

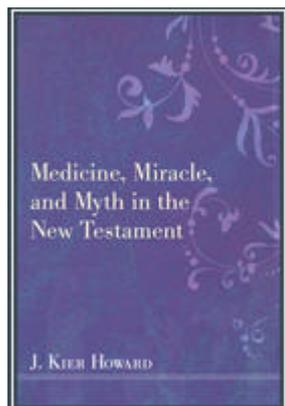


Medicine, Miracle, and Myth in the New Testament

J Keir Howard. [Wipf and Stock Publishers](#), 2010. ISBN-13: 9781608992447.

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Dr J Keir Howard, a retired consultant physician and now an active Anglican priest in Wellington with doctorates in both disciplines, is truly a physician of both body and soul.



In *Medicine, Miracle, and Myth in the New Testament*, Howard gives a fresh understanding of the healing ministry of Jesus. Healing the cripple, giving sight to the blind, cleansing the leper, raising the dead: does our knowledge of medicine today help us understand these miracles?

Aided by his years as a missionary in Zambia, Howard gives thought-provoking interpretations of these miracles, suggesting that Jesus acted as a prophetic folk healer in the tradition of the Old Testament prophets such as Elijah and Elisha.

Howard, carefully dissecting the limited clinical information given in the Gospels and Acts, divides the New Testament miracles into three groups. The first and largest group includes those with illnesses that can be considered psychosomatic. Paralysis, for example, can be a manifestation of conversion disorders. The first words Jesus spoke to the paralyzed young man let down through the roof were, 'Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.' Having dealt with his underlying anxiety and feelings of guilt, the man regained the use of his limbs. The second group were those with genuine physical problems. Touching the blind man's eyes, Jesus used the long-established practice of manual couching to deal with over-ripe cataracts. The third group were people afflicted with 'leprosy', an ill-understood diverse group of skin disorders, whom Jesus declared to be ritually cleansed.

Amongst other subjects discussed, Howard gives fresh insights into the raising of the dead, the virginal conception of Jesus and His death on the cross, and Paul's thorn in the flesh.

This book will appeal to students of medicine and should be compulsory reading for ministers and preachers, for it provides an intelligent framework to interpret medical mysteries in the Gospels that cannot readily be found elsewhere.

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