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Foreword

Bread in ancient times has been the symbol of life and nourishment for our bodies. It always has been regarded as something wholesome and good; representing the basic necessity of life. Is it no wonder that God makes a divine connection between natural bread and the Word of God? As Jesus said in John 6:63, *"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life."* As natural bread sustains physical life, Jesus Christ, the Word of God sustains us on all three dimensions of our being- spirit, soul and body. *"For in him we live and move and have our being,"* Acts 17:28.

Matthew 4:4
Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Job 23:12
I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread.

Jeremiah 15:16
When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O Lord God Almighty.

Psalms 107:20
He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave.

Proverbs 4:20-22
My son, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to a man's whole body.

John 1:14
The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Jesus so eloquently articulates to mankind that He is our all in all, not only our creator God, but our very essence of life and fulfillment. He completes us, sustains us and fills us to overflowing- never to go hungry or thirsty again in any area of life- He is the Alpha and the Omega, Revelation 22:13!

John 6:30-36
So they asked him, "What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." "Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread." Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.

John 6:47-51
I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Only Jesus can satisfy the deep hunger and thirst of the human heart for God; as deep calls to deep- Psalms 42:7. Certainly there are many aspects to Jesus being our "Bread of Life" that we can draw rich revelation from. For this series, we are going to focus on the aspect of divine healing in the context of Jesus being the bread of life for the healing of our physical body and soul- mind, will and emotions.

Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil, which has afflicted humanity with all forms of sickness, disease, pain and suffering- Acts 10:38; 1 John 3:8. Jesus called this deliverance and healing, "The Children's Bread" in Matthew 15:26 and Mark 7:27. Notice that Jesus made a wonderful statement concerning healing, *"let the children eat all they want."* God is never on short supply nor is He stingy or withholding when it comes to healing for His children. Even those who are not a part of God's family can receive healing from the Lord.

Mark 7:24-30
Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret. In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an evil spirit came and fell at his feet. The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter. "First let the children eat all they want," he told her, "for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs." "Yes, Lord," she replied, "but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." Then he told her, "For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter." She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

As natural bread is life for our physical bodies, so the Word of God is life for our spirit, soul and body. We are going to cover a lot of territory on the subject of Healing from the Word of God. Proverbs 4:22 calls God's Word, life and health for our body. The Hebrew word translated health is *marpe* in Strong's Concordance, which means: medicine, a cure and deliverance. Receiving God's word into our spirit is like receiving medicine for our body. In the natural, we generally take our medicine a number of times before we see any results. So it is with God's Word, I will be presenting key concepts multiple times; since faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of God- Romans 10:17. So if you remember hearing a certain point before in the material, it was by design and more than likely you will hear it again further in the study.

Colossians 2:6-7
So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Colossians 3:16
Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom

So, without any further delay, let's jump into the Bible and discover all that God has to say about healing and health for His Children.

I. God's Will for Healing

Introductory Comments

My heart's desire and prayer is that those who read this material will enjoy a comprehensive study on the subject of divine healing. I named this series "Healing is the Children's Bread" because the Word of God plainly makes it a major staple for the believers to receive, enjoy and share with others. In Acts 5:20 the angel told Peter who was delivered from jail, *"tell the people the full message of this new life."* Sadly, this wonderful subject has come under vicious attack over the centuries because Satan wants God's children to be oppressed by his sicknesses and diseases in an attempt to hinder the plan of God in the earth- and fulfilling the Great Commission.

I have researched this subject extensively and fortunately there are many excellent works for the Body of Christ to receive further revelation knowledge on this all important subject. I encourage you to allow the Word and the Holy Spirit to transform your life so you can be blessed with divine healing in your personal life and in turn bless others with God's healing Word.

Acts 20:20-21
You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house.

A. Who Has Believed the Report

Isaiah 53:1
"Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"

My encouragement to you as you read this material is to be open in your thinking. There may be some unbiblical traditions and mentalities that will be challenged along the way, please don't turn me off. Of course you are not obligated to accept anything in this material if you can't see it plainly in the Word of God and bears witness with your spirit. However, if you begin to see things in the Word of God that may be a little different from what you have been accustomed to, we need to stay with the truth of God's Word and not what we thought the Bible said, or what another person said they thought the Bible said. I don't know about you, but if I am wrong in my thinking, I want to know about it and change so I can receive God's blessing in my life.

Acts 17:11
Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

Utterance is greatly affected by the hearer. It can be harder to get the message out in some places than others. This dynamic often times is found with the people who are listening or should I say, the manner in which they listen. When folks get excited and hungry things happen, but if they are bored and are thinking about what's for lunch, the Spirit of God is grieved.

In the gospel of John chapter 12, John by the Holy Spirit was making a connection with Jesus in regards to His miracle and healing ministry as a fulfillment of Isaiah 53:1. However, this principle of "Believing the Report" or lack thereof has broad application today.

John 12:37-41
Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet: "Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere: "He has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn — and I would heal them." Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him.

In regards to ministry, some are sent and some just went- Acts 13. Here we see the Holy Spirit had sent Paul and Barnabas into the mission field, they were not sent by a human committee. When it comes to ministry, the key is being called, appointed, anointed and sent by the Holy Spirit; some folks can get up and give a good talk, but they are not sent of the Holy Spirit. When the anointed Word of God is being taught or preached, it is in our best interest to listen carefully and take to heart the Word of God that is spoken. Like Mary in Luke 2:19, *"But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart."*

Romans 10:13-18
For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: "Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world."

Let's talk a little about the Arm of the Lord. For example, the Arm of the Lord was exerted when God raised Jesus from the dead, but when it came to casting out demons, it only takes His finger to flick them- Luke 11:20, *"But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you."* The arm of the Lord or the power of God is revealed on behalf of those who believe the report. The measure of attention that is given to what we hear is the measure of what we will get out of what we hear. There can be two people in the same service and one individual's life is completely changed and transformed and the other one just sitting there bored. The difference is in how one hears; how we esteem what we hear, the value we place on the Word of God. Spiritual things never grow old, so if it's old to us, it was never real to us.

Mark 4:24-25
Consider carefully what you hear," he continued. "With the measure [attentiveness to the Word] you use, it will be measured to you — and even more. Whoever has [ears to hear] will be given more; whoever does not have[ears to hear], even what he has [knowledge of God's Word] will be taken from him [will forget it]."

Luke 8:18
Therefore consider carefully how you listen. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him."

The Scriptures declare that the power of God is revealed to those who believe the report. Note to self, upon hearing the Word if I still don't have any joy and peace over the circumstances of life; I have not believed the report.

No matter how dark the situation may be, if I hear the Word on a subject that I am dealing with, and am still just as sad, upset and full of fear; I simply have not believed the report of God's Word. If we believe the report it affects us inside and out and will reveal a visible change because we believe the good news. If we say, "But the doctor says I'm going to die in a few weeks…" then we don't believe the Report of the Lord- which says in Psalms 118:17, *"I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the Lord has done."* Rather, some believe the doctor's report instead of God's report, because that is what the world says we are to do.

For those who esteem the Word and come out to hear the Word when it is ministered because they know the Word will make a difference in their life, they will not be disappointed. The Word is at work only in those who believe the good report of God's Word.

And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

Is it still the will of God, as in the past, to heal all who have need of healing, and to fulfill the number of their days? The greatest barrier to the faith of many seeking bodily healing in our day is the uncertainty in their minds as to it being the will of God to heal all. Based on mere observation, nearly everyone knows that God does heal some, but there is much in modern theology that keeps the people from knowing what the Bible clearly teaches; healing is provided for all, all the time. It is impossible to boldly claim by faith a blessing which we are not sure God offers, because the power of God can be claimed only when the will of God is known.

Before anyone can have a steadfast faith for the healing of their body, they must be rid of all uncertainty concerning God's will in the matter. Appropriating faith cannot go beyond one's knowledge of the revealed will of God. Before attempting to exercise faith for healing, one needs to know what the Scriptures plainly teach, that it is just as much God's will to heal the body as it is to forgive sins. This lesson is specifically designed for that very purpose; to provide an abundance of Scriptural evidence to build such a certainty concerning God's will on this matter. It's only by knowing that God promises what we are seeking, that all uncertainty can be removed and a steadfast faith is made possible. Each promise of God in His Word is a revelation of what He is already eager to do for us. Until we know what God's will is, there is nothing to base our faith on.

John 8:31-32
To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Until a person who is seeking healing is sure from God's Word, that it is God's will to heal him, he is trying to reap a harvest where there is no seed planted. It would be impossible for a farmer to have faith for a harvest before he was sure the seed had been planted. God does nothing without His Word. It would be next to impossible to get a sinner to "believe unto righteousness…" before we had fully convinced him that it was God's will for him to be saved.

Faith begins where the will of God is known. If it's God's will to heal only some of those who need healing, then none of us has any basis for faith unless they have a special revelation that they are among the favored ones to receive it. Faith must rest on the will of God alone, not on our desires or wishes. Appropriating faith is not believing that God can but that God will. Because of not knowing it to be a redemptive privilege for all, most of those in our day, when seeking healing, add to their petition the phrase, "If it be Thy will."

Faith begins where the will of God is known and God's Word is God's Will!

"He sent His Word and it healed them" are the words of the Holy Spirit in Psalms 107:20- Fenton's Translation. All His work is done in faithfulness to His promises. For each sick person to know that it is God's will to heal him, is the "seed" which is to be planted in his mind and heart. And it is not planted until it is known, received and trusted. No sinner can become a Christian before he knows that it is God's will to save him. It is the Word of God planted and watered and steadfastly trusted, which heals both soul and body. The "seed" must remain planted and be kept watered before it can produce a harvest.

1 Peter 1:23 NKJV
Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever…

Praying for healing with the faith destroying words, "if it be Thy will" is not planting the "seed"; it is destroying the seed. "The prayer of faith" which heals the sick is to follow (not precede) the planting of the "seed" (the Word) upon which alone faith is based. Many, instead of saying, "pray for me" should first say, "teach me God's Word, so I can intelligently cooperate for my recovery." We must know what the benefits of Calvary are before we can appropriate them by faith.

Faith Rests on More than Mere Ability

If a billionaire were to appear before an audience of a thousand people, with the announcement that he was **able** to give each one a million dollars, this would be no basis for any faith for a million dollars, because faith cannot rest on ability alone. If he should go further, and say, "I will give **fifty of you** a million dollars each," even then there is no basis for anyone in the audience to have faith for the million dollars. Were you to ask one of them if he or she were "fully assured" of receiving a million dollars from the billionaire, the answer would be, "I need the money, and hope I am among the lucky ones, but I cannot be sure." But, should the billionaire say, "**It is my will** to give all of you a million dollars each," then everyone in the audience would have a basis for faith- it's a sure thing, no more guess work. Everyone would undoubtedly say to the rich man, "Thank you! I'll take my money now."

1. Read the Will and Know

If we want to know God's will on any subject, let us read His will in His Word. Suppose a lady should say, "My husband, who was very rich, has passed away; I wish I knew whether he left me anything in the will." I would say to her, "Why don't you read the will and find out?" The word "testament," legally speaking, means a person's will. The Bible contains God's last will and testament, in which He bequeaths to us all the blessings of redemption; and since it is His "last will and testament," anything submitted later is a forgery. A man never writes a new will after he is dead. If healing is in God's will for us, then to say that the age of miracles is past is virtually saying what is the opposite of the truth, that a will is no good after the death of the testator. Jesus is not only the testator who died; He was resurrected, and is also the mediator of the will. He is our lawyer, so to speak, and He will not beat us out of the Will, as some earthly lawyers do. He is our Representative at the right hand of God.

For the answer to the question under consideration, let us look away from modern tradition and go to the Word of God, which is a revelation of His will. In the 15th chapter of Exodus, just after the passage of the Red Sea, which typified our redemption, and "was written for our admonition," God gave His first promise to heal. This promise was for all. God named the conditions, the conditions were met by the people of Israel, and we read in Psalms 105:37 NKJV, *"He also brought them out with silver and gold, and there was none feeble among His tribes."* It is here that God gave the covenant of healing, revealed by and sealed with His first covenant and Redemptive name, Jehovah-Rapha, translated, "I am the Lord who heals you." This is God's word, "settled in heaven," a never-changing fact concerning God.

Exodus 15:22-26
Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea and they went into the Desert of Shur. For three days they traveled in the desert without finding water. When they came to Marah, they could not drink its water because it was bitter. (That is why the place is called Marah.) So the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "What are we to drink?" Then Moses cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a piece of wood. He threw it into the water, and the water became sweet. There the Lord made a decree and a law for them, and there he tested them. He said, "If you listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you."

To say that this privilege of health is not for God's people today, is to change God's "I Am" to "I Was" Jehovah-Rapha. Who has the authority to change God's Redemptive names? This universal state of health in the nation of Israel continued as long as God's conditions were met. Then, twenty years later (Numbers 16:46-50) when, because of sin the plague destroyed 14,700, they again met the conditions and the plague stopped, and He was still Jehovah-Rapha. He is the Healer, not to some, but to all. It would not be true that the plague was stopped if it remained on even one of them. This state of health again remained uninterrupted until nineteen years later, when the people, not satisfied with God's way for them, chosen in love and mercy, spoke against God and against Moses, and they were cursed with the poisonous serpents. When they again met God's conditions, by confessing their sins, His word through Moses to them was:

Numbers 21:8-9
The Lord said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live." So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived.

So, again at this time, the Scriptures show us that it was still God's will to heal, not some, but all. Every one that was bitten lived by looking at the bronze snake. Which was a foreshadowing of the coming sacrifice upon Calvary by Jesus, on our behalf. In today's age, folks talk a lot about "Universal Health Care." Well that concept is not new; it originated with God and continues to be in force as a divine benefit for believers today to enjoy.

B. God at Work

Hebrews 1:3
The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

Colossians 2:9-10
For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.

Jesus Christ is the absolute expression of God's will. There is no better way of ascertaining the proper answer to the question before us concerning God's will in regards to bodily healing than by reading the Gospels, which record the teachings and the works of Christ. He was the expression of the Father's will. His life was both a revelation and a manifestation of the unchanging love and will of God. He literally acted out the will of God for humanity. Therefore, when we see Him healing the multitudes of people that came to see Him day after day, we see the Father revealing His will. When in Luke 4:40 NKJV, *"He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them,"* He was doing and revealing the will of God for our bodies.

John 6:38
For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.

John 14:9-10
Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.

Do you want to know what God is like? Look at Jesus. Do you want to see God at work? Look at Jesus. Do you want to know the will of God? Look at Jesus. Jesus is the will of God in action. John 6:38, *"For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me."* Did Jesus go about making people sick? No! He went about doing good and healing! So it's God's will to heal!

Acts 10:38 AMP
How God anointed and consecrated Jesus of Nazareth with the [Holy] Spirit and with strength and ability and power; how He went about doing good and, in particular, curing all who were harassed and oppressed by [the power of] the devil, for God was with Him.

Perhaps no one would be more conservative than the scholars of the Episcopalian church. A commission was appointed to study the subject of healing and report back to the church. After three years of study and research in both the Bible and history, they reported the following, "The healing of the sick by Jesus was done as a revelation of God's will for man." Because they discovered that His will is fully revealed, they went on to say, "No longer can the Church pray for the sick with the faith destroying, qualifying phrase 'If it by Thy will.'"

The message taught everywhere in the Gospels was one of complete healing for the spirit, soul and body and it applied to all who came to Him. Many today say, "I believe in healing, but I do not believe it is God's will for everyone." If it's not, how could we pray the prayer of faith for any, or even for one

whom it is God's will to heal, until we have a revelation by the Spirit that we are praying for the right one? If it is not God's will to heal all, then no man can ascertain the will of God for himself from the Bible. Are we to understand from these teachers that we must close our Bibles and get our revelation direct from the Spirit, before we can pray for the sick, because the will of God cannot be ascertained from the Scriptures? How are the sick to be healed if there is no Gospel (good news) of healing to proclaim to them as a

basis for their faith? Or, since faith is expecting God to keep His promise, how can there be faith for healing if there is no promise in the Bible that the sick can apply to him/her? The Scriptures plainly tell us how God heals the sick.

Psalms 107:20- "He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave."

Jeremiah 1:12- "…for I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled."

Isaiah 55:11
So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Proverbs 4:22
"…for they [God's Word] are life to those who find them and health to a man's whole body."

John 6:63- "The words I [Jesus] have spoken to you are spirit and they are life."

Hebrews 1:3 AMP
"…upholding and maintaining and guiding and propelling the universe by His mighty word of power."

1 Thessalonians 2:13 AMP
"…the Word of God, which is effectually at work in you who believe [exercising its superhuman power in those who adhere to and trust in and rely on it]."

1. God's Great Mercy

Nothing reveals the character of God more than these two verses of Scripture. The Lord is gracious, and He's full of compassion. The dictionary tells us that "to be full of compassion" means to be merciful. So "compassion" and "mercy" are companion terms, we might say. And, if you look up the words "compassion" and "mercy," you'll find that often the same Hebrew or Greek word is translated one time "mercy" and another time "compassion." Therefore, "to have mercy" means to be full of compassion. God is full of compassion, He is of great mercy, and His tender mercies are over all of His works.

Psalms 145:8-9
The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.

Usually we think of "mercy" only in connection with the Lord having mercy on the sinner and saving him/her. Well, that's a part of it, but we also need to think of God's mercy in connection with healing. The first text we will look at is in Mark chapter 1. I want you to notice some things about the Lord Jesus Christ. Because Jesus is the will of God in action, we can look at God's compassion manifested in the Person of Jesus. Notice that compassion moved Jesus to heal the leper. Healing is a display of God's compassion.

Mark 1:40-42
A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.

2. Compassion Compelled Jesus

Let's look at another example of the Lord's compassion in relation to healing.

Matthew 14:13-14
When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

Verse 14 says that Jesus was moved with compassion. Well, what did compassion move Him to do? It moved Him to heal! Verse 14 says, *"... and healed their sick."* I think that the compassion of the Lord in connection with healing has been hidden from us because it has been taught that Jesus healed the sick only to prove His deity. Yet that kind of statement isn't in the Bible. Not once, in all the recorded cases of healing, does the Bible ever say, ". . . and to prove His deity and divinity, Jesus healed them." And if the Bible doesn't say it, then we shouldn't say it either. The work of God and the harvest of souls are certainly about salvation, but please keep in mind that healing is part of the salvation message as we will establish later in this series. We need to consider the wonderful harvest of physical healing and mental restoration for humanity as part of God's program, not just the New Birth of the human spirit.

Matthew 9:36-38
When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

According to the Bible, Jesus healed the sick because of His compassion, not because of His deity or divinity. His compassion compelled Him to do it. And, thank God, He's the same compassionate Lord today. God never changes. He's the same now as He was back then. So if He was gracious then, He's gracious now. If He was full of compassion then, He's full of compassion now. If He was merciful then, He's merciful now.

Matthew 20:29-34
As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!" The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!" Jesus stopped and called them. "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked. "Lord," they answered, "we want our sight." Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

The two blind men in this passage cried out for Jesus to have mercy on them. When Jesus asked these men what they wanted, they did not say, "That our sins may be forgiven." You see, we usually think of mercy in connection with the forgiveness or remission of sins. We think of the mercy of God extended toward the sinner. But is He any less merciful to the sick? These men were asking for mercy in connection with healing. If they had asked for their sins to be forgiven, that would be mercy all right. But when Jesus asked them what they wanted, they answered, *"…we want our sight."* Healing is mercy too. Verse 34 says that Jesus had compassion or mercy – on them and, *"…touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him."*

Healing is Mercy Too!

Now, let's review what happened in this passage. These two blind men asked for the mercy of having their eyes opened. Jesus granted unto them the mercy of healing, proving that healing is a mercy just as forgiveness is a mercy.

In Mark chapter 5, we read that Jesus delivered a man possessed by a devil. I want to call your attention to the fact that Jesus had mercy and compassion on this man who was possessed by a devil. This demonized man broke the chains that bound him, and wandered among the tombs, crying out day and night while cutting himself with stones. Jesus had compassion upon this man, and the man was delivered, healed, clothed, and restored to his right mind. We know that Jesus delivered him out of mercy.

Mark 5:19-20
Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."

Clearly this verse makes it plain that the Lord did great things for the man because the Lord had mercy on him just as He had mercy on the sick in body. The man did just as Jesus told him to do according to verse 20, *"So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed."*

Since the man told others about the Lord's mercy, multitudes came to Jesus to be healed. How do we know that? Matthew chapter 15 tells us so.

Matthew 15:30-31
Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he healed them. The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.

Now it's important for us to realize that the setting of this passage is Decapolis – the same place the man in Mark chapter 5 was to go and tell about the Lord's mercy. You may not realize that it is the same place without a close study of the Word, but it is (see Mark 7:31-37 for the parallel account of Matthew 15:30 and 31). As a result of this man telling about the Lord's mercy, great multitudes came to Jesus and were healed; so healing mercy makes for great advertising for the Kingdom of God as well.

A third example of Jesus being moved with compassion and mercy came on the occasion when He fed the multitudes. This correlates with God's heart to provide materially for us as a human parent cares for their children. God is just as interested in prospering His children as He is in healing their bodies and delivering them from the oppression of the devil.

Mark 8:1-3
During those days another large crowd gathered. Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance."

Matthew 7:9-11
"Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

Philippians 4:19
And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

2 Corinthians 8:9
For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

So could healing be classified as a good gift? If parents take their sick children to the doctor to receive a remedy, how much more does our Heavenly Father want to heal us completely of anything and everything that the devil tries to put on us? Therefore, healing is a good gift; so how much more does our heavenly Father want us healed than we do? Immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine!

Exodus 23:25-26
Worship the Lord your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you, and none will miscarry or be barren in your land. I will give you a full life span.

Psalms 103:2-3
Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits — who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,

So do you see the connection here, if it's God's will to show mercy in the area of forgiveness for all, that same mercy can be consistently demonstrated for healing, deliverance and provision for all as well!

3. The Father of Mercies

Mercy isn't just something that God has or shows; it's part of His nature. Notice that the New International Version uses the word "Compassion" and the New King James Version uses the word "Mercy" in 2 Corinthians chapter one verse three- these two words can be used interchangeably. Greek oiktirmos (oyk-tir-mos'); pity, mercy, merciful, of tender mercy and compassionate.

2 Corinthians 1:3
Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort.

2 Corinthians 1:3 NKJV
Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort.

This verse of Scripture reveals the character of our Father God. So many times we as Christians don't see God our Father in the light that we should. Some Christians picture God as a sort of traffic cop who is just waiting for them to do something wrong so He can blow the whistle on them. Or they picture God as an austere judge who is waiting, with gavel in hand, to smite them the minute they do wrong. Or they picture God as waiting with a giant flyswatter, ready to swat them as soon as they stop moving. Yes, God is against wrongdoing, and He is a holy and just God. However, 2 Corinthians 1:3 tells us that He is also the Father of mercies and compassion. He may be God to the world, but He is Father to you and me through Jesus Christ. If our perspective of God is the former, then our expectations for healing would be mighty slim. But as we become acquainted with our loving heavenly Father, we see clearly that healing is part of His nature just as much as the remission of our sins.

Romans 2:4 AMP
Or are you [so blind as to] trifle with and presume upon and despise and underestimate the wealth of His kindness and forbearance and long-suffering patience? Are you unmindful or actually ignorant [of the fact] that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repent (to change your mind and inner man to accept God's will)?

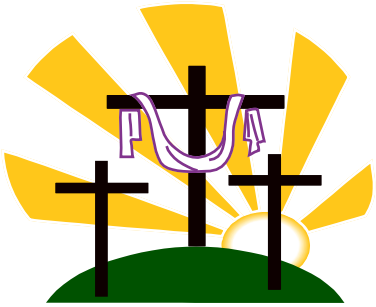
Matthew 5:43-45
"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."

Acts 14:16-17
"In the past, he let all nations go their own way. Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy."

God not only wants His children healed, but also the lost, as a means of showing His mercy, compassion and goodness to them in order to lead them to repentance. The devil wants people to think that God is as he is, a cruel task master making people sick and oppressed, but the Bible clearly reveals that God is a God of love and even in His judgments, they are acts of mercy like Noah's flood, Sodom and Gomorrah etc. Jesus made it a personal mission to set the captives free, from being under Satan's oppressive curses as a consequence of breaking God's law- 1 John 3:8, *"The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work."*

Galatians 3:13
Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."

Acts 10:38
How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.



If Jesus' mission on earth was to destroy the devil's work, how can it be that He now wants a cancer, a "plague," a "curse," "the works of the devil," in "the members of His Body," and "the temples of the Holy Spirit?" Is it not His will to heal any part of "the Body of Christ?" If not, why has He commanded that "any sick" in His Body be anointed with oil (James 5:14-15) in His name for healing? Since "the Body is for the Lord," a "living sacrifice unto God," would He not rather have a well body than one that is a wreck? If not, how can He make us "perfect in every good work to do His will?" Is God's expressed will that we "may abound unto every good work," that we may be "prepared unto every good work," "thoroughly furnished unto all good works," "zealous of good works," and "careful to maintain good works" only for well men and women? If for all, He would have to heal the sick to make this possible, because no man or woman can "abound unto every good work" while confined to a sick bed- Hebrews 13:21.

Let's take a closer look at 2 Corinthians 1:3 in the New King James Version:

2 Corinthians 1:3 NKJV
Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort.

Notice this verse doesn't say that God is the Father of mercy, singular. It says He is the Father of mercies, plural! You see, if He was just the Father of one mercy – the mercy of forgiveness toward the sinner, for example – then Paul would have called Him the Father of mercy. But thank God, He's the Father of mercies, and one of His mercies is healing!

Some people say healing isn't for us today or that it's only for a chosen select few whom the Lord wills to be healed. Well, is compassion for us today? Of course, it is! And is the Lord still compassionate and merciful? Of course, He is! We have seen in the New Testament that the words "compassion" and "mercy" are consistently mentioned in connection with healing and deliverance and provision. So we know that because God's mercy is still for us today, healing is also for us today! Remember, God is the Father of mercies. Not only is the forgiveness of sin and the remission of sin a mercy, but healing is a mercy! If we would just think of healing as one of God's tender mercies, we'll find out right away that we'll get somewhere in this area. God is merciful to save, and He is merciful to heal- without favoritism. What God is looking for is faith; thank God for the mercy of healing!

As we have already stated, many in our day have been taught that Christ performed miracles of healing just to show His power and to prove His deity. This may be true to a degree, but it is far from being all the truth. He would not have had to heal all to show His power; a few outstanding cases would prove this.

Besides, wasn't it the devil that had tempted Jesus to prove His deity by jumping off the temple in Luke 4:9-11. Others teach that He healed the sick to make Himself known. His own family tried to push Him into a more visible ministry in John 7:1-9. Jesus was frequently telling people to be quiet about their healing- Matthew 8:4; 16:20; 17:9; Mark 7:36; 8:30; 9:9; Luke 5:14; 8:56. But the Scriptures show that He healed because of His compassion and to fulfill prophecy.

Some, who do admit that Jesus healed all who came to Him, hold that Isaiah's prophecy concerning Him bearing our sicknesses refers only to His earthly ministry; that this universal manifestation of His compassion was special for that time, and not a revelation of the unchanging will of God for all of eternity. But the Bible clearly teaches that He only "began to do and teach" in Acts 1:1, what was not only to be continued, but increased and continued long after His ascension.

After Jesus, for three years, had healed all that came to Him, He said in John 16:7, *"It is for your good that I am going away."* How could this be true if His going away would diminish His ministry to the sick and oppressed? Anticipating the unbelief with which this wonderful promise would be regarded, He prefaced His promise to continue the same and greater works in answer to our prayers after His exaltation with the words:

John 14:12-13
I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.

We are to carry on His ministry in the earth as His Body through faith in His Word and by speaking the Name of Jesus. Notice, Jesus did not say, "less works" or "some works" or "a few works," but "greater works." This not only means more of the same of what Jesus did, but even greater manifestations of His power. To me, this statement of fact from the lips of Jesus is a complete answer to all opposers and to all their books and articles against Divine Healing. Wm. Jennings Bryan asks a simple question, "Since Jesus said 'It is written,' and the devil said 'It is written,' why can't the preacher say 'It is written?'"

4. Jesus is the Same Yesterday, Today, and Forever

God's mercy hasn't changed since Jesus' ascension but rather is still being manifested in Jesus' present-day ministry as our faithful High Priest. During the ministry of Jesus on the earth some 2,000 years ago, He was healing folks on a regular basis. For Jesus to say to His *disciples "It is for your good that I am going away…"* in John 16:7, then the wonderful healing ministry of Jesus (among other things), could not have been in decline but on the increase- based on the statement of Jesus Himself.

John 16:7
But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

Even though at the time, the disciples could not understand that it was better for Jesus to go than for Him to stay. The reason that it was better was because the Holy Spirit would be sent to live inside us as our Great Comforter and His anointing would be upon us in power to fulfill the Great Commission. In His book Christ the Healer, F. F. Bosworth points out that Jesus' going away could not be a good thing (and thus Jesus' statement proved untrue) "if His going away would withdraw, or even modify, the manifestation of His compassion in healing the sick."

Brother Bosworth went on to say, "Every man who teaches that healing is not for all who need it today, as it was in the past, is virtually teaching that Christ's compassion toward the sick has been at least modified since His exaltation. Worse yet, others teach that [Jesus'] compassion in healing the sick has been entirely withdrawn. To me, it is a mystery how any minister can take a position that veils and interferes with the manifestation of the greatest attribute of deity, God's compassion which is Divine Love in action."

Why would Jesus be any less compassionate in His present-day ministry as our faithful High Priest than He was in His earthly ministry? Jesus is the same now as He was when He was on the earth. He never changes. He's the same now as He was back then. So if He was gracious then, He's gracious now. If He was full of compassion then, He's full of compassion now. If He was merciful then, He's merciful now.

Hebrews 2:17
For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

Romans 8:34-35
Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

The same Greek word translated "merciful" in Hebrews 2:17 is also translated "compassionate" in other passages. We've already brought out the fact that both the words "merciful" and "compassionate" can be used interchangeably. Therefore, the Greek adjective translated "merciful" in Hebrews 4:17 could also be translated "compassionate." Both of these words accurately describe Jesus our High Priest. Hebrews 4:15 tells us that Jesus our High Priest understands what we're going through and has compassion on us.

Hebrews 4:15-16
For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

The tender heart of God is still the same today for humanity as it always has been. In this dispensation of Grace that we live in today, we have better promises and a better covenant to deal with the issues of life than we ever have before! So if Jesus is the same today as He was yesterday – if He is the same now as our exalted High Priest sitting at the right hand of the Father as He was when He walked the shores of Galilee – then He is full of just as much compassion now as He was then to heal the sick.

That means Jesus is full of just as much compassion and mercy today as He was in Matthew chapter 20 when He departed from Jericho and two blind men cried unto Him, *"Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"* in Matthew 20:29-34. If Jesus is the same now as He was then, then He's still full of compassion. And the Bible tells us that He is the same now as He was when He was on the earth- Hebrews 13:8. When you can get people to see that, getting them healed is no problem at all.

Hebrews 13:8
Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

As a matter of fact, Jesus wants you healed more than you want yourself healed- He yearns to heal you! Because of the Lord's compassion and mercy, He wants to heal you. Just because Jesus has been exalted doesn't mean He's lost or is diminished in His mercy. The Bible doesn't teach that His mercy has been done away with or changed. Actually, it's the will of God that His healing ministry be multiplied and perpetuated all throughout the world; through His Body of believers, anointed with the Holy Spirit and healing power.

John 14:12
I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

John 12:23-24
Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."

Fact: Jesus wants you Healed more than you do!

It is time to start believing in the Lord's mercy of healing. Most Christian don't have any problem at all believing in God's mercy of forgiveness for Christians (1 John 1:9), because they've heard the message of forgiveness preached all their lives. And they probably don't have any problem at all believing in God's mercy toward the sinner to be saved. If a sinner came to the altar and I were praying with him and he said, "Well, I don't know whether the Lord will save me or not," I would be quick to tell him that the Lord would certainly forgive him. I would give him scripture after scripture about the Lord's mercy for the remission of sins.

But, for many that's as far as our thinking goes. We need to expand our thinking. We need to think God's thoughts after Him. How are we going to think God's thoughts? Think in line with what the Word says. Someone may ask, "Is the mercy of healing available to me?" Well, is God's mercy of forgiveness available to the sinner? Yes, thank God. Is His mercy of forgiveness available to the Christian who has sinned or failed? Yes, thank God. But God's mercy doesn't stop there; His tender mercies are over all His works. Well, we can thank God for the remission of sins and the New Birth. But that's not all His works. Notice again that Psalm 145:9 says *"tender mercies,"* which is plural. The word "mercy" in this verse has to be plural because the verse says that God's mercies are over all His "works" which is plural. God's works are plural, and His mercies are plural.

Psalms 145:8-9 NKJV
The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, Slow to anger and great in mercy. The Lord is good to all, And His tender mercies are over all His works.

Psalms 145:8-9
The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.

The first statement in our text above is, *"the Lord is gracious,"* meaning that He is moved with compassion towards us and desires to bestow His grace and love upon us in an infinite display of affection. This glorious fact that shines with such brilliancy throughout the Scriptures has been so eclipsed by modern theology that we hear everywhere, the Lord is able instead of "the Lord is gracious and willing."

Christians today have no problem accepting the fact that God has the power to heal them and they have been duped into thinking that He is not always willing to heal. How much faith does it take to say "the Lord is able to heal?" The devil knows God is able, and he knows He is willing; but he has kept the people from knowing the latter fact. Satan has no problem with Christians magnifying the Lord's power, because he knows, that this is not a sufficient basis for faith; but he knows the Lord's compassion and willingness is to heal.

1 Timothy 5:22 AMP
Do not be in a hurry in the laying on of hands…

Before praying for the healing of people, we have to wait to teach them the Word of God until they can say, "the Lord is willing," instead of "the Lord is able," and "if it be thy will." This is exactly what Jesus had to do before healing the leper who said in Matthew 8:2, *"Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."* He showed His willingness by reaching out his hand and touching the leper and saying in Matthew 8:3, *"'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!'"* As a result, the man's expectation was turned on to expect healing.

We know that God is "Able to Heal," and now we see in Scripture that God is also "Willing to Heal," but let's take this one step further. God "delights" or is passionate in showing us mercy; the Hebrew word "*chaphets*" renders the following- To be inclined, pleased, desire and takes pleasure in. Do you know what God says about His children giving finances into His kingdom, 2 Corinthians 9:7, *"for God loves a cheerful giver…"* This is a universal principle; God is no different in that He takes an immense amount of joy in dispensing His many tender mercies, one of which includes healing.

Acts 20:35,
…remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

Micah 7:18-19
Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.

2 Chronicles 16:9
For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.

These scriptures show that the Lord is not only willing but is eager and excited to pour out His blessings in great profusion upon all mankind, and faith makes it possible for Him to do so- by cooperating in line with His Word through faith and obedience. According to 2 Chronicles 16:9, God is on the hunt, just looking for folks that are reaching out to Him in faith and live according to His Word. Generosity is a great attribute of God. Therefore, if we want to please Him, let's remove all the obstacles in our lives that would hinder Him from blessing and loving on us; since He delights in blessing us in every area of our lives- Hebrews 12:1, *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."*

Hebrews 11:6 AMP
But without faith it is impossible to please and be satisfactory to Him. For whoever would come near to God must [necessarily] believe that God exists and that He is the rewarder of those who earnestly and diligently seek Him [out].

Matthew 5:6 AMP
Blessed and fortunate and happy and spiritually prosperous (in that state in which the born-again child of God enjoys His favor and salvation) are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (uprightness and right standing with God), for they shall be completely satisfied! [Isaiah 55:1,2.]

Isaiah 55:1-2
Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.

Isaiah 1:19-20 AMP
If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; But if you refuse and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

God is infinitely good, indescribably good, beyond our wildest dreams and imaginations, He is good. Just read Psalms 136, how many times the phrase in the NIV *"His love endures forever"* or the NKJV *"His mercy endures forever"* is used of God. If we doubt His goodness, then we will doubt His willingness to heal us. God is no respecter of persons and will pour out His love and mercy on all who call upon Him and submit in reverent obedience to His Word- to walk in love and holiness. God will not condone unrepentant sin, His promises are conditional in that He requires of us to be quick to forgive and quick to repent, then we can expect to receive His abundant love and mercy in our lives- all things that pertain to life and godliness.

Psalms 97:10
Let those who love the Lord hate evil, for he guards the lives of his faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked."

Romans 12:9- Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

Micah 6:8
He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Romans 13:8-10
Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Daniel 9:4
Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands.

1 John 2:4-6
The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

1 John 4:20-21
If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

1 John 5:2-3
This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome

James 1:21
Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

Cornelius placed himself where God's mercy could reach him by saying to Peter in Acts 10:33, *"Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."* He found God's goodness so great that God could not wait for Peter to finish his sermon. Just as soon as Peter had spoken enough to be a basis for their faith, down came the blessing- they were saved and filled with the Holy Spirit.

Not only is God able and willing, but He is so passionate about blessing us that He does so *"exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think,"* according to Ephesians 3:20. If we are going to doubt God, it seems to me that God would rather have us doubt His ability than His willingness. Since the "Willingness" aspect of God speaks of who He is, a God of love. But thank God we don't have to doubt God in either area if we fill our hearts with God's Word.

Psalms 34:8-10
Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. Fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing. The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

Psalms 145:9-13
The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made. All you have made will praise you, O Lord; your saints will extol you. They will tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might, so that all men may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The Lord is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made.

2 Chronicles 5:13-14 NKJV
Indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying: 'For He is good, For His mercy endures forever," that the house, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God.

Proverbs 8:17-18
I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me. With me are riches and honor, enduring wealth and prosperity.

Doubting or ignoring His love and compassion grieves the heart of Jesus. It made Him weep over Jerusalem. So many times ministers have said, in these days that we do not need miracles now, thinking of miracles only as signs to prove the Lord's deity, etc. Their ideology has so blinded them, if they had a cancer eating their body away; they would need a miracle, wouldn't they? Most people today are so in the dark on this subject that it never occurs to them that there is mercy also for the sick.

Matthew 23:37-39
"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

They never think of the gifts of healing and miracles as being the manifestation of Christ's compassion; and that, hour after hour, and day after day, for three years, He healed all who came to Him because of His compassion. Are not the needs of sufferers today the same as they were in that day? And do they not need as much compassion as ever in the past? Where does His mercy reach us? It reaches us in the spiritual realm, and it also reaches us in the natural realm. And, thank God, it reaches us in the financial and material realm. Because of God's mercies, not because of justice or because we deserved anything, we are blessed in every area of our lives.

Unit 1 Review:

Isaiah 53:1, “Who has Believed Our Report?” What does that mean?

Why must our faith for healing rely on more than just the fact that God is able to heal?

What is it about Jesus’ earthly ministry that reveals the will of God to us today?

Does God’s mercy include the healing of the sick as well, why?

Why would Jesus make the statement, “It is for your good that I am going away…”?

Why does 1 Timothy 5:22 admonish us not to be hasty in the laying on of hands?

C. God's Healing Provision for Israel

God always has been opposed to sickness, not in favor of it. Even in the Old Testament, He always made provision for His covenant people to be healed. If sickness was His will, He wouldn't have made that provision. When Israel crossed the Red Sea and started toward their homeland, the Lord said:

Exodus 15:26
He said, "If you listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring [literal Hebrew, "I will permit"] on you any of the diseases I brought [permitted] on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you."

Notice it isn't the Lord who made them sick. He said, *"I am the Lord that heals you."* Therefore, God takes responsibility for healing, the devil certainly doesn't. God didn't put diseases upon Israel, nor upon the Egyptians. It is Satan, the god of this world, who makes people sick. Jehovah declares that He is Israel's Healer and He is our Healer today as well.

Exodus 23:25-26
Worship the Lord your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you, and none will miscarry or be barren in your land. I will give you a full life span.

As long as Israel walked in the Covenant, there was no sickness among them. There is no record of a premature death- no babies, young people, or middle-aged people dying. With sickness taken away from among them, the children of Israel lived out their lives without disease- they just fell asleep at a ripe old age, full of years. When the time came for them to go, they would lay hands on their children and pronounce blessings upon them. Then they would gather their feet up into bed and their spirit would simply leave their body. This experience is referred to as the "Death of the Righteous," no wasting disease eating away at them, no Alzheimer's or mental debilitation. This is God's best for His people, even though some very fine Christians may have had traumatic departures, it does not change God's will and plan for His people.

Genesis 49:33
When Jacob had finished giving instructions to his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed, breathed his last and was gathered to his people.

Someone will ask, "What does that have to do with us today? That was back then and applied to Israel." God is the same God now as He was then. The Bible says He does not change according to Malachi 3:6. God was against sin in the Old Testament and He is against sin in the New Testament. He was against sickness in the Old Testament, and He is against sickness in the New Testament. He made provision for healing in the Old Testament, and He made provision for healing in the New Testament.

Deuteronomy 7:13- He will love you and bless you and increase your numbers.

It would be a strange kind of love, if God put death on His children and strike them down with all kinds of horrible plagues and illnesses. I think some people must not be reading the same Bible. They read, "And He will put sickness upon you and cause some of you to be stillborn and some of you to die when you're babies and some of you to be sick and crippled all your life." NO! That is not what the Bible says concerning His perfect will for His covenant children. The curse of the law is for those who break the law, not for those who have been redeemed from it through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

Deuteronomy 7:13-15
He will love you and bless you and increase your numbers. He will bless the fruit of your womb, the crops of your land — your grain, new wine and oil — the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks in the land that he swore to your forefathers to give you. You will be blessed more than any other people; none of your men or women will be childless, nor any of your livestock without young. The Lord will keep you free from every disease. He will not inflict *[permit]* on you the horrible diseases you knew in Egypt…

Remember what Jesus said in John 3:16, *"For God so loved the world that He gave…"* God's love gives healing, it does not take it away. Why would Jesus lay down His life to redeem us from the curse of sickness, to just put it back on us- this would be a major contradiction, but God does not contradict Himself.

1 John 4:9
This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

Glory to God, Deuteronomy 7:13-15 was written for our benefit today! I think the Holy Spirit knew there would be those who would jump up and say, "That's just for the Jews. It's not for us!" So He had recorded what had happened to them for our benefit and for our admonition, Romans 15:4.

Should we think those people back then, would be more blessed than the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ today? Should we think they could be more blessed financially and could prosper and be well under the Old Covenant, but the Church couldn't under a New Covenant with better promises? Should we think that the Church, the Body of Christ, the Body of the Son of God, the Body of the Beloved, would have to struggle through life poverty-stricken. Be sick and afflicted, emaciated, and wasting away with starvation, singing, "Here I wander like a beggar through the heat and the cold"? No, that is not the picture the Bible paints for His Glorious Church- Hebrews 7:22!

Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours: Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.
2 Peter 1:1-4

Hebrews 8:6
But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.

Hebrews 8:13
By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.

1. Examples for Us

When we look at Old Testament examples, remember that they were written down for our benefit, instruction and warning. God wants us to learn from their mistakes, but also to imitate their faith and obedience. As the Old Testament saints were God's covenant people so are we- Galatians 3:29, *"If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."* There is tremendous application and relevance for us today to be gleaned from reading the Old Covenant. Just remember to interpret the Old Covenant in light of the New Covenant. For instance, the Israelites were notorious for opening the door to the devil through their disobedience. In this regard, the Lord is warning us not to do what they did. All the consequences of their sin, death, pain and suffering, came from the hand of Satan which God allowed as a righteous judge.

1 Corinthians 10:1-13
For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert.

Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry." We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did — and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. We should not test the Lord, as some of them did — and were killed by snakes. And do not grumble, as some of them did — and were killed by the destroying angel.

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

Isaiah 1:19-20
If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land; but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

Lesson Learned: Be Quick to Forgive, Quick to Repent, and Quick to Obey!

2. The Heroes of Faith

Consider the heroes of faith in the book of Hebrews chapter 11. Those accounts were obviously very positive and they were all commended by God for us to see and follow their examples of faith and obedience. We are encouraged to be bold, courageous and put our trust in God regardless of the circumstances. The thought is, if they could do it as ordinary folks anointed by the Holy Spirit, how much more can us, being filled with the Holy Spirit under the New Covenant.

Hebrews 11:39-40
These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

3. Types and Shadows

The Old Testament types and shadows were also written down for our benefit so as to gain a greater appreciation and understanding of Jesus' redemptive work! Just consider all the numerous prophetic references to Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. They were originally recorded as types and shadows but were later revealed and explained to us in the New Testament.

Colossians 2:16-17
Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

Hebrews 10:1-2
The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming — not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.

1 Peter 1:10-12
Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

4. Precious Promises

All the Old Testament blessings are ours in Christ, who is the door for us to this wonderful new life. The God who does not change, has never changed His mind to bless and provide for His children. Malachi 3:6, *"I the Lord do not change"* and Hebrews 13:8, *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."*

2 Corinthians 1:18-20
But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No." For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes." For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

Galatians 3:13-14
Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit

Many times, this is where folks miss it. They say, "I know God promised to heal me, but He hasn't done it yet." This causes folks to become confused. But God didn't promise to heal them someday. He said in His Word that they were healed and healing already belongs to them now! To say that God has promised to heal us someday is like an unsaved person saying, "I know God has promised to save me, I just hope He will." No, God didn't promise to save the sinner in the future. The Word says that salvation already belongs to every unsaved person right now- 2 Corinthians 5:19. Salvation is a gift that is to be received because it has already been given. It was paid for by Jesus Christ and it already belongs to us, now! Healing belongs to us too, so what are we waiting for? Receiving healing, just like receiving salvation, is simply a matter of appropriating what already belongs to us through faith in God's Word, because of Christ's past redemptive work.

