

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke** **Chapter 4- Luke 4:38-44** 53- Jesus the Deliverer- Part 2

November 1, 2009

Luke 4:38-44

Now as I told you last week- it is true that the Jews were always looking for a sign. For example- in **1Corinthians 1:22** the Apostle Paul says that the Jews desired a sign. So the Jews of the first century weren't about to accept just anybody as their Messiah and all throughout their history- there had been plenty of wanna-bes who had periodically risen up to say that they were the Messiah.

These would-be pretenders to the role of Messiah- wanted to come down and gain a favor of the people and they wanted to be elevated to positions of power and glory and prestige as the Messiah.

So the Jews wanted to have some criteria by which to judge Who was really the Messiah and who was not. And so they were always looking for some sign. But just what is a sign? A sign is something that points or directs you somewhere and that's exactly what they were looking for- they were looking for something in the life of Jesus that would give them the necessary evidence to be convinced that He was in fact the Messiah.

So these Jews were looking for a sign and Jesus delivered in spades. And in these brief verses- Luke shows us three realms of Power in which Jesus gave them a sign- three different realms in which Jesus demonstrated His Divinity- three realms in which Jesus demonstrated His Messiahship- three different realms in which Jesus proved Himself to be the great Deliverer.

1. Our Physical Body
2. Our Mind
3. Our Soul

But before any of you can possibly appreciate the great need that you have to be delivered in your body and in your mind and in your soul- you first have to understand that it is these three areas of your life that have been the most damaged and corrupted and destroyed by sin and satan.

So we need to know that the *reason* that we need deliverance in these three areas is because of our fallen and sinful condition. And that is why I spend so much time on two main topics in this Church. I teach two main topics in just about any teaching or Bible Study or prayer meeting or men's Meeting that we do here-

- A. The Absolute Sovereignty of God
- B. The Radical Ruination of Man

If you can just get those two Biblical Truths down pat in your mind- the whole Bible will make sense to you and the great mysteries of God's Word will open up to you. But if you get either Sovereignty or Total Human Depravity wrong- then the Bible will be nothing but a confusing collection of Words to you.

And it is not a coincidence that as we come closer to the return of Jesus- that those two critical issues- God's Absolute Sovereignty over everything all the time, and the radical and negative results that the Fall of Adam had on all of us are the two main subjects that the modern Church has almost universally abandoned. I sadly say to you this morning that there is less taught about these two infinitely important and massive Biblical Truths in the modern Church than at any time in the 6,000 year old history of Man and the 2,000 year old history of the Church. That is a real shame, beloved, because the wrong teaching and the blatant ignorance of both God Sovereignty and the horrendous impact that Fall had on all of mankind has caused untold confusion about issues ranging all the way from physical Healing to Salvation.

And it is the unbelievable ignorance about these two issues in the heart and mind of the average Church member who sits in the average Church today that has given rise to almost all the heresies and false teachings that plague us today.

If God is not as Sovereign as the Bible says that He is, if God is not in complete and total control over every aspect of the Universe that He created 24 hours every day and 7 days every week and 52 weeks

every year - then nothing else matters. If you have ever in your life taken any comfort at all in **Romans 8:28** that says:

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

... the only reason that you can ever take any comfort in that Promise is because God is Sovereign. Because I suggest to you that the only reason that God can work all things together for "good" is because God is completely and absolutely Sovereign over all things, and this God that we worship is in total and complete charge over everything in His Universe, including everything that we as humans call "good" and everything that we as humans call "bad". And because there is not one single molecule in the entire Universe that roams around without the express Permission of God and without the express Command of God; there is not one single leaf that turns brown or green and that falls to the earth in the deepest parts of the Amazon Forest that God does not decree; there is not one single sparrow that hops along the ground that God in His Infinite And majestic and glorious Sovereignty does not allow and take knowledge of and control; there is not one hair on your head that turns grey that is not numbered along with every other hair and that single hair turns grey on that particular day or falls out on that particular day only by the permission and the decree and by the command of this Sovereign God.

