

# Jesus' Healing Ministry in Luke: A Model Approach to Minister with Those Who Are Suffering

Andresito P. Fernando\* and Ermina C. Fernando\*

*Adventist University of the Philippines*

apfernando@aup.edu.ph

mcfernando@aup.edu.ph

## ABSTRACT

This study determines the healing motif in the Gospel of Luke as performed by Jesus. The significance of Jesus' healing ministry has been highlighted in the Third Gospel through the prominence and distribution of healing narratives in the general outline of Luke's Gospel. The emphasis of Luke in presenting the episodes of Jesus' healing is profound and provides a timeless model on how to deal with human suffering. Using a qualitative approach by looking at various healing narratives within the Gospel, this study found out that Jesus' healing ministry has four basic characteristics that provide an example on how the church should minister with those who are suffering. First, Jesus' healing ministry is based on the revelation of Jesus' identity. It reveals who Jesus is. Through His ministry, Jesus fulfilled the Messianic prophecy in Isaiah 61:1, 2, a passage that uses the terminologies of the Year of Jubilee in the Book of Leviticus. Second, it is a ministry that is founded on genuine compassion. The Gospel of Luke alludes to many Old Testament passages that highlight the mercy and compassion of God. The third perspective of Jesus' healing ministry is the in-breaking of God's Kingdom. The coming of God's Kingdom through Jesus' healing highlights the themes of creation, forgiveness, holistic restoration, and liberation from the bondage of Satan. Lastly, the healing ministry of Jesus points to the future eschatological hope that nurtures faith, endurance, and anticipation of God's promise of total restoration in the future. The Church should emulate the model of Jesus' healing ministry by introducing Jesus to those who are suffering, making them the object of genuine compassion, treating them holistically by ministering to people's physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, and pointing them to the future promises of God that will find its fulfillment at the parousia.

**Keywords:** Messianic prophecy, Kingdom of God, holistic healing, eschatological hope.

## INTRODUCTION

The Synoptic Gospels present Jesus' threefold ministry of teaching, preaching, and healing (cf. Matt 4:23, Mark 1:39; Luke 4:44; Luke 6:17-19). However, Jesus spent more time in healing the people than preaching and teaching. The healing episodes in Jesus' ministry are not without purpose for these are demonstrations of His identity, power, redemptive work, and His

eschatological reign. The Gospel of Luke presents prominently the healing ministry of Jesus in line with the major theme of the Gospel.

Scholars recognize the significance of healing narratives in the Gospel of Luke. This recognition can be seen in the considerable amount of scholarly materials dealing with healing miracles in the third Gospel (Chad Hartsock, 2013, pp. 341-355; Christopher Bruno, 2010, 81-102; Thomas Brookins, 2011, 70-89; John Morgan Cadenhead, 2008). An important reading dealing with sickness and healing in Luke-Acts using the socio-scientific method is found in an article written by John J. Pilch (John Pilch, 1991, pp. 181-209). This motivates the readers of Luke to determine the significance of these healing episodes much more are their relevance at present.

Luke presents Jesus as a compassionate Savior, the Son of Man who manifests a deep and profound care for people who are suffering. The Third Gospel has been considered by many scholars as a social Gospel for it highlights more than any other Gospel Jesus' concern for the less fortunate, poor, and outcasts in society. However, beyond the Gospel's emphasis on Jesus's compassion and care, the healing miracles of Jesus reveal His identity and announce the in-breaking of God's Kingdom that brings about the salvation of humanity. The in-breaking of God's Kingdom as demonstrated through the healing miracles of Jesus shows that salvation includes the complete restoration of humanity and the ultimate triumph of God over human predicament. These motifs of Jesus's healing acts provide hope, cleansing, and assurance to the suffering. The Church as God's agency to bring healing to the world has a perfect and effective model by following the principles that the Gospel of Luke elucidates.

