

Chapter two reveals more to us of this Jesus who has suddenly become a celebrity in Galilee. So much so that He was mobbed wherever He had become known. After several day He ventures (as guided by the Father) to return to Capernaum. He was apparently in Peter's mother-in-law's house and it was quickly filled with people. No one could get near the door, much less into the house. One wonder's what Peter's wife's family thought when four men started dismantling the roof, which also was the ceiling inside. Dirt and plaster raining down in the livingroom and upon all of her guests visiting Jesus. They lowered down a litter with a man lying on it down into the midst of the crowd room. He was a paralytic (stroke victim? injury? or?). This took faith on the part of these four and their love for their friend was obvious. Jesus again is touched seeing their faith. But He doesn't simply heal this man. He uses the occasion to reveal a little more of Who He really is. We haven't been told if everyone who He had been healing had faith or not. If not, then being healed did not necessarily mean the one made whole physically was made whole spiritually. But this one clearly was. Jesus pronounces his sins forgiven. "Son thy sins be forgiven thee." What words of grace! What was this? What did the sick man think? Was he going to remain a forgiven paralytic? Did he even think of his ailment at all? Did he grasp the enormity of what had occurred? His sins forgiven? Forgiven! Did the paralysis matter to him anymore?

Certain scribes were sitting there. Why were they there anyway? Apparently they had respectfully been given seats inside. Or were they the first to arrive? Doubtful. They immediately began questioning in their hearts. Their doctrine was correct: "who can forgive sins but God only?" The logical conclusion would be that this indeed was God right there in their midst, or this is another fake messiah speaking blasphemies. Talk is cheap. After all how could anyone know if the mans sins were actually forgiven before God in heaven? Talk is cheap unless you are in the presence of the scribes of Judea. Such talk might get one in deep trouble. Such a one might find himself nailed to a Roman cross. Turns out this talk was on the level. Jesus immediately knew what they were reasoning in their hearts and confronted them. He tell them and everyone else what they were thinking! This in itself is the second sign to them that He is God. Then to clinch it He heals the man. He doesn't even say "be ye healed" or something like that. He commands the paralyzed man "take up thy bed and walk." He got up and walked right out though the crowded doorway. His sins were forgiven. And he was cured. Glory to God. The Son of Man has power to forgive sins on this earth! They had seen and heard the undeniable, irrefutable evidence before their very eyes. You and I have now also seen and heard the evidence. Do you believe on Him?

Today God does not favor unbelievers (or even

believers) with signs of His power. Why should He? The five fold witness of the four Gospels and the Acts is enough. Does any one dare demand more? That's unbelief. Does anyone want to see some more exciting signs? Many, many signs and wonders have been given and documented in the scriptures. Will God lower Himself to give performances to simply satisfy man's fleshly lust for excitement? Again this is the age of faith, "by grace are ye saved through faith." We have the witness of the scriptures, do we desire more? Yes, more of Christ but we don't need more acts of power. Now we, by faith, still rejoice in those the scriptures declare. The time for signs and wonders will come again when God introduces the next age in His dealing with mankind and the earth which Adam's descendants ruined and continue to ruin, Revelation 12:3-9. Until then, the scriptures imply, at least, that they are past.

*Hebrews 2:3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; 4 God also bearing **them** witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?*

*1Corinthians 13:8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall **cease**; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. {fail: Gr. vanish away}*

Having pronounced a man's sins forgiven and healed him Jesus has **opened the door** to all who desire to have their sins forgiven. Do such now flock to Him? He resumes teaching, but not in the synagogue for the scribes have initially rejected His overture to them. They have not knelt and worshiped Him, although He is proven worthy. So He **goes forth, out** along the sea shore and teaches those who **come to Him** there. Those who came wanted His teaching not His signs and wonders. While we are not told here what He taught we have it in other passages in the Gospels.

Next another change. He **goes to** the publicans and sinners. He calls Levi (Matthew), a sitting tax gatherer for the Roman Emperor. Publicans were notoriously cheats and thieves, traitors in the eyes of the Jewish people. Then the Lord attends a banquet given by Matthew for his friends so they could meet the Lord. These had already turned against their own nation and people for personal advantage and gain. Now what would keep them from jumping again, from serving Rome to serving Christ. After all there is much more spiritual advantage and spiritual gain to be had with Him. His conduct is called into question by the Pharisees and scribes who counted themselves more righteous than to eat with such. Jesus has been healing the sick and possessed of Israel, now He seeks to bring spiritual healing to lost sinners. He begins with those counted by man to be the lowest and worst. Yes, the door for sinners has been opened! It still is! Have YOU come?

By Ron Canner, November 15, 2006