
**HEALING OF THE BOY WITH AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT IN LUKE 9:37
- 43 IN RELATION TO HEALING PRACTICES IN CHRIST
APOSTOLIC CHURCH, IBADAN, NIGERIA**

BY

ADEMOLA, Julius Olajide Ph.D

**DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES,
REDEEMER UNIVERSITY, EDE, OSUN STATE**

Tel: +234-8033828962

+234-8136328514

olajideishola5@gmail.com

Abstract

Healing and health are fundamental to human life. People go to any extent to seek healing. When orthodox medicine fails, people do not hesitate to go to prayer houses and even herbalists to procure healing. The centrality of healing features prominently in Jesus' earthly ministry. In compliance with Jesus' instruction to his followers to preach the gospel and heal the sick, the CAC has made healing one of its major preoccupations. However, there are cases of ministers using extra-Biblical means to perform healing such as the sale of anointing oil, handkerchief and water. Also, ministers seek gratification from beneficiaries of healing and other abuses that were not witnessed during Jesus' ministry. This study therefore, investigated healing in Luke 9:37-43 and its application in **Christ Apostolic Church with a view to ascertaining the degree of compliance to Jesus' command.** The study adopted a mixed

method comprising hermeneutical and exegetical methods to analyse the text in order to bring out the essential meaning of healing in the Bible in relation to the practice of the CAC and **descriptive method of a survey type was employed.** The study concluded that healing is a fundamental aspect of the liturgy and practice of the C.A.C. which helps in bringing members to salvation. The study therefore, recommended that the authority of the Church should ensure strict compliance with the principles and techniques of healing adopted by Jesus in Luke's Gospel.

Key Words: *θεραπεία* (Therapeia), Healing, Healing miracle, Christ Apostolic Church (CAC.)

1. Introduction

The nature of human existence makes it fundamentally necessary for people to live a healthy life. The need to restore people to full health has been paramount to man since creation. Man has always needed to suppress and to reduce in intensity such things as enemies, sickness and diseases which cause pains and damages to humanity. The healing could partly mean restoring what is broken between one human being and another, between human beings and the universe as a whole. Healing by Jesus aimed at restoring man to both physical and spiritual health. Man is a being, possessing body, mind and spirit, all inextricably connected; each part affecting the whole and the whole being greater than the part. There is also interconnectedness between human beings and their environment. This interconnectedness acts as a force on the functioning of each individual as a person. Disease or ill-health often arises as a result of a state of imbalance either from within or from the environment. Jesus did not just heal physically without ensuring that those who were healed physically were also restored spiritually to health. Most of the healing miracles led to the confession of faith in Jesus, either before or after the healing.

Furthermore, the restoration of health makes man whole or well whether physically, mentally, or spiritually. The Bible indicates that God's highest will for man is for him to be in good health, even as his soul prospers (III John 2). Healing is a prominent topic in the Bible. Sickness is cured by the supernatural intervention of God with or without the use of earthly means, and some of the healings performed by Jesus were characterized by faith. The vital connection between faith and healing is unmistakable. On the relationship between faith and healing, they operate in close connection with each other, noting that faith being the background and energizing force for healing. Obviously, where faith is present, there is an atmosphere conducive to healing, and vital connection between faith and healing because

faith makes possible the healing of even the most desperate situation. Healing requires faith for its operation. In the New Testament Jesus alone is the healer, and only by faith in Him and in His name can healing be done.

Health is good and universally desired. It is a necessary condition for obtaining goods of life, indeed, in most western cultures; health has become a virtual and cultural obsession, resulting in steadily growing demands on health care systems and in burgeoning industries in wellness and alternative medicine. Importantly, health and healing are central to the message of salvation throughout the Old and New Testaments, and particularly in the ministry of Jesus. The terms health may be used in various ways, which include healthy body, healthy minds and spirits. Similarly, one can only talk about physical, mental, spiritual, and social health when health is related to salvation for Christians, although it is not likely to be defined that way by a clinician or public institution like the World Health Organization.

