



The Impact of Divine Healing on Evangelism Based on Acts of the Apostles Chapter 3 and Its Significance for Believers

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ABSTRACT

Divine healing sometimes sparks fervent debates among Bible-believing individuals about its central role in the Bible. The undeniable fact is that divine healing occurred in both the Old and New Testaments, indicating that it is not in conflict with the teachings of the Bible. When Jesus healed someone, as He frequently did, His motive was never self-glorification but rather to aid those in need. He is a compassionate Healer, a Savior, addressing both physical and spiritual ailments. In Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 3, a divine healing event is recounted, and it holds significance for evangelism. To ensure accurate and accountable data in this study, the author employed library research and exposition studies using inductive methods. The primary goals of this study were, first, to provide a clear and detailed explanation of divine healing based on Acts Chapter 3. Second, to elucidate the close relationship between faith and divine healing. Lastly, to explore the impact of divine healing on evangelism as reflected by its followers. In conclusion, divine healing is a manifestation of God's work for those who have faith in the name of Jesus. It serves the purpose of bringing individuals closer to God, nurturing love for God, inspiring a life dedicated to glorifying Him, and producing positive impacts on others.

Keywords: *Divine Healing, Evangelism, People Believe*

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INTRODUCTION

The debate among Christians regarding divine healing is a contentious issue. On one side, there are individuals who level unfounded accusations, while on the other, they make exaggerated claims. Consequently, some Christians fail to acknowledge the work of those who practice these gifts, dismissing it as mere fantasy or even as something associated with the devil (Donald Bridge & David Phipers, 1999).

In his book, Emanuel G. Singgih suggests that understanding the realm of prayer involves not only viewing prayer as a request but also recognizing it as a form of medicine. This perspective is reflected in advertisements in newspapers promoting "gifted individuals" who can facilitate healing through prayer. People may perceive prayer as

a form of medicine, as long as they remain open to the benefits of modern medicine and the advancements in the medical field (Emanuel G. Singgih, 2000). Abineno, in his book, emphasizes that some proponents of "divine healing" subscribe to the belief that faith plays a functional role in the process of healing. Faith is regarded as a potent force within individuals, one that can be harnessed as a tool for healing, alongside other conventional healing methods (Ch. Abineno, 2004).

In the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments contain accounts of divine healing experienced by various individuals. For instance, Miriam was healed of leprosy after the confession of sins made by Aaron and Miriam (Numbers 12:11-16). There are also instances of divine healing in the Old Testament, including the son of a woman from Shunem, who was prayed for by Elisha (2 Kings 4:33-37), the healing of a widow's son in Zarephath by the prophet Elijah (1 Kings 17:7-24), and King Hezekiah's healing from illness, accompanied by a 15-year extension of his life (2 Kings 20:1-10).

In the New Testament, miracles play a significant role in the ministry of the Lord Jesus and are closely connected to the evangelistic work He conducted. Jesus commanded His disciples to heal the sick (Matthew 10:8) and indicated that His disciples would perform the same works He did. Additionally, in his first letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 12), the Apostle Paul includes the gift of healing among several other spiritual gifts. James provides guidance on caring for the sick (James 5:13-16). All of these examples lead to the conclusion that divine healing has a role in the proclamation of the Gospel (Donald Bridge & David Phypers, 1999).

It is important to note that divine healing is not a means to seek personal profit in terms of material gain or recognition. Instead, divine healing is a gift from God that should be received with gratitude, with the ultimate purpose of bringing glory to His name.

RESEARCH METHOD

To ensure the collection of accurate and accountable data in this study, the author employed library research methods and conducted exposition studies using inductive approaches. The primary focus of the author's research is on Acts Chapter 3, and reference is also made to other relevant passages in the Bible that support this topic.

Research, as defined in the General Indonesian Dictionary, involves careful examination, investigation, and the systematic and objective collection, management, analysis, and testing of data to address a problem or test a hypothesis, ultimately leading to the development of general principles (Indonesian General Dictionary, 1995).

