

IS ANY SICK AMONG YOU ?

STUDY OF JAMES 5:14,15

Int.

1. Aim: To Give an explanation of this Passage that is in harmony with the rest of the Bible.
2. Jas. 5:14-15 "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 15. and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."
3. Question - Why do we not have the elders pray for the sick, anoint them with oil, and expect God to cure them?
4. This is a difficult passage but we need to understand what it means.

Discussion

I. THREE POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS of this passage:

A. He is talking about PHYSICAL AILMENTS

1. The elders should pray over the physically sick
2. They believe then that God will provide a cure

B. The writer is talking about elders of the 1st century

1. They were endowed with a special gift of the H.S. which enabled them to heal people.
2. The elders in the 1st century who had these gifts could pray for the physically sick

3. They would anoint them with oil and they were supernaturally healed.
 4. These gifts were limited to the 1st century and we can not work these miracles today.
- C. The writer is not talking about physical but spiritual or soul sickness
1. It is proper and right for the elders today to pray for the penitent child of God
 2. He has assurance that God will forgive the sinner.
- D. We will look at each of these positions to see which one is the correct view.

II. REJECTION OF THE FIRST POSITION

- A. If God answers prayers of elders to heal the sick then:
1. Why do some Christians get sick and die?
 2. Why are just the elders able to heal the sick and pray for them?
 3. What about, the other righteous people and their prayers?
 4. Would the earnest, fervent believing prayer of any righteous person have the same effect as the prayer of the elders ?
 5. What kind of oil do we use and where do we get it?
- B. If God intervenes and answers these prayers then why do some recover from an illness and others succumb to the disease ?
1. Is God a respecter of persons?
 2. If a person is sick and he calls for the elders to pray for him, and he does not get well does this mean that God does not love him? And He does not want him to be healed ?

- C. Would it be a lack of faith on our part if we went to the doctor? Is he trying to get a doctor to do what God does not want to happen ?
- D. This first position must be rejected! The writer is not talking about physical ailments and the elders praying for them to be cured or healed!

III. REJECTION OF THE SECOND POSITION

- A. There are some serious problems with this second position saying that the elders of the 1st century had spiritual gifts and could therefore heal the sick.
- B. The super-natural gifts of the early church were not-limited to the elders.
 - 1. Some brethren were given these gifts in the congregations where they did not even have elders.
 - 2. Even some elders- did not have these spiritual gifts in the 1st century.
- C. The spiritual gifts were for specific purposes
 - 1. That was to
 - a. REVEAL TRUTH - John 14:26
 - b. remember truth - John 14:26 - John 16:13
 - c. and to confirm truth - Mark 16:20 - Heb. 2:4
 - 2. They were all temporary - 1 Cor. 12 - 14 - 1 Cor. 13:8-10
 - 3. They lasted only until the revelation of God was put in written form and was therefore no longer needed !

- D. Everyone was not healed even in the 1st century
1. Some people had sicknesses and diseases even though they had these spiritual gifts
 2. Paul is an example - he had some kind of infirmity - he had that until he died - 2 Cor. 12:7-10
 3. II Tim. 4:20 - Trophimus left at Miletum sick
 4. People in the 1st century were not healed for the sake of healing
 - a. God does not promise us immunity from trouble or sickness in order to get us to follow him.
 - b. He offers spiritual health and riches if we obey him, but he makes not offer of material gain beyond each day's supply of bread.
- E. This second position must be rejected!

IV. THE THIRD POSITION IS THE CORRECT VIEW OF JAMES 5:14-15

- A. The writer is talking about soul sickness or sin. And it is proper to pray for the penitent sin sick child of God.
- B. See the context - Jas.5:14-16
- C. What kind of sickness is James talking about ?
 1. Two kinds of sickness - physical and spiritual
 2. I Cor. 11:30-31 - some were weak and sickly = spiritually
 - a. V. 30 "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."
 - b. If this meant physical sickness then a great many brethren would be in the hospital.

- c. There are some who forsake the assembly and do not even partake the Lord's Supper, but they are in good physical health. And vice/versa some who are faithful in attendance and are in bad physical health !
- 3. A sinful person has sickness in his soul - James is here referring to sickness of the soul not the body !

D. Send for the Elders

- 1. The sick man is to call for the elders - they are to pray over him
- 2. The primary duty of elders is to watch in behalf of the souls of the saved -
Heb:13:17 "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."
- 3. The fact that they were to send for the elders means that they had some spiritual problem !

E. The elders were to anoint him with oil

- 1. If the sickness is spiritual, then the anointing is figurative.
- 2. The word anointing is used figuratively in several passages:
 - a. Ps. 23:5 "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over."
 - b. Heb. 1:9 "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

3. In these passages the anointing with oil is used figuratively of the giving of great blessing.
 - a. In Ps. 23:5 "Thou anointest my head with oil" means that David had been given great blessing.
 - b. In Heb. 1:9 "Anointed with the oil of gladness" indicates that Christ had been given a place of high honor and blessing.
4. There is a figurative use of the word in Jas. 5:14 "Anointing with Oil"
- F. "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up;"
 1. The man who is sick [soul sickness in sin] shall be saved or raised up
 2. This would indicate that there were never any failures.
 3. In this healing there will always be success.
 4. But if this passage is talking about physical healing then there are problems:
 - a. What if the person was not healed?
 - b. Would this indicate that the elder was not qualified?
 - c. Would it mean that God was not able to heal some people?
 5. If a man is striving for spiritual health, which is what James is teaching in this passage, then he will be healed or raised up.
 - a. In 1 John chapter one the writer is talking about a child of God who confesses his sin.
 - b. And in v. 9 we read: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - c. Very much like James 5:15 "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."

G. V. 16 "Confess your faults one to another..."

1. If a man has committed sins then he is to confess them
2. In this context this indicates that it is to be to the elders.
3. There are other passages, like I John 1, where it talks about a public confession
4. But this verse indicates that it is a private confession of sin to righteous men in order to gain help to overcome sin and get our life right before God.
5. This in no way proves the doctrine of Auricular Confession of the Catholic church.
 - a. What they teach is that you confess your sins to a priest and he can then forgive your sin.
 - b. No man has the right to forgive sins and he cannot do that.
 - c. In this passage in James he is not talking about Priests but the elders.
 - d. There is only one mediator between God and man - 1 Tim. 2:5 and that mediator is Christ Jesus. It is not some man !

CONCLUSION

1. If a brother realizes he has been overtaken in a sin
 - a. He is to call for the elders - his spiritual leaders and guides
 - b. They are to pray over this penitent person
 - c. They are to teach and strengthen him by the power of the gospel [anointing him with oil]
 - d. And God will raise him up - or forgive him
 - e. James says "If he have committed sins., they shall be forgiven him."
2. In v. 16 he goes on to discuss confessing your faults one to another and praying one for another.

3. Then in v. 19&20 he says "Brethren if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he that converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."
4. The passage in James 5:14-15 is talking about a person who is sick in sin.
 - a. The elders as spiritual overseers are called to his aid
 - b. The prayer of a righteous man is valuable. Jas. 5:16b
 - c. His sins will be forgiven
 - d. Because "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9
5. Is any sick among you?

Sources

1. Firm Foundation 6/26/84 by H.A. Buster Dobbs P. 307-308 "Problem Passages"
 2. Perceptor Vol. 30, P. 240-249 6/1/1981 "Is Any Sick Among You? By Grant B. Caldwell
 3. File on James
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