In the healing ministry of Jesus Christ, faith was a dominant factor. Normally, faith on the part of the patient was a prerequisite to healing. In ordinary usage, it is applied to be non-medical treatment of disease often spoken of as healing by faith. This usage is based on a fragmented view of the human person in which the doctor looks after the body and the Church looks after the soul. Healing includes the whole person and all means of healing, whether medical or non-medical, physical or spiritual. Healing, whether provided through creation or providence, produces limited powers of self-healing and placed healing agents in our environments.

The study is therefore informed by the divine and human responses to health challenges (such as illness, sickness and diseases) posing a serious threat to the human existence and the original purpose of God for man to live a healthy life as the research is hinged on examining the concept of *θεραπεία* in the Gospel of Luke and apply the same to Christ Apostolic Church in Nigeria. The Gospel of Luke was chosen for this research because it contains detailed accounts of Jesus healing miracles more than other synoptic Gospels.

2.Exegesis of Healing of the Boy with an Unclean Spirit in Luke 9:37 - 43

Luke provides no topographical or temporal shifts. On the contrary, he ties his record of Jesus sayings to his disciples (vv 43b-45) into the exorcism account (vv37-43a) by means of the genitive absolute construction in v 43b (“while everyone was amazed...”); he formulates the disciples' argument over greatness (vv 46-49) in relation to their reluctance to query Jesus about his suffering (v 45); and John's concern with the exorcism practices of an outsider (vv

49-50) is cast as an “answer” to Jesus teaching about relative greatness (47-48). In addition to this structural connections, Sabourin (1994) referred to numerous catchwords and concept that hold these subunits together – for example, the shift from “son” (vv38, 41) to “child” (vv 42, 48), amazement (vv 40, 43, 45, 46-50).¹ Dunn (2010) reiterated that although it is not without Christological import, this larger unit focuses above all on the disciples, and especially on their failure. After the Christological high point of the transfiguration scene, the deficiencies they exhibit in the current scene are positively disastrous. Previously, they were indicted for failing to exhibit their faith while responding in fear (Luke 8:22-25); however, they not only display fear but are actually ruled by Jesus to be “faithless” (vv 45, 41). They fail to exorcise a demon (v 40), fail to understand Jesus message about his passion (v 45), and attempt to exercise control over one whose ministry succeeds where theirs had not (v 49).²

In this narrative unit, Luke brings together the central components of the ministry of Jesus as this has come to expression in the Galilean segment of the Gospel: the ministry of the released displayed here in term of healing and exorcism, the nature of Jesus' divine commission and the wide reach of God's graciousness that extends even to those of low status, the link between Christology and discipleship. Abogunrin (2009) enumerated these points in the same direction, emphasising that the exercise of redemptive power and authority is not related to normal canons of honour and status and kinship. The ministry of “release,” in this case of demonisation, is not a matter of magical ability or correct procedure, and the reception of “power and authority over all demons and to cure all diseases” (9:1) does not substitute for the need to embody in one's life the message of Jesus.³ Faith-full and faithful comportment is necessary if one is to engage effectively in the divine mission. It is here that the disciples failure is most evident, as Jesus stinging words.⁴ (“O faithless and perverse generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here.”) (v 41) make clear and as their own behavior corroborates (Dairo, 1995, pp.52-59).

Geisler (2012) established the narrative need for the long journey that commences with Luke 9:51 – a journey whose central focus will fall on the formation of perceptive, faithful disciples. In verses 37-40, although verse 37 begins a fresh narrative unit, its relation to the transfiguration scene is marked emphatically by dual chronological and topographical markers.⁵ Salm (2016) opined that episode may have been concluded, but it has some obvious connection to the present one. Only as this scene unfolds will it become clear how the transfiguration scene places its stamp on this one. Only followers learn to integrate into their understanding of the one divine purpose these seemingly disparate elements: dishonor,

rejection, and even death on one hand, the exercise of divine authority, elevated status before God, and service in the salvific mission on the other.⁶