Someone might say, "I've read all kinds of wonderful healing promises in the Word," but stop there. These wonderful scriptures on healing that we've been covering are promises from God in that they are available to us, but are not automatic. We still have to meet the conditions of faith and obedience to benefit from them. Yet on the other hand, they are also statements of fact, past tense provision from God that just simply needs to be received- by His grace given 2,000 years ago and our faith today (Ephesians 2:8-9). Remember, in the mind of God, we're already healed. God sees it as a past event. He has already healed us because He had laid sickness and disease on Jesus 2,000 years ago. Jesus has already borne sickness and disease for us so we don't have to carry it around in our bodies today. We need not bear what Jesus already bore for us. Peter later wrote this reality concerning Jesus' redemptive work in:

1 Peter 2:24
He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

If we talk about healing in the future tense as something God is going to do, than we have completely missed the boat; this is a reason why we are not getting healed. So let's change our talking from "God going to heal me," (waiting on God to do something) to "God has already healed me, praise the Lord," which is faith receiving now what God has already done in Christ. Peter was looking back to the Cross; since he spoke in past tense *"... you have been healed."* In other words, we're not going to be healed, we are already healed! Speaking as though it already happened brings the reality of it into manifestation in our lives.

What we need to know, is that in the mind of the Father, we are perfectly healed and perfectly free from sin, because He already laid our diseases and our sins upon His Son for us. His Son was made sin with our sins. He was made sick with our diseases. In the mind of Jesus, we are perfectly healed because He can remember when He was made sin with our sins, when He was made sick with our diseases. He remembers when He put our sin and our diseases away in His death, burial and resurrection. In the mind of the Holy Spirit we are absolutely free from both sin and sickness, for He remembers when Christ was made sin and when He was made sick for us. He remembers when He raised Jesus from the dead. Christ was free from our sin and our sickness. Both had been put away through His redemptive work.

The Word declares that "By His stripes we were healed." The whole problem is our recognition of the absolute, truthfulness of that Word. It is not in good taste to ask Him to heal us, for He has already done it. This truth came as a real shock to me when I first saw it. Since He declared that we were healed; therefore we are healed today. The only problem now is to get in perfect harmony with His Word. If He declares we are healed, then our part is to thank Him for the work He has already accomplished. That is exactly what Jesus was saying in Mark 11:24, before we receive, we must first believe that we have already received it, before we have even see it- we see it through the eye of faith, God's Word. This is not a riddle, but simply how faith works, because faith is the evidence of things not seen according to Hebrews 11:1 NKJV, *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* The fact that God's Word declares I am healed is the only proof I need to be healed, because God said it, that settles it. God's Word contains God's grace and power as spiritual seed to produce the manifestation of what He has already promised to do- the seed is in itself, Genesis 1:11 NKJV, *"whose seed is in itself."*

Mark 11:24
Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

Only when we stand in faith on God's Word, that our body will come in line with God's Word and every symptom has to go! Someone might say, "I just believe God is going to heal me sometime." Well, that's not agreeing with God. In fact, to say that is really taking sides against God because God and His Word are one. God's Word is God speaking to us, and God's Word says we were already healed (1 Peter 2:24)! So what's it going to be, side with God and His Word or side with our feelings and what our five senses tell us. So why is it so important to believe that we are healed before it actually manifests in our body? Jesus said it's only in believing we were healed, that we become healed.

5. God was Israel's Healer

The psalms were Israel's prayer and song book, and they continually mention that God was Israel's Healer- Psalms 103 is a classic example.

Psalms 103:1-5
Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits — who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Disease came to Israel through disobedience of the Law. So forgiveness for their disobedience meant healing of their diseases. God told Israel that the reason for their sickness and disease was that they had rebelled against His words and against the counsel of the Most High- Psalms 107:11.

Psalms 107:17-20
Some became fools through their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their iniquities. They loathed all food and drew near the gates of death. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave.

The Scriptures give the reason for their troubles; the children of Israel took themselves out from under the protection of their covenant by wrongdoing. God permitted the devil to have access to them and afflict them due to their unrepentant hearts.

Even though we have a New Covenant that is better than the Old Covenant (Hebrews 8:6) with divine protection as a provision, it is still possible for us to take ourselves out from under the protection of this covenant as the children of Israel did under their covenant- through disobedience, ignorance or a lack of faith.

Did you know that ignoring the leading of the Spirit is just as much disobedience as telling a lie? Failure to follow God's plan for our lives and doing our own thing will expose us to the attacks of the enemy just as quick as unforgiveness. We need to be sensitive to our spirit, when it condemns us when we miss God; let's be quick to repent and get back under the protection of the blood covenant. We have the Word of God to point out obvious sins that we commit, but other acts of disobedience, like resisting the Holy Spirit is not always so obvious. Our recreated human spirits is a safe guide, and when it condemns us of sin, confess it to God according to 1 John 1:9!

1 John 3:19-24
This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

Long life is a wonderful promise from God for all His children whether they realize it for themselves or not. We have a better covenant than Israel had. If it was God's plan for the Israelites to live out their full length of time without sickness (who by the way were servants and not sons, under a covenant not as good as ours), then imagine what His plan is for us, the children of God! If God didn't want His servants sick, obviously He doesn't want His sons and daughters to be sick either.

I believe it is the plans of God that no believer should ever be sick, just as it's His will that all be saved and go to heaven. Do all get saved, no and neither will all be healed, but that is not God's fault, nor has His Word failed. There are reasons why not everyone gets saved just as there are reasons why not everyone gets healed but it's not because God has changed His Mind or His will on the matter. Human beings are the variable in this equation; their free-will and decisions make all the difference on whether they get saved or healed. God has done all He is ever going to do in providing salvation and healing, now it's up to folks to mix God's Word with faith in order to receive for them God's highest and best for their lives- but it's not automatic!

I believe according to the Bible that every believer should live out his/her full length of time, which according to Psalms 91 is, *"With long life will I satisfy him…"* when we are satisfied. If you are not satisfied at 80, live on to 90, if you are still not satisfied keep on living. The only cap we have in longevity according to Genesis 6:3 is 120 years. So, if Jesus tarries His return, God's will for us is to live until we are satisfied and wear out our bodies and then fall asleep in Him. It is not, and I state boldly, not the will of God that we should suffer with cancer and other dreaded diseases which bring pain and anguish. No! It is God's will that we be healed, because healing is provided for us under the New Covenant as it was under the Old.

Hebrews 4:1-2 NKJV
Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.

D. God's Covenant Names

The great poet William Shakespeare once posed this question: "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell sweet." Our modern society places little significance on the meaning of a name. Parents usually name their children after beloved relatives or well-known persons. Sometimes they pick a child's name merely because it "sounds good." But seldom would they give thought to the meaning of a name.

Yet names do mean something. Ideally, they correspond directly to the one designated by the name. For example, did you know that the name Kenneth comes from the Greek word meaning, "to know"? So a person named Kenneth is supposed to be knowledgeable. Since the name Diana comes from the Greek word meaning "of a god," a girl with that name is supposed to be "simply divine" in her beauty or other qualities. Other people's names are derived from words of the ancient Greek, Latin, Norse or other languages. And most of those names have some special meaning.

The same is true for names of places like, Philadelphia means "city of brotherly love." It comes from the Greek words *phileo* ("to love") and *delphos* ("city"). The name Jerusalem means "city of peace," derived from the Hebrew word *shalom* ("peace"). My point is this, while it may have been all right for Shakespeare to shrug off the importance of a name, we should not take names so lightly. Often a name provides an important clue to the nature of a person or place.

This is certainly true of God. The Bible refers to God by many different names, and each one reveals some aspect of God's character or His relationship with us. The translators who gave us the King James Version and other English versions of the Bible simply translate His name as "God" or "Lord"; but significantly, several Greek or Hebrew names are used in the original manuscripts. If we want to become a serious student of the Word of God, we should be familiar with those Greek and Hebrew names because they contain a wealth of truth about the wonderful God we serve.

1) The Lord – Yahweh/Jehovah
2) The Lord Is God – Jehovah-Elohim
3) The Lord God Most High – Jehovah-Elyon
4) The Almighty God – El-Shaddai
5) The Lord Will Provide – Jehovah-Jireh
6) The Lord Is Healer – Jehovah-Repheka
7) The Lord Is Our Righteousness – Jehovah-Tsidqenu
8) The Lord Of Hosts – Jehovah-Tsebaoth
9) The Lord Is Conqueror – Jehovah-Nissi
10) The Lord Is Peace – Jehovah-Shalom
11) The Lord Is There – Jehovah-Shamah

In regards to the scope of our study, we are going to briefly cover "The Lord Is Healer" according to His covenant name – Jehovah Repheka or Rapha. God made our bodies, and God is able to heal them and keep them healthy when we meet His conditions by obeying His instructions. God demonstrated this to the children of Israel as Moses led them out of bondage in Egypt.

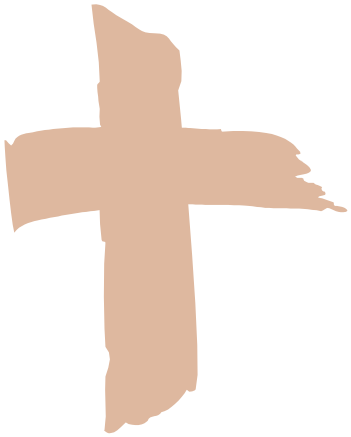
Exodus chapter 15 tells how the Israelites rejoiced to see God deliver them from the Egyptians. You'll remember that God parted the Red Sea so they could cross over on dry ground, then He let the waters come flooding in upon the pursuing Egyptian hordes. What a day of victory that was! The Israelites celebrated with singing and dancing, with Moses' sister Miriam leading the festivities- Exodus 15:20-21.

However, three days later, when they were unable to find good drinking water, the Israelites started grumbling- Exodus 15:22-24. Isn't that just like fickle human nature? We forget God's goodness so easily, but in this moment of distress, God spoke to His people through Moses and revealed another name for Himself, a name that would encourage them for years to come:

Exodus 15:25-26
Then Moses cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a piece of wood. He threw it into the water, and the water became sweet. There the Lord made a decree and a law for them, and there he tested them. He said, "If you listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring *[permit]* on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you [Jehovah-Rapha]."

The Lord showed Moses a tree. Moses cast the tree into the waters and the waters became sweet. How could the tree make the bitter waters sweet? Did it have magical powers? No, God made the bitter waters sweet, but He used the tree because it spoke of the cross that His Son would die on. Jesus was crucified on a tree.

Galatians 3:13
Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."



What is God trying to tell us here? What is bitter in our life can be made sweet when we throw in the redemptive work of Christ. Suppose we are very bitter towards our earthly father for having abused us when we were a child. The more we bring in the cross that is, the more we see how Jesus died for our dad's sins, as well as our own sins, the more that bitterness disappears. The more we see how God has forgiven us of our lifetime of sins, the more we will be able to forgive others (Luke 7:47). Bringing in the cross removes the bitterness and adds sweetness to the whole thing.

In this example above, the application is obviously to emotional healing. God can heal our broken heart because His Son's heart was literally broken at the cross. Medical experts believe that Jesus' heart had ruptured because blood as well as water flowed out when a Roman soldier's spear pierced His side- John 19:34. Isaiah 53:3 also tells us that at the cross, Jesus became a "Man of sorrows." The Hebrew word for "sorrows" here is *mak'ob* . The word *mak'ob* means physical as well as mental pain.

Therefore, Jesus' heart was broken so that ours can be mended and filled with joy and love. He bore our mental pains so that we can have peace of mind, a sound mind and the mind of Christ. The Name "Jehovah-Rapha" reveals His nature of *healer* to His people. And He was certainly not talking about "spiritual healing," but rather physical healing because the diseases which came upon the Egyptians were not "spiritual."

The very fact that one of His names is Jehovah-Rapha should be enough to convince us that He is a God who wants to heal. But why can He heal undeserving and sinful man? Because of the tree, Jesus was nailed to the cross and cast into the bitter waters so that we can be healed. Surely He has borne our sicknesses and carried our pains on Calvary's tree. The world will talk about some people being a carrier of this sickness or that virus. Do you know that the devil would try to make you and me a pack mule to carry all kinds of sickness, depression, pains, poverty and the like in our lives? We must be adamant, that what He bore for me, what He carried for me I refuse to carry again. If I carry it again after He carried it, then He carried it for me in vain. What the Lord bore for us, we need to simply refuse to carry in our lives. When the devil puts symptoms on our body, we don't have to accept it with our heart, just keep on resisting it- say, "No in Jesus' Name, sickness you cannot stay here, return to sender!"

2 Corinthians 6:1-2
As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

Strongs OT:7495 ap*r* rapha' (raw-faw'); or raphah (raw-faw'); a primitive root; properly, to mend (by stitching), i.e. (figuratively) to cure: KJV - cure, (cause to) heal, physician, repair, thoroughly, make whole.

Now, let's take a closer look at the Hebrew word *rapha*. According to Brown Driver & Briggs Hebrew Lexicon, *rapha* means "to heal, to make healthful." This sounds like physical healing in the plainest sense. But if we want to know if *rapha* really refers to physical healing, we can find out where the word first appears in the Bible and see if it refers to physical healing. This method of Bible interpretation is known as "the law of first mention." The first occurrence of *rapha* in the Bible then, is found in Genesis 20:17.

Genesis 20:17-18
Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed *[rapha]* Abimelech, his wife and his slave girls so they could have children again, for the Lord had closed up every womb in Abimelech's household because of Abraham's wife Sarah.

God healed Abimelech, his wife and his female servants after Abraham prayed for them, and the women were able to bear children. Clearly, this was a physical healing, so *rapha* does refer to physical healing. The word *rapha* is also used in Isaiah 53:5, *"But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed [rapha]."*

And because *rapha* refers to physical healing as we have just seen, we know that Isaiah was referring to physical healing when He said, "... by His wounds we are healed." Notice that God said, "I am the Lord who heals you if you'll do what I've told you to do." His promise came with a requirement, a condition that the Israelites had to meet if they wanted Him to heal them. Praise God for being Jehovah-Rapha. Thank Him for being the One who "Heals all our diseases." So claim His healing for your life today!

Unit 2 Review:

Is God for healing today as He was for the children of Israel under the Old Covenant?

Are the promises of God concerning healing for a future time?

Why is it so important to believe that we are healed before it manifests?

If not all people get saved and neither do all folks get healed, why is that?

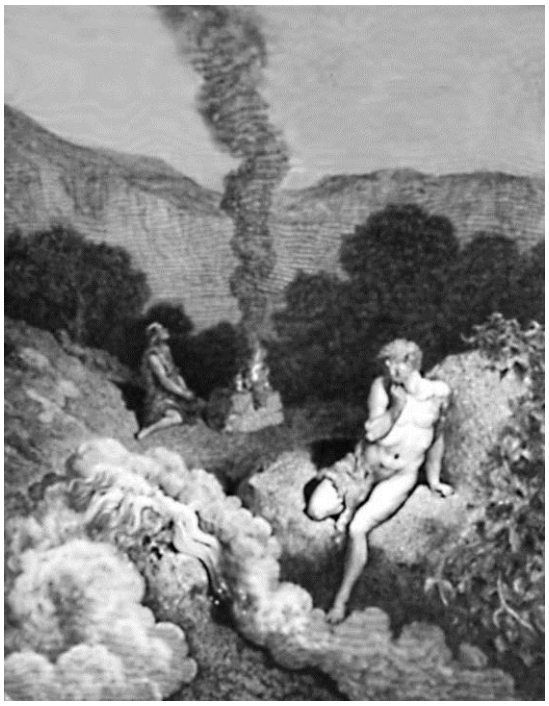
Why are Bible names so important for us to study, especially God's redemptive names?

What does the redemptive name of God, Jehovah-Rapha mean?

E. Healing and the Atonement

1. The Right Sacrifice

The account of Cain and Abel is very significant because it points out a very important principle in regards to the means by which fallen man can be reconciled back to God. In other words, how do we deal with the sin problem, in order for our relationship with God to be restored? This fact has tremendous application to healing.



Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man." Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."

Genesis 4:1-7

As the story goes, Cain put his trust in his own labor as an offering to be acceptable to God, but it was rejected. Cain is a type and shadow for religion today, man's manufactured effort to come to God on his own terms. Abel on the other hand was a man of faith who obeyed God's instructions to offer a sacrifice of blood. God's having made for Adam and Eve coats of skin presupposes the slaying of animals; and doubtless implies that Abel's sacrifice of an animal life was an act of faith which rested on God's command (though not expressly recorded) that such were the sacrifices He required.

Hebrews 11:4
By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.

What Abel offered was "much more a sacrifice" (Wycliffe; Greek) than Cain's. "By faith Abel offered unto God a much more sacrifice than Cain," i.e. one which had more of the true virtue of sacrifice; for it was an animal sacrifice of the firstlings of the flock, a token of the forfeiture of man's life by sin, and a type of the Redeemer to be bruised in heel that He would crush the serpent's head- Genesis 3:15.

The universal law of God required payment for sin, a blood sacrifice is the only acceptable way to pay the penalty of sin. Innocent blood had to be shed to redeem a guilty individual.

Leviticus 17:11
For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.

The blood of a living creature is a powerful thing according to the Bible, the blood of a human being is even more powerful, but the blood of Jesus is the ultimate statement. Again, our western mind looks at blood merely as a biological necessity in order to sustain life. This is a true statement but according to the Bible, the blood has a deep spiritual meaning- a supernatural currency with great implications.

Blood sacrifice to our western thinking is a foreign concept for sure. However, from the beginning of time, it was God's method of choice in dealing with the sin problem. The best definition for sin is, "to miss the mark;" in other words, it means anything less than perfection. Sin has a horrible consequence called death as mentioned in Romans 6:23, *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."* It's the result of being under Satan's tyranny.

When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, after pronouncing judgment, the first thing God did was to shed an innocent life on behalf of fallen man- Genesis 3:21, *"The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them."* The very first record of a life being taken from earth was the life of an animal in order to clothe man due to his sin. Evidently God had instituted the shedding of blood as a means to approach God according to the story of Cain and Abel. However, the blood of animals only cover man's sin, it does not take them away.

2. Atonement

The King James version uses the word "Propitiation" in Romans 3:25 and "Reconciliation" in Hebrews 2:17. Therefore the word "Atonement" means reconciliation, it was associated with sacrificial offerings to remove the effects of sin. In the New Testament, it refers specifically to the reconciliation between God and humanity; as a result of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Atonement is best understood as expiation that is removing the barrier that sin creates between God and man. Expiation emphasizes the removal of guilt through a payment of the penalty of sin, while propitiation emphasizes the appeasement or averting of God's wrath and satisfying the claims of God's justice. In the margin of my Bible, the word "Atonement" in Romans 3:25 means: "The one who turns aside His wrath, taking away sin."

Romans 3:25- God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood.

Both words are related to reconciliation, since it is through Christ's death on the cross for our sins that we are reconciled to God. The place of atonement was made upon the mercy seat by the blood of Jesus, Hebrews 9:5 *"Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover."* So mercy, forgiveness, justification and reconciliation are all wrapped up in the term atonement.

1 John 2:1-2
My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense- Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 4:10
This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

3. The Birth of Religion

The first two brothers in history stand as the types and representatives of the two main and enduring divisions of mankind, and bear witness to the absolute antithesis and eternal enmity between good and evil. Envy of the godly was "the way of Cain."

Jude 11
Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain.

Unfortunately, religious Cain did what so many people do today in the name of religion, and that was to murder his brother out of envy- Please read Mark 15:10; Acts 7:8-12; 13:45; Philippians 1:15 to see what I mean.

1 John 3:12-13
Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous.

Blood has a Voice
Abel ranks as the first martyr, whose blood cried out for vengeance. Jesus spoke of "the blood of righteous Abel" and implied that Abel, the first righteous martyr, anticipated symbolically His own death on Calvary at the hands of evil men.

Matthew 23:35
And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

Genesis 4:10
The LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground."

Genesis 9:4-6
"But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man."

However, the blood of Jesus appeals to God for the forgiveness of sin, and speaks of the salvation and redemption of mankind- not of vengeance.

Hebrews 12:24
To Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

4. Healing was Purchased for us in the Atonement of our Lord

Most if not all Christians know that Jesus bore their sins on the cross. And because He did that, they know that forgiveness of sins has been purchased for them with His blood.

DVD still: The Passion Of The Christ

But not many Christians know that Jesus also bore their sicknesses on the cross and purchased healing for them with His blood. In other words, they do not know that healing is in the atonement or redemptive work of Christ. They do not know that Christ has actually redeemed them from sickness. Why is this point so important for one important reason, redemptive equivalency. Most Christians have tremendous faith in the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus because it is taught so much in local churches- that is a good thing of course. Since the Bible puts healing on the same redemptive ground as forgiveness of sins, folks can also direct the same faith and confidence in receiving healing (1 Peter 2:24) as they do the forgiveness of sins (1 John 1:9).

5. The Sure Foundation for Believing in Divine Healing

The foundation for believing in divine healing and health is the cross of Jesus- His perfect, finished work. There is no other foundation. We cannot say that we believe in divine healing because we saw or know of someone who was miraculously healed by God. Why? Because when we see or know of someone who was *not* healed after prayer, our faith will be shaken. So we must see healing provided for us in the atonement of Christ. We must see it in His redemptive work and Word. That is our sure and firm foundation. What then, are some of the scriptures which tell us that healing is in the atonement of Christ? How about, *'Surely He has borne our sicknesses.'* We begin with the most well-known passage of Scripture found in Isaiah 53- the famous chapter describing our Lord's suffering on the cross.

Isaiah 53:4 NKJV
Surely He has borne our griefs [*kholee*, sicknesses] and carried our sorrows [*makob*, pains]; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

Matthew 8:16-17
When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases."

Matthew 8:17 AMP
And thus He fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, He Himself took [in order to carry away] our weaknesses and infirmities and bore away our diseases. [Isaiah 53:4.]

The words "griefs" and "sorrows" were translated from the Hebrew words *kholee* and *makob* . This is an unfortunate translation because *kholee* actually means "sickness" and *makob*, "pain" (physical and mental). (See Strong's numbers 02483 and 04341). Any good Hebrew lexicon will tell you that. The English translation is thus unfortunate. In other words, if you read the original Hebrew text (the Old Testament was written in Hebrew), it would say:

Isaiah 53:4 - Surely He has borne our sicknesses and carried our pains…

The English translations are thus inaccurate, except for Young's Literal Translation.

Isaiah 53:4, YLT - Surely our sicknesses he hath borne, and our pains - he hath carried them…

Here is Dr. Isaac Leeser's translation of Isaiah 53:4:
"But only our disease did he bear himself, and our pains he carried."

In Deuteronomy 7:15 NKJV we read, *"And the Lord will take away from you all sickness [kholee]…"* This word is translated "sickness" in Deuteronomy 28:61, 1 Kings 17:17, 2 Kings 1:2; 8:8, and other places.

Makob is translated "pain" in Job 33:19 KJV, *"He is chastened also with pain [makob]."* In Jeremiah 51:8 KJV we read, *"Take balm for her pain [makob]."*

Let us now examine the verbs in Isaiah 53:4 KJV, "borne" (*nasa*) and "carried" (*sabal*). The Hebrew verb *nasa* means to bear in the sense of "Suffering punishment for something." Leviticus 5:1 KJV, *"And if a soul sin. . . then he shall bear [nasa] his iniquity."* In Isaiah 53:12 KJV we have the true meaning of *nasa* set forth*: "And he (Christ) was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare [nasa] the sin of many."* Now how did Christ bear our sins?

Vicariously- Definition: performed, exercised, received, or suffered in place of another: vicarious punishment. Taking the place of another person or thing; acting or serving as a substitute, as our Substitute.

But this is the same verb used in Isaiah 53:4 KJV, *"Surely he [Christ] hath borne [nasa] our sicknesses."* We all admit that this verb (*nasa*) in Isaiah 53:12 teaches us that Christ bore our sins vicariously; so all unprejudiced minds must admit that this very same verb (*nasa*) in Isaiah 53:4 teaches that He (Christ) also bore our sicknesses vicariously. Yes, the very same verb (*nasa*) is used of bearing our sins in Isaiah 53:12 as is used in Isaiah 53:4 of bearing our sicknesses. The clear teaching, therefore, is that Christ bore our sicknesses in the very same way that he bore our sins. There can be no other conclusion.

"And carried [sabal] our pains." This verb *sabal* (carried) also means "to bear something as a penalty or chastisement." Lamentations 5:7 KJV, *"Our fathers have sinned… and we have borne [sabal] their iniquities."* Isaiah 53:11 KJV, *"He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied . . . for he shall bear [sabal) their iniquities."* Now how did Christ bear our iniquities? He bore them vicariously, as our Substitute. Then He bore or carried our pains the very same way, for Isaiah declares Isaiah 53:4 KJV, *"Surely he hath borne [nasa} our sicknesses, and carried [sabal] our pains."*

When we remember that the words in Isaiah 53:4 for "griefs" (kholee) and "sorrows" (makob) literally mean "sicknesses" and "pains"; and when we remember that the verbs of Isaiah 53:4, "borne" (nasa) and "carried" (sabal), are the same two verbs used in Isaiah 53:12 and Isaiah 53:11 to express the tremendous fact that Christ bore vicariously our sins and our iniquities, how can we escape the logical conclusion that Christ died for our sicknesses in the very same way that He died for our sins? For all unprejudiced Hebrew scholars there is no other conclusion.

Again listen to Alexander McLaren, (Volume on Isaiah, page 98): "It is to be kept in view, that the griefs, which the Servant (Christ) is here described as bearing, are literally sicknesses, and that similarly, the sorrows may be diseases. Matthew in his quotation of this verse (Matthew 8:17) takes the words to refer to bodily ailments – and that interpretation is part of the whole truth, for Hebrew thought drew no such sharp line of distinction between diseases of the body and those of the soul, as we are accustomed to draw. All sickness was taken to be the consequence of sin. Of these two words expressing the Servant's taking their burden on His shoulders (*nasa* and *sabal*) the former implies not only the taking of it, but the bearing of it away; and the latter emphasizes the weight of the load."

Let us also quote the words of Delitzsch in his wonderful exposition of Isaiah 53:4. Delitzsch was, without exception, the greatest Hebrew scholar in Germany. He taught Hebrew at Rostock, Erlangen, and Leipzig. As a Hebraist there is no opponent of healing in the Atonement today who can begin to compare with Delitzsch. Besides being the greatest of all Hebraists, he was also a deeply spiritual man.

Regarding Isaiah 53:4, Delitzsch says:
"Freely but faithfully does the Gospel of Matthew translate this text, 'Himself took our infirmities and carried our sicknesses.' The help which Jesus rendered in all kinds of bodily sickness is taken in Matthew to be a fulfillment of what in Isaiah is prophesied of the Servant of Jehovah. The Hebrew verbs of the text, when used of sin, signify to assume as a heavy burden and bear away the guilt of sin, as one's own; that is, to bear sin mediatorially in order to atone for it. But here, where not our sins, but our sicknesses and pains are the object, the mediatorial sense remains the same. It is not meant that the Servant of Jehovah merely entered into the fellowship of our sufferings, but that He took upon Himself the sufferings that we had to bear, and deserved to bear; and, therefore, He not only bore them away, but also in His own person endured them in order to discharge us from them. Now when one takes sufferings upon himself which another had to bear, and does this, not merely in fellowship with him, but in his stead, we call it Substitution."

Here, then, Delitzsch, perhaps the greatest of all modern Hebraists, declares that the bearing and removing of our sicknesses and pains – so clearly taught in Isaiah 53:4 – is an integral part of Christ's redeeming work; or, in other words, that bodily healing is in the Atonement.

Fact: We are as Healed as we are Forgiven!

To substantiate our conclusions from Isaiah 53:4 and Matthew 8:17, let us here quote the words of three great Spirit-filled Bible scholars:

(a) A. J. Gordon (Ministry of Healing, pages 16,17), "The yoke of His cross by which He lifted our iniquities, took hold also of our diseases; - He who entered into mysterious sympathy with our pain – which is the fruit of sin – also put Himself underneath our pain, which is the penalty of sin. In other words the passage seems to teach that Christ endured vicariously our diseases, as well as our iniquities." This agrees exactly with the conclusion of Delitzsch, the great Hebraist.

(b) Listen to Andrew Murray (Divine Healing, pages 99 and 119): "It is not said only that the Lord's righteous Servant had borne our sins, but also that He has borne our sicknesses. Thus His bearing our sicknesses forms an integral part of the Redeemer's work, as well as bearing our sins. The body and the soul have been created to serve together as a habitation of God: the sickly condition of the body is – as well as that of the soul- a consequence of sin, and that is what Jesus is come to bear, to expiate and to conquer."

(c) Listen also to A. B. Simpson (The Gospel of Healing, page 17): "Therefore as He hath borne our sins, Jesus Christ has also borne away, and carried off our sicknesses; yea, and even our pains, so that abiding in Him, we may be fully delivered from both sickness and pain. Thus by His stripes we are healed. Blessed and glorious Burden-Bearer."

Some have insisted that Isaiah was only referring to "spiritual healing," by "spiritual healing," they mean the born-again experience where our spirits are made alive unto God- spiritual regeneration. They also mean emotional healing, such as a woman who is no longer bitter towards her ex-husband who cheated on her. In other words, it has nothing to do with the physical healing of our bodies. While healing certainly does include the soul realm of the emotions, when it comes to salvation or the born-again experience, it is strange to say that our spirits are "healed."

If you stop to think about it, there is no such thing as spiritual healing mentioned in the Bible. The concept of spiritual healing probably came into being when some psychologists got saved and filled with the Holy Spirit, and then they tried to consolidate the teachings of the Bible with psychology. They were born again and filled with the Spirit, all right; wonderful, sincere Christians, but they got confused. You see, when your body gets healed, you are just healed of a sickness or disease. You don't get a brand-new body, do you? No, of course not. You still have the same body you had before you were healed. You just got healed of the sickness or disease that afflicted your body. Well, similarly, if your spirit were healed when you got born again, you would still have the same old spirit too. It would just be healed, but the Scriptures don't teach that at all.

2 Corinthians 5:17-18
Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

Our spirits are not "healed" when we receive Christ as our Savior. We won't find the Bible describing the born-again experience as a "inner-healing," just as we won't find the Bible telling us to "heal" our minds, but to "renew" it, with the Word of God (Romans 12:12). In regards to our spirit, we become new creations, the old man dies and a new creation, a new spiritual nature takes its place- 2 Corinthians 5:17. This says nothing about healing, but the eradication and putting to death of the old sinful nature and a brand new man immerging in its place- the Greek for "New Creation" speaks of a new species, something that never existed before. Christianity is all about the New Birth, being born-again is just that, something brand new, not a makeover or a remodeling of the old man- that would be religion.

John 3:3-8
In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

In other words, there is a natural birth whereby the flesh is born, and there is a spiritual birth whereby the spirit is born. You see, when a baby is born into this natural world, we don't say he was healed- No! We say he/she was born. In the same way, when a person becomes a new creature in Christ, his/her human spirit is not healed, it is born again as something brand new that never existed before.

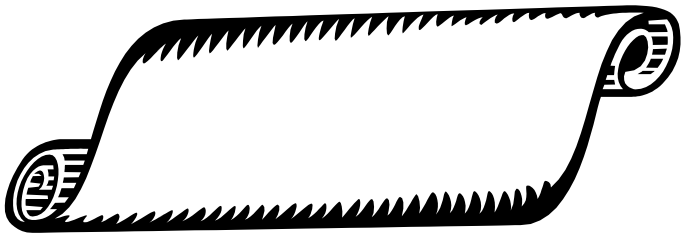
Romans 6:8
Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

Galatians 2:20
I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

While we're on this subject, let me also say again that when a person is born again, his soul doesn't become new either. That's another place where folks miss it: They don't distinguish between the soul and the spirit, because they think that they are the same. But the soul and the spirit are different. In fact, man has a threefold nature. According to the Bible, man is a spirit who possesses a soul and lives in a body- 1 Thessalonians 5:23. The soul of man is made of his mind, will, and emotions. Many people have missed it because we talk about the soul being saved when a person gets born again. James 1:21 does say, *"Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you [KJV Save your Souls]."* But we've taken that verse out of context. Here the word "save" means to renew or to restore. Psalm 23:3 says that God restores our soul and Romans 12:2 say that we must renew our mind with the Word of God. Our soul can't be born again. The spirit is reborn, but the soul is renewed or restored. Notice what Ezekiel prophesied under the Old Covenant:

Ezekiel 36:26-27
"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws."

So from a simple study of the Hebrew words used, we know that Isaiah was referring to physical healing. This is confirmed by Matthew.



When Jesus came into Peter's house, he saw Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him. When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases." Matthew 8:14-17

In verse 17, we see that Matthew quoted the verse from Isaiah- *"He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases."* He used the words "infirmities" and "diseases," not "griefs" and "sorrows." The Greek word (the New Testament was written in Greek) for "infirmities" is *astheneia* and it means "bodily weaknesses." Clearly, Matthew was not referring to "spiritual healing," but physical healing. The background or context confirms this too. Peter's mother-in-law was healed of a fever, and when evening had come, Jesus healed all the sick that were brought to Him. These were not "spiritual" healings.

Again Peter is our witness to this great fact that bodily healing is in the Atonement. In First Peter 2:24 KJV we read the blessed words, *"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree. . . by whose stripes [molopi, bruise] ye were healed."*

1 Peter 2:24
He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

1 Peter 2:24 AMP
He personally bore our sins in His [own] body on the tree [as on an altar and offered Himself on it], that we might die (cease to exist) to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed.

This agrees exactly with Isaiah 53:5, which reads in the Septuagint (Greek version of the Old Testament), *"But he was wounded on account of our sins, and was bruised because of our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and by his bruise [to molopi auto, by the bruise of Him] we are healed."* Here note two facts: (l) that the word for "healed" here, both in the Septuagint and the Greek New Testament, is *iaomai*, a verb that always speaks of physical healing in the New Testament. It is used 28 times in the New Testament, and always in connection with physical healing. The Greek word for "physician" is *iatros*, a noun derived from this same verb icromai. We can, therefore, be fully assured that when Peter declares, *"By. . . [His] stripes [bruise] ye were healed,"* he is referring to our bodily healing, and not to any spiritual healing. (2) Note secondly here that both Isaiah and Peter use the singular word "bruise" or "stripe" (*molopi*) and not "bruises" or "stripes." Why?

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In Matthew 27:26 we read regarding Pilate, *". . . and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified."* This literally reads, "and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified." Mark 15:15 gives us the same information. Now why do Isaiah (in the Septuagint) and Peter use the word *molopi* (dative singular of *molops*), and not *molopsi* (bruises, dative plural)? The word *molops* means "the mark of a blow" or "a bruise." If Christ had been so scourged that the mark of each blow could plainly have been seen on His back, then the rule of Greek grammar would have demanded here the use of *molopsi* (bruises), and not the singular *molopi* (bruise).

The use of the dative singular here, *molopi* (the dative of instrument) tells us, as clearly as language can express it, that our dear Savior's back had been so terribly scourged. Every spot on His back was so bruised and lacerated that it was just like one great bruise. Had there been one quarter inch of space between any two of the bruises, the Greek here must then have read *molopsi* (bruises) and not *molopi* (bruise).

The Jews had a law that no person should be given more than 40 stripes when flogged, but the Romans had no such law, so they often scourged their victim until he bled to death. If scourging Jesus' until His whole back was just one great bruise wasn't enough, the cruel Romans plucked out His whiskers by the roots and spat upon Him.

Isaiah 50:6
"I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting."

Just here let us quote from Geikie's Life of Christ, as he describes Christ's scourging: "Victims condemned to the cross first underwent the hideous torture of the scourge. And this was immediately inflicted on Jesus. He was now seized by some of the soldiers standing near, and after being stripped to the waist, was bound in a stooping posture. His hands being behind His back, to a post, or a block, near the tribunal. He was then beaten at the pleasure of the soldiers, with knots of rope, or plaited leathern thongs, armed at the ends with acorn shaped drops of lead, or small sharp pointed bones. In many cases not only was the back of the person scourged, cut open in all directions, but even the eyes, the face, and the breast were torn, even the teeth not seldom knocked out. Under the fury of the countless stripes, the victims sometimes sank – amidst screams, convulsive leaps, and distortions – into a senseless heap; sometimes died on the spot; sometimes were taken away, an unrecognizable mass of bleeding flesh, to find deliverance in death, from the inflammation and fever, sickness and shame. "The scourging of Jesus

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was of the severest, for the soldiers only too gladly vented on any Jew the grudge they bore that nation. And they would doubtless try if they could, to force out a confession which His silence had denied the governor. Besides, He was to be crucified, and the harder the scourging, the less life there would be left to detain them afterwards on guard at the cross." Eusebius, the Early Church historian, describes a Roman scourging of some martyrs thus: "All around were horrified to see them so torn with the scourges that their very veins were laid bare, and the inner muscles and sinews, and even their very bowels were exposed." On Christ's poor, bruised back they now laid the heavy cross (John 9:17).

Now we can understand why Peter asserts with Isaiah, that *"by his bruise [not bruises], we were healed,"* referring, as we have clearly proven from the use of this verb "healed" (*iaomai*), to bodily healing. Much of His precious blood was doubtless shed while receiving that awful bruise for our physical healing, but the rest of His precious blood was reserved to be shed on the cross for our sins. Peter here (1 Peter 2:24) clearly teaches that Christ not only suffered, bled, and died for our sins, but also for our physical healing- again we see the combination of the two, sin and healing connected.

Paul, as well as Isaiah and Peter, is our witness to this same great fact that bodily healing is in the Atonement. Note, our body belongs to God's just as much as our spirit and soul; we are a trichotomy, a three-part being according to 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20
Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought [*egorasthete*] at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

The Greek construction here *reads hanna estin tou theou* (which are of the God). *Hatina* is the nominative plural, neuter of the relative pronoun *hostis*, and so includes both body and spirit. *Theou* is the genitive singular of *theos* (God). The genitive of source or origin, and so brings out the gracious truth that our bodies are God's for the very same reason that our spirits are His; because both originated from Him. This being true, we are not surprised here to read that both have been bought with a price. What was the price paid to thus purchase our body and our spirit? The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. How can we be absolutely certain of this? The word for "bought" here gives us the clue. This word is *egorasthete*, the 1st aorist passive, 2nd plural of *agorazo*, I buy or redeem. Turn now to Revelation 5:9:

Revelation 5:9 NKJV
And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed [*egorasas* NIV: Purchased] us to God by Your blood."

The word "redeemed" here is *egorasas*, the 1st Aorist, 2nd person singular of *agorazo*, I buy, the very same word that Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 6:20, where he asserts that both our body and spirit were bought or redeemed with a price. Peter also uses this same word (*agorazo*) to express Christ's redemptive work (2 Peter 2:1). Now John asserts (Revelation 5:9) that Christ redeemed us to God (or bought us) with His blood. Paul asserts (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) that the "us" of Revelation 5:9 includes our bodies as well as our spirits, and uses the very same word for "bought" or "redeemed" that John uses. Then these two passages together teach most clearly the blessed truth that, when Christ shed His blood at the awful scourging and on the cross, He redeemed us, spirit, soul and body by His blood, the price paid for our ransom. So Paul also clearly teaches in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 that bodily healing is in the Atonement.

1 Timothy 2:5-6
For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men — the testimony given in its proper time.

When we understand what is already ours in Christ, all the thousands of precious promises, the redemptive truths that are already ours, bought and paid for. All is left for us to do is claim them by faith and personalize them into every area of our lives. All we have to do is simply recognize the fact that this healing, this need, is already covered in our glorious redemption- simply receive what has already been freely given to us- claim it out loud, make a bold confession that, "By His Bruise I was Healed" according to 1 Peter 2:24.

Isaiah 53:4 AMP
Surely He has borne our griefs (sicknesses, weaknesses, and distresses) and carried our sorrows and pains [of punishment], yet we [ignorantly] considered Him stricken, smitten, and afflicted by God [as if with leprosy]. [Matthew 8:17.]

Jesus bore our sicknesses and carried our pains. He was made sick for us as much as He was made sin for us as our substitute so we would not have to suffer under either sin or sickness. For us to continue on carrying them in our lives today, would be to make what Christ did in His death, burial and resurrection in vain. Healing is part of salvation which encompasses deliverance, protection, preservation and healing for us spirit, soul and body- it is the complete emancipation from sin and the tyranny of slavery to Satan.

2 Corinthians 6:1-2
As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

When Jesus arose, He put off sickness as He did sin, the sickness had been put away and He rose in resurrection life, free from the dominion of sickness. You see, Satan lost his authority to afflict people with his sicknesses and diseases when Jesus took away our sins. Sin is what grants access to Satan to kill steal and destroy folks lives. However, even believers who have been delivered from the authority of darkness (Colossians 1:13-14), can still be dominated in these areas through ignorance, lack of faith (lack of God's Word in their heart) and unrepentant sin. Now, sickness hasn't any right to impose itself upon us and Satan hasn't any right to impose any disease upon us because we are free!

When these illegitimate diseases and sicknesses come and try to afflict us, we still have to resist them and they will flee from us. We need to resist sickness and diseases as we do sin and condemnation. The devil will try to put off on us false condemnation by reminding us of our past sins- I call it false, assuming that we have confessed our sins to God according to 1 John 1:9. If we have not repented of sin, then condemnation has a right to lord itself over us until we confess them to God.

Romans 8:1 AMP
THEREFORE, [there is] now no condemnation (no adjudging guilty of wrong) for those who are in Christ Jesus, who live [and] walk not after the dictates of the flesh, but after the dictates of the Spirit. [John 3:18.]

So when Satan comes around, trying to steal our joy and peace and rob us of faith and confidence before God through false condemnation, just confess Romans 8:1. "Satan, there is, therefore now no condemnation upon me, for I am in Christ Jesus. Jesus has already dealt with those sins and put them away, and you cannot get them. You may bring back a photograph of them but you cannot get the actual real sin because it has been put away from me forever!"

James 4:7- Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

1 Peter 5:8-9
Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith…

Revelation 12:10-11
"Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death."

When Satan comes around and tries to remind you of your past, just remind him of his future in the Lake of Fire- he loves that!

When he tries to impose disease upon me, I have a right to say to him, "Satan, those diseases were borne in the body of Jesus and you have no right to bring their photograph around here, and try to frighten me with them. Those diseases were unconditionally put away, and I am free from disease as the body of Jesus was when He rose from the dead. I am in Christ Jesus and you cannot put those things on me." Resist sickness and disease and any other form of oppression like you do the devil, because they are one and the same.

- I know that by His resurrection I am justified, and I do not need to be re-justified!
- I know that by His life I am made alive, and I am alive!
- I know that I died with Him; I know that I rose with Him; I know that I am in Him!
- I know that "by His bruise I am healed!"
- If I am healed, I am healed!
- I have no more to do with obtaining healing, because it is already mine, than I have to do with my resurrection, for He is my resurrection! He is my healing!
- In Him I live and move and have my being!

John 11:25-26
Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

He is my resurrection and yours, He is our life, He is our healing, He is our health, He is our victory- He is our all in all- Now and Forevermore! This is how simple this thing is, when I simply recognize and confess to the fact that He healed me in His substitutionary work, I receive my healing. This principle of faith works for all the promises of God.

"The Inner Man"	"The Outer Man"
• Adam, by his fall, brought sin into our spirits.	• Adam, by his fall, brought disease into our bodies.
• Sin is therefore the work of the devil.	• Disease is therefore the work of the devil. Jesus "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil."
• Jesus was "manifested to destroy the works of the devil" in the spirit of man.	• Jesus was "manifested to destroy the works of the devil" in the physical body of man.
• The redemptive name "Jehovah-Tsidkenu" (Righteousness) reveals His redemptive provision for our spirits.	• The redemptive name "Jehovah-Rapha" reveals His redemptive provision for our bodies- healing.
• On Calvary Jesus "bore our sins."	• On Calvary Jesus "bore our sicknesses."
• He was made "sin for us" (2 Cor. 5:21) when "He bore our sins" (1 Peter 2:24).	• He was "made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13) when He "bore our sicknesses" (Mt. 8:17).
• "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24).	• "By his bruise you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:24).
• "Who forgives all your sins" (Psalms 103:3).	• "And heals all your diseases" (Psalms 103:3).
• For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your … spirit, which are God's (1 Corinthians 6:20 NKJV).	• For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body …which are God's (1 Corinthians 6:20 NKJV).
• The Spirit is bought with a price.	• The body is bought with a price.
• Is remaining in sin the way to glorify God in our spirit?	• Is remaining sick the way to glorify God in our body?
• Since He "bore our sins," how many people will God save, when they come to Him? "Whoever believes" (John 3:15).	• Since He "bore our sicknesses," how many people will God heal, when they come to Him? "He healed them all" (Luke 6:19).

As God *"made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin."* So God made Him to be sick for us who knew no sickness.

Since Jesus our Substitute bore our sins, didn't He do so that we wouldn't have to? Since Jesus our Substitute also bore our sicknesses, didn't he do so, in order that we wouldn't have to be sick any more either?

Jesus bore our sins that we might be delivered from them. Not sympathy- a suffering with, but a substitution- a suffering for. Jesus bore our sicknesses that we might be delivered from them. Not sympathy- a suffering with, but a substitution- a suffering for so we don't have to.

Since it's a Biblical fact that Jesus "bore our sins in His own body on the tree," we trust Him today for the forgiveness of our sins. It's also a Biblical fact that in the same redemptive act, He also "bore our sicknesses," an equally valid reason why we should trust Him now to heal our bodies?

Faith for salvation "Comes by hearing" the Gospel message – He "bore our sins." Faith for healing "Comes by hearing" – He "Bore our sicknesses."

Therefore, preach the Gospel (that He bore our sins) to every creature and the Gospel (that He bore our sicknesses) to every creature." This is what the apostle Paul had done in Acts 14:6-10.

Christ's promise for every soul ("shall be saved") is in the Great Commission (Mark 16). Christ's promise for our bodies ("shall recover") is also in the Great Commission (Mark 16).

In connection with the ordinance of baptism, the Bible teaches that he that believes and is baptized shall be saved (Mark 16). In connection with the ordinance of anointing with oil, the Bible teaches that he that believes and is anointed shall be healed (James 5:14); are you seeing the correlation here?

We are commanded to baptize in Jesus' Name. We are commanded to anoint "in the name of the Lord" (James 5:14).

