNTTM 11.641; Cf. G. Schille, Ac, THNT, p. 170.

<sup>361</sup> *Tra, mexa* may mean table for serving food or money table, i.e. bank (Lk 19:23). It is likely that it is used here to refer to the place where funds and supplies were administered for the poor and widows.

<sup>362</sup> It is not clear whether *evx u`mon* (“from among you”) refers to the whole church or only to its Greek-speaking segment. It may refer to the Hellenists alone as reflected in the names of those chosen.

<sup>363</sup> Although Greek names like Andrew and Philip were used by Palestinian Jews, apart from Philip in the list, the others were unlikely names of the Aramaic-speaking Jews. H. Marshall, Ac, TNTC, p. 127.

<sup>364</sup> E. H. Plumptre, Ac, ECWB, p. 34.



presence of the apostles who installed them into their office by prayer and the laying on of hands.<sup>365</sup>

The Seven are traditionally called "deacons," but the text does not directly call them by the ecclesiastical title *dia, konoī*.<sup>366</sup> Yet it appears that the ministry to which they were commissioned was functionally equivalent to what Paul described in the title *dia, konoj* (cf. 1 Tim 3:8-13). On account of their function, it might be better to describe the seven men as "almoners."<sup>367</sup> At any rate, their position was temporary, and because of the communal nature of the church at Jerusalem, was created for the purpose of meeting a specific need. Of these seven men appointed that day, only Stephen and Philip are further mentioned in the following episodes. Except for Nicolas who is called a proselyte<sup>368</sup> from Antioch, nothing else is said about Procorus, Nicanor, Timon and Parmenas. Again, a conjecture that these five men did also a similar ministry which the other two did, though it might not be as extensive, may here be justified.

While the seven men were assigned to serve tables, it is plain that their activity was by no means confined to dispensing goods to the needy. No doubt they were regarded as leaders of the Hellenistic section within the church. The sequel shows at least for Stephen and Philip that God had designed a wider ministry for them. The details of the activities of the two proves that they were well equipped for other forms of service such as preaching, evangelism and healing.<sup>369</sup> Stephen and Philip were said to be among the Seventy-two whom Jesus sent into every city and village for a missionary task (Lk 10:1ff.). This probability is based on Philip's choice of the region where he later went and on

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<sup>365</sup> L. Morris thinks that it was the whole congregation which laid hands on the Seven. **Ministers of God** (London: Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1964), pp. 59f., 88. In any case, there is no thought of "apostolic succession." Cf. the appointment of Joshua as successor of Moses (Nu 27:15-23). Cf. also the admission of members to the Sanhedrin which according to the Mishnah is done by the imposition of hands (Sanhedrin iv. 4).

<sup>366</sup> Although the cognate noun *diakoni, a* (v. 1; "distribution"; cf. V. 4, "service") and the verb *diakone, w* (v. 2, "wait on," "serve") appear in the text, they were never called deacons. Later in 21:8 they are called "the Seven." Cf. C. S. C. Williams, Ac, BNTC, pp. 96f.; O. Bauernfeind, Ac, THNT, pp. 99f.

<sup>367</sup> F. F. Bruce, Ac, NICNT, p. 130.

<sup>368</sup> Nicolas was a Gentile convert to Judaism and later to Christianity. His being chosen as one of the Seven implies that he was a respectable member of the Jerusalem church.

<sup>369</sup> The activities of Stephen and Philip as described by Luke show that they "were well equipped for other forms of service - Stephen for the defence of the faith and Philip for the work of evangelism." F. F. Bruce, Ac, NLCNT, p. 131.

the general tendency of Stephen's speech<sup>370</sup> (7:2ff.). This view, however, lacks sufficient evidence and the grounds cited may be dismissed as mere coincidence.

Stephen, who heads the list, possessed excellent spiritual qualities of a minister of God. Aside from the specific qualification required of the seven men (6:3), he is further described as *avnh.r plh,rhj pi,stewj* "a man full of faith," 6:5), *plh,rhj ca,ritoj kai. duna,mewj* ("full of grace and power," 6:8). He was, therefore, filled with or controlled by five factors: *to. Pneuma a`gi,on* (the Holy Spirit), *sofi,a* (wisdom), *pi,stij* (faith), *ca,rij*<sup>371</sup> (grace) and *du,namij* (power). He was such a skilled debater that his opponents from the synagogue of the Freedmen "could not stand up against his wisdom and the Spirit by whom he spoke" (vv. 9,10; cf. Mt 10:19). Like Jesus and the apostles, Stephen was "full of grace and power" (cf. 4:33; Lk 2:40,52). *Du,namij* here means divine power expressed in mighty works.

Stephen was one of those chosen who were responsible for the daily ministrations to the poor and widows. But he also distinguished himself by the same kind of ministry of preaching and healing as the apostles. His preaching incurred general and fierce hostility and brought him into conflict with the Jews, and finally led to his martyrdom. His healing is briefly summarized in the statement that he "did great wonders and miraculous signs (*te,rata kai. shmeia mega,la*) among the people" (6:8). What Jesus and the apostles did were also done by Stephen. The words in verse 8 undoubtedly means that he healed sick people and exorcised evil spirits. It is not apparent whether the power to perform signs and wonders was already with Stephen before his appointment as one of the Seven. Some insist that it was after the imposition of apostolic hands that he was empowered to do such miracles.<sup>372</sup> It is possible, however, that these manifestations of divine power were already present with him even before his election.<sup>373</sup> It should be noted that he was "full of faith and of the Holy Spirit" before he was chosen for a special work.

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<sup>370</sup> See E. H. Plumptre, Ac, ECWB, p. 34.

<sup>371</sup> The word *ca,rij* is also used by Luke in characterizing Jesus (Lk 4:22) and the apostolic church (4:33). It connotes "spiritual charm" or "winsomeness." R. Longenecker, Ac, EBC, p. 334.

<sup>372</sup> So G. W. H. Lampe, **The Seal of the Spirit** (London: Longmans, Green, 1951), p. 74.

<sup>373</sup> So F. F. Bruce, Ac, NICNT, p. 133; R. Longenecker, Ac, EBC, p. 335.

On the day of Stephen's death, "a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem"<sup>374</sup> (8:1ff.). Saul, who later became Paul the apostle, played a prominent role in putting men and women in prison. The persecution led to the scattering of believers throughout Judea and Samaria. The diaspora of the early Christians became a significant step towards the fulfilment of the church's mission (cf. 1:8). Those who were driven from their homes proclaimed the good news wherever they went. As they moved to new areas, they drew positive response to their message as exemplified by the receptivity of the Samaritan people. One of them who decided to move out of Jerusalem was Philip.<sup>375</sup> He was one of the Seven and among those scattered whose work is described in later narratives of Acts as a powerful evangelist (cf. 8:4ff.; 21:8f.).

The persecution drove Philip from his work in Jerusalem and brought him to a city in Samaria (8:5ff.). It is not certain which city in Samaria is meant, but whatever be the identification, it has no significance for the story as such.<sup>376</sup> Philip's choice of the place may be due to his information about the readiness of the people of that particular city in receiving the gospel (cf. Jn 4:35). There he proclaimed<sup>377</sup> to them the Christ with remarkable results. In his preaching about Christ, Philip must have used Dt 18:15, 18-19 as a major testimonium passage, as Peter and Stephen had done. Their longing for the coming of a Mosaic Messiah led them to be open to Philip's message. The content of his message is further specified in verse 12 as the *basilei, a tou qeou* and the

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<sup>374</sup> Although Luke says *pa, ntej*, the context seems to show that the persecution was directed to the Greek-speaking Jews who would be more sympathetic with Stephen. Cf. G. Schneider, Ac, HTKNT, 1.479; O. Bauernfeind, Ac, THNT, p. 121; R. Pesch, Ac, EKKNT, 1.265. The church in Jerusalem which undoubtedly became more Jewish continued on with the leadership of the apostles.

