

1. CHARISMATIC QUESTIONS ANSWERED:

(A). DOES THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM INCLUDE HEALING FOR TODAY?

www.thebiblejesus.com

Okay. I'm going to take the plunge and dive into the deep end. This series on [Charismatic Questions](#) has been brewing in my mind and bubbling in my heart for quite some time now. It will, no doubt, raise some eyebrows --- if not a few defensive hackles --- but hopefully it will drive us back to the Bible, back to our knees, and back to God's mighty provision for us in these last days. I want for nothing more than the riches of God in Christ to be our present reality ([Phil. 4:19](#); [Eph. 1: 3f; 3:14-21](#)).

Specifically, I want us to think about issues like:-

Is what is recorded in the Book of Acts unique and not-to-be-repeated history, or is it narrative that is doctrine-in-practice for us to anticipate today? Is the gift of speaking in "other tongues" available to the church today and should every believer seek it? Is the gift of healing still possible? Indeed, have any or all of the gifts of the Spirit ceased? Is the "baptism in the holy Spirit" to be sought and looked for? Is God still revealing new truths to His church or has revelation and the gift of prophecy ceased? Is the Kingdom of God to be entered into and enjoyed as a present reality, able to bring supernatural power to bear in our circumstantial needs, or is it a glorious hope entirely locked up only for future realisation?

I send [Charismatic Questions](#) out after much prayer and with an invitation for you to consider with me some "burning questions" about "the power of the holy Spirit" for our lives today. I send it out, not because I like sensationalism, but because "charismatic confusion" is a powerful paralysing agent to the bold faith and obedience needed in these desperate times.

I am convinced that some of the insights we will be discussing are desperately needed in our own individual lives --- I mean, are you satisfied with the level of your experience of God's reality in your own life or do you feel something is lacking when you honestly compare yourself with the vibrancy and the intimacy of fellowship with the risen Christ which the early Christians had?

Equally, I am sure the truths we will look at are needed in our corporate body-life within the Church. We must be real and face some tough questions. Questions such as, is the world we live in sitting up and taking notice of the Gospel we are modelling? Does our street and society see that our God is the Living One who raised Jesus from the dead and is still in the business of delivering from demonic darkness, from paranoia and, from guilt and confusion?

Our circle may not believe our message, but can they ignore it's transformational power in our lives? They may not accept our faith, but is it creating unbeknownst to us a hunger within them for what we have? Is it causing them to ask questions? The first Christians may not have been believed, but they could not be ignored.

Look. It's just not good enough having all our doctrinal "i's" dotted, and "t's" crossed, all the while having a **form of godliness** but lacking its power. Any teaching, any doctrine, any truth from God's Word that does not bring us to encounter God *Himself* only makes us more religious --- which is something the world does not need, in fact is repulsed by!

So, let's dive in, and (to mix my metaphors) let the cat out amongst the pigeons! Or to use a good Aussie expression, "grab the rough end of the pineapple"!

ARE WE BIBLICAL MONOTHEISTS REALLY PREACHING THE FULL GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM?

What a shocking question to ask my fellow unitarian believers who have paid a huge price for standing on the truth that the God of the Bible is One Person, and that Jesus His beloved Son who now sits at His Father's right hand (waiting to inherit the promised Kingdom) is there, not because he is "fully God" and has simply returned to where he always was from eternity, but is in that exalted status because God honoured his obedience by raising him up as the Messianic Lord over the entire cosmos ([Acts 2: 32 -36](#)).

And, in spite of our worthy endeavours to also correct the popular misconception that Jesus came to "save souls" by taking us up to heaven --- rather than to establish God's future renewed Kingdom on earth --- I am wondering whether we may have overlooked, and therefore, divested a critical aspect from the Gospel of the kingdom we wish to promote?

Perish the thought, you say. But before this thought perishes unexamined, please allow me to test whether this possibility may in fact be the case.

A TEST QUESTION

How do you react to this statement? **Divine healing is an essential part of the Gospel of the kingdom of God which we are to proclaim and practice today.** Now, before you think I am entering "schismatic charismatic" waters, please consider the following ...