In the Lord's Supper the wine is taken "in remembrance" of His death for our souls (1 Corinthians 11:25). In the Lord's Supper the bread is eaten "in remembrance" of His death for our bodies (1 Corinthians 11:23-24).

The sinner must accept God's promise as true before he/she can experience the joy of salvation. The sick must accept God's promise as true before he/she can experience a manifestation of healing.

6. Chastised for our Peace

The next verse from Isaiah is also interesting.

Isaiah 53:5
…the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

It says that the chastisement that brought us "peace" was laid upon Jesus. In other words, Jesus was chastised so that we could have "peace." Now, the word "peace" is *shalowm* in Hebrew, s*halowm* is a very rich Hebrew word. It does not just mean peace of mind or a nice peaceful feeling. According to Brown Driver & Briggs Hebrew Lexicon, *shalown* means:

- completeness, soundness, welfare, peace
- completeness (in number)
- safety, soundness (in body)
- welfare, health, prosperity
- peace, quiet, tranquility, contentment
- peace, friendship used of human relationships
- with God especially in covenant relationship

As we can see, *shalowm* is a very rich Hebrew word, and its meaning includes health and soundness of body. It also includes safety or protection, and prosperity. That is why prosperity and divine protection are also included in the atonement. I like how someone described the word: "Nothing missing, nothing broken!"

The crown of thorns and the blood that was spilled speak of redemption from all mental torments and vexations of the mind. This includes fear, worry, anxiety, depression, obsessions and the like. This covers the totality of the mental realm and mental health of psychiatry.

John 14:27 AMP
Peace I leave with you; My [own] peace I now give and bequeath to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. [Stop allowing yourselves to be agitated and disturbed; and do not permit yourselves to be fearful and intimidated and cowardly and unsettled.]

Philippians 4:6-7
Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

1 Peter 5:7 AMP
Casting the whole of your care [all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares for you affectionately and cares about you watchfully. [Psalms 55:22.]

7. The Double Cure

The doctrine that Jesus bore our sins as well as our sicknesses is sometimes called "the double cure" - Jesus forgiving sins and healing diseases at the same time. This is not unusual when we consider the paralytic who was not just forgiven of his sins, but also healed by Jesus.

Matthew 9:2-8
Some men brought to him a paralytic, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven." At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, "This fellow is blaspheming!" Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, "Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts? Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. . . ." Then he said to the paralytic, "Get up, take your mat and go home." And the man got up and went home.

Did you know that forgiveness of sins and healing really go hand in hand? It's because of sin in the first place that gave Satan legal authority to oppress our bodies with sickness and disease. Since the blood of Jesus atones for our sins and wipes them away, Satan has lost his authority or right to afflict us with these curses. That is why sickness, poverty and anything else the devil can muster against us has no more place in our lives because of the atoning and redeeming work of Jesus Christ through His death, burial and resurrection.

Psalms 103:2-5
Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits — who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Isaiah 53:4-5
Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Romans 5:12-14
Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned— for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

Allow me to say it again, sin is what gives Satan the authority or the right to oppress humanity. If one was to take away sin, his authority is taken away to afflict, kill, steal and destroy folks lives. So strategically and also legally, the greatest act of spiritual warfare was for Jesus to take from Satan what gave him authority over mankind to begin with- sin, disobedience to God's Word.

John 1:29-30
The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

The Twelve disciples did not originally understand this, even after the resurrection of Jesus. It was not until the Holy Spirit began to reveal the full impact of the Lord's redemptive work in His death, burial and resurrection- triumphing over sin, death and the devil. Their definition of the Triumphant Christ was to bring death to the Romans and restore Israel to the glory days of David and Solomon. However, true freedom finds its roots in the spiritual realm, where sin once had an iron grip or strangle-hold on humanity. Jesus broke Satan's back and set captivity captive, our deliver has come and we all get to share in a wonderful spiritual exodus from the power of darkness. The good news is that it does not stop there, not only are we set free in our spirit, but freedom from God also belongs to our souls and bodies as well. All areas of our life are affected by this glorious redemption!

Acts 1:6
So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

Jesus came as the Lamb of God, but He will return as a Lion to execute judgment on this world system and bring an end to Satan's kingdom of darkness- Hallelujah!

Hebrews 2:14-16
Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil— and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

In the mean time, Jesus has given us a little heaven to experience here and now on earth before we get the full taste of our future inheritance. It's referred to as the deposit of our inheritance. God has generously made ample provision for any and every area of our lives, here and now on planet earth. Sure, there will be unspeakable glories to be held in heaven in the future, but there are more promises from God for this life than any believer could fully experience in a thousand lifetimes!

2 Corinthians 1:18-22
But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No." For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes." For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

2 Peter 1:3-4
His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

8. The Divine Exchange

The doctrine of the double cure is also part of the "divine exchange" teaching. The divine exchange teaching simply refers to the exchanges that took place at the cross between God and man. Jesus took our place so that we could take His place. He traded places with us, so to speak. He became our divine substitute or scapegoat. As the old hymn goes, "He paid a debt He did not owe, I owed a debt I could not pay, I needed someone to wash my sins away."

Romans 5:6-8
You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

For example, Jesus took our sins so that we can take His righteousness. He became curse itself so that we can be blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ. He was forsaken by God so that God will never leave us nor forsake us. He became poor so that we can be made rich, lacking in nothing. He wore the crown of thorns for the restoration of our soul- peace of mind and deliverance from all mental anguish. And, of course, He took our sicknesses so that we can take His health. He was scourged so that we can be healed. The list goes on and on. Sometimes, Christianity is really about discovering all that the Lord has done for us which results in jubilant praise and worship to God- what a testimony this becomes for the world to see how great our God is.

Psalms 34:2-3
My soul will boast in the Lord; let the afflicted hear and rejoice. Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together.

1 Corinthians 1:30-31
It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God — that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."

You could call these divine exchanges or blessings "benefits" too. Again, the psalmist David spoke of these benefits in Psalm 103:2-3. In just one short passage, you find these benefits: Forgiveness of all sins, healing of all diseases, protection from destruction, favor and mercy, prosperity and renewal of youth or long life. These are "His benefits" - the benefits of the passion (sufferings) of Christ, which we receive by grace through faith. Jesus went to the lowest hell (Matthew 12:40) so that we could be raised up with Him and seated with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus at the right hand of the Father- the highest place in the universe (Ephesians 2:4-7).

So if healing is indeed in the atonement of our Lord, what does it mean, practically, for us believers? It means that when we are sick, healing is freely available for us. It may be free for us, but it cost God His Son. It means that health and healing is our blood-bought right as children of God. Health and healing is part of our rich inheritance in Christ. We do not have to suffer sicknesses and die of diseases like the rest of the people in the world. We are in the world, but not of the world- John 17:11-14. We can have victory over sicknesses and walk in divine health.

As mentioned above, most Christians know that Jesus Christ died for their sins and that by believing in Him they are saved from hell. That is certainly true and this is the most precious aspect of His work on the cross.

- He became sin so that we can be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21). In other words, He took on our sins so that we can take on His righteousness. Righteousness means the ability to stand in the presence of the Father, or of demons, or of sickness and disease, without the sense of inferiority, condemnation, or of sin-consciousness.

- He died so that we can have eternal life (Romans 6:23).

But that is not all there is. There are many other divine exchanges that took place on the cross. For example:

- He was made a curse on the cross so that we can be blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3).

- He was made poor at the cross so that we can be made rich (2 Corinthians 8:9).

- He was forsaken on the cross by His Father so that we will never be forsaken by Him (Matthew 27:46, Matthew 28:20, Mark 15:34, Hebrews 13:5).

- He lost the Father-Son relationship (Jesus called His Father "God" for the first time on the cross) so that we can call God "*Abba*! Father!" (Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34, Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6).

• He bore God's wrath so that we will not be appointed to wrath (Isaiah 53:5, 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 5:9).

• He became a Man of sorrows on the cross so that we can have His joy (Isaiah 53:3, John 16:20, John 17:13).

The list is by no means exhaustive. There is so much more that Jesus suffered and died to give us. We are only scratching the surface of God's grace. Perhaps that is why Paul said that he was determined to know nothing else but Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2), that is, Jesus and what He has accomplished on the cross for us.

9. Redeemed from the Curse of the Law

Whenever the Bible makes reference to sickness it is always spoken of in terms of being a curse and not a blessing. Obviously a curse is always something bad, evil, hurtful, undesirable and destructive, and to be avoided. The curse as described in Deuteronomy chapter 28 is punishment in response to breaking God's laws- punishing rebellion and disobedience. Poverty, sickness, mental oppression and depression, destruction are all forms of punishment or curses. In the beginning of creation, God made everything perfect and there was no curse. So what brought the curse into the earth, that we see running rampant all throughout the world today- sin, for all have sinned according to Romans 3:23; 6:23.

Satan is the incarnation of the curse, the result of Adam and Eve taking that fatal bite, that is what God meant when He said in Genesis 2:17, *"…but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."* Meaning they would be turned over to the jurisdiction and tyranny of Satan, becoming subject and enslaved in his kingdom of death, misery and pain. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil by removing our sin, and in so doing ransomed and delivered us from the bondage of the enemy. Jesus took our curse, was punished for our sin, and absorbed the full measure of pain and suffering as our substitute. As a result of the Lord's death, burial and resurrection, we have been redeemed from everything that the devil can throw at us including sickness and every disease. Satan has no right to reign over us with sickness, disease, weakness or failure.

1 Timothy 2:5-6
"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men…"

Matthew 20:28
"…just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

There is a simple, logical process by which we can prove from Scripture that healing is indeed in the redemptive work of Christ. The Bible tells us that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. Obviously the word "Redeemed" is referring to our glorious redemption- to buy us back from the hand of the enemy. Now we are God's property, bought and paid for.

Galatians 3:13
Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."

1 Corinthians 6:19-20
Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

The Greek word here for "redeem" is not *agorazo*, but *exagorazo*, and means "to purchase or redeem out from or away from." The word for "curse" here is *katara*- note this word.

Deuteronomy 28:15
However, if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses [katarai] will come upon you and overtake you:

Remember that Deuteronomy 28:15 calls all these sicknesses which would follow disobedience to God's law, "curses" (*katarai* in the Septuagint)- giving access to Satan to kill, steal and destroy. Now this is the nominative plural of the very word Paul uses when he says (Galatians 3:13*), "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse [katara) of the law, being made [genomenos, having become] a curse [katara] for us."* Since sickness was one of the curses (*katara*) of the law, and Christ died to redeem us from the curse (*katara*) of the law, by becoming a curse (*katara*) for us (Substitutionary Atonement); therefore, according to Paul's teaching, bodily healing is in the Atonement. In the light of Isaiah 53:4 and Isaiah 53:11 and 12, this is what we would expect Paul to teach.

DVD still: The Passion Of The Christ

So if we can prove that part of the curse of the law includes sickness, then we can prove that we have been redeemed from sickness just as we have been redeemed from sin and the penalty of sin, which is death (Romans 6:23); since sickness leads to death, we have been redeemed from sickness and disease too. Since forgiveness of sins belongs to all, then healing too must belong to all. God would not say, "Yes, I see that you have confessed your sins, but I'm sorry, this time it's just not my will for you to be forgiven." Notice, we do not buy into that notion because we know that forgiveness of sins is part of our redemption. The reason some folks are confused about God's will to heal is because they have not seen in the Word the connection that healing has in the atonement is part of our redemption just as much as the forgiveness of sins. Now that we know, there should be no more doubts as we build these truths deep into our spirit and they become a part of us just as the revelation of the forgiveness of sins has.

So what is the curse of the law? Simply put, the curse of the law is this: If we do not obey all of God's commandments, we open the door to the devil to bring down on us all sorts of curses- bad things.

Deuteronomy 28:15
"But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you…"

Galatians 3:10
For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."

This was the old covenant system of the law. Obey all of God's commandments and you will be blessed. Break just one commandment and the curse of the law comes on you until you made the right sacrifice. Thank God Jesus fulfilled all the laws for us! Thank God He redeemed us from the curse of the law! The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all unrighteousness and when we speak God's Word on this matter, it silences the accuser of the brethren- Revelation 12:10. But is sickness part of the curse of the law?

Most definitely it is. If you read the list of curses found in Deuteronomy 28, you will, among other curses, find these curses on sickness and disease. Remember to interpret these versus in the "permissive" tense, that the Lord would allow the devil to bring these things against the children of Israel. Note those curses were already oppressing the Gentile world. When God's people get out from under the protective hand of God and into disobedience, they open the door for the enemy to come in and kill, steal and destroy- John 10:10.

Deuteronomy 28:21-23
The Lord will plague you with diseases until he has destroyed you from the land you are entering to possess. The Lord will [*permit*] strike you with wasting disease, with fever and inflammation, with scorching heat and drought, with blight and mildew, which will plague you until you perish.

Deuteronomy 28:27-28
The Lord will [*permit*] afflict you with the boils of Egypt and with tumors, festering sores and the itch, from which you cannot be cured. The Lord will [*permit*] afflict you with madness, blindness and confusion of mind.

Deuteronomy 28:34-35
The sights you see will drive you mad. The Lord will [*permit*] afflict your knees and legs with painful boils that cannot be cured, spreading from the soles of your feet to the top of your head.

Deuteronomy 28:59-60
The Lord will [*permit*] send fearful plagues on you and your descendants, harsh and prolonged disasters, and severe and lingering illnesses. He will [*permit*] bring upon you all the diseases of Egypt that you dreaded, and they will cling to you.

But the most significant one is this all-inclusive curse on sickness:

Deuteronomy 28:61
The Lord will [*permit*] also bring on you every kind of sickness and disaster not recorded in this Book of the Law, until you are destroyed.

In case you thought your disease was missed out, it is covered by this "every sickness and disaster" curse clause. So if Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, and He has, then the logical conclusion is that we have been redeemed from all the sicknesses listed in Deuteronomy 28, as well as any sickness that is not listed there. Praise God!

So, in Deuteronomy 28, there are 11 verses on blessings (verses 3-13) and 53 verses on curses (verses 16-68). Since there are more curses than blessings here, the Christian ought to study what these curses are, lest he/she calls something a blessing when it's really a curse! What is profound about Deuteronomy 28:61 is that a sickness can never be confused with a blessing. So if we say that sickness is a blessing from God to teach us something, then we are contradicting Deuteronomy 28:61, which plainly implies that any sickness is a curse; and it's from Satan and not God. Sadly, when you listen to some folks talk, one would think that cancer was the best thing that ever happened to them; to somehow make them more like Jesus. Sad how religion can mess up our thinking and rob us from receiving God's blessing for our lives, but that is what the devil tries to do, steal God's provision for us by any means possible. That is why we must stay vigilant and alert, full of the Word and the Spirit, quick to forgive and quick to repent so we are not deceived and taken advantage of by the enemy.

2 Corinthians 2:11 NKJV
"…lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices."

1 Peter 5:8-9
Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith…

I hope this is clear enough now; healing is part of Christ's redemptive work. Healing was purchased for us in the atonement of our Lord. So we cannot say that God chooses to heal some and not others because the truth is that healing is offered to all through the cross. If we say that God is willing to heal only some people, it is like saying that God is willing to save only some people. Neither can we say that God disciplines His children with diseases. If that were true, God would be contradicting and dishonoring the work of His Son. Here is another angle of looking at this. Egypt in the Bible represents the secular world. Just as God called the Israelites out of Egypt through Moses, Christians are called out of the world through Christ. Another way of saying it is that Christians are *in* the world but not *of* the world.

John 17:11
"Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world…"

John 15:19
"If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."

John 17:14, 16
"I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world...They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world."

This means that Christians need not suffer sicknesses like people of the world do. Sicknesses belong to the world, and come directly from the devil or indirectly through the fall of man. Sicknesses belong to those under Satan's dominion. As Christians we are in the world, but not of the world. In Deuteronomy 28:60, God calls diseases, "of Egypt." In God's eyes, sicknesses are the way of the world. But in God's kingdom - and we are of His kingdom - there are no diseases. Just as Jesus instructed the disciples how to pray in Matthew 6:10, *"Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."* There is no sickness in heaven, nor is it God's will for it to be present in our lives here on earth.

Deuteronomy 28:60
He will [*permit*] bring upon you all the diseases of Egypt that you dreaded, and they will cling to you.

John 18:36
Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."

10. His Visage was Marred beyond Recognition

Again, the words "grief" and "sorrows" here are actually "sickness" and "pain" (physical and mental) in the original Hebrew text. Sadly, the translation here is also inaccurate.

Isaiah 53:3-4 NKJV
He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows [pains] and acquainted with grief [sickness]. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs [sickness] and carried our sorrows [pains]; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.

DVD still: The Passion Of The Christ

As with verse 4, this verse is talking about all of Jesus' suffering for our entire and complete redemption. He became a Man of pains acquainted with sicknesses because He was carrying all our diseases as well as physical and mental pains. In fact, His face and body were so disfigured by the diseases and pains that those who saw Him were appalled and hid their faces from Him (verse 3). Isaiah says the same thing in the preceding chapter, let's look at a few translations:

Isaiah 52:14 NKJV
Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men.

Isaiah 52:14 NIV
Just as there were many who were appalled at him — his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness.

Isaiah 52:14 AMP
[For many the Servant of God became an object of horror; many were astonished at Him.] His face and His whole appearance were marred more than any man's, and His form beyond that of the sons of men — but just as many were astonished at Him.

Isaiah 52:14 NLT
But many were amazed when they saw him. His face was so disfigured he seemed hardly human, and from his appearance, one would scarcely know he was a man.

11. The Serpent on a Pole

Numbers 21 describes a situation which God proved His healing mercy to the children of Israel. They had been wandering in the wilderness for a long time without getting into the Promise Land, and they started to grumble again.

Numbers 21:4-5
They traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea, to go around Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way; they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the desert? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!"

God was giving them manna from heaven. In their rebelliousness, however, they said, "We don't care for it." They were saying, "Thanks for the manna, Lord, but we want filet mignon." They forgot that God was supplying their needs; they started whining and complaining. This got them into the devil's territory of unbelief and ungratefulness, so the Lord allowed poisonous serpents to attack their camp. Many Israelites were bitten and died. Suddenly the survivors realized how well-off they had been before. Well good, I'm glad they got the revelation, but it was not God's will for so many to have died; it would have been better for them to have just stood fast on the Word and trust God in the first place. Sure God works the good out of bad situations that we often get ourselves into; however, wisdom dictates that we be a doer of the Word and avoid the needless loss and hardship. Sadly, many of us are stubborn and hard headed and insist on taking the hard way through life, but we shouldn't blame God and try to make Him responsible for our poor choices!

So Moses prayed for the people and the Lord instructed him to make a serpent of brass and set it upon a pole in the midst of the camp; promising that anyone who was bitten by a snake could look upon that brazen snake and live- so the Lord healed the victims of their snake bites. The notes to the Scofield bible indicate that the serpents represented sin, while brass represented divine judgment. As in the brazen altar and the grating where the sacrificial animals were burnt, they were made of bronze in Exodus 38:30. Therefore, according to Scofield, the brass serpent represented Jesus who became sin on our behalf.

2 Corinthians 5:21- God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Do you know what the traditional symbol for medicine looks like? It is a serpent coiled around a pole (see photo). Where do you think the idea came from? The world says Greek mythology. But I believe it originated from this event recorded in the Bible.

That is why Moses was told to lift up a bronze serpent placed on a pole- a type of the crucifixion. Interestingly, the traditional medical symbol used today is a serpent coiled around a staff.

Any Israelite who was bitten by a snake received healing as long as he focused on the bronze serpent on the pole (a type of Christ bearing our sicknesses and pains on the cross). But those who focused on their snake bite wounds (their natural circumstances) died. The word "look" in the Hebrew is in the continuous present tense. It does not mean a mere glance, but a steadfast gaze- that's what we have to do in God's Word.

Numbers 21:8-9
The Lord said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live." So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived.

But how can the bronze serpent be a type of Christ? In the Bible, a serpent symbolizes a curse (Genesis 3:14). Jesus was made a curse on the cross for us.

Galatians 3:13
Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."

Jesus Himself pointed out this connection when He said to Nicodemus:

John 3:14-15
"Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life."

The world attributes the origins of the traditional medical symbol to Greek mythology. But I believe it originated from the event recorded in Numbers 21:9 -- Moses' bronze serpent placed on a pole.

This huge sculpture of a serpent coiled around a pole can be seen at the Singapore General Hospital.

What has this got to do with healing being in the atonement? Remember, the bronze serpent symbolizes the judgment of Christ. The pole symbolizes the wooden cross that Jesus was judged on. Christ, the sacrificial Lamb of God, was judged on the cross for our sins. He bore God's fiery wrath on our behalf. Why a serpent? Because a serpent in the Bible speaks of the curse (Genesis 3:14), and Jesus was made a curse for us on the cross. So the serpent on the pole is actually a shadow or type of Jesus on the cross- the redemptive work of Christ. And in this redemptive work, healing is provided because those who looked at the bronze serpent did not die from

their wounds but lived. But what did it mean to "look" at the bronze serpent? How could merely looking at a bronze serpent on a pole bring about healing? When those who were bitten looked at the bronze serpent, it meant that they were looking away from their natural circumstances- their wounds. The snake bites were real all right, they were painful, and they caused death. But instead of focusing on the natural facts, they looked up to a higher truth. They saw the source of their problem- the fiery serpents- judged at the cross. Or you could say that they saw a type of Christ judged on the cross with their diseases. Everyone that looked at the brazen serpent- the type of Christ- lived. They were both forgiven and healed by looking. He who trusts Christ has no need to be ashamed of his/her confidence; time and eternity will both justify his/her reliance.

Psalms 34:5- Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.
Romans 10:11- As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

Today, it is the same. When you have a disease, as real and painful as it may be, you are to look away from the natural facts and condition (Like Abraham did Romans 4:17-22), and look to the cross of Jesus. See your disease judged already in the body of another. See the Lord on the cross smitten and accursed with all your diseases until He cried, *"It is finished!"* John 19:30

We fix our eyes on Jesus by keeping God's Word on our lips and in our hearts and minds. As we feed on the bread of life, Jesus' healing Word, it ministers life and health to our whole body. The Israelites were to look at the brass serpent and receive healing. All our healing, spirit, soul and body come from the Lord, through faith in His Word.

Hebrews 3:1
Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.

Proverbs 4:20-22
My son, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to a man's whole body.

Think about it: If He already took our disease, why take it one second longer? If He already suffered and died for our disease, why suffer and die for the same disease? Have we been delivered from the devil's dominion? Yes, and the same crime cannot be punished twice. A debt that has already been paid by another should not be paid a second time by us. There is no justice in that. Beloved, look to the cross, and see all your diseases judged and finished in the body of the One who says to you today, "I am the Lord who heals you." Exodus 15:26

Sin is the root cause of our suffering. Sometimes suffering comes upon the world in a general sense due to Adam's fall, other times it is a result of our own transgressions. But in either case, Jesus is the answer to the sin issue that opened the door for death, devil and the curse to come upon the earth. Jesus took our sins upon Him as our substitute, paid the penalty for our sins and set us free from Satan's dominion over our lives- by His bruise we are healed according to Isaiah 53:5. We lift up Jesus by magnifying His Word and putting it first place in our lives, and then He confirms it with signs following.

John 12:32-33
"But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

Unit 3 Review:

Why is a “blood” sacrifice, the right sacrifice when it pertains to sin?

What is meant by redemptive equivalency between the remission of sin and healing?

What in effect are we doing when we fail to receive healing for our bodies?

How did Satan lose his authority to afflict people with sickness and disease?

What does the “Divine Exchange” teaching portray?

So what is the “Curse of the Law” and who is the administrator of those curses?

F. Passover

(pas'-o-ver) (pecach, from pacach, "to pass" or "spring over" or "to spare"
Exodus Chapter 12 begins with the creation of the Jewish calendar- Exodus 12:1-2 *The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, "This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year."*

The Lord went on to instruct them that on the tenth day of the new month they are to take a lamb for his family, one for each household- they must be year old males without defect or blemish. They are to keep the lamb with the family for the next four days so they become familiar and attached to it- making the sacrifice that much more personal. Why a lamb and not an adult sheep or goat, perhaps the lamb symbolizes innocence, being only a year old.

At twilight on the fourteenth day of the month, all the people of the community must slaughter their lamb. Then take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs which were roasted with fire along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. They were to eat it in haste, fully dressed and ready to leave- it is the Lord's Passover.

Now this is no small town affair, there are literally tens of thousands of people killing lambs, sprinkling the blood on the doorposts, and going inside to roast the lambs- they were all doing it at the same time. You can imagine that the land of Goshen smelled like one great big lamb cookout. Think what it would be like today, if all the citizens of a city of two million residents went in their backyard at the same time and grilled steaks. Why you could smell those steaks and see that smoke for miles and miles. That's what is happening with the Hebrews. You would smell those lambs being roasted all over Egypt. As the scent of the smoke ascended up into the heavens, it reached the very nostrils of God. It was evidence to God that the blood, representing the covenant relationship with Abraham's descendants, had been applied. Now the covenant meal was being consumed to celebrate the communion of that covenant.

Did you notice that God required a perfect lamb without defect or blemish to be chosen for the sacrifice? The life of a lamb represented a substitutionary offering for the lives of those living in the house. We understand according to Romans 3:23 that the wages of sin is death, someone has to die, justice has to be satisfied. However, justice will only accept an innocent sacrifice to take the place of a guilty person. A condemned man cannot pay the crimes committed by another condemned man; he has to pay for his own crimes. God used the innocent lamb as a type of Jesus being the perfect, sinless sacrifice for all mankind. I have enclosed a number of Scriptures that points to this revelation- enjoy!

Isaiah 53:7
He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

John 1:29- The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

1 Peter 1:18-21
For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

Revelation 7:14, 12:11, 13:8, 17:14
They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast- all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world. They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings-and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.

Revelation 19:7-9
Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" And he added, "These are the true words of God."

Revelation 22:3-5
No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign forever and ever.

Revelation 5:6-14
Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song:

"You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, forever and ever!"
The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.

We know who the gods of Egypt were- they were demons. Satan and his hosts are so conceited and full of pride that they long to be worshiped- it was the original sin for Satan. This is why idolatry is so evil!

1 Corinthians 10:18-21
Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons.

Although the family was inside the house and couldn't see the blood covering, they had faith that God would save them because of it. As they ate their meal, God allowed death to sweep through the land. As he passed from door to door, he sought to enter every household. If the entrance was covered by blood the angel of death could not get in, but had to pass over that house. The blood was a seal protecting the people inside. However, if the entrance was not covered by blood, judgment would come upon that household as the first-born died.

The blood of the lamb was applied by dipping a bunch of hyssop in the blood and striking the two side posts and the upper post or lintel of the door. It typified the blood of Jesus sprinkled for believers. Notice that no blood was to be sprinkled on the threshold so that the feet would trample on it.

HYSSOP
The marjoram (origanum) with long, straight stalk, downy leaf, and white blossom; common in Palestine and near mount Sinai; an aromatic plant. The simplest form of the hyssop sprinkler is the "bunch," which each father in Israel hastily prepared before leaving Egypt. In the Mosaic ritual the bunch of hyssop was tied with a scarlet thread (Numbers 19:6). In the account of the crucifixion (John 19:28-29) it is recorded, *"they put a sponge full of sour wine upon a bunch of hyssop, and brought it to His mouth."*

Exodus 12:22-23
Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. Not one of you shall go out the door of his house until morning. When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.

Hebrews 11:28
By faith Moses kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.

Why bread without yeast- yeast as you know is the substance that causes bread to rise through a fermentation process. The Bible refers to "yeast" as a type for sin.

1 Corinthians 5:6-8
Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast-as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.

Bitter herbs were to be used with the meal. What kind is not specified, but it is thought they were chicory, wild lettuce, and horehound. They were to remind Israel of their bitter slavery in Egypt from which God was now ready to deliver them.

Ephesians 2:1-5
As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-it is by grace you have been saved.

John 8:34-36
Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

1. The Way the Bread is Made

If we examine the Jewish matza, which is the unleavened bread the Jews eat during the Passover, and which many churches use today for their Holy Communion, you will notice that it is striped with tiny holes. It also has many burnt marks.

Interestingly, before the dough is baked, it is pierced using a special tool which forms rows of tiny holes. The holes are probably there for a practical reason- to keep the matza flat and crispy. But there is a deeper spiritual truth here (see diagram).

The matza clearly represents the body of our Lord. The stripes, wounds and bruisings speak of the scourging He endured to purchase our healing. The holes speak of His piercing by the crown of thorns, nails and Roman soldier's spear. And the burnt marks speak of the fiery wrath of God, which He bore because our sins were being judged in His body. Perhaps the most visible are the stripes, *"by His stripes we are healed"* in Isaiah 53:5.

1 Peter 2:24 NKJV
…who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness — by whose stripes *[bruise]* you were healed.

Jesus bore every one of those painful lashes to purchase our healing.

2. A Lamb Defeats a Serpent

This was the Lord's Passover, and we see that He used the blood of the lamb as the means for bringing His people out of bondage to Egypt. Now the symbol of Egypt was the serpent. In the Bible, the serpent represents Satan- Genesis 3:15; Revelation 12:9. What God is saying with this exodus is that in His own appointed time, He will use the blood of the lamb to destroy Satan's power and set people free from his bondage.

Remember that Egypt is a type of the "World System" that Satan dominates and who formerly held us in spiritual slavery through sin. The new birth represents our spiritual Exodus out of the kingdom of darkness. Our pathway out of spiritual "Egypt", the world system that represented the life we once lived- an oppressive life dominated by Satan, sin, sickness and poverty. Through Jesus Christ in His death, burial and resurrection we have been ransomed from sin through the blood of Jesus- Romans 6:15-23.

Colossians 1:13-14 AMP
[The Father] has delivered and drawn us to Himself out of the control and the dominion of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, In Whom we have our redemption through His blood, [which means] the remission of our sins.

Exodus 12:29-30
At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well. Pharaoh and all his officials and all the Egyptians got up during the night, and there was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead.

God made the Passover or the "Feast of Unleavened Bread" an ordinance for Israel to follow each year until its fulfillment in Jesus Christ at the Last Supper. At the Last Supper Jesus officially ended the ancient ordinance and instituted a new one under the New Covenant called Communion.

Luke 22:1
Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching,

Mark 14:12
On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

3. None Feeble Among Them

If you are familiar with the story of Moses and how God used him to free His people from slavery and Pharaoh's grip, you would know that the very first Passover meal was eaten on the night before the Israelites left Egypt.

On that night, God told each Israelite household to take a lamb without blemish, kill it, smear its blood on the doorposts and eat the lamb roasted in fire (Exodus 12:1-28). We know that the lamb here represents Christ, the true, spotless Lamb of God who would shed His blood, be "roasted" by the fires of God's judgment for our transgressions, and free His people from slavery to Satan and sin. So again, we see a typology of the atonement of Christ here. But what is interesting about this event is that the very next day, there was not one single feeble person among the two million Israelites!

Psalms 105:37 NKJV
He also brought them out with silver and gold, and there was none feeble among His tribes.

That sounds like an impossibility considering the fact that the Israelites were slaves who had been ill-treated and ill-fed for decades. With all the hard work, lack of rest and poor nutrition, how could there not be even one weak or sickly person among the two million of them?

Was it just their enthusiasm and happiness that made them all healthy and strong overnight? Or should credit be given to the type and shadow of the Lamb of God (Jesus) that was fed upon? Also, remember that it was the blood on the doorposts that stopped the plague from coming into the house and killing their firstborn.

Exodus 12:13
The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

Here, we see protection from deadly diseases in the blood of Jesus. So we find two blessings portrayed here: Health and strength, as well as protection from deadly diseases, provided for in the atonement of Jesus.

4. How Plagues are Stopped

Concerning Israel, in the Old Testament, plagues were stopped when atonement on behalf of the people was made. Now, it was not the person making the atonement that pleased God and moved Him to stop the plague, but *who* was represented in the sacrifice- Jesus. The sacrifices or incense offered to God pleased Him because they pointed to His Son and His perfect sacrifice that would be made on the cross. Once, when a plague was killing thousands of Israelites, Aaron the high priest took a censer, put fire from the altar in it, ran out into the midst of the people and put incense in the censer. Smoke arose from the censer and the plague stopped where Aaron had stood, so he stood between the living and the dead. See another example in 2 Samuel 24:24-25.

Numbers 16:46-50
Then Moses said to Aaron, "Take your censer and put incense in it, along with fire from the altar, and hurry to the assembly to make atonement for them. Wrath has come out from the Lord; the plague has started." So Aaron did as Moses said, and ran into the midst of the assembly. The plague had already started among the people, but Aaron offered the incense and made atonement for them. He stood between the living and the dead, and the plague stopped. But 14,700 people died from the plague, in addition to those who had died because of Korah. Then Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, for the plague had stopped.

Did the censer and burning incense have magical powers? No, the burning incense in the Bible speaks of prayer or intercession on behalf of another. Revelation 5:8, *"…were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints."*

Revelation 8:3-4
Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand.

The greatest prayers or incense that has been offered unto God on our behalf was and continues to be Jesus. He is our Great High Priest (Hebrews 4:14) who ever lives to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7:25).

Romans 8:34-35
Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

John 17:1, 20
After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message…"

God has made us believers in Jesus Christ a royal priesthood to offer up prayers and petitions on behalf of others. This includes praying for the sick, which comes up before God as a wonderful fragrance to Him; it points back to the atoning work of Jesus Christ on our behalf! As the Body of Christ we have been anointed with the Holy Spirit and given the Name of Jesus to stand in the gap on behalf of suffering humanity and minister the new birth, healing and deliverance to fallen humanity.

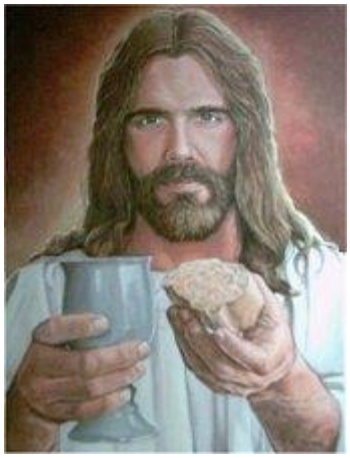
James 5:15
And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.

2 Corinthians 2:15-16
For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life. And who is equal to such a task?

1 Peter 2:5, 9-10
You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Coming back to the Communion, when we hold the bread in our hands, and remember and appreciate all these truths, we are discerning the Lord's body. His body was broken, bruised, beaten, pierced and scourged – so that ours can be made whole. Beloved, the bread is for our healing. What about the wine? Since it represents His blood, it is for the forgiveness of sins. Again, we see the double cure- forgiveness of sins and healing as mentioned in Psalms 103:1-4. The wonderful power that is in the blood to wash our sins away is a vital aspect to understand as it pertains to healing. Besides paving the way to be legally free from Satan's tyranny, it also means that Jesus made us worthy to be healed and receive healing for our soul and body.

Hebrews 10:10
And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.



Healing is a gift of God's grace that we have already received through Jesus; not by good works to try and deserve or earn it. There is no need to wait for something that God has already bought and paid for. It's already ours, given to us through the atoning, redemptive work of Christ; revealed and received by faith in the Word of God and in the power that is in the Name of Jesus- it's ours, so let's appropriate it and apply it in our lives and the lives of others!

Hebrews 13:12
And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood.

5. The Blood for our Protection

When we drink the cup of wine or juice, we can also claim protection from accidents, sicknesses, attacks and the like, physical or spiritual. We read in Exodus 12 that as long as the blood of the lamb (a type of Jesus and His blood shed for us) was applied to the lintel and two side posts of the door (a picture of the cross), the destroyer passed over (from which you get "Passover" feast) the house and did not kill the firstborn (man or beast) in that family.

Exodus 12:21-23- Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. Not one of you shall go out the door of his house until morning. When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.

The destroyer (Satan) passed over a house not because the people in it were Israelites, but because he saw the blood. The blood tells the destroyer that someone else (pointing to the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ) has already been killed in the firstborn's (our) place for the firstborn's (our) sins. It tells the destroyer that a life has already been taken; so the penalty of death, because of sin, need not be enforced again- the same crime cannot be punished twice. It was at that time that the Lord instituted the Passover feast to remind the Israelites of how He had graciously delivered them out of Egypt. Note that it was not the previous nine plagues, but this last judgment that finally forced Pharaoh to let God's people go free. In other words, it was the sacrifice of an innocent lamb (the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ) and the shedding of its (His) blood that bought God's people freedom (redemption and salvation) from the clutches of Pharaoh.

As Christians, we are already saved from hell. But when it comes to divine protection, the blessing does not fall automatically into our laps just because we are Christians. Like the Israelites in Egypt, we must still *apply* the blood. The Israelites had to apply the blood on their doorposts, or their firstborn would have been killed along with the firstborn of the Egyptians. Today, we apply the blood for protection over ourselves or our loved ones by simply speaking or praying the Word of God and the Name of Jesus in faith. For example, the head of the household can lay his hands on his child and say, "Father, I apply the precious blood of Jesus over my son who is going to school now. Watch over him and protect him from the evil one according to your Word." If ever you sense danger in your spirit, whether it pertains to you or your loved ones, do not hesitate to apply the blood of Christ through prayer; speak the blood, what the Bible says about it. Many Christians and their loved ones have escaped serious accidents and deaths just by being sensitive to the unction of the Holy Spirit in them to pray and apply the blood of Jesus.

6. Jesus Partook of Passover

Let's look at how Jesus partook of the Passover under the Old Covenant on that night when Jesus and His disciples met together to eat the Passover- Matthew 26:19; Mark 14:16; Luke 22:13. The manner in which the Passover feast was kept by the Jews of that period differed in many details from that originally prescribed by the rules of Exodus 12. The multitudes that came up to Jerusalem met as they could find accommodations.

Matthew 26:26-29 NKJV
And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

The narratives of the Gospels show how strongly the disciples were impressed with the words which had given a new meaning to the old familiar acts. They leave unnoticed all the ceremonies of the Passover, except those which had thus been transferred to the Christian Church and perpetuated in it.

Old things were passing away, and all things were becoming new. They had looked on the bread and the wine as memorials of the deliverance from Egypt. They were now told to partake of them "in remembrance" of their Master and Lord. The festival had been annual. No rule was given as to the time and frequency of the new feast that thus supervened on the old, but the command, *"Do this as often as you drink it."*(1 Corinthians 11:25), suggested the more continual recurrence of that which was to be their memorial of one whom they would never forget.

The words, *"This is my body,"* gave to the unleavened bread a new character. They had been prepared for language that would otherwise have been so startling by the teaching of John (John 6:32-58). They were taught to see in the bread, a broken body as a witness of the closest possible union and fellowship with their Lord. The cup, which was *"the New Covenant"* in His blood, would remind them, in like manner, of the wonderful prophecy in which the New Covenant had been foretold in Jeremiah 31:31-34. The crowning glory was in the promise, *"I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."* His bloodshed, as He told them, *"for them and for many,"* for the remission of sins. What He had been proclaiming throughout His whole ministry, was to seal a New Covenant; foretold through the sprinkling of blood from the time of Moses in Exodus 24:8. We know that the Communion is about the atoning sacrifice of our Lord. On the night of the Last Supper, Jesus broke bread with His disciples and said:

1 Corinthians 11:23-26
For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Jesus was referring to His body, which would be beaten, bruised and "burnt" at the cross by the fiery wrath of God. The question then, is this: Can healing be found in the Holy Communion, since it speaks of the atoning sacrifice of our Lord? Yes, it can. In fact, the apostle Paul said that the reason Christians are weak and sick, and die prematurely, is that they fail to discern the Lord's body during Communion.

1 Corinthians 11:29
For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.

1 Corinthians 11:29 NKJV
For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment [*krima*] to himself [*eauto*, reflexive pronoun], not discerning the Lord's body.

The word for "discerning" here is *diakrinon*, the present participle of *diakrino*, and means "making a distinction between." What distinction is here referred to? Read 1 Corinthians 11:30 NKJV, *"For this reason [because you do not discern between the significance of the bread and the wine when partaking of Communion] many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep [are prematurely dead]."* Paul here asserts that many Christians are weak and sickly and others have died prematurely because they had partaken of Communion without understanding – as they ought to have understood – the great distinction between the significance of the bread and the wine. What is this distinction? As we have just covered, that Jesus is our Passover Lamb or deliverance from the kingdom of darkness- sin, sickness and disease. Secondly, as the context of 1 Cor. 11:17-34 dictates, not recognizing the body of Christ; in other words not walking in love towards other Christians will result in judgment- open door to the devil.

1 Corinthians 5:7- For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

If Christ is our Passover lamb, His blood was most assuredly shed to save us from the wrath of God through the forgiveness of our sins, and His flesh was bruised and broken for our physical benefits. *"By the bruise of whom ye were healed physically"* (1 Peter 2:24, literal translation). Remember that this word "healed" (*iaomai*) without one exception in the New Testament refers only and always to physical healing, never to spiritual healing. This is positive proof to all Greek scholars that Peter is here speaking of our "physical healing" through the awful suffering of Christ.

Although the blood of Christ, our Passover lamb, was shed to save us from the wrath of God, and His body was bruised and broken for our physical benefits. The failure of any saint to discern this distinction, when partaking of Communion, does not make that saint guilty in the sight of God. Read again 1 Corinthians 11:29 NKJV, *"For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment [krima] to himself [eauto, reflexive pronoun], not discerning the Lord's body."* If, when partaking of the Sacrament, we fail to discern the true significance of the bread because of ignorance or wrong teaching, we bring judgment upon ourselves alone in that we will continue to be sick or die prematurely, but it does not affect, in any way, our standing in God's sight. This is the exact meaning here of the reflexive pronoun (eauro). As Paul declares in Romans 8:1, *"Therefore, there is now no condemnation [katakrima, sentence standing against] for those who are in Christ Jesus."* Yes, healing is in the Atonement, but no saint is held guilty in God's sight who fails for any reason to discern this fact; he only suffers himself as a result of a lack of knowledge.

Interestingly, this is the only reason given in the entire New Testament as to why Christians fall sick and die prematurely. They fail to recognize the Lord's body when they partake of Communion. The reverse then, is true: If they recognize the Lord's body, they will not fall sick and die prematurely. In other words, health and healing are provided for in the atonement, and these benefits can be received by discerning the Lord's body when partaking of Communion. But how do we recognize the Lord's body during Communion? Or what do we recognize about the bread, which represents His body? First, know that one of the symbolisms of bread in the Bible is healing. This is seen in the healing of the Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter, who was severely demon-possessed. Clearly, the bread here represents healing. The demon was driven out of the body of the Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter.

Matthew 15:25-28
The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said. He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs." "Yes, Lord," she said, "but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Discerning the Lord's body when taking the Communion means to believe and receive by faith what has been purchased for us in Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. What divine exchanges took place on the cross between Him and us? There are many, the most common one that Christians know is that Christ took their sins so that they can take His righteousness when they receive Him as their Lord and Savior. But since the subject here is divine healing, we are focusing on health and healing. We are to recognize the Lord's body believing and receiving by faith what the bread and wine represent- the pierced, striped, bruised and broken body of our Lord for our healing, and the blood for our ongoing righteousness and for our protection. Are we laying hold of these truths and claiming the benefits by faith as we partake of the elements? This is what it means to examine or judge ourselves. To discern the Lord's Body also means to recognize other believers in the Body of Christ and to walk in love and to always forgive them.

DVD still: The Passion Of The Christ

The next time you take Communion, come reverently and boldly to the Lord's Table without guilt, shame or condemnation. Know that all your sins have been forgiven and that His blood has washed you whiter than snow- forever! If you do feel "unworthy" because you have just fallen into sin, all the more you should drink from the cup and remind yourself of the power of His blood to continuously keep you clean when you confess it to God- which should be done the moment we are made conscious of sin.

1 John 1:9-10
If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

Remember, it's not some religious penance or banging our head against a brick wall that makes us righteous before God. To believe and do those things is nothing more than self-righteousness. No, only the blood of Jesus can make us righteous once and for all.

And it did, the moment we believed on Him. When we eat the bread, let's not just go through the motion and do it as a ritual. Recognize what Christ suffered in His body to give us, be it health and healing, prosperity, a Father-child relationship and everything else that pertains to salvation. Believe the benefits, receive them by faith and in so doing, we will be partaking of Communion in a worthy manner.

When we drink the cup of wine or juice, we remind ourselves that it is Jesus' blood that continuously keeps us clean and righteous before God. Our performance- good or bad deeds has nothing to do with it. We also remind ourselves that not just our past sins, but our present as well as future sins, were all remitted (blotted out) the moment we believed in Jesus Christ. We were cleansed of all unrighteousness forever when we were born again. God's forgiveness and His gift of righteousness are certainly not given in installments depending on our performance or obedience. We are righteous now and as righteous as we will ever be for all eternity by the gift of righteousness. That is one side to righteousness, the other side is to live it out for God's glory each day of our lives on earth.

2 Corinthians 5:21
God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Romans 5:17
…how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

In fact, that is why we ought to take Communion when we fall into sin. As Christians, we still fall into sin now and then. And when we do, we feel frustrated and condemned. Hence, we need to be reminded that Jesus' blood has cleansed us of every sin, and that we apply that blood fresh and anew when we confess our sins to God- 1 John 1:9. It is His blood alone that has made us righteous, not our good works- though we need to continually aim for Christ likeness in our lives (1 John 2:6).

Once we understand this, we will not feel condemned. Indeed, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). And if we are firmly established in the fact that we are righteous forever by His blood alone, no matter what sin we have just fallen into, we can always come boldly (Hebrews 4:16) to the Lord's Table with faith to receive from God and be encouraged.

Another way we are to recognize the Lord's body is to walk in love toward other people. This is very important in order for our sins to be forgiven and to keep our prays from being hindered. We can't just treat people any ole way and think that it will not have an effect on our walk with God. The Law of the New Covenant is to walk in love, one step out of love is one step into sin and into the devil's territory.

Mark 11:25
And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.

1 Peter 3:7
Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

James 2:12-13
Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!