<sup>375</sup> He may be the informant of Luke about the incidents in this section of Acts. Paul and his companions visited him at Caesarea on their way to Jerusalem (21:8). The coincidence of name with that of the apostle and with two of Herod's Sons suggests that Philip was a common name.

<sup>376</sup> The oldest MSS have *th.n po, lhn thj Eamarei, aj*, while some textual authorities omit the article. Thus, RSV, NIV and NEB render the phrase, "a city of Samaria." Suggested places are Sebaste (the renamed city of the OT Samaria), Schechem (a leading city during the Greek period, according to Josephus, Ant XI.340), Sychar (near Schechem and at times identified with Schechem), and Gitta (the birthplace of Simon Magus according to Justin Martyr (Apology 1.26)). Here, Luke was evidently not interested in citing a precise geographical identification. Cf. G. Schille, Ac, THNT, p. 201; G. Schneider, Ac, HTKNT, 1.487, n. 34.

<sup>377</sup> The tense of the verb *khru, saw* implies continued action which may have extended for over weeks or months.

ov,noma tou vIhsou Cristou. His preaching about the Messiah would have aroused the interest of his hearers because of their strong messianic expectation (cf. Jn 4:25). The other reason why they paid close attention to what Philip said was the miraculous signs they saw (v. 6). The signs were a major factor in leading many to Christ for they attracted and convinced the masses. Hearing the works of Philip and seeing the signs he performed aroused their great interest and led to their conversion.

In verse 7 the signs are clearly defined as exorcism and healing. Luke describes the healings which attended Philip's message: "With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed. It is evident that Philip had the same power as the apostles. Like Peter (5:16), he could drive out demons from their victims. The people could hear the loud cries<sup>378</sup> of the demoniacs when the evil spirits left them. They also witnessed how the people who were once paralyzed and lame became active and were enabled to walk. The ministry of Philip is marked with the kind of signs which had been described in the ministry of Jesus and the apostles. Luke summarizes the Samaritan's response to the work of Philip: "So there was great joy (pollh. cara.) in that city" (v. 8). Undoubtedly, that great rejoicing was brought about by the knowledge that the Messiah had indeed come and by the numerous exorcisms and healings.<sup>379</sup> One can imagine how the families and friends of the ex-demoniacs, former paralytics and cripples, as well as the victims and healed persons themselves were filled with great joy.

In that city of Samaria there was a man practicing sorcery (mageu, wn) named Simon<sup>380</sup> (vv. 9ff.). The inhabitants were used to give their attention to him and even exclaimed that he is h` du,namij tou qeou which is called Great. It is an explicit recognition that the source of Simon's power was the supreme God. His magic which appealed to all social strata of the Samaritan society, amazed the people for a long time to the extent

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<sup>378</sup> Cf. Mk 1:26; Lk 4:33,41; 9:39. The "great cries" of the demoniacs was partly of agony, and partly of exultation at deliverance. E. H. Plumptre, *Ac*, ECWB, p. 48.

<sup>379</sup> Cf. R. Pesch, *Ac*, EKKNT, 1.273.

<sup>380</sup> Simon Magus, as he is usually called, is identified in the Post-apostolic times as the father of the Gnostic heresies. Cf. Irenaeus (*Against Heresies*, 1.23); Hippolytus (*Refutation of all Heresies*, vi.2-15); Justin Martyr (*Apology* 1.26). Cf. G. Schneider, *Ac*, HTKNT, 1.486. But it may be a confusion of identity in later tradition. See H. J. Schoeps, **Theologie und Geschichte des Judentums** (Tubingen: Mohr, 1949), pp. 239ff.; F. J. Foakes Jackson, **Peter: Prince of Apostles** (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1927), pp. 165ff.; W. M. Meeks, "Simon Magus in Recent Research," *RSR* 3 (1977): 137-42.

that they followed him, accepting his own arrogant claims. They thought that there was a divine quality about his magic. But when Philip came and the people believed him, Simon apparently lost his adherents. Simon was impressed by Philip's work. Thus, when the people accepted the good news about the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, he, too, believed (*evpi, steusen*) and joined the multitude which was baptized by Philip<sup>381</sup> (vv. 12, 13).

As Simon followed Philip everywhere, he was astonished (*evxi, stato*) by the signs and great wonders performed by the messenger of God. But he seems to have regarded the mighty works as no more than superior displays of magic.<sup>382</sup> He had yet to learn that they are signs of a spiritual kingdom under the direction of God's Spirit. He continued to have a self-centered interest in the display of miraculous power. When Peter and John came to Samaria, they prayed for the believers "that they might receive the Holy Spirit."<sup>383</sup> Seeing that they received the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands by the apostles,<sup>384</sup> Simon offered money to buy<sup>385</sup> the power exercised by the men of God (vv. 18-19).

#### 4. Paul's Healing in His Missionary Work

Over half of Luke's narratives in Acts is about Paul and his missionary activities. The ministry of the apostle to the Gentiles, which is generally marked with success, included his concern for the physical well-being of man. He did not only preach the Gospel, but made it relevant to man's conditions.<sup>386</sup> This is well expressed in his healing activities. Like the twelve apostles, Stephen, and

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<sup>381</sup> The nature of Simon's belief is uncertain (cf. vv. 18ff.). His being baptized might be only a strategy to avoid a complete loss of adherents. His action may also be interpreted as a tacit recognition that the power operating through Philip was superior than his own. Cf. F. F. Bruce, *Ac*, NLCNT, p. 179. By joining the congregation of believers, he probably hoped to discover the secret of Philip's power. R. Pesch, *Ac*, EKKNT, 1.275.

<sup>382</sup> D. Guthrie, **Apostles**, p. 65. S. Toussaint draws a striking contrast and comparison between Simon and Philip. He says: "Both performed miracles, Simon by the demonic power and Philip by divine power. Simon boasted and welcomed acclaim to himself, but Philip proclaimed Christ. People were amazed at Simon's magic, but people were converted to Christ by Philip's ministry" *Ac*, BKC, p. 373.

<sup>383</sup> See Johannes Behm, **Die Handauflegung im Urchristentum** (Leipzig: Deichert, 1911), pp. 24ff.

<sup>384</sup> The actions of the apostles from Jerusalem and its aftermath confirmed Philip's ministry among the Samaritans. Cf. R. Pesch, *Ac*, EKKNT, 1.275.

<sup>385</sup> It is from here that the word "simony" got into the English vocabulary.

<sup>386</sup> Cf. the collections done by Paul for the needy brethren in Jerusalem (1 Cor 16:1).

Philip, Paul is described to have possessed and exercised the authority to heal and exorcise. But first, he himself was healed of blindness<sup>387</sup> three days after his encounter with the Lord on the road to Damascus (9:18). His sight was completely restored when Ananias laid his hands on him. Later he was stoned, dragged out of the city of Lystra and left for dead<sup>388</sup> (14:19f.). His rapid recovery is expressed in the action of his getting up and going back into the city. In the last chapter of Acts, he was described as having been miraculously saved from the bite of a poisonous viper<sup>389</sup> (ev, cidna, 28:3ff.). Seeing that he was bitten by the snake, the Maltese who knew the deadly character of the creature, thought that Paul must be a murderer, who had escaped from the sea but Justice (h` di, kn)<sup>390</sup> had caught up with him (v. 4). After watching for some time and saw that nothing happened to him, they quickly changed their minds and superstitiously said that the apostle must be a god (qeo, j). This incident made a deep impression on the inhabitants of the island.

