

A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS
XXXIII. Christ's Sovereignty Over Sickness
(Matthew 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-34; Luke 4:38-41)

I. Introduction

- A. When Israel's Messiah was predicted to come, Isaiah had foretold that He would bear our infirmities and sorrows, what actually referred to His healing of souls and giving salvation to men, Isaiah 53:4; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1107. This work would be accomplished on the cross, but in anticipation of that work, Christ healed many people's physical illnesses in His earthly ministry, illnesses that were the effects of sin, *Ibid.*
- B. One event that dramatically demonstrated Christ's infinite divine sovereignty over physical sickness occurred in His healing of Peter's mother-in-law as recorded in Matthew 8:14-17, Mark 1:29-34, and Luke 4:38-41.
- C. We view this event from the synoptic gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke for our insight and edification:

II. Christ's Sovereignty Over Sickness, Matthew 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-34; Luke 4:38-41.

- A. According to the Mosaic Covenant, physical illness like a fever for Hebrews in the dispensation of the Law was God's discipline for sin, Deuteronomy 28:15, 22 ESV. When Jesus was then asked by His disciples to heal Peter's Hebrew mother-in-law of a fever (Matthew 8:14; Mark 1:29-30; Luke 4:38), He addressed her need as an act of God's unmerited favor toward her, a demonstration of His great grace noted in John 1:16-17.
- B. Thus, the infinitely gracious sovereignty and power of the Incarnate God over illness is seen in this event:
 - 1. Mark 1:29-30 *twice* uses the word "immediately" (*euthus*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 122) to describe an emergency that arose right after Christ's ministry in the synagogue at Capernaum: Peter's mother-in-law was seriously ill with a fever, so immediately (*euthus*) after Jesus had finished speaking, likely when He was still in the synagogue, the disciples had asked Jesus to come and heal Peter's relative, and He had responded by immediately (*euthus*) leaving the synagogue and entering Peter's home where she lay ill.
 - 2. Luke's record, that of a physician (Colossians 4:14), describes how this was a life-threatening illness:
 - a. Peter's mother-in-law had suffered for some time, seen by Luke's use of the verb *en*, the **imperfect** tense ["was being"] of *eimi*, "am" that is used with the passive participle, *sunechomene*, from *sunecho*, "be affected with" (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 219; The Analyt. Grk. Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 187, 118, 389).
 - b. She was experiencing a *pureto megalo*, "severe fever" (*Ibid.*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 738), dangerous for even a short period of time, and life-threatening for the extended period of time that this middle-aged or elderly woman had been ill, Luke 4:38.
 - 3. Mark 1:31 claims that Jesus took her hand, Matthew 8:15 reports that He touched her and Luke 4:39 claims that Jesus bent over her, so He bent over the woman and picked up her hand in His hand. (J. Dwight Pentecost, The Words and Works of Jesus Christ, 1991, p. 146.
 - 4. Christ then rebuked the fever, and it left her, Luke 4:39a.
 - 5. However, Luke then used the adverb *parachrema*, "at once, immediately" (*Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 629) to tell how Peter's mother-in-law **instantly** arose from where she had been lying near death for some time with a dangerously high fever and "was ministering" (*diekonei*, **imperfect** tense of *diakoneo*, "minister, serve, attend upon" (*Ibid.*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; *Ibid.*, The Analyt. Grk. Lex., p. 101, 92) unto Jesus and the household for some period of time! She not only lacked the fever, but her immune system and energy had been completely, instantly restored to where she was so full of energy that she ministered for an extended period of time entertaining Jesus and the other disciples as guests! (Luke 4:39b)
- C. News of this event and Christ's exorcism of the demon possessed man in the synagogue "circulated rapidly," and by "sunset . . . multitudes with similar needs had gathered at the home of Peter and Andrew seeking the release others had experienced from demon possession and disease," *Ibid.*, Pentecost, p. 146-147; Luke 4:40a.
- D. All who came to Jesus seeking help received it (Luke 4:40b). In the cases of exorcisms, Jesus did not allow the demons to cry out that He was the Messiah and Son of God in ways that would discredit His reputation or that people would learn from demons His identity, but that the people would learn from His miracles His true identity in accord with Old Testament prophecy, Luke 4:41 with Matthew 11:2-6 with Isaiah 35:5; 61:1.

Lesson: *Jesus demonstrated His infinitely gracious sovereignty and power as the Messiah and Incarnate God in both healing the sick and exorcising demons, that Israel's people might believe in Him for salvation.*

Application: *(1) May we believe in Christ as the Messiah and Son of God due to His words and works. (2) If God wills that we serve Him as Peter's mother-in-law did, may we trust Him to handle our physical needs to that end.*