If we are out of fellowship with God due to disobedience, just repent and get back under the blood of Jesus and the protection of God. If we persist in willful disobedience, we make ourselves vulnerable to attack. God will not condone sin, and after His mercy for us to repent is exhausted, we will be turned over to the enemy to be afflicted- this is what it means to be judged by the Lord.

1 Corinthians 11:31-32
But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.

1 Corinthians 5:4-5
When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.

Revelation 2:20-22
Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways.

7. The Lamb on the Cross

When Jesus went to Golgotha's hill to be crucified, He had a personal confrontation with Satan. At 9 o'clock that morning as the lambs were being prepared for sacrifice, Jesus was nailed to the cross in Mark 15:25. The third hour was 9 o'clock in the morning, Jewish time.

DVD still: The Passion Of The Christ

There He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The Lord laid on Jesus the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted. Yet He opened not His mouth, like a lamb led to the slaughter. His strength was poured out like water. His bones were out of joint and His heart melted like wax. His strength dried up like sun-baked clay. His tongue stuck to His mouth. His bones protruded out of His body. He was sheared like a lamb at the slaughter house. His heel was bruised- See Isaiah 53; Psalms 22:14-17. These are prophecies describing Jesus' crucifixion.

When a person is crucified, he pushes himself up by his heel to get more air into his lungs. This act of pushing bruises the heel. Then at 3 o'clock in the afternoon as the people are singing praises to God that echo throughout the hills of Jerusalem, the lambs are slaughtered. At the same moment, as the shouts of "Hallelujah" and "Praise ye the Lord" ring out on the hill called Calvary, Jesus died. Like the doorpost back in Egypt, the blood of the lamb covered the cross. To perfectly fulfill the Old Covenant not one bone of the "Lamb of God" was broken- Exodus l2:46; Psalms 34:20; John 19:36.The entire Lamb (Jesus) was consumed being roasted by the judgment fires of God as he became our sin substitute. Jeremiah wrote of this time and said God would send fire into His bones and consume the entire sacrifice- Lamentations 1:13. The Jews, not knowing they were further fulfilling prophecy, hurriedly took the body down before 6 o'clock pm, so that there would be nothing left over for the next day- Exodus 12:10; John 19:31.

8. Blood and Water

I mentioned that the Hebrews back in Egypt used a hyssop bush to sprinkle the blood of the lamb on the doorpost. The hyssop bush carries water in its stem. When the blood was applied, water would flow out of the stem and cover the blood. So the entire entrance into the house was actually sealed with blood and water.

When Moses received the Ten Commandments, he took a hyssop bush dipped it into blood and sprinkled it over the stone tablets and all the people. Later, he sprinkled blood over the Tabernacle and all its furnishings used in worship as well as the priest. They were all sealed with blood and water. Then in order to enter the Tabernacle and approach God, the High Priest had to go by way of the blood at the Altar and the water at the laver. There he carried the name of each of the 12 tribes sealed in stone over his heart and on his shoulders.

Then later when the Temple was built, blood drained into basins underneath the Altar. Water flowed through these basins carrying the blood outside the Temple so that the people could see that their sacrifice had been accepted. They saw the blood and water, when Jesus was crucified; they pierced Him in the side and out flowed blood and water.

John 19:34-37
Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water . The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced."

All these sacrifices were pointing to Him as our Passover Lamb! 1 Corinthians 5:7-8, *"Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast — as you really are. For Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed."*

The blood represents a life given while the water represents a life received. Jesus gave His life for us at the cross. There His blood was poured out on our behalf, but we get no benefit from Him giving His life unless we personally receive it for ourselves. The blood of Jesus alone will not save us unless we appropriate it in our own life through faith- Romans 10:9-10.

We appropriate it for our own life by asking Him to come into our life and be our Lord and Savior. We accept Him into our heart as the "Lamb of God" who died for our sins. Jesus then comes into our life through the person of the Holy Spirit. This is the meaning of the water that sealed every place where the blood was applied. It looked forward to us receiving the Holy Spirit. Whoever applies the blood of Jesus to their life is sealed with the Holy Spirit- Ephesians 1:13; 4:30; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 1 Peter 1:5. Water is a type of the Holy Spirit:

John 4:10
Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water ."

John 7:38-39
"Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit and Power, after He was water Baptized- the Holy Spirit came upon Him.

Luke 4:14
Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside.

Acts 10:38
How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

So now you see how in the Old Covenant, the water and blood, a type of Jesus and the Holy Spirit was ushering in the New Covenant. As believers in Jesus Christ we were washed in the blood of Jesus and filled with the Holy Spirit, so we entered into God's Kingdom through water and blood. Just as in the natural when we were physically born, it was by water and blood, a pregnant woman breaks her water, the baby is born and the bloody placenta is removed.

1 John 5:6-12
This is the one who came by water and blood — Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

This is what the New Covenant meal is all about. When we partake of it, we are not just remembering a life given; we are celebrating a life received. It is God's life and we have received it. This is why communion is to be a time of great joy, praise and worship.

Most communion services are dry and remind me of a funeral home. Everybody wears a long face and will hardly breathe lest their gasping for breath break the silence and offend God. We unwittingly have believed this "holy hush" is pleasing to God. One person retorted in regards to noisy Charismatics, "God is not deaf," and someone else responded, "He is not nervous either." Please don't get me wrong there is a time and place to be "still and know He is God," (Psalms 46:10) to be quiet and reverent in His presence, but it should be as the Spirit leads us and not as a predictable ritual.

Communion is a time of celebration: the cross is bare, the tomb is empty, and Jesus is alive! He publicly destroyed Satan at the cross where He purchased our salvation; Colossians 2:15 *"And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."* The blood of the Lamb destroyed the serpent and set us free from bondage to him. Death cannot enter the heart of the one who is covered with the blood of Jesus and sealed with the Holy Spirit. Death was swallowed up in victory. God has given us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord- 1 Corinthians 15:54-58, the war is over and we won! Yet we live on to fight the good fight of faith and enforce Satan's defeat each day of our lives!

Ephesians 1:19-23
That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

The seed of the woman bruised the head of the serpent through His resurrection, and now we have received that same life in us. We too have victory over Satan for greater is He who is in us than He who is in the world- l John 4:4.

9. The Lamb on the Throne

In the Revelation of Jesus Christ, John stood before one on the throne who had a scroll with writing on the inside and the back. It was sealed with seven seals. John heard a mighty angel with a loud voice saying, *"Who is worthy to open the book and loose the seals?"* No one in heaven, nor in earth, nor under the earth was able to open the book. No one could even look upon it. Then John wept for no one was found worthy to open and read the book, neither to look upon it. One of the elders before the throne said unto John, *"Weep not! Look, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the book."* As John turned expecting to see this lion, instead he saw standing in the center of the Throne a Lamb, as if it had been slain. The Greek word John chose to refer to this lamb is *arnios*. It means a little, "pet lamb," just like back in Egypt.

Revelation 5:9-14
"You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth." Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they sang:

"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and praise!"

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, forever and ever!" The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.

10. The King is Coming

All who know Jesus as their Lord and Savior drink of the fruit of the vine in remembrance of His life given for us and to us. As we partake of the covenant meal, we look forward to the time when we will partake of it with our heavenly Father at the "Marriage Supper of the Lamb" according to Revelation 19:1-9. It will be a time of great joy and praise and worship to God, echoing throughout the hills of the New Jerusalem. And instead of being on Mount Calvary it will be on Mount Zion where Jesus Christ, the "Lamb of God," will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords- Psalms 2:6-8; 48:1-2. There we shall reign with Him as kings and priests of the Most High God. The Jews complete their Passover service by saying. L'Shanah Ha, Baah, Bee-Ru-Sha La-Yim. Which means "next year in Jerusalem." So we partake of the covenant meal by saying, "next year at the marriage supper of the lamb." Hallelujah! The King is coming.

G. Salvation- More than Forgiveness of Sins

The Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul made an outstanding statement in Romans 1:16, *"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation…"* Dr. Scofield, a Greek and Hebrew scholar, made a reference to this verse in his footnotes in regards to the word "salvation" that is awesome. Dr. Scofield says, "The Greek and Hebrew words translated salvation imply the ideas of **deliverance, safety, preservation, healing, and health**." "Salvation is the great inclusive word of the Gospel, gathering into itself all the redemptive acts and processes." The Greek word for "salvation" is *soteria*, implies deliverance, preservation, healing, health, soundness, and in the New Testament is applied sometimes to the spirit or soul, and at other times to the body only. The Greek word "*sozo*" translated "saved," also means "healed," "made sound," or "made whole." In Romans 10:9 it's translated "saved," and in Acts 14:9 the same word is translated "healed" in referring to the healing of the man lame from birth. Both Greek words for "salvation" and "saved" mean both spiritual and physical salvation; or in other words, spiritual new birth and physical healing.

Salvation = Deliverance, Safety, Preservation, Healing and Health!

Glory to God! The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God unto deliverance! The Gospel is the power of God unto safety! It is the power of God unto preservation! And it is the power of God unto healing and health! In Acts 14:6-7, it states that Paul and Barnabas continued to preach the good news of the gospel in the surrounding country side.

Acts 14:6-10
But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country, where they continued to preach the good news. In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed and called out, "Stand up on your feet!" At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.

We have seen that the implication of "Salvation" involves a lot more than just the remission of sins. The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ has majored on just one aspect of salvation- the remission of sins. As important as that is, there is more to it than just that as Dr. Scofield has pointed out. In Acts 14:8-10, we can agree that Paul was preaching the gospel, the message of salvation. With that being said, Paul had to be talking about Christ the Healer and God's will for everyone to be well! I say that because in Romans 10:17, it is stated that faith comes by hearing the Word of God on a matter. Concerning the above account in the book of Acts, a crippled man was listening to Paul speak and had faith to be healed. Therefore, Paul had to have incorporated the message of healing in his presentation of the gospel!

A simple study of the Greek word for 'saved' - *sozo*
In the book of Acts, the apostle Peter said to the rulers and elders of Israel:

Acts 4:12
Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved [*sozo*].

Peter was speaking to them about Jesus Christ, whom they crucified, and whom God raised from the dead; mankind can only be saved by that Name. Now, the Greek word for "saved" in this verse and basically in the New Testament is *sozo*. According to Thayer's Greek Lexicon, *sozo* means:

"To save, to keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction universally, *tina*, one (from injury or peril); to save a suffering one (from perishing), e.g. one suffering from disease, to make well, heal, restore to health." Wow, I like that; we have received salvation from suffering sickness and disease through faith in Jesus Christ as our Healer.

The Gospel of Mark talks about such a person. She was the woman who had a bleeding condition for 12 years and had suffered many things from many doctors. She had spent all that she had on doctors and medicine. But instead of getting better, she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment, because she said:

Matthew 9:20-21
Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. She said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed."

The woman had touched Jesus with the touch of faith which released the healing virtue, the grace and power of God to heal her- Hebrews 11:6, faith pleases God! As a result, Jesus sensed it according to Mark 5:30, *"At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, 'Who touched my clothes?'"* Her faith put a demand on the anointing that was on Jesus.

Matthew 9:22
Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed [*sozo*] you." And the woman was healed from that moment.

I like what the woman said, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed." That was a statement of faith; notice that she did not say, "well I hope I'll be healed" or "maybe if it's God's will I'll be healed." I am convinced if she had said any of the latter two, she would not have been healed, because there were a whole lot of other folks touching Him hoping some sparks would fly and give them something. However, she was the only one who touched Jesus in faith and received!

Matthew 1:21
"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save [*sozo*] his people from their sins."

Luke 6:17-19
He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coast of Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by evil spirits were cured, and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.

Notice the above Scripture said, "Healing them all" as opposed to "only healing those for whom it was God's will to be healed." My question is this, "Is it God's will for all people to be born again and go to heaven?" Well according to Scripture the answer is most definitely "Yes!" Since we have just established the fact that healing is part of salvation, then we can say that it's just as much God's will for people to be healed as it is to be born again- all people all the time, Amen! Note the Greek word for "Power" in Luke is "dunamis" which is the same word used for power in Acts 1:8- Holy Spirit Power!

1 Timothy 2:3-4
This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

John 1:12-13
Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

As you can see, one of the meanings of *sozo* is to save a suffering one from perishing of his/her disease, that is, to make well, to heal and restore him/her to health- not just forgiveness of sins! Thus, when the New Testament talks about being "saved," it is not just limited to the idea of being saved from hell- thank God for that, but there is so much more. No, "saved" or *sozo* also means to save one from perishing of disease, to make whole and restore to health. It includes physical healing, protection and basically deliverance from whatever troubles we encounter. Beloved, our Lord did not die on the cross just to save us from hell. He also died on the cross to save us from sicknesses and diseases. His sacrifice is complete. His work is perfect! 2 Samuel 23:5, *"... Has he not made with me an everlasting covenant, arranged and secured in every part?"* This is just His style, to be made complete in Him-Col. 1:28.

Let's take Jesus as our Savior from sickness and disease just as we take him as our Savior from sin. Have you ever heard of the term "Full Gospel" as it pertains to the belief system of a group of Christian people? The implication is that others are only preaching and teaching a partial gospel of Jesus Christ; that would be the case if all they mention is the remission of sins aspect of salvation. Since the Greek points out "deliverance, safety, preservation, healing, and health" we need to make mention of those redeeming aspects of our redemption as well. Notice what the Angel told Peter in Acts 5:20, *"tell the people the full message of this new life."* Let's not be guilty of only presenting a partial gospel. God is just as much interested in healing our bodies and restoring our minds as He is in cleansing us from sin.

Acts 5:19-20
But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people the full message of this new life."

It amazes me how some Christians go to such great lengths to try and dismiss God's will to heal people. Perhaps deep down inside they want to believe in a healing Jesus, but since they have been disappointed so many times (not by God of course) by not receiving healing, it's easier to fabricate an excuse for their lack of faith or understanding on the subject. They spiritualize their experiences and reason away plain truth in the Bible; that it's God's will to heal everyone all the time, every time.

For example, they will take Isaiah 53:5, and say that the reference *"by his wounds we are healed"* refer to spiritual healing through the new birth. However, the Gospel of Matthew makes reference to this very passage in the context of physical healing. The Bible rule of hermeneutics (Bible Interpretation) of Scripture interprets Scripture, needs to be followed. As we have already covered, the Hebrew word for "infirmities" should have been translated "sickness" and "sorrows" should have been translated "pains" or "diseases."

Matthew 8:14-17
When Jesus came into Peter's house, he saw Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him. When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases."

Isaiah 53:4 AMP
Surely He has borne our griefs (sicknesses, weaknesses, and distresses) and carried our sorrows and pains [of punishment], yet we [ignorantly] considered Him stricken, smitten, and afflicted by God [as if with leprosy]. [Matthew 8:17.]

In other words, Jesus bore the pain of migraine headaches so we would not have to. Why should we bare anything Jesus had already bore for us as our substitute so as to eliminate the possibility of it having any affect upon our lives; whether it's sin, condemnation, oppression, poverty, sickness or disease. That is why Jesus came, "to preach good news to the poor" according to Luke 4:18- why? So we don't have to be poor any more. Poverty is a curse, just look at starving people around the world- that is not the work of God but of a tyrant, the devil.

1. Healing, a Commandment?

I want to point out a new shade of meaning to a familiar verse in the Bible, I want to focus on the phrase*, "continue to work out your salvation"* in verse 12. Since the Bible includes healing in "Salvation" we are thus commanded to work out healing salvation in our lives through faith in God's Word out of reverence and awe for God.

Philippians 2:12-13
Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed — not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence — continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

The Bible tells us in 1 Corinthians 6:20*, "Therefore honor God with your body."* We are the caretakers of our physical bodies, so are we honoring God if we allow sickness and disease to ravage it. Sickness and disease is like spiritual graffiti by Satan to defame the temple of the Holy Spirit. For us to take a passive position on healing is just as much disobedience as it would be to take a passive stance concerning lying or stealing. We need to be as vigilant to keep sickness out of our bodies as we are about bad thoughts that come to our minds. If God commands us to be healed, there should then be no question as to whether it is His will or not- that is Great News! I think folks look at healing as optional or a suggestion that one can take or leave.

Mark 16:15, 18
He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation…they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

So is the Great Commission a commandment given to us from the Lord to obey; would it be His will for our lives to do our part in fulfilling it? Absolutely yes! In that commandment, He commanded us to lay hands on the sick to be healed. Well if we are commanded to heal the sick through His Name, obviously it's His will that we be healed to begin with. We must obey God's will for our lives, to fail to do so would be disobedience or sin. Since healing is a command for our lives and not an option, if we fail to apply healing and allow sickness to run its course in our bodies because of a lack of faith, we need to repent. We can't allow sickness to hinder our ability to server or disease to cut our lives short in this life.

Romans 14:23- "…everything that does not come from faith is sin."

But someone would say, "But it's not my fault that I got sick." Yes, but when we get sick, it's because we allowed it to happen; that does not glorify or honor God when the devil gets the upper hand in our lives. It's not always because we opened the door to the devil because of sin. Sickness can come in the form of a trial to test our faith; the devil probing us for weaknesses to exploit. That's right, Satan will tempt us with sickness; when yielded to, will incapacitate and hindered us from fulfilling the Great Commission. Not only that, we become a carrier of one of Satan's diabolical diseases that can infect others as well. Let's not become a pack mule for the devil!

James 4:17- Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.

To be Healed is a Command from the Lord to be Obeyed!

When Christians die prematurely in this life, I would think God would say to them something like this, "Child I love you, but who gave you permission to die before finishing your race upon the earth?" "But Lord, I thought you wanted to bring me home, that it was not your will to heal me!" "Well you thought wrong, you listened to the devil instead of following what my Word plainly states." I am not walking in love towards others if I allow myself to be sick, nor does that glorify God when Jesus clearly paid an incredible price for me to live a life free from all the devil's curses of sickness and disease. I think this concept is a tremendous faith builder, because if God insists and commands that I be healed, my response is "Yes Sir, by your stripes I was healed!" It takes all the guess work out of, "is it God's will to heal me?"

Psalms 91:15-16
He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation."

2. The Same Crime Cannot be Punished Twice

What does all this mean for Christians? Because Christ bore our sicknesses and pains on the cross, it would make no sense for us to bear them again. Do we go around carrying our sins and feeling condemned? No, because Jesus already bore our sins for us. He was judged and punished in our place because He was carrying our sins. So for us to carry on bearing our sins and condemning ourselves is to not trust in the finished work of Christ and dishonors it.

It is the same with sicknesses and pains. Why should a Christian suffer cancer and be in pain when Christ has already borne that cancer and pain in His body on the cross? If Christ has already been punished with that cancer, why should that Christian be punished again with the same disease?

The same crime cannot be punished twice. If one was to get a speeding ticket, he/she does not pay the fine twice or thrice, do they? God's justice was completely satisfied with the perfect payment made by Jesus for the penalty of our sin. It is Satan who is unjust. It is the devil, not God, who wants to put diseases on the Christian who does not know any better. If we don't understand Jesus has already paid the price for the penalty of sin, that we were already justified; we will go ahead and try to pay for it ourselves by suffering the oppression of the enemy when we do not have to. It's like people going on to hell when they can go to heaven, because of what Jesus did for them through redemption- it's senseless!

God says that His people are destroyed due to a lack of knowledge- Hosea 4:6. Christians are still getting sick and dying prematurely because they do not know their rights or inheritance in Christ; Satan has taken advantage of their ignorance and indifference. God has provided numerous ways to be healed and we will cover that later. So my dear brother or sister, there is really no reason for us to be sick unless of course we allow it to happen- it is never God's will for His children to suffer under the hand of the enemy. Remember, Jesus came to earth with the express purpose to destroy the works of the devil, let's keep the door shut and deny the enemy access to our lives!

Sickness and disease was put on Jesus' body when they beat and bruised Him, it was never intended for our body. The disease cannot exist in two places at the same time. Focus on the fact that Jesus did bear that disease for us already 2,000 years ago. Stop focusing on the disease. Stop focusing on the medical reports. Stop focusing on the circumstances. Look to Jesus and His finished work- Hebrews 3:1.

The Same Crime cannot be Punished Twice!

3. Why Jesus could Heal Then and Now

Those who insist that Isaiah 53:4 is only referring to "spiritual healing" will say that Matthew 8:17 is simply telling us that Jesus healed the sick to fulfill Isaiah's prophecy and also to prove that He was the Messiah the prophet was speaking of.

By saying this, they are actually contradicting themselves because they are now saying that both verses have to do with physical healing. While it is true that Jesus fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy when He went around healing the sick, and signs and wonders certainly played a part in proving Jesus is the Messiah- John 3:2; 9:32-33; Acts 2:22; Hebrews 2:4. However, Jesus was not into performing signs and wonders just for their curiosity or to appease their skepticism. This is clear from the way He answered the scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees when they asked Him for a sign.

Matthew 12:38-41
Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you." He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Matthew 16:1, 4
The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven. "A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah." Jesus then left them and went away.

Actually, the entire life and ministry of Jesus was a sign and wonder in regards to the fulfillment of all the Old Testament types, shadows and prophecies concerning His redemptive work at Calvary. Certainly the great miracles and healings He was doing got folks attention, but that is not what gets people saved. If it did, then all the religious leaders would have believed on Him- don't get me wrong it does help. His greatest testimony to the world was the fulfillment of Messianic prophecies concerning Himself. Actually, there were times when Jesus healed folks, He told them to be quiet about it- Matthew 8:4. Only faith in God's Word gets people saved, healed and delivered; that is why He majored on His teaching and preaching ministry. As in the parable of the sower, folks who do not have enough Word in their spirit will not last according to Mark 4:17*, "But since they have no root, they last only a short time."* Signs and wonders are great at getting folks attention, adding credibility and ministering to urgent needs, but in the final analysis it's only the Word in people's hearts that bring everlasting life and lasting change. A great example of signs not saving people is John 5:1-15 concerning the invalid man by the pool of Bethesda.

Luke 2:34-35
Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed."

Luke 24:25-27
He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Also, the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy does not mean that Jesus stopped healing after that. Post-resurrection, many miraculous healings continued to take place in the early Church by the power of His Spirit. Today, it is no different; there are many well-documented cases of divine healings. Jesus is still fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy today, so to speak. The question which we should really be asking is why Jesus could heal undeserving man before as well as after his redemptive work in His death, burial and resurrection.

Pre-resurrection, why could Jesus go around healing the sick? The answer is simple, the redemptive work of Jesus. Jesus could take away a person's disease because He knew that He was going to bear it for him/her in His redemptive work. Similarly, He could forgive a person's sin because He knew that He was going to bear it for him/her at Calvary. Jesus did not heal the sick and forgive sins presumptuously. He did it justly and righteously in anticipation to what He would accomplish in His death, burial and resurrection.

Romans 3:25-26
God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished — he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

Likewise, post-resurrection, Jesus by His Spirit can heal undeserving man because of redemption. He bore all our sicknesses and diseases in His redemptive work. In the first case, it is a matter of "looking forward" to the resurrection. In the second case, it is a matter of "looking backwards" to His death, burial and resurrection. Now, understand that as far as God is concerned, the redemptive work of Jesus stands outside of time. God who created time is not time-bound. As far as He is concerned, His Son was slain before the foundation of the world.

Revelation 13:8
All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast — all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

Bought at a Price
Let's look at Psalms 103 verse 3, because some Bible teachers tell us the Psalmist here is only speaking of spiritual diseases. This is wrong because the word "disease" here in the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) is *nosos*. This word is used nine times in the Septuagint and twelve times in the New Testament, and it always refers to physical disease. The word "heals" in the Septuagint is *iaomai*. This word is used twenty-eight times in the New Testament, and always of physical healing.

Psalms 103:3- Who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases…

Because the expression "who redeems" (Septuagint) reads *ton lutroumenon*, the one constantly redeeming (the present participle middle of *lutroo*). The use of the present participle here teaches the blessed truth that God is continually keeping life in our bodies today; keeping our hearts beating – something we have nothing whatsoever to do with. We know this redemption is going on now and does not refer to the Resurrection, because of what follows in the Septuagint. It literally reads, "The one redeeming thy life from destruction [decay], the one crowning you with mercy and compassion, the one satisfying your desire with good things," etc. The use of the present participle here, as all Greek scholars know, brings out the blessed thought that God is right now constantly doing all these things mentioned. The redemption spoken of, therefore, in Psalm l03:3 have nothing whatsoever to do with the Resurrection of the future, but reveals what the Lord is now, presently doing in our lives today.

Psalms 103:4-5 NKJV
Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Psalms 107:20- He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave.

Jesus' Healing Ministry Delegated
In the New Testament times, God was man's Healer through the Lord Jesus Christ, God in the flesh. A big part of the Lord's ministry was to go about healing the sick, demonstrating God's heart, compassion and will for humanity.

Matthew 9:35
Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing <u>every</u> disease and sickness.

Jesus delegated this same healing anointing to His disciples when he told them to go out into all the villages, and preach the good news concerning Jesus.

Mark 6:12-13
They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

Later on Jesus appointed seventy-two followers, who were not one part of the 12 original disciples, to go out ahead of Him. He gave them the same commission in Luke 10:9, *"Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.'"* So according to Jesus, the kingdom of God is about bringing healing and deliverance upon the earth! They returned with a good report in Luke 10:17 *"The seventy-two returned with joy and said, 'Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.'"*
It gets even better, the Lord passed on His healing ministry to the Church through the Great Commission to be perpetuated throughout the dispensation of Grace that we now live in. Jesus told us that we would continue to do what He had done in the Old Covenant period and His earthly ministry, heal the sick and set the captives free; not only that, but to do it more often and in even greater manifestations throughout the world.

Mark 16:15-18
He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

John 14:12
I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

So has God changed, or is He the very same God today that He was in Old and New Testament times? In Malachi 3:6 we read, *"I the Lord do not change."* In Hebrews 13:8, *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."* The Greek expression here for "the same" is *ho autos*, and means the very same identical person in every respect. Healing is a good gift from God, let's not be deceived in thinking that God has changed His position concerning healing.

James 1:16-17
Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

The Holy Spirit – The Power of God
Another reason why all Christians should expect God to heal their sick bodies today is because the very same Holy Spirit who did all of Christ's miracles and raised Him from the dead is still in the Church, and has all His old time, life-giving power. In John 14:16, Christ declares emphatically that the Holy Spirit would abide with us forever. Then, in 1 Thessalonians 1:5, *"Because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power [dunamis], with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction."* Now this word for "power" (*dunamis)* is the same Holy Spirit power of Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:8. Again Paul declares 2 Timothy 1:6-7 NKJV, *"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power [dunamis Holy Spirit power] and of love and of a sound mind."*

Then the Holy Spirit, who is now abiding in us, is the Holy Spirit with power (*dunamis)*, the very same Holy Spirit who controlled all of Christ's actions while on earth. Luke 4:14, *"And Jesus returned in the power [dunamis] of the Spirit into Galilee."* This same Holy Spirit, who is now in the Church, also anointed Jesus and gave Him the power to work all those miracles.

Acts 10:38, *"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power [dunamis], and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him."* Remember, Jesus did all His miracles through the power of the Holy Spirit; not as the Second Person of the glorious Godhead- Philippians 2:6-7. Dear reader, Christ has assured us that this same Holy Ghost power, manifesting the *dunamis* of God, is for each of His saints today. Acts 1:8, *"But you will receive power [dunamis] when the Holy Spirit comes on you…"* Since the very same Holy Spirit who did all of Christ's miracles and all of Paul's miracles is in the Church today with all His power *(dunamis)*, why should we not expect Him to heal the sick today?

No wonder Paul declares in Romans 8:26 KJV, *"The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities [astheneiais]."* This Greek word *astheneiais* is the dative plural of *asthenei*, the commonest word in the Greek language for "sickness." But note well the word here translated "helpeth" (*sunantilambanetai*). This is the present tense, 3rd person singular of the deponent verb *sunantilambanomai*, and comes from sun, together with; anti, against, and *lambano*, I take hold of. This word, therefore, means "to take hold against together with." Thus, in Romans 8:26 we are told that the Holy Ghost takes hold against our sicknesses together with someone- with whom? Why, with ourselves. Whenever we meet the needful conditions, the conditions set forth in John 15:7, *"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you."* Yes, Romans 8:26 teaches us that it is just as much the work of the Holy Spirit today "to take hold against our sicknesses" as it is to convict sinners of their sin.

Listen now to Romans 8:11 KJV, *"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken [zoopoiesei] your mortal [thneta] bodies by his Spirit that dwells in you."* This verb "will quicken" is *zoopoiesei*, the future, 3rd person singular of *zoopoieo*, and comes from *zoe*, life, and *poieo*, I make. Some are of the belief that Romans 8:11 is referring to the future resurrection, when we receive our new glorified bodies. However the Greek word for "mortal" is not nekrous which refers to a physically dead body or corpse as in Romans 4:17, *"…the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were."* Nowhere in the Bible is the Greek word [*thneta*] used in connection with a literal dead human body.

The word "mortal (*thneta*)" simply means death doomed, that our physical bodies are doomed to die some day, not that it is already dead. Our bodies will not be mortal in the grave; neither will the Spirit be in them. Here is one of many important functions that the Holy Spirit plays in our lives today- to manifest healing in our physical bodies, to repel sicknesses and diseases that are continually trying to attach themselves to our bodies in this sin and death infested world.

Thnetos (mortal) is an adjective derived from *thnesko*, I died, and always means "liable to, or subject to death," in contrast with *athanatos*, immortal. The Greek word for a dead human body is *nekros*, but never *thnetos*, which always refers to something "subject to death," but never, never to a dead body. Let Paul explain what he means by the word *thnetos*, mortal. Romans 6:12. *"Let not sin reign in your mortal [thnetos, the same word as in Romans 8:11] body…"* Had Paul said, "Let not sin reign in your dead body," it would have been utter nonsense- 2 Corinthians 4:11 is another example.

2 Corinthians 4:11
For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.

If "our mortal [*thnetos*] body" here meant "our dead body," how could we, after our bodies were dead, manifest forth the life of Christ? No! We are now to manifest forth the life of Jesus Christ in these bodies which are subject to die, for the word "mortal" (*thnetos*) never, ever means a dead body, but always something which is subject to death, but not yet dead. John Calvin, that superb Greek scholar, is therefore correct when he says of Romans 8:11, "The quickening of the mortal body here cannot refer to the resurrection of the saints, but must mean a giving of life to their bodies, while here upon earth, through the Spirit." Let us now read again Romans 8:11:

Romans 8:11
And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also <u>give life</u> to your mortal bodies [these bodies subject to death, but not dead yet] through his Spirit, who lives in you.

Since it is the work of the Holy Spirit, as Paul assures us, to keep making life in these mortal bodies of ours, no wonder this apostle asserts in Romans 8:26, *"The Spirit takes hold against our sicknesses together with."* This verse proves that, while it is the work of the Spirit to keep making life in our mortal bodies (bodies subject to sickness and death), yet He will not do this wonderful work unless we, God's saints, do our part, and take hold together with Him through faith in God's Word according to John 15:7.

John 15:7 AMP
If you live in Me [abide vitally united to Me] and My words remain in you and continue to live in your hearts, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.

In other words, we must let the Holy Spirit control us in thought, word, and deed, and then He "will take hold against our sicknesses together with" ourselves (literal reading of Romans 8:26). The result will be that He (the Holy Spirit) will keep making life (the exact meaning of *zoopoitio*) in these mortal bodies of ours. Yes, praise God, all Christians should expect God to heal their bodies today, because the very same Holy Spirit who did all of Christ's miracles (Acts l0:38) and all of Paul's miracles (Romans 15:19) is still in the Church as "the maker of life" (*zoopoieo*), and He is here "to take hold against our sicknesses together with" ourselves, as Romans 8:26 asserts. HALLELUJAH!

The Holy Spirit Gives Healing Life to our Body!

Precious Promises
Another important reason why we know it is God's will for His children to be healed all the time and every time is due to all the Precious Promises we have in Christ. However, they must be individually appropriated in our lives through faith in God's Word. In a general sense, through the New Covenant, God has given thousands of promises that cover our lives today and the life to be experienced in heaven. What is important to realize is that for the life we live today, particularly in the area of physical healing, God has made ample provision through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 1:18-21
But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No." For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes." For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

2 Peter 1:2-4
Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

James 1:16-18
Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Isn't it wonderful how our Heavenly Father has given us thousands of Precious Promises in His Word for us to claim and receive for our lives? It is no wonder then that the Scriptures I am about to list, give us an open invitation to tap into the unlimited resources of heaven. Later on we will explore in greater detail the various methods God has afforded us to receive healing and the conditions that must be followed in order to receive. Even though our glorious redemption was purchased by the Lord and given to us as a free gift, it's not automatic and must be appropriated through faith as we walk in love.

Matthew 18:19-20
"Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

Mark 11:22-24
"Have faith in God," Jesus answered. "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."

John 14:13-14
And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

John 15:7
If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.

John 16:23-24
In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

James 5:14-16
Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.

1 John 3:21-22
Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.

1 John 5:14-15
This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of him.

Mark 9:23-
"'If you can'?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes."

Notice how many times the Scripture use the words "Whatever" and "Anything" you ask for. We have firmly established in this section that it is God's will for us to be healed every time and all the time without exception and without excuse. Clearly healing was bought and paid for in the Atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His glorious redemption for mankind. We have a perfect right as children of God to pray for the sick and to be healed because of the power in the Name of Jesus and the Greater One, the Holy Spirit within us.

Here is a sample list:

Ex	15:25-26	I will not permit any of these diseases to come on you, for I am the Lord who heals you
Ex	23:25	The Lord's blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you
Nu	21:8-9	Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived
Dt	7:15	The Lord will keep you free from every disease. He will not permit any of the horrible diseases
2Ki	5:14-15	Naaman is healed of leprosy according to Elisha's word
2Ki	20:1-6	Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed, and the Lord added fifteen years to his life
2Ch	30:20	And the Lord heard Hezekiah and healed the people
Ps	30:2	O Lord my God, I called to you for help and you healed me
Ps	41:3	The Lord will sustain him on his sickbed and restore him from his bed of illness
Ps	91:6	You will not fear the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday
Ps	103:3	He heals all my diseases
Ps	107:20	He sent his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave
Ps	146:8	The Lord gives sight to the blind, the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down
Ps	147:3	He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds
Pr	3:7-8	No pride, fear the Lord, hate evil- this will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones
Pr	4:20-22	The word is life to those who find them and health to a man's whole body
Pr	14:30	A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones

Pr	15:30	A cheerful look brings joy to the heart, and good news gives health to the bones
Pr	16:24	Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones
Pr	17:22	A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones
Pr	18:14	A man's spirit sustains him in sickness, but a crushed spirit who can bear
Isa	33:24	No one living in Zion will say, "I am ill"
Isa	53:4	Surely he took up our diseases & sicknesses and carried our pains
Isa	53:5	By his stripes we are healed
Isa	57:18-19	I have seen his ways, but I will heal him. Peace to those far and near, I will heal them
Isa	58:8	Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear
Mal	4:2	For you who revere his name, the son of righteousness will rise with healing in His wings
Mal	4:2	And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall
Mt	4:23	Jesus taught & preached the good news and healed every disease and sickness among the people
Mt	4:24	Those ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the epileptics/paralytics, he healed them
Mt	8:1-4	Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man with leprosy, "I am willing, be clean"- immediately
Mt	8:14-15	Jesus touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him
Mt	8:16-17	Jesus healed all the sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah- Isa.53:4
Mt	9:6-7	Jesus said to the paralytic, "Get up, take your mat and go home." And the man got up and went home
Mt	9:18-22	The woman with a issue of blood touched his cloak and was healed- "Your faith has healed you"
Mt	9:27-31	Two blind men came to Jesus, who touched their eyes, and their sight was restored
Mt	9:35	Jesus went about preaching the good news, and healing every disease and sickness
Mt	12:15	Many followed Jesus, and he healed all their sick
Mt	14:14	When Jesus landed and saw the large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick
Mt	14:35-36	The people begged him to let the sick touch the edge of his cloak, all who touched him were healed
Mt	15:30-31	People brought the lame, blind, crippled, dumb, and many others, and he healed them
Mt	20:29-24	Two blind men were brought to Jesus, having compassion on them, he touched their eyes- healed
Mt	21:14	The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them
Mk	1:29-31	Simon's mother-in-law had a fever. Jesus took her hand, and helped her up and the fever left her
Mk	1:32-34	The people brought all the sick with various diseases and He healed them
Mk	1:40-45	A man with leprosy was cured, Jesus was filled with compassion, "I am willing, be clean."
Mk	2:11-12	Jesus said, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." He walked out in full view of them
Mk	3:1-6	Jesus said to the man with a shriveled hand, "Stretch out your hand." He did and it was restored
Mk	3:10	Jesus had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him
Mk	5:25-34	The woman with the issue of blood touched Jesus, immediately her bleeding stopped, and was healed
Mk	6:13	The twelve disciples anointed many sick people with oil and healed them
Mk	7:31-36	Jesus put his fingers into his ears, and then spit and touched his tongue- said, "Be opened!"
Mk	10:46-52	Blind man Bartimaeus received his sight from Jesus, "Your faith has healed you."
Mk	16:18	They will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well
Lk	4:38-39	A woman was suffering from a high fever. Jesus bent over her and rebuked the fever and it left her
Lk	4:40	Jesus laid his hands on every person with various kinds of sickness, and he healed them all
Lk	5:12-13	A man with leprosy was healed. Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man, "I am willing, be clean"
Lk	5:15	Crowds came to hear Jesus and to be healed of their sicknesses
Lk	5:17	And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick

Lk	5:18-26	A paralytic man with 4 men. Jesus said, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home"
Lk	6:6-11	A man with a shriveled hand. Jesus said, "Stretch out your hand." He did, and it was completely restored
Lk	6:18-19	People came to hear him, and touch him, because power was coming from him, healing them all
Lk	7:10	Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well
Lk	8:43-48	She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped
Lk	9:10-11	Jesus spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing
Lk	14:1-6	A man with the dropsy was healed by Jesus
Lk	17:11-19	Ten men with leprosy come to Jesus and were healed on their way to present themselves to the priests
Lk	18:35-43	A blind man receives his sight, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you"
Lk	22:49-51	Peter cut off a man's ear, whom Jesus had healed by touching his ear
Jn	4:46-54	A man's son was close to death, and Jesus said, "You may go. Your son will live"
Jn	5:1-15	The healing at the pool of Bethesda. Jesus said, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk"
Jn	9:1-7	"Go, wash in the pool of Siloam. " So the blind man went and washed, and came home seeing
Acts	3:16	It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him
Acts	4:10	It is by the name of Jesus, that this man stands before you completely healed
Acts	5:15	People placed on mat's so that at least Peter's shadow might fall upon them, and be healed
Acts	5:16	People brought the sick and they were healed
Acts	9:12	"In a vision Saul had seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight"
Acts	9:32-34	Peter said to Aeneas, a paralytic "Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and take care of your mat"
Acts	14:8-10	A crippled man is healed by hearing the gospel, he had faith to be healed
Acts	28:8	Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him
Acts	28:9	The rest of the sick on the island came and were cured
Jms	5:15	The prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up
1Pet	2:24	By the stripes of Jesus, I was healed

Here are six reasons why we should expect God to heal us from sickness and diseases today:

1) Because God used to heal the sick as Jehovah-Rapha (the Lord our Healer), and He is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

2) Because Christ died on the cross to atone for our sicknesses, just as He died to atone for our sins.

3) Because all sickness is the result of Satan's work. When he introduced sin into this world and "Christ was manifested to destroy the works of the devil."

4) Because the very same Holy Spirit is in the Church today who did all of Jesus' miracles and all of Paul's miracles; the very Holy Spirit who raised Christ from the dead. Since this is true, why should we not expect Him still to heal the sick?

5) Because of Christ's last Great Commission in Mark 16:15-18, and because of His direct command in James 5:14-15.

6) Because of all His marvelous promises, the fulfillment of which depends altogether upon the exercise of our own faith.

Unit 4 Review:

How is the Passover significant as it pertains to healing?

In what way is communion foundational to the teaching of divine healing?

How does one apply the blood of Jesus to his/her life in order to receive its benefits?

What does it mean to "Discern" the Lord's Body during communion?

Is the word "Salvation" restricted only to the forgiveness of sins or is there more to it?

Could the subject of Divine Healing be considered a commandment to obey?

II. Roadblocks to Healing

Introductory Comments

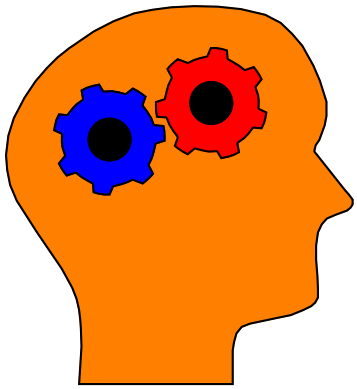
This unit is really important to the overall series on healing, because it directly addresses hindrances and stumbling blocks to receiving our healing. I have heard so much religious ideology and jargon over the years that have kept God's people from enjoying good health and healing. God's Word sets the record straight and exposes the lies of the enemy that has so blinded folks from the truth on the subject of Divine Healing. It is with much joy and anticipation that I present this material to you from a number of well known ministerial authorities, including my own research on the subject.

Please be open to what the Word and the Spirit of God has to say in confronting unscriptural thinking in these areas. Everything we believe should have chapter and verse behind it or be in harmony with the principles of Scripture, particularly the New Testament.

John 8:31-32 AMP
So Jesus said to those Jews who had believed in Him, if you abide in My Word [hold fast to My teachings and live in accordance with them], you are truly My disciples. And you will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free.

A. Wrong Thinking About Healing

If our thinking is wrong, our believing will be wrong; and if our believing is wrong, then what we say will be wrong too. It all goes back to our thinking. We've got to get our thinking straightened out in order to open the way to our heart to receive the Word of God on Healing.



Some Christians who need healing have said to me, "Maybe God put this sickness on me for some purpose." Did Jesus ever put sickness on anyone? When people came to Him for healing, did He ever turn even one away saying, "No, it's not My will, just suffer a little longer. You're just not pious or humble enough?" No! Not once! If you find such a Scripture, where Jesus turned people away, please show me. It is imperative that we get our thinking straight on this matter. If the truth of God's Word makes us free, then the lies of the enemy through fine sounding philosophical religious thought will most certainly hold people in bondage. Being misinformed on this vital subject can result in needless suffering and even premature death- I have personally seen this too many times!

Luke 5:12-13
While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" And immediately the leprosy left him.

Well if Jesus never turned anyone away from being healed who came to Him during His earthly ministry, maybe He has changed His mind on the subject since then. Perhaps the Lord has reconsidered this whole healing thing; it's in the best interest of humanity to suffer for a little while, and maybe they will be more thankful and appreciative of the Lord. Obviously I am being facetious here, sadly though some folks have spiritualized something so simple in order to dismiss a wonderful redemptive provision.

Why would anyone want to do that you may ask? When folks don't get healed, humans feel compelled to come up with an explanation as to why it didn't happen. Instead of admitting that perhaps they missed God on the matter somehow, in order to save-face, it's easier to shift the blame on God. "Well perhaps God didn't want me to be healed in order to teach me something or discipline me with sickness so I will be more like Him." That is dangerous religious ideology that is based on human reasoning not on Biblical revelation. As a result, folks are robbed of a legitimate redemptive right to be healed.

Hebrews 13:8- Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Malachi 3:6-7- "I the Lord do not change."

Numbers 23:19
God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?

1 Samuel 15:29
"He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind."

The Bible says we are joint-heirs with Christ, sons of God! We're not beggars! We're new creations, blessed above all people! You can see from the Scriptures that it was God's plan for everything connected with Israel to bear the stamp of prosperity and success. Disease and sickness were not to be tolerated among the Israelites, so the Church shouldn't tolerate sickness and disease either. Everything connected with the Body of Christ – the New Testament Church – should bear the stamp of prosperity, success, healing, surplus, and health. Of course that is not all there is to Christianity, but for the time being, that is what we are talking about.

1. Trying to Be Humble – Big Mistake!

People will quote Matthew 5:3, *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."* Taking this out of context, to imply that poverty and godliness goes hand in hand is just Biblical error. Jesus is talking about "humility" here just as in the next verse *"Blessed are those who mourn…"* is not talking about walking around with a sad face all the time- it's talking about repentance from sin. The point I am trying to drive home is, let's not allow ourselves to be robbed of any of God's redemptive blessings by religion. Nor should we allow anything that Jesus bought and paid for by His blood be in vain in our lives! God is glorified when nothing that Jesus did for us in redemption goes wasted.

Colossians 2:16-23
Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow. Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

Religion is so seductive because it is demonic in origin and is based on pride. 1 Timothy 4:1 NKJV *"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons…"* Humility on the other hand is reality and is based on the truth of God's Word that makes us free. The Bible warns us in Colossians about "False Humility:"

1. Reverting back to Old Covenant regulations; in order to be seen- look what I have done
2. Worship of Angels
3. Builds doctrine on experiences (what is seen), on reason (unspiritual mind) and idle notions
4. Lost connection with the Head, Jesus Christ; earthly minded instead of revelation truth
5. Still tied to the basic principles of this world- following man-made traditions
6. Self-Imposed worship through penance and the harsh treatment of the body

Religion goes all the way back to Cain and Abel where the first murder was over religion because of jealousy. It was because of religion and envy that Jesus was handed over to be crucified- Matthew 27:18. It was because of religion and envy that Paul was persecuted- Acts 13:45. Religious pride and false humility is an abomination in God's sight, and it was the one thing that made Jesus angry when He rebuked the Pharisees for their religious hypocrisy- just read Matthew chapter 23 and John Chapter 8. What is most tragic about religion is that it robs people of the truth and prevents them from receiving from God; healing, peace, prosperity, deliverance and even the new birth. That is why I hate man-made religion and so does God, because it's a stumbling block, a thief and robber of God's precious promises. Religion is simply man made traditions that are contrary to Scripture. By God's grace I never want to be found responsible of hindering anybody from entering into the Full-Gospel, the full message of this new life in Jesus Christ!

Luke 11:52 AMP
Woe to you, lawyers (experts in the Mosaic Law)! For you have taken away the key to knowledge; you did not go in yourselves, and you hindered and prevented those who were entering.