I plead with you, dear friends, to see that only because God is that Sovereign, only because God is that much in charge, only because God is that much in control can **Romans 8:28** ever in any way become a source of strength to me when my child dies a very slow and painful death with leukemia, and only because this Sovereign God is in total and absolute control of everything that happens to everybody who on the face of the earth that allows me to have hope when my beautiful daughter is run over with a lawnmower and has her leg cut off; because God is Absolutely Sovereign over everything all the time- my trials are not arbitrary, my suffering has purpose, my grief is used by God to fashion my faith and my despair is swallowed up in victory. But, only because God is over the affairs of men.

And if Man is not as bad and as fallen and as sinful and as wicked and as helpless and as dead in trespasses and sins as the Bible says

that he is, and if Man is not as unable and unwilling to love and serve God without the empowerment of the Holy Spirit as the Bible says that He is- then I say to you that Grace is meaningless, and I say to you that Jesus wasted His time dying on the Cross. Grace only means something because we need it, and Jesus' death and Burial and Resurrection is so glorious only because without that death and without that Resurrection we would be forever lost.

So these two issues are paramount, they are vital, they are so very important. And if you need to study up on these two issues- let me know- and I will be happy to give you copies of my teaching on both The Absolute Sovereignty of God and the Radical Ruination of Man.

So as sinners- we need to be delivered in body, mind, and soul from our fallen condition. And so if Somebody is going to be the real and true and genuine fulfillment of almost 400 Old Testament prophecies and be the true Messiah- then that Person must be able to deliver me in my body, and he must be able to deliver me in my mind, and He must be able to deliver me in my soul.

So let's take a look at the first one, and this opens up a huge area of important study in the Life of Jesus- His Total and Complete Power and Authority over the physical realm. And, of course, the issue of sickness falls into that realm, and so sickness and the deliverance from diseases is of great importance to us. And, so, if Jesus is to be the true Messiah- He must be able to heal diseases, He must have total and complete Authority and Power over all sicknesses that plague human beings. Just as Jesus spoke the word and demons and devils instantly obeyed- Jesus must have that same Authority and Power over diseases or else He is a fraud.

But there is a secondary issue with sicknesses that we tend to forget. The ultimate end of all diseases is death, and the ultimate end of death is the destruction and the decaying of our bodies. And so it is incomplete to discuss physical healing without also discussing the Power and Authority that the true Messiah must have over death itself and the ability that the Messiah has to give us a new body that will live forever.

Whoever is the true Anointed One sent from God must be able to conquer not only all diseases, but He must also have total and complete Authority and Power over Death and Hell and the Grave, and this Deliverer must be able to not only heal my diseases but He must also be

able to take me out of death and take me out of the grave and bring me back to life and give me a new immortal body so that I may live eternally with Him!

And Luke is faithful to tell us here that Jesus could deal with decay- that He had Power over the body- the results that the Fall of Adam had on the body- disease and weakness and physical malfunction and death.

And this section is both specific and general. We will find here a very specific illustration of Jesus' healing Power and we will also find a general reference to the breadth of His healing ability which becomes evidence in this first category.

So let's begin in verse 38 with a very specific account:

38 Then He got up and *left* the synagogue, and entered Simon's home. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Him to help her.

39 And standing over her, He rebuked the fever, and it left her; and she immediately got up and waited on them.

Now the passage just prior to the ending in verse 37 is the account of Jesus in the town of Capernaum in the synagogue. It was Sabbath in that major city of north Galilee, at the very north tip of the Sea of Galilee. And you remember we studied that passage in great detail. Jesus had gone down to Capernaum, verse 31, a city of Galilee, and He was there on the Sabbath day and He was teaching in the synagogue.

He had preached the same message, I'm sure, or a very similar message that He had given in the synagogue at Nazareth back in the prior passage. And you can look back at verses 18 and 19 and be reminded that when He preached in Nazareth- Jesus quoted from **Isaiah 61**, that said:

1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners;
2 To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD ...

In other words, Jesus is telling these people that He is the Deliverer. And He had come to bring the Good News of Forgiveness and

Salvation to those who were spiritually poor. He had come to release those who were captive to sin, to give sight to those who were blinded by the deceitfulness of sin and wickedness, and to set free those who were oppressed and downtrodden. And He had come to bring this great Acceptable Year of the Lord- the time in which God will save unworthy sinners. And Jesus closed the book there in Nazareth and sat down and then He said in verse 21,

Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.