## **METHODS**

It is significant to examine the healing motif of Luke in the context of Jesus' life and ministry as well as how the present-day readers, particularly the church, should benefit from them and utilize the principles learned in performing its mission of bringing healing and promoting the well being of the people in the society. Through a qualitative approach and looking into the prominent healing narratives of the Third Gospel, this paper determines the significance of Jesus' healing ministry that serves as a model to minister to those who are suffering during the contemporary time.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The recognition of the significance of healing narratives in the Third Gospel is based on the prominence of healing miracles in Luke and their distribution in the general outline of the Third Gospel. Sixteen episodes of healing miracles of Jesus are recorded in the third Gospel and five of them are distinctively Lukan (cf. Luke 7:11-17; 13:10-13; 14:1-6; 17:11-19; 22:50,51). These healing episodes are well distributed throughout the Gospel of Luke (cf. 4:31-37; 4:38-44; 5:12-16; 5:17-26; 7:1-10; 7:11-17; 7:21; 8:26-39; 8:40-56; 9:37-45; 13:10-17; 17:11-19; and 18:35-43). The frequency and locations of healing narratives imply that they play a significant function and role in relation to the major emphasis of the Gospel of Luke.

## The Healing Ministry Reveals Jesus' Identity

The healing miracles that the third Gospel contains show who Jesus really is. Jesus interprets His work as the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecy. In other words, Jesus' works are intended to affirm that He is the promised Messiah. His synagogue visits in His hometown Nazareth allowed Him to read and expound the prophecy of Isaiah 61:1, 2. The event in Nazareth (cf. Luke 4:16-30) where Jesus appropriated to Himself the prophetic fulfillment of Isaiah 61:1,2, serves as an initial portrayal of the healing ministry of Jesus found elsewhere in the Gospel of Luke. Luke's narrative of Jesus' visit to the synagogue provided the way for Jesus' announcement of the coming of God's Kingdom (Albert Stein, 1993, p. 46). Jesus' application of Isaiah 61:1,2 to Himself alludes to a broader theme of the Old Testament. Isaiah uses the terminology of the year of Jubilee in a more extensive and eschatological term (Christopher R. Bruno, 2010, pp. 81-102). Isaiah's prophetic statement is more comprehensive in including the Gentiles and the outcasts. It is also eschatological because it foretells the future eschatological expectations of the Jews concerning the dawn of the new Messianic age. The Hebrew word “*darar*” (liberty, Heb. רִוּחַ) in Isaiah 61:1 is clearly linked to Leviticus 25:10 when on the fiftieth year the Israelites consecrated themselves and proclaimed *darar* (רִוּחַ) throughout all the land. This liberty has been used by Isaiah in eschatological terms pointing forward to the work of the Messiah. Thus, both the work and identity of Jesus have been highlighted in the application of Isaiah 61:1, 2 to Himself. The equivalent Greek verb *aphesei* has been used by Jesus to describe His Messianic work. Through Jesus's healing, Luke implies that diseases and demonic possession are oppressive constraints and bondage. The healing work of Jesus in fulfillment of Isaiah 61:1, 2 is the reversal from confinement and bondage towards the experience of release or liberation. This reversal is not only confined to the physical aspect but includes the spiritual dimension as well. Both Bruno and Green note that the poor and blind in Luke have both literal and symbolic meanings. Blindness could either be physical or spiritual (cf. 18:35-43 and 1:78-79; 2:9,29-32; 3:6). In the same way, being poor can be physical, social, or spiritual (cf. 18:22; 6:20; 7:22). Thus oppression and bondage could be physical or spiritual. In Luke ἄφεςις and σῶζω includes both. (Joel Green, 1997, 210, 211). Thus, *aphesis* embraces more than physical healing but includes holistic restoration.

Jesus's healing miracles reveal His identity; Jesus is the promised Messiah, and His ministry and works are the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecy of Isaiah 61:1, 2. The Old Testament celebration of the Year of Jubilee has found its fulfillment in Jesus. Healing the sick and exorcism announce the release and liberation of those who are in bondage. In a broader and deeper sense, they implicitly teach that Jesus' healing is beyond the physical aspect of humanity. The Greek words about liberation and salvation in the third Gospel are used both for physical and spiritual healing, making human restoration holistic.

## The Healing Ministry of Jesus as a Ministry of Compassion

The Greek word *eleos* that has an intertextual connection with the Hebrew word *chesed* appears not less than 14 times in the Gospel of Luke. It is mentioned in Mary's song of praise and the Magnificat (five times, cf. Luke 1:50, 54, 58, 72, 78); in the sermon on the Mount (cf. Luke 6:36); in Jesus' encounter with the widow of Nain whose son had died and was raised by Jesus Himself (cf. Luke 7:13); in the healing narratives of the Gospel such as the healing of the ten lepers

(cf. Luke 17:3); a blind man Bartimaeus (cf. Luke 18:38, 39); and in the parables of Jesus that talk about the Good Samaritan (cf. Luke 10:33, 37), the Prodigal Son (cf. Luke 15:20), the Rich Man and Lazarus (cf. Luke 16:24), and the Pharisee and the Publican (Luke 18:13).

