

The Greatest Life Ever Lived

A Study in the Incarnate Life of Jesus Christ and An Exposition of the Four Gospels

LESSON XXXI : THE FIRST TOUR OF GALILEE / HEALING OF THE LEPER AND PARALYTIC

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	related passages
4:23-25;8:2-4;9:1-8	1:35 - 2:12	4:42-44;5:12-26		

The First Tour of Galilee with Four Fishermen

Mk 1:35-37 *And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. And Simon and they that were with him followed after Him. And when they had found Him, they said unto Him, All men seek for Thee.*

Lk 4:42 *And when it was day, He departed and went into a desert place: and the people sought Him, and came unto Him, and stayed Him, that He should not depart from them.*

After a long and strenuous day Jesus, who was and is not only divine but also human, felt the need of prayer [see lesson 30: Jesus had spent the Sabbath healing the demoniac during the service, retiring to Peter's house where He healed Peter's mother-in-law, then spending the hours immediately following the Sabbath healing all those in town who came to Him]. The implication is that Jesus spend the night at Peter's house and rose prior to dawn to pray. Upon awakening, Peter and others diligently searched for Jesus, the others being either the other fishermen Jesus had called (James, John and Andrew) or many from town.

In the morning a great while before day: "the morning" is to be understood the whole space of three hours, which finished the fourth watch of the night. "A great while before day: literally, *while it was in the night*. The word is peculiar to Mark." [Vincent, *Word Studies*] Wuest: "*And in the last watch of the night between three and six, in the early part of the watch while it was still somewhat dark, He arose and went out.*"

And there He prayed: "Not that He needed any thing, for in Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; but that He might be a pattern to us. Every thing that our blessed Lord did He performed either as our pattern, or as our sacrifice." [Clarke, *Commentary*]

The people sought Him: they were seeking Him earnestly. Hendriksen comments that the word is often used in a hostile sense: *to pursue, hunt or track down*, but here has the sense of searching with eager determination to find Jesus by all means. [Hendriksen, *Mark*] "Simon and his companions, as well as the people of the city, seem to have been afraid lest He should have permanently left them. Hence the compound verb indicates that they followed Him *eagerly*; *pursued* Him as if He were fleeing from them. Simon, true to his nature, was foremost in the pursuit." [Vincent, *Word Studies*] Wuest on Mark's account: "*And Simon and those with him hunted Him out;*" on Luke's account: "*And the crowds kept on searching for Him diligently.*" "They had now begun to taste the good word of God, and thought they could never hear too much of it. Many possess this spirit when first converted to God. O! what a pity that they should ever lose it! The soul that relishes God's word is ever growing in grace by it." [Clarke, *Commentary*]

All men seek for Thee: "Some to hear; some to be healed; some to be saved; and some, perhaps, through no good motive. There are all sorts of followers in the train of Christ; but how few walk steadily, and persevere unto the end!" [Clarke, *Commentary*]

and stayed Him: they were detaining Him, they caught hold of him, thus showing their great earnestness. Wuest: "*And they came to Him, and kept on attempting to hinder Him from going away from them.*"

Mk 1:38 *And He said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth.*

Lk 4:43 *And He said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.*

"The result however was surprising. Jesus is not going to allow the people in general, or even His disciples, to tell Him where He should go. Besides, in His great love He wishes to distribute His favors among the many. Capernaum will see Him again. It remains for a while the center of operations, His headquarters. But He does not wish to confine Himself to that one city." [Hendriksen, *Mark*] Note He wants His disciples to come ("let us go"), beginning their training as apostles. Also note the emphasis Jesus places on His ministry: He does go and perform miracles, but **the reason for His tour is to preach**. Jesus continues by adding that this was one of the purposes for His coming! "To proclaim the kingdom of God was the Messiah's great work; healing the diseases of the people was only an emblematical and secondary work, a work that was to be the proof of His goodness, and the demonstration of His authority to preach the Gospel, and open the kingdom of heaven to all believers.... For this purpose am I come forth — to preach the Gospel to every creature, that all might hear, and fear, and return unto the Lord. **The towns and the villages will not come to the preacher — the preacher must go to them, if he desires their salvation.** In this, also, Jesus has left His ministering servants an example, that they should follow His steps." [Clarke, *Commentary*]

Mt 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

Mk 1:39 And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils.