In other words- Jesus was saying, *"I am the fulfillment of that Promise that God gave to the prophet Isaiah many centuries before."* So He preached the good news of deliverance to these people and they liked it so much- they tried to kill Him. So down in verse 31- Jesus was in another synagogue this time in Capernaum and He was essentially preaching the same message.

And **Luke 4:32** says,

and they were amazed at His teaching, for His message was with authority.

So what marks Jesus always is this tremendous Authority with which He speaks. And His Authority was so great that there was a man in the crowd who had a demon living in him, verse 33, he was possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon. And the demon is so traumatized and terrified by this Authority of Jesus- that the demon blows his cover.

Now as we learned over the last several weeks- demons normally want to be hidden. They want to work subtly and they don't want to be publicly manifested. But this demon was under the pressure and the power of the teaching and preaching of Jesus and he screams with a loud voice, verse 34,

... Let us alone! What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!

So this demon literally cannot restrain himself. And in an astonishing, astonishing outburst, the people in the synagogue find out that one of their own has a demon living in him. And Jesus rebukes the

demon, and the demon had to instantly obey and come out of the man.
And all the people who saw this began discussing with each other,

Luke 4:36b&37

36 ... What is this message? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits and they come out.

37 And the report about Him was spreading into every locality in the surrounding district.

So, the word is spreading everywhere and this is another incident that causes the word to spread. This is the first miracle of Luke's Gospel, and it is the miracle of Jesus delivering a man from a demon. That was an astonishing day in the Capernaum synagogue as Jesus confronted the forces of hell, and He conquered them right in their midst. He was so traumatizing to that demon that the demon couldn't help but scream in terror and fear that Jesus had come for the time of his destruction.

Now let's pick up the story in verse 38.

Luke 4:38a

Then He got up and *left* the synagogue, and entered Simon's home.

Now this is the same day and to fully appreciate this- you need to know a little bit about how a service in a Jewish synagogue went. Generally speaking- a service in a Jewish synagogue in the first century ended around noon or twelve thirty, and that tradition is still with us to this day. I try to end around twelve thirty and that goes all the way back to Sabbath observance in a synagogue- however, in those days, of course, it was the Sabbath- so it would have been on a Saturday rather than a Sunday because Jesus had not risen from the dead.

Now when the service ended there's another interesting part of Jewish life. That service was followed by the major meal of the day. And so typically after the synagogue service was over- the people all went home to a very, very large and significant meal of the day which they sat together as families and enjoyed the provision of food. And that is where Luke picks up this story-

(Jesus) got up and *left* the synagogue, and entered Simon's home.

Now this is very interesting because Peter is not yet an Apostle. He has not even been called as a disciple of Jesus yet. And has not even had his name changed from Simon to Peter. That happens later and we'll see that. Peter doesn't become a disciple until **Luke 5**. And he gets his name changed even after that- and **Matthew 16** records that. But there's no description of Peter here because by the time Luke wrote this record- everybody knew who Simon was. Everybody knew that Simon was Peter. So there wasn't any need to describe who Simon was- it was only necessary to mention Simon. And by the time Luke had finished his Gospel Account- and it was being read- everyone around the world knew who Simon was.

But at this time he is just a man in the synagogue. He is in the synagogue with his family. And his family is identified here. The end of verse 38 says:

... Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Him to help her.

Remember that the word was getting around that Jesus could deliver and heal. As you know, He had been in Capernaum on prior occasion and had done some healing, and there were healings done down in Judea in the south and the word was spreading. And so people were becoming very aware of His Power. Already, that very day, of course, the man had been delivered from a demon, and so this was Peter's hometown.

Peter, by the way, was born in Bethsaida which is just a little ways away- but he had moved to Capernaum where he was operating a fishing business right on the edge- the north edge- of the Sea of Galilee. And Mark records the same account, and Mark tells us that Andrew- Peter's brother was there as well as both sons of Zebedee- James and John. And none of these men had been called as disciples yet- but they all knew each other and they all went to the same synagogue in Capernaum. And so they were fascinated with Jesus. Obviously they were drawn to Him and so they were the guests in the main meal of the day after the synagogue service was over.