Juanda emphasized that through research, one can gain an understanding of, solve, and anticipate problems in human life (Juanda, 2007). The two exposition studies using the inductive method are rooted in the Bible, particularly focusing on Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 3, and related verses. The goal is to achieve optimal results and provide genuine benefits to readers. In his book, Saparman explained that the term "exposition" derives from the Latin word "expositio," meaning explanation (Saparman, 2007).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Acts of the Apostles is a book in the New Testament that offers a comprehensive account of the Holy Spirit's role in the lives of early church believers. The Holy Spirit's work is evident in its ability to convict people of their sins, provide guidance, instill strength and courage for the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ, both to Jews and non-Jews.

According to Browning in *The Bible Dictionary*, "Writing stories about the first generation of the Christian Church would have been impossible without Acts" (W.R.F. Browning, 2007). The central theme of Acts is

"Witness for Christ," with Acts 1:8 serving as the key verse: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth." This verse underscores that those sent as Christ's witnesses are equipped with spiritual power and have a specific area of ministry.

The estimated date of writing is around 62-63 AD, as the narrative ends with a report on Paul's imprisonment in Rome (Elim Simamora). This is consistent with the explanation provided by Pfeiffer and Harrison in *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, suggesting that "probably at some date not long after the end of the narrative, then this book was written in AD 62" (Charles F. Pfeiffer & Evertt F. Harrison).

The Impact of Divine Healing on Evangelism: Based on the Story of the Apostles Chapter 3

The third chapter of the Acts of the Apostles holds a significant place in church history as it recounts a well-known event. It marks the occurrence of the first divine healing in the early church. Prior to this, the power of God had been evident during the ascension of Jesus and on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended. Additionally, 3,000 people were converted upon hearing Peter's sermon. It is essential to consider miraculous healings in the context of the broader teachings in the Bible concerning suffering, illness, and mortality. The Bible clearly articulates that suffering, sickness, and death are inherent aspects of the human condition, stemming from the fall into sin, and will only be eradicated when God creates a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:4) (Donald Bridge & David Phypers, 1999).

The term "healing," denoting the process of being restored to health, is derived from the root word "cured," which signifies regaining health after an illness. On the other hand, the word "divine" pertains to having attributes associated with God. H.L. Smack, in the book "Miraculous Healing," defines divine healing as a miracle from God accessible to every believer in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a form of healing bestowed by God to those who believe and live in accordance with His revealed will in the Bible. This method of healing is described as the quickest, safest, and most perfect, without any cost. It encompasses healing for the body, soul, and spirit, resulting in total healing and a life filled with happiness and God's blessings (Jonarifgultom, 2008). Jesus and the apostles performed numerous healings, as documented in the four Gospels and the Book of Acts. Jesus had promised His followers that such healings would occur. It is essential for both the healer and the one being healed to express faith in God, except in cases where individuals are unaware. However, the absence of divine healing for some should not be interpreted as a lack of faith, as even the apostle Paul, a devout believer, experienced illness that was not divinely healed.

Divine healing has been present since the time of the apostles and continues to this day, despite enduring skepticism from some quarters. It is perhaps inevitable that there will be doubters, as there have been instances of dishonest individuals claiming to be servants of God while engaging in faith healing practices. Notably, Luke, referred to as the "beloved physician," was a friend of the Apostle Paul, suggesting that the early church had a place for medical healing alongside miraculous healing (J. Stephen Lang, 2002).

In his book, Charles C. Ryrie defines divine healing as the capacity to exhibit special signs, including physical healing (Charles C. Ryrie, 1991). Paul demonstrated this gift in Ephesus (Acts 19:11-12). However, there were cases where he either did not or could not use this gift for healing, such as with Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:27), Timothy (1 Timothy 5:23), and Trophimus (2 Timothy 4:20).