When you read the following selection of verses --- all from the lips of Jesus himself --- ask yourself whether Jesus, our model teacher, established that his Gospel message will --- and should --- be accompanied with life-changing "signs" of healing and deliverance;

[And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people \(Matthew 4:23\).](#)

[Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people \(Matthew 9:35\).](#)

[And as you go, preach, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give \(Matthew 10: 7-8\).](#)

[He commissioned the seventy saying, "And heal the sick there **and say** to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you" \(Luke 10: 9\).](#)

It is evident that, for Jesus, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom **included** an expectation for healings to follow. His commission was, "[Go, preach the Gospel of the kingdom **and** ...](#)"! The words of Jesus must define for us what his Gospel proclamation and practice looks like, surely? We have rightly said that a Jesus divorced from his own words is not the Jesus of the Bible.

The Gospels record twenty-six individual cases of healing, to say nothing of the ten mentions of multiple healings in addition --- ranging from a handful of people to masses; [And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people \(Matthew 4:23\).](#)

And ... [there was a great throng of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were being cured. And all the multitude were trying to touch him, for power was coming from him and healing them all \(Lk. 6: 17-19\).](#)

Peter's reflection of Jesus' gospel-ministry was, "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the holy Spirit and with power, and how he went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him" (Acts 10:38).

Peter's confession concerning Jesus was that he was a man, accredited to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through him in your midst (Acts 2: 22).

When Nicodemus came to Jesus in the middle of night, he told him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him" (John 3: 2). Nicodemus understood that a teacher from God is not recognized just by his talk! There has to be some evidence that God is behind him, backing him up with kingdom-signs following.

Can anyone deny that the Jesus of the Bible believed and practised healing as an inextricable part of his "gospel of the kingdom" message? We are aware that the Devil's main trick is to separate Jesus from his teaching. We have rightly said we don't have the Jesus of the Bible if we don't listen to his words. So why the deafening silence in this regard? Is this not surely an alarming loss of Gospel content?

WHY DID JESUS HEAL?

There are various reasons given as to why Jesus healed so extensively. He was doing the works of His Father --- expressing God's mind and will and character (John 9:4). He was expressing his compassion (Mark 1:41). He was fulfilling prophecy thereby proving his Messianic credentials (Matt. 8: 16-17; 11: 3-5). He was encouraging people to grow in faith (Matt. 9: 18, 27f; Mk 5:25; John 9: 35-38). He was destroying the works of Satan's kingdom (Lk 13: 16; Acts 10: 38; I John 3: 8).

That last reason is particularly telling. In the Luke 13 story when the ruler of the synagogue expressed his outrage over Jesus healing the bent over woman on the Sabbath day, Jesus shot back, "Ought not this woman, whom Satan has bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bondage on the sabbath day?"

I say this is particularly telling because, for the Jewish people, the Sabbath day was a divine institution commemorating (in part) the originally good creation of God. This sick daughter of Abraham, bound up by the Devil, formed no part of God's perfect design for her. Thus, by healing her on the Sabbath, Jesus was destroying the works of Satan, reversing the effects of Adam's rebellion by promoting the kingdom of God in power. That's salvation! ¹

According to Jesus then, whilst the kingdom's consummation belongs to the future, healings are the first-fruits and the guarantee of the full harvest yet to come. Jesus' healings are signs expressing the reality of the kingdom in our midst now, as well as a potent prophetic proclamation of the final destruction of Satan's evil kingdom.

We may say unequivocally that, ***the ultimate reason Jesus healed was to extend the kingdom of God.*** Healing was *essential* to Jesus' kingdom-message and work. And God's kingdom plan is to complete that which He has started: **The mustard seed ... became a tree (Lk. 13: 19)!**

So, the follow-up question must be: Should we expect our gospel witness to bear the same semblance today? Is there anywhere in the Bible that says healings are no longer included in the announcement of the Kingdom of God? A good place to start would be to inquire what Jesus told us to pray for ...

¹ The Greek word translated as save is the very same word often translated as rescue, deliver, make well!

YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

When we pray, **Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven**, for what do we ask? You answer, “Surely Jesus intended that our eyes be fixed intently on God’s glorious reign in Christ to be actualised upon this earth at the end of this present evil Age?” Of course he did! The kingdom is eschatological. It arrives when Christ comes back **in the glory of his Father and with His mighty angels**. But is that *all* Jesus taught us to pray for --- the “Final Solution” --- what the old-timers called the denouement?

“The Lord’s Prayer” goes on to elaborate *how in the meantime* we are to be co-workers for that coming kingdom. Jesus encourages us to ask the Father in heaven to **give us this day our daily bread**. Now, don’t you find that almost anti-climactic? Here we are asking that God Almighty usher in His mighty rule upon earth, and in the next breath we are asking not to be hungry! What’s going on here? Is there a link between the kingdom-come and our daily bread?

Ask yourself, is anybody going to starve or be hungry in the coming kingdom of God? Of course not. Where God is, there is no lack, no starvation, no hunger --- only abundant supply for every need to carry out His will, His kingdom plan.

So, here’s my question: When we ask God to supply our daily bread, to meet our most basic of physical needs, aren’t we in effect reaching up to the Father’s heart, and by faith grabbing His Kingdom-reality and bringing it down to earth and making it material *now*?

Faith makes visible that which is invisible. When we ask for our daily bread we are asking for God’s will be done on earth as it is in heaven --- *today*. We are declaring we believe the Kingdom, which will have no hunger, may be experienced in a real measure *now*. Wasn’t Jesus plainly telling us what God’s will for us is now? Wasn’t he encouraging us to know that we can bring whatever already exists in heaven’s future kingdom right on down to change our lives today? It appears so.

When we go on to pray, **and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors**, aren’t we also demonstrating that there is no such thing as unforgiveness and bitterness and fractured relationships in heaven’s future for our world? Since we are already citizens of heaven, surely we are meant to be models of that coming kingdom’s harmony now (**Phil. 3: 20**)? When we forgive our debtors and forgive as Christ has already forgiven us, aren’t we making it plain that God’s kingdom reality is *already* breaking into our world?

And when we pray, **and do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil one**, aren’t we confessing that Satan and sin cannot dwell in that future kingdom and that right here and right now we are to be living examples of those whose lives are already demonstrating freedom from his power?

Scripture assures us that our Father **has delivered us from the domain of darkness, and [has] transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son (Col. 1: 13)**. We are to ask for **a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge** of this so that we may know **what is** [note the present tense] **the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe (Eph. 1: 17-19)**.

Jesus testified that, **“Satan has nothing in me”**. The Gospel announces that we are now united to Christ, already dead to sin, already raised to newness of life in the Spirit, and that we are to increasingly enter into the future glory now by resisting the Devil knowing he will flee from us (**James 4:7**). We can and should be tasting that heavenly atmosphere right now!

When we pray, **For Yours is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever, Amen**, we are declaring by faith our assurance for that future. We are believing that Jesus has already “planted” the kingdom-seed and that nothing will stop it from growing. The kingdom of God is **like a mustard seed that ... grew and became a tree (Lk. 13:18- 19)**. He told us the kingdom is **like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened (Lk. 11:13 - 20)**. And he assured us that the kingdom

would develop, not by apocalyptic interference, but as a corn-seed grows ... **the seed sprouts and grows ... first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head** --- but men **know not how** (Mk. 4: 27-28).

God's kingdom is already growing in our very midst! Shouldn't we expect to see its signs in some measure? Shouldn't we expect the first-fruits to appear now, before the full harvest then? The narrative of the NT indicates it is so.

What we call "The Lord's Prayer" is really "The Kingdom Prayer", for it tells us, that not only should we be anticipating God's future kingdom, devoting all our energies in its promotion, but that we ought to be experiencing a real foretaste of it *now*:- Jesus' kingdom-promise is that if we **seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all these things will be added to us today** (Matt. 6: 33).