Now from this passage- we know that Peter was married. And over in **1Corinthians 9:5**- Paul refers to Peter's wife. So we know that

Peter was a married man, and even though his wife is not mentioned here in Luke- his mother-in-law is mentioned here and you can't have a mother- in- law without having a wife. So from this we can construct a little bit about the family. This was Peter's house and Peter was married. And Church history tells us that Peter had children- even though the Scriptures don't refer to them. And Peter had his mother-in-law living with him which was a fairly common thing to do then and now. So Peter was in a very normal kind of family structure.

So Peter's mother-in-law had become very ill and she is suffering from what the other Gospel writers who refer to this call a fever, and Luke- probably because he is a real medical doctor- tends to be a little more technical- and Luke calls it a "great fever", or a "high fever", or the Greek word is "*mega*"- a *mega* fever. So we know that she had a very severe fever.

So these synagogue goers there in Capernaum had heard Jesus teach and they had heard all about Jesus and they had heard about His Power and Authority and they had some knowledge of His miracles and naturally they invited Him to dinner- realizing, of course, that the mother-in-law was ill and wanting Jesus to do something about it. In fact, at the end of verse 38 it says, "They made request of Him on her behalf."

Now obviously - Peter's mother-in-law had some kind of serious infection. And even though we have no way to diagnose exactly what she had- we all know that a fever is indicative of the body's effort to fight infections. So she had some kind of serious infection- producing a high fever. And there was great concern, no doubt, by her daughter, who was Peter's wife, and no doubt by Peter also as well as others in the family- perhaps Andrew- Peter's brother- and even friends like James and John.

Now as I said- Church History says that Peter had children and so they would have been concerned about their grandmother as well. So this was a real family crisis. And Luke writes a little more about this. He says they made request of Him on her behalf. They were very, very concerned about getting her well. They were aware that Jesus had been healing. The reputation and fame of Jesus' healing Power had spread throughout all the surrounding district. Back in chapter 4 verse 14 we read that, also verse 23 indicates that Jesus had the power to heal and He had demonstrated it back at Capernaum, chapter 4 verse 23 you can

look that up. So they had evidence of Jesus' Power to heal, so they prevailed upon Him. Now look at verse 39:

And standing over her, He (Jesus) rebuked the fever, and it left her; and she immediately got up and waited on them.

Now both **Matthew** and **Mark** record the very same incident. And they tell us that she was lying down, and they add that Jesus took her hand in an expression or a gesture of tenderness and sympathy- showing us the great tenderness of Jesus as when He wept over the death of Lazarus and the sorrow of Mary and Martha over in **John 11**, and this also shows the compassion of God.

And Luke says that Jesus stood over her or He leaned over her and He rebuked the fever left her. Now this term "rebuke" is reserved almost exclusively for people- but here it is attached with a disease, or a symptom of a disease or infection which is the fever. So Jesus specifically rebukes the fever. And the intent that Luke is making by giving us this information is that Jesus has complete Power and Authority over what debilitates the body. He can speak to a fever and it disappears.

So there is no medicine here and there is no medical technique or procedure used here. There is nothing other than the Sovereign and Supernatural Power of God over an infection. And by rebuking the fever- Jesus instantly destroys the infection and the fever immediately goes away and this woman rose up and waited on them.

Now remember- this is the biggest meal of the week- kind of like Sunday Dinner. And this is the Sabbath dinner- so this is the big meal. And we need to notice that there is no lingering weakness in her- she is instantly and miraculously and supernaturally and Sovereignly healed.

Now, normally when someone has had a high fever over a prolonged period of time- fighting some serious infection- even when there can be some abatement of that infection through antibiotics or whatever- there is always going to be a lingering weakness because the body has gone through quite a fight. But there is absolutely no trace of lingering weakness here and there is no need for any recovery period here. So this is not a gradual healing here. This is a sure nuff miracle.

There is no cup of cool water, no wet cloth to lay on her forehead, no bowl of chicken soup, no flush cheeks, no hot skin, no sweating the

fever off, no dryness, no limpness, no shivering, no struggling to try to get up and walk. There are absolutely no remaining residual symptoms of this terrible infection that caused this great fever or this mega fever.