The primary evidences of Paul's healing activities are found in his three earliest letters to different congregations. Writing to the Corinthians, who were in conflict with him on many subjects, he made clear the things that mark a true apostle (2 Cor 12:12). These are signs (shmeia), wonders (te, rata), and mighty works (duna, meij) which Paul performed among the Corinthians with

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<sup>387</sup> Something like scales (lepi, dej) fell from his eyes. The same word lepi, j is used for that which covered Tobit's eyes and blinded him (Tob 3:17; 11:13).

<sup>388</sup> Paul was probably unconscious and at death's door (cf. 2 Cor 13:2,4). Cf. the reference to Paul's stoning in 2 Cor 11:25 and 2 Tim 3:11.

<sup>389</sup> This dramatic incident related by Luke has raised some questions concerning its veracity. It has been found out that there are no poisonous snakes in Malta today. However, one cannot use the modern ecology of the island as a guide to ancient conditions. W. M. Ramsay rightly noted that "such changes are natural and probable in a small island populous and long civilized." **St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen** (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1920), p. 343. Ramsay also says, referring to Luke, "A trained medical man in ancient times was usually a good authority about serpents, to which great respect was paid in ancient medicine and custom." **Luke the Physician** (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1908), p. 63f. Moreover, the natives "would not have thought the snake was poisonous if there were no poisonous snakes on the island." H. Marshall, Ac, TNTC, p. 416. Cf. O. Bauernfeind, Ac, THNT, p. 277. For other references to the power over snakes see H. van der Loos, **Miracles**, pp. 224ff.

<sup>390</sup> It refers to the Greek goddess of justice and vengeance (G. Schneider, Ac, HTKNT, 11.402), but it is possible that the people of the island referred to a corresponding deity of their own. H. Marshall, Ac, TNTC, p. 416.

great perseverance.<sup>391</sup> There is essential agreement among scholars that these refer to the healings and probably exorcisms that Paul did in Corinth. Paul knew that even his enemies there could not deny their occurrence. To the Galatians who were turning away from his teachings, he writes, "Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?" (3:5). In his letter to the Romans, Paul writes about what Christ has accomplished through him in his ministry among the Gentiles which was done "by the power of signs and wonder through the power of the Holy Spirit" (15:18f.). The three references are strong testimonials of Paul to prove that his ministry was accompanied by signs, wonders, and mighty works.

As an apostle of Christ, Paul received not only the authority to proclaim the Kingdom but also the ability to heal.<sup>392</sup> The secondary evidences in Acts include a number of summarized statements of his healings and specific cases of persons healed by him. At Iconium, Paul together with Barnabas had effectively preached the Gospel, leading a great number of Jews and Gentiles to believe (14:1ff.). On account of the unbelieving Jews who tried to poison the minds of the Gentiles against the brethren, the two missionaries had to spend considerable time there. They continued to speak boldly for the Lord, "who bore witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands" (v. 3, RSV). The Lord enabled Paul and Barnabas to perform signs and wonders at Iconium, which undoubtedly refer to miraculous healings of diverse diseases and probably also to exorcisms. When Paul, Barnabas, and some believers from Antioch were appointed to go to Jerusalem to settle the question of circumcision, the two missionaries reported to the apostles, elders, and the church "everything God had done through them" (15:1ff.). Luke especially mentions that Paul and Barnabas related to the Council at Jerusalem the *shmeia* and *te, rata* which God had done through them among the Gentiles (v. 12). With this report is an implication that the miraculous signs and wonders were not only done in Iconium but also in other places where they had preached.

The most striking statement about Paul's healing ministry is in chapter 19. While at Ephesus, "God did extraordinary miracles

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<sup>391</sup> The verse implies clearly that other apostles of Christ did similar mighty works. F. Filson, 2 Cor, 1B, 10.411. The three Greek words *shmeion*, *te, raj*, and *du, nami j* were used often in the Gospels and Acts to refer to the miracles done by Jesus and his apostles, very often miracles of healing.

<sup>392</sup> O. Betz & W. Grimm, **Wunder Jesu**, p. 107.

by the hands of Paul<sup>393</sup> (v. 11, RSV). Finally, in the last chapter of Acts, it is pointed out that many in the island of Malta were cured through him (28:9).

The narratives in Acts describe specific cases of Paul's healing activities).<sup>394</sup> Parallel with the incident at the Beautiful Gate where Peter and John healed a lame man, is the story of Paul's healing of a helpless cripple at Lystra (14:8-10). Apparently, there was no Jewish synagogue in Lystra where Paul could preach. Probably, he did his preaching in a public place where crowds gathered. Among the people who were listening to him was "a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from birth and had never walked."<sup>395</sup> The incurable nature of his lameness is emphasized by this threefold description of his hopeless condition. He was presumably a beggar, whose infirmity had been lifelong. This man listened attentively to the words of Paul about the good news. The apostle took notice of the man, looked directly at him, and recognized that he had faith to be cured.<sup>396</sup> This may suggest that some reference to the healing ministry of Jesus was made by the apostle in his preaching.

Paul simply commanded the lame man in a loud voice to stand up on his feet (v. 10). The man was instantly healed. He jumped up and walked.<sup>397</sup> He must have been overwhelmed with joy as he walked for the first time in his life. This healing was so convincing that the Lystrans thought that Paul and Barnabas were gods in human form<sup>398</sup> (v. ii). They identified Barnabas as Zeus

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<sup>393</sup> More about these extraordinary *duna, meij* through Paul will be dealt with in the following chapter (4.3).

<sup>394</sup> Parallels between Paul's and Peter's healings are apparent (cf. 3:1ff. and 14:8ff.; 9:32ff. and 28:7ff.; 2:12ff. and 19:12ff.; 5:16 and 28:9; 9:36ff. and 20:7ff.). See G. Schneider, Ac, HTKNT, I.306ff.

<sup>395</sup> Cf. 3:2. Note the characteristic care to record the duration of the malady which was miraculously cured. (Cf. also 9:33). The description shows the incurable nature of the man's illness until Paul ministered to him. Cf. G. Schneider, Ac, HTKNT, 11.157.

<sup>396</sup> The man's faith was made plain when he readily obeyed Paul's command to stand up. While the Greek verb *swqhnai* here primarily refers to physical cure, the spiritual meaning may also be embodied. Cf. W. M. Ramsay, **The Teaching of Paul in Terms of the Present Day** (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1914), p. 95.

<sup>397</sup> Note the similarities with the healing in chap 3. The two men were lame from birth; Peter and Paul looked at the one to be healed; both men responded by jumping and walking. It apparently shows that Paul had the same powers as Peter. Cf. H. Marshall, Ac, TNTC, p. 233; S. Toussaint, Ac, BKC, p. 391.

<sup>398</sup> The thought of being favored with a divine visitation was probably influenced by a legend written by Ovid (c. 43 B.C. - A.D. 17) which related a previous visit of Zeus and Hermes (Metamorphoses 8.626- 724). Two inscriptions dating from the middle of the third century A.D. about dedications to the two gods by



and Paul as Hermes. At first, the two missionaries did not understand what the people had in mind because they spoke in their native language. The priest of Zeus brought bulls and wreaths<sup>399</sup> and together with the people wanted to offer sacrifices to them. When the two messengers of God discerned what was about to happen, they tore their garments<sup>400</sup> and rushed to the crowds and tried to keep the people from offering sacrifices to them. The same crowd was influenced later by some Jews who came from Antioch to turn against Paul and Barnabas. Paul was stoned and dragged out of the city. In the presence of the believers, he speedily recovered and went back to the city.

