

OVERVIEW SERIES:

Matthew 8:16-17

They Brought Unto Him Many

Jesus had healed the leper, the centurion's slave boy, and Peter's mother-in-law. Now, Matthew reports that the crowd brought unto Jesus "many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick" (v. 16).

As Jesus had done before and many times afterward (Matthew 14:14; Luke 5:17; 9:6), He here performed mass healings, without regard to individual faith or circumstances. Whether it was demon possession, or physical healing, Jesus healed all that was brought to Him. In doing this, Jesus gave evidence of His deity and messiahship. For all practical purposes Jesus banished sickness and disease from Palestine during the course of His earthly ministry.

Verse 17: He did this, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet [Isaiah 53:4], saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."

Jesus participated in human pain and sorrow in that He "took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." Jesus knew men's hearts and all of their inner feelings. He experienced the agony of being human. He experienced the bewilderment of being human. He experienced the confusion, and the despair of being human. He "took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." He understood the frustrations that "infirmities" and "sicknesses" bring. He knows all about our weaknesses. The writer of Hebrews said, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (4:15).

Jesus "took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." He took our infirmities when He became man (John 1:1, 14). He had to take upon Himself the infirmities of mankind, and in so doing, He experienced suffering and sickness unto death (Philippians 2:6-8). He was affected by His humanness in all points as you and I are, but, when He was affected, He remained sinless. It was not that Jesus carried away our diseases by contracting them, but by experiencing vicariously the pain they bring.

Jesus knew the root cause of infirmities, and sicknesses. Sin! He had to take our infirmities and baring our sicknesses – He had to become human. He had to do this in order to conquer sin. Sin was the cause, Christ was the cure.

One writer said, "Disease and death cannot be permanently removed until sin is permanently removed, and Jesus supreme work, therefore, was to conquer sin. In the atonement He dealt with sin, death, and sickness; and yet all three of those are still with us. When He died on the cross, Jesus bruised the head of Satan and broke the power of sin, and the person who trusts in the atoning work of Christ is immediately delivered from the penalty of sin and one day will be delivered from the very presence of sin and its consequences. The ultimate fulfillment of Christ's redeeming work is yet future for believers (cf. Rom. 8:22-25; 13:11). Christ died for men's sins, but Christians still fall into sin; He conquered death, but His followers still die; and He overcame pain and sickness, but His people still suffer and become ill. There is physical healing in the atonement, just as there is total deliverance from sin and death in the atonement; but we still await the fulfillment of that deliverance in the day when the Lord brings the end of suffering, sin, and death."

Those who claim that Christians should never be sick because there is healing in the atonement should also claim that Christians should never die, because Jesus conquered death in the atonement.

The same writer said, "The central message of the gospel is deliverance from sin. It is the good news about forgiveness, not health. Christ was made sin, not disease, and He died on the cross for our sin, not our sickness."

By: Jerry W. Arnold

All Rights Reserved