Jesus had total Authority over the fever and the infection, and He rebuked the fever and it left her, and she immediately rose up and waited on them- she went in to help with serving dinner to a rather large group of people. I mean it was Peter and it was Peter's wife, and it was whatever children were there, and it was Andrew and it was James and it was John and it was Jesus and whoever else may have been there, adults and children making up a very busy household. And she turns immediately from this high fever, this *mega* fever, and is engaged in serving them this large Sabbath Day meal.

And this is very typical of all the healings of Jesus. They were all miracles and they were all demonstrations to prove His Messiahship and to give credibility to what he was doing and saying. And this is very *atypical* or unlike many of the healing claims that are made by the so-called faith healers of our day.

And at this point I would be unfaithful if I didn't inject a very important perspective relating to Jesus' healings and the claims made by the so-called faith healers of our day because these questions come up all the time and they need to be carefully answered from Scripture.

There is a logic that you must try to get when reading the Bible; a logic that you must try to use if you are to correctly understand God's Word. The Puritans called it "The Logic of Scripture". And that simply means that we develop what we believe from what the Bible actually says or teaches versus developing what we believe from human reasoning or intellect or human wisdom.

And we must do that because God is not like us and He does not operate like us, He does not think like us, and He does not do what seems to us at times to be reasonable or even good. And that is because God is not the least bit interested in being "fair" in the human term of that word, and He is not concerned with pleasing Man or of having to meet up to our expectations. God is simply interested, dear friends, in being God- the great Omnipotent Sovereign of the Universe- Who knows no weakness and Who answers to no Man.

The Bible tells us in **Ephesians 1:11** that God does all that He does after the Counsel of His Own Will. In other words- God does all that He does for His Own Glory and through the means of consulting with

Himself. And that simply means that God does not consult with anyone, or anything about what He does or why He does it because there is nothing and no one capable of informing God about anything.

So there is a great gap between us and God. God is infinitely wise and infinitely strong and infinitely beautiful and infinitely Glorious and infinitely Righteous and Infinitely Perfect, and we are infinitely sinful and corrupt and fallen. And it is that great gap, that great distinction between God and us that causes us to not understand God at times, and it is that great gap that is between a perfectly righteous God and a perfectly sinful creature that causes us to wonder after this God, and that is part of what makes God to be worthy of our adoration and our admiration and our worship.

And part of that distinction is that God is Immutable. And God's Immutability simply means that the one true living God does not change. God is the same today as He has always been, and He will always be the same as He is now. **Malachi 3:6** says:

For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.

And this OT Truth about God's Immutability is brought over into the New Testament when the writer of **Hebrews** wrote in **Hebrews 13:8**:

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

So in His Perfection and in His Person- God does not change. But while it is absolutely true that God Himself does not change- how God operates in the earth and why God does the things that He does- those things *do* change.

For example- in the first 31 verses of **Genesis 1**- we see a God as Creator. God created everything "ex-nihilo"- or in other words- God created everything out of nothing. And we hold to the literal and grammatical and historical interpretation of the Bible, and so we believe and teach that God did all of His Creation in six- 24 hour periods. The evening and the morning were the first day- that's 24 hours, and that 24 hours made up the first day. And the evening and the morning - the next 24 hours made up the second day, and so forth

until we get to the sixth day. And after the sixth- 24 hour period was over- we read this in **Genesis 1:31-2:2:**

1:31 God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts.

2 By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.

So, once God completed His action of Creation in six 24-hour periods- the Bible says that God "rested". And God didn't rest because He was tired- God "rested" from Creation because He was finished with Creation. Everything that needed to be created was created, and after everything was created- God was finished with Creation, and God has never created anything else since that moment. Creation ceased because it was finished.

We have to know that Creation is not ongoing. Creation began at a certain point on the first day and it ended at a certain point on the sixth day when God said that everything that He made was "very good".

Now while Creation has ended- God still governs and He maintains and He sustains all that He created by His Own Sovereign Omnipotence and through the Counsel of His Own Will and for His Own Glory- but He is not continually creating anything anymore.