Lk 4:44 And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.

The course they took was one which Paul would later describe as “to the Jew first, then to the Greek.” (Rom 1:16)

Preaching the Gospel of the kingdom: “Behold here the perfect pattern of an evangelical preacher:

- He goes about seeking sinners on every side, that he may show them the way to heaven.
- He proclaims the glad tidings of the kingdom, with a freedom worthy of the King whom he serves.
- He makes his reputation and the confidence of the people subservient not to his own interest, but to the salvation of souls.
- To his preaching he joins, as far as he has ability, all works of mercy, and temporal assistance to the bodies of men.
- He takes care to inform men that diseases, and all kinds of temporal evils, are the effects of sin, and that their hatred to iniquity should increase in proportion to the evils they endure through it.
- And that nothing but the power of God can save them from sin and its consequences. [Clarke, *Commentary*]

There is a distinction in the words used to describe those healed by Jesus:

- **sickness**, noson: a disease of some standing, chronic disorder; carries the notion of *something severe, dangerous or even violent*. The Latin word nocere meaning to *injure* is akin to this word.
- **disease**, malakian: a temporary disorder of the body. A kindred adjective malakon means *soft* as a couch or newly ploughed furrow; morally it implies softness as *effeminacy, cowardice*, physically it's used of *weakness, sickness*, emphasizing the idea of being *weak or feeble* rather than a violent suffering or danger.
- **torments**, basanois: translated torments in Mt 4:24; the word originally meant Lydian stone or touchstone which leaves a peculiar mark on pure gold when rubbed. Therefore the word came to mean a *test*, then *a test or trial by torture*. Eventually the concept of testing passed entirely out of the word and left the idea of *suffering, torture*. A form of this word is used in Lk 16:23,28 as a form of retribution of those in hell. Examples of those with torments are cholics, gout, rheumatisms which rack every joint.
- **lunatic**, selāniazomenous: literally “to be moon-struck”, rendered by some as *epileptic*. At one time epilepsy was supposed to be influenced by the moon.

Mt 4:24,25 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan. : “This, even according to the Jews, was one proof of the days of the Messiah: for they acknowledged that in His time there should be a great famine of the word of God; and thus they understood Amos, Amos 8:11. Behold, the days come that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread but of hearing the words of the Lord. And as the Messiah was to dispense this word, the bread of life, hence they believed that vast multitudes from all parts should be gathered together to Him.” [Clarke, *Commentary*]

Decapolis: a small country situated between Syria and Galilee of the nations called Decapolis (from ten + a city), because it contained only ten cities; the metropolis, and most ancient of which, was Damascus.

A Leper Healed

Mt 8:2 And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.

Mk 1:40 And there came a leper to Him, beseeching Him, and kneeling down to Him, and saying unto Him, If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.

Lk 5:12 And it came to pass, when He was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought Him, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.

The assumption is this leper's cleansing occurred during the initial Galilean tour since it follows in Mark's account and Lk 5:12 ties in with Lk 4:42, “And He said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also ... and it came to pass, when He was in a certain city...”. Hendriksen comments that Matthew's account does not contradict this chronology since Matthew arranges the miracles in chapters 8 and 9 topically, not chronologically.

Leprosy: “In connection with ‘and a leper came up to Him’ there are those who deny the correctness of the rendering ‘leper’ and ‘leprosy.’ They maintain that not leprosy was healed (Hansen's disease) but vitiligo, leucoderma, and/or other skin sicknesses are meant. On the other hand Dr. L.S. Huizenga, having received both a theological and a medical training, and basing his conclusion

upon a detailed study of all the pertinent biblical material and on his own experience with lepers, states: ‘I believe that Moses describes a definite disease — a disease which corresponds to what we today call leprosy, though the symptoms may not be the same.’ “ [Hendriksen, *Mark*; quoting Huizenga, *Unclean! Unclean!*] “**Full of leprosy.** Matthew and Mark have simply *a leper*. The expression, *full of leprosy*, seems to be used here with professional accuracy. Leprosy was known among physicians under three forms: the *dull white*, the *clear white*, and the *black*. Luke means to describe an aggravated case. The word *full* in this connection is often used by medical writers, as, *full of disease*; the veins *full of blood*; the ears *full of roaring*.” [Vincent, *Word Studies*]

came up to Him: close enough to touch Him which is remarkable when considering Lev 13:45,46 of a leper being without the camp, alone; and Lk 17:12 in which the ten lepers stood at a distance. **Regardless of one’s state, one should have the confidence to come to the Christ who is full of compassion and understanding.**