The power of divine healing remains present today, and it should not be denied. It is unfortunate if there are ministers of faith who do not believe in it. Nevertheless, it is crucial to scrutinize whether the Gospel teaches

that perfect healing can be obtained in this world. Does the atonement of Christ automatically guarantee freedom from illness for believers? The outward interpretation of perfectionism, which is prominent in the teachings of figures like Paul Yonggi Cho and other successful evangelists, warrants examination. Such views can lead to overly simplistic assumptions that equate faith with perfect health (blessing) and illness with a lack of faith (cursing) (Herlianto, 2006). Andry Hartono, in his book, expresses a similar sentiment, highlighting the belief among some Christians that healing is attainable through unwavering faith in Jesus. This perspective is rooted in Jesus' words about faith the size of a mustard seed moving mountains and making all things possible (Andry Hartono, 2006). As a result, Christian healers pray, and at times fast, laying their hands and anointing the heads of the sick with oil in an effort to cure various diseases attributed to the influence of the devil.

Divine healing is the work of the Holy Spirit, bringing healing to anyone who earnestly believes in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus on the cross. This form of divine healing is a miraculous act of God, rooted entirely in His grace, affirming the truth of His Word concerning complete salvation in Christ, encompassing the salvation of the body, soul, and spirit. It's important to note, as Warren W. Wiersbe explained in his book, that not all believers, whether men or women, experience miraculous deliverance (Warren W. Wiersbe, 2008).

In his book, Wiersbe also shared his personal experience of God miraculously touching his body when others believed he would not survive. He acknowledges that God can heal but recognizes that God doesn't always need to heal to prove someone's faith. The author of Hebrews (11:36-38) highlights that many unnamed believers were not delivered from their tribulations, yet God still honored their faith. Often, what is required is not just faith to be released from a situation but more faith to endure it, just as the three Hebrew youths, Daniel's friends, needed to trust and obey God even when He did not intervene in their circumstances (Daniel 3:16-18) (Warren W. Wiersbe, 2008).

One way God demonstrates His love is by bestowing the gift of healing upon believers, enabling them to serve others for God's glory. As Leon Morris elucidates in his book, God, in His love, has provided everything His people needed in the past, including sending the Holy Spirit to guide and lead them in the path of love. God's love is a potent and majestic reality that kindles love in the hearts of His people. Nothing surpasses the power of love (1 Corinthians 13:13) (Leon Morris, 2006).

Divine healing, granted by God, not only serves to strengthen the fellowship of believers as the body of Christ but also leaves a lasting impact on both the recipients and those who witness it. Divine healing is a means through which God can convey the Gospel personally to individuals and to a broader audience.

The term "Evangelism," as defined in the Big Indonesian Dictionary, refers to the "process, action, or method of proclaiming the Gospel." The word originates from the root "gospel," which signifies "good tidings" (Suharso and Ana Retnoningsih, 2005). Therefore, evangelism encompasses the process or method of delivering the Gospel or conveying the good news.

In his book, Richardson asserts that "evangelism means conveying or proclaiming the good news. It is a biblical practice and an essential element of the church's existence and God's purposes" (Rick Richardson, 2010). Similarly, Browning, in the Bible Dictionary, describes the Gospel as news about "joyful" events or "joyful news" (Browning, 2007).

Divine Healing in the Name of Jesus Christ (Acts 3:6)

Browning, in *The Bible Dictionary*, clarified that "most individual Hebrew names in the Bible are compound names that begin or end with the divine name" (Browning, 2007). Darmawijaya, in his book, explained that the phrase "in the name of Jesus Christ, the Nazarene, walk" reflects the actions of Peter and John. They emulated what Jesus frequently did during His ministry, even though their actions might not have been grandiose. Second, Peter and John had unwavering faith in the power of the risen and glorious Jesus, who was now present in their lives. This faith and strength were manifested in their actions, thanks to the glorious presence of Jesus. Their service was a clear expression of this confession put into practice. Their strength (Acts 1:8) came from God, who had glorified Jesus after His resurrection. Healing and miracles are gifts of the Holy Spirit to the church (1 Cor. 12:9), intended primarily for those in need and not for personal gain (Darmawijaya, 2005).

