

A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS
FF. Christ's Great Grace To Israel's Infirm
(Matthew 14:34-36; Mark 6:53-56)

I. Introduction

- A. After Jesus had fed the five thousand and crossed the Sea of Galilee, the people there recognized Him and began to run about in haste to bring infirmed people even on their sick beds to Him to be healed.
- B. Everyone who had a physical need had it healed by Jesus, and under the Mosaic Law, this fact testified to the great grace of Christ to Israel's infirmed people. We study this event for our insight and edification:

II. Christ's Great Grace To Israel's Infirm, Matthew 14:34-36; Mark 6:53-56.

- A. After Jesus and His disciples had crossed the Sea of Galilee to Gennesaret, the people there quickly recognized Him, Mark 6:53-54. They ran throughout that region and gathered up to carry the infirmed on beds to where they heard He was, be it in the villages, towns or countryside, and they placed the infirmed in the marketplaces, Mark 6:55-56a KJV. They then begged Jesus to let Him touch even the border of His garment, and all who touched it were healed, Mark 6:56b KJV.
- B. This account in view of the Scriptures reveals the great grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to the infirmed in Israel:
 - 1. The motivation of the infirmed to touch even the border of Christ's garment resulted from news of the woman with the twelve-year-long hemorrhage who had touched Jesus garment and had been healed:
 - a. Back in Matthew 9:20, the woman with the twelve-year-long hemorrhage had come up behind Jesus and touched the *kraspedon*, the "tassel" that was located at the corner of the hem of His outer garment. (Arndt & Gingrich, *A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T.*, 1967, p. 449) This outer garment, a Tallith, was square in shape, and it was evidently wrapped about the body so that a corner of it with its tassel dangled between one's shoulder blades (Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, 1972, vol. I, p. 624).
 - b. Her hemorrhage had made her unclean, and she wanted to avoid publicly contaminating Jesus by touching Him though longing to be healed of her long, socially isolating infirmity. Consequently, she had shyly come up behind Jesus and touched just the tassel that dangled between His shoulder blades, Matthew 9:20!
 - c. Since she had touched the tassel in faith, she had been instantly healed, and Jesus stopped to teach her this truth that she not think that she had been healed because of some magical force, cf. Matthew 9:22.
 - d. Thus, the many infirmed people who desired to touch Jesus also wanted to touch His *kraspedon* (Ibid.) that they might be healed like the woman with the twelve-year long hemorrhage, Mark 6:56. Many of them would have had infirmities that made them likewise unclean, so due to the precedent of the woman with the unclean hemorrhage touching His tassel to be healed, they also longed just to touch Jesus' tassel!
 - 2. Significantly, Jesus was wearing a blue tassel at each corner of His outer garment to obey Numbers 15:38-40 NIV, ESV of the Mosaic Law that ordered Israel's people to wear these blue tassels at the corners of their outer garments to remind them to obey the Law (*Ryrie St. Bib., KJV*, 1978, ftn. to Num. 15:37-41).
 - 3. Were the people to obey all of the Law's commandments, they would have enjoyed God's comprehensive blessings, including good health, cf. Deuteronomy 28:15-22!
 - 4. Thus, the existence of many infirmed Hebrews in Israel of Jesus' day revealed the spiritual failure of many of them to obey the Law! The people in Jesus' day indeed walked in darkness as Isaiah 9:2a had foretold.
 - 5. The infirmed people of Jesus' day, possibly not even thinking of God's Biblical intent in having Jesus wear such tassels to remind them to obey Scripture, could only dwell on their need to touch His tassel like the unclean woman with the hemorrhage had done to be healed. Thus, since they touched Jesus' tassel in faith to be healed, by God's great grace, every one of them was healed by the Lord Jesus (Mark 6:56b).
 - 6. With Jesus' healing of such large throngs of infirmed people in Israel, people infirmed from violating the Mosaic Law, Isaiah 9:1-2 was graciously fulfilled: The people of Israel who lived in Galilee and who had walked in spiritual darkness had seen a Great Light, the Light of God in His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ! Galilean Hebrews who dwelt in the land of the shadow of spiritual death had seen that Great Light of life!

Lesson: Based on Christ's gracious healing of the ceremonially unclean woman with the twelve-year-long hemorrhage who touched the tassel of His outer garment that dangled between His shoulder blades and that was meant to remind Israel's people to keep the Law to remain healthy, many other infirmed people, similarly afflicted in punishment and uncleanness for disobeying the Law, were still graciously healed by touching Jesus' tassel.

Application: May we rejoice in the great grace of our Lord, and may we come to Him for cleansing as we need it!