Religion- Man Made Traditions – Contrary to Scripture!

I would like to bring to our remembrance, the table that the Lord has prepared for us in the midst of our enemies: sickness, poverty, oppression, fears and the like in Psalms 23:5. The table of the Lord is full of healing, life, forgiveness, prosperity, peace, joy and so much more. Suppose in the name of trying to be humble a believer approaches this banquet table sheepishly, and apologetically; only taking a couple of scoops from the plate of forgiveness and that's it. He looks next to him and sees one of those "Full Gospel" folks, just digging in. I mean, he is taking huge helpings of everything on that salvation table; he just wants to try everything. Meanwhile, our religious brother looks forlornly at his meager sampling. In jealousy, he begins to chide his other brother for being greedy, arrogant and selfish to presume that he can just help himself to the master's table and partake of whatever and as much as he wants.

He tells him, "What, do you think this is all for your benefit? You need to show some restraint, first prove your loyalty to the Lord and suffer lack, sacrifice and suffer hunger and pains for the Master- who do you think you are!" Just then the Lord interrupts and says to this pious brother, "Who told you to carry the burden of sin and the curse that only I could bear for humanity. Why are you shrinking back from what I have provided for your benefit and cost me everything? It is right and proper to be excited as a little child and jump in and enjoy the Salvation I have richly provided for you."

Certainly, the Bible teaches us to be content and thankful for what we have. And I am not condoning that we raise up disciples for Christ who are only interested in themselves, who are spoiled and self-centered. What I am presenting is the truth as the Word of God presents it and trying to avoid the ditches

on both sides of the road- a poverty spirit and self-indulgence. God is glorified and pleased when His children enjoy the "Good Life" that He has provided for us in salvation. Just as natural parents derive immense pleasure and satisfaction when they see their children enjoying the good life provided for them. So let's approach the table of the Lord with boldness and confidence and dig into all that God's salvation entails, taste it all, have seconds and thirds- really don't stop eating. No apologies, no excuses and no denying oneself for the sake of religious piety. Also, be sure to take some to go and give it to others so they can get an appetite for the things of God and take their rightful place at the Table of the Lord.

Psalms 34:8-10
Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. Fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing. The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

2 Corinthians 6:1-2
As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

Hebrews 4:16 NKJV
Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Our God, *"richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment,"* according to 1 Timothy 6:17. The same God who by *"His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness…"* in 2 Peter 1:3. I am convinced that many Christians when they get to heaven will realize that religion had cheated them out of so many legitimate blessings from God.

This example reminds me of the reaction of the older brother in the story of the Prodigal Son. The older son represents the faithful Christian, who servers the Lord faithfully for years. However, when he/she sees other Christians, who may be uncommitted get healed, it chaffs them. They get all bent out of shape and mad, thinking God owes them something. However, they fail to realize that the promises of God have been provided as a gift and so must be received by faith. Good works does not get us saved nor do they get us healed; only faith in God's Word appropriates the provision of God in one's life. Notice how the father pleads with his older son in the story, *"everything I have is yours."* In other words, all you had to do was ask, according to John 16:24, *"Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete."* Everything the older brother wanted or needed was at his finger tips. It's not the father's fault if his son does not take advantage of what already belongs to him.

Luke 15:25-32
"Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!' "'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'"

2. Beware of a Poverty spirit

Can I just take a quick side journey concerning the subject of prosperity, because the poverty spirit of lack also creeps into the area of divine healing. Just like Paul's thorn in the flesh, religious folks read into these Scriptures, things that are not there. Money itself is not evil; it's the love of it that gets folks into trouble. The big danger of having a poverty attitude is that it makes us beggars and whiners. It also causes us to shrink back from God and faith because of an inferiority complex, condemnation and fear.

1 Timothy 6:10
For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

God does not mind His children being rich, He just does not want us to be covetous and seek things instead of seeking first His Kingdom. We need money to finance the Great Commission and build His Kingdom!

Deuteronomy 8:18
But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.

Proverbs 13:22- A good man leaves an inheritance for his children's children, but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous.

This generation of Job and Abraham did not know anything other than God blessing them financially. You can't sell that old lie of the devil that God brings poverty on all of us to keep us humble to the Jewish folks, their Bible does not say that, neither does ours. The source of that kind of teaching apparently came from Zen Buddhism, through the study of Eastern religion by European people at the turn of the 19th century. That philosophy worked its way from there and started a trend of poverty vows and poverty oaths which are neither in the Bible nor a part of the New Covenant, but is actually in violation of the Covenant. Then it came over into North America. Beware of this Poverty spirit of religious piety to stay humble. It's just the devil trying to steal from God's children and keep finances out of God's Kingdom. Yet on the other hand watch out for the spirit of materialism and consumerism that is pervasive in our society that detracts from God's Kingdom priorities- the Bible condemns greed.

Mark 4:18-20
Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.

3. Was Divine Healing Only for the Early Church?

Many Bible teachers today tell us that the age of miracles passed away with the death of the apostles. So Christ is not healing the sick anymore. Let us investigate this subject and find out for ourselves. Listen to Justin Martyr (165 A.D.), one of the great Church leaders and scholars of his day:

He says, "For numberless demoniacs throughout the whole world and in your city, many of our Christian men, exorcising them in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, have healed, and do heal, rendering helpless and driving the possessing devils out of the men, though they could not be cured by all the other exorcists, and those who used incantations and drugs" (Apol. II, Chapter 6). Then this Apostolic, miracle-working power was in the Church down to 165 A.D.

Listen to Irenacus (200 A.D.): "Those who are in truth His disciples, receiving grace from Him, do in His name perform miracles; and they do truly cast out devils. Others still heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole. Yea, moreover, as I have said, the dead even have been raised up, and remained among us for many years." (Vs. Hermetics, Book I, Chapter 32.) Then down to 200 A.D. this same Apostolic, miracle working power was in the Church.

Listen to Origen (250 A.D.): "And some give evidence of their having received through their faith a marvelous power by the cures which they perform, invoking no other name over those who need their help than that of the God of all things, and of Jesus, along with a mention of His history. For by these means we too have seen many persons freed from grievous calamities, and from distractions of mind and madness, and countless other ills, which could be cured neither by men or devils" (Contra Celsum Book III, Chapter 24). Then down to 250 A.D. this same Apostolic, miracle working power was in the Church.

Dr. Waterland (Creation and Redemption, page 50) says: "The miraculous gifts continued through the third century, at least." Then he tells how, under Constantine, the Church became flooded with worldliness and begun to put its trust in earthly rulers more than in God. But even then those who remained true to God saw miracles performed in His Name.

Theodore of Mopsueste (429 A.D.) says: "Many heathen amongst us are being healed by Christians from whatever sickness they have, so abundant are miracles in our midst" (Christlieb – Moden Doubt, page 321).

Rev. A. Bost (History of United Brethren, Page 17) quotes the famous Zinzendorf's words, spoken in 1730: "To believe against hope is the root of the gift of miracles; and I owe this testimony to our beloved church, that Apostolic powers are there manifested. We have had undeniable proofs thereof in the unequivocal discovery of things, persons, and circumstances, which could not humanly have been discovered. In the healing of maladies in themselves incurable, such as cancers, consumptions, when the patient was in the agonies of death, all by means of prayer, or of a single word."

Dr. A. J. Gordon (Ministry of Healing, page 65 – a book every saint should read) quotes from the Confession of the Waldenses as follows: "Therefore, concerning the anointing of the sick, we hold it as an article of faith, and profess sincerely from the heart, that sick persons, when they ask it, may lawfully be anointed with anointing oil by one who joins with them in praying that it may be efficacious to the healing of the body according to the design and end and effect mentioned by the Apostles, and we profess that such an anointing, performed according to the Apostolic design and practice, will be healing and profitable."

No wonder Dr. Gordon says (Ministry of Healing, page 43), "Two streams of blessings started from the personal ministry of our Lord, a stream of healing and a stream of regeneration; the one for the recovery of the body, and the other for the recovery of the soul, and these two flowed on side by side through the Apostolic age. Is it quite reasonable to suppose that the purpose of God was that one should run on through the whole dispensation of the Spirit, and that the other should fade away and utterly disappear within a single generation? We think not." Having now proven that all manner of sicknesses were cured by prayer down to 1750 A.D., the days of Zinzendorf, let us prove to you that God is still, today, healing all manner of diseases in answer to the prayer of faith.

4. Modern Miracles of Healing

Modern accounts of God's healing power- from Roy Hicks in "Bodily Healing and The Atonement."

1) Violet M. Collins, Vancouver, B.C., was born without a rectum passage. Best surgeons in Toronto operated, told she could not live. Was anointed and prayed for, and instantly made as normal as any other girl.

2) Mrs. H. R. Shortreed, Vancouver, B.C., had sugar diabetes in advanced stage. Anointed, prayed for and healed.

3) Mrs. Jean C. Barker, West Vancouver, B.C., and Mrs. M. M. Meadows, Vancouver, B.C., both had operations for dreadful cancers. Mrs. Barker had both breasts removed. These cancers grew again. Both women anointed and prayed for; today are well.

4) B. M. Colwell, Vancouver, B.C., was cured by prayer of dreadful stammering, an affliction from boyhood. This was a marvelous healing.

5) Reuben Mark Scotcher, Vancouver, B.C., had "adhesions of the bowels" for nine years. Operated on, but became much worse, also ruptured. Anointed, prayed for and healed by the Lord Jesus. Mr. Scotcher is a Presbyterian elder.

6) Mrs. Frances McClurg, Vancouver, B.C., was paralyzed 19 years, and her eyesight almost gone. Was anointed, prayed for, and healed completely by the power of God. She threads the finest needle today.

7) Mrs. Zeva Parker, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, known as "Dare Devil French Bobby," jumped from a plane two thousand feet high at the Fair Grounds. The parachute failed to open until she was almost down. Her back was broken in three places and seven ribs were so fractured that they protruded through the flesh. She was rushed to the hospital and put in a plaster of paris cast. Doctors said she would never walk. She was instantly healed while lying on her cot in Dr. C. S. Price's meeting. She had been born again, but had not as yet been prayed for. She has since won many souls to Christ by her wonderful testimony.

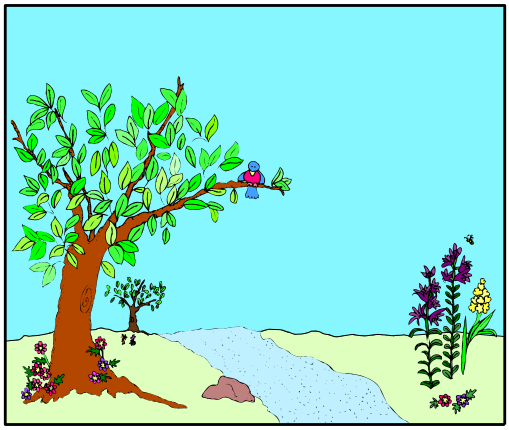
8) Reginald Williams, West Vancouver. B.C. cut off the top part of his left thumb at the joint below the nail. He was anointed and prayed for, and God caused that part to grow on again, nail and all. Upon examination of both thumbs, you cannot now tell on which one God performed this wonderful miracle.

God is the same, He has not changed nor does He show favoritism. What He has done for these, He is ready to do for you. Take hold of the healing Scriptures shared in this series, then drop on your knees and claim your healing on the authority of these promises and the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ died for your sickness as well as for your sins.

B. Understanding the Fall of Man

1. How did Sickness Enter this World?

Our answer is found in Romans 5:12, *"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned."* Therefore, physical death and all that produces it are the direct results of sin.



By virtue of creation, the earth and all that God has made belongs to God because He is the author of creation. God is the owner, He holds the title deed, it all belongs to Him, and so in this aspect He is sovereign.

Psalms 24:1-2
The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.

Haggai 2:8- "The silver is mine and the gold is mine," declares the LORD Almighty.

Yet as soon as He finished restoring the earth to a habitable state, He turned it over to Adam on a lease, to be a steward and caretaker of it. God gave Adam the keys to the car so to speak, to get in the driver's seat and take charge of this earth for a specified period of time- "Adam's Lease." The last 6,000 years since Adam and Eve until now has been a time for human beings to be born and their free-will tested in order to determine where they will spend eternity- with God in heaven or the devil in the Lake of Fire. In Revelation chapter 21, after the Millennial (1,000 years) reign of Christ is over, Jesus, the Last Adam, having destroyed everything the devil had messed up in the Garden of Eden, turns over the kingdom to God the Father. Man's time or lease is over at this point and we go into the Endless Age, this is when the Bible ends. We will have to wait until we get to heaven to find out all the wonderful things God has in store for us in eternity future.

1 Corinthians 15:24-28
Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

Genesis 1:26-28
"…and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

In Genesis 2:15, in reference to the Garden of Eden, God told Adam to "take care of it or to keep it." This implies to guard and protect it from intruders. This is the first reference in Scripture of the existence of an enemy to God and man in the earth.

Let's look at the Hebrew meaning:
shamar (shaw-mar'); a primitive root; properly, to hedge about (as with thorns), i.e. guard; generally, to protect, attend to, etc.: KJV - beward, be circumspect, take heed (to self), keep (-erself,), mark, look narrowly, observe, preserve, regard, reserve, save (self), sure, (that lay) wait (for), watch (-man).

I have heard people ask this question, "Why put that tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden in the first place anyway?" What good is it to have a free will if you do not have an opportunity to make a choice to obey or disobey God's commandments? Adam was created with the potential of immorality in a perfect state since he was created. Death would occur only if Adam disobeyed the command of God relative to eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:16-17
And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

Man was created in God's image. He was endowed with intelligence, emotion and free will. He was a free moral agent, therefore, he was capable of making a choice. Since man was created for God's glory (Isaiah 43:7), and since he could best glorify God by freely choosing to worship and serve Him, it was necessary that Adam be given an opportunity to make a choice.

For Adam and Eve, the Garden of Eden was not only a home in paradise; it was also a place of probation, a place to test their obedience and loyalty to God. The probation of Adam and Eve was based upon a clear direct commandment, a simple law of works. The law had two parts:

1) A positive part, consisting of a glorious provision
2) A negative part, consisting of a clear prohibition

Genesis 3:1
Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made.

In Genesis chapter three, the temptation of Adam and Eve is attributed to the serpent that is said to have been, *"more crafty than any of the wild animals."* Remember, that it was Adam's responsibility to keep or protect the Garden of Eden from intruders.

The serpent allowed Satan to manifest himself through it in order to address Adam and Eve with a proposition to rebel against God, just as he originally had done with one third of the angels. Satan and his host of rebels (fallen angels and pre-Adamite spirits known as demons) were imprisoned on the earth without a kingdom. They had witnessed what God has done for mankind and were waiting for an opportunity to strike again at God by usurping Adam's authority.

In Ezekiel 28:11-19 and Isaiah 14:12-17 speaks of Satan's fall and of the original sin. This was before Adam and Eve during the dispensation of "Angels" when 1/3 God's angels followed Satan in a rebellion against Him- Revelation 12:4. This account puts Satan as the real originator of sin, sickness and death. What we see now on earth today is just a repeat of how he operated in his original pre-Adamite kingdom that was ultimately destroyed in a flood that made the earth formless void- Genesis 1:1-2.

Revelation 12:9
The great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray.

2 Corinthians 11:3
But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

Many scholars believe that the serpent was originally an upright animal and was the most beautiful of all the creatures. This seems likely because the curse upon the serpent reduced him to a crawling, slithering creature. Satan finally had an opportunity through the cooperation of the serpent to beguile Adam and Eve into committing high treason, thus rebelling against God through disobedience and thus turning over man's dominion and authority over to Satan the usurper.

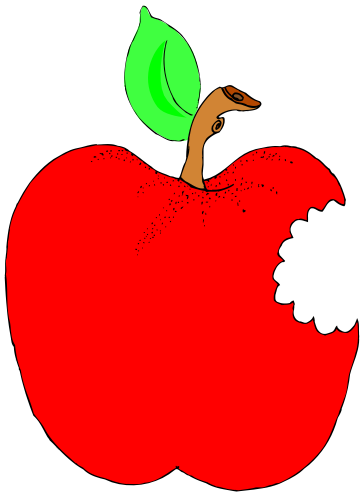
Jesus put it this way, the devil was not intended to be a part of God's redesign of earth and the introduction of mankind into this world. Satan was an outsider, an alien wanting in, a thief and a robber; *"but climbs in by some other way,"* through the serpent and deceit he tricked Adam and Eve to give over the keys to their dominion. Satan's objective was to steal man from God as a way of getting back at God. Satan wanted to rule again and set up his kingdom of darkness and dominate mankind. But Jesus became a man, born into this world through the virgin birth. Jesus is the *"the man who enters by the gate (and) is the shepherd of his sheep."*

John 10:1-3
I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

The original sin is the same temptation used today in order to entrap people in the bondages of disobedience and slavery to the law of sin and death:

- The lust of the flesh- *Good for food*
- The lust of the eyes- *Pleasing to the eye*
- The pride of life- *Desirable for gaining wisdom*

1 John 2:15-17 NKJV
Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world — <u>the lust of the flesh</u>, <u>the lust of the eyes</u>, and <u>the pride of life</u> — is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.



Unfortunately, Adam and Eve took that fatal bite and in so doing surrendered their God given dominion over the earth and relinquished it over to the devil. There is a universal law that states in Romans 6:16, that *"You are a slave to whom you obey"* and that is what happened in the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve obeyed Satan and disobeyed God, they became slaves to Satan and gave him the authority to be god of this world that was originally given to them by their Creator. Adam and Eve committed high treason and joined Satan's rebellion against God- mankind became spiritual outlaws. James 4:4, *"You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God."*

Romans 6:16
Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey — whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

Luke 4:5-8
The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours."
Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

Notice the statement that Satan made, *"I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to."* That's right sports fans; Satan stole that authority from Adam in the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve obeyed Satan and rebelled against God, Satan became the god of this world instead of Adam and Eve. When we say 'world' we are referring to the culture, economic and political affairs of man, the world system is what Satan is god over. Creation as we said before still belongs to God. Satan is the god of this world now, that's why it's in such a mess! That is why sickness and disease kills millions of people every year.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4
And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

1 John 5:19-20
We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

This explains why Jesus said to the man whom He cured at the Pool of Bethesda John 5:14-15, *"See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you."* His sickness had come as the result of sin, whether it was a personal sin he had committed or the general sin of the fall of man, which gave Satan dominion to oppress mankind with sickness and disease. The root cause of death is the same- sin. That is why Jesus came as the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world- John 1:36. Jesus dealt with the root of all man's problems, the very thing that gave Satan his authority in the first place back in the Garden of Eden- sin! Let's look at another example in Gospel of Mark.

Mark 2:9-11
"Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins . . ." He said to the paralytic, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home."

The people did not believe that Jesus had the power to forgive this man's sins, so He said to them, in effect, "I will now show you that I have the power to forgive sins by curing this palsy, which is a consequence of sin. When you see that I can cure this sin-produced disease, then you will know for a certainty that I also can take away sin itself."

Acts 10:38
How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and <u>healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him</u>.

1 John 3:8- The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

Luke 13:10-13, 16
On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity." Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God… "Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?"

Another reason why we are absolutely sure Satan is the author of sickness as well as sin, is because Christ always uses the same harsh word, *epitimao*, to rebuke sickness (Satan's work) as He uses to rebuke evil spirits.

In Luke 4:35 NKJV we read, *"But Jesus rebuked [epetimesen] him [the evil spirit in a man], saying, 'Be quiet, and come out of him!'"* In Luke 4:39 NKJV we also read, *"So He stood over her and rebuked [epetimesen, the same word as in Luke 4:35] the [spirit causing the fever] fever, and it left her."* Jesus had used the same harsh word to rebuke all sicknesses as He used to rebuke all evil spirits, because all sicknesses are caused by Satan. Acts 10:38, makes it clear that sickness and disease is either a direct or indirect Satanic oppression- being under the dominion, power or lordship of Satan. Jesus came to earth for one reason- to destroy what Satan had set in motion back in the Garden through the fall of man that he instigated. We have been delivered, set free, ransomed from Satan's control over our lives. Jesus is now our Lord and we are citizens of His Kingdom of righteous, joy and peace- Romans 14:17.

Colossians 1:13-14 AMP
[The Father] has delivered and drawn us to Himself out of the control and the dominion of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, In Whom we have our redemption through His blood, [which means] the forgiveness of our sins.

Yes, every sickness, disease, and deformity that Christ had cured while on earth was the result of Satan's work, and it is the same today. Not only is Satan the originator of sickness, but he is the propagator of it, for the Bible informs us that he has special evil spirits whose chief business is to make people sick as we see in Luke 13:11 concerning a *"spirit of infirmity (sickness)."* The word for "infirmity" here is *astheneia*, the commonest word in the Greek language for "sickness." This unfortunate woman had been dominated for eighteen years by an evil spirit, a spirit the Bible called "a spirit of sickness." Yes, Satan really has "spirits of sickness" whose mission in this world is to propagate sickness and disease. That does not mean when a person is sick that it is always the result of a literal demonic presence. Remember, the fall of man has released into the very atmosphere bacteria that cause illness. It would require the Holy Spirit to provide revelation as to whether or not a demon is present, causing the alignment or not.

In addition to "spirits of sickness," Satan also has "deaf and dumb" spirits to afflict mankind in Mark 9:25 NKJV, "When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, *"deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!'"* In Mark 1:23 NKJV we read, *"Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean [unwashed, dirty, foul] spirit."* Then Satan also has spirits who are specialists in polluting folk's minds and imaginations, energizing them in the area of immorality- particularly sexual sins.

In Acts 16:16 we read of a girl who was "possessed with a spirit of divination." This was an evil spirit which gave her the ability to foretell things. This is where psychics and mediums get their influence, through familiar spirits- demonic power.

Acts 16:16 AMP
As we were on our way to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who was possessed by a spirit of divination [claiming to foretell future events and to discover hidden knowledge], and she brought her owners much gain by her fortune telling.

1 Samuel 28:7 KJV
Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit , that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor.

1 Samuel 28:7 AMP
Then Saul said to his servants, Find me a woman who is a medium [between the living and the dead], that I may go and inquire of her. His servants said, Behold, there is a woman who is a medium at Endor.

Satan, then has all kinds of evil spirits, and I would venture to say that thousands of these belong to that group designated as "spirits of sickness." No wonder we read in Ephesians 6:12*, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."* Satan and not God is the author and propagator of all sickness and disease; if the source of sickness in a person's life was not through the affects of the fall of man, it was carried out by evil spirits that afflict, harass and oppresses humanity.

Well did Jesus succeed in His mission in destroying the works of the devil? Absolutely, which means not only are we delivered from sin, but also from the consequences of sin which is death- sickness and disease are byproducts of death. But one may say, "Yea, but Satan is still in the earth and people are still dying." Let's look at what the Bible has to say about that. First of all when it comes to physical death for the Christian, the Bible calls it, "to fall asleep" in a number of passages like 1 Corinthians 15:20*, "But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have* ***fallen asleep****."* Why would God use that word choice; simply because physical death is only a temporary state. One day all of God's people will receive new resurrected, glorified bodies with no more death in it due to Adam's fall.

Philippians 3:20-21
But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

1 Thessalonians 4:14-18
We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.

Death has been Swallowed Up in Victory!

1 Corinthians 15:20-28
But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

1 Corinthians 15:50-58
I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

God has the final word, what Satan thought would be a perpetual state of death is reversed by our Lord Jesus Christ; but this is a future event that we are looking forward to. In the meantime, Jesus has provided physical healing for our mortal bodies, and if the Lord tarries His return, it's God's will for us to be satisfied with long life (Psalms 91:16), our bodies simply wear out and fall asleep. No pain, no wasting disease, just a simple transition from this life to the next.

Romans 8:11
And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life [zoopoiesei] to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

This verb "give life" is zoopoiesei and comes from zoe (life) and poieo (I make). It is the work of the Holy Spirit to keep making life in these mortal bodies of ours. This speaks of the God-kind of "life" Jesus came to bring humanity in John 10:10. For that life is the enlightenment of men- John 1:4. The Greek word for this God-kind of life is zoe.

2. Jesus Rebuked the Storm

From the natural standpoint, it is difficult for people to understand that most of the laws governing the earth today came into being through the fall of man – when Adam sinned and the curse came upon the earth. Because people don't understand this, they accuse God of accidents, sickness, and the death of loved ones. God is not the author of any of these things. People also blame God for the storms, catastrophes, earthquakes, and floods that occur. Even insurance policies call these "acts of God." No, they are not acts of God, they are acts of the devil- their author is Satan, directly or indirectly. All of these natural laws as we understand them were set aside by Jesus, whenever necessary, in order to bless humanity. Bear in mind that Jesus said, *"He that has seen Me has seen the Father"* (John 14:9).

Well, we don't see Jesus bringing any storms on people. We see Him calming the storms! A storm had arisen on the Sea of Galilee and Jesus was in the back of the ship asleep on a pillow. The disciples

awoke Him and said, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" They thought they were going down at sea. But Jesus arose and rebuked the wind. He wasn't rebuking something God did. He was rebuking something the devil had stirred up. You see, Adam was originally the god, of this world- to rule and exercise dominion over God's creation. God made the world, Psalms 89:11, *"The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth; you founded the world and all that is in it."* Then He made man, Adam. He said to Adam, "I give you the authority to rule this earth. You are the one who is to dominate it." But Adam sold us all out to the devil. (He didn't have the moral right to do it, but he had the legal right, because the earth was under his charge – God put it into his hands.) Adam committed high treason and sold out to the devil. And the Bible tells us that now Satan is the god of this world- 2 Corinthians 4:4. When did Satan become the god of this world? Right after Adam had sinned.

Mark 4:35-41
That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

3. Jesus Rebuked the Fever

Whenever Jesus saw the work of Satan on display through sickness and disease or demon possession, He intervened and rebuked it. Again Jesus was not rebuking the work of God in folk's lives. Jesus' mission was to destroy the devil's works in people's lives. John 10:10, *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."* How we have gotten this all messed up and confused is beyond me; the Bible certainly makes it simple enough.

Luke 4:38-41
Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them. When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them. Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ.

Acts 10:38 AMP
How God anointed and consecrated Jesus of Nazareth with the [Holy] Spirit and with strength and ability and power; how He went about doing good and, in particular, curing all who were harassed and oppressed by [the power of] the devil, for God was with Him.

Unit 5 Review:

What we think about healing is very important, why is that?

Why is "False Humility" such a hindrance to receiving healing?

Another religious roadblock is a "poverty spirit," how does this hinder healing in our lives?

So who is the originator and propagator of sickness and diseases in the earth?

So is the world right when they call hurricanes, tornadoes and floods acts of God?

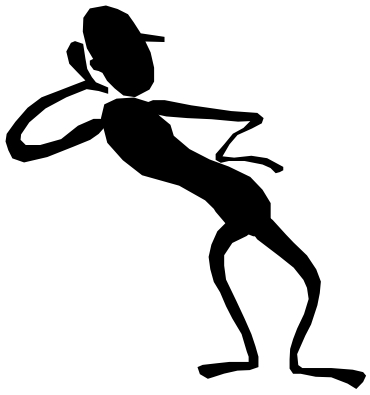
What was Jesus' response when confronted with the work of Satan in people's lives?

C. So is God in Control of Everything on the Earth?

We need to get some of these things straight in our minds, because many in the church world are confused. People have all kinds of unscriptural ideas. Some think, Well, God's got everything under control, He is sovereign, so whatever happens does so for a reason- so don't question or resist it. But that may or may not be so, according to how you mean it. If you mean that God is ruling the earth right now – no, He isn't! He's going to rule it again one of these days, but He's not right now.

There was an interesting article by a well-known newspaper columnist. He said, in effect, "I don't claim to be a Christian, but I'm not an atheist or an agnostic. The atheist says there is no God. I believe there is one. The agnostic says there may be a God; he doesn't know. I believe there is. "I don't believe everything just happened into being," he continued. "I believe some Supreme Being created everything. But what hinders me from being a Christian is what I hear preachers saying. I'm confused because they say God is running everything. And if He is, He sure has things in a mess." Then the man alluded to wars, children being killed, poverty, disease, and sickness, saying, "I believe that there is a Supreme Being somewhere and that everything He made was beautiful and good. I just can't believe those things are the work of God."

Luke 4:5-7
The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours."



Well, the truth is, those things came with the Fall when Adam sinned and Satan became the god of this world. When Satan is finally eliminated from the earth, there will be nothing that will hurt or destroy. And then it ought to be obvious where all those things came from. Jesus' statement, *"He that has seen Me has seen the Father,"* and His description of the Father makes it impossible to accept the teaching that sickness and disease are from God and the circumstances of life originated from our Heavenly Father in order to make us humble. The very nature of God refutes such an idea, for God is love. It would be slander to incriminate God with the works of the devil. Some may call this belief naive or simplistic; I just call it Bible without human reasoning.

John 10:10-11 AMP
The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows). I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd risks and lays down His [own] life for the sheep. (see also Psalms 23)

In John 10:10 we see the simplicity of the truth of God's Word- Good God versus bad devil. I am not buying the argument that God at times will send trials and tests our way to keep us humble and to obey His will. That line of thinking does not fit with the model of the "Good Shepherd" that we see in Scripture. When we read in Psalms 23:2, *"He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul…"* Trials and bad circumstances are not conducive to experiencing the rest of God in green pastures and quiet waters. However, the Good Shepherd does have a rod, His Word, by which He corrects, rebukes and chastises us for training in righteousness- so we can share in His holiness. God does not break our arm to get His point across or afflict us with cancer to keep us in line. Certainly, He can work the good out of what the devil meant for harm, but He is not the author of it.

2 Timothy 3:16-4:1
All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Hebrews 12:10-11
Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Acts 3:19
Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord…

Hebrews 4:1-2
Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it.

Clearly, according to the Bible, the devil is the author of trials, tests and temptations in an attempt to kill, steal and destroy from us according to John 10:10. The Lord is about keeping us from evil, *"He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake."* If God was the author of bad experiences, then He would be contradicting Himself by delivering folks from evil that He created. Look, sickness, disease oppression, poverty and the like are evil, not something good. It's amazing how religion can twist and distort the plain truth.

1 Corinthians 10:13
No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

Psalms 34:19-20
A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all; he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken.

2 Timothy 4:18
The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

1. God is our Refuge

We have a safe refuge to find shelter in during the storms of life, Psalms 23:4 *"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me."* God is on our side, He is for us as our protector and shield from the enemy. The Bible states in Ephesians 6:12 that our enemy is not flesh and blood but the devil and his entourage. He roams around as a roaring lion looking for opportunities to create trouble and havoc in folks lives- 1 Peter 5:8. He is the accuser of the brethren trying to build a case and collecting evidence against us so that we would be judged and turned over to him- Revelation 12:10; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5; 11:31-32. However, even in the midst of persecution and trials of our faith, the Lord is there Psalms 23:5, *"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows."*

"As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day. For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say." John 12:47-50

So let's keep the record straight and not attribute the works of the devil to God, because Jesus set the standard of God's will and God's heart for humanity. And you know sickness, disease, pains and tears are not part of it. So what is the will of God for humanity and especially His children, Matthew 6:10, *"Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."*

Is there sickness, disease suffering and wasting illnesses in heaven? Are there hospitals in heaven, do folks still need to take Advil for headaches in heaven? Obviously no, that is not God's will up in heaven nor is it His will on earth- ever! Psalms 23:6, *"Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."*

Psalms 91:9-16
If you make the Most High your dwelling — even the Lord, who is my refuge — then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. You will tread upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent. "Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation."

Revelation 21:3-4
And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

2. Jesus came to Destroy the Works of the devil

Remember that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil according to 1 John 3:8. God is not the dealer in death; the Bible attributes that kind of work to the devil. The wages of sin is death according to Romans 6:23, because sin places a person into Satan's territory where, legally he can oppress them with death- the devil is the death dealer. That is why Jesus came, to take away our sins and thus pull the carpet out from under Satan's feet to remove the legal basis that kept humanity in his death grip.

1 John 3:8
He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

Hebrews 2:14-15
Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

Sickness, disease, torment, oppression along with all the miseries of life is the direct or indirect affect of the devil operating in folks lives. That is why we must keep the door shut to the enemy and be quick to forgive and quick to repent. So through the blood of Jesus, and a life of obedience in line with God's Word, we too can say, "The devil has no hold or place in my life!"

John 14:30-31
I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me.

John 14:30 AMP
I will not talk with you much more, for the prince (evil genius, ruler) of the world is coming. And he has no claim on Me. [He has nothing in common with Me; there is nothing in Me that belongs to him, and he has no power over Me.]

Let's go back to Acts 10:38 for a moment. Who anointed Jesus of Nazareth? God did! And Jesus said, *"... the Father that dwells in me, He does the work"* according to John 14:10. God did these works of healing through Jesus; by anointing Him with the Holy Spirit and with healing power. What did Jesus do with the anointing with which God had anointed Him? He went about doing good! What was the good that He did? Healing! So God was healing when Jesus healed, because it was God who anointed Him. God is in the healing business, not in the sickness business! God is in the delivering business, not in the bondage business or bringing negative circumstances of life our way in order to punish and keep us in submission.

Notice in Acts l0:38 NKJV who was healed by Jesus*: "...healing <u>all</u> who were oppressed by the devil..."* Now, that's a plain statement- ALL! That means everyone who was healed under the ministry of Jesus was oppressed of the devil. In other words, the devil had something to do with their sickness. That doesn't mean an evil spirit was always present. It just means the devil was behind the whole situation- directly or indirectly. They were oppressed of the devil- every one of them. Yet to hear some people talk nowadays, even ministers, you would be led to believe that God and the devil had swapped jobs for the last 2,000 years! You'd think God was putting sickness on people and the devil was healing them. No, the devil is the same devil he always was and God is still the same God.

Mark 16:15-18
He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

Let's stop and analyze this, which one of the sick did Jesus say to lay hands on? He just said the sick, period. Well, if God were the author of sickness, if He did put sickness and disease on people, and if it were His will for some to be sick, then Mark 16:18 would be confusing- because Jesus authorized us to lay hands on <u>all</u> the sick and said they would recover. God does not contradict Himself by making people sick and then turning around and heal them; that would make Him a lawbreaker- Galatians 2:18.

If it were God's will for some to remain sick, Jesus would have had to have said something like, "Lay your hands on those for whom it is the will of God to heal, and they shall recover. And those whom it isn't God's will to heal, they won't recover." But that wasn't the case. God set the Church against sickness, period! Destroying the works of the devil as Jesus had done while on earth- John 14:12.

James 5:14-15
Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.

Verse 14 asks, "Is any sick among you?" Among whom? The Church. So it must be God's will to heal any of the sick in the Church. Therefore, it can't be the will of God for "any" in the Church to stay sick.

D. Why do Christians Get Sick

Since it is so clearly revealed everywhere throughout the Scriptures that the Heavenly Father wills for our healing, why do some in our day, who seek healing, fail to receive it? This is a question in the minds of many honest inquirers. There are several answers to this question, which we will mention briefly. If you have not received healing in the past, perhaps this segment in our teaching will identify some pitfalls that you may have fallen into.

I have heard it, and you probably have too, "Why haven't I been healed?" "Why did my mother die?" "Why was my baby born handicapped?" We all have a lot of "why" questions. I have plenty of my own, but not all of them will be answered in this life. They will have to wait until we join the Lord in heaven. However, the Scriptures do shed a lot of light on many of the "Why's" that we have. We will not always know why, but one thing we do know for sure, it's God's will for all to be healed, all the time. When we fail to receive, that is never God's will. The Scriptures tell us to ask God for wisdom; in order to know where we have missed it. All we need to do is make the adjustments and receive God's wonderful provision of healing for our bodies.

1 Corinthians 13:9-12
For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

So many of our "why" questions would be answered if we only looked at the way we live, and compared it with the standard of obedience required by the Word of God. Then we would realize that we are not living up to God's conditions. Most people read the benefits promised in God's Word, but fail to read the conditions attached to them. As a result, that's usually the reason why they can't figure out why no healing has come. Let's now look at a number of avenues that the enemy tries to exploit against us-
2 Corinthians 2:11 NKJV *"...lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices."*

1. Lack of Faith

God's Word settles the matter forever, divine healing is always His will- God's Word is God's will! Faith begins where the will of God is known. If God says it in His Word, that settles it, its truth and will not change, regardless of our experiences or what we see happen to others.

Just look at all the examples in the Gospels where Jesus continually attributed to folks receiving or not receiving as a result of their faith. Consider the generation of Israelites who failed to enter the Promise Land. It was unbelief that caused them to die in the desert; that was not God's will.

1 John 5:14-15
This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of him.

2 Thessalonians 1:11
With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith.

Although in other places Jesus worked miracles and healed all that were sick, when He came to Nazareth, His home town, where He had been brought up, the Bible tells us that He *"could not"* do any miracles there. Notice the Bible does not say that it just was not the will of God to do any miracles. In other words, Jesus wanted to perform miracles in His hometown but could not and was hindered because of their lack of faith. There are many churches and Christian lives today where the Lord wants to perform great healings and deliverances, but he can't, for the same reason as it was 2,000 years ago, a lack of faith. Unbelief makes God a liar, when He clearly declares in His Word *that "I am the Lord who heals you"* and then folks turn right around and say, "It's not always His will to heal." My friends, this grieves the Holy Spirit terribly.

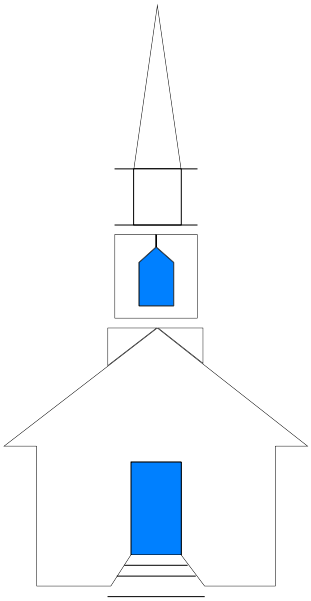
Mark 6:5-6
He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their lack of faith.

The traditions which the people today have been taught to believe, in place of the plain Word of God concerning the subject of healing, has turned many congregations into a veritable Nazareth of unbelief. What I mean, is that in many congregations today, it's a community of unbelief as the norm. Those who preach the full Gospel and pray for the sick are often times obliged to labor in a Nazareth of unbelief. We can get results only so far as we can get rid of the "traditions of the elders" regarding healing by teaching the people what the Scriptures actually teach on the subject. Clearly as it was in Nazareth, so it is today, "faith" is a critical ingredient for people to get healed. So to say that the sick can get healed without them exercising any faith is a misnomer. Hebrews 11:6 tells us that God *"…rewards those who earnestly seek him."*

If we are lackadaisical and casual about seeking healing from God through faith in His Word, we will be disappointed. We have to press in and fight the good fight of faith and resist the devil with a bold conviction that does not take "no" for an answer from the circumstances of life. Others are not healed because they will only accept an instantaneous manifestation of miracles or gifts of healing from God. Because they are not made well and strong immediately, these people cast away their confidence. Healing can be progressive like the ten lepers in Luke 17:14. Often times it is holding fast to our confession of Healing according to God's Word that is required to receive our healing in the long run.

Hebrews 6:12
We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

Hebrews 10:35-36
So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.



If it is proper to account for the failure of some to receive healing by calling in question Christ's willingness to heal all sick persons, then why should we not call in question His willingness to save all sinners in order to explain the fact that so many in the churches today are unsaved? Upon a certain occasion only one woman in a great throng touched Jesus with faith for healing. Later on, whole multitudes did so. It is a matter of receiving revelation from the Word and exercising faith. Just as during the Dark Ages of the Middle Ages when the Word of God was locked up from the common people, not many were getting saved. It was not until the Protestant reformation that unlocked God's Word into the hands of the masses that revival and salvation began to flourish. If God's Word is locked up on any subject like healing by religious traditions, churches can be living under the "Dark Ages" concerning that Biblical truth and fail to receive God's provision for their lives. Regardless, no minister can expect to get results until the preaching and teaching of the Word of God is done first.

Many splendid Christians are not healed by prayer, because they cannot pray the prayer of expectant faith. They say, "Perhaps God does not desire to heal me yet," and this "perhaps" causes a doubt in their heart. The Holy Spirit through James makes it clear; a person with a lack of faith should not expect to receive anything that he/she asks from the Lord.

James 1:5-8 AMP
If any of you is deficient in wisdom, let him ask of the giving God [Who gives] to everyone liberally and ungrudgingly, without reproaching or faultfinding, and it will be given him. Only it must be in faith that he asks with no wavering (no hesitating, no doubting). For the one who wavers (hesitates, doubts) is like the billowing surge out at sea that is blown hither and thither and tossed by the wind. For truly, let not such a person imagine that he will receive anything [he asks for] from the Lord, [For being as he is] a man of two minds (hesitating, dubious, irresolute), [he is] unstable and unreliable and uncertain about everything [he thinks, feels, decides].

1 Peter 2:24
He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

Well, "have been" in 1 Peter 2:24 is past tense. That means we're already healed! We have to get our believing in the right tense for it to work for us! Now God will often allow another person to release their faith on behalf of one who doesn't know the Word or they're still in the babyhood stage of Christianity. He will meet them on a lower level of faith. However, once they receive light from the Word concerning God's will to heal, He expects them to walk in that light. God expects mature believers to walk in the light of what they know. That's why it's the most difficult thing in the world for some Christians to get healed – because they already have light concerning healing, and God expects them to walk in that light, but they're not.

We must Walk in the Light of what we know!

Mark 4:24 AMP
And He said to them, be careful what you are hearing. The measure[of thought and study] you give [to the truth you hear] will be the measure[of virtue and knowledge] that comes back to you — and more [besides] will be given to you who hear.

The responsibility is found with the hearer of God's Word, what they do with it- saint or sinner. Do we cherish the Word, hide it in our hearts, and meditate on it day and night? Jesus was saying that the measure of attentiveness, expectation and energy we apply to the Word is the same measure of results we will get out of it. Reminds me of the old saying, "You get out of it what you put into it!"

John 12:47-49
As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him . For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day.

Faith does not come from having heard the Word once or twice- Romans 10:17. Faith does not come from having heard the Word years ago either. When people say, "Well, I have heard that before…" it is apparent that the Word is not in their heart. Spiritual things never grow old, if a promise from God is old to us, it was never real to us in our spirit to begin with. For when God's Word gets in our heart, it never grows old, but remains fresh and exciting every time we hear it. Folks can get in one healing line after another, travel the country and have dozens of anointed men and women of God pray over them and nothing happens. Until they realize that their faith has everything to do with them getting healed. God requires them to exercise faith in the Word and not be solely dependent upon someone else's faith and prayers unless they are just newly saved and don't know any better.

If a Promise from God is Old to us, It was Never Real to Us!

Some people are always wanting God to speak to them, but if they'd get in the Bible and read it and meditate on it, they'd find that God is speaking to them from every page. They're always looking for some "new" revelation, yet they haven't mastered walking in the light of what they already know. But when we walk in the light of what we know, more light will be given to us. In reality, it's the truth of God's anointed Word, not some "new" revelation that sets people free and destroys every yoke of bondage. Sometimes when I've tried to read scriptures to people on healing, they've said, "Oh, I've already heard that." That's like a man sitting down at the table to eat, but when a big T-bone steak is put on his plate, he says, "No thanks, I've had T-bone steak before!" Just because we ate a T-bone steak one time doesn't mean we're never going to eat one again!

Matthew 4:4
Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

What is this verse saying? As natural food is to our body, the Word of God is to our spirit. The Word of God is "food" or nourishment, for our spirit. Just because we ate a certain kind of natural food one time doesn't mean we're never going to eat it again. No, we'll come right back to the table and eat the same kinds of food again and again; so it is with the Word of God. If we keep meditating on healing scriptures our whole life long, we will experience divine healing for a lifetime.

According to the book of James, "faith without deeds is dead." It is not God's turn to move until we have faith with corresponding actions. The full exercise of faith means that we think faith, speak faith, and act faith. To the blind man, Jesus said, *"Go, wash in the Pool of Siloam."* This act gave the man an opportunity to exercise faith in his heart, mind and body. He was not healed until he had first given this visible expression of his faith- going to the Pool of Siloam. He believed the healing was his before it was manifested.

Some will not believe that their prayer for healing has been heard until they have experienced and seen the answer in advance. This is referred to as the "Thomas" kind of faith. This is also called "Sense" faith which relies on the five senses as evidence to answered prayer; this is not Bible faith, it does not please God and will not be honored. Besides, Hebrews 11:1 says that faith in God's Word is the only "evidence" we need, taking God at His Word; otherwise in affect we are calling God a liar.

John 20:24-29
Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Jesus has not promised that our healing will begin before we believe that He has heard our prayer. Some suppose that they can keep on praying without believing that their prayer has been heard, at least until they are well. This is exactly the opposite of what God requires. In Mark 11:24, Jesus tells us exactly the conditions He requires for appropriating the promises found in the Bible.

Mark 11:24, "Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."

In other words when we first believe in our spirit that He has answered our prayer, then and only then will the answer materialize. Which comes first the "believing" or the "receiving?" According to Jesus the "believing" comes first and then the "receiving" follows. When we reverse this divine order, we get no results, we fall into the same trap that Thomas did. As Jesus said, *"Father, I thank you that you have heard me"* even while Lazarus was still dead; so we should be able to say, "I thank you Lord that by your stripes I was healed," even while our physical bodies are still exhibiting symptoms. By meeting the requirements of faith, we can boldly declare that we are healed now; knowing by faith that the healing power of God is presently manifesting itself in our bodies. The Word works when we work it according to instructions!

John 11:41-44
So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Mark 4:26-29
He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain — first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

God has not promised that our prayer has been answered before we believe that He has heard our prayer. If this is true, then we must believe that our prayer has been heard when we really pray. We must be able to say with clear conviction that, "We know we have the petition that we desire of Him," not because we see the answer in advance, but because "God is faithful, who also will do it."