The song of Mary alludes to many Old Testament references that talk about God’s mercy and how it has been fully revealed in the coming of the Messiah. Mary’s praise is an allusion to the prayer of Hannah, the mother of prophet Samuel (cf. 1 Samuel 2:1). The preceding verse (Luke 1:49) goes back to the description of God as great in power (cf. Psalms 50:1; 62:7; 106:2) and perfectly holy (cf. Exodus 15:11; Leviticus 20:26; Psalms 99:5). Mary praised God for what He has done (Luke 1:51; cf. Psalms 89:13). The mercy of God for those who fear Him that extends from generation to generation resonates Psalms 25:6, Psalms 86:15, and Psalms 103:17. The mercy of God shown by helping Israel points to the coming of the promised Messiah who was to come from the tribe of Judah through the lineage of David (cf. Genesis 49:10; 2 Samuel 7:12-16) who would help and not forsake His people (cf. Isaiah 9:6, 7; 44:21). The same line of thought has been expressed through Zecharia’s prophecy as he makes allusions to the Old Testament on how God has fulfilled His promise and His covenant because of His mercy (cf. Luke 1:72, 78; Leviticus 26:42; Psalms 98:3). Thus, both the Magnificat and the prophecy of Zechariah reveal that the coming of the Messiah and His succeeding ministry are founded on mercy and compassion.

The healing narratives in the Gospel of Luke are demonstrations of *eleos* in the ministry of Jesus. His encounter with the ten lepers who are considered outcasts, unclean, and punished by God reflects the foundation of Jesus’ healing acts. The ten lepers appealed to Jesus by asking for His *eleos*. Such pleading elicits a positive response from Jesus. The thanksgiving of the Samaritan as among those who are healed shows that the mercy of Jesus is beyond racial, cultural, and religious boundaries. As a response to the gratitude of the Samaritan, Jesus affirms the role of faith in his healing experience (Luke 17:19).

Upon learning that Jesus was passing by, the blind man Bartimaeus called on Jesus to have *eleos* on him. He calls Jesus as the Son of David, an allusion to God’s promise to David that he would have an heir who would reign over Israel forever (cf. 2 Samuel 7:12-16). This coming king is a Messianic prophecy that points to the One whose work is to deliver Israel (cf. Jeremiah 23:5, 6). The motif of deliverance seems to inspire Bartimaeus to ask for *eleos*. The context of deliverance in the book of Jeremiah points to the enemies of Israel, but in the account of Luke, Bartimaeus applies the deliverance by the Son of David to his physical malady. The healing that Bartimaeus received from Jesus, both physical and spiritual, expounds that the meaning of Jesus’s healing ministry is holistic and redemptive.

Three parables in the Gospel of Luke mention *eleos* as the motivating force of performing acts of kindness and acceptance. The parable of the Good Samaritan gives an explicit answer to the question of “who is my neighbor” (Luke 10:29). The half-dead victim was neglected by both the priest and the Levite. Then the Samaritan comes and sees the dying victim. When he saw him, “he had compassion (*eleos*) on him” (Luke 10:33). Unable to deny the force of the lesson, the expert of the law admits that the one who has shown mercy (*eleos*) is the neighbor of the victim. The action of the Good Samaritan is comparable with the ministry and mission of the Messiah. Jesus exemplifies the nature of God’s mercy in the Parable of the Good Samaritan and through His healing ministry reveals the compassionate God. The same truth is elucidated when the prodigal son returned home “while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion

(*eleos*), and ran and embraced him and kissed him.” (Luke 15:20). The cluster of the three parables in Luke 15 shows the love and graciousness of God regardless of number and backgrounds of the people. The cascading number of one hundred (cf. Luke 15:1-7), ten (cf. Luke 15:8-10), and one (cf. Luke 15:11-32) signifies God’s concern with every individual. Jesus compassionately healed individuals such as Peter’s mother-in-law (cf. Luke 4:38, 39), a leper (cf. Luke 5:12-16), a crippled man (cf. Luke 5:17-26), a man with a withered hand (cf. Luke 6:6-11), a woman with a hemorrhage (cf. Luke 8:43-48), and the blind man at Jericho (cf. Luke 18:15-43). It was also because of God’s mercy (*eleos*) that the publican who prayed at the temple was justified by God. Jesus explicitly states that “this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God.” (Luke 18:14). The basis of his justification is not like the boasting of the Pharisee (Luke 18:9-12) but his asking of mercy (*eleos*) from God (cf. Luke 18:13). The life and earthly ministry of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke is founded on compassion. It demonstrates God’s great concern for those who are suffering. The birth and infancy narrative, His healing, teaching, and preaching ministries, all of these affirm the compassionate acts of Jesus in dealing with human suffering and woe.

### **The Healing Ministry of Jesus Announces the In-Breaking of God’s Kingdom That Brings Salvation**

Several authors pointed out that the Kingdom of God is the major theme of Luke. Karl Allen Kuhn considers Luke's narrative as a "kingdom story" that announces the arrival of God's reign in Jesus (Karl Allen Kuhn, 2015, p. 79). Robert Stein states that the importance of the Kingdom theme has been demonstrated in the frequency of its occurrence and its prominent place in Luke’s account (Albert Stein, 1992, p. 46). The usage of the word group about the kingdom shows its centrality in the Gospel—*basileia* (46 times), *basileia tou theou/tōn ouranōn* (32 times), total references to God’s kingdom (35 times), Kingdom of Christ/Son of Man (4 times).

The relationship between Jesus’ healing miracles and the Kingdom of God appears to be inseparably linked in the Lukan account. Strauss emphasizes that the healing miracles recorded by Luke were not “showy demonstrations of power. . . . They are manifestations of the in-breaking of the Kingdom of God, a foretaste and preview of the restoration of creation promised by God” (Strauss, 2007, p. 466) Clinton Wahlen points out that the Gospel writer simply assumes the miraculous nature of Jesus’ healing but the main emphasis is in their theological significance, healing are signs of the in-breaking Kingdom of God (Clinton Wahlen, 2013, p. 362). He further notes that “the proclamation of Jesus in Luke is characterized in Isaianic terms that include healing...” (Clinton Wahlen, 2013, p. 367). These healing acts manifest a new and special quality that introduces the Deity of Jesus, the complete restoration of human beings, the necessity of faith, and the ultimate triumph of God’s Kingdom (Clinton Wahlen, 2013, 369).

Tannehill further adds,

The healing work is part of something larger—a saving purpose for the world which embraces physical as well as other dimensions of life—is confirmed by the connection between Jesus’ healing and the coming of God’s reign. . . . Thus proclaiming the reign of God and healing, mentioned together in summaries of Jesus’ and the apostles’ work in 9:2,6,11, are related tasks. Healing are concrete realizations for the needy persons of the salvation which the preachers announce in preaching good news of God’s reign (Tannehill, 1991, p. 88).



Wahlen observes that in Jesus’ ministry, there is “no dichotomy between preaching and healing (Wahlen, 368).” Immediately preceding the historical account of Jesus’ preaching in Nazareth, Luke records several healing episodes. The emphasis of these healing narratives strongly implies the role and functions of healing in the Kingdom’s proclamation of Jesus. Noticeable in these healing stories are the Sabbath healing miracles performed by Jesus (cf. 4:31-39; 6:6-11; 13:10-17; 14:1-6). Luke recorded four Sabbath healing miracles and two of them are distinctively found in his Gospel (cf. 4:31-37; 13:10-17). It includes the act of exorcism in the synagogue of Capernaum (4:31-37), the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law (4:38- 39), the crippled woman (13:10-17), and the man with dropsy (14:1-6). Similarities are observable in these healing stories; (1) all the venues of these miracles are clearly stated – there is a sequence of synagogue-house-synagogue-house (John E. Elliott, 1991, pp. 211-240); (2) the description of sickness, its severity and effect to the sufferer, (3) healings are implicitly or explicitly described as freedom from physical and spiritual bondage, (4) how Jesus healed the sickness; and (5) the impact of healing miracles to the sufferers and those who witness the event. These Sabbath healing episodes are intentionally included in the third Gospel as Luke alludes to the Old Testament themes of creation and liberation. Sabbath in the Old Testament carries the concept of creation-restoration (cf. Exod. 20:8-11) and liberation (cf. Deut. 5:12-15).