The crowd, almost permanent fixture on the Lukan landscape, has been backstage since the feeding miracle of verses 12-17. They are brought into view again, but only temporarily, as Luke turns the spotlight on one needy man from within the crowd. Later they will be brought back into focus, ἐξεπλήσσαντο δὲ πάντες ἐπὶ τῇ μεγαλειότητι τοῦ θεοῦ,⁷ “And all were astonished at the majesty of God (Akintunde 2001, pp. 23-28). But while they were all marveling at everything he did, he said to his disciples” (v 43), with the consequence that they are presented as witness of Jesus' ministry who respond with astonishment at God's majesty. However, Caird (1995) posited that the narrator provides a detailed assessment of this man's problem. Verse 39 seems to spare nothing of his son's repulsive behavior. The stakes are raised when the man mentions that his demonized boy is his only child – a reality that reminds one of the earlier accounts (7:12; 8:42) and suggest this family's precarious situation in their community. If their son is not restored to health, who will maintain the family line? The challenge of this case emphasised even further when the man notes the failure of the disciples to cast out the demon.⁸ It should be borne in mind that the disciples have been given capacity to do this very thing, they were given power and authority over all demons (9:11). Why not this one? In spite of their status as emissaries of the Messiah of God (v 20), in this instance they are no better than the physicians who failed to help the hemorrhage woman (8:43).⁹ In the face of such obstacles, the man's approach to Jesus is remarkable. He cries out for help and begs for assistance; his faith apparently persists in spite of his son's condition and failure of the disciples (Oderinde, 2009, pp. 113-125).

Goldson (2010) opined that the form of the man's request foregrounds an immediate comparison between Jesus and the disciples. He had begged the disciples; now he begs Jesus. How will he fare this time (9:1-2, 6, 11)? In verses 41- 43a, Jesus' answer focuses first on the failure of the disciples to exorcise the spirit. Had they not been given power and authority over “all demons” (9:1)? If so, then their inability to appropriate that authority is due to their faithlessness. Jesus, in fact, finds in their behavior a parallel to the children of God in the Exodus story – “a crooked and perverse generation” in contrast to a “faithful God” (Deut. 32:4-5).¹⁰ In the Lukan text, Jesus seems deliberately to have shaped his indictment of his disciples – first, drawing Old Testament language used to depict the state of God's people in the Exodus journey so as to interpret the condition of his disciples as they begin the journey (“exodus” v 31) to Jerusalem; and second by using the particular language of “faithlessness,”

attested already in the Deuteronomic co-text and much more suitable to Lukan concerns (8:11-15). According to Calloud (2012), the incorrigibility of the disciples is exacerbated by the inconsistency, even deterioration, of their faith – present but not manifest in the boat scene of 8:22-25, on display in their ministry activity in 9:6 but again hidden in the episode of the feeding miracle of 9:12-17, and now altogether absent. Jesus is already anticipating his execution (9:22'44). After which his followers will share responsibility in the divine mission, and they are in a deplorable state of readiness.¹¹

Jesus' answer focuses second on the man's request for divine intervention. Calvin (2008) described the boy's symptoms (v 39), emphasising the severity of his case, and as though in reaction to the presence of Jesus, its seriousness is evidenced as the demon took control of the boy again (8:28), Jesus manifested his authority over the demonic by commanding the spirit. At this point in the narrative, the outline is a familiar one, so familiar that it need not be repeated in detail here; rather, it should be understood that the word of Jesus is sufficient to cause the unclean spirit to depart from the boy.¹² This according to Cameron (2015) is encapsulated in the report that the boy was healed and returned to his father. This report also indicates the degree to which Luke refuses to draw a sharp line between diseases and demonic tyranny, and evidences the social construction of the concept of "healing" so as to include the dissipation of spiritual and physical indications, the departure of their diabolic cause, and the restoration of kinship relation. Luke rounds out this scene with reference to the reaction of "all" that is, the crowd, present at the beginning (v 37) but since only in the background, and the disciples.¹³ They recognize in Jesus' authoritative ministry an exhibition of the majesty of God, a response that is reminiscent of the image of Jesus wrapped in the glory of God in the immediately adjacent scene of transfiguration.

