**The Gospel of Luke**

**Witness to the Gentiles - #11**

**Healing and Teaching**

**Luke 5:12-16, 17-25**

**OFF IN FEBRUARY**George’s weekly class will take a hiatus in February. After tonight (January 28) the next E91 class meeting will be Wednesday, March 4.

**Luke 5:7-12 Jesus Cleanses a Leper**

***Luke 5:12****While Jesus was in the city, a man covered with leprosy happened to be there. Seeing Jesus; he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.”*

***13****Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” Immediately the leprosy left him.* ***14****And He charged him to tell no one, “But go and show yourself to the priest, (Lev 13:49) and make an offering for your cleansing, as a testimony to them, just as Moses commanded.”*

***15****However, the report went around concerning Him all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities.* ***16****So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.*

**Studies and Notes**

1. Hennecke-Schneemelcher published a papyrus (Egerton 2 a fragment 1,r, dated around 150 A.D. ). The text has been amended in the English translation:

“And suddenly a leper drew near to him and said: Teacher Jesus, I too became a leprous in the inn. If then you really want to, I am cleansed. The Lord said to him, I want to indeed, be cleansed” (NT Apocrypha Vol. 1,96-97)

This could be just a kind of a popular telling of the same story of Luke 5:12-16.

2. In verse 12, Luke does not name the town but it must be in the same vacuity around the Lake of Gennesart.

3. “*Covered with leprosy*,” which is a disease caused by “mycobacterium leprae”.

4. “*he fell on his face and implored Him, saying*…”. It means the Leper knelt, not just bowed. This is the same “kneeling” as in Genesis 17:3, 17.

5. Here the Greek vocative is Kyrie, should we translate this as “master” or “sir” or “Lord.” This debate is due to the face that Mark did not use the title but Matthew (8:1) used the same word as did Luke. We must notice that the above Papyrus used “Lord.” More important is the face that a title of honor in the context of a demand of healing would be too rare for this occasion.

6. We have no reports of healing of leprosy in the OT, or in Jewish documents before and even after Christ. The falling on the face and the demand to be healed must have been caused by the reputation of Jesus as a Healer. Jewish memory must have helped many to realize that here is someone unique and totally different.

7. Verse 13. Jesus stretched his hand and did what the Law forbade for Jesus touch the Leper.  Then Leprosy left him as a result of the touch.

**Was Jesus ‘moved’?**

Both Mathew and Luke omit what Mark reported that Jesus “moved with pity” (1:41) which appeared in old Greek MS. No feeling was reported here. We have two ways of looking at the various ways of telling narratives about Jesus.

First: What all narratives agree on is the heart of the teaching, and here it is the healing power of Jesus.

Second: Each narrative highlights the basic interaction of the eye witness. Each added what is not just an impression of the Person of Jesus but what expressed the uniqueness of Jesus.

**Jesus and the Law of Moses**

In verse 13 we read of instructing the healed leper to see a priest and to “*and make an offering for your cleansing, as a testimony to them, just as Moses commanded*.” This offering appears in Leviticus 14:4-7:

***4*** *then the priest shall command to take for him who is to be cleansed two living and clean birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop.*  ***5****And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water.* ***6****As for the living bird, he shall take it, the cedar wood and the scarlet and the hyssop, and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water.* ***7****And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed from the leprosy, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose in the open field.*

**Why a testimony?**

Why did our Lord want to say “*as a testimony (proof) for them*”?

1. Ephrem the Syrian said that the proof is “for the sake of the priests who must testify that the Leper has been cleansed. (*Commentary of the Diatessaron* 12:21)

2.    It could also mean that Jesus is the Healer, as the priest would have asked the question: how did you get cleansed?

3. Also “them” could be for all the people who are seeking to know who Jesus is.

A Note from Philemon

“When our Lord speaks, he says something that is directed to many people even to us today. Jesus does not only address one person but also those around him.”

**Luke 5:17-25 Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralytic**

***Luke 5:17****As it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord happened to be with him to heal them.* ***18****Then behold, men brought on a bed a man who was paralyzed, whom they sought to bring in and lay before Him.* ***19****And when they could not find how they might bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop and let him down with his bed through the tiling into the midst before Jesus.*

***20****When He saw their faith, He said to him, “Man, your sins are forgiven.”*

***21****And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, “Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”* ***22****But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answered and said to them, “Why are you reasoning in your hearts?*

***23 “****Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Rise up and walk’?* ***24****But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins” — He said to the man who was paralyzed, “I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.”*

***25****Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.* ***26****And they were all amazed, and they glorified God and were filled with fear, saying, “We have seen strange things today!”*

**Studies and Notes**

This portion is the first of this kind of serious debate with the “religious leaders” of the time, the Pharisees and the Teachers of the Law. Here the debate is about Jesus’ power to heal and to forgive.