The context of this promise concerns what we eat and drink and wear, that is, our physical needs. The meeting of all our material and physical needs today are present signs of the kingdom's reality and availability. Every blessing for body and soul --- including health to carry out our Father's will --- are pointers to the coming kingdom and are legitimate blessings to be appropriated today. **"Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven"**! Faith is the **substance of things hoped for** (Heb. 11: 21). Faith substantiates, that is, gives present reality to the future kingdom by bringing it into play today. ²

For Jesus --- and his first followers --- preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom always included the ***and***... Let's take an example from one of his "evangelists" in the early church ... Philip.

ACTS 8: 12 ... A FAVOURITE PROOF TEXT FOR THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM MESSAGE

One of our favourite "Gospel of the kingdom" texts is **Acts 8: 12; But when they believed Philip, who was proclaiming the good news about the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus, they were baptized, both men and women.** A perfect summary that the Gospel concerns the kingdom of God as authorised by Jesus himself!

However, we seem to go rather coy about the fact that Philip's preaching did not go unaccompanied. For, **the crowds with one accord listened eagerly to what was said by Philip, hearing and seeing the signs that he did, for unclean spirits crying with loud shrieks, came out of many who were possessed, and many others who were paralyzed or lame were cured. So there was great joy in the city** (vs. 6-8).

Once again, the invariable pattern for preaching the gospel of the kingdom emerges. Words and works together. Divine healing is part of the Kingdom of God message! Evidently it was not confined to Jesus himself, or to his twelve apostles, but to other members of the church like Philip. ³

It seems that our heavenly Father was pleased, as it were, to say "Amen!" to the proclamation of the good news about Jesus and the kingdom, for we read that, **God was bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the holy Spirit according to His own will** (Hebrews 2: 4).

WHERE DOES MODERN MEDICINE FIT IN?

There are some Christian teachers and believers who are of the opinion that it's a sign of unbelief to seek modern medical intervention for their health needs and treatment when sickness strikes. They believe they grieve the Lord by even having their children vaccinated. You are no doubt aware of tragic stories from such a reckless course of action, even though it is guided by worthy motives not to doubt God.

² This does not mean that I endorse today's popular caricature called "the Prosperity Gospel". Just that God supplies every need sufficient for us to carry out His Gospel work.

³ Nor does this mean I endorse much of the sensationalism that accompanies so-called "faith-healers" today.

If only they understood a little of the history of the Christian church much heartache and confusion would be avoided. It's documented that when the Roman Empire was threatened by various plagues and epidemics, it was the Christians who tended the sick, caring for their bodily needs of washing and hygiene, proper food and clothing, laying their hands on the sick and praying for their healing.

When the pagans neglected and even abandoned their sick for fear of infection, the members of the churches touched the sick and tended to them. This obedience to the Lord's Gospel-commission and their compassion was such a powerful testimony, that it's recorded the word of the Lord spread faster than the diseases throughout the Roman world!

Has not God given us modern medical science as His gift for healing? Of course he has. Multitudes of committed Christians have dedicated their God-given talents and exercised their faith in the belief that God has called them to bring His love to the sick. We must not despise the "means" God is able to use. He can even use a non-Christian surgeon to remove a tumour!? But how much more the one who is dedicated to the Lord's kingdom and who goes forth expecting God to work through them!

Not many are directly visited by heavenly angels who cook meals and strengthen them as the prophet Elijah was when he was physically run down and depressed! But God has as surely touched the fevered brow and healed the sick through the touch of modern medicine rendered through the hands of a loving husband, wife, neighbour, doctor or nurse.

There is no unbelief in receiving medical attention as prescribed by physicians and we may accept this in all good conscience. I am sure that before you seek such intervention you will first have prayed and committed your path to the Lord and asked for His hand of healing!

And God forbid, but if you should come down with a life-threatening sickness, you must not let the dire prognosis limit your faith and expectation in God's miraculous intervention. Jesus has already revealed God's heart and will for His people. All things are possible with our God! And there is nothing wrong, in telling your doctor that you believe God is healing you, and that you are seeking the prayers of the church.

So ... Does the Gospel of the Kingdom Include Healing for Today?

An honest reading leads us to believe Jesus did not consider his healing ministry as unique to himself: He committed it to his apostles, to the Seventy, to others like Philip, and as history testifies (and as I shall further prove in the next instalment) to the whole church.

So, please stay tuned!