Like the other apostles, Paul's ministry included exorcism (cf. 19:12). A specific incident of his casting out of a spirit took place at Philippi (16:16ff.). While he and his companions were on the way to the place of prayer, they met a slave girl (paidi, skn) who was possessed of a "spirit of divination."<sup>401</sup> By her fortune-telling, she made a great deal of money for her masters. For reasons which are not clear, this girl followed Paul and his party, shouting, "These men are the servants of the most High God,<sup>402</sup> who are telling you the way to be saved" (v. 17). This proclamation probably expresses the defensive posture of the possessed girl in accordance with the ancient belief that knowledge of the identity of another person confers superiority over him (cf. Lk 4:34,41; 8:28). On the other hand, it may be an expression of the girl's longing for

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the Lycaonians were discovered near Lystra. W. M. Calder, "Acts 14:12," *ExpT* 37 (1926): 528.

<sup>399</sup> The ste,mmata (garlands) were made of wool and placed on the sacrificial animals.

<sup>400</sup> The tearing of garments was a way of showing a strong aversion to blasphemy (cf. Mk 14:63). About four or five inches into the neckline of the garment were usually the rips that were made. S. Toussaint, *Ac*, BKC, p. 392.

<sup>401</sup> Pneuma pu, qwna lit., "a spirit, a python" or "python spirit.." Plutarch calls the people who had this spirit as "ventriloquists" (evggastri, muqoi, *The Failure of the Oracles*, ix.414e) whose utterances were apparently beyond their conscious control. Cf. O. Bauernfeind, *Ac*, THNT, p. 209; H. Conzelmann, *Ac*, HNT, p. 100. The girl in the text is described as having the gift of clairvoyance or soothsaying. She was apparently much in demand by people who wanted to have their fortunes told.

<sup>402</sup> Cf. the words of the demoniac in Mk 5:7 where tou qeou tou u`yi, stou also appears. `O qe.ouj o` u`yi, stoj was originally a Phoenician ascription for deity (El Elyon) and was later used by the Hebrews of Yahweh (e.g. Gn 14:18; Is 14:14; Ps 78:35 etc.) and by the Greeks of Zeus, Cf. Roberts, Skeat & Nock, "The Guild of Zeus Hypsistos," *HTR* 29 (1936): 39-88; Martin Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* (Munich: Beck, 1950), 11.636-38; C. S. C. Williams, *Ac*, BNTC, p. 194; K. Kertelge, *Wunder Jesu*, p. 105.

deliverance, peace, and calm.<sup>403</sup> She might have seen in the preachers those whom she recognized as the persons who could help her in her situation. The girl followed the missionaries for many days shouting the same proclamation.

The unsolicited testimonials of the girl probably had negative effects on the work of the missionaries. Though her statements were true and gave them an unexpected publicity, their work could be damaged by an association with a spirit-possessed girl. There was no attempt to deal with the situation on the first occasion.<sup>404</sup> Finally, Paul got tired of her unsolicited advertising. He was so troubled, that he faced the girl and exorcised the spirit that possessed her. He directly commanded the spirit in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of its victim. At that very hour, the spirit left her. The narrative does not tell whether the girl became a convert. What is clear is that she lost her soothsaying ability and her masters lost their profit after she was released from the grip of the spirit and restored to her true self (v. 19). Consequently, Paul and Silas were jailed on account of the false accusations charged against them by the girl's managers.

A dramatic and unexpected happening took place at Troas (20:7-12). The believers there were gathered together in the final evening of Paul's stay with them for the breaking of bread and the exposition of the word. The apostle had already been in Troas for a whole week (v. 6), but he had still much to say to the church that evening before the day of his departure. So he kept on talking until midnight in an upper room which was lit by oil lamps. One of his listeners was a young man named Eutychus (lit. "fortunate"), who sat on the window where the air was freshest. Probably, due to the soporific atmosphere in the room caused by many lamps<sup>405</sup> and the crowded condition, Eutychus could not stay awake. While Paul talked on and on, he was overcome by a deep sleep and fell down from the third floor. His fall brought their meeting to a sudden and

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<sup>403</sup> E. H. Plumptre, Ac, ECWB, p. 106.

<sup>404</sup> The girl's publicity must have helped gather an audience, but later became a nuisance because her proclamation probably got more hearing than the preaching of the Gospel. R. Longenecker, Ac, EBC, p. 462; Cf. E. H. Plumptre, Ac, ECWB, p. 107. It could also have been uttered only in ridicule and sarcasm (D. Guthrie, **Apostles**, p. 140) and possibly followed by derisive, demonic laughter. H. Jeter, **By His Stripes**, p. 169.

<sup>405</sup> *Lampa, dej i`kanai*, lit. "many torches." These lamps which caused shortage of oxygen in the room and the hypnotic effect of their flickering flames would have helped to send Eutychus off to a deep sleep. Besides, as a young man, he may have felt unequal to the length of Paul's message, or simply may have been bored by his long discussion. R. Longenecker, Ac, EBC, p. 509. Cf. C. S. C. Williams, Ac, BNTC, p. 230.

shocking halt. They rushed down, and Luke the physician affirms that he was picked up dead.

The abbreviation of the story at this point is apparent. Luke simply says that "Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him"<sup>406</sup> (v. 10). He mentions nothing about any prayer that Paul presumably offered, or any preliminary actions before the act of restoration. Some details of the method followed by Paul are also missing. Luke concentrates on Paul's remark to comfort those present by saying that life was still in Eutychus. This is to be understood that he was restored to life after Paul ministered to him. He was actually dead for a brief space of time and his life returned to him when Paul embraced him.<sup>407</sup> Luke then describes the resumption of the meeting until daylight and mentions Paul's departure from the place. Eutychus may have been unconscious for some time and had recovered before Paul left their place. Thus, the people were greatly comforted when they took Eutychus home alive.

In whatever circumstances where opportunities were open, the apostle Paul was always ready to minister to the sick. Stranded on the island of Malta, he, and probably few of the shipwrecked party including Luke, were offered hospitality by Publius, the chief man of the island<sup>408</sup> (prw, toj thj nh, sou, 28:7ff.). Although a prisoner, Paul was undoubtedly given freedom of movement on the island by the centurion Julius. It was at this time that he learned of the illness of Publius' father who was in bed suffering from feverish attacks and dysentery (puretoij kai. dusenteri, w).<sup>409</sup> By some arrangements, the apostle

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<sup>406</sup> Paul's action which suggests artificial respiration is reminiscent of Elijah and Elisha when they restored the life of the dead (1 Ki 17:21; 2 Ki 4:34-35). O. Bauernfeind, Ac, THNT, p. 236.

<sup>407</sup> 113 F. F. Bruce, Ac, NICNT, p. 408; G. Schneider, Ac, HTKNT, 11.287. Cf. H. Conzelmann, Ac, HNT, p. 125; H. Marshall, Ac, TNTC, p. 326; C. S. C. Williams, Ac, BNTC, pp. 230f.; D. E. Haenchen, Ac, KKNT, p. 518; R. Pesch, Ac, EKKNT, 11.192. Luke portrays Paul like Peter who was able to raise the dead (cf. 9:36-43). For resurrections found in apocryphal literature which happened through Paul and other apostles, see H. van der Loos, **Miracles**, pp. 562f.

<sup>408</sup> This is an official title which appear on two Maltese inscriptions in Latin and Greek of the time of Augustus. Cf. **Corpus Inscriptiorum Latinarum** 10:7495; **Corpus Inscriptiorum Graecarum** 5754. Publius may be the designated prefect or governor of the island. He must have also arranged the lodgings of the party over the winter elsewhere on the island.

<sup>409</sup> The plural puretoij probably indicates that the fever was recurrent. With the combination of dusenteri, on the case appears more than critical. The man probably had what is known today as "Malta fever" caused by the microorganism **Micrococcus Melitensis** which was discovered from the milk of Maltese goats in 1887.

managed to pay the sick man a visit. Significantly, it was not Luke the physician that took the responsibility in treating the man and prescribing medicine for him. It was Paul who ministered to the man by praying<sup>410</sup> and placing his hands on him, healing him. It is not clear whether the cure was instantaneous, but it may be the case here as in other healing incidents.