All of Creation is being sustained and it is being maintained by the same God Who created it in the first place- and the observation of this sustaining and this maintaining is called Science- but Creation is not ongoing. And Creation will never be carried out again because once something has been created- it doesn't need to be created again. So Creation ceased because Creation was finished.

And yet even though God is not actively creating anything today- He is still the Creator. And God will always be the Creator because He is the only One Who created everything to begin with. So even though Creation is now past, and even though God does not continue on in Creation- God is still the Creator. God does not change from being the Creator, but what He does and why He does it- absolutely does change.

Here is another example. God gave Moses the Law in **Exodus 20**. Before God gave Moses the Law- God was still God- the Law did not make God to be God- God was God before He gave the Law. But there

came a point in history when God imposed His Moral law on all of Mankind. And the moral aspects of the Law are as immutable as God Himself is- because they represent God's very Own Holy Character and Nature- and they never change and they are binding on everybody on earth for all time. We are under the moral aspects of the Law today- even though we are in Jesus Christ. But the ceremonial and the dietary and the sacrificial parts of the Law are not binding on us today because they have been completely fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ.

You see, part of that Law was the establishment of the Levitical Priesthood and the establishment of animal sacrifices. And from **Exodus 20** all the way to **Luke 24**- a period spanning approximately 1500 years- everybody who wanted to worship the one true living God had to come to God through the Levitical Priesthood and they had to sacrifice animals.

But the very second that Jesus rose from the dead by the Glory of the Father- the very second that God sanctioned all that Jesus said and did by raising Him from the dead- anybody sacrificing an animal was insulting the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and anybody who went to a Levitical Priest to get that priest to make intercession to God was committing idolatry- even though God had established both of them.

And that is because the *inferior* sacrificial system of animals was replaced by the *superior* Sacrifice of the spotless Lamb of God, and the *inferior* Levitical Priesthood which contained sinful men was replaced by the superior Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Himself- Who never sinned.

And this change in the way that God deals with Man, and this change in the way that Man relates to God is so strong that today if anybody tries to worship the one true living God- they must come to Jesus and go through Jesus, or God does not receive their worship. Nobody can approach the one true living God unless they come through the Lord Jesus Christ- not a Muslim, not a Buddhist, not a Hindu, and not even a Jew. Nobody comes to the Father unless they come through Jesus- period. So those areas of the law are no longer in force, and God doesn't deal with men through the Levitical Priesthood nor does God deal with men through animal sacrifices anymore. Those things ceased because they were finished and replaced with things that are far better.

Now even though those aspects of the Law ceased - God Himself didn't change. God is Immutable and He never changes in His Person- so God is still the Law Giver even as God is still the Creator.

But we must acknowledge, dear friends, that the way in which God deals with Man and the way in which men worship God *has* changed. Even though God is still the Creator- God is not actively creating anything anymore, and even though God is still the Law Giver- God is not being honored today through animal sacrifices and God is not being Glorified by us going through Priest for intercession.

God is still the One Who initiated animal sacrifices in the first place, and God is still the One Who ordained the Levitical Priesthood to begin with, and God is still the One Who created all things- so God has not changed- yea- God *cannot* change, God is Immutable- but how God deals with Man *has* changed and it has changed *dramatically* and it has changed *repeatedly*.

So it is a faulty logic to say that since God does not change that whatever God used to do He still does today. That is not true now and that has never been true. God is still the Creator- but God does not create anything today. God is still the Law Giver but the ceremonial and sacrificial aspects of the Law that God gave have been superseded by a *superior* Covenant.

So the point that I am making here by saying all of this is that it while it is very true that God does not change, and while it is absolutely true that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever- and while it is true that we should take great comfort in the fact that we can rest in the Arms of a God Who never changes- but it is equally true that *how* God moves in the earth and *how* God relates to Man *has* changed. And this Biblical fact has never been more true than with the issue of physical healing.

As I stated earlier- and as we go on into this- I want you to remember that I said this- God is a healing God by Nature, so that will never change. God is also a saving God by Nature, and thank God- that will never change either. But even though God is a saving and a healing God by Nature- *how* God heals and *why* God heals today *does* change and it has changed.

