

THE EXEGETICAL STUDY OF HEALING OF THE BLIND MAN IN JOHN 9:1-7
AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHURCH IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

A wrong concept about Miraculous Healing has become a growing reality. The researcher is concerned about the growing misconception and trend of healing in the Christian circle today. The church today is faced with a gross misunderstanding of what Jesus' miraculous healing entails. With the current trend of assuming that sicknesses is born out sin. In the midst of these misconceptions, a proper examination of John 9:1-7 with an attempt to understand the teaching of Jesus on miraculous healing against the background of the worldview of sin and sickness will help in checking the misconceptions among Contemporary Christian Church. This work is an attempt to explore the concept of healing from both secular and biblical perspectives. It highlights what biblical concept of miraculous healing meant to various scholars and what it meant in the Bible by exegetically looking at Jesus' teaching in John 9:1-7. The writer identified some implications to contemporary Nigeria Church. The research explored the question posed to Jesus in terms of cause. Jesus responded in terms of purpose or result. Though he makes no general statement about the relationship of sin and suffering, Jesus rejected both conclusions that could be drawn from the Jewish assumption. "Neither this man nor his parents sinned". The issue is not the cause of the man's blindness but the role that it now will play in the work of God in the world. The Greek text expresses it in terms of purpose. The Semitic mind did not distinguish purpose and result. Thus, from our perspective, we would hear Jesus refusing to discuss the cause of suffering. Rather he answered in terms of what glory to God could result from it. Some of us would do well to follow his pattern as we try to deal with suffering that we do not understand. Jesus explanation that the blindness was an opportunity for the works of God to be displayed lead into verse 4 literally translated, the verse reads, "It is necessary that we work the works of the one who sent me as long as it is day". "Night is coming when no one is able to work". The expression, "it is necessary," was a common Biblical phrase meaning that it was the will of God. It was God's will for Jesus to heal, teach, redeem, and bring people to faith. It is also God's will that we work those same works as disciples of our Master. The introduction of the metaphors of "day" and "night" fit into the issue of blindness brilliantly. They also form the transition to verse 5 in which Jesus repeats his affirmation in John 8:12 that he was the "light of the world". Hence miraculous healing which is characterized by work should be the Christian approach to healing. It is therefore recommended that true biblical teaching on the subject of miraculous healing should be encouraged to provide a better clarification of biblical injunctions on how miraculous healing should be done in our homes, churches, societies and the world at large.

5.2 CONCLUSION

Jesus' identity as the messiah is revealed by the very act of healing a blind man, for a sign of the messianic age was the healing of blindness, both physical blindness and spiritual blindness. So Jesus' healing of the blind stands out as a major

sign of his identity and the significance of his coming. All believers are expected to set out to do the work of the master according to pattern within the available time frame, for there is no room for indolence since the Spirit is always present to continue Jesus' work through the church.

It will be good to conclude here that healing portrays one of the purposes for which God sent His beloved Son into the world to give life, and though the ultimate purpose is to give life to all mankind, healing has come to be an integral part of the gospel as revealed in the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ and in the present day ministry of the church. The church should not neglect this aspect of the ministry but should also unequivocally proclaim God's love as his highest purpose for mankind.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

After a careful exegetical study of Jesus' teaching on the subject of the healing of the blind man from birth in the Gospel of John 9:1-7, it is necessary to make the following recommendations.

Nigerian biblical scholars are encouraged to carry out exegetical researches on the subject of miraculous healing in order to provide a clear and precise answer to so many questions asked by contemporary Nigerian Christians. There are very few numbers of preachers that are carrying out research on this subject and this has created more room for the wrong teachings by some charismatic and Pentecostal preacher and writers.

Nigerian Christians should be encouraged to believe that physical healing, like salvation, is an inheritance of every believer through the atoning death of Christ. Some Pentecostals had taught that a Christian cannot be sick except such live a sinful life. This teaching should be discouraged otherwise people will be subjected to emotional

torment. The Nigerian Christians be made to understand that sickness is not always divine punishment for man individual sins, nor is it normative for God to use sickness as punishment.

The healing ministry of Jesus was continued through his commissioning and sending out of the twelve and the seventy. From the early church to the twentieth century, the record demonstrates that physical healing by divine intervention has been the experience of many God's people. Therefore, it should not be made less popular of the ministry gift in the church. All Nigerian Christian must also be careful not to over emphasize the ministry of healing as some charismatic and Pentecostal churches in Nigeria and other part of the world are doing. Having knowing that healing is an integral part of Jesus' ministry every Nigerian Christian should be encouraged to explore this ministry by faith in Christ.

"Gifts"(plural) indicates the great variety of both the sickness healed and the means used in the healings. The person who exercised the gift, and the patient who was healed had one essential in common- faith in God. All Christian should learn to walk by faith which is a prerequisite for define healing. Gifts of healings are a permanent gift of the Spirit to the church but are properly exercised only by people of the Spirit and of humility and faith. As a result of this all Nigerian Christian should be encourage to trust the Holy Spirit to relate to them in this capacity.