1 John 5:14-15
This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of him.

We must be like Abraham, "fully persuaded" that God will honor His Word when we act upon it in simple faith- this is how we know we believe God's Word in our hearts, when we become "fully persuaded." This heart faith only comes through meditating (Speaking) God's Word continually from our mouths- Joshua 1:8; Psalms 1:1-3. The "Word of Faith" principle in Deuteronomy 30:14 and Romans 10:8 declares, *"'The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,' that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming…"* The Word is first in our mouths, then it gets in our hearts, and only then will we receive. So the goal here is to simply get the Word in our hearts so we can believe it and be healed. The sowing is in the saying, God's Word is spiritual seed that produces after itself by multiplication. In the process of time, after the Word has been planted in our spirit, it will grow and produce a harvest of healing in our lives. These principles of faith works with whatever kind of seed we sow from God's Word. It was these principles that got us born again to begin with; who told us to stop appropriating the "Word of Faith" principles of believing and receiving from God's Word?

Abraham did not keep on praying for the birth of Isaac until the child was born. Instead, he kept on believing and glorifying God for His Word on the matter.

Romans 4:18-21
Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead — since he was about a hundred years old — and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.

It is supposed to be the "end of praying" when one has been anointed for healing (James 5:13-16), and if one who has been anointed really has faith, we will hear nothing but thanksgiving and praise until he/she has been healed. When a child begs her mother for a new dress until the mother says, "I will get it for you," the child makes an end of asking before there is any dress in sight. Instead of continuing to say, "Please give me a dress," she says, "Thank you! Thank you!" The switch of faith and trust must remain active during the manifestation process of the promises of God- sometimes takes time for things to manifest. When Jehoshaphat and his men who, after they had finished praying, went out to battle, singing praises to God- 2 Chronicles 20:1-30. Solomon, when he had finished praying, the fire of the Lord came down out of heaven and consumed the offering- 2 Chronicles 7:1-4. The healing of the ten lepers came while their trust was still active- Luke 17:14.

2 Chronicles 7:1
When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple.

If we allow our faith to become inactive, it will weaken; if we keep it active, it will continually grow stronger. Some hinder God by basing their faith on their improvement after prayer rather than upon His promise. They do not realize that there is no other reason for faith as good as the Word of God, and that God wants to train every Christian to believe Him when everything they can see, except His promise, is to the contrary.

2 Corinthians 10:15
Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow, our area of activity among you will greatly expand…

2 Thessalonians 1:3
We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing.

2. Lack of Knowledge of God's Word

What we don't know can hurt us; ignorance of God's Word can cost the believer many hardships!

Hosea 4:6- My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.

This principle is true in any arena of life, but it is especially true concerning spiritual things. We cannot experience first-hand in our lives what we do not know exists. We cannot receive what we do not know is available to us. This is simply an issue of ignorance, and is remedied only by being enlightened with revelation knowledge from God's Word.

Paul tells us that *"faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."* Many have sought healing from Christ before having heard or known enough of the Word of God to produce in them a steadfast faith. The early Church believers were in one accord in the matter of proclaiming the entire Gospel. They kept back nothing that was profitable. They declared the full counsel of God. We have seen that God's way of producing faith for healing is the same as that of producing faith for salvation, or for any other blessing, and that is for the needy one first to learn from the Scriptures what is God's will on the matter. The hand of faith cannot reach out and receive from God what the eye of faith does not see to be the will of God. It is the truth of the Written Word that sets us free. That is, the truth known, understood, received, acted upon, maintained and steadfastly believed with an appropriating faith.

John 8:31-32
To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Acts 20:26-27
Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.

Acts 5:19-20
But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people the full message of this new life."

The Word of God works when we work it according to directions in the Scriptures. It is incorruptible seed, it can never fail, if it does then God fails. Our confidence to receive from God must be firmly established in the fact that His Word is mightily at work in us who believe. The Word of God is the precious seed, containing the very life and power of God to produce after itself, 30, 60 and 100 fold depending on the condition of our hearts. As long as we keep our hearts pure, keep the Word planted, protected and cultivated, we are **guaranteed** a harvest- every time!

Some fail to receive healing because they are trying to get results from the seed (the Word concerning healing) without knowing what that Word is and without the knowledge of how to plant it in their spirit- the spirit of man is the production center. They don't know how to put the Word first place in their life and how to defeat the attacks of the enemy. The devil will try to get us to defeat ourselves by digging up the seed we had planted through negative confessions and/or by hardening our hearts through the practice of sin- not walking in love and/or gratifying the sinful passions of our body. The seed cannot work in us, unless it is in us by our having known and received it.

Luke 17:20-21
Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you."

What is so lacking in the Body of Christ today is accurate training on the subject of divine healing. Entering into God's inheritance is not automatic nor can we set our Christian life on cruise control and expect to receive or amount to much for God's kingdom. It takes work, dedication and sacrifice to study and pay the price of getting into God's Word and become skilled, trained and equipped to handle the Word of truth effectively. For many it's easier to let the pastor do all their praying for them, do all their studying for them, and do all the ministry for them. That is fine if one is just saved as a babe in Christ. However, God expects us to grow up in our salvation now that we have tasted that the Lord is good. That is why many Christians who have been saved for awhile are no longer maintaining their healing is because God is expecting them to learn to walk on their own faith legs. This way they can become trained in the things of God in order to help others; that is how God's kingdom is to multiply, spread and grow- each one reach one.

2 Timothy 2:15 AMP
Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth.

Bottom line, we must first know what God has already freely given us in our glorious redemption through Jesus Christ before we can expect to experience it first hand in our lives. The knowledge of God's will must precede faith for that will to be done. Sadly, multitudes of Christians today do not know that the perfect healing of their bodies is fully revealed as the will of God in the Bible. To know what the Word of God has to say on a matter is the only sufficient evidence or legal basis for appropriating faith. The power to provide is locked up in the seed itself, the life of the seed to produce according to its kind is in itself. All that is left for us to do is to release and unlock that power of God, called grace that is contained in His Word through the spiritual laws of faith.

John 17:17- Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

John 1:16-17
From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Acts 20:32
"Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified."

Ephesians 3:7
I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power.

Unless those who are seeking healing can say with full conviction, "It is written" when their faith is tested, their belief cannot remain steadfast. Only God's Word can settle the question of God's will. The Word of God spoken from our spirit (not from the head as mere mental assent), is the sword of our spirit that defeats the enemy every time- Hebrews 4:12; Ephesians 6:17. The Bible is called the: Word, Truth, Grace and Power of God- this is what it is and does, to save, produce, change and deliver! Multitudes of Christians who have suffered under the tyranny of Satan's sicknesses and diseases, have prayed for healing for years without success, and have done so because in their prayers the faith-destroying phrase of, "If it be thy will," had been uttered. However, when the light of God's Word dawned on their spirit concerning the will of God and healing, divine healing finally manifested in their lives.

The early Church members were not only in one accord in teaching this subject, but they also lifted up their voices to God in one accord in prayer for "signs and wonders" to be manifested. The prayer of faith was already set in motion before the sick were brought into the streets of Jerusalem. It was not the faith of a single evangelist, but the faith of the entire company of believers that brought healing to "everyone" in the streets of Jerusalem after Christ's ascension- Acts 5:14-16.

The majority of ministers and church members today through their ignorance of and their traditions on the subject of the ministry of healing, are opposed to it as it was taught and preached and practiced in the early Church- this is a reason why many folks are not healed, their own ministers are in unbelief. Instead of praying in one accord for these healing results as the early Church members did, the present Church members as a whole have not accepted our Lord's attitude toward sickness as revealed in the Gospels. In our day, opposition often takes the place of united prayer; unbelief takes the place of united faith; lukewarmness takes the place of being Spirit-filled- unlike the early Church. So I will ask you the question, "Would not the blame for the failure of so many to receive healing today are largely due to the unbelieving part of the Church itself, since we are members one of another?" I believe you would say yes to this. At least it has an indirect affect upon us individually and greater affect upon us corporately.

So what is the cure to such rampant lack of faith concerning healing, it's really simple. If the ministry gifts in Ephesians 4:11 would simply teach and preach the truth on the matter, until we are all in one accord and come into the unity of the faith, healings would be a common occurrence. Unfortunately, there are too many doubting Christians who are making it practically impossible for the Church to be in one accord in prayer and faith for the sick. The Church is out of tune with God's programs.

Let's get on the Same Page Concerning Healing!

Ephesians 4:11-15
It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.

Suppose it was generally believed that the day of being born again has passed, as we so often hear it said "the day of miracles has passed." Consider how this would hinder us from preaching the Gospel! Christian workers could have no success in saving souls except by getting people to give up the false tradition (that the New Birth has passed away) and start believing the Bible again. We must always put the Word of God first place in our lives as our final authority for all matters that pertain to life and conduct. The Word of God is the voice of God; the Bible is God speaking to you and to me.

On the other hand, suppose from infancy we have all been taught that healing is included in the Gospel message as forgiveness of sins. In this case, I'm sure that very few would have any difficulty in producing faith for healing. It is the Word of God which produces faith for healing. The problem is simple and so is the solution. There has been too little accurate teaching on the subject in the Body of Christ; too much false teachings of the traditions of men and a psychology of unbelief particularly in North America. When one goes over seas, the simplicity of the Gospel is presented in power to save, heal and deliver, and the results speak for themselves- be it unto you according to your faith and faith comes by hearing the Word. In our western society, intellectualism and liberal theology has embalmed folks in unbelief and the religious traditions of men; as a result, paralyzing the faith of many to receive anything from God except for an occasional scrap, given out of mercy.

Some afflictions are the direct work of an evil spirit which must be cast out. In Mark chapter nine, Jesus did not heal the epileptic disease, but rather cast the epileptic spirit out. He also had cast out deaf and dumb spirits and other spirits of infirmity that were the direct cause of the sickness and disease.

Luke 13:10-13
On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity." Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.

Luke 13:16
"Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?"

3. Disobedience to God's Word

Unrepentant sin gives the enemy the right to kill, steal and destroy in our lives- Israel in the Old Testament was a good example of this. Proverbs 19:3, *"A man's own folly ruins his life, yet his heart rages against the Lord."* It would be incredulous for the children of Israel to think, "Isn't it wonderful to have all these benefits and promises from the Lord!" But not pay any attention to the requirements He had given them: *"do that which is right in his sight,"* or *"giving ear to all his commandments,"* or *"keeping all his statutes."* Under the New Covenant, the requirement is to walk in love- Romans 13:8-10; Galatians 5:6.

Exodus 15:26
He said, "If you listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring *[permit]* on you any of the diseases I brought *[permitted]* on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you."

If we would just stick to the Word of God and obey what He tells us to do, God's blessings will surely follow us. God described all the blessings that would overtake His covenant children if they would simply obey all His commands.

Deuteronomy 28:1-2
If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God.

Psalms 23:6-24:1
Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

We have it a lot easier under the New Covenant, for us there is only one command to obey- The law of the New Covenant is to walk in love. One step out of love is one step into sin. God is a faith God and His power is released in our lives through our faith in His Word. However, faith also works by love according to Galatians 5:6. We must learn to walk in love by obeying God's commands.

1 John 4:19
We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

1 John 5:2-3
This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.

1 Thessalonians 1:3
We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

It was always God's will for all His children to be healthy. Adam and Eve were created perfect, without any weaknesses or ailments. It was our disobedience and sin that ushered in the curse of Satan called death that has been afflicting mankind since the fall of man. Yet God in His mercy has sent Jesus to destroy the works of the devil and has restored back to mankind healing, wholeness and strength. Divine healing is a big part of Redemption. However, God has not promised to destroy the works of the devil in the body while we are clinging to the works of the devil in the soul. Unconfessed sin hinders people from receiving God's mercy.

Proverbs 28:13
He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

Being lukewarm in our walk with God is also disobedience and will therefore hinder us from receiving healing. Living in a backslidden state is one way we open the door to the devil and invite satanic oppression in our lives in the form of sickness and disease.

Revelation 3:15-16
I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm — neither hot nor cold — I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

Unforgiveness is another pitfall that Christians can find themselves in. Holding grudges or bitterness towards others is a sure way to short-circuit our faith to receive healing.

Mark 11:25
"And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."

Ephesians 4:31-32
Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Hebrews 12:14-15
Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

4. Many Christians are not Healed because of False Teaching

Jesus blasted the religious leaders for nullifying the Word of God for the sake of their traditions. In our day many ministers have done worse, for they have made void a part of the Gospel by their traditions.

Matthew 15:3-6
Jesus replied, "And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? For God said, 'Honor your father and mother' and 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.' But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God,' he is not to 'honor his father' with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition."

Tradition 1- It is not God's Will to Heal All
One such tradition is that, *"it's not always His will to heal, for God sovereignly chooses who to heal and who not to."* Some go so far that God purposely puts sickness on people in order to discipline them for their own good. It is a mystery to me how anyone can hold this view in the face of the Scriptures and the ministry of Jesus, who for three years healed all who came to Him for healing- all who were oppressed of the devil, not by God Acts 10:38. If it is God's will to heal only some of those who need healing, then none have any basis for faith, until they have received a special revelation that they are among the favored ones. If God's promises to heal are not for all, then no man can ascertain the will of God for himself from the Bible. Are we to understand from such teachers that we must close our Bibles and get our revelation directly from the Spirit before we can pray for the sick, because the will of God in this matter cannot be ascertained from the Scriptures? This would be virtually to teach that the whole of the Divine activity on the line of healing would have to be governed by direct revelations from the Spirit instead of by the Scriptures. Yet the Bible declares that he sent His Word and healed them- Ps. 107:20.

Tradition 2- Developing Patience in Sickness
Another tradition which is responsible for thousands dying a premature death after years of physical agony is the teaching that *"we glorify God more by remaining sick and exhibiting patience than we can by being divinely healed."* An honest but unenlightened minister will often kneel at the bedside of one suffering with arthritis or cancer or some other dangerous disease and pray, "Lord, since in Thy loving providence Thou hast seen fit to lay Thine afflicting hand upon our dear sister. Give her fortitude and patience to bear this affliction." He utters this pompous religious prayer instead of obeying the plain command to anoint "any sick" in the Church and to pray "the prayer of faith" for their healing (James 5:14); which method John Wesley says was the only process of healing in the Church until it was lost through unbelief.

Tradition 3- The Age of Miracles has Passed
Here is another common and threadbare tradition is the worn-out statement that *"the age of miracles has passed."* Of all the present-day "traditions of the elders" or ministers, this is the most foolish, illogical and unscriptural of any that I know. The Holy Spirit, in whose age we are now living, is God's only Miracle Worker, the only Administrator of the Father's will; the One who healed all the sick multitudes who came to Jesus for healing during His earthly ministry. All the miracles ever worked until the Day of Pentecost were accomplished by the Spirit, the Miracle Worker, before He had entered officially for His own dispensation. The age in which we live today was intended by our Heavenly Father to be the most miraculous of all the dispensations because it is the Miracle Worker's age, the Holy Spirit's dispensation. During this age, the great promise is that God will pour out the Holy Spirit, the Miracle Worker, upon all people. This is the age where the nine manifestations of the Spirit- including the gifts of faith, healing and miracles- were to be distributed through God's people by the Holy Spirit. This is in part what Jesus referred to as the "Greater Works" in John 14:12 would be done by the Spirit of God.

Tradition 4- If it be Thy Will
It is impossible for one to ever pray with faith until the "If" has been removed from his/her prayer. To have real faith is to be "fully persuaded" that God will do what He has promised to do, and no one is ever "fully persuaded" when they add to their prayer, "If it be Thy will." Since God has revealed His will in this matter through His precious promises, for us to say, "If it be Thy will" when praying for healing is the same as to say, "If it be thy will to keep Thy promise." It other words, we are saying "Lord I am not so sure You mean what You say and will keep Your word." God's response is, "Are you calling Me a liar?" I will go into greater depth on this later on.

Tradition 5- Paul's Thorn in the Flesh was Sickness
Another unscriptural premise that has sent thousands of sufferers to premature graves and kept multitudes of others from receiving healing is the modern teaching that Paul's thorn in the flesh was some kind of physical illness. I go into greater detail on this area under sacred cow #6 later on in this unit.

Tradition 6- Jesus Healed as the Son of God
Here is a tradition that has hindered the ministry of healing in teaching that Jesus healed the sick as the Son of God, not as the Son of Man. Such teachers believe that all healing came from Jesus because He is God. Now that He is in heaven, we should not expect such works to continue today. However, The Scriptures teach us that Jesus, the Son of God, emptied Himself of all divine abilities and became just like us in all things, except He never sinned. He speaks of Himself as "The Son of Man" about eighty times and as the Son of Man He said, *"By myself I can do nothing"* in John 5:30.

Philippians 2:6-8
Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but <u>made himself nothing</u>, taking the very nature of a servant, <u>being made in human likeness</u>. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross!

This certainly was not true of Him before He became the Son of Man, because all things were made by Him and for Him- Colossians 1:16. We have already seen that Jesus did His works in reliance upon the Holy Spirit. It was not until John's baptism in Luke 3:22 where *"the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove,"* that we see any miracles performed by Jesus.

Luke 4:1
Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert…

Luke 4:14
Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit…

Jesus made it clear in John 14:12 that His ministry would not end at His resurrection; as matter of fact, it would become widespread and thus greater in its impact around the globe.

John 14:12
I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

Consider Acts chapter 1 and verse 1, what was it that Jesus said to His apostles before His ascension into heaven. All we have to do is look further down in the same chapter, they too were to be anointed with the same Holy Spirit; He is the secret to performing miracles, signs and wonders. The very words here quoted from Acts 1:1, *"all that Jesus began to do and to teach,"* prove that what the Lord "began" both in doing and teaching was to be continued by the Holy Spirit operating through the Church, His Body.

Acts 1:1-2
In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus <u>began to do</u> and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.

Acts 1:4-5
On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be <u>baptized with the Holy Spirit</u>."

Acts 1:8
But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Jesus Himself said that the signs that would follow the believer were the same signs that followed His own earthly ministry. If it was not the Lord's intent to continue His ministry in the earth after His ascension, then He would not have continued performing signs and wonders through His followers.

Mark 16:15-18
He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

Mark 16:19-20
After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

Tradition 7- Our Lifestyle is not a Factor
We can't violate the laws of nature and abuse our bodies and expect to walk in divine healing. Some folks have challenges with over eating and as a consequence are experiencing all kinds of health problems; this will prove to be a hindrance to answering their prayers. After God had revealed Himself as Jehovah Rapha-Healer, He gave the people of Israel dietary laws for their physical well being.

Tradition 8- God uses Sickness to Lead us into His Perfect Will
Some subscribe to the notion that God permits sickness and affliction to remain on some as a way to rein them into the center of His will, and when this has been done, He removes the sickness. If He were to remove the illness too soon, many would run away, and so deprive themselves of the pleasure of living out the Divine will of God for their lives. Again, this is classic human reasoning and there is no Scripture to support this line of thinking. As a result, it would be impossible to pray "the prayer of faith" to get the so-called sovereign hand of God that is allowing the sickness to be removed if this were true.

They have been taught that sickness and pain are sent by God Himself to discipline them and make them wholly submissive to His will. These dear saints pray for patience to be submissive to God's will, who has (as they suppose) so severely afflicted them. However, these same saints are quick to send for a physician and a nurse and begin to take medicine or have an operation in order to get rid of this disagreeable experience, which, they believe, God has brought upon them to beautify their character. Is this submission to God's will if one really believes that this sickness has been sent of God? No!

Hebrews 12:6
Because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.

These saints cannot pray the prayer of faith to be healed, because they believe it is God's will that they should be sick, but they can, without any hesitation, send for a physician and use all possible human remedies to get rid of that which God has sent upon them for their good. Human nature is indeed a funny thing.

God uses His Word to Train and Discipline us!

If sickness, as some think, is the will of God for His faithful children, then it would be a sin for them even to desire to be well, to say nothing of spending thousands of dollars to defeat His Sovereign purpose for their lives. I truly thank God for all the help that has ever come to sufferers through the physician, through the surgeon, the hospital and the trained nurse. However, if sickness is the will of God, then to quote one writer, "Every physician is a lawbreaker; every trained nurse is defying the Almighty; every hospital is a house of rebellion, instead of a house of mercy," and instead of supporting hospitals, we ought to do our most to close everyone."

If the modern theology of those who teach that God wants some of His worshipers to remain sick for His glory is true, then Jesus, during His earthly ministry, never hesitated to rob the Father of all the glory He could by healing all who came to Him. The Holy Spirit, likewise, robbed Him of all the glory He could by healing all the sick in the streets of Jerusalem in the Book of Acts. Paul, too, robbed God of all the glory he could by healing all the sick on the island of Melita.

Acts 28:7-9
There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and for three days entertained us hospitably. His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured.

Many today hold that God afflicts even the obedient, because He loves them. Making sickness a love-token from our Heavenly Father. If this is true, why do they try to get rid of His love token? Why does not the one suffering with a cancer pray for a double portion for themselves and also ask Him to thus bless his wife, children, father, mother, neighbors, etc? Certainly, God will allow or permit His children to be attacked by the enemy because we ourselves allow it, Satan has a legal right to do so in those instances of unrepentant sin, ignorance or a lack of faith, but that is never His will for His Children.

Thank God this scenario can be avoided according to 1 Corinthians 11:31-32, if we would judge ourselves and repent of sin, we in fact close the door on the devil from attacking us with his sickness and disease among other evil things. Divine healing is not unconditionally promised to all Christians, regardless of their conduct. It is for those who believe and obey God's Word. It is imperative that we be quick to forgive and quick to repent. Many problems in life can be avoided if we just act wisely and walk in obedience to God's Word.

Psalms 25:10
All the ways of the Lord are loving and faithful for those who keep the demands of his covenant.

Proverbs 28:26
He who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe.

Recall the words of Jesus in Matthew 9:12, *"On hearing this, Jesus said, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.'"* This is true, every sick person does need a physician, and if he or she, for any reason, cannot exercise expectant faith in the promises of Christ, the Great Physician, then all such should send for a doctor. Praise God for the many noble physicians in our land who go forth day or night, in good or bad weather, to relieve suffering. Many often drive miles to serve poor people, though they know they will not receive a dollar. Among our physicians today are many noble men and women of God who believe in prayer, and always ask God's help before they prescribe or perform an operation. May God bless them, and no advocate of divine healing should ever say or write an unkind word against them. If Christian people are sick, and for any reason cannot meet God's conditions for receiving divine healing by faith, then let them get a physician, and the sooner the better.

James 1:17 says that *"Every good and perfect gift is from above"* and I believe that medical science on the most part does a lot of good for humanity and is from God. Obviously God is about keeping people alive as long as possible in order for them to hear the gospel and increase their chances of being saved. Satan is about shortening folk's lives in order to get them to hell sooner. Therefore, the practice of medical science to preserve life is from God. Medicine can be a great ally by diminishing pain in order for believers to focus on healing scriptures and release the healing grace of God through faith. In other cases, medical science actually keeps people alive like those suffering under diabetes or heart conditions. This way, in the meantime, they can focus on the ultimate solution of receiving a permanent healing from God through faith in His Word.

It is not faith or wisdom to tell a person dependent on life-preserving medical care to stop receiving such treatment as a prerequisite to be healed. This is not faith but presumption and foolishness. Unless a manifestation of the Spirit according to 1 Corinthians 12 is in operation (Gifts of Healings or Working of Miracles or Special faith) for an instantaneous healing, a patient should continue taking their medicine until their own faith in God's Word concerning healing reaches such a point where it becomes unnecessary for them to continue taking their treatment. In other words, in the process of time their faith in God's word weans them off and replaces the medical treatment with a permanent healing from God.

I only have issue with the notion of leaving God out of our everyday life- especially in the area of healing. If a Christian goes their entire life without making any effort to receive from God; only trusting in man for their solutions, this is a grave problem. However, we can leverage and take advantage of human inventions from God as a stop-gap for assistance on the road of faith. In time we can learn to become completely dependent and reliant upon the grace of God's redemption through faith in His Word; trusting God to meet all our needs in this life- spiritual, mental, financial, social etc.

5. The Man Born Blind

Here is a choice religious notion: those who espouse to "suffering sickness and disease for the glory of God" will use the following passage to support their assertion:

John 9:1-4
As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "<u>but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life</u>. As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.

We cannot read into this passage that God selectively picks certain individuals for some esoteric (mysterious) reason to display some spiritual work in their lives and those around them- the Bible does not support such a conclusion. Common belief at that time was that the parents had sinned in such a way as to incur the wrath of God upon their children- Exodus 20:5-6. Just read Ezekiel chapter eighteen, which clarifies that whole idea. That is why the disciples asked in John 9:2, *"Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"* What Jesus says next is what many folks misunderstand in John 9:3, *"but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life."*

Therefore, some people reason from this verse that the man was born blind in order that God might get glory from it. But Jesus went on to say in John 9:4, *"As long as it is day, we must <u>do the work</u> of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work."* Well, the works of God weren't made manifest in that blind man until Christ did what He was sent to do (Heal), not in making him blind in the first place. Jesus healed the man's blindness. So "the works" that Jesus was referring to was healing, not the man's blindness. Jesus came to destroy and undo what the devil has done to humanity through the fall of man in bringing sickness, disease and deformity to plague mankind.

6. What About Lazarus?

Someone might ask, "What about Lazarus? Doesn't the Bible say he was sick for the glory of God?" No, people just put their own interpretation on that. Remember when Jesus got word that Lazarus was sick? Jesus purposely waited instead of hurrying to His friend's bedside. Then He told his disciples, *"...This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it"* John 11:4. Later when Jesus arrived in Bethany with His disciples, Lazarus had been dead four days. Lazarus' sister Martha told Jesus that if He had been there, her brother would not have died. Then Jesus told her that her brother would rise again.

John 11:24-26
Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

Shortly after this, Martha protested Christ's command to roll away Lazarus's gravestone. She knew that after four days, his body would have already begun to decompose and stink. But notice the Lord's response in John 11:40, *"Then Jesus said, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the* ***glory of God****?'"*

Jesus was really telling Martha that she had not yet seen the glory of God. Martha couldn't have seen the glory of God in her brother's death, because God's glory hadn't been made manifest yet. The glory of God was not manifested in Lazarus being sick and dying. The glory of God was manifested in Lazarus being resurrection and healed! Lazarus not only had to be resurrected, but he also had to be healed of whatever had caused his death. If he wasn't also healed, he would have died again immediately. God is glorified through healing and deliverance, not through sickness and suffering!

7. God does not Discipline His Children through Sickness

It is true that the Bible says in Hebrews 12:6, *"Because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."* However, it does not say, "Whom the Lord loves He also makes them sick in order to teach them a lesson!" It is a mistake to take a small portion of Scripture and try to prove something. There is no reference to sickness in this text, and there is no implication of sickness or disease in the word "disciplines" in the original Greek.

The full meaning of this word can be gleaned from the writings of Dr. Robert Young, a recognized Greek scholar, and W. E. Vine, author of An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words. We learn from them that "discipline" literally means to child train, educate, or teach. Just as small children need to be taught and corrected so that they can grow to be healthy children and adults, baby Christians need to be taught and corrected with the Word of God so that they can grow to be spiritually healthy Christians. God's children need to be disciplined and governed, which is what the word "discipline" means in the original Greek.

8. How does God Discipline His Children?

Just a note about the subject of "Inspiration" which I will cover in more detail later on, the Bible is given by inspiration, but not everything that is recorded in the Bible is inspiring from God- in other words, suitable for making doctrine for us to follow. Neither Satan, Job or his three friends spoke by inspiration of God. They gave utterances to their own opinions. All that Inspiration vouches for is that no one of them was misrepresented, but that each one spoke the sentiments that are attributed to him in Scripture.

Therefore, what is said gives insight into the character, activities, and motives of the devil and men. Remember, that what they said is inspired by God but **only** in the sense that what they said was **accurately recorded** as reliable information for our benefit to refer to.

Even though the author of the Book of Job is unknown, it was not written by Job but was a written account of his life- detailing what he said and did. Also, it is said that the Book of Job is the oldest book in the Bible. The Bible is a progressive revelation of God to man, Job had the least amount of light to work with. Job 1:1-2, *"In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil."* Therefore, when Job made the following statement:

Job 5:17-18
"Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal."

He was speaking from his own personal perspective and perception- it was his opinion and not the truth. As we read the book of Job, we come to find out, not everything was as it appeared to be to Job. For we found out that it was the devil behind all of Job's troubles not God:

Job 2:7
So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head.

Correct Bible interpretation practices are found in Scripture interpreting Scripture. We will establish throughout this series that the notion that Job had concerning God's form of discipline, in making people sick just so He can heal them is flat wrong and will be disproved over and over again. Children must be disciplined, corrected, and trained in love. One meaning of the word "chasten" is to educate. Parents send their children to school so they can be educated. But, again, parents don't tell the teacher, "If my child doesn't act right, just knock his eye out or break his leg." That isn't the way to educate a child. And that's not how God educates His children either!

2 Timothy 3:14-17
But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

God uses His Word to teach, rebuke, correct and train us in righteousness in order to be thoroughly equipped for every good work according to 2 Timothy 3:14-17. I am not seeing what the devil throws at us: sickness, trials, tests and temptations listed here. Even though God does turn around for good what the devil means for evil, God is not the author of those evil circumstances, nor does He send them into our lives- James 1:2-3; Romans 8:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:18.

Matthew 7:7-11
"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

We wouldn't need any other scripture in the Bible to preach divine healing (and we have plenty of them) than verse 11 above. Let me show you what I mean. How many of you parents want your children to be sick? Not one of you. You'll do everything in the world that you can to provide for them so that your children will eat well, live well, and stay well. Well, what is Jesus saying in Matthew 7:7-11? He's saying that if earthly parents know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more our Heavenly Father give good things! God gives His children far beyond what earthly parents could even think or do! That's because, *"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows,"* James 1:17-18. God doesn't change. He always gives good gifts!

We've already learned that healing is connected with doing good. The Bible says, *"how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around* **doing good and healing** *all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him"* Acts 10:38. The Bible tells us that healing is good, but we don't have to read the Bible to know that's true. We just have good sense, we know that. Have you ever been sick? Have you ever been well? Which one is better? Being well is much better, isn't it? Healing is a good gift from God, and healing belongs to God's children- it is the children's bread!

9. "If it be Thy Will" Concerning Healing

Other saints are not healed because they always ask with those fatal words "if it be thy will." Some people just tack the phrase "If it be Thy will" on the end of their prayers out of tradition. They think they're being humble, but they're really robbing themselves of the blessings of God. Anything the Bible promises us or says belongs to us is ours. We don't have to put an "if" in our prayers when we pray according to God's Word! That's why praying, "Lord, if it be Thy will, please heal me" is unnecessary. God has plainly told us in His Word that it is His will to heal us. A sinner wouldn't pray, "Lord, save me, if it be Thy will." That kind of prayer would be ridiculous, because God's Word declares that it is His will for them to be saved, the same goes for the area of healing.

We cannot blame them, for they read in such erroneous books such as *The Healing Question*, pages 127-128 the following:

> "The most essential element in believing prayer is to ask according to His will. It does not say, 'If we ask anything according to our will He heareth us,' but 'If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us' (1 John 5:14). Without this, prayer is not real prayer, nor real faith, but dictation to God, which must be more obnoxious to Him than when a child comes to an earthly father and insists on having that which the father knows would only hurt his child. The highest prayer which lips of clay can pray is the prayer the Son of God prayed in dark Gethsemane, 'Nevertheless not my will but thy will be done.' And thus the child of God prays still, and such a prayer is acceptable and well pleasing in His sight."

Ephesians 6:18, *"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests."* This plainly states that there are all "kinds" of prayer meaning plural; in other words there is not just one prayer for all situations. Just as a carpenter does not use a hammer for all cases neither does a Christian when it comes to prayer.

The prayer that Jesus had prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, was a prayer of "Consecration" as it pertained to God's will for redemption to be fulfilled in His death, burial and resurrection. We also can pray this prayer as we express our willingness to follow God's plan and direction for our lives in the future as well. The **only** time and place for "if it be thy will" is when we pray the "Prayer of Consecration." James provides an example of this as it pertains to making future plans; we should always dedicate ourselves to God's will and not our own.

James 4:13-15
Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."

If we are thinking of changing where we live, and are not yet certain that this change is God's will for our lives, we ought to pray, "Lord, I would like to move to this other city and do this or that, and perhaps you don't want me to remain here. Lord, I only want to do your will for my life, so I ask you for wisdom in this situation in Jesus' Name." This is the only thing we can do when we are uncertain of God's will concerning His plans for our lives.

However, when it comes to receiving healing, it would be the wrong tool or prayer to use the "Prayer of Consecration"; rather we are to use the "Prayer of Faith" as mentioned in James 5:15 NKJV, *"And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up."*

With such false teaching prevalent today as this, it's no wonder that the majority of saints know little or nothing regarding divine healing. When the opponents of divine healing quote 1 John 5:14 so frequently, why do they never quote John 15:7 (ask for anything based on the Word); 1 John 3:22 (ask for anything while obeying His commands); and Matthew 15:21.28 (concerning the faith element)? The only reason these opponents of divine healing do not quote these passages is because they prove their teaching regarding prayer to be absolutely false, and they are too prejudiced against divine healing to face the truth of God squarely.

Andrew Murray says, "It simply is impossible to pray with faith when we are not sure that we are asking according to the will of God. As long as one prays thus, inserting the proviso, 'if it be thy will,' one is praying with submission, but this is not the prayer of faith."

Then no one can possibly pray the prayer of faith which saves the sick (James 5:15) and put in the proviso "if it be thy will." When one prays for the sick and inserts, "if it be your will," they are virtually saying, "Lord, I do not know whether you desire to heal this person or let him die. But whatever you do Lord will please me, so do not let my request to have him live make any difference to your sovereign will whatsoever." Such a prayer as this reveals fatalism, not faith.

Mark 11:22-25
"Have faith in God," Jesus answered. "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."

Note the words *"and does not doubt in his heart."* To pray the prayer of faith, Christ says, we must ask and not doubt in our hearts. No one can possibly pray this prayer of faith unless he knows for a certainty that it is God's will to heal the one being prayed for. When we inject the proviso "if it be thy will," it is always an acknowledgment that we are not praying the prayer of faith, but that we have a doubt in our own heart; and James 1:7 says, *"That man [who prays with doubt in his heart] should not think he will receive anything from the Lord."* When we pray the prayer of faith for healing, we must believe that we have already received that for which we have prayed for, and have no doubt about this fact (Mark 11:22-24). But such a prayer cannot possibly be offered unless we know it is God's will to heal.

Suppose you are ministering to an unbeliever about Jesus and he asks you, "Doesn't God know whether I will be saved or lost?" "Yes," you reply. Then he says, "Well, if I am going to be saved, I will be saved, and if I am going to be lost, I will be lost, so it is all up to God. I have no responsibility in the matter." That is true Calvinism right there- there is a big difference between foreknowledge and predestination. You would call this fatalism, not faith. And you would explain to him that to be saved he must meet God's conditions for salvation; which is simple faith in calling on the name of Jesus. Likewise, when we pray for the sick and insert the proviso "if it be thy will," we are placing all the responsibility of that healing on God and assuming absolutely none for ourselves. We are forgetting that Christ has set down certain hard and fast conditions (principles of faith and walking in love) which must be met before He will answer prayer- we will cover this in greater detail in the next unit.

Have you ever stopped to think about the fact that the New Birth, the remission of sin, belongs to the worst sinner just as much as it belongs to the Christian? The remission of sins belongs to people in jail and prison – even those who are on "death row" – just as much as it belongs to the most faithful churchgoer. Why? Because the Bible says in John 3:16, *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that <u>whoever</u> believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."* Jesus paid for salvation for every man, woman, boy, and girl who would ever live on this earth. But people must believe on Jesus and receive Him as their own Savior before salvation can benefit them. So, you see, salvation belongs to the sinner. Then why doesn't every sinner get saved? It's either because no one has shared the Gospel with them, so they don't know about salvation, or because someone has told them, but they didn't believe it or accept it.

The same thing is true with healing. One reason many Christians haven't received healing is they haven't heard the Word on healing; they don't know healing belongs to them already. They thought they had to stay sick, but healing still belongs to them. There are other reasons why Christians don't get healed as well, but the point is, healing belongs to them. We know it's the anointing (Holy Spirit) that destroys every yoke of sickness and disease. But actually, the anointing is released by acting on God's anointed Word – that is, by believing it and applying it to our own lives through faith.

Isaiah 10:27 KJV
And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.

Read Matthew 21:22 Jesus said, *"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."* If we were to add to Jesus' words and insert "if it be thy will," then we cannot ask "believing," for we put all the responsibility on God- it's up to God whether it's your will or not to be healed this time.

Healing is not One-Sided – it's by <u>His</u> Grace, and through <u>our</u> Faith!

In Mark 9:22 there is an account of a father looking for deliverance for his demon-possessed son. He makes a statement akin to "If it by thy will" by saying "If you can" to Jesus. I love the Lord's response:

Mark 9:21-23
Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?" "From childhood," he answered. "It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us." "If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes."

Mark 9:24-25
Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the evil spirit. "You deaf and mute spirit," he said, "I command you, come out of him and never enter him again."

The man admitted his unbelief to the Lord and Jesus immediately delivered his son. Jesus let the man know that the "if" (the responsibility of the cure) did not lie solely with Him, but also with the father as well. How easy it is for us to forget this. Again, read Mark 11:22-24, and see how God puts all responsibility for answered prayer on us. He says here, as plainly as language can express it, that our faith in God's Word is what moves the circumstances of life out of the way. When we speak God's Word, we are automatically declaring God's will on the matter, so we don't have to wonder about it.

Just because we read Matthew 8:17 doesn't mean it's going to work for us automatically. A lot of times people think God's Word is just going to work for them without having to mix faith with it. For example, some Christians will read Matthew 8:17, *"...He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases,"* and expect the truth of that verse to just fall on them. They'll say, "Well, if that verse is so, why am I not healed?"

They're not experiencing divine healing and health because they don't really believe and accept God's Word. The truth of God's Word won't do them any good until they know it, believe it, and accept it. In other words, they think they don't have to lift a finger in the matter, but that's not true. The blessings of God must be appropriated by faith according to God's written Word. In other words, we must receive by faith the blessings that God has already provided for us in His Word. It doesn't just happen automatically.

If certain scholars are right in saying we should always insert the proviso "if it be thy will," when we pray, then why did Jesus say to the two blind men in Matthew 9:29, *"According to your faith will it be done to you"*? Why didn't He just say, "According to my will be it unto you"? Because God has placed the responsibility for answered prayer on us and not upon Himself- God's will is already settled on this matter. Now it's up to us to mix the promises of God with our faith in order to receive. God does not show favoritism nor has He changed His mind about healing- for all to be healed and made well.

Luke 5:12-13
While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, "Lord, if you are willing , you can make me clean." Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" And immediately the leprosy left him.

If it was ever God's will that any of His saints should remain sick, would He have given us that great command in James:

James 5:14-15 NKJV
Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick [physically sick], and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

Note the word "let him call for" (*proskalesastho*). This is the 1st Aorist, imperative, middle of *proskaleo*, I call. In the middle voice this, word means "to call or summon for one's own benefit or aid." The Aorist imperative demands immediate action. It demands that the command be executed and be made a past event at once. Here, then, we have a direct command from God Himself that every saint, when sick, should at once call to his/her aid the elders of the Church, and just as direct a command (imperative, Aorist) that the elders should pray over the sick person, having first anointed him with oil in the Name of the Lord.

Now some of us are fully persuaded that, if it were ever God's will that His saints should remain sick, in place of here saying, *"And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up,"* James 5:15 would have read, "And the prayer of faith shall [if it be God's will] save the sick, and the Lord shall [if it be His will] raise him up." Since God did not here insert this proviso when giving us this gracious command, why should we insert it?

10. Don't Spiritualize the Situation

When tragedy hits a Christian, the biggest mistake they can make is to spiritualize and reason out the cause for the calamity. Suppose a fine Christian lady experienced a driving accident that left her paralyzed, changing her life dramatically, spiritualizing the situation would sound something like this:

> "God knows what He is doing. I am being made Christ like, and God is being glorified in my infirmities, more than He would be glorified in my physical healing. The same was true of Paul with his thorn in his flesh. We may not fully understand how this is to our benefit or how God can be glorified in this way, but He is. There are special cases in which God demonstrates His Sovereign love through giving patience and strength instead of healing. Sometimes, He is healing and perfecting our spiritual lives first."

It's unfortunate when bad things happen to good people, but show me Scripture in the New Testament, where such a line of thinking would be supported by the Bible. It just isn't there. For one thing, Paul's thorn was not sickness and disease, but persecution! When people fail to get healed, they have to come up with a reason to explain their persisting conditions. Often times, their rationale sure sounds religious, but is not Bible; as a consequence they are held further captive by religious ideology. Rather, let's side with the truth, that God's will is to be healed all the time and without exception. And when we don't see a manifestation of healing, let's simply admit we missed it somewhere, and get back in the Word and ask God for wisdom in what changes we need to make- knowing that neither God nor His Word ever changes. We are the ones in need of change, to get in line with Biblical principles- the Word works when we work it according to directions. We do ourselves and others a huge injustice when we dismiss God's healing promises for the Thomas kind of faith when we walk by sight like Thomas instead of by faith- 2 Corinthians 5:7, *"We live by faith , not by sight."*

John 20:24-29
Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

11. Don't Limit God

Even people who deny God's promise of healing will turn to Him for healing when they get ill- they'll give it a whirl so-to-speak. Bible faith does not give God a try- it believes! Others deny that God will heal certain kinds of illness. For example, if they have an emotional problem they don't go to church for prayer, they go to a mental health clinic or psychiatrist. If a friend or relative goes insane, they would never call a pastor to pray for that person. They seem to think that God can ease pain or heal a broken family, but mental disorders are too big for Him! So they cut themselves off from God's blessings.

Here is my favorite, those precious folks who think God can't cure the common cold? They testify about what God can do for serious illnesses, then turn around and say, "Guess I'd better not send my children to school this week. They'll catch the flu from everybody else." Or they may say, "I'll probably come down with a cold, like everybody at work. It's that time of year you know." They might as well be saying, "Come on in Mr. Devil, slap that ole flu on me…" and the devil will oblige them and say, "You asked for it, so open wide!" What is really sad is when they get wiped out by the flu, they will whine to God as to why they are sick and then say, "Okay God, if you want me to suffer like poor ole Job; you give and take away, blessed be the Name of the Lord." Meanwhile the Lord is probably shaking His head, grieved that the healing He had bought and paid for by His blood is going to waste and in vain.

If we are the children of God, called to be different, let's start acting and talking like it. Let's not continue saying what the rest of the world is saying, who are in darkness and ignorance. Let's not talk about dying young, getting old, being tired, losing our memory and getting sick; we don't need to be expecting a heart attack to strike us down, or a tumor to kill us- even if it is in our natural family history. The new family we belong to does not have any such hereditary sickness passed down to us. As a matter of fact, we have inherited from our Father, Christ the healer, strength, mental vitality and life that much more abundantly- John 10:10. With that said, let's align our speaking in line with God's Word and get Bible results in our lives!

12. The Hindrance of Pain

Ill people become depressed very easily, they grow weary of suffering daily. They tend to feel defeated by their illness; they fail to look to the Lord, who has already conquered their illness. Visit the cancer ward in your local hospital, talk with some of the patients, and you'll see what I mean. It's not easy to struggle with pain for months, even years, without seeing some improvement. After a while, the sufferer wants to give up- in the natural this is understandable. This is where medical science can be a great help concerning healing. Medication can greatly minimize the pain so the patient can focus on getting into God's Word and obtain healing from the Great Physician- Jesus Christ!

Philippians 4:4-7
Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

In a case like that, healing can only begin when the sufferer shakes off the depression and begins expecting to be healed. The Bible tells us to fight the good fight of the faith (1Timothy 1:18; 6:12); only having a fighting, tenacious spirit through faith in God's Word can the enemy be defeated. One cannot surrender to that illness, but must choose to get well and never let go of that goal. When a person gives up hope, they are truly in a hopeless situation. That is where other believers in the Lord play a vital role to encourage and support us during tough times so that we do not let go of our faith and hope in the Lord!

Psalms 118:17 AMP
I shall not die but live, and shall declare the works and recount the illustrious acts of the Lord.

Romans 15:4-6
For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I have been with Christians who were terminally ill and hear them say those fateful words, "I guess it's just the Lord's will for me to die." Yet they were still relatively young, gifted capable people who could give many more years to the Lord's work. I realize this is easier said than done, but the reality is that they gave up too easily. They surrendered to the pain. They let their illness become the master of their lives. Either pain is our god, or God is our God. Either we allow circumstances of life to become our lord, or we allow Jesus to be Lord over our circumstances- the choice is ours. God made us to be free moral agents with the power to choose what we will do with our lives. But it's amazing at the choices most people make! We can choose to believe in God, but most people choose not to because they have not been properly taught- rather all they have been given by the professional clergy is a steady diet of human psychology, doubt and unbelief. It's no wonder their faith is weak when the trials, tests and temptations of life come.

If they were taught correctly in the Word their response to weakness would be, Joel 3:10 NKJV, *"Let the weak say, 'I am strong.'"* And they would say, *"I am strong in the Lord and in the power of His might…"* according to Ephesians 6:10. They would boldly declare in the face of all opposition, *"I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength…"* in Philippians 4:13.

Isaiah 40:29-31
He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Folks can choose to be saved from their sins, but most people choose not to. Christians can choose to be healed of their illnesses, but most people choose not to. But you may say that most Christians want to be healed but just aren't. Consider this, many people in the world acknowledge a historical Jesus, but do not have a personal revelation of Him in their heart as Lord and Savior through faith in God's Word.

The same could be said of countless Christians who mentally acquiesce to a Healing Jesus but do not believe it in their hearts. All throughout the gospels, Jesus contributed folks to being healed or receiving a miracle in their lives due to their faith. It's by God's grace through our faith that got us born again (Ephesians 2:8-9), and it's the same biblical principles of faith in God's Word that releases God's grace and power that is at work in the lives of those who believe. I will cover what it means to believe with the heart later on in this study.