1. The Pharisees are a group of Jews whose origin is not known. The Jewish historian called them a sect (*Jewish Antiquities* 13:5). They appear after the return from exile and seem to have been known during the time of the Maccabean. Their name comes from Aramaic that means, “separated ones.” They were known of being very vigorous in applying the Law of the Torah (Acts 26:5). Their teaching was known as the “sayings of the fathers’ (Mark 7:3) and it was intended to maintain the Law.

2. “Keeping the Law of the Sabbath.” Teachers of the Law are called in Greek ***nomodidaskaloi*** mentioned also in Acts 5:34. These may have been a group of the Pharisees and may have been the same as the “scribes.”

3. Those who came, “*who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem*” in (verse 17) are certainly a good multitude of persons who were interested in the teaching of Jesus.

4.  “*The power of the Lord happened to be with him*.” Here it is God while Yahweh is not mentioned but is called ***Kyrios*** the same title that is used for Jesus. The Incarnation of the Son of God is the cause of such distinction. Jesus reveals the power of the Lord.

**Through the tiles**

Verses 18-19 refer to “friends” who cared about the paralyzed man who carried him on a kind of a “stretcher.”  They put their friend “through the tiles,” according to Luke. But roofs were made of wooden beams placed across stone or mud brick walls. The beams were covered with reeds and those covered with clay. Luke used “tiles” to make his readers who were not from Palestine able to understand what actually happened, as tiled roofs were common outside Palestine.

**Ancient Farmhouse**



*Reconstruction of a 1st century farmhouse complex with oven and olive press (upper right); the courtyard and roof are clearly work areas; the roof has a shaded work space and separate areas for drying flax, farm produce, etc.*

**Reasoning in their hearts**

In verse 22-23 *”Jesus perceived their thoughts*” means that their thoughts were not uttered and this is confirmed by the rest of what Jesus said, *“Why are you reasoning in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Rise up and walk’?”* Here comes the miracle that proves that he was not a Blasphemer.

**Seeing faith**

“Jesus saw their faith” and this is the richness of love and compassion. The sick man had no faith but his friends had faith. Healing can take place because of the faith of others.

**Did Jesus blaspheme?**

In verse 21 the Pharisees ask, *“Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”*

1.   Why is this a blasphemy? According to the Law (Lev 24:10-11, 14-16, and 23) it is an abusive of the name of God. Any attempt to claim God’s power to save is looked at as a blasphemy (2 Kings 19; 4,6, 22). Jesus was charged with blasphemy because Jesus made himself equal to God the Father (John 5:18, 10:30-39).

2.   In the NT this charge of blasphemy continued and was an important part of the “Trial of Jesus” (Mark14: 64, Matthew 26:65).

**‘Son of Man’ – A Short Note on the Title (v20)**

1. This title appears at least 30 times in the Gospel, here in 5:24 and it goes on till 24:7.

2.   It means a human being since its Aramaic form is “bar enas” appears first in (Dan 7:13-14) and the reference is for a human being.

**Why did Jesus use this title here?**

1. Jesus was referring to the text of Daniel 7:13-14,

*“As I watched in the night visions, I saw one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven.*

*“And he came to the Ancient One**and was presented before him. To him was given dominion and glory and kingship that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed.”*

2. Jesus wanted to tell that his authority and power is to forgive. No one can serve the nations without healing sins.

**‘Man, your sins are forgiven’**

**A Note from Philemon**

“Man is what Jesus himself has become. Jesus addressed not his own humanity, but what was in the humanity of this sick man’s sickness and sins. This man did not ask for either (healing or forgiveness) but here is the infinite mercy of the Son of Man, who for our sake took our humanity to heal us and to make us free.”

**Another Note from Philemon**

“You have asked me what does the confession “Jesus is Lord” mean? I am not a learned man. Jesus gave and gives his life to me. He gave his life on the cross, but he still gives his life to me in the mystical supper (Lord’s Supper). No one can do this if he is only a human like us. More important is the fact of the way he spoke of his personal knowledge of the Father. The Father is his Father and he lives by the Father. This is why the more I recite the Gospel of John the more I see that his personal life is also is mine. Not one single prophet spoke like Jesus about the Father. They all fear him and never speak of God as being in the human heart. ‘Jesus is Lord’ means ‘Jesus is my life eternal.’

- Fourth Dialogue 1965

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