Beseeching Him: the leper came begging Jesus for help. Wuest: “*and there comes to Him a leper, begging Him and kneeling.*”

If Thou wilt: it is not a question of ability but one of willingness. The leper submits himself to the sovereign disposition of Christ, although he does beg to receive the healing power and mercy from Him. “As this leper may be considered as a fit emblem of the corruption of man by sin; so may his cure, of the redemption of the soul by Christ. **A sinner, truly penitent, seeks God with a respectful faith; approaches Him in the spirit of adoration; humbles himself under His mighty hand, acknowledging the greatness of his fall, and the vileness of his sin; his prayer, like that of the leper, should be humble, plain, and full of confidence in that God who can do all things, and of dependence upon His will or mercy,** from which all good must be derived. It is peculiar to God that **He need only will what He intends to perform. His power is His will.** The ability of God to do what is necessary to be done, and His willingness to make His creatures happy, should be deeply considered by all those who approach Him in prayer.” [Clarke, *Commentary*]

Make me clean: All three evangelists say *cleanse* instead of *heal*, because of the notion of uncleanness which specially attached to this malady.

Mt 8:3 And Jesus put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

Mk 1:41,42 And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth His hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean. And as soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.

Lk 5:13 And He put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.

Jesus was moved by the leper’s appeal. “Living in the midst of a people who were placing all the emphasis on legal trivialities, which was true especially of the leaders, He stands out as the One whose emphasis is on ‘the weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy, and fidelity’ (Matt 23:23). The sorrows of the people are His own sorrows. He dearly and intensely loves the burdened ones, and is eager to help them.” [Hendriksen, *Mark*]

his leprosy was cleansed: as with the demoniac and Peter’s mother-in-law, the leper was healed completely and instantaneously.

Touched him: “Men shunned lepers and we are safe in saying that nobody but other lepers had touched this man in years. That touch spoke volumes.” [Morris, *Luke*]

be thou clean: “The most sovereign authority is assumed in this speech of our blessed Lord — I WILL. There is here no supplication of any power superior to His own; and the event proved to the fullest conviction, and by the clearest demonstration, that His authority was absolute, and His power unlimited. Be thou cleansed, *katharisthāti*; a single word is enough.” [Clarke, *Commentary*]

Mt 8:4 And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

Mk 1:43,44 And He straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away; and saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

Lk 5:14 And He charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

The leper is sternly warned or charged: the verb used here means to snort (as a horse). “Starting, perhaps, from the idea of the snorting of an impatient horse, or simply in general from the idea of making noise in anger, it is easy to see how readily this develops into ‘charge or warn sternly,’ as here and in Matt 9:30; and into ‘reproached’ or ‘scolded’.” [Hendriksen, *Mark*] Wuest: “*and sternly charging him.*” “The word is originally *to snort*, as of mettlesome horses. Hence, to *fret*, or *chafe*, or be otherwise strongly moved; and then, as a result of this feeling, to *admonish* or *rebuke urgently*. The Lord evidently spoke to him [as a dictator, leaving no room for debate].... He charged: a strong word, often, of military orders. Aristotle uses it of a physician: *to prescribe*.” [Vincent, *Word Studies*]

Why Jesus made this warning is not known for sure. Perhaps because He wanted to be known for His preaching rather than the miracles; perhaps because He knew the enthusiasm of His healings could lead to a premature crisis. “Unwise witness to a physical healing would attract others from wrong motives. This is one of the paradoxes of the Christ. He sees the hungry multitude, has pity

on them and feeds them; and yet He rebukes multitudes who come to Him for feeding (Jn 6:26). He has compassion on the sick, and does not turn them away when they come for healing; but He makes no attempt to seek out the sick and heal them. Rather, He withdraws Himself when the throng of those seeking healing becomes too great, for this makes His teaching ministry, that is along able to interpret His healing ministry, impossible. He was primarily Teacher, not Healer.” [Cole, *Mark*] **This underlines the importance of our motives in everything we do.**