This is where a full understanding of the "Authority of the Believer" becomes vital in learning how to resist the devil in the Name of Jesus and to stand on God's Word. We rise up in the power of God and speak to those mountains in our lives and tell them to get out of the way! When it comes to the works of darkness that try to oppress us in this life, they can only do so if we allow them to. We hold the key to unlocking the victory Jesus has already won for us and releasing it into our lives.

13. Every Christian should be Healed, but they aren't!

One Bible teacher said,

"We must add, that if it were true that Christ died for our sicknesses, then His atoning work in this respect is a failure, the choicest saints on earth today are the thousands of shut-ins, who suffer in patience and sing their sweet songs in the night." (The Healing Question, pages 74-75.)

Dear brother and sister, did Christ die to save all sinners? Yes, should be the reply. Then every sinner in this world has a blood-bought right to be saved according to 1Timothy 2:1-4; 2Peter 3:9. But are all sinners saved? No, only a very small percentage-Matthew 7:13-14. Then, according to the writer just quoted above, Christ's atoning work in this respect also is a tremendous failure. Why are not all sinners saved, since they have a blood bought right to be saved? Because for whatever reason, they fail to meet God's conditions as set forth in John 1:12-13; John 3:16,18,36; John 5:24; and Romans l0:9-10. It is just the same with bodily healing. Every saint has a blood-bought right to be healed, but thousands do not know that they must exercise the very same appropriating faith in the bruised body of Christ for their healing as they formerly exercised in His shed blood for the remission of their sins.

In Luke 7:50, Christ says to a poor sinful woman, *"Your faith has saved you...."* The word here for "has saved" is *sesoken*, the perfect, 3rd singular of sozo, I save. In Luke 8:48, Christ says to the poor woman who had an issue of blood twelve years, *"Your faith has healed you..."* The word here for "has healed you" is this same word, *sesoken*, the perfect, 3rd singular of sozo, I save. This, then, is positive proof that the very same faith that saves the soul also will heal the body. Many saints do not understand this because of ignorance or false teaching, and therefore they are not healed.

14. Why I Lost My Healing

Here is a story of a person who lost their healing and the spiritual counsel that was given in response.

"I felt perfectly well for several days after you prayed for me. Then all the symptoms came back and I have been in hell ever since. Can you tell me what the difficulty is?" "Yes, it is very simple. You received your healing through another's faith. The adversary took advantage of your lack of faith and brought back the symptoms, camouflaged the entire thing and you were filled with fear instead of faith. Instead of rising resolutely and meeting the adversary with the Word, and commanding his power broken in Jesus' Name, you yielded. Why did you yield you may ask, because you had no foundation in your life. You were like the man who built his house upon the sand. The storm came and destroyed it. The thing for you to do is to get to know the Lord yourself through the Word."

When we know that *"By His stripes you are healed"* and we know it like we know two plus two is four, then the adversary will have no power over us. When we know the power and authority of the Name of Jesus and that we have a legal right to use it, when the adversary lays siege to us, we will not be filled with fear. We will simply laugh at him and say "Satan, did you know you were whipped? Leave my body now in Jesus' Name" and he has to leave. No one can maintain one's healing which has come as a result of another's faith unless their own faith is developed through the Word, so they can maintain their own rights in the Redemption of Christ.

DVD still: The Passion Of The Christ

Unit 6 Review:

If we're not always going to know why some folks didn't get healed, what can we be sure of?

Does God allow mature believers to carry baby Christians on their faith for a time?

Are there requirements on our part that need to be met in order to be healed?

What is so damaging about the traditions of man?

Does God discipline His children through sickness and disease?

What is the big danger of spiritualizing circumstances of life and pinning it on God as His will?

E. Understanding Permissive Tense

1. The Curse of the Law: Deuteronomy 28:15-22, 27-29, 35, 58-61

We can readily see from these Scriptures in Deuteronomy chapter 28 that sickness is a curse of the law. The dreadful diseases enumerated here- in fact, every sickness and every disease, according to the 61st verse are part of the punishment for breaking God's law. We see specifically that the curse of the law was extensive, and included disease of every kind; financial ruin, destruction of the family, lack of peace or mental illness. We can see clearly that the curse of the law included every disease known and every disease that there was, whether recorded in the Book or not, from verse 61, *"Also every sickness and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, will the Lord bring [permit] upon you until you are destroyed."* Reading these Scriptures in the Bible would lead us to believe that God Himself puts sickness and affliction upon His people, for it reads, "The Lord will send on you…"

2. Permissive versus Causative Tense

There are many who oppose divine healing in Christian circles and they will point out all kinds of scriptures to support their case. Note that the majority of them are found in the Old Testament. It is important to make that distinction because the Bible is progressive revelation in that an increase of light and revelation is given to mankind progressively from the oldest book, Job to the New Testament epistles or letters to the churches (Romans to Revelation). Here are a few Bible examples that these folks will use to try to prove their ideology that God does not always heal folks and is actually the cause of sickness and disease.

Deuteronomy 32:39
See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand.

1 Samuel 2:6-7
The Lord brings death and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and raises up. The Lord sends poverty and wealth; he humbles and he exalts.

Hosea 6:1
Come, let us return to the Lord. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds.

Job 5:18- For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal.

Deuteronomy 28:27-29
The Lord will afflict you with the boils of Egypt and with tumors, festering sores and the itch, from which you cannot be cured. The Lord will afflict you with madness, blindness and confusion of mind. At midday you will grope about like a blind man in the dark. You will be unsuccessful in everything you do; day after day you will be oppressed and robbed, with no one to rescue you.

Numbers 11:33
But while the meat was still between their teeth and before it could be consumed, the anger of the Lord burned against the people, and he struck them with a severe plague.

1 Samuel 25:38- About ten days later, the Lord struck Nabal and he died.

2 Kings 15:5
The Lord afflicted the king with leprosy until the day he died, and he lived in a separate house.

2 Chronicles 21:18-19
After all this, the Lord afflicted Jehoram with an incurable disease of the bowels. In the course of time, at the end of the second year, his bowels came out because of the disease, and he died in great pain.

Dr. Robert Young, was a Hebrew and Greek Scholar (Old Testament was written in Hebrew, New Testament was written in Greek), and the author of *Hints and Helps to Bible Interpretation*. He says in this book, that in Exodus 15:26, the literal Hebrew *reads "... I will permit to be put upon thee none of these diseases which I permitted to be brought upon the Egyptians, for I am the Lord that heals you."* The original Hebrew of these scriptures was in the permissive tense, but because the English language has no corresponding permissive tense, the verbs were translated in the causative tense. The KEY to understanding these different passages of Scripture lies in knowing that the active verbs in Hebrew have been translated in the causative tense when they should have been translated in the permissive tense. So, Deuteronomy 28:27 should have been translated something like, *"The Lord will **allow/permit** these plagues to be brought upon you..."*

So please keep in mind that Old Testament Scripture language frequently attributes directly to God what He merely permits. Many other verbs were translated in the causative sense in the KJV. For example, Isaiah 45:7, "Does God create evil?" Well the answer would be no. That would make God a devil. God may permit evil, but He does not create it. If God commits or creates evil, then He has no right whatsoever to judge man for sinning. In taking the whole counsel of God's Word into consideration when interpreting these Scriptures, God is not responsible for evil, He only permits evil. There is a vast difference between commission and permission.

Isaiah 45:7 KJV
I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things.

Amos 3:6 KJV
Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?

In speaking of the Passover night when the children of Israel were in Egypt, notice that Exodus 12:12 gives the impression that God personally went through the land of Egypt to deal out judgment. However, when we read down to verse 23, we see that when the blood was applied to a house, the Lord would not permit the "Destroyer" access to that home. Well, who is the "Destroyer" then? Let's look at Revelation 9:11, *"They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon."* There is a small letter beside the name "Apollyon" in my Bible, and the interpretation for that name is "Destroyer." The king spoken of here in the book of Revelation is Satan or Beelzebub, being interpreted, "Lord of the flies" in Luke 11:15-18. So who was directly responsible for the deaths of the first born in Egypt, that's right it was the devil, God merely was allowing or permitting it to happen.

Exodus 12:12
"On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn — both men and animals — and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord.

Exodus 12:23
When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.

Hebrews 11:28
By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.

What we see over and over again throughout Scripture is that God is passing judgment that allows the destroyer access to people in the Old and New Testaments. So often when studying the nation of Israel, when they backslid from God, the Lord would warn them of impending judgment and allow them a period of time to repent. If they ignore God's warnings and refuse to repent, the Lord simply lifts His hand of protection over them and their enemies rush in like a flood. Satan through these enemies of Israel would come in like a plague and kill, steal and destroy them.

Judges 2:14
In his anger against Israel the Lord handed them over to raiders who plundered them. He sold them to their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist.

Psalms 78:61-62
He sent [the ark of] his might into captivity, his splendor into the hands of the enemy. He gave his people over to the sword; he was very angry with his inheritance.

Revelation 2:21-22
I (Jesus) have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways.

When the children of Israel had enough suffering and misery, they would repent of their ways and God in His mercy, faithfulness and loving kindness would restore His hand of protection and deliver them from the hand of Satan and their enemies. God would restore their health, prosperity and protection until in the course of time, the people would forget and give into the temptations of the devil who was looking to regain access and put them through hell on earth all over again- so the vicious cycle of Blessing, Backslidden, Warning, Judgment, Repentance, Blessing… would continue all throughout the history of Israel. Now 1 Corinthians chapter 10 was written to point out this scenario so we would learn from Israel's mistakes and understand how sin opens the door to the devil to kill, steal and destroy. God permits it because He is not about to become a willing accomplice to our sin when we refuse to repent. Satan could challenge God's justice if the Lord refused to turn unrepentant children of God over to him to be judged.

1 Corinthians 5:4-5
When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.

1 Timothy 1:19-20
Holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith. Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.

1 Corinthians 11:29-32
For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.

So we are seeing in Scripture, to be judged by the Lord, is to be turned over to the hand of the enemy. And what does the enemy promptly do? Destroy our lives, because that is what he has been waiting to do all along, he has just been waiting for the right opportunity when individuals had expended God's mercy for them to repent, and like a lion he pounces on them with sickness, calamites the like. Sin opens the door to the devil when we fail to repent, that is not just talking about sexual sin, but giving into fear or unforgiveness as well- Romans 14:23; James 4:17. We can open the door through the simple admission of ignorance and a lack of knowledge. That too is a way of opening the door; it does not have to be legitimate as far as the devil is concerned. The Bible does not say he can devour anyone he wants to, 1 Peter 5:8, but states that he is looking for someone that he can devour because they allow him to. If we resist Him through the blood of the Lamb and speaking the Word, he can't devour us- Praise the Lord!

Luke 4:13- When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

1 Peter 5:8
Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Some people think God is quick to judgment, not so, just look at how He dealt with Israel, who were more times than not, steeped in rebellion, idol worship, sacrificing their children to demons and the like. Still God was so merciful and longsuffering, He gave them years to repent and sent prophets to warn them. However, they would kill the prophets and what would God do, send them another prophet and they would kill him. What would you do if you were God? Well, thank God you are not!

2 Kings 17:16-17
They forsook all the commands of the Lord their God and made for themselves two idols cast in the shape of calves, and an Asherah pole. They bowed down to all the starry hosts, and they worshiped Baal. They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire. They practiced divination and sorcery and sold themselves to do evil in the eyes of the Lord, provoking him to anger.

Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. **Matthew 23:34-38**

When King Saul backslid, in 1Samuel 16:14, what actually happened was that Saul's sin broke fellowship with God, and God permitted the evil spirit from the devil to trouble him. The original Hebrew of these Scriptures was in the permissive tense, but because the English language has no corresponding permissive tense, the verbs were translated in the causative. No, God does not send plagues and sickness upon His people as these verses seem to indicate. God's Word does not teach that these things come directly from God. When God's people broke His commandments, they no longer were under His divine protection. All He could do was permit the devil to bring those afflictions upon them. Their sin and wrongdoing brought those dreadful plagues upon them.

The key to understanding these different passages of Scripture lies in knowing that the active verbs in the Hebrew have been translated in the causative sense when they should have been translated in the permissive sense. Someone might say, "Well, maybe God didn't exactly send the sicknesses on you, but he permitted it," implying that since He permitted it, He had some purpose in it. It was not God's will or purpose that an entire generation of the children of Israel died in the desert because of unbelief; they never made it into the Promise Land. Just because God permits something doesn't mean He has a purpose in it. For example, it was not God's will for Israel to have an earthly king- God was to be their king. Remember God has given us a free will, and He will allow what we allow in our lives.

1 Samuel 8:4-9
So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. They said to him, "You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have." But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the Lord. And the Lord told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will do."

So Samuel went back to the people and warned them about how a king would tax them and conscript their sons into the army and the like. However, it made no difference, even though God's perfect will for Israel was to be a theocracy, where God was their king, making them unique in the world, but they wouldn't have it- so much for walking by faith. So God permitted them to have a human king, but it was not His will for them nor did He have some mystical purpose in it. The Lord's response to Samuel was in essence, "they asked for it, and now they are going to have it, but they will regret it, missing my perfect will for their nation."

1 Samuel 8:19-22
But the people refused to listen to Samuel. "No!" they said. "We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles." When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the Lord. The Lord answered, "Listen to them and give them a king."

God only permits sickness to come. Sickness is not His will. God's will is for us to walk in His statutes and keep His commandments. Then He will take sickness away from the midst of us. As I said before, sickness comes as a result of man's disobedience, ignorance or a lack of faith.

So the plague of death that came upon Egypt did not come until God withdrew His hand of protection and permitted it. His permission, however, should not be confused with commission. For example, God permits people to establish bars and nightclubs. He permits people to steal and kill. But He certainly doesn't commission those actions. There is a vast difference between permission and commission.

There is a vast difference between Permission and Commission!

Acts 2:23
This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

In other words, it was originally God's plan for Jesus to redeem us from sin and its effects and be mocked, flogged and crucified; so God allowed the devil to work through wicked men. When the Pharisees stirred up the high priesthood against Jesus, He said in John 8:44, *"You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire."* It was not the work of God that the Pharisees turned people against Jesus, even though God permitted it. But the fact that God permits wickedness doesn't mean that people have to commit sinful acts, any more than it means that people have to turn against Christ. Many people are crucifying Jesus afresh today because they are rejecting Him. Yet God doesn't commission them to reject Him; He just permits them to make their own choice – He gave man the free will to accept or reject His Son. Yet God in His foreknowledge knows in advance what choices people will make; that does not mean God makes these choices for them and predestinates them!

John 3:36
Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.

Deuteronomy 30:19
This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life , so that you and your children may live.

Now it's important to understand that even though He is left with no course but to judge His people of unrepentant sin, which simply means to be turned over to the enemy, so that he is given access; it did not please Him, nor was it His perfect will and it could have been avoided. In fact it grieves the Lord when He is left with no option but to pass judgment and give the enemy access. He does not do it willingly, it is not His perfect will, and it's not pleasing to Him.

So if it grieves Him to do it, why does He? Simple, He is the righteous judge of all the earth. Sin must be punished; just consider Jesus and what He endured- it was to satisfy God's justice and was the acceptable sacrifice for the payment of our sin. No matter how much God loves us, He will not pervert His justice for anyone. If we do not judge ourselves and do what is right in order to keep from being judged, then He has no option but to find us guilty and judge us, which gives the enemy access.

Lamentations 3:22-23, 31-33
Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. For men are not cast off by the Lord forever. Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love. For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to the children of men.

Ezekiel 18:23
Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? Declares the Sovereign Lord. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?

Ezekiel 33:11
Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?'

Hosea 11:8
"How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I treat you like Admah? How can I make you like Zeboiim? My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused.

Please consider this parable from the Lord; it illustrates a central truth that God gives people many opportunities to do the right thing before passing judgment.

Luke 13:6-9
Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?' "'Sir,' the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.'"

People read the Old Testament and sometimes get confused, they see God destroying this and God smiting that and they come away thinking God is mean. It's no wonder that the world has this one sided view of God as an austere unsympathetic and uncaring God who would just as well turn you into a smoking, greasy little stain on the ground than to look at you. However, they do not take the Scriptures in context. When in doubt, always stay on God's side, whether you understand it or not. God is a good God: loving, compassionate, merciful, fair and just. Remember, the devil is a slanderer, liar and a deceiver and will accuse God of being everything that He is not.

The devil will whisper in people's ears, "God let you down, God allowed that to happen" or "why didn't God do this, He can't be depended upon, He let you down…" Don't listen to the devil's trash talk about our Father! He would like to pervert His goodness and image in our hearts and minds, but if we stay with the Bible, the record is always straightened out- Good God versus bad devil. God has never failed because God is love, He is true to His Word and it's impossible for Him to lie or to fail us according to 1 Corinthians 13:8 AMP, *"Love never fails [never fades out or becomes obsolete or comes to an end]."* Have confidence in His goodness and character, we can count on Him; we are the ones who get ourselves out of His will. If God seems distant, who moved? It was not the Lord!

John 10:10 AMP
The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows).

F. Kicking Over Sacred Cows

First, I will share with you some keys to rightly dividing the Word of Truth. Then we're going to kick over some sacred cows. Many of the people of India worship cows, but would not dare eat them. The very thing God provided for food holds them in bondage. The blessing becomes a curse when they refuse to partake of it. There are some sacred cow scriptures in the Bible that are holding people in bondage. The Word of God was given to fulfill the needs in our life. But when people worship the scripture and wouldn't dare partake of the Bread of Life, then it holds them in bondage. These are certain preconceived ideas that become a curse because people don't rightly divide the Word of God.

1. Guidelines for Bible Interpretation

Historically the United States of America has a special agency that theoretically functions as the supreme board of interpretation for our land. That agency is called the Supreme Court. One of its primary tasks is to interpret the Constitution of the United States. The constitution is a written document that requires such interpretation. Originally the procedure of interpreting the Constitution followed the so-called grammatico-historical method. That is, the Constitution was interpreted by studying the words of the document itself in light of what those words meant when they were used at the time of the formulation of the document.

Since the work of Oliver Wendell Holmes the method of Constitutional interpretation has changed radically. The current crisis in law and public confidence in the nation's highest court is directly related to the underlying problem of method of interpretation. When the court interprets the Constitution in light of modern attitudes, it in effect changes the Constitution by means of reinterpretation. The net result is that in a subtle way the Court becomes a legislative (making policy) rather than interpretive agency.

The same kind of crisis has occurred with Biblical interpretation. When biblical scholars utilize the method of interpretation that involves "bringing the Bible up to date" by reinterpretation, the original meaning of Scripture is obscured and the message is brought into conformity with contemporary trends in opinion. Like some denominations that allow openly gay ministers to serve; trying to be inclusive and politically correct.

2. The Analogy of Faith

When the Reformers broke with Rome and claimed the view that the Bible was to be the supreme authority of the church, they were very careful to define basic principles of interpretation. The primary rule of Bible interpretation was called "the analogy of faith." The analogy of faith is the rule that Scripture is to interpret Scripture. In other words, Sacred Scripture is its own interpreter. This means, quite simply, that no part of Scripture can be interpreted in such a way as to render it in conflict with what is clearly taught elsewhere in Scripture. For example, if a given verse is capable of two renditions or variant interpretations and one of those interpretations goes against the rest of Scripture while the other is in harmony with it, then the latter interpretation must be used.

2 Corinthians 13:1
"Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."

3. Interpreting the Bible Literally

The Bible should be interpreted according to its literal sense. The term *literal* comes from the Latin *litera* meaning letter. To interpret something literally is to pay attention to the *litera* or to the letters and words which are being used. To interpret the Bible literally is to interpret it as *literature*. That is, the natural meaning of a passage is to be interpreted according to the normal rules of grammar, speech, syntax and context.

The Bible is a very special book, being uniquely inspired by the Holy Spirit, but that inspiration does not transform the letters of the words or the sentences of the passages into magical phrases. Under inspiration a noun remains a noun and a verb remains a verb. Questions do not become exclamations, and historical narratives do not become allegories to read into it interpretations that are not there.

4. Understanding Inspiration

There is much history and many personal observations recorded in the Bible. What we are assured of is that the record is true. The Holy Spirit directed and influenced the writers so that, by inspiration, they were kept from every error of fact and doctrine. The Bible records the words and acts of God, men and the devil. It is very important to take careful note of who is speaking and in what dispensation and covenant (Old or New) that it was written under.

WM, Evans has expressed it well:
Though all Scripture is inspired, it does not stamp with divine authority every sentence which it reports as uttered by the men of whom it speaks, nor does it mark with divine approval every action which it relates as performed by those with whose biographies it deals. In the book of Job, for example, Inspiration gives with equal accuracy the language of Jehovah, the words of Satan, and the speeches of Job and his three friends; but it does not therefore place them all on the same level of authority-responsible for their own utterances.

Neither Satan, Job or his three friends spoke by inspiration of God. They gave utterances to their own opinions; and all that Inspiration vouches for is that no one of them was misrepresented, but that each one spoke the sentiments that are attributed to him in Scripture. Therefore, what is said gives insight into the character, activities, and motives of the devil and men. Remember, that what they said is inspired by God but **only** in the sense that what they said was **accurately recorded** as reliable information for our benefit today.

5. Literal Interpretation and Genre Analysis

The term *genre* means simply “kind,” “sort” or “species.” Genre analysis involves the study of such things as literary forms, figures of speech and style. We distinguish between lyric poetry and legal briefs, between newspaper accounts of current events and epic poems. We distinguish between the style of historical narratives and sermons, between realistic graphic description and hyperbole. Failure to make these distinctions when dealing with the Bible can lead to a host of problems with interpretation. Literary analysis is crucial to accurate interpretation.

For example, the Bible describes the hills as dancing and clapping their hands. Such figures of speech are usually easy to recognize and cause no difficulty of interpretation. In some cases, however, questions of personification have led to serious debate. In the Old Testament there is a record of Balaam’s donkey speaking. Is this a sudden intrusion of a poetic form in the midst of an historical narrative? Does the speaking animal indicate the presence of fable in the text?

Or do we find here an indication of a miracle recorded in history? This particular episode takes place in the midst of a section of Scripture that does not bear the marks of poetry or fable. The immediate context bears all the marks of historical narrative- so in other words we are to take it literally as historical fact.

6. Historical Narratives are to be interpreted by the Didactic

The term *didactic* comes from the Greek word that means to teach or to instruct. Didactic literature is literature that teaches or explains. Much of the Apostle Paul's writing is didactic in character. The relationship between the Gospels and the Epistles often has been defined in the simple terms of saying that the Gospels record what Jesus did and the Epistles interpret the significance of what He did. Sure, this is an oversimplification in that the Gospels often teach and interpret as they are giving a narration.

But it is true that the emphasis in the Gospels is found in the record of events, while the Epistles are more concerned with interpreting the significance of those events in terms of doctrine, exhortation and application. Note that Jesus lived under a different period of redemptive history than we do. At that time, He was required to fulfill all the laws of the Old Covenant including dietary and ceremonial laws. Jesus was being perfectly obedient to the Father God when He was circumcised as a religious rite. The gospels record events and narrative in regards to Old Testament living. Jesus was bringing transition into a New and better Covenant.

After the Lord's resurrection, the Holy Spirit through the Apostles wrote about the new liberty we have in Jesus. Even though the Gospels are a part of the New Testament, it recorded events that pertained to Israel and to us. The letters to the Churches that began with the book of Acts until Revelation, are written in the current dispensation we live in today- the Age of Grace! Building doctrine or drawing too many inferences from narratives alone is dangerous business. The New Testament instructs us that a primary way to view the Old Testament is to learn from their mistakes (1 Corinthians 10:1-13) and from their successes (Hebrews chapter 11). We need to pay special attention to what the New Testament now provides for us in the area of New Covenant doctrine, ordinances, commands, prophecy and form of worship.

7. Calvinism at the Root

I want to briefly introduce some theological beliefs that were first promoted by John Calvin (1509-1564), one of the leaders of the Protestant reformation. I believe that his teachings have cast a shadow on present day Christian theology and could be at the root of a number of misunderstandings that need to be clarified.

Let's look at a fundamental principle in Calvinism called "Unconditional Election." It states that God not only knew what choice every person would make in his/her life, God had actually decided what choices everyone would make in advance. Individuals had no choice in this. Human Free Will was only an illusion. Therefore God had decided that certain people would live a Christian Life and be saved- supporting the concept of eternal security of the believer, also known as once saved always saved. He had also decided that the rest would sin and be eternally condemned. If you were predestined to be condemned there was nothing you could do about it. God's will was Sovereign. All Humans were "totally depraved" and unable to do anything to help themselves. God's salvation was a gift of Grace that He bestowed on the fortunate ones who He chose. Christ died, not to save everyone, but only to save a chosen, predestined "elect."

This theological view positions itself in direct contradiction with the whole counsel of God's Word which clearly teaches free will and salvation is available to all of mankind- Deuteronomy 30:19.

What's Wrong with Calvinism:
To many, Calvinism goes against the whole flow of New Testament teaching. It substitutes a vengeful, capricious and merciless God, for the loving Father of Jesus' teachings. It also substitutes God's sovereignty for man's free will to choose. Calvinism finds its root in the Old Testament where God is painted as the author of good and evil, without the clarification of the New Testament, that Satan is actually the author and agent of evil.

1) **Fatalism**. What is the point of evangelizing, if it's already decided who is to be saved? Similarly, if a person is starving or in need, God has put him in that position, so there is no need to do anything about it.

2) **A Tribal Consciousness**. Groups and Nationalities began to see themselves as "Chosen by God." Other peoples, not being so "chosen," could be treated harshly.

3) **Lack of Responsibility**. This line of thinking would carry into the believer's life, taking responsibility of the individual and placing it on God. If I am in need of healing, it's up to God's sovereign will, which sometimes is yes and sometimes no, you will never know for sure- our faith in God and His Word would not be a factor.

Arminianism
Arminianism was started by Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609). He was born slightly before John Calvin, died and was actually taught by Calvin's son-in-law. He was a Calvinist until one day when forced to defend his beliefs and found that his opponent could more ably defend his views against Calvinism. This caused Arminius to reject his Calvinistic background and "sought to modify Calvinism so that God might not be considered the author of sin, nor man an automation in the hands of God."

The Arminian point of view recognizes that God, knowing all things 'Foreknew' what choice everyone would make in advance, but did not make the choice for them as in the case of unconditional election of the Calvinist. The Tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil in Genesis 2:9 makes it clear that God leaves man with a choice to obey or disobey Him. God did not create us as robots, so our free will becomes the variable or condition of whether or not we receive the promises of God in our life.

Deuteronomy 30:19
This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

1 Timothy 2:1-4
I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone - for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

According to 2 Corinthians 1:15-22, it is plainly stated that all the Promises of God are "Yes," not sometimes "Yes" and sometimes "No," only "Yes" in Christ. However, the promises of God are not automatically applied, even though they belong to us and its God's will for us to enter into this provision for our lives. It requires faith just like it was for salvation; by grace through faith in Ephesians 2:8-9. This is where the Arminian perspective changes the expectation of the believer by injecting our free will into the equation and the operation of our faith being mixed with God's Word to get results.

God is the constant that does not change and His Word never fails. We are the variable, in that we may or may not believe and it is our faith that determines whether we receive or not. God's Word is God's Will and that is eternal and unchanging. So if we fail to receive, it is not that God changed His mind or made an exception for us, we simply missed it somewhere. So if we ask God for wisdom in the matter according to James 1:5 and judge ourselves according to 1 Corinthians 11:27-34, we can try again and receive. If receiving was solely dependent on God's sovereignty (all God and none of us), then why would Jesus use the parable of the sower to illustrate partnership between us and God- 1 Cor. 3:6-9.

Matthew 13:57-58, "But Jesus said to them, 'Only in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without honor.' And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith."

Mark 16:14
Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen

Mark 5:34- "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

Hebrews 4:1-2
Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.

In our western culture, we are too educated to bow down and worship a statue or graven image. However, we are quick to bow our knees to the altar of intellectualism, philosophy and the traditions of men. Our society exalts the human intellect and reason above revelation from Scripture, hence the decline in our nation. As the sensual spirits of ancient Corinth crept into the church there, so in our land the religion of reason and sense knowledge is creeping into churches, even Full-Gospel churches. Let's now identify eight sacred cows of religious ideology that need to be kicked over through the Word of God and in Jesus' Name.

Sacred Cow #1- Does God Show Favoritism?

In Calvinism, God makes choices on whom He shows favor or kindness to, regardless of what the person does. Yet this point of view contradicts the spiritual law of sowing and reaping in Galatians 6:7-10. This is as simple as the rule of "Cause and Effect." If we live in sin and don't repent, we should know that the devil has a right to come in and kill, steal and destroy. If we are persistent in living a life of obedience in light of God's Word, we can expect to reap a harvest of good things.

This puts the ownership on us to CHOOSE and make decisions that will affect the outcome of our lives. This makes God just in holding us responsible for our own actions; therefore, we have no one to blame but ourselves. When it comes to rewards and blessings we too have a hand in it, called faith and obedience. Sure the devil will encourage us to do wrong and God will prompt us to do right, but we choose which one we follow and listen to. Let's look at a passage of scripture that folks use to support favoritism concerning Esau and Jacob.

The Bible makes us Responsible for our own Decisions!

Romans 9:10-15
Not only that, but Rebekah's children had one and the same father, our father Isaac. Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad — in order that God's purpose in election might stand: not by works but by him who calls — she was told, "The older will serve the younger." Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

Going back to the difference between foreknowledge and predestination; God is omniscient, which means He knows everything, past, present and future. I believe that God was predicting the inevitable outcomes of the choices that Jacob and Esau were going to make before they were born. The Bible goes on to say that Esau was godless, not esteeming the things of God which caused him to miss God's best for his life. I believe God could have used Esau instead of Jacob, if Esau had made the right decisions.

Hebrews 12:16-17
See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears.

Consider Cain and Abel in the beginning, God instructed Cain that if he would just be obedient to God's instructions and offer the right sacrifice, a blood sacrifice for the atonement of sins, he would be accepted.

Genesis 4:6-7
Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."

Isaiah 1:19-20
"If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land; but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

With that being said, God does not show favoritism or partiality. There are no favorites in God's family; He loves us all the same. Every person, born into His family has the same Redemption. Everyone has the same rights in the Family; each one may have a different gift set, but the gift does not make him/her any dearer to the heart of the Father. Each one has the same right to use the Name of Jesus; to deliver people from the dominion of Satan, to heal the sick and to cast out demons. The Father has no favorites, and the closer our fellowship is with the Father, the sweeter and richer our life will be. Certainly He is pleased with those who obey His Word and disappointed with those who do not, but His unconditional love for all of us remains the same.

Romans 2:9-11
There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For God does not show favoritism.

Ephesians 6:9
And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

Colossians 3:25- Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.

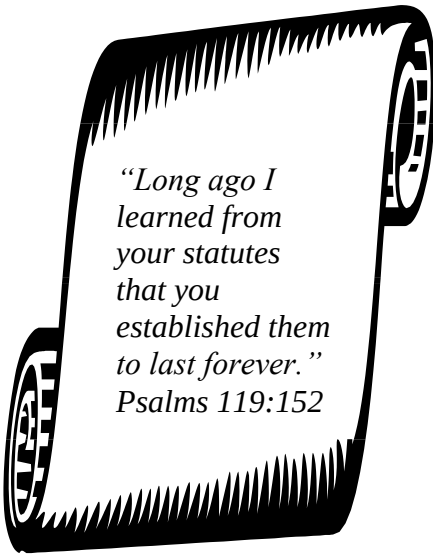
Now if God tells us not to show favoritism, He would be unjust if He showed it- right? He would be upholding a double standard- consider Genesis 18:22-25 in regards to Sodom and Gomorrah. So according to these Scriptures, God does not show favoritism and neither should we.

1 Timothy 5:21
I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism.

James 2:1-2- My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism.

James 2:8-10
If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.

1. So in Prayer is it Sometimes 'Yes' and Sometimes 'No'?



This is a very important question: does God show favoritism in prayer when it comes to answering His children? I have heard people say that when we pray God sometimes says 'Yes' and sometimes says 'No'. In their mind this may be construed as favoritism or God's mysterious sovereign will or some other esoteric reason. Yet what basis of faith and confidence could a person have with such a premise as uncertain as that? With that belief system anything is up for grabs- no way of knowing what will happen. If God answers our prayer one day, we were lucky, but not another, oh well- sounds like gambling! No, God's Word is not a spin of the wheel or a game of chance; it works all the time and every time when we work it according to its instructions and directives- no guess work involved! I believe according to the Scriptures that God deals with absolute truths- no gray obscure places. He has already expressed His will in His Word and that will does not change, it is established to last forever. Isaiah 51:6, *"But my salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail."*

God is Sovereign in that He creates the rules, He sets the boundaries and He establishes the spiritual laws that govern His kingdom. However, He plays by His own rules and does not violate them, change or make personal accommodations for anybody's personal preferences. This is important to realize, that people are of the belief that they can pray any ole way and God, knowing what they want will see past their ignorance of the Scriptures and answer their prayer anyway. He will do this for baby Christians who don't know any better, but at some point He expects all of His children to have studied the Scriptures and learned to follow the Biblical principles, laws and instructions. Ephesians 6:18, refers to all kinds of prayers (plural), meaning many kinds and types of prayers with unique directions on how they are operated; just as one can't play basketball with hockey rules, so one prayer differs in its operation from another. If we try to mix the rules between prayers, we end up nullifying the effects of our prayers. For instance when it comes to the prayer of petition, Jesus said that we pray to the Father in Jesus' Name, not in any other name. He goes on to say that we are no longer to ask Jesus for anything, but to ask only the Father. Finally, unless we ask we won't receive, it's not automatic, even though God knows what our needs are, we must exercise faith every time for those needs to be met and possess it!

John 16:23-24
In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

Suppose a Christian, knowing the above Scripture, but was taught in Sunday school to just ask God without the name of Jesus, or to ask in Peter's name or Mary. They may have been taught not to ask at all. If God wants them to have something, since God knows their needs, He will provide, if He sovereignly feels like it.

1 John 5:14-15- This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of him.

So when it comes to prayer, it may seem like a hit and miss venture for folks, sometimes their prayers get answered and sometimes they are not. The perception is that God shows favoritism or sovereignly picks and chooses which prayers He is going to answer. This is not the case at all; it comes down to our faith and knowledge of how different prayers operate. It is our ignorance of the Bible, lack of faith or living in sin that prevents us from receiving every time- not God saying sometimes 'Yes' and 'No'.

2 Corinthians 1:18-20
But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No." For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes." For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

Mark 13:31- "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away."

But thanks be to God, we have the bedrock foundation of God's Word to know what God's will is on any matter, no need for guess work concerning the will of God. Faith begins where the will of God is known. Knowing that God's Word works 100% of the time if we simply follow the instructions is tremendous! So the responsibility is on us then, not on God arbitrarily saying 'Yes' or 'No'!

What about Repetitious Praying?

Since we have been talking about prayer, let's kick over one more sacred cow on this subject. It has been said that when we pray for something, we should just keep on asking God until the answer comes. If we hang in there long enough and ask God over and over again for the same thing, we will somehow wear Him down and He will give in and answer. They will cite the parable of the "Unjust Judge" as a premise for their notion, but unfortunately they misinterpret it as I will explain.

Luke 18:1-6
Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!'" And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says.

First of all it is important to understand that Jesus was making a 'Comparison' between an unrighteous judge which people were accustomed to in the world and their heavenly Father. Jesus was making a powerful contrast between the two!

2. The Profile of an Unjust Judge

- Had no fear of God, so he was not accountable to, nor respected God's Word
- Could care less about people, was indifferent, aloof, was only in it for himself
- Did not care about the widow, refused her and deprived her of justice for some time
- Only out for self-interest, only caves in and grants the widow's request out of exasperation

The world has been deceived by Satan into thinking that God is like the unjust judge, austere, aloof and uncaring about people's problems. Nothing could be further from the truth as we see Jesus setting the record straight!

Luke 18:7-8
And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

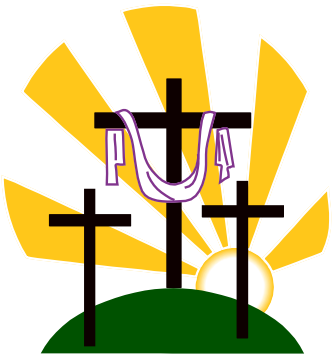
Now, supposing God were a respecter of persons, and that it was His will to heal only some of those who need healing, let us take a glance through the Gospels, and see how the friends of the sick decided which of the sick to bring to Him for healing:

Luke 4:40-41
When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them.

So if the unlucky ones were brought, He healed them the same as all the others. Surely, it was God doing and revealing His own will. If you had been there and were sick, you would have been brought, and would have been healed with all the rest, because they brought them all.

Matthew 8:16-17
When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases."

Matthew, in his record of the same instance, tells why Jesus made no exceptions, showed no favoritism and was no respecter of persons because of some so-called esoteric sovereign will of God. The word "our" means everybody, in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ and it therefore requires the healing of all, to fulfill the prophecy. Not only on this occasion, but on every occasion since, down until today, He heals the sick "To fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah, the Prophet, He took our infirmities and carried our diseases so we would not have to. Let the reader go through the Gospels and note the "all's" and the "every" and you will see that the redemptive blessing of healing was for all, and that no one ever asked in vain to Jesus for healing. There never was a multitude large enough to have even one that Jesus wanted to remain sick, and would refuse to heal.



Matthew 4:23-24
Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them.

Matthew 9:35
Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.

Matthew 10:1
He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

Matthew 12:15
Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. Many followed him, and he healed all their sick…

Matthew 14:14
When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

Matthew 14:34-36, "When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret. And when the men of that place recognized Jesus, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought all their sick to him and begged him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed."

Luke 6:17-19
He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coast of Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by evil spirits were cured, and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.

We see throughout the Gospels that, in bringing the sick to Jesus for healing, it was repeatedly stated that they brought them all, which included all the so-called unlucky ones whom supposedly it was not God's sovereign will to heal. If according to modern tradition, it's God's will for some to patiently remain sick for His glory or to build character in suffering or receive divine discipline, isn't it strange that there should have been at least one of these cases in all these multitudes that were brought to Jesus for healing? Yet we never see any such precedence in the Gospels to support such an erroneous claim.

By healing the epileptic in Mark 9:14-29, Jesus proved it to be the Father's will to deliver even this one whom the disciples were divinely commissioned to cast out demons failed to set free. We see by this verse that it would have been wrong to call in question and to teach God's unwillingness to heal because of this failure on the part of the disciples. Jesus, by healing him, shows us that the failure proved to be nothing but unbelief. Peter, after three years of constant association with the Lord described His earthly ministry in this one brief statement while preaching the Gospel message:

Acts 10:38
How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

3. The Profile of our Heavenly Father

- The Father is interested in the welfare of His people, He is concerned and is willing
- The Father will answer quickly and will see to it that they are cared for and protected
- What moves God is our faith, not our desperation, begging, whining and pleading

Luke 18:7-8
And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

What Jesus is saying, is that God is not like the people of the world who are consumed with self-interest and don't care about the needs of other people. The Father God is already willing and able to respond quickly to our prayer, so it's not necessary to beg, plead, and grovel for a scrap from the Master's table. We are children of God, it is our birth right to receive all that we need through the redemption that came by Jesus Christ- let's not be apologetic about it. It is pointless to be desperate when the Father is all so willing to respond immediately to take care of His children and draw near to us when we draw near to Him- James 4:8!

Colossians 1:12
Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

As a matter of fact, contrary to religious thinking, we are invited by God through the Scriptures to come boldly to His throne whenever and for whatever we want! Unfortunately, religious ministers have inbred within believers a sin consciousness of being unworthy, undeserving sinners saved by grace. The affect is devastating on Christians; it turns children of God into beggars, full of shame, guilt and riddled with a sense of unworthiness. This cripples their walk with God, paralyzes their faith and nullifies their prayer life. I believe the intent was to try to keep people humble, but its ignorance in light of being righteous in Christ. If sin consciousness is legitimate as a result of unrepentant sin, than let's confess our sins and exchange condemnation for righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Spirit- Romans 14:17. Religion panders sin consciousness and a sense of unworthiness. The enemy will magnify this in the form of spiritual oppression if we allow him. Our worthiness is in Jesus Christ who never changes; we are righteous now in Jesus Christ! The sense of unworthiness is a denial of the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus and our standing in Christ, and of Christ's righteousness before the Father which has been granted to us.

Hebrews 4:16 AMP
Let us then fearlessly and confidently and boldly draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy [for our failures] and find grace to help in good time for every need [appropriate help and well-timed help, coming just when we need it].

Hebrews 10:19-23
Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

Yes we were sinners saved by grace, but now we are saints in Christ Jesus- Righteousness, Holy, Justified and made worthy through the blood of Jesus according to 1 Corinthians 1:30-31. Righteousness consciousness creates a boldness, fearlessness and confidence to receive from God through the hand of faith with joy- Isaiah 12:3. This is not arrogance as some have so accused, but a revelation from God's Word of who we are in Christ. Obviously Satan wants believers to be defeated and weak in this life so he continues to peddle 'Sin Consciousness' teaching, a doctrine of demons I may add. So no more cowering before our loving heavenly Father, let's jump into His lap as our heavenly Daddy; "Abba" in Hebrew is akin to little children reaching their hands up to their earthly father and saying "Daddy!"

Romans 8:12-17
Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation — but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

I don't know about your house, but my children don't come up to me when they are hungry like Oliver Twist and say "Please sir, may I have some more?" My kids don't have to hold onto my feet and beg me for food, shelter or love. They know they have access to the refrigerator. If they are thirsty they know they can just go to the fridge and help themselves to as much as they want. They belong to this family so all I have belongs to them and they are benefactors! So it is with us in Christ in God's family; what God has already provided in redemption is found in our heavenly fridge, so just help yourself.

Psalms 23:5-6
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

2 Peter 1:1-4
Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours: Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

Here is a critical point I need to make, it is pointless to ask God for something that He has already provided and given us in redemption. When Christians ask God for something that they already have, God can't answer that prayer because He does not have it; He had already given it to us in Christ. In the above Scripture is says that His divine power **"HAS"** given us everything we need for life and godliness. I think **"ALL"** things about covers it all doesn't it?

The redemption that Jesus has bought and paid for by His blood in His death, burial and resurrection makes: healing, peace, remission of sins, prosperity, and all things that pertain to life and godliness past tense- already provided for us! So we don't have to ask for healing, rather we claim it by faith as ours!

Romans 3:21-24
But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Confession Brings Possession! Simply Claim in Faith what is already yours in Christ Jesus!

All that is left for us to do is go in and possess our New Covenant Promised Land of inheritance; a Christian life overflowing with milk and honey. Does that mean we will never face any trials, tests and temptations? Just as the children of Israel had to possess their Promise Land through force, fighting off the giants in the land; we too must fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6:12). According to John 10:10, Satan is a thief and wants to rob and deny us of all that God has provided us in Jesus. So when we act on our redemptive rights for healing, the enemy will challenge our faith on the matter and try to put sickness on us- we resist him with the Word and stand our ground- Ephesians 6:10-18; 1 Peter 5:9.

I wish all the blessings of God were just automatically appropriated into our lives without us having to lift a finger. Jesus has already done all the work to provide our redemption, but we still have to exercise faith in order to enter into it and possess it for ourselves on a personal basis. It takes the arm of faith to reach out and fill my plate with a heaping of healing and a scoop of peace from the table of the Lord. Unfortunately, a lot of Christians are standing by the Table of the Lord asking for a crumb when He is saying come and dine. However, the act of partaking and receiving from God is done by His grace which was already accomplished in redemption and is now up to us to receive through our faith in God's Word- Ephesians 2:8-9. I would venture to say, that is a really good deal isn't it?

Hebrews 4:1-3
Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. Now we who have believed enter that rest.

Hebrews 6:12
We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

Satan is the author of all evil and bad things that happen in this world. When some of those things happen to God's people it is never His will. He permits people to reap what they sow when they open the door to the devil or because of ignorance or a lack of faith- Hosea 4:6; Mark 6:6. However, God is not showing favoritism or partiality. If people fail to receive, it is never God's fault, He did not change His mind, nor did God's Word fail. People are the variable in the equation; they are the loose cannons that are subject to change. God is constant; He does not change and is always faithful to His Word to perform it- Jeremiah 1:12.

Romans 3:3-4
What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar.

Okay back to repetitious praying, praying for the same thing over and over again. We discovered that God is nothing like the unjust judge. The religious notion that I just have to pester God long enough so I might be able to tire Him out into granting my request is just flat wrong! The consistent message that we see in the Scriptures is that as believers we are to take the initiative, like the woman with the issue of blood and boldly press into God's provision for our lives. We are not to be fearful or cowardly about receiving from God. Rather we are to be bold, without hesitation or a sense of unworthiness and shame.

Proverbs 28:1
The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion.

Matthew 5:6- "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."

2 Timothy 1:7 AMP
For God did not give us a spirit of timidity (of cowardice, of craven and cringing and fawning fear), but [He has given us a spirit] of power and of love and of calm and well-balanced mind and discipline and self-control.

Let's look at the man who came at midnight; the punch line to this parable is simple and it is found in verse 8, *"yet because of the man's boldness"* is what got the job done. Faith does not take "No" for an answer. Not at all referring to God but rather from the devil and the mountains in our life that we face- the trials, tests and temptations from the enemy of our soul!

Jesus goes on to say that we can ask God, notice that it does not say asking God in a repetitious way. Just ask Him once, He hears us the first time. We need to look in God's Word for the Biblical principles of how the kingdom of God works. Finally knock, use your faith to enter into God's rest and provision for our lives. Notice that in the same context Jesus compares natural parents providing for their children, and how much more is the Father's heart for us to see us blessed- James 1:16-17.

Luke 11:5-13
Then he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.' Then the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs. So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?"

So don't keep asking for the same thing over and over again; in affect what we are do is digging up our seed so it never has a chance to grow and produce a harvest- the answer! When we look at the parable of the sower in Mark chapter 4, we see a key principle on how the kingdom of God operates; seed time and harvest principles of sowing God's Word for a harvest of provision in our lives and the lives of others.