3. Healing And Exorcism

Exorcism as indicated by the Babylonian and Egyptian texts indicates that the practice of expelling evil spiritual beings from people and places is very ancient. The oldest exorcism story is in I Sam. 16-19. Eastern influence in Palestine brought an increase in the belief that demons could control people, so that by the time of Jesus exorcism was relatively common. The gospel traditions and the use of the name of Jesus by other exorcists show that Jesus was considered a particularly successful exorcist against whom the demons sought to defend themselves (Mk. 1:24). His ministry of exorcism was distinctive, in that he used no mechanical aids or proofs; nor prayer part of his techniques; nor did he call upon any outside



power-authority (Mt. 12:28, Lk. 11:20). Rather, in saying 'I cast out...' Jesus deliberately drew attention to himself and his own resources in his ability to expel demons. Not surprisingly, responses to Jesus' exorcisms are described as fear and amazement (Mk. 1:27; 5:14-15). Some said that he was demon-possessed (Mk. 3:20-27), the interpretation that his exorcisms showed that he was the messiah probably reflects the faith of Christians for there is little or no pre-Christian evidence that the Messiah was expected to be an exorcist.¹⁴ Jesus was the first to make the specific connection between exorcism and the first stage of the defeat of the devil. The charge that Jesus exorcised by magic is also late (Abogunrin, 2009, p. 44).

The disciple shared Jesus ministry of exorcism (Lk. 9:1-6) and it was an important part of the ministry of the apostolic church, except in the Johannine community. In John it is the cross which functions as the focus of the complete defeat of the evil ruler of this world which become existential as Jesus draws all men to himself (Jn. 12:32). Paul was reluctantly involved in exorcism (Acts 16:16-18). Matthew plays down exorcism, probably because his church suffered from the exploits of false prophets whose activities included exorcism (Matt 7:15-23-24). Mark and Luke emphasise exorcism in the church's ministry (Mk. 6;7-13;9:14-29) and show that early Christian like other exorcist uses the name of a power-authority, viz. Jesus (Mk. 9:38-41; Lk. 10:17; Acts 16:18). The early Christian believe they were successful as exorcists not because of what they said or did, but because, by simple commands, the demons were confronted and defeated by Jesus. Prayer was required in difficult cases (Mk. 9:28-29).

The charismatic understanding of the authority to exorcise demon using the name of Jesus continued for some time in the post apostolic period. Apart from the central use of the name of Jesus, the practice of exorcism soon began to vary. In places a 'history' of Jesus was used as well as his name. The breath of the exorcist, touch, and the sign of the cross were also used. Exorcism was commonly an element of the baptismal rite.

Healings and exorcisms are proof of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Most of the signs convinced onlookers about the authority behind the church's mission. "Visible and audible signs of the Spirit's presence such as these were obviously important and this expectancy lasted for about three hundred years". Especially "in urban environments, Christians banded together for worship services that incorporated exorcism and healing along with other practices that strengthened individuals through union with Christ and with one another as members of his collective body of Christ". Baptism was considered "an exalted form of healing. It was a rite of initiation in the mystery of Christ that gave people eternal life and fortified them against sickness, diseases and sin".

4. Practice of Healing in the Christ Apostolic Church, Ibadan

The practice of “*Cura divina*” (divine healing) in some members contend, one of the most important benefactions to its members. Of course, in West Africa nations where there are very few hospitals and costly medicine is beyond the reach of the majority, one would reasonably expect that the promise of *Cura divina* would attract a number of people.¹⁵ Indeed, sickness is by far the most common reason which people give for attending AICS, especially, C.A.C. Testimonies of healing, soundness and miracles are heard from many about their answered prayers. In quite a number of cases, those concerned claim that they first went to the hospitals, and or consulted traditional healers. They then resorted to an indigenous church when the foreign physicians and herbalists failed them (Adamo, 2012, p. 87)

In Christ Apostolic Church, special days (usually, every Wednesday and Friday) are set aside for healing purposes. Healing services are conducted every day. Sometimes, the invalid would be given some apartment in the Pastorium while they receive their treatment in some churches, the spiritual or faith homes serve as clinics and maternity centers for pregnant women.