The news of this act of healing would inevitably have spread among the inhabitants of Malta. As a consequence, the rest who had diseases on the island came and were also cured by Paul (v. 9). The *οἱ λοιποὶ*, most likely included people who had the same illness with Publius' father. Though it is not stated, those who were lame, blind, deaf, and demon possessed might have also benefited from the healing powers of the apostle. Although verse 9 seems to convey the idea that the healings were done in a mass setting for a short period, most probably, they were performed for some length of time, considering the fact that the shipwrecked party was on the island for three months (v. ii). No doubt, Paul also preached the Gospel to them aside from dealing with their physical maladies. Certainly these are the reasons why the islanders honored Paul and his party with many honors<sup>411</sup> (v. 10). Their gratitude was further shown in furnishing Paul and his friends with the supplies they needed for the remainder of their voyage. It was their way of expressing appreciation of the services that the apostle and his associates rendered to them.

## **DISCIPLES' HEALING METHODS**

The synoptic Gospels bear accounts of the sending of the Twelve and the seventy-two for the specific mission to preach and to heal. What they did after the resurrection of Jesus was a continuation of their obedience to the Lord's commission. There are at least twenty references to healings in the book of Acts performed not only by the apostles, but also by Stephen, Philip, and Ananias. Like Jesus, the disciples used varied methods in healing physical ailments. Some words uttered as a command, pronouncement or prayer, physical contact, and material

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<sup>410</sup> The act of praying indicates that Paul healed not through his own power but through the power of his Lord. R. Pesch, Ac, EKKNT, 11.299.

<sup>411</sup> *Pollaij timaij* may have been expressed in their friendly attitude towards the missionaries and in looking after their material needs while on the island. RSV renders the phrase "many gifts."

elements<sup>412</sup> were employed by the followers of Jesus as media or channels of God's healing power.

### 1. Spoken Word: "In the Name of Jesus"

In many instances, the healings by the disciples were done through the spoken word. Usually, this way of healing sicknesses and deliverance from demon powers was associated with the name of Jesus. Jesus' followers healed in his name.<sup>413</sup> A name in Semitic thought does not only identify or distinguish a person; it also indicates the very nature and character of his being.<sup>414</sup> Thus, when the disciples used the phrase *evn tw ovno, mati vIhsou Cristou*, it means that they were acting in the person and authority of Jesus Christ. "In the name of Jesus Christ" is not a magic formula<sup>415</sup> but implies a continuing power of Jesus which has been bestowed upon the disciples. It is as if Jesus himself were present saying the words attributed to his name.<sup>416</sup>

The utterance of the name of Jesus in relation to healing in the book of Acts first appears in the healing of the lame man at the Gate Beautiful (Ac 3:6). However, this does not mean that the disciples did not use his name prior to this incident. Undoubtedly, the signs and wonders in 2:43 (cf. 4:30) were performed by the apostles in the name of Jesus. Though not stated in connection with the first healing mission of the Twelve, the evidence of its use by the seventy-two (1k 10:17) would justify the conjecture that they likewise healed in the name of their Master during the pre-resurrection time. Their continued practice of healing in his name may be partly due to their faith in Jesus' promise and partly to the result of their past experience in the exercise of like powers.

Before the assembled crowd which was astonished of the miraculous cure of the lame man, Peter denied that the healing was the result of their own power or godliness on their part (3:12). He emphasized that it was by faith in Jesus' name that made the

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<sup>412</sup> Basically, the disciples followed the same sacramental approach of Jesus. M. Kelsey suggests that "the sacramental acts were only outward carriers of something nonphysical, something of the Spirit." **Healing**, p. 124.

<sup>413</sup> In the Gospel of John, Jesus has given the disciples the promise of granting whatever they ask in his name (14:14). Cf. Jesus' promise in the disputed ending of Mark (16:17,18).

<sup>414</sup> H. Jeter, **By His Stripes**, p. 164. Cf. D. E. Haenchen, Ac, KKNT, p. 161. "The name" appears at least 33 times in Acts. It is suggested that *το. Ου, νομα* "was a pious Jewish surrogate for God and connoted his divine presence and power." R. Longenecker, Ac, EBC, pp. 294, 196.

<sup>415</sup> Cf. R. Pesch, Ac, EKKNT, 1.153.

<sup>416</sup> Cf. D. E. Haenchen, Ac, KKNT, p. 181.

man strong and enabled him to walk<sup>417</sup> (3:16). His message stresses “the name of Jesus” as the power agent in the miracle. When Peter and John were brought to trial, they were asked, “By what power (du, nami)j or what name (ov, noma) did you do this?”<sup>418</sup> (4:7). Peter’s defence focused on the cure of the crippled which was effected “by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth” (v. 10). He again ascribed the healing to the power associated with the name of Jesus. Since the religious leaders could not deny the miracle, they resorted to a severe threatening of the apostles not to speak and teach anymore in his name<sup>419</sup> (vv. 16ff.). They greatly feared the further use by the apostles of the powerful, miracle- working name of Jesus, but they could not stop it.

In the case of Aeneas, Peter first made a pronouncement that Jesus Christ heals him (9:34). Then he commanded the crippled man to get up and take care of his mat.<sup>420</sup> Here, Peter did not say “in the name” but directly stated that Jesus Christ is the one who healed the paralytic man. The apostle disclaims as in 3:12 and 4:9,10 any personal power or holiness as the cause that brought about the supernatural healing. The word of command appears to be the modus operandi in the healing of paralytics both in the Gospels and Acts. The lame man at Lystra was commanded by Paul to stand on his feet (14:10). The command to rise and walk seems a mockery to one who had been crippled from birth or for a long time.<sup>421</sup> Nevertheless, it was obeyed by the will that had been inspired by the power of faith.

The use of the name of Jesus is associated in the exorcisms done by the disciples. Even before the death and resurrection of Jesus, the seventy-two missionaries exorcised evil spirits by the power of his name (Lk 10:17). There are good reasons to believe that the Twelve also drove out demons in the name of Jesus during that time. Firstly, they were given du, nami)j and

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<sup>417</sup> The lame man responded in faith to what Peter said and “the power of the risen Christ filled his body with health and strength.” F. F. Bruce, *Ac*, NLCNT, p. 89.

<sup>418</sup> The imperfect tense (evpunga, nonto) of the verb punqa, nomai suggests that the question was raised repeatedly and probably in varying forms. Apparently, the question was in a tone of contempt and implied a suspicion that the cure was the effect of magic or caused by a power other than God. E. H. Plumtre, *Ac*, ECWB, p. 21.

<sup>419</sup> The apostles ignored this threat and continued to use Jesus’ name in their ministry. In the second appearance before the Sanhedrin, they were flogged and commanded again not to speak in the name of Jesus (5:40).

<sup>420</sup> Peter’s command to Aeneas is reminiscent of the way in which Jesus had done his work of healing in a similar case (cf. Mt 9:6; Jn 5:8,11).

<sup>421</sup> Cf. E. H. Plumtre, *Ac*, ECWB, p. 89.

evxousi, a to drive out all demons<sup>422</sup> when they were sent to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick (Lk 9:1,2; Mt 10:8). Secondly, on one occasion, the disciples reported to their Master telling him of having seen a man who was doing exorcisms in his name and having stopped him because he was not one of them<sup>423</sup> (Mk 9:38; Lk 9:49). This exorcist, who was an “outsider” could have probably observed the manner in which demons were cast out by the disciples during their missionary tour. He could have seen the effective power of his name in casting out demons and had imitated their method. It seemed that his use of his name worked, even though he did not belong to the circle of disciples (Mk 9:39).