Well-meaning Christians, who keep asking for the same thing, perform an exercise in futility according to the Scriptures. It's no wonder folks don't get their prayers answered- another example of lack of knowledge that defeats us. The good news is as sure as planting a natural seed will produce a harvest, how much more sure is God's incorruptible seed (1 Peter 1:23) going to produce after its own kind, 30, 60 and 100 fold! Boldness in prayer, not repetition in prayer, is the key! Jesus was saying; don't be like unbelievers in other religions, chanting the same thing over and over again for hours hoping to get their god's attention.

First we need to find Scriptures that cover our need, meditate on them until faith gets in our hearts and we become "Full Persuaded" concerning the matter- Joshua 1:8; Romans 10:7-8; 4:21. So when we pray the prayer of faith (James 5:13-18; Mark 11:22-24; Luke 17:5-6), we pray the prayer of petition or speak to the mountain. In either case we address the matter once, after that we thank God for the answer- this is the "Spirit of Faith" mentioned in 2 Corinthians 4:13. Thank Him as much as you like, boast about God and His Word, but do not ask for it again- this would nullify our faith- James 1:5-8.

Matthew 6:7 AMP
And when you pray, do not heap up phrases (multiply words, repeating the same ones over and over) as the Gentiles do, for they think they will be heard for their much speaking.

A great example of repetitious praying is found with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. You can read the whole account in 1 Kings Chapter 18. A long story short, what we have is a show down as to who is the real God, as demonstrated by fire that was to consume their sacrifice. The prophets of Baal got to go first. Remember, here is an example of how the pagans pray, not God's people!

1 Kings 18:26-29
Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. "O Baal, answer us!" they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made. At noon Elijah began to taunt them. "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened." So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention.

Yet we see in 1 Kings 18:36-39 that when Elijah prayed, God answered immediately!

1 Kings 18:36-40
At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, O Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again." Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The Lord-he is God! The Lord-he is God!" Then Elijah commanded them, "Seize the prophets of Baal. Don't let anyone get away!" They seized them, and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered there.

One last point I wanted to bring out is this; let's not allow time to be our enemy. When we become impatient and give up, we are defeated. Realize that Satan knows this about human nature (impatience), so he will try to hold things up in order to discourage us to give up.

For example, when Daniel prayed he was immediately answered, but the devil detained the answer for a period of time- delay does not mean denial! Spiritual warfare is often the cause for a delay, but if we hold our ground and stand fast in faith on God's Word we will come out on top in Jesus every time!

Daniel 10:12-14
Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."

Galatians 6:9-10- Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Another rule of thumb to keep in mind is that many things in this life can only come through other people. Take finances for instance, God does not counterfeit money. Often times He will impress upon people to give into your life or ministry, but it may not take until the 17th person to obey God and give! Well this burns up time now doesn't it? Suppose we became impatient and spiritualized the situation and reasoned, "Well I guess it just wasn't the Lord's will for me to go on that mission trip." That statement could very well torpedo God's plan for them to go on that mission trip.

Luke 6:38
"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

The angels that were working, bringing the money in through people, would have to stop in their activities. Our faith in God's Word sets the angels to working, but when we speak doubt and unbelief it brings them to a standstill. Angels are all about seeing God's word fulfilled in the earth.

Psalms 103:20-21
Praise the Lord, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word. Praise the Lord, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will.

Unit 7 Review:

Why is it so important to understand, “Permissive versus Causative” tenses in the Bible?

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What is the difference between Calvinism and Arminianism?

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Does God show favoritism, and how important is that point in regards to healing?

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Why would an accurate understanding of the Father’s love for us, be so important?

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Everything in redemption is already ours, how does that change our prayer life?

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What is wrong with repetitious praying about the same thing to God?

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Sacred Cow #2- Did God Harden Pharaoh's Heart?

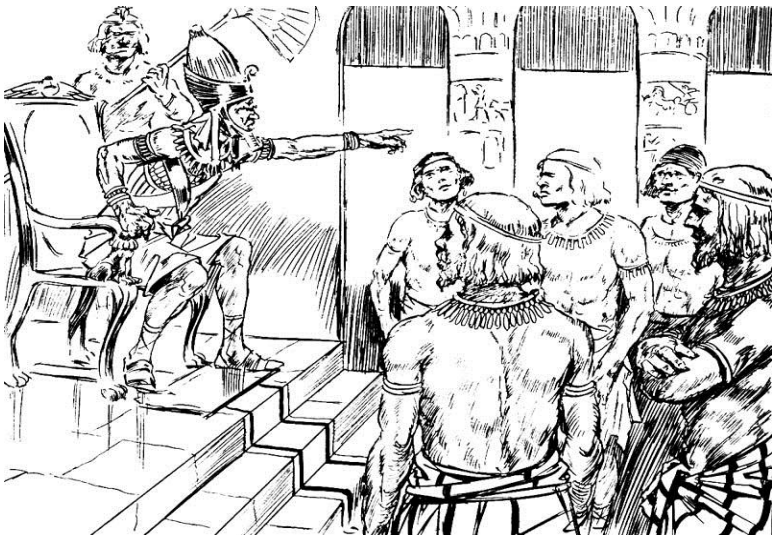
God revealed His plan to Moses in Exodus 4:21-23. God said at the beginning that He would harden Pharaoh's heart. The hardening of Pharaoh's heart is then described in several different ways:

- Pharaoh's heart became hard: Exodus 7:13, 23
- Pharaoh hardened his heart: Exodus 8:15, 32
- God hardened Pharaoh's heart: Exodus 9:7, 10:20

Pharaoh in the beginning persistently hardened his own heart against God- Romans 9:17-18; Acts 19:9. This brought on the retributive "hardening" by God, after much long-suffering- Exodus 9:12 . However, when the Bible says Pharaoh hardens his heart, it also says that this happened "just as the Lord had said" in Exodus 8:15:

Exodus 9:34-35
When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned again: He and his officials hardened their hearts. So Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not let the Israelites go, just as the Lord had said through Moses.

Exodus 10:1-2
Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his officials so that I may perform these miraculous signs of mine among them that you may tell your children and grandchildren how I dealt harshly with the Egyptians and how I performed my signs among them, and that you may know that I am the Lord."



In other words, Pharaoh hardening his heart is considered to be the same as God hardening Pharaoh's heart. I take this to mean that Pharaoh did the actual hardening, as we see it; he decided on his own not to listen to God and let the Israelites go. But God knew in advance what Pharaoh would do in any given situation, and deliberately placed Pharaoh in this situation. God decided that Pharaoh would be born at the time and place that he was and thus placed him in this position of power- see Exodus 9:13-17; Acts 17:26-27.

Thus God brought about the situation, namely that Moses would encounter a pharaoh whose heart was hardened against God in the first place; remember that Pharaoh hardened his heart of his own free will. Consider this; if God had doomed Pharaoh to a sinful position of rebellion against Him, then God would be guilty of sin by creating Pharaoh as an object of sinful rebellion- how could God then be just in punishing him. God would be contradicting His holiness by predestinating people to be evil in order to further His will. No, there are plenty of evil people around who choose to be evil by their own free will for God to use to further His purpose in the earth like Pharaoh- God does not make people evil or hard!

Three Words translated 'Harden" in the Hebrew:

1) chazaq- to brace or tighten up as opposed to relax- Exodus 4:21; 7:13,22; 8:19; 9:12, 35:10:20; 11:10; 14:4, 8; 12:23; Joshua 11:20
2) kabed- to make heavy, weighty or hard- Exodus 8:15, 32; 9:7, 34; 10:1; 1 Samuel 6:6
3) qashah- to make sharp, hard, severe or cruel- Exodus 7:13, 13:15

Many times God is said to be responsible for the things He **permits** to be done. God gave Pharaoh the occasion to resist Him and harden his own heart in the same way that the gospel saves or damns people today; softens or hardens; and makes alive or kills all who hear it- Romans 2:4-11, 2 Corinthians 2:15-16.

As the sun hardens the clay and softens the wax, so it is with truth. The result is not in the sun (or with God), but in the composition of the materials- the response people make with their own free will in relation to God and His Word. In Luke 20:17, Jesus was quoting Psalms 118:22, *"The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone."* He went on to say in verse 18, *"Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed."* Two outcomes for humanity concerning what they do with Jesus: 1) Repentance & Salvation (broken to pieces) or 2) Rejection & Damnation (crushed) as is stated in John 3:36.

So the persisting question remains, "Does the Lord strike His people?" Unfortunately there are a lot of people who misunderstand a number of Scriptures in the Old Testament and come to the erroneous conclusion that God is the afflicter and author of calamity, sickness and death- so-called acts of God.

Deuteronomy 32:39
See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand.

1 Samuel 2:6-7
"The Lord brings death and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and raises up. The Lord sends poverty and wealth; he humbles and he exalts."

Hosea 6:1
"Come, let us return to the Lord. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds."

Job 5:18- For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal.

Note: remember our previous discussion on the permissive versus causative tenses in the Old Testament

1. God is a Righteous and Holy Judge

Sin left unchecked, like a cancer, would destroy the universe, so God judges sin and keeps it contained. The greatest act of love is for God to condemn and judge sin, otherwise it would destroy us all!

Daniel 7:9-10
As I looked, "thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.

Revelation 20:12-13
And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.

John 12:47-48
"As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him, for I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day."

Hebrews 12:23, "You have come to God, the judge of all men."
Psalms 7:11- God is a righteous judge, a God who expresses his wrath every day.

Concerning Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham questioned God's justice, reasoning with the Lord to spare the land for the sake of the righteous.

Genesis 18:25
"Far be it from you to do such a thing — to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

2. Judgment – Being Turned Over to the Enemy

When folks fail to repent and force God's hand to judge them, God in course turns them over to the devil that is waiting anxiously to have access to them. There are numerous Scriptures concerning the children of Israel, where God gave them over to their enemies due to their persistence in sin and rebellion- they left God with no other choice!

Psalms 78:61-62
He sent [the ark of] his might into captivity, his splendor into the hands of the enemy. He gave his people over to the sword; he was very angry with his inheritance.

Judges 2:14-15
In his anger against Israel the Lord handed them over to raiders who plundered them. He sold them to their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist.

Jeremiah 22:25
I will hand you over to those who seek your life, those you fear — to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and to the Babylonians.

If we want to avoid being judged, being turned over to the hand of the enemy, we need only to judge ourselves and repent. Now the devil wants us to be turned over to him, but we don't want that! If we don't repent we will be judged and then it will cost us- Luke 12:57-59. Here are a couple of New Testament passages that confirm the same principle.

1 Corinthians 5:4-5
When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.

1 Timothy 1:19-20
Holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith. Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.

This is judgment, being turned over into the enemies hands. What does the enemy want to do? Very simple, to promptly destroy folks in every area of their lives! However, when we repent and apply the blood of Jesus, we get back under God's protection.

3. The Curse of the Law: Deuteronomy 28:15-22, 27-29, 35, 58-61

We can readily see from these Scriptures that sickness is a curse of the law. The dreadful diseases enumerated here- in fact, every sickness and every disease, according to the 61st verse are part of the punishment for breaking God's law. We see specifically that the curse of the law was many fold, and included disease of every kind, financial ruin, destruction of the family, lack of peace or mental illness. Embodied in the curse of the law was every disease known to man, whether recorded in the Book or not. According to verse 61, *"Also every sickness and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, will the Lord bring (permit) upon you until you are destroyed."*

Reading these Scriptures in the Bible would lead us to believe that God Himself puts sickness and affliction upon His people, for it reads, *"The Lord will send on you…"* Deuteronomy 28:15 *"However, if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:"*

Deuteronomy 28:20
The Lord will send on you curses, confusion and rebuke in everything you put your hand to…

Deuteronomy 28:21
The Lord will plague you with diseases until he has destroyed you from the land you are entering to possess.

Deuteronomy 28:22
The Lord will strike you with wasting disease, with fever and inflammation, with scorching heat and drought, with blight and mildew, which will plague you until you perish.

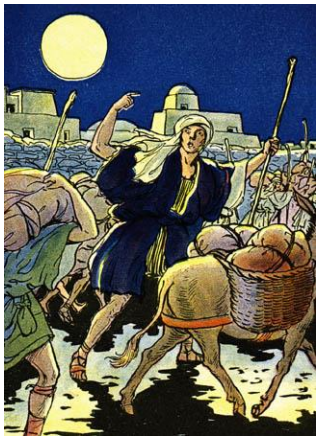
Deuteronomy 28:24
The Lord will turn the rain of your country into dust and powder

Deuteronomy 28:25, "The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies."

Deuteronomy 28:27-28
The Lord will afflict you with the boils of Egypt and with tumors, festering sores and the itch, from which you cannot be cured.

Deuteronomy 28:28-29
The Lord will afflict you with madness, blindness and confusion of mind. At midday you will grope about like a blind man in the dark.

Deuteronomy 28:30
You will be pledged to be married to a woman, but another will take her and ravish her.



Remember that we had previously discussed the principle of "*Permissive versus Causative Tense"* in Bible interpretation. God allows bad things to happen because people open the door to the devil through their disobedience, ignorance or lack of faith. God is not the author of evil; Satan is, so it's imperative that we keep the record straight! Here is another example, concerning the Passover in Egypt in Exodus 12:12-13, one could get the impression that God was the one personally going throughout the land dealing death to the first born of Egypt.

Exodus 12:12-13
"On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn — both men and animals — and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt."

Exodus 12:23
When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.

It sounds like God did it personally, but we see that God simply allowed the death angel, further down the chapter in verse 23 of Exodus chapter 12.

4. New Testament Clarification- Setting the Record Straight

The 'Analogy of Faith' concerning Bible interpretation teach us that Scripture interprets Scripture. One cannot come to an interpretation that contradicts explicit Scriptures elsewhere in the Bible, particularly in the New Testament. According to 1 John 3:8, Jesus came to earth, *"to destroy the devil's work"* and redeem mankind from his oppressive tyranny which ranges from disease, mental anguish, spiritual death, poverty and everything else that is evil in this world- John 10:10; Acts 10:38; Luke 13:16, Matthew 7:11.

In Galatians 2:18-19 it states, *"If I rebuild what I destroyed, I prove that I am a lawbreaker."* If God made people sick just so He can heal them; that would make God a lawbreaker. Consider John 9:1-3, the man born blind or Lazarus in John 11:4-5. God was not the author of those tragedies, Satan was. Since Jesus came to destroy the devil's work, God was glorified in spite of what the devil meant for evil. God turned it around for His glory. To attribute the works of Satan to God is dangerous- Matthew 12:25-28.

I want you to notice something, in all these Old Testament passages and these were just a sampling, there is really no mention of Satan as the instigator or perpetrator of all these calamities- the Bible is progressive revelation, greater revelation as time goes on. I can see how folks are left with the assumption that God is the cause of everything, that He is sovereignly responsible for anything and everything- good, bad and ugly. Yet in the light of the New Testament we are given more revelation light concerning the devices, tactics and operations of the devil- we see a distinction. It is revealed that Satan is the agent and dealer of death- Jesus came to destroy his works- Luke 13:10-17.

To attribute and accuse God of being the dealer of the curse of the law is to not rightly divide the Word in light of what we read in the New Testament.

John 10:10 AMP
The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows).

Hebrews 2:14-16
Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil— and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

1 John 3:8- The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

Acts 10:38
How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

For the Old Testament saint, they were walking in the light of revelation knowledge that was revealed to them. If they had the New Testament that we have today, they would not be attributing the works of Satan to God. The Bible is progressive revelation, the Old Testament with its types and shadows pointed to the coming of Jesus. The comments and understanding of the Old Testament believers reflected the measure of light and revelation that they had. We would be in error to build doctrine concerning these matters based on the limited light of the Old Testament when we have the New Testament- especially the Epistles, the letters written to the Church (Romans to Revelation) to explain things.

5. Opportunities for Repentance

The flip side to God's judgments is to understand His mercy and willingness to afford people and nations an opportunity to repent of their ways. His patience and longsuffering is as firm as His justice. In this way God is absolutely fair and just so that men are without excuse.

2 Chronicles 7:14
If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

Deuteronomy 7:9
Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.

Proverbs 28:13- He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

For God to judge men, this does not please the Lord nor is it His perfect will. God does not enjoy or take pleasure is seeing people suffer for their sin under the hand of the enemy. In fact it grieves Him; He provides opportunities for people to repent.

Ezekiel 18:32
For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent and live!

Ezekiel 18:23
Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked declares the Sovereign Lord. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?

Ezekiel 33:7-11
"Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you will surely die,' and you do not speak out to dissuade him from his ways, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. But if you do warn the wicked man to turn from his ways and he does not do so, he will die for his sin, but you will have saved yourself. Son of man, say to the house of Israel, 'this is what you are saying: Our offenses and sins weigh us down, and we are wasting away because of them. How then can we live?' Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?'"

God takes no pleasure in turning people over to the enemy for judgment. So if it grieves Him to judge folks why does He do it? He is the righteous judge of the universe. God judged our sin in Jesus Christ and poured out His wrath on Him so we could go free. In this way God satisfies His perfect Holiness and we go free if we accept this Great offer of Salvation through Jesus Christ!

Lamentations 3:22-23
Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Lamentations 3:32-33
Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love. For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to the children of men.

Just look at the people of Israel, how many numerous times God sent prophets to warn them of impending judgment and to turn them from their wicked ways. He provided many passages of Scriptures warning the people of the consequences if they got into sin, how it opens the door to the devil. God in His mercy gave them a span of time, even years to repent of their ways.

Meanwhile, the devil with bated breath was waiting for God to finally lift His hand of protection, to remove the hedge, so as a roaring lion he could jump on God's people and destroy them. That is why he uses temptations and the world system to entice them, for only one reason- for an open door of access via sin or fear. God would have to allow it, if His people refused to repent and put their trust in Him.

Matthew 23:33-39
"You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

If you were God and you sent a prophet or two in order to warn the people of impending judgment and they killed your chosen prophets what would you do? The Israelites were even burning their children alive in sacrifice to demons. These were God's babies they were burning alive, what would you do? Yet God was so merciful to them, so after years of warning them of impending judgment, it finally came because they would not repent.

Jeremiah 19:5-6
They have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as offerings to Baal — something I did not command or mention, nor did it enter my mind.

2 Kings 17:16-17
They forsook all the commands of the Lord their God and made for themselves two idols cast in the shape of calves, and an Asherah pole. They bowed down to all the starry hosts, and they worshiped Baal. They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire. They practiced divination and sorcery and sold themselves to do evil in the eyes of the Lord, provoking him to anger.

Here is an example in the New Testament, where folks in the Church were getting into sin, not walking in love.

Revelation 2:20-23
Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways.

1 Corinthians 11:28-32
A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.

The Lord does give people an opportunity for repentance, time to judge themselves before finally God lifts His hand of protection. Please read Romans 1:18-32 which provides quite an indictment of humanity as a whole.

6. It's Never God's Fault

Satan came to God to press his rights in order to gain access to Job. The devil hates righteous God fearing people, especially rich righteous people- Job was a powerful man of influence for God. Have you ever notice that every person in the Old Testament who had a covenant with God was extremely wealthy, but that is another topic. Even though Job had a covenant with God, through fear he opened the door to the devil, who being slow on the uptake took notice of this and challenged God. God being a righteous judge allowed access to Job. It was Job that broke down the hedge, not God. The Lord would never go back on His covenant and give the devil access to Job for no reason!

Job 1:10
"Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land."

Job 3:25
What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me.

In Job 1:8, *"Then the Lord said to Satan, 'Have you considered my servant Job?'"* The Hebrew literally says, **"Have you set your heart upon my servant Job?"** God was not daggling Job out in front of the devil saying "Come and get him." Here we see a rare glimpse of the operation of the High Court of Heaven. Satan began to accuse Job and question his commitment and motivation. He began to present a case to God twice- once against his possessions and secondly against himself personally. What we see happening here is Job got judged and turned over to the hand of the enemy.

Let's not accuse God of evil; He is not the author of it. As we have been saying all along, He only permits it as a last final act of judgment when folks have exhausted all of God's appeals and opportunities for repentance. To insinuate that tornadoes, cancer and other calamities are an act of God is to fall right into the hands of Satan's lies. The word "Devil" means slanderer and that is what he does with God's name, tries to drag it through the mud by placing doubt in our minds concerning the goodness, mercy and love of God.

People begin questioning the faithfulness of God. Why did He allow this to happen, why do bad things happen to seemingly good people. There is always a reason and we may not always know it, but I do know this according to 1 Corinthians 13: 8, *"Love never fails!"* God will never let us down, He is always faithful and true to His Word, He does not lie nor change His mind. If something went bad, God is not the one behind it or to blame.

Let's just settle it in our minds that it is never God's fault, He is never to be blamed. People may let us down, we may let ourselves down, but God never does. This was the trap Job found himself in. In Job's limited knowledge, he thought that God was sovereignly putting him through these trials to test his loyalty, to keep him humble or whatever other religious reason there is. Job had accused God of being the reason for all his troubles, yet what was the Lord's response in Job 38:2, *"Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge?"* When life becomes confusing, give God the benefit of the doubt; ask Him for wisdom according to James 1:5 instead of jumping to religious conclusions.

Romans 3:3-4
What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge."

Just because People Fail to receive does not mean that God had Failed to Provide!

7. Understanding the Legal Element

Friend, when it comes to the kingdom of God, it's a legal thing. The Bible is a legal document, His will and New Testament, being justified and declared righteous through Jesus Christ is a legal spiritual reality! The devil has no legal hold over us anymore; we have been delivered from his authority and now live under the dominion and authority of Jesus Christ as our new Lord and Master! Therefore, Satan has no legal basis to put his sicknesses and diseases in our lives.

Romans 3:22-26
This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

Colossians 1:13-14
For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Ephesians 2:1-7
As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

What we see in Scripture is when God passes judgment; He allows the destroyer access to folks. Does this mean that God and the devil work together on the same team- Absolutely Not! Notice in Luke 4:6; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 5:19 we see that Satan is the god of this world system, given to him by Adam. As a result, the devil has a right to be here for a time, but he can't go around and do whatever he wants. Sin is a primary avenue that gives him access to folks; those in sin and rebellion fall under his dominion and authority. In addition to sin, ignorance or a lack of knowledge and a lack of faith opens the door as well. He will exploit ignorance (Hosea 4:6) just as fast as a person in open disobedience.

Isaiah 1:19-20
"If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land; but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

Romans 5:12
Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.

When Jesus came, He had one thing in mind, to deal with the sin problem. By satisfying God's justice as our sin sacrifice and substitute. Jesus paid for our spiritual crimes so we would not have to do the time and live under Satan's tyranny and be separated from God forever. So the key to Satan's authority or right to afflict humanity has always been sin. Since Jesus paid the price for our sin and took it out of the equation, Satan has lost his authority and right to afflict us- Praise the Lord!

John 1:29-30
The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

In the court of Heaven the blood of Jesus and our testimony of God's Word in our mouth silence the accuser from building a case against us. Why does the devil need to build a case against us? His goal is for God to have to pass judgment on us and grant him access to attack us because we opened the door.

Revelation 12:10-11
For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. <u>They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony</u>.

Satan knows his rights; those who sin come under his authority. God is a righteous judge and must give people over to Satan for judgment when they persist in sin. God will never condone or be an accomplice to sin because He is perfectly holy, upright and just.

When trials, tests and temptations come our way, often times the devil is trying to test our knowledge of God's Word to see if he can obtain permission to access our lives through our ignorance. It does not mean we have sinned at all. However, we invite the enemy in our lives by accepting symptoms in our body and problems in our lives instead of resisting them. This is how we unfortunately give the enemy permission. Satan can't just devour whoever he wants to, though he will portray himself as this big, bad and all powerful devil- remember he is a liar. Yes he has some power, but he does not have open access to Christians- he has to get permission.

Why is it important to make this distinction, "Who is the agent of destruction, God or Satan?"

"My servant Job shall pray for you."—*Job* xlii. 8.

If we believe that God is responsible, we will sit down and take it like Job, we won't resist it because we would never want to resist God's will. If God has sent the trial to teach me something, then my response is just to lay down and take it and try to endure the pain and suffering. However, if the origin of all things that kill, steal and destroy come from the devil, then the Bible is clear, I am to resist the devil. I am to resist his trials, tests and temptations and he will flee. I am to stand up and say "No devil it is not legal for you to afflict me with those things Jesus had already bore on my behalf as my substitute!" I am a citizen of heaven according to Philippians 3:20, *"But our citizenship is in heaven."* The devil has no right to scourge me with sickness, poverty, or oppression of any kind! I am blood washed and a blood bought child of God!

Acts 22:25
As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, "Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn't even been found guilty?"

Since God is the holy judge of the universe, if we do not judge ourselves and repent of sin or if we concede to the enemy's lies and accept something that Jesus bore, God has no choice but to allow the enemy access to our lives. We opened the door to the devil, God did not arbitrarily send some trial to keep us humble or purify us. Certainly God will work the good out of what the devil meant for evil- Romans 8:28.

The scriptures make it plain in regards to the nature of the operations of God and the devil- Good God, bad devil! Have enough sense that if something is trying to ruin your life, it's not from God; deal with it in Jesus Name! Please don't be deceived and just take it, lay down in defeat and allow that attack to cut your life short and rob you of God's perfect will for your life- which is to be satisfied with long life and enjoy His salvation according to Psalms 91:16!

Sacred Cow #3- Does God send Desert Experiences to keep us Humble?

The way some well-meaning Christians talk, you would think they lived from one desert experience to another. They will refer to the children of Israel in the desert as a pretext to support their beliefs that God in His sovereign plan puts people through dry places in their life to teach and purify them to be dependent on God. I'm all about living a holy life and being dependent on God through faith in the Word of His Grace and the work of the Holy Spirit. I protest to the devil trying to rip me off in life through doubt and unbelief. Here is a news flash, the 40 years Israel spent in the desert was not God's will- it was a result of their unbelief when they refused to enter the Promise Land out of fear.

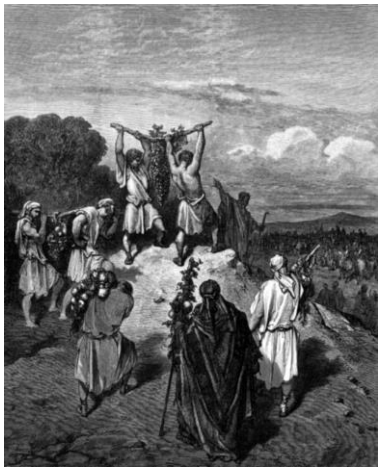
The place is Kadesh Barnea on the outskirts of the Promise Land; at last the people of Israel are on the verge of entering into their land flowing with milk and honey. This is the same land that God had promised Abraham for his decedents to inherit. After all this time, God's promise is about to be made manifest. This is one of the great Old Covenant stories, for it teaches volumes on the principles of faith.

Hebrews 11:8-10
By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

We will reference the book of Deuteronomy which makes an interesting point. It appears that Moses initially told the folks to just go straight in and take possession of what God had promised, but the people wanted to send in spies first. One leader from each tribe to explore the land of Canaan- 12 men from the twelve tribes of Israel- that decision to hesitate cost that generation dearly!

Deuteronomy 1:21-25
"See, the Lord your God has given you the land. Go up and take possession of it as the Lord, the God of your fathers, told you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." Then all of you came to me and said, "Let us send men ahead to spy out the land for us and bring back a report about the route we are to take and the towns we will come to." The idea seemed good to me; so I selected twelve of you, one man from each tribe. They left and went up into the hill country, and came to the Valley of Eshcol and explored it. Taking with them some of the fruit of the land, they brought it down to us and reported, "It is a good land that the Lord our God is giving us."

I love how Moses told the people, "Go for it, reach out and take what belongs to you that God has graciously promised with an oath!" Notice he said, don't be afraid or discouraged, these are the same stumbling blocks we have to deal with today, when it comes to us entering into our New Covenant Promise Land. Satan will try to use circumstances, fear and intimidation to get us to back down from receiving our blood bought inheritance in Jesus Christ! Too often we limit God and settle for what we think we can achieve instead of allowing our faith to be stretched on walk on water so-to-speak with our hand in the hand of the Master.



Numbers 13:21-25

So they went up and explored the land from the Desert of Zin as far as Rehob, toward Lebo Hamath. They went up through the Negev and came to Hebron, where Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmai, the descendants of Anak, lived. (Hebron had been built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) When they reached the Valley of Eshcol, they cut off a branch bearing a single cluster of grapes. Two of them carried it on a pole between them, along with some pomegranates and figs. That place was called the Valley of Eshcol because of the cluster of grapes the Israelites cut off there. At the end of forty days they returned from exploring the land.

1. The Evil Report

So after 40 days, the twelve spies returned and freely acknowledged that the land was everything that was said concerning it, a land flowing with milk and honey- **BUT**!!!

Numbers 13:28-29
"But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan."

Now what they said concerning their mere observations was correct, it was the conclusion they came to that was wrong. There is a big difference between truth and fact; it was a fact that the people of the land were great and powerful, but the truth was God had already delivered them into their hands. This reminds me of Abraham, he faced the fact that he and Sarah were too old to have children, but the greater truth was that God had promised them a son. So which one are we going to believe, the facts or the truth?

Romans 4:17-21
As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed — the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were. Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead — since he was about a hundred years old — and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.

Immediately we see the faith of Caleb (one of the twelve spies), begin to kick in. We see his faith by simply reading his testimony in the Bible- faith always has a distinguishing tone. Faith is of the heart and Jesus said what is in the abundance of the heart will come out of the mouth- Matthew 12:34-35.

Numbers 13:30
Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it."

Faith Produces an Unshakable Confidence in the Lord!

However, notice the response of the other spies, fear and doubt dominated them and what was in their hearts came out of their mouths as well. They spread a bad or evil report of doubt, unbelief and fear.

Numbers 13:31-33
But the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are." And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, "The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them."

Now I will point this out remember Og the King of Bashan, he was a descendant of the giants, literally like Goliath, these folks were a freak of nature.

Deuteronomy 3:11
Only Og king of Bashan was left of the remnant of the Rephaites. His bed was made of iron and was more than thirteen feet long and six feet wide. It is still in Rabbah of the Ammonites.

So when the spies said they looked like grasshoppers, now you know why. So the people were left with a choice, on the one side they had God's Word, a sworn oath that He would fight for them and send His angel ahead of them to drive the Canaanites out before them. Now there are many more references to this truth, but these listed below will make our point.

Exodus 13:4-5
Today, in the month of Abib, you are leaving. When the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites and Jebusites — the land he swore to your forefathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey.

Exodus 23:23
My angel will go ahead of you and bring you into the land of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites , Hivites and Jebusites, and I will wipe them out.

Exodus 23:27-31
"I will send my terror ahead of you and throw into confusion every nation you encounter. I will make all your enemies turn their backs and run. I will send the hornet ahead of you to drive the Hivites, Canaanites and Hittites out of your way. But I will not drive them out in a single year, because the land would become desolate and the wild animals too numerous for you. Little by little I will drive them out before you, until you have increased enough to take possession of the land. "I will establish your borders from the Red Sea to the Sea of the Philistines, and from the desert to the River. I will hand over to you the people who live in the land and you will drive them out before you."

On the other hand, we have the report of the majority of the spies who walked by sight and not by faith, who rejected what God had said and allowed what they saw, their perception of the situation to become their reality. The Bible calls their testimony a "Bad Report" or an "Evil Report" in other translations, because it flies smack in the face of what God had promised them. Basically calling God a liar and too weak to fulfill His promises for them. Unfortunately the people embraced the "Bad Report" to their own loss of their Promised Land inheritance. Here we see a classic example of the power of words; life and death are in the power of the tongue.

Numbers 14:1-4
That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert! Why is the Lord bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?" And they said to each other, "We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt."

How pathetic, after all that God has done for them, yet we too find ourselves in the same mire of self-pity and despair even today, don't we? We can locate people when they have a whine in their voice about their trials, tests and temptations, in that they are not in faith. It was an incredible disappointment, when you consider the children of Israel at the brink of possessing their Promise Land and then fall short of it. It was not without reason that Moses and Aaron fell face down in front of the whole assembly, "Oh, how will God respond to this one!" Joshua and Caleb made one last attempt to encourage and rally the people to believe God. What they said will forever be a tribute to them and their courage to take a stand and trust God.

Numbers 14:6-9
Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes and said to the entire Israelite assembly, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them."

Fear is the greatest weapon and temptation of the enemy- to disobey God and doubt His ability to save. Fear is a temptation and to yield to worry, anxiety and fear is sin- Romans 14:23, *"…and everything that does not come from faith is sin."* That makes us think twice doesn't it? The next time we are tempted by the circumstances of life to give into fear and worry. Yes, those circumstances are real; we don't deny that, but what about God? Isn't He more real, more powerful and able to back us up when we make a stand on His Word in faith!

This was the last straw, now the Israelites were beyond hope; they now talked about stoning Joshua and Caleb for their stand of faith in verse 10. Which is typical, the greatest persecution will not be from the world, but from religious folks who are bound by their physical senses; what they can see, touch and hear. See how this religion of doubt, unbelief and fear turned from weeping and wailing to hatred and murder so quickly. Unbelief, a deliberate refusal to believe is rebellion and is the worst of sins in my opinion. This is a huge lesson for us today!!!

Having done all to Stand, Stand on God's Word- Ephesians 6:13!

Hebrews 3:7-19
So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did. That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' So I declared on oath in my anger,' They shall never enter my rest.' "See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.

Well, God had heard enough, we learn through the Scriptures that His patience is long, but it is not everlasting. He will work with people for a time, giving them many opportunities to repent, but only for a season- Revelation 2:20-23. Today is the Day of Salvation, but it will not always be Today- 2 Corinthians 6:1-2.

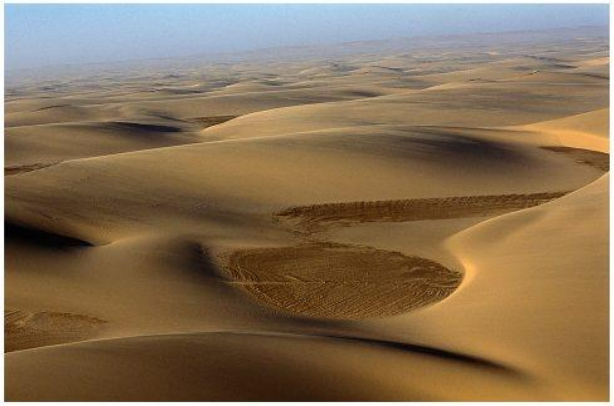
Numbers 14:11-12
The Lord said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the miraculous signs I have performed among them? I will strike them down with a plague and destroy them, but I will make you into a nation greater and stronger than they."

I think by now most of us would say, "Yes Lord please, do us both a favor and rid the earth of them!" But that is not what Moses did, he again interceded for them and God forgave them again, but not without a consequence.

Numbers 14:20-25
The Lord replied, "I have forgiven them, as you asked. Nevertheless, as surely as I live and as surely as the glory of the Lord fills the whole earth, not one of the men who saw my glory and the miraculous signs I performed in Egypt and in the desert but who disobeyed me and tested me ten times — not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their forefathers. No one who has treated me with contempt will ever see it. But because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it. Since the Amalekites and Canaanites are living in the valleys, turn back tomorrow and set out toward the desert along the route to the Red Sea."

Wow, their unbelief cost them the Promise Land, by their own choice and with the words of their own mouth they determined their destiny- death in the desert. Was this God's perfect will, No! A thousand times No! Yet is not God Sovereign, could He not have made them do the right thing and inherit the land. Yes God is Sovereign as the Scriptures dictate that He is, but He will not violate free will or His own Word.

Numbers 14:28-29
"So tell them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Lord, I will do to you the very things I heard you say: In this desert your bodies will fall — every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me.'"



The first desert experience en route to the Promise Land was God's will; the 40 years of extra desert wandering was not God's will. As Christians we can't assume that the deserts of trials and tests alone make a person holy, because the Hebrews seemed to be worse off at the end of their desert experience. We can have 10 miles of tests and not grow an inch unless we overcome those trials through faith in God's Word. The simple truth is tests, trials and temptations that come from Satan are designed to kill, steal and destroy us- to sift us as wheat, Luke 22:31. There are many people who have become bitter and fallen away from God due to tests and trials- don't seem to hear about them.

2. God Uses His Word to Purify Us

I believe that God uses His Word and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit to purify His children. Certainly as we go through this world we will be persecuted, we will suffer temptation as we learn to crucify our flesh, but only through faith in God's Word will we overcome these things that seek to destroy us. When we know the source, we are then placed in a position to resist the devil when he comes by to peddle his evil intentions for our lives. Jesus came that we may have life and have it to the full- John 10:10. Just as the world calls tornados and hurricanes an act of God, our Father gets the same bad rap from Christians who claim that He makes them sick or poor to try to teach them something. I don't see that anywhere in the New Covenant- let's be on our guard against religious speculation, tradition and false humility- Colossians 2:18. God uses His Word through the Holy Spirit to train and discipline us.

James 1:16-17
Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Matthew 7:9-11
"Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

So the verdict is in, those 20 years of age and older will never make it into the Promised Land.

Numbers 14:26-38
The Lord said to Moses and Aaron: "How long will this wicked community grumble against me? I have heard the complaints of these grumbling Israelites. So tell them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Lord, I will do to you the very things I heard you say: In this desert your bodies will fall — every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me. Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun. As for your children that you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring them in to enjoy the land you have rejected. But you — your bodies will fall in this desert. Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies lies in the desert. For forty years — one year for each of the forty days you explored the land — you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you.' I, the Lord, have spoken, and I will surely do these things to this whole wicked community, which has banded together against me.

They will meet their end in this desert; here they will die." So the men Moses had sent to explore the land, who returned and made the whole community grumble against him by spreading a bad report about it — these men responsible for spreading the bad report about the land were struck down and died of a plague before the Lord. Of the men who went to explore the land, only Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh survived.

It all comes down to faith; believing and acting on God's Word is the difference between life and death, blessing or still living under the oppression of the devil. Interesting that the people received a self-fulfilled prophecy, God quoted from their own mouths, and that is what happened- what we say will be what we get if we keep on saying it. Both Faith and Fear come by the principles of hearing words over and over again. Hearing God's Words produces faith, hearing the words of the devil produces fear. The men responsible for the "Bad Report" died immediately, so unnecessary and so tragic, but it happens even today. Good folks falling short of God's best for their lives, but it does not mean that God or His Word failed, we just failed to believe God- Romans 3:2-3.

Hebrews 4:1-3
Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not <u>combine it with faith</u>. Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said,

"So I declared on oath in my anger,
'They shall never enter my rest ."'

Hebrews 4:6
It still remains that some will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience.

Finally we see one last example of folly; the Israelites had regretted their sin instead of repenting of their sin. For in their presumption they disobey the Lord's instruction once again, and tried to take the Promised Land on their own, unfortunately it was too late for that generation- please read this account in Numbers 14:39-45.

For some more helpful insight into this account, read from the book of **<u>Deuteronomy 1:19-46; 9:23-29</u>**. It contains things that were said that make the picture even clearer, it would behoove us to read it. Jeremiah 29:11 talks about God's plans to prosper us and give us a future. This was His will for the children of Israel, but they suffered 40 years of desert due to unbelief; we too can fail if we aren't vigilant and learn from their mistakes- 1 Corinthians 10:1-13.

Sacred Cow #4- Job's Trial- Why do Bad things Happen to Good People?

Quite honestly, the book of Job has been gravely misunderstood by Christians and has been used as a pretext for God to sovereignly afflict His covenant people for all kinds of mysterious reasons. It's amazing to me how the devil has perverted that story and how so many people are ignorant of it and confused by it and are convinced that they are just like poor old Job, and won't be healed because God is testing their faithfulness. However, in the end Job was healed and God prospered Him with twice as much as He had in the beginning. How is it that people miss the punch line, all they get is forty two chapters of pain, strain and suffering and, "I guess it's not God's will to heal me."

Folks have said, "God made Job sick to keep him humble." No, He didn't. The devil afflicted Him because he had opened the door. "Yes, but God gave the devil permission." However, God didn't commission it. God will permit us to rob a gas station, but He won't commission us to do it.
For instance, folks have quoted Job's response to his calamities in Job 1:21, *"The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised."* But was it the Lord who took away? We see that it was Satan who was responsible, but why would God allow such a thing, let's look further!

Job 1:1-3
In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. He had seven sons and three daughters, and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.

Now Job was a righteous rich man, actually the Bible said he was the greatest man of the East. Now the devil hates righteous people, but he really hates rich righteous people. Because money in this world is power, and Job was a man of position, power and influence and he used it to further righteousness throughout the land and it chaffed the devil every day. Now Job was not perfect, but was fully devoted and wholehearted in his devotion to God. Remember in the end of the book of Job, he repented and prayed for his friends and that turned his captivity in Job 42:10. Job had a covenant with God, a life keeping Covenant. The reason I say that he had a life keeping Covenant is because in Job 2:6, the Lord forbade Satan from taking his life. Notice that the devil had to get permission to mess with God's man, Job. However, God allowed it because Job allowed it- likewise what we allow, God allows in our lives!

Job 1:6-11
One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it." Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil." "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land."

1. Job Opened the Door to Satan

Here we see some more insight; God does not put a hedge of protection and bless everything that an individual has for no reason. Job had to have had a covenant with God in order for God to legally intervene in Job's life on his behalf. Moreover, we see in verse one that Job kept the requirements of the covenant and in verse 5 he sacrificed burnt offerings to the Lord on a regular basis- we see these things are not automatic. Yet Job gave into fear and had opened the door to the devil, yet the devil did not even know it at the time, it took God pointing it out to him before he got a clue.

Job 1:12 NKJV
So the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD."

Job was simply judged by the Lord and turned over to the hand of the enemy because Job opened the door through fear. So who opened the door to the devil and how did it happen? Well, there were only two parties involved in this covenant, Job and God. Obviously God did not falter on His side of the covenant. So how did Job turn everything over to Satan? It was FEAR! Job giving into his fears concerning his children opened the door.

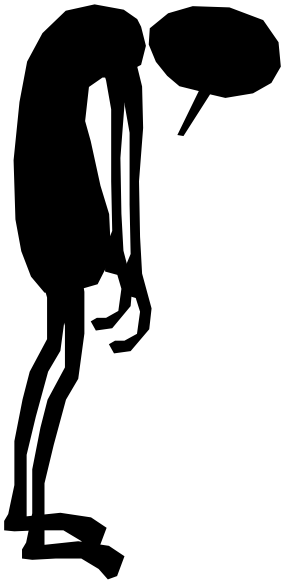
Job 1:4-5
His sons used to take turns holding feasts in their homes, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would send and have them purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular custom.

Job 3:25
What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me.

The Bible has much to say about the enemy of fear, it is the opposite of faith. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God and fear comes by hearing the words of the devil; as a matter of fact, according to Romans 14:23, *"everything that does not come from faith is sin."* So to be tempted with fear and to give into it is sin. That's right, Satan uses circumstances, evil thoughts and words from others to cause people to worry, be anxious, and fearful- it's sin to give into it. As we read the Bible we read so many references to 'Fear Not!'

Deuteronomy 20:3-4
He shall say: "Hear, O Israel, today you are going into battle against your enemies. Do not be fainthearted or afraid; do not be terrified or give way to panic before them. For the LORD your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory."

1 Peter 3:6- You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.



By Job yielding to fear, he gave power to the devil to come in and kill, steal and destroy (John 10:10). Yet instead of putting faith back into the covenant he had with God, he stumbled into yet another trap, the trap of self-pity. For forty plus chapters, Job complained and whined, never enforcing his rights in the covenant.

God wants us to be bold, not arrogant but confident in God that He will honor His Covenant. When we boldly declare to the devil that he get out of our lives (provided we are walking in love), according to John 14:12, he must obey. God will see to it. God wants us to put Him in remembrance and declare the stipulations of the New Covenant so He can legally release His power on the earth and in the affairs of men- it's not automatic, we have a part to play.

Isaiah 43:26 NKJV
Put Me in remembrance; Let us contend together; state your case, that you may be acquitted.

When Job finally got his mind on his covenant with God instead of his problems, God intervened- you can't get anything from God with self-pity which is a manifestation of selfishness.

Job 42:10 KJV
And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.

It is strange that Christians who believe in suffering sicknesses "for God's glory" often point to Job's sufferings, but never to his perseverance, healing, double blessings and long life. Bible scholars agree that the entire Book of Job took place in nine to eighteen months. Yet folks will leave the impression that Job's experience lasted much longer. In chapter 42, we can read about the works of God! For example, Job 42:10 says that God turned Job's "captivity." That means when Job was sick, he was in captivity to the devil. When he was in poverty, he was in captivity to the devil. But God turned Job's captivity and gave him twice as much as he had to begin with (v. 10)! Job lived 140 years after he got healed! That's God's work!

James 5:11
As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

Job said something very interesting in Job 9:32 in that he recognized that he had been judged by God and needed someone to mediate between him and God. He needed a defense attorney, and the only way he could know that was by revelation from God. Job was basically saying that he needed someone that understood God and understood man, a mediator between God and man. Is there such a one who fully understands God and fully understands man? Yes, His name is Jesus who is seated at the right hand of God and makes intercession for us as our advocate- 1 John 2:1-2; Romans 8:34. Redemption and the kingdom of God are full of legal terminology- condemned, righteousness, justification, mediator, advocate, intercession, testimony, reconciliation. Unlike Job, we have a defense attorney who gives us His Word to speak and silence the accusations of the enemy.

Job 9:32-35
He is not a man like me that I might answer him, that we might confront each other in court. If only there were someone to arbitrate between us, to lay his hand upon us both, someone to remove God's rod from me, so that his terror would frighten me no more. Then I would speak up without fear of him, but as it now stands with me, I cannot.

Job 16:19-21
Even now my witness is in heaven; my advocate is on high. My intercessor is my friend as my eyes pour out tears to God; on behalf of a man he pleads with God as a man pleads for his friend.

2. Job's Perseverance is the Lesson to be Learned

Another lesson the Bible points out about Job's experience is the value of perseverance; standing on God's Word and to hold fast to your confession of the Scriptures in the midst of trials, tests and temptations from the enemy. Satan was