God heals the sick and injured bodies of human beings today- absolutely. God healed people in the OT through the Prophets way before Jesus was born, and God healed people in the New Testament

through Jesus, and then God continued to heal people through His Apostles- and God graciously and mercifully and periodically extends His healing Hand to people today.

But when God heals the physical bodies of sick or injured people today it is more of a sign that God graciously and mercifully answers prayer than it is that somebody has the gifts of healing as the OT Prophets or Jesus or the Apostles did and that are recorded for us in **1Corinthians**, or that somebody has a "hot hand".

And we need to know that God heals today- not based on our faith- as though our faith was some kind of tool that we can use to twist God's Arm into doing something for us- but God heals sick or injured bodies today based on the immutable Counsel of His Own Will, and God heals today so that God is glorified, not some so-called faith healer.

You see, dear friends, there was a very powerful and a very wise reason why God moved in healing and miracles like He did through the OT Prophets, and there was a reason why God healed people through Jesus and through the NT Apostles, and we *cannot* and we *must not* ignore or minimize or discount that reason when trying to comprehend the issue of physical healing today.

What we must remember is that the number one reason why God chose and ordained and equipped and empowered the OT Prophets was so that they would receive and write down the 39 Books of the OT. And everything that they did and said was to that end.

The OT Prophets were specially chosen, and they were specially equipped and specially ordained, and specially empowered to hear directly from God so that they could receive the Word of God so that they would speak that Word and no other, and so that Word could be written down and preserved for us today.

You see, the Words that the OT Prophets got from God were special. These Words were not Words that originated from deep inside themselves. These Words did not come from human reasoning or human intellect or human wisdom. The Words that the OT Prophets received came from an *external* Source- not an *internal* one.

And these Words are unique and they are different and they are set apart from all other words spoken and written down by all other men. These Words came right out of the very Mouth and Mind and Heart of Almighty God. These Words were given to Man by God through a process called "inspiration", or in other words- these unique

and special Words were exhaled or breathed out by the Owner and Creator of the Universe. And by default that makes these Words different from all other words.

And so in order to give the OT Prophets credibility about what they were saying so that the people would know that what these Prophets said and what they did was of God- God sanctioned the Words that the Prophets spoke and the Words that they wrote down for us by confirming them with signs and wonders and miracles and various gifts of the Holy Ghost. Please turn with me and read **Hebrews 2:3&4:**

**3 how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard,
4 God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.**

And this very same power and anointing and all of these supernatural gifts followed through onto Jesus and then onto the Apostles for the very same reason- so that all men would have the confidence to trust that the Words that these men spoke were "breathed out" by God. So that as they did what they did and as they said what they said and as they wrote down the 27 Books of the NT- the people would know that the Words of the NT were equally from God as were the Words of the OT. Other than that- we would not have known that the NT writers were of God.

The very same signs and wonders and miracles and gifts that gave credibility to the OT Prophets and which established them and their Words as being inspired followed onto Jesus and then to the Apostles for the very same reason- so that everybody would have confidence that what they said was from God.

But now follow this logic closely. Once the OT Prophets received the last Word of the *partial* Revelation of the Old Covenant- and once all 39 Books were firmly established as being fully inspired- all the signs and all the wonders and all the miracles and all the angelic visitations and all the physical healings stopped. They ceased. And they ceased precisely because the purpose for which these signs and wonders and miracles and healings were given had been accomplished, and the 39 OT Books were given proper credibility so that men could trust that they were from God.

According to Jewish history- from the time of the end of Malachi's prophecy to the birth of Jesus- a space of about 400 years- there were no miracles, no healings, no signs or wonders, and no angelic appearances in all the earth. None. They ceased because they were finished. So the only reason why God performed these wonders and miracles to begin with was to give credibility to what the OT Prophets wrote down. And as soon as they did that- they all ceased.

Now we have to realize, dear friends, that there were not wholesale miracles and signs and wonders and healings going on even during the time of the OT. God was not speaking to everybody, and physical healings were rare even in OT times. And as we saw in earlier messages- part of what makes supernatural signs and wonders and miracles so spectacular is precisely because they are very rare. And once those OT Words were given and written down- the signs and miracles that verified them and that gave them Divine credibility ceased.