In Acts, the exorcisms done by the Twelve are not described in details (cf. 5:16). Undoubtedly, they continued to utter his name in commanding evil spirits to come out of their victims. In the ministry of Philip in Samaria, the power of Jesus’ name could have been the reason of the shrieks of many demoniacs, as the evil spirits came out of them (8:7). An example which evidently shows the power of Jesus’ name was done through the ministry of Paul. In Philippi, Paul drove out a spirit by commanding<sup>424</sup> it in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of a slave girl (16:18). Evil spirits recognized the superior authority when Jesus himself commanded them to leave their victims. His authority was equally recognized when his name was invoked by one of his apostles. His name proved as potent in exorcism as in other forms of healing.<sup>425</sup>

Significantly, the use of the name of Jesus did not work in all instances. A certain group of itinerant Jewish exorcists was in Ephesus practicing their profession<sup>426</sup> (Ac 19:13ff.). The seven

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<sup>422</sup> Cf. however, their failure to drive out the spirit which possessed a boy (Lk 9:39-40).

<sup>423</sup> Regarded by some as an interpolation (so R. Reitzenstein, **Poimandres**, p. 187), and some identified the person concerned as Paul. Cited by E. Klostermann, *Mk*, HNT, p. 95. The story shows that great “power” was attributed to the name of Jesus at quite an early stage. H. van der Loos, **Miracles**, p. 140.

<sup>424</sup> The command could have been given with firmness and authority and not necessarily through a loud voice. It was not an incantation but it signifies authority.

<sup>425</sup> F. F. Bruce, *Ac*, NICNT, p. 333.

<sup>426</sup> The account provides some indications of the kind of environment in which Paul worked. There was a widespread belief in the adverse influence of spirits on the lives of men. Men sought after any method of exercising authority over spirits. The Jews as well as the Christians practiced exorcism. D. Guthrie, **Apostles**, pp. 175f. It was, therefore, not uncommon that some men went around making a living by various kinds of pseudo-scientific or clairvoyant powers. In their exorcism, they recited numerous names of gods in order not to

sons of Sceva, a Jewish high priest<sup>427</sup> (*avrciereu, j*), had come in contact with Paul and his preaching about Jesus. Their priestly background added prestige in magical circles, since Jewish priests “were the most likely ones to know the true pronunciation of the ineffable Name and, therefore, most able to release its power.”<sup>428</sup> The seven sons of Sceva must have seen and heard that Paul used the name of Jesus in exorcism. Perhaps in an endeavor to rival Paul’s power, they proceeded to use the name of Jesus. They would say, “I command you by the name of Jesus whom Paul preaches.” This is probably their newly acquired magical formula. They obviously have used a variety of chants, incantations, and methods invoking names of archangels<sup>429</sup> as they went from city to city. This time, they tried to invoke the name of Jesus over a demoniac. They thought that Paul’s technique was better than theirs.

The attempt of the seven exorcists to make magical use of Jesus’ name failed. The evil spirit possessing a man answered them, “Jesus I know (*ginw, skw*), and I know (*evpi, stamai*) about Paul,<sup>430</sup> but who are you?” The spirit in the man confessed his knowledge of Jesus and about Paul who preaches his name, but challenged the exorcists of their right to use the name. Not only so, the demoniac became violent and attacked them. Frenzied and strong, he jumped on them and overpowered all seven, in spite of their number.<sup>431</sup> So violent was the fight that

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miss the right one in any particular case. H. Marshall, *Ac, TNTC*, p. 311. Cf. H. Conzelmann who considers the story as a legend. *Ac, HNT*, p. 120.

<sup>427</sup> NIV and NASV translate *avrciereu, j* “chief priest.” B. A. Martin suggests that Sceva may have been a member of the high priest family. “Scaeva the Chief Priest,” *JTS* 27 (1976): 405-12. Cf. D. Guthrie, *Apostles*, p. 177. Or it may be that Sceva assumed the title for professional purposes in order to impress and delude the people (R. Pesch, *Ac, EKKNT*, 11.173; H. Marshall, *Ac, TNTC*, p. 311. Cf. S. Toussaint, *Ac, BKC*, p. 410), and that the title itself was part of the imposture. E. H. Plumptre, *Ac, ECWB*, p. 130. In any case, their family background does not affect the point of the story.

<sup>428</sup> R. Longenecker, *Ac, EBC*, p. 497. Cf. B. M. Metzger, “St. Paul and the Magicians,” *PSB* 38 (1944): 27-39; O. Bauernfeind, *Ac, THNT*, p. 232.

<sup>429</sup> Cf. G. Schneider, *Ac, HTKNT*, 11.269. See Josephus for the nature of Jewish exorcism (*Ant XIII.45-49*).

<sup>430</sup> The variation in the verbs for “know” is significant. *Ginw, skw* means “to know by interaction and experience”; whereas *evpi, stamai* means “to know about, to understand.” S. Toussaint, *Ac, BKC*, p. 410. The first implies recognition of authority and the second a more familiar acquaintance. “Der Damon hat Wissen über Jesus und Respekt vor Paulus.” G. Schneider, *Ac, HTKNT*, 11.270. Cf. the knowledge of the demoniacs in the Gospels (e.g. *Lk 4:34,41; 8:28*).

<sup>431</sup> Some demoniacs in the NT possessed unusual physical power (cf. *Mk 5:3,4; Mt 8:28*).



ensued resulting to the flight of the exorcists whose clothes were torn and whose bodies were wounded. The Sons of Sceva realized in a painful way their great mistake of supposing that they could borrow Paul's formula without inward faith in all that the name of Jesus implied.<sup>432</sup> They used Jesus' name as no more than a magic formula. On the lips of counterfeits, his name did not work because it required faith in the person which the name represented.

The failure and humiliation experienced by the "professional" exorcists had tremendous effect upon the residents of Ephesus (19:17-20). Both Jews and Greeks were all seized with fear and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled. In contrast to the attempted magical use of his name in exorcism, the people highly esteemed it. His sacred name stood on quite a different level from that of the numerous names employed by the exorcists. Many believers, who for a while were still holding on to their old deeds (*pra,xeij*),<sup>433</sup> came and openly confessed them. Furthermore, their confession was not only by words but was demonstrated by the actions they took. They gathered the books of magic and sorcery<sup>434</sup> which they were keeping and publicly burned them. They recognized the complete incongruity of their former manuals of sorcery with their Christian faith. Considering the value of the books which amounted to about fifty thousand drachmas (*avrgu,rion*, lit. "silver"), it was a remarkable sacrifice on their part to give up their treasure for the sake of their faith.

## 2. Physical Contact

The disciples followed the manner in which Jesus healed. The spoken word is accompanied with physical touch. Although it is not mentioned in the Gospels that the followers of Jesus did laying on of hands, it is most likely that they followed the usual practice of their Teacher (cf. Mt 8:15; Mk 5:23; Lk 4:40). Since the

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<sup>432</sup> Cf. D. E. Haenchen, *Ac*, KKNT, p. 499. A parallel misuse of Jesus' name is found in the Paris magical papyrus No. 574 where the following adjuration is found: "I adjure thee by Jesus the God of the Hebrews" (line 3018f.).

<sup>433</sup> These probably refer to their practice of sorcery and spiritism. The word *peri,erga* (lit. "magic or curious arts") in v. 19 expresses the idea of superstitious arts which supposed secrets of the invisible world.