The name "Jesus" is derived from the Latin form of the Greek translation of the Hebrew word "Joshua" or "Yehosua," meaning "salvation is Yahweh." "Christ" is a translation of "Christos," used in the Greek Septuagint (LXX) for the Hebrew term "Messiah," signifying the anointed one. Originally, it referred to anointed kings, such as David, anointed by Samuel (1 Sam. 16:13), and his successors (Ps. 2:2; Dan. 9:25). In the New Testament, it is applied to Jesus as the one who fulfills Old Testament hopes (Luke 2:11) (Browning, 2007). Wiersbe, in his book, pointed out that Peter and John had no money to give as alms, but what the beggar truly needed was not money. His soul needed salvation, and his body needed healing, which money could not provide. Through the power of the name of Jesus, the beggar was completely healed (Warren W. Wiersbe, 2002).

The name "Jesus Christ of Nazareth" mentioned by Peter to the paralyzed man was no ordinary name. It represented a person anointed by God to be the Savior of all who believe in Him. The paralyzed man's faith in the powerful name of Jesus allowed him to experience divine healing (R. Dixon, 2005). According to David, the primary focus of those seeking healing should be Christ as the healer. This goes beyond rituals, feelings, or manifestations experienced. The goal for those seeking healing is to encounter the risen Lord Jesus Christ and give God the attention and praise (David J. Smith, 2013).

In his book, Drewes explained that he did not provide gold or silver money but, rather, through Peter, the power of the name of Jesus Christ became evident. "The name of Jesus Christ" refers to His inherent power. This presence is indeed potent, although it can also bring suffering, as Jesus Himself endured. Humans cannot manipulate this presence magically; it can only be invoked through faith in Him. This is what Peter explicitly conveys in verse 16. It's worth recalling that in the Old Testament, the name of God, YHWH or the LORD, signifies the power to save (e.g., Ps. 20:2, 8; 96:2) because God is present and reveals His personality through His name. The power of Jesus Christ's presence becomes a reality! When Peter commanded, "walk," the formerly paralyzed man began walking, and the people witnessed this miraculous transformation. The name of Jesus Christ, resurrected by God, also resurrected the paralyzed man. Through the name of Jesus, the power of God, His own divine power, becomes manifest (B.F. Drewes, 2014).

In conclusion, divine healing is experienced by individuals due to their unwavering belief in the name of Jesus, a name filled with the power to bring physical and spiritual healing and restoration.

Divine Healing Results in Praise to God (Acts 8-9)

The incident of divine healing involving a man who had been paralyzed for 40 years was a remarkable event that deeply affected those in the house of God. Many of them were aware of this man's condition, and only by invoking the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth could he miraculously rise and be freed from his paralysis. He

not only stood, but also walked and leaped while glorifying God, all of which were witnessed by the surrounding crowds.

Warren W. Wiersbe, in his book, explains that if God's glory is magnified through the deliverance or healing of His people, He will certainly perform it. Conversely, if He deems it more glorifying not to deliver or heal, He may choose not to do so. It is crucial not to jump to the conclusion that a lack of faith is the reason if a child of God is not healed or delivered (Warren W. Wiersbe, 2008). Meanwhile, Merrill C. Tenney suggests that "sustained faith results in healing and increasing enlightenment" (Merril C. Tenney, 1996).

Wiersbe underscores in his book that faith is a cornerstone in the lives of Christians. It springs forth from hearing the Word of Christ and is instrumental in the salvation of sinners (Eph. 2:8-9). Believers are called to live by faith (2 Cor. 5:7). Without faith, it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6), and anything not founded on faith amounts to sin. Faith is not a vague sentiment to be conjured; rather, it is the unwavering belief that God's Word is true and the confidence that actions rooted in that Word will yield His blessings (Warren W. Wiersbe, 1999).

Divine Healing Facilitates Evangelism (Acts 3:11-26)

The divine healing experienced by the paralyzed man at the entrance of the house of God left the onlookers astonished and awed, causing them to gather around Peter and John, who were located in Solomon's Porch. In his book, Drewes elucidates that Solomon's Porch was an elongated, roofed hall without walls, typically used as a meeting place for various congregations, including Jews who followed Jesus the Messiah (Acts 5:12). According to Luke, it was situated within the house of God.