Offer the gift Moses commanded: according to Lev 14:1-7 a healed leper was to bring an offering of two clean living birds. One was to be killed with the blood sprinkled over the healed man seven times; the other bird was dipped in the blood of the dead bird and then released. In so doing, Jesus made sure that this man’s standing in public and religious life was completely restored. Note that while Jesus condemned the human traditions that make them void God’s holy law, he does not disobey that law. “Now all this was to be done for a testimony to them; to prove that this leper, who was doubtless well known in the land, had been thoroughly cleansed; and thus, in this private way, to give full proof to the priesthood that Jesus was the true Messiah. The Jewish rabbis allowed that curing the lepers should be a characteristic of the Messiah; therefore the obstinacy of the priests, etc., in rejecting Christ, was utterly inexcusable.” [Clark, *Commentary*]

Mk 1:45 But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to Him from every quarter.

Lk 5:15,16 But so much the more went there a fame abroad of Him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. And He withdrew Himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

In v40 we saw the leper at his best while in this verse we see him at his worse, illustrating the sad truth that **even in the best of the saints there remains the taint of the old nature.** Another truth is demonstrated here as well: **any disobedience, regardless of how understandable from the human standpoint, always hinders the work of Christ.**

And He withdrew Himself into the wilderness: “Or rather, He frequently withdrew into the desert. This I believe to be the import of the original words. **He made it a frequent custom to withdraw from the multitudes for a time, and pray, teaching hereby the ministers of the Gospel that they are to receive fresh supplies of light and power from God by prayer, that they may be the more successful in their work; and that they ought to seek frequent opportunities of being in private with God and their books.** A man can give nothing unless he first receive it; and no man can be successful in the ministry who does not constantly depend upon God, for the excellence of the power is all from him. Why is there so much preaching, and so little good done? Is it not because the preachers mix too much with the world, keep too long in the crowd, and are so seldom in private with God? Reader! Art thou a herald for the Lord of hosts? Make full proof of thy ministry! Let it never be said of thee, ‘He forsook all to follow Christ, and to preach His Gospel, but there was little or no fruit of his labor; for he ceased to be a man of prayer, and got into the spirit of the world.’ Alas! alas! is this luminous star, that was once held in the right hand of Jesus, fallen from the firmament of heaven, down to the EARTH!” [Clarke, *Commentary*]

A Paralytic is Lowered Through the Roof at Capernaum

Mt 9:1 And He entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into His own city.

Mk 2:1 And again He entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that He was in the house.

Jesus is here returning from His initial Galilean tour to His adopted city of Capernaum, quite probably to the house of Peter.

Mk 2:2 And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and He preached the word unto them.

Lk 5:17 And it came to pass on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

Many came from throughout the city: those genuine disciples who came to love and learn; those “rubbernecks” who was filled with curiosity at this marvel; and even the rabbis who came to examine the work of this new prophet. Their concern over the ministry of Jesus brought not only those religious leaders who were close-by, but some came even from as far as Jerusalem and Judea. Although there were the healings (Luke’s account), the main purpose of Jesus was being fulfilled in the preaching of the Word.

He was teaching: “The pronoun has a slightly emphatic force: *He* as distinguished from the Pharisees and teachers of the law.” [Vincent, *Word Studies*]

Mt 9:2a And, behold, they brought to Him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed:

Mk 2:3 And they come unto Him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was born of four.

Lk 5:18 And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring Him in, and to lay him before Him.