Wahlen rightly states that,

Jesus’ act of healing on the Sabbath echoes creation, not only in displaying divine power and authority but also in returning individuals to total health on the day that was the first full day of life for human beings in the beginning. It also points to the ultimate triumph of God’s kingdom and, as John makes explicit, eternal life (Wahlen, 2013, p. 369).

The healing works of Jesus present the activity of the Kingdom of God in releasing those who are in bondage. In the story of the crippled woman (cf. 13:10-17) the Greek verb *luein* has been translated as “to release, set free, pardon” in verse 12, “to loose, to unite” in verses 15 and 16 appears three times (cf. 13:12, 15, 16). These threefold repetitions imply that the use of this verb is important. When challenged by the religious leaders if it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath, Jesus’ explanation for the *luein* (“release,” “setting free,” “loosing,” and “untying”) of the crippled woman is to liberate her from Satan’s bondage for eighteen years. The same concept is present in the story of the man with dropsy (cf. 14:1-6) where the healing of the man has been compared to a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit. It is lawful to pull it out (Gk. *anaspasei*) even on the Sabbath day. In these healing episodes, Luke integrated the concept of creation, restoration, and liberation themes embedded in the Kingdom’s proclamation of Jesus. Additionally, healing affirms the authority of Jesus, the importance of faith, and the foundational ethics of God’s Kingdom.

Jesus’s authority to forgive sin has been demonstrated in the healing of the paralytic (cf. 5:24). Jesus in forgiving the paralytic uses the Greek verb ἀφέωνται which literally means “to let go.” This goes back to the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecy in Isaiah that the anointed One would proclaim liberty to those who are bound. This liberty includes physical healing and forgiveness of sin. The spiritual healing that Luke highlights is embedded in the narratives exclusive in the Third Gospel. Only in Luke’s Gospel do we meet the penitent woman whose many sins were forgiven because of her great love (Lk 7:47). Jesus ate with the hated tax collectors as a manifestation of His forgiveness and acceptance of these outcasts. Zacchaeus received salvation (Lk 19:7). The parable of the prodigal son, unique in Luke, is a great revelation of the character of

a forgiving God. Jesus forgave those who crucified Him (23:34) and promised the repentant thief of paradise (23:43)

Jesus's recognition of the significance of faith to experience the blessings of the Kingdom has been shown in the healing of the leper (cf. 5:12,13) and the Centurion's servant (7:1-10). In these two episodes of healing Jesus responded to the expression of faith. Throughout the Gospel of Luke, the emphasis on the necessity of faith to enter the Kingdom and experience its blessings has been elucidated (cf. v. 20; 7:9,50; 8:25,48; 12:28; 17:5-6,19; 18:8,42; 22:32). It is also important not to miss the ethical side of the healing motif. The Kingdom of God manifested through Jesus' healing miracles is founded in the principles of compassion and mercy. This has been shown in the resurrection of the widow's son in Nain (cf. 7:11-17).

The three stories of exorcism in the Gospel of Luke (cf. 4:31-37; 8:26-39; 9:37-45) indicate that demon possession is likewise an experience of bondage and oppression by the devil. Jesus' miraculous acts have been presented as deliverance from bondage as the result of Satan's defeat through the coming of the Kingdom of God. In the exorcism scenarios, the following points are observable; (1) the devil's encounter with Jesus shows a sharp contrast between Jesus and the devil, (2) the devil recognizes who Jesus is, (3) the devil applies the divine and Messianic titles to Jesus, (4) the devil pleaded for their preservation, and (5) the devil submitted to Jesus' authority (Robert Tannehill, 1991, p. 89).

The defeat of Satan and the triumph of the Kingdom through exorcism were illustrated when the seventy joyously returned and said to Jesus that even the demons became subject to them. Jesus responded by telling them of Satan's fall like lightning from heaven (cf. Luke 10:17, 18). On another occasion, Jesus's refutation that His power came from Beelzebub confirmed that He performed exorcism by the finger of God (11:19-20). The finger of God seems to be an allusion to the words of the magicians in Egypt when the Egyptians were struck by the plague (cf. Exod. 8:19). This was an admission that they could no longer contend with the God of Moses. Jesus' conclusion that His exorcism is through the finger of God is an assurance that the Kingdom of God has come upon them (cf. Luke 11:20).

