

# *Twelve Years*

by Jerry Kamphuis

## **Medicine**

Some of the laws God gave the Jewish people were for the purpose of better health. There were laws about rest, relaxation, food, contaminated water, marriage, cleanliness, and contagious diseases. Soldiers were to carry a spade to bury human waste, and people with leprosy were to be isolated. Circumcision resulted in lower incidences of cancer of the cervix among Jewish women, and marriage limitations helped control hereditary diseases.

These things led to a higher level of good health among the people, but there were higher levels of disease when they disobeyed God's laws. This led to an attitude towards doctors. Anyone who resorted to calling on a doctor came under criticism for going against the Will of God (II Chronicles 16:12). They felt that the correct procedure for illness was prayer.

Still, common people wore charms to ward off the evil spirits they thought caused illness, and doctor were around. Exodus 21:9 seem to indicate the use of a crutch when a limb is broken and Hezekiah made a poultice to treat his boil (II Kings 20:7). The book of Job made it clear that sickness was not a result of sin. The book of Ecclesiastes says that God gives gifts of healing. Isaiah said the nation of Judah needed cleansing, bandaging, and ointment (Isaiah 1:6).

In the time of Christ, diseases included leprosy, blindness, deafness, epilepsy, nervous disorders, various crippling diseases and sickness that related to diet & pollution. The religious leaders were still wavering in their attitudes toward medicine and doctors. They thought that there might be a connection between sickness and sin. Still every town was required to have a doctor, which is why the woman was able to consult twelve of them. The Temple always had a doctor close by to look after priests who picked up ailments because of their habit of walking barefoot.

Jesus did not believe that all diseases were a result of sin (John 9:2-4). Still, he knew that sometimes it was a result of demon possession, and dealt with it accordingly. It was His attitude toward sickness that accelerated the Christian acceptance of physicians in the early church. Luke was a doctor who cared for Paul.<sup>1</sup>

## **Chief Ruler of the Synagogue**

A number of elders within each synagogue arranged the details of the service and all other aspects of life at the synagogue. The "chief ruler" was the senior elder, and he took charge of the service. He could invite a preacher (or allowed one) to present the

message and lead the discussion afterwards. Later, Paul received many invitations with synagogues using this procedure.<sup>2</sup> Jairus was a ruler of the synagogue in Capernaum, and it was he who must have allowed (or even invited) Jesus to speak at his synagogue. He may have been among those who interceded for the Roman Centurion.<sup>3</sup>

The name Jairus means, “he will give light”<sup>4</sup> He only had one daughter, who had just passed childhood and reached the period when Jewish Law declared a woman of age. A woman came to age at twelve years and one day. Boys came to age at thirteen years and one day.

This young woman was the youngest of three people that Jesus raised from the dead. The other two being the young man at Nain and Lazarus. In a two-day period of time, Jesus showed that He had power over nature, demons, disease, and now death.

## **Thoughts on the story**

### **Jairus**

- Wealthy and well respected in society
- Man of prestige
- Leader in the synagogue
- He presided over the board of elders in the synagogue
- Had a wife and 12 year-old daughter
- Daughter was very sick and close to death
- Had access to all of the best doctors
- When everything seemed hopeless he went to find Jesus and threw himself at the feet of Him in full view of everyone

*Thought: Imagine how this could be used to promote the cause of Christ if God uses it the way we think He could use it.*

### **The woman with the hemorrhage**

- Her position in society was one of being unclean and unwanted.
- She was not allowed in the synagogue.
- She probably no longer had a family as they would have all left because of her condition.
- Sick for 12 years
- Destitute, lonely, out of money, and she could no longer afford doctors
- When everything seemed hopeless she snuck up behind Jesus and simply touched the hem of his robe hoping that no one would notice.

*Note: A common practice for a woman in her situation was to dig through the dung of a white female donkey to look for a barley of corn to serve as a good luck charm.*

*Thought: Imagine how this woman might have been treated for her interruption of Jesus and His ministry.*

### **Jesus**

- He stops right in the middle of Jairus' 911 emergency and asks "Who touched me?"
- He takes time for this woman who was a nobody
- He was busy doing "ministry" and was on an important mission
- He was busy doing something good but He took time for a nobody, an outcast, for someone no one else cared for. Time that changed her life forever.
- This was valuable time!!! Ask Jairus!!!

*Thought: What do you think Jairus thought about this woman?*

### **The Story**

- While all of this is taking place, Jairus looks up and sees his friends who stayed behind with his daughter and the family coming to him. He could tell by the look on their faces that things were terribly wrong. His daughter is dead! It's no use! You're too late!
- Imagine the horror that must have ripped through Jairus' body. His little girl is dead. Didn't Jesus care? She was only 12 years old. The woman with the hemorrhage had a long life and it was only the last 12 years that she was sick. Why didn't God take her?
- Jesus hears what Jairus' friends said but He ignored them, looked at Jairus and told him "Don't be afraid, just believe"
- What do you suppose Jairus thought? He probably wanted to explode or breakdown into a heap. His little girl is dead!

*Note: This has gone from a healing to a resurrection.*

- Jesus heads off to Jairus' house and takes Peter, James, and John with Him into the home along with Jairus and his wife.
- People are crying everywhere.
- Jesus asks why and then says that she is not dead, she is sleeping.
- Real death is the separation of the soul from God not the soul from the body.
- People laughed but I am sure many were deeply angered that He would say something like that. What an insult! It wasn't funny at all, it was ridiculous!!
- This the first time that Jairus sees his little girl. Cold, lifeless, dead.

- His wife is at his side weeping, shaking, and hysterical. Imagine the pain for Jairus.
- Jesus reaches out and takes the hand of the little girl and simply says “Get up!”
- Immediately she stood up and walked around the room. The first thing she saw was Jesus. The family is in shock. Imagine!!!
- Jesus tells them to tell no one. Why? This story had to get out. The mourners knew. Why not tell everyone? This was fantastic!!
- Jesus’ concern was for the furtherance of the Gospel, not the miracle. It was the Gospel and not the miracle that He wanted them to see and hear.

*Thought: Could we say the same? Is the Gospel more important to us than our most cherished possession?*

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<sup>1</sup> Manners & Customs by Ralph Gower, pages 132-134

<sup>2</sup> Manners & Customs by Ralph Gower, pages 270-273

<sup>3</sup> The Life and Times of Jesus, the Messiah by Alfred Edersheim, page 426

<sup>4</sup> Jesu v. Nazar. 2.2, p. 472