In the midst of Jesus’ teaching and healing, a noise is heard overhead of one stricken by palsy. To what degree was his sickness is unknown but this much is clear: this man was unable to move about on his own and had to be carried. Most of the translations and

commentaries I've seen refers to this man as a paralytic. Wuest: "*and they came, bearing to Him a paralytic who had been picked up and was being carried by four men.*"

Mk 2:4 *And when they could not come nigh unto Him for the press, they uncovered the roof where He was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.*

Lk 5:19 *And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus.*

The houses of the day were generally flat with transverse rafters, overlaid with brushwood, tree branches and the like. Over this was a thick layer of mud or clay mixed with chopped straw (Clarke says tiles). What these friends of the paralytic did was literally "unroof the roof" (apestegasan t̄an stegān). "Broken it up: literally, *scooped it out*. Very graphic and true to fact. A modern roof would be *untiled* or *unshingled*; but an oriental roof would have to be *dug* to make such an opening as was required. A composition of mortar, tar, ashes, and sand is spread upon the roofs, and rolled hard, and grass grows in the crevices. On the houses of the poor in the country the grass grows more freely, and goats may be seen on the roofs cropping it. In some cases, as in this, stone slabs are laid across the joists. Note Luke 5:19 where it is said they let him down *through the tiles*; so that they would be obliged, not only to dig through the grass and earth, but also to pry up the tiles." [Vincent, *Word Studies*] The bed or pallet was a poor-man's bed, possibly only a thin, straw-filled mattress.

Mt 9:2b *and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.*

Mk 2:5 *When Jesus saw their faith, He said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.*

Lk 5:20 *And when He saw their faith, He said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.*

Here in front of Jesus was this paralytic laying with his friends still atop the roof holding the ropes. Note nothing was said, nothing was shouted by either the friends or the palsied man (perhaps the disease had progressed to the point that the man could *not* have spoken). But though they had no words, they did have trust.

Seeing their faith: another example of healing which conflicts with today's healing movement. We have seen a boy healed by the faith of his father (lesson 28), a demonized man healed without asking (lesson 29), Peter's mother-in-law healed because the disciples asked Jesus (lesson 29), and now a paralytic healed because of the faith of his four friends. We will come across examples of people healed in which Jesus will say it was due to their faith, but taken as a whole it would be unwise to take a single incident or a few incidents and build a doctrine upon that framework. The gospels provide no single basis upon which each healing was provided. The standard Baptist teaching on this bears repeated: **it is not the "how" that the gospels emphasize but the "why"; the healings of Jesus' ministry was to draw attention to the One healing and to authenticate the message He brought forth.** The manner in which these healings were applied is varied as we have already witnessed.

Thy sins be forgiven: to infer from this that the man was in this condition due to his sin is unwarranted. While a common belief among the Jews as well as others, Jesus fought to combat that error during His ministry. Jesus so spoke in this manner to illustrate a point He was about to make.

Mt 9:3 *And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.*

Mk 2:6,7 *But there was certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?*

Lk 5:21 *And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?*

"In the hearts of the scribes who had come here to find fault with Jesus there was no room for participation in the joy of this grievously stricken man who at this moment heard words of encouragement and cheer. In a highly derogatory manner these enemies are saying something decidedly unfavorable. However, they are not saying it out loud, only *within their hearts*. But hearts are very important. Are they not the mainsprings of dispositions as well as of feelings and thoughts? Does not a man's heart show what kind of a person he really is?" [Hendriksen, *Mark*]

Note the arising of conflict. "Of course, the conflict could not be avoided; for He stressed love, they legalism; He God's holy law, they law-burying tradition; He freedom, they bondage; He the inner attitude, they the outward act. How they hated to surrender to Him their prestige, their hold on the public!" [Hendriksen, *Mark*]

Reasoning: "The word *dialogue* is derived from this, and the meaning literally is, that *they held a dialogue* with themselves." [Vincent, *Word Studies*]

blasphemy: "Comes either from a word meaning to *hurt or blast the reputation or credit of another*, or from one which means to *smite with reports*. Whenever it is used in reference to GOD, it simply signifies, to speak impiously of his nature, or attributes, or works. Injurious speaking is its proper translation when referred to man. The scribes were the literati of that time; and **their learning, because not used in dependence on God, rendered them proud, envious, and obstinate. Unsanctified knowledge has still the same effect: that light serves only to blind and lead men out of the way which is not joined with uprightness of heart. The most sacred truths often become an occasion of delusion, where men are under the government of their evil**

passions.” [Clarke, *Commentary*] Wuest: “*who is this fellow who is speaking impious and reproachful things injurious to the divine majesty of God?*” (Luke’s account); “*He is by contemptuous speech coming short of the reverence due to God.*” (Mark’s account).

who can forgive sins but God? : the scribes were correct in this understanding but wrong in their application. When a person sins against another, there is a proper place for going to that person and asking forgiveness, and a proper place for our forgiving others. But **ultimately all sins are against the Lord and only God can forgive the sinner.**

Mt 9:4,5 And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?