Several concepts or themes in Isaiah's prophecy applied to Jesus have also enriched the link between Jesus' healing ministry and the His Kingdom's proclamation. Comparing Isaiah 61:1,2 and Luke 4:18-19, these concepts include (1) the introduction of the Anointed One, (2) the role and the works of the Holy Spirit through the Anointed One, (3) the preaching and healing ministry of the Anointed One, (4) the terms "liberty" and "acceptable year of the Lord" about the year of Jubilee in Lev. 25, and (5) the universal scope of the eschatological Jubilee prophesied by prophet Isaiah. The One who will carry out the proclamation of *darar* is the Lord's anointed. Luke applies the equivalent Gk. *echrisen* (noun *Christos*) to Jesus. The fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy becomes broader in Luke 4:18,19 because it transcends ethnic and social boundaries by extending Jesus' preaching and healing works beyond the confines of the Jewish nation and the socially favored. Even within the pericope of the Nazarene discourse, Jesus points out the divine favor to those who are not Jews by mentioning what Elijah had done to the woman of Zarephath and the healing of Naaman through Elisha.

McIver notes that Jesus' interest in the poor and outcasts of society is a theme that permeates the Gospel of Luke. He also mentions Zaccheus who though rich was certainly despised

(cf. 19:1-10). The instruction that Jesus gave in Luke 14:7-14 bears a positive Christian relationship with the poor and outcast. The various women who are highlighted in the Gospel of Luke represent those who are powerless. Even the parables of Jesus that include the good Samaritan (10:25-37), the lost coin (15:8-11), the lost son (15:11-32), the widow and the judge (18:1-8), and the Pharisee and the tax collector (18:9-14) teach God's concern towards the outcast (McIver, 2000, pp. 126-127). The Messiah/Christ in Isaiah 61:1,2 directed His ministry to the outcast described as "poor," "brokenhearted," "captives," and "blind." This has been demonstrated through Jesus' exorcism (cf. 4:33-37), the healing of the centurion's servant (7:1-10), the healing of a man with leprosy (cf. 5:12-14) the commendation of the Samaritan leper (cf. 17:11-19), and the sending of the twelve disciples and the other seventy to preach the kingdom and heal the sick (9:1,2; 10:1-12, 17-20). In Jesus's commission to His disciples to preach and heal the sick, He admonished them to proclaim their healing ministry as sign that the Kingdom of God is come nigh to them (cf. 10:9). Here Jesus once again reversed the Jewish understanding that purity and physical well being are prerequisites to approach God. Instead, Jesus' miraculous healing is a sign or affirmation that the Kingdom of God has already drawn nigh. This concept is consistent with the theme of universal salvation brought about by the coming of the Kingdom of God as proclaimed in the preaching and realized in the coming of Jesus. Bruno rightly comments that;

Although Jesus' proclamation of ἄφεσις in Luke-Acts is not as clearly linked to the restoration of God's covenant with Israel as it is in the prophetic books, Jesus' ministry is clearly linked to the proclamation of the Kingdom of God. The forgiveness of sin and the release from demonic oppression can both be defined as "kingdom activities" in Luke (Christopher Bruno, 2010, p. 99).

The link between the Kingdom of God, salvation, and healing is shown in the linguistic, and structural content of Luke. The Greek word *sōzō* for example has been used in the Gospel of Luke to refer to both spiritual salvation (Luke 7:50; 8:12; 9:24; 9:56; 13:23; 18:26; 19:10) and physical healing (Luke 6:9; 8:48;). Physical healing includes restoration of health through healing of diseases (cf. Luke 6:9; 8:48; 17:19; 18:42; ), exorcism (Luke 4:31-37; 8:26-39; 9:37-45), and raising of the dead (Luke 8:50). In these usages of *sōzō*, Marshall aptly observes three common concepts—the close link between physical healing and spiritual salvation, the common point that God is the source of healing, and the necessity of faith response on the part of the sufferer. Marshall points out, "This shows that there is some link between the healing wrought by Jesus and the spiritual salvation which He brought to men, a link which is not merely linguistically easy but has its deeper roots in the fact that common to both sets of activity is the power of God revealed in Jesus in response to faith. The power to heal and the authority to save both reside in God" (I. Howard Marshall, 1998, p. 95).

