
A CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION OF THE HEALING OF THE CRIPPLED WOMAN IN LUKE 13:10–17 AND ITS RELEVANCE TO CHRIST APOSTOLIC CHURCH (C.A.C), NIGERIA

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Abstract: *Health, influenced by one’s behavior, environment, and lifestyle, is essential for achieving life’s purpose. Jesus’ earthly ministry placed significant emphasis on healing, revealing God’s deep concern for complete human well-being. In obedience to Jesus’ instruction to proclaim the gospel and heal the sick, the Christ Apostolic Church (C.A.C) has prioritized healing as a central part of its spiritual mission. This paper examines Luke 13:10–17—the story of Jesus healing a woman on the Sabbath—and relates its theological insights to the healing practices of the C.A.C in Nigeria. Adopting descriptive, exegetical, and hermeneutic methods, the study interprets the biblical passage and reflects on its application within the church’s context. The findings affirm that health is essential for human flourishing. By merging biblical analysis with practical church realities, the study underscores healing as both a theological act and a means of leading individuals to salvation. It concludes that healing continues to be a vital component of the C.A.C’s ministry, mirroring the example of Christ and fostering both spiritual and physical renewal. The study advocates for church leaders to sustain this scriptural mandate in their worship and outreach programs.*

Keywords: *θεραπεία, Christ Apostolic Church (C.A.C), Divine Healing, Miracles, Salvation*

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, humans have consistently sought relief from disease and suffering, recognizing good health as a foundation for purposeful living. From a biblical standpoint, God’s intention for humanity includes holistic well-being—spiritually, mentally, and physically—as reflected in 3 John 2. Healing transcends the realm of medical treatment; it is a sacred process that often involves faith and divine involvement. In the ministry of Jesus, healing served not merely as

physical restoration but as a manifestation of God’s kingdom on earth. Faith frequently underpinned these healing acts, highlighting the crucial link between belief and recovery.

In Christian theology—especially within African Pentecostal and indigenous expressions like the Christ Apostolic Church—healing is deeply embedded in spiritual practice and is viewed as a core part of the gospel message. The C.A.C emphasizes divine healing as a defining element of its doctrine and worship. Congregants often seek deliverance through prayer, fasting, and prophetic intervention when ill, reflecting their conviction that God is the ultimate healer. This approach mirrors the biblical portrayal of healing as holistic—impacting body, soul, and spirit—and often serves as a pathway to deeper faith and salvation.

EXEGESIS OF THE HEALING OF THE CRIPPLED WOMAN ON THE SABBATH (LUKE 13:10–17)

The story of the healing of the bent woman is unique to Luke’s Gospel and offers deep theological meaning. Scholars like Carson (2012) suggest her condition may have stemmed from a spinal disease, while others attribute it to demonic affliction—particularly since she had suffered for eighteen years. Witty (2018) notes that, in the Old Testament, illness was often linked to three possible causes: divine punishment, demonic influence, or unknown reasons. Health was seen as a sign of divine favor, while sickness was frequently interpreted as the result of personal sin. By the time of the New Testament, this belief had become more rigid, with many assuming that every illness stemmed from specific sins. Oepke (2019) shows how diseases like leprosy and epilepsy were often associated with moral failure.

Luke presents this woman’s affliction as demonic in nature—something Jesus affirms when He says she was “bound by Satan.” This understanding aligns with traditional Yoruba and broader African worldviews, where illness is often seen as spiritually caused—whether by witchcraft, curses, ancestral spirits, or social factors. Oguntoye (2016) emphasizes that, in African cosmology, sickness may result from divine displeasure, ancestral influence, spiritual attacks, or even societal stress. For many Nigerian women, physical ailments can also stem from the strain of economic hardship and domestic labor—conditions reminiscent of the woman’s physical and social condition in this passage.

In verses 12–13, Jesus initiates the healing without the woman asking, showing His compassionate leadership. Despite her suffering, she came to the synagogue, expressing faith through her presence. Unlike other miracle accounts where individuals cry out for healing, this woman remained silent. Jesus noticed her, called her forward, declared her healing, and physically touched her—actions that defied both social norms and religious laws. Akangbe (2016) sees this as an example of leadership grounded in divine love. Jesus modeled both spiritual authority and empathy. The synagogue leader, however, responded with indignation, prioritizing religious law over human need (Oderinde, 2012).

Verse 14 reflects the leader’s resistance. He did not confront Jesus directly but rebuked the people, citing the law of Sabbath rest from Exodus 20:9–10. Jesus, however, redefined the Sabbath as a time for healing and restoration. Fiorenza (2018) argues that Jesus revealed the true intention of the Sabbath: to bring renewal and joy. The woman’s healing prompted praise, echoing Jesus’ teaching in Mark 2:27—that the Sabbath was created for human benefit, not as a burden. Oderinde



(2009) highlights how Jesus consistently uplifted the marginalized, especially women, who often bear the weight of social and economic injustice. Leaders today are thus called to prioritize compassion and dignity over rigid tradition (Calloud, 2015).

In verses 10–11, Jesus is shown teaching in a synagogue—a setting not mentioned since the start of His final journey to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51). This reflects His consistent pattern of teaching and healing, seen earlier in Galilee. The woman’s condition could have been a medical issue like spondylitis or a spiritual affliction. Luke identifies it as spiritual bondage (Wilkinson, 2020; Beata, 2013). Ajayi and Oke (2014) describe her state as a spiritual disorder requiring divine intervention.