So God had graciously given 39 Books that contained a *partial* Revelation of Himself and His Works in the earth, and every single Word of those 39 Books had been verified through Divine Miracles and supernatural manifestations to prove that every Word was from God and thus were true.

And as soon as that *part* of God's Revelation was finished and formally recorded for us- the signs and wonders and miracles that verified the Words stopped. And the Heavens were silent for 400 years. There was no Voice, no angel, no miracle, no healing, and no supernatural gift at work in the earth during that 400 years.

And as we have already studied- right at the beginning of the announcement of the birth of John the Baptist- angels began to appear again after an absence of 400 years, and then angels appeared all the time, and then there was the Birth of The King of kings in a very miraculous and supernatural way and so after a silence of 400 years- miracles and healings and signs and wonders and supernatural activity began all over again. And we are forced to ask, "*Why?*"

If it is true that the only reason why miracles and healings and supernatural gifts and signs were manifested in the OT in the first place was to give credibility to the Words that the OT Prophets received, and immediately after the last Word was written down- all these miracles and wonders ceased- and now all these supernatural

manifestations are all starting back up again with the birth of John the Baptist- then the only logical conclusion that we can come to is that God is getting ready to reveal to Man additional Revelation that has not yet been received.

But is that true? Can we look back at this time in history as the people already had 39 inspired and inerrant Books of the OT and can we see that God desired to give more Revelation? And the answer to that question is, "Yes!" God wanted to give the final and the full and the completed Revelation in the 27 Books of the NT, and so God confirmed the NT Words with the very same signs and wonders and miracles and gifts and healings that He used to confirm the OT Revelation with so that the people would know that the very same God Who spoke the 39 Books of the OT was the very same God Who gave the additional Revelation of the 27 Books of the NT.

But this time- there was a change, and at the completion of the 27th Book of the NT- God gave a warning about any further Revelation from any man, and that Divine Warning is found in **The Revelation 22:18&19** that says:

18 I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book;

19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

So since the Revelation of God to Man is finished and complete and there is to be nothing added to the 66 Books of the Holy Bible- the need for all the signs and the miracles and the wonders and healings and angelic visitations that verified the existing Revelation has vanished because that is the only reason why those things existed in the first place.

So what do we say to all this? We say that God is a healing God by nature, and we say that God is well able to heal the sick or injured bodies of human beings today. But we also say that the wholesale miracles and signs and wonders and gifts of healing and all the other gifts and tools and anointings and functions that went on and that God used during the *development* of the Scriptures has ceased, and they

have ceased only because they finished their job, and today we have the final, full, and completed Revelation of God to Man in the 66 Books of the Holy Bible.

And we hear the Voice of the Spirit today as we read the Words of this Book because this Book is the product of the Holy Spirit. And as we humble submit to the Authority of this Book in our daily lives- we are walking in the Spirit, and as we submit to the Authority of this Book in our daily lives we are living in the Spirit, and as we quote from this Book- we are prophesying the Word of God, and as we sing what is in this Book- we are singing in the Spirit, and as we pray what is in this Book- we are praying in the Spirit.

And this Book tells us to pray for the sick. And so we are correct to pray for healing and we are correct to ask God to heal. And we are correct to try to help people feel better if that means pray for them, or if that means that we are to visit them in the hospital or help them get their medication that common Grace has provided or pray with them at their bedside as they slip on into eternity.

And we must know that God is glorified in *two* ways as it pertains to physical healing. God is absolutely glorified when He so chooses to mercifully and miraculously heal a sick person, and we praise Him for that and God is glorified in that. But God is also equally glorified, dear friends, when He chooses *not* to heal, and it is God's Will that we suffer through sickness and injury and trouble and unfairness and persecution and diseases and imprisonment and yea- even death. And God is glorified when we suffer as a Christian- with hope- and not as those who have no hope- and as we suffer and endure pain with joy and with the peace that passes all understanding and not with murmuring and not with complaining and not with unbelief and not with lack of faith in the God Who said that He would never leave us nor forsake us. And God is glorified that we learn not to just live well- but that we also learn by God's Grace to suffer well, and to endure well, and to persevere well- and if God is willing- that we learn to die well- with dignity and with the full assurance that He which began a good work in us will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.

Let's come and pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.