<sup>434</sup> The practice of magical arts was especially prominent at Ephesus. Magicians and astrologers swarmed her streets. There was a profitable business of selling charms, incantations, books of divination, guides for the interpretation of dreams and the like. The so-called "Ephesian spells" (**grammata Ephesia**, cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 5.242; Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 12.548) were small slips of parchment in silk bags, on which strange words were written and were valued by the Ephesians. E. H. Plumptre, *Ac*, ECWB, p. 131.

evangelists' purpose was to picture the life and ministry of Jesus, the description of the disciples' ministry, particularly during their missionary work, is minimally given attention. In the book of Acts, the laying of hands is not only used in connection with healing but also as a gesture of commissioning, granting of authority, and bestowal of the Holy Spirit's blessings. The apostles laid their hands on the seven men after they were chosen for the task of distributing material support to the poor (Ac 6:6). The believers in Samaria received the gift of the Spirit after Peter and John laid hands on them<sup>435</sup> (8:17,18). Paul and Barnabas were commissioned in Antioch for missionary work through prayer and laying on of hands<sup>436</sup> (13:3).

The customary outward and visible sign of the bestowal of authority and the gift of the Spirit is significantly used as medium of healing. Peter's command to the lame man to walk in the name of Jesus of Nazareth was accompanied with a support to get on his feet (3:7). Peter took him by the right hand and helped him up. Ananias' placing of hands on the blinded Saul accomplished a miracle (9:17,18). Whatever the cause of Paul's blindness on the Damascus road, the recovery of his sight was done through Ananias' laying on of hands upon him. Paul himself practiced laying on of hands for the purpose of healing. Luke reports that in Ephesus, God did "extraordinary miracles" by the hands of Paul (19:11). It is probable that the phrase *dia. twn ceirwn Pau, lou* refers to Paul's direct healings through the laying on of his hands.<sup>437</sup>

The incontestable evidence of Paul's healing through laying on of hands is found in the accounts of his stay on the island of Malta after being shipwrecked. On the island, he prayed and laid hands on Publius' father and healed him (28:8). Here, and in other narratives, laying on of hands is frequently associated with prayer.<sup>438</sup> After the healing of the old man, Luke mentions that

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<sup>435</sup> The converts at Ephesus experienced the same when Paul placed his hands on them (19:6).

<sup>436</sup> Cf. 1 Tim 4:14; 5:22; Heb 6:2.

<sup>437</sup> This is not picked up by NIV which omits *twn ceirwn* in its rendering. According to D. E. Haenchen, the phrase *dia. twn ceirwn* is not semitism, for it is through direct contact (laying on of hands) that the healing power is transmitted. Ac, KKNT, p. 496, n. 2. R. Longenecker thinks that Luke had two types of "extraordinary miracles" in mind as indicated by the participle *te* (v. ii) and the adverbial use of *kai* (v. 12). One type refers to the direct healings through the laying on of hands by Paul and the other to the indirect healings with the use of handkerchiefs and aprons. Ac, EBC, p. 496. Cf. D. E. Haenchen, Ac, KKNT, p. 497.

<sup>438</sup> Undoubtedly, Paul's prayer here was to invoke God's power and was said prior to the placing of hands in order that the pagans would know in whose

many of the islanders brought their sick to Paul and were healed (28:9). There is no indication of the manner in which the apostle cured them. However, it is most likely that he healed some of them in the same way he did with Publius' father. Probably, the rest were healed through spoken words using the name of Jesus.

Luke does not describe the manner in which many other healings were done by the followers of Jesus. They were expressed in summarized statements so that one has no information as to the ways Stephen, Philip, and the other apostles conducted their healing ministry. Undoubtedly, as noted above, they acted and spoke in the name of Jesus. It could be conjectured, and not without good reasons, that they employed laying on of hands. The signs and wonders wrought by them could have been partly accomplished by touching sick people whom they healed. The apostles who had observed how Jesus laid his hands on many sick people and cured them probably continued the practice in their ministry. Some infer that it was such a common practice that it was not thought necessary to give details about its use.

In spite of the stern warning from the religious leaders, the apostles never ceased to preach and heal in Jesus' name. More and more people sought physical healing from them, especially from Peter (5:15f.). A strange form of contact with him brought healing to many in Jerusalem. So great was their number that individual attention to them was not possible.<sup>439</sup> The people, therefore, had to resort to bringing their sick relatives into the streets of Jerusalem and laid them on beds and mats, so that at least Peter's shadow (*skia*,) might fall on some of them as he passed by.<sup>440</sup> They believed that the shadow of the apostle would suffice to heal them. This is an evidence of their strong belief in the power of the apostles, especially Peter who was regarded as having exceptional healing powers.

In the ancient world, a shadow was claimed to have magical powers which could be beneficent or malevolent.<sup>441</sup> This explains

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name he healed (K. Bailey, **Divine Healing**, p. 121). The union of the two acts reminds one of the rule given in Jam 5:14,15).

<sup>439</sup> G. Schille, Ac, THNT, p. 157.

<sup>440</sup> The atmosphere is similar with that of the earlier days of Jesus' Galilean ministry (cf. Mk 1:32-34; 3:10). Cf. R. Pesch, Ac, EKKNT, 1.207; F. F. Bruce, Ac, NLCNT, p. 118. The shadow was believed to be a part of personality. H. van der Loos, **Miracles**, p. 318. The power of a person can be transmitted through his shadow when God is behind it. G. Schneider, Ac, HTKNT, 1.382.

<sup>441</sup> See P. W. an der Horst, "Peter's shadow: the Religio-Historical Background of Acts 5:15," NTS 23 (1876-77): 204-13. Cf. R. Reitzenstein, **Poimandres**, p. 152ff.; L. Weatherhead, **Psychology**, p. 92; R. Pesch, Ac, EKKNT, 1.207.

the motivation of the people. Just as healing virtue had been received from Jesus just by touching his garment in faith (cf. Mk 5:25-34), so Luke tells us that even Peter's shadow was used by God to effect cures.<sup>442</sup> His shadow was an efficacious medium of healing power like the tassel of Jesus' garment. It is implied in verse 16 that their hope was not disappointed. The congestion in the streets of Jerusalem was intensified by the swelling of the numbers of people coming from surrounding towns which may have included Jericho, Hebron, Bethlehem, Emmaus, and perhaps also Lydda and Joppa. When the residents of these town heard about the healings performed through the apostles, they also brought their sick and those tormented by evil spirits. The imperfect tense of the verb *sune, racomai* ("gather") suggests a continual and daily concourse which probably lasted for months.<sup>443</sup>

Luke states that all were healed. It should not be understood that all were healed through the shadow of Peter. The phrase *tini. auvtwn* ("on some of them") in verse 15 indicates that Peter's shadow did not fall on all those who were laid on the streets. It implies further that Peter and the other apostles (cf. v. 12) had ministered to the rest by individually touching them or speaking to them words which conveyed healing powers. Moreover, those afflicted with unclean spirits were likely to have been helped by rebuking the spirits in the name of Jesus. The extraordinary powers shown by the apostles caused the Sadducees to be jealous which consequently led to the arrest of the apostles (vv. 17ff.).

### 3. Use of Material Means

In his healings, Jesus used material means particularly spittle<sup>444</sup> (Mk 7:33; 8:23). The evangelists do not mention its use by the disciples. Instead, it is reported that they anointed with oil (*hv, leifon evlai, w*) many that were sick and healed them (Mk 6:13). The anointing with oil is not explicitly connected with either Jesus' own practice or with any command to the disciples. In the OT, there were anointings with oil into the priesthood, kingship, and into the prophetic office; but there were none for the purpose of healing (cf. however, Is 1:6). Aside from this pouring of

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<sup>442</sup> R. Longenecker, Ac, EBC, p. 317. Cf. the strange story of a dead raised to life in 2 Ki 13:20-21: The touch with the bones of Elisha brought a dead man to life.

<sup>443</sup> E. H. Plumptre, Ac, ECWB, p. 28.