At the outset of his sermon, Peter sought to dispel any misconceptions. Here, the fallacy that suggested Peter and John's individual power or piety as the source of the paralyzed man's healing was dismissed. The apostles did not seek self-promotion, instead positioning themselves as genuine witnesses of Jesus' resurrection (B.F. Drewes, 2014). Darmawijaya similarly explained in his book that the events at Solomon's Porch held significant importance in the early congregation's life. This location was where Jesus, during His time with His disciples, had delivered His messages (John 10:29). According to the Acts of the Apostles, Jesus' disciples subsequently utilized this spot as a meeting place, serving as a memorial to their shared experiences with Jesus (Acts 5:2). The site served not only as a connection to Jewish tradition but also as a symbol of their association with Jesus' work (Darmawijaya, 2005).

Furthermore, Darmawijaya also explained that on that occasion, Peter once again shared the joyful news related to the healing of the paralyzed man. The incident served as a manifestation of salvation, echoing the work of Jesus and inviting people to repent and strengthen their faith. The scriptural testimony corroborates that this act of salvation aligns with God's plan and will. So, what did Peter proclaim?

First, Peter underscored that the event was not the result of his personal strength (verse 12). While something witnessed by many with their own eyes may seem self-evident, Peter recognized the need for careful consideration. He did not lay claim to the power that Simon once believed he had (Acts 8:9). Moreover, he disavowed any notion that the event was a result of his and John's piety. Why did Peter take this stance? Had he forgotten Jesus' promise: "Ask and it will be given to you" (Luke 11:9)? Peter must have been conscious of the power of faith and realized that faith was at the core of this event, closely tied to prayer. However, Peter's focus in this instance was on bearing witness. He was a witness to God's healing work, and this aspect must not be overlooked. The miracle occurred as a result of God's involvement in the event, so it was not Peter's own strength that should take the spotlight but rather the work of God, performing these remarkable and astounding deeds.

Second, Peter stressed the connection between this event and Jesus Christ, who had risen to glory. On this occasion, the power of Christ's resurrection was demonstrated by healing the paralyzed man. Peter placed the healing within the framework of God's self-revelation working through Jesus Christ, His Son. This alignment was consistent with the traditions of their forefathers, acknowledging that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had the power to accomplish great works, even in the case of the paralyzed man. It was this God who glorified His Son for the work of human salvation. In doing so, what was previously conveyed to Moses (Exodus 3:15) was now fulfilled (Darmawijaya, 2005).

Barclay, in his book, discussed three key points about early Christian preaching. First, preachers in the early church consistently emphasized that the crucifixion was the greatest crime in human history. Whenever they spoke of it, their voices trembled with gravity, striving to impress upon people the magnitude of the evil of the cross. They proclaimed, "See what sin can do." Second, these preachers always underscored the truth of the resurrection. Why? The answer is simple: without the resurrection, the Church could not exist. The resurrection serves as proof that Jesus is indestructible and the Lord of life and death. It is the ultimate demonstration that God is the driving force, impervious to any other power. Third, early preachers consistently highlighted the power of the risen Lord. They never considered themselves the source of this power but merely the conduit. They were acutely aware of their limitations but equally aware that there were no limits to what they could accomplish when acting through and in the risen Christ. The secret to the Christian life lay within this power. As long as a Christian's focus remained on themselves and their own efforts, the result would be nothing but failure, frustration, and fear. However, by shifting their perspective to "not I, but Christ in me," they could only experience peace and empowerment (William Barclay, 2007).

In the book "Bible Doctrine," William and Stanley explained that God, the great healer, derives His greatness from being the Lord of hosts, the sovereign ruler over His creation. He possesses the power to both wound and heal, as articulated in Deuteronomy 32:39. It is within God's authority to employ sickness for His own purposes. For instance, when Miriam fell sick and was subsequently healed, it served as a lesson and a form of punishment for the Israelites, as recounted in Numbers 12:10-15. Similarly, King Joram was afflicted with a deadly disease by God as a punishment for his sins, as described in 2 Chronicles 21:18-19. Job, too, underwent severe physical trials, although it is evident from the Bible that the sickness and suffering inflicted upon him originated with Satan. God, the supreme ruler of heaven and earth, allows Satan's actions only within defined limits and for a noble purpose, even employing them to gain victory over Satan, as seen in the Book of Job (Job 1:20-22; 19:25) (William W. Menzies & Stanley Horton, 2003).