Alana(2008) enumerated important article of faith of the C.A.C under Article (xii) section i. Unlike some other churches, the C.A.C does not believe in medical treatment in and outside the hospital. Unlike some of the Aladura churches, the C.A.C does not allow traditional means of healing by the use of objects, such as, green water, banana stems or the likes as aids to healing sick members. Importantly, the treatment that a sick person needs for healing is very simple. The process is as follows: confession of sins, since it is believed that sins or wicked people cause ailment; laying on of hands; anointing the sick with olive oil, if found necessary, using sanctified water for washing and drinking; praying for the patient with faith; confidence and authority viz; *Iwo aisan mo pase fun o, ni oruko Jesu, jade kuro lara re; ko ri bee; ogo ni fun o oluwa nitori pe o ti se* (you sickness in the name of Jesus, I command you, come out of the patient; it shall be so glory be to you Lord, because you have done it). In addition to the use of the name of Jesus for healing, the C.A.C also heals the sick by invoking the power in the Blood of Jesus i.e. *Ni Agbara Eje Jesu*. C.A.C members also believe in the use of 'sanctified' water for healing and scaring away evil forces in their surrounding and rendering poisons useless.¹⁶

Osun (1981) expatiated that some critics of the C.A.C have objected to the methods of healing the sick in the church. They contend that by their didactic methods of prayer for the sick, the fellow praying tends to force God to effect healing. This view cannot be sustained



since the prayer-men/women are only exercising the authority that Jesus Himself had given all believers. There is also the view that adherents of the church should not be forced to reject the use of medicine and the assistance of doctors and other paramedical staff; that the sick should be assisted to regain his health 'through every possible and right means'.¹⁷ The answer is not far-fetched. Divine healing is a fulfillment of the biblical teaching that prayers made in faith would both heal any believer who is ill and also restore to him his health. What other means do we need except faith?

Oluseye (2010) emphasized an important highlight of the Great Revival of 1930 was both the enthusiastic response of the people and the wonderful manifestation of God's power of healing and salvation. At each centre, the hearers accepted the Revival message, ransacked their homes and spontaneously brought to the Revival what the Lord forbids.¹⁸

At Ilesa, traditionalists surrendered their '*Orisa*' (idols) and '*ere*' (carved images). Moslems accepted the Gospel using their '*tesibaa*' (chaplet) to praise the Lord in obedience to God's directive. Others brought to Joseph Babalola all their books of magic and '*juju*' including the so called sixth and seventh books of Moses. Different types of *Orisa* such as *Oya*, *Osun*, *Sigidi* and *Ayara* among others constructed with bronze, silver and gold were brought to the revivalist for burning. So also were '*oruka ere*' (poisoned rings), *igbadi* and the likes were surrendered in their thousands. A woman brought a bag of charms costing 14 dollars.

Omowole, (2013). highlighted that at *Efon*, other accursed materials abandoned included *ere ibeji* (Carved wooden and female twins); *aso-egungun* (masquerade outfits and costumes); carved images of *sigidi*, *osanyin*, *egungun* in various shapes and descriptions; magic books other than those were Odumosu's book in dreams and also parchments on *juju* including *onile*, *ifunpa* and others as mentioned above. Others were *ilu* and *aba*, *Oogun* (charmed drums and ladders), and *ekutu Oogun* (Charmed native flutes) used during quarrels, crisis periods or at wars; charmed arrows kept in bamboo poles or horns of animals (*iwo eranko*) used by masqueraders and herbalists against enemies or other hostile people. People willingly surrendered all these materials to Joseph Babalola a.k.a *Oga* or *Buroda* (Master or Brother). For instance, the book of charms of Samuel Ojo in the town took eight days to burn.¹⁹ He and his wife Dorcas later became prophet and prophetess respectively in the Christ Apostolic Church before their death.