<sup>444</sup> In the healing of the man born blind as recorded in the Gospel of John, the spittle was mixed with soil (9:6).

oil upon persons, it was also done upon altars and vessels (cf. Gn 28:18; 31:13; Lv 8:10-12; 1 Sam 16:13). The OT rite of anointing was an act of dedication into God's service. Moreover, oil was used for cosmetic purposes (cf. Ruth 3:3; Am 6:6; Mt 6:17) and is used figuratively to express feelings of joy (Ps 23:5; 45:7). The OT anointing is obviously associated with health and gladness and never with sickness and sadness.<sup>445</sup> In the NT times, anointing the sick with oil probably became a familiar procedure among the Jews, and it was carried over from the synagogue to the church.<sup>446</sup> It may also have been a Palestinian custom.<sup>447</sup>

The use of oil in healing brings us to the question whether it was applied as medicine. The Greek word *ev, laion* is commonly used for olive oil. Whether it has curative power is a subject of debate for many commentators. Some insist that oil was used by the disciples because of its medicinal properties.<sup>448</sup> It is argued that oil served as medicine for various diseases in the ancient world.<sup>449</sup> It is further argued that its medical use is implied in the parable of the Good Samaritan<sup>450</sup> (Lk 10:34). Others contend that oil itself has no curative power and was not used as medication of any kind.<sup>451</sup> Supporters of this view argue that the disciples' healings were instantaneous and that oil, if ever it has medical value, does not produce immediate healing.<sup>452</sup> The anointing with oil is understood as having symbolical meaning. It symbolizes the presence and power of the Holy Spirit<sup>453</sup> and the act of anointing is

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<sup>445</sup> J. S. Baxter, **Divine Healing**, p. 165.

<sup>446</sup> H. Duneim thinks that in the early church the practice was limited to the sphere of Jewish Christianity. "Spiritual Healing," p. 391.

<sup>447</sup> Cf. E. Mally, Mk, JBC, p. 34; G. Eder, **Wundertäter**, p. 69; *Catalogus Codicum Astrologorum Graecarum* vii.178.

<sup>448</sup> J. Grassmick, Mk, BKC, p. 128. Cf. E. H. Plumtre, Ac, ECWB, p. 28; W. Grundmann, Mk, THNT, p. 170.

<sup>449</sup> H. Schlier, "*ev, laion*," TWNT 11.470. Cf. H. van der Loos, **Miracles**, pp. 311ff.; K. Staab, Mk, EB, p. 33; Pliny, **Natural History** XV.1-8. There are several references to the use of oil as medicine in the Talmud. See Strack-Billerbeck, KNTTM, I.428f.; II.IIf. Oil was also used as a defence against disease-producing demons. S. Eitrem, **Demology**, p. 23.

<sup>450</sup> L. Lawrence, **Göttliche Kraft**, p. 91. Cf. R. Longenecker, Ac, EBC, p. 864.

<sup>451</sup> H. Jeter, **By His Stripes**, p. 127; W. Schmithals, Mk, OTNT, p. 310. "There is not the faintest hint in Scripture that oil was commanded or used as a medicine." R. Carter, **Sin and Sickness**, p. 233. Olsalbung hat "keine medizinische Maßnahme, sondern Mitteilung göttlicher Segenskräfte." D. E. Haenchen, **Der Weg Jesu**, 2. Aufl. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1968), p. 223.

<sup>452</sup> K. Bailey, **Divine Healing**, p. 139. Cf. K. Staab, Mk, EB, p. 33. W. Grundmann thinks that the use of oil by the disciples had sacramental meaning. Mk, THNT, p. 170.

<sup>453</sup> R. Torrey, **Divine Healing**, p. 22; H. Jeter, **By His Stripes**, p. 127; N. Parr, **Divine Healing**, p. 35; T. Dearing, **Supernatural Healing**, p. 109; R. Carter,

an “acted parable” of divine healing.<sup>454</sup> It may also have been applied to encourage faith<sup>455</sup> in those seeking healing. Whatever was the intent for the use of oil by the disciples, one thing is certain, viz., God healed through its use.

The anointing of the sick with oil appears in the NT only twice. Once in the case of the disciples (Mk 6:13) and again in the instructions to the sick in James 5:14. It is not mentioned by Luke in Acts. This does not mean, however, that the disciples stopped to anoint sick people in their post-resurrection ministry. It is inferred that it was such a common practice<sup>456</sup> and that Luke thought it not necessary to give details about the apostles’ acts of anointing people afflicted with sickness. The anointing which was accompanied with prayer is believed to have been a part of their public ministry and was not confined to the house of believers.<sup>457</sup>

Like Peter, Paul was especially used by God in the ministry of healing. In his missionary activities, he performed many healings and the most striking of them took place in the city of Ephesus. He was in Ephesus for about three years (cf. 20:31) and his healing ministry there seemed to have been quite prominent. Luke tells his readers that extraordinary healings and exorcisms accompanied his preaching of the gospel. So prominent was the divine presence in his ministry that “miracles not of the common kind” were performed by his hands (19:11). These took place directly through Paul and indirectly through handkerchiefs (*souda, ria*) and aprons (*simiki, nqia*)<sup>458</sup> which were taken to the sick and demon possessed (v. 12).

It appears that Paul was unable to be in person to visit many of the sick who sought his help. So he sent pieces of material which had been in contact with his body to them, as a point of

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**Sin and Sickness**, p. 233. For Calvin, oil “was a symbol of spiritual grace by means of which they testified that the healing came from the secret forces of God ...” Joannis Calvini Commentarii in Quatuor Evangelistas, Amstelodami, 1667, re: Mk 6:13.

<sup>454</sup> R. A. Cole, Mk, TNTC, p. 109.

<sup>455</sup> R. Longenecker, Ac, EBC, p. 864. Cf. A. Plummer, Lk, ICC, p. 138.

<sup>456</sup> H. Jeter, **By His Stripes**, p. 127.

<sup>457</sup> Ibid.

<sup>458</sup> Both *souda, rion* (cf. Lk 19:20; Jn 11:44; 20:7) and *simiki, nqion* are of Latin origin (*sudarium* and *simicinctium*). The former was tied round Paul’s head and the latter round his waist. Cf. G. Schneider, Ac, HTKNT, 11.269, n. 19. R. Longenecker observes that Luke is emphasizing the supernatural power of the Gospel in chapter 19. He thinks that Luke includes these extraordinary miracles through sweat-clothes and work-aprons in order to set up a parallel with the ministries of Jesus and Peter, whose healings took place by touching Jesus’ garment (Lk 8:4) and through the shadow of Peter (5:15), Ac, EBC, p. 496; Cf. F. F. Bruce, Ac, NICNT, p. 389.

contact, just as he would have laid hands upon them if he had been present.<sup>459</sup> The pieces of clothing which Paul had touched became vehicles of supernatural powers and exercised a beneficial healing influence upon the sick people. On the other hand, they might have been just plain symbols of God's power through the apostle, without having powers in themselves. Their beneficial effects were brought about by the power of God and the faith of the recipients. The handkerchiefs and aprons were not only used in the healing of physical ailments but also for the deliverance from evil possession. Since the described exorcisms in the NT were done through spoken word in the form of a command, it may be inferred that the carriers of those pieces of materials from the apostle had spoken exorcistic words as they confronted the evil-possessed persons with the pieces of clothes in their hands.

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<sup>459</sup> The narrative may also portray a picture of devout people who went to Paul as he was working at his craft and carried away with them pieces of clothes that the apostle had used, as precious relics. It reflects the belief of the Ephesians in the healing power of pieces of clothing belonging to a healer. H. Jeter, **By His Stripes**, pp. 135f. Cf. the prophet Elisha, who sent his servant Gehazi with his staff that he might place it on the face of the Shunammite woman's son (2 Ki 4:29).