### **The Healing Ministry of Jesus in Eschatological Perspective**

The Gospel of Luke contains passages that focus on eschatological themes (cf. Luke 17:26-46; 19:11-17; 21:5-36). It is in line with the healing ministry of Jesus that transcends the present human experience. It is a foretaste of what is to come. It is the preview of the future restoration based on the promise of God. (Mark Strauss, 2007, p. 466). In every act of healing in the narrative of Luke, the concepts of restoration, cleansing, and liberation are either explicit or implicit in each



story. In the healing acts of Jesus, the theme of eschatological reversal becomes prominent. Sinclair Bugeja sees in the Gospel of Luke the eschatological reversal as both present and future. This eschatological reversal is realized in the present and actualized in the future (Sinclair Bugeja, 2021, p. 139). Norval Geldenhuys also points out that Jesus “teaches that the kingdom of God is already a present reality in Him but that its final consummation lies in the future when He comes in divine majesty” (Norval Geldenhuys, 1997, p. 444). When asked about the Kingdom of God, Jesus answered that the Kingdom of God is in your midst (cf. Luke 17:21). This is an obvious declaration that the Kingdom of God has its present dimension. However, Jesus also speaks of God’s Kingdom as coming in the future. When Jesus returns with glory and majesty (cf. Luke 17:22-37).

The healing ministry of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke includes a broad perspective that can be integrated with the healing ministry of the Church as it ministers to those who are suffering. Ministering with the suffering should be founded on genuine compassion. The focus is Christ for people to know Him as their Saviour and Healer. The Church’s effort to relieve suffering should be holistic, and bring healing both in the body and the spirit. The in-breaking of God’s Kingdom provides liberation not only from physical bondage but also from the spiritual captivity of sin. Jesus’ healing ministry is most of all, futuristic. It is a foretaste of what is to come when sin, pain, suffering, and death will be no more. The Church in its ministry should point the attention of those who suffer beyond the present towards the eschatological fulfillment that will be realized at the parousia.

## **CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, SUGGESTION, AND LIMITATIONS**

The healing ministry of Jesus provides a model for dealing and ministering with those who are suffering. It is centered on the person of Jesus. The motivation for reaching out to those who are in pain and suffering is genuine compassion, the kind of love God has for humanity. Whenever Jesus performs His healing ministry, He aims for the holistic restoration of humanity. It signifies freedom and liberty not only of the body but also of the spirit. The in-breaking of God’s Kingdom brings about physical healing, forgiveness of sin, restoration, and liberation from the bondage of Satan. The eschatological aspect of Jesus’ healing ministry points to the final restoration of humanity during the parousia. These aspects of Jesus’ healing ministry have a huge implication for the ministry and mission of the Church. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been tasked to proclaim the Three Angels’ Messages. Our health message is the right hand of this end-time message. The health ministry of the Church and its outreach for those who are in pain and suffering are well organized from the local church to the world headquarters of the Universal Church. Hospitals and other healthcare institutions are all aligned to fulfill the mandate of restoring humanity holistically. However, it should always be in line with the model that Jesus has set. The effort of the church to relieve human suffering will not be realized without making Jesus as the center of its health and healing ministry. Jesus should be introduced to people as the Source of their healing and salvation. Secondly, the health and healing ministry of the church to relieve the suffering of humanity should be based on pure and genuine compassion. It should not be contaminated with other motives. The kind of love and compassion that God has will let the people understand the nature and character of God.

The third implication of Jesus' healing ministry is to call the attention of those who are suffering to the future hope of total restoration that God Himself has promised. Divine revelation assures humanity of a bright future when suffering and pain will be no more. In every mission to provide healing, it should be made plain that those are just a foretaste of the eschatological reality that will find its fulfillment at the coming of Jesus.

While this paper focuses on the third Gospel, it is acknowledged that the Synoptic Gospels have their own theological emphases on Jesus' healing ministry that are open for future investigation.