Socially, the woman was marginalized—her bent posture symbolizing her invisibility and low status. Jesus saw her, acknowledged her, and restored her not only physically but also socially. In verses 12–13, His actions reflected His mission in Luke 4:18–19—to bring freedom to the oppressed. As Gooding (2015) explains, Jesus used liberation language, reaffirming His call in Acts 10:38 to set people free from all forms of oppression. The woman’s upright posture and praise were signs of total healing—body, soul, and spirit. Gordon (2021) notes that Jesus brought her forward, restoring her place in the community and validating her worth.

In verse 14, the synagogue leader’s criticism—directed at the crowd rather than Jesus—echoes earlier Pharisaic opposition. The Sabbath had become central to Jewish religious identity (Harvey, 2016), yet the leader failed to cite any direct scripture (Hastings, 2012). Since her ailment wasn’t life-threatening, he saw no urgency. Delight (2012) suggests he believed healing could wait. But Jesus responds with strong rebuke in verses 15–16, exposing their inconsistency. If animals could be untied for water on the Sabbath, how much more should a suffering woman—“a daughter of Abraham”—be set free from Satan’s grip?

Enuwosa (2004) points to this as a stark contrast between religious legalism and Christ’s compassion. Finally, in verse 17, Jesus’ opponents were publicly shamed, while the people rejoiced. Holland (2016) emphasizes that the crowd recognized divine power in Jesus’ actions. Unlike previous audiences who missed the deeper message (Luke 12:56), this group responded with joy and praise, affirming that God was at work (Ayantayo, 2011).

HEALING IN THE CHRIST APOSTOLIC CHURCH, NIGERIA

Sickness is a major reason many people are drawn to African Indigenous Churches (AICs), particularly the Christ Apostolic Church (C.A.C). Numerous members share testimonies of divine healing and answered prayers. Often, individuals come to the C.A.C after medical treatment or traditional therapies have failed (Adamo, 2012:87). The church designates specific days—commonly Wednesdays and Fridays—for healing services, though in many congregations, these services occur daily. In some cases, those seeking healing are allowed to stay on church grounds, such as in the Pastorium, during their recovery process. Certain assemblies operate “faith homes,” which serve as spiritual clinics and maternity centers (Calvin, 2017:77–79).

According to Alana (2008), one thing that sets the C.A.C apart is its rejection of both Western medicine and traditional healing practices that involve rituals like using green water or banana leaves. Instead, healing is approached through spiritual means. The process often begins with



confessing sins, based on the belief that illness may result from personal sin or spiritual attack. This is followed by the laying on of hands, anointing with olive oil, drinking or washing with sanctified water, and intense prayers. These prayers are assertive and faith-filled, often spoken with commands such as: “In the name of Jesus, sickness, come out of this body!” The power of the Blood of Jesus (Ni Agbara Eje Jesu) is frequently called upon. Sanctified water is also used as a spiritual shield against evil forces or poisoning (Omowole, 2023:56).

Oshun (1981) notes that this forceful style of prayer may appear to be an attempt to compel God to act. However, the C.A.C maintains that its ministers are simply exercising spiritual authority granted by Jesus Christ. While some believe that Christians should be open to medical help, the C.A.C upholds divine healing as a biblical truth, stressing that faith alone is sufficient for healing. Oluseye (2010) highlights that the 1930 revival was marked by widespread conversions and miraculous healings, as people abandoned prohibited objects and turned to God wholeheartedly. Olusola (2009) recalls that during the Oke-Ooye Revival, individuals were healed of a wide range of conditions including pregnancy complications, chronic ailments, blindness, epilepsy, infertility, and poverty. Many more miraculous healings were recorded at Oke-Bola in Ibadan. Between September 14 and October 4, 1930, an astonishing 2,538 healing cases were reported—these included restored pregnancies, freedom from pain, restored vision, restored fertility, and even instances of people being raised from the dead (Loos, 2015:103–107).

The revival in Ibadan had an even broader impact than the one at Oke-Ooye. Reports emerged of lepers being cleansed, the lame walking, the blind regaining sight, and the dumb speaking. Individuals possessed by evil spirits were often convicted during prayer sessions. In Efon Alaaye, healing and deliverance took place quietly and reverently, without public display, as directed by divine instruction (Wilkinson, 2016:189–197).

CONCLUSION

Miraculous healings are acts of divine intervention and are central to the theology and ministry of the Christ Apostolic Church. These healing practices closely mirror the healing ministry of Jesus as described in the Synoptic Gospels, especially in Luke, where Jesus' healings reveal His divine identity and compassion. In the C.A.C, miracles have played a significant role in conversions, church growth, and spiritual revivals.

However, while miracles are important for drawing people to faith, they should not become the church's primary focus. The ultimate aim of revival is spiritual restoration—renewed fellowship with God. Authentic healing must lead to reconciliation with God and should never glorify individuals. Today's believers and church leaders are urged to prioritize the values of God's kingdom above the pursuit of signs and wonders. True revival is not just about physical miracles but about inner transformation and peace with God.



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