Furthermore, Olusola (2009) pointed out that those who came with illness to Oke-Ooye Revival Ground received their healing immediately, this included people who had long

been suffering from protracted pregnancy, acute and continuous stomach ache, acute headache, (oripariwo), epileptic feets blindness, issue of Blood, 'orinrin' (disturbance during sleep), rheumatism, reduction in weight, eye diseases, back-ache, pile, sleeplessness, unemployment, poverty, little or no reward from much work, old and chronic sores, breastlessness in women, impotence in men just as infertility in women, inability to eat food, too much sleeping, loss of menstrual period and 'eda'.

At Oke-Boola, Ibadan, greater efforts were made to document the miracles that took place at the revival centre than in the other places. Many people suffering from diverse diseases also came to the Revivalist for divine healing. After prayer at the end of each revival meeting, those who had received healing would publicly thank God whilst their names and other details connected with the work of healing were written in a book. However, on each occasion, people who had been saved were too many to have the opportunity of bearing testimony of what God had done for them.²⁰

Still, during the first week at the Oke-Bola revival at Ibadan, 341 known people were cured. But during the period between September 14th and October 4th, 1930, the number of the sick people who were cured had jumped to 2,538, excluding those who were too shy to give testimony. The break-down of those cured on that occasion alone is as follows: delayed pregnancy 202, stomach ache 87, miscarriage 49, witchcraft 41, back ache 161, blindness 24, women's sickness 24, cough 22, gonorrhea 19, those raised from the dead 22, infertility 11, hunch backed 15, rashes and blemishes 11 and the like.²¹ Others who were later cured included a victim of 'arun egba' (palsy) for 58 years; an Egba man who regained his sight after 30 years of blindness and a child, born lame but was cured at the age of 6years (Loos, 2015, pp.103-107).

Consequently, the warm welcome accorded the Great Revival in the town, the miracles performed by Joseph Babalola there ultimately far out stripped those performed at Oke-Ooye three months earlier. At Oke-Bola, a leper was cleansed; the lame jumped for joy; the deaf had his ears open; the blind gained his sight; the dumb was able to speak; the mental patient were perfectly cured; children were rid of convulsion. The list could be elongated. Joseph Babalola's work of healing was so great at the town that evil spirit themselves acknowledged his spiritual superiority.²² At Oke-Ooye, Ilesa and Oke-Bola, Ibadan people who were possessed by witches and wizards had to fall down, rolling during the revival for their evil spirits to submit; but at Oke-Adura Efon Alaaye revival, the reverse was the case, there the evil spirit, in obedience to divine directive, left their victims without much fuss(Wilkinson, 2001, pp. 189-197).

5. Conclusion

The concept of healing is a belief and practice of Christ Apostolic Church. It is similar to Jesus healing miracles in the Synoptic gospel. The huge success of Jesus healing miracles in Gospel could be traced to Luke's conception of the person of Jesus Christ as the most significant factor. This healing force comes from His divine being. It is empowered and reinforced by the Spirit of God for onward transmission to the sick by a command of words. As the sick person releases his faith to touch the divine seat of the healing power in the being of Jesus, a current of divine health flows in a spiritual manner from Jesus to the being of the sick person. The immediate result is miracle. Thus, the healing power of Jesus is in the nature of His divine person, the action of God and the Holy Spirit in Him.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- a. Healing should be an essential part of the proclamation of the Gospel message and the Church should place more emphasis on healing ministry following the example of Jesus Christ.
- b. The authority of Christ Apostolic Church should ensure strict compliance with the principles and techniques of healing miracles adopted by Jesus in the gospel according to Luke to minimize dubious and magical practices.
- c. Christ Apostolic Church should regulate and control excesses and abuses that may occur through the ministers of miracles and the process of administering healing miracles in the church.
- d. Only those that are healthy should be allowed to involve in fasting. Sick people need not risk their lives in fasting for therapeutic reasons.

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