Howard, in his writings, explained that miracles occurred with the intention of inspiring faith in God's saving power, which operates through the Lord Jesus (Mark 9:23, etc.). Miracles were not solely intended to display God's great and awe-inspiring power; in fact, the Pharisees regarded these signs as potentially indicating the power of Satan (Mark 3:22). However, individuals with spiritual insight can recognize that these miracles are signs of God working through Jesus to fulfill His promises to humanity, designed to awaken and strengthen faith in Him. Howard further noted that early Christians exhibited the same power as the Lord Jesus. They healed the sick and miraculously released the imprisoned. All these acts serve as signs, attesting to the continued operation of God's power in His disciples, confirming their message of salvation, and delivering a warning about the gravity of God's judgment (Howard Marshall, 2004).

Its Relevance for Believers

In the preceding discussion, it is evident that divine healing is a remarkable work of God granted to a man who had been paralyzed since birth, enduring over forty years of paralysis. His life was defined by begging for alms due to his condition. The encounter between the paralyzed man and Peter and John brought about a significant transformation in his life. Peter and John served as instruments of God, demonstrating His power through the name of Jesus. Through this powerful name, the paralyzed man was healed and filled with immense joy and gratitude. The healing of this man presented an opportunity for Peter and John to proclaim the Gospel, leading to many people placing their faith in Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

The events described in the Acts of the Apostles are not beyond the realm of possibility in the lives of contemporary believers. Why? Because the power of the name of Jesus persists in the past, present, and future. His power transcends limitations of space, time, and age. With this understanding, the Church must actively fulfill its responsibilities as God's people entrusted with the Great Commission in this world.

First and foremost, the Church must empower individuals who have been bestowed with the gift of healing. Each believer is endowed by God with diverse gifts, one of which is the gift of healing. This gift is freely given by God to believers with the purpose of sustaining and strengthening the ministry of each believer (1 Cor. 12).

The gift of healing, exemplified in Peter's case, serves as a means to further the ministry of preaching the Gospel and winning souls for Christ. This remains relevant today, emphasizing the role of the Church in empowering every believer who possesses the gift of healing. This empowerment is instrumental in fulfilling the Church's mission of carrying out the Great Commission.

Second, the Church Needs to Pray for the Sick

Secondly, the Church must engage in fervent prayer for the sick. One of the ways for the Church to share the good news and evangelize is through the act of praying for individuals who are unwell, whether it be in their homes, hospitals, or any place where it is feasible. The more proactive the Church becomes in praying for the sick, the greater its impact on the ministry. As the number of sick individuals who experience divine healing increases, the number of people who genuinely seek to glorify God will also rise.

Healing through prayer is not confined to ancient times, as it continues to occur in the present day. Consequently, the Church should make an effort to visit and pray for those who are unwell, ensuring that they encounter not only physical healing but also spiritual restoration that becomes an integral part of their lives.

CONCLUSION

Divine healing is a manifestation of God's grace for those who hold firm belief in the power of the name of Jesus. This healing is not without purpose; it serves a distinct intention in God's plan. It aims to draw those who experience it closer to God, fostering love for Him and a life dedicated to glorifying God, all while having a profound impact on others. Indeed, divine healing can significantly contribute to the process of evangelism, as exemplified in the case of the crippled man situated at the Beautiful Gate. The miraculous healing of this paralyzed man drew the attention of numerous witnesses, creating a constant gathering around Peter and John. Seizing this opportunity, Peter and John fervently preached the message of Jesus, who endured suffering, death, and resurrection to atone for the sins of all humankind.

Divine healing stands as one of the means through which God authenticates their message, ultimately leading to a steady increase in the number of believers. The spiritual gifts bestowed upon the two apostles did not fuel arrogance or pride; rather, they humbly directed the newfound believers to glorify God, the source of their power. It is crucial for the Church to comprehend and actively engage in empowering individuals gifted with the ability to heal. Likewise, the Church should proactively participate in prayer for the sick. God cares deeply about the challenges humans face and desires to bestow blessings upon believers that surpass what anyone could ever ask or imagine, much like the profound transformation experienced by the crippled man.

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