## REFERENCES

- Aus, R. D. (2015). *Essay in the Judaic Background of Mark 11:12-14, 20-21; 15:23; Luke 1:37; John 19:28-30; and Acts 11:28: Studies in Judaism*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America.
- Avalos, H. (1999). *Health Care and the Rise of Christianity*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
- Brookins, T. A. (2011). “Luke’s Use of Mark: It’s Effects on Characterization in the ‘Healing of Blind Bartimaeus’ Pericope (Mark 10:46-52/Luke 18:35-43),” in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*. Vol. 34, Sept. 2011. ed. Simon J. Gathercole. London: SAGE Publication.
- Brown, R. E. (1977). *The Birth of the Messiah. A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company.
- Bruno, C. (2010). “Jesus is Our Jubilee.....But How? The OT Background and Lukan Fulfillment of the Ethics of Jubilee” in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*. Vol. 53, No. 1. ed. Andreas J. Kostenberger. Louisville, KY: Evangelical Theological Society.
- Bugeja, S. (2021). *The Lucan Beatitudes and Woes: A Realized or Futurist Eschatological Reversal?* Bodija Journal, Vol 11. Ibadan: Major Seminary of Saint Peter and Paul.
- Cadenhead, John Morgan (2008), “The Significance of Jesus' Healing Miracles: A Study of their Role in the Synoptic Gospels and their Importance to Early Christianity” in *Georgia State University Religious Studies Theses*. Georgia: Georgia State University.
- Elliott, J. E. (1991). “Temple Versus Households in Luke-Acts: A Contrast in Social Institutions” in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models of Interpretation*. ed. Jerome Neyrey. Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991.
- Evans, C. A. (1990). “Luke,” in *New International Biblical Commentary*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990.
- Gaiser, F. J. (1996). “Your Faith Has Made You Well”: Healing and Salvation in Luke 17:12-19,” in *Word and World*, Vol. XVI No. 3. MN: Luther Seminary, 1996.
- Geldenhuis, N. (1997). *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Green, J. B. (2013). “The Gospel of Luke,” in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, 2nd ed., , ed. Joel B. Green, et. al. Downers Grove, IL. InterVarsity.
- Green, J. B. (1995). *New Testament Theology: The Theology of the Gospel of Luke* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Fitzmyer, J. (1981). *The Gospel According to Luke*, vol. 1. Anchor Bible. Garden City: Doubleday.

- Hartsock, C. (2013). "The Healing of the Man with Dropsy (Luke 14:1-6) and the Lukan Landscape" in *Biblical Interpretation: A Journal of Contemporary Approaches: Reading Luke's Redaction and Rhetoric*. ed. Benny Liew. Netherland: Brill.
- Hill, J. L. (2007). "Health, Sickness and Healing in the New Testament," in *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology*, Vol. 26, No. 2, ed. Andrew G. Wildsmith. Kenya: Scott Christian University.
- Kaiser, W. C. (2001). *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New*. Oregon, USA: Wipf and Stock Publishers.
- Kee, H. C. (1983). *Miracle in the Early Christian World: A Study in Sociohistorical Method*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Keener, C. S. (1993). "The Angel and the Priest," in *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press.
- Kuhn, K. A. (2015). *The Kingdom according to Luke and Acts: A Social, Literary, and Theological Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.
- McIver, R. K. (2000). *The Four Faces of Jesus*. Idaho: Pacific Press.
- Marshall, I. H. (1970). *Luke: Historian and Theologian*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970.
- O'Fearghail, F. (1989). "The Imitation of the Septuagint in Luke's Infancy Narrative," in *Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association 12*, ed. W. Harrington. Irish Biblical Association.
- Pilch, J. J. (1991). "Sickness and Healing in Luke-Acts," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models of Interpretation*. ed. Jerome Neyrey. Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers.
- Rees, T. (1999). "Barren, Barreness." *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia: 1915 Edition*, ed. James Orr. Albany, OR: Ages Software.
- Stein, A. (1992). "The Kingdom of God," in *The New American Commentary*, Vol. 24. USA: Broadman Press.
- Strauss, M. L. (2007). *Four Portraits, One Jesus: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Strauss, M. L. (1995). *The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts: The Promise and Its Fulfillment in Lukan Christology*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Tannehill, R. C. (1991). "The Gospel According to Luke," in *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*. MN: Fortress Press.
- Tiele, David L. (1980). *Prophecy and History in Luke-Acts*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
- Todd, K. (2004). *The Exorcism Stories in Luke-Acts: A Sociostylistic Reading*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wahlen, C. (2013). "Healing," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, 2nd ed. Joel B. Green, et. al. (Eds.). Downers Grove, IL. InterVarsity.