Mk 2:8,9 And immediately when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, He said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?

Lk 5:22,23 But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts? Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?

Not only were the scribes accusing in their hearts Jesus of blasphemy but they thought Him flippant as well. Of course anyone could stand there and say someone’s sins were forgiven for who could enter the throne-room of God and see if this were true or not? But to pronounce the man healed was a different issue for all could witness that truth or failure. It is for this reason that Jesus answers as He does.

Jesus knowing (literally, seeing) their thoughts: “In telling them what the thoughts of their hearts were, (for they had expressed nothing publicly,) He gave them the fullest proof of His power to forgive sins; because God only can forgive sins, and God only can search and know the heart. Jesus pronounced the man’s sins forgiven; and gave the scribes the fullest proof of His power to do so, by telling them what, in the secret of their souls, they thought on the subject. God sounds the secrets of all hearts — no sin escapes His notice; how senseless then is the sinner to think he sins securely when unseen by men! Let us take heed to our hearts, as well as to our conduct, for God searches out and condemns all that does not spring from, and leads not to Himself.” [Clarke, *Commentary*]

Perceived: “The preposition gives the force of *fully*. He was not only *immediately* aware of their thoughts, but *clearly* and *fully* aware.” [Vincent, *Word Studies*]

Which is easier?: each requires omnipotence for both is equally impossible.

Mt 9:6 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith He to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.

Mk 2:10,11 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (He saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

Lk 5:24 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (He said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house.

The scribes reasoned that miracles in the physical realm were required to establish His authority in the spiritual realm, then let them see both with this miracle! Here we see the purpose of the healings were to glorify Jesus in His ministry.

Arise, take up thy bed: “Being enabled to obey this command was the public proof that the man was made whole. Such a circumstance should not pass without improvement. **A man gives proof of his conversion from sin to God who imitates this paralytic person.** He who does not rise and stand upright, but either continues groveling on the earth, or falls back as soon as he is got up, is not yet cured of his spiritual palsy. When we see a penitent enabled to rejoice in hope of God’s glory, and to walk in the way of his commandments, he affords us all the proof which we can reasonably require, that his conversion is real: the proof sufficient to satisfy himself is the witness of the Holy Spirit in his own heart; but this is a matter of which those who are without cannot judge: they must form their opinion from his conduct, and judge of the tree by its fruits.” [Clarke, *Commentary*]

Power: “Or better, *authority*, as RSV in margin. The word is derived from *exesti*, *it is permitted* or *lawful*. It combines the ideas of *right* and *might*. Authority or *right* is the dominant meaning in the New Testament.” [Vincent, *Word Studies*]

Mt 9:7,8 And he arose, and departed to his house. But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.

Mk 2:12 And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

Lk 5:25,26 And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day.

The paralytic immediately obeyed, to the amazement of all the bystanders. Observe again the total immediate healing: a paralytic who had not walked for some time would not have had the strength to walk and carry his bed, yet this man was wholly healed.

The crowd was amazed: literally awe-struck, filled with awe and seized with astonishment. Wuest: “*and amazement to the pint of*

being beside themselves, seized upon all, and they kept on glorifying God.”

Strange things: paradoza, from two words meaning *contrary to* + *opinion*. “Something contrary to received opinion, and hence *strange*. Compare the English *paradox*. Only here in New Testament.” [Vincent, *Word Studies*] “A paradox is something that appears false and absurd, but is not really so: or, something contrary to the commonly received opinion. We have seen wonders wrought which seem impossible; and we should conclude them to be tricks and illusions, were it not for the indisputable evidence we have of their reality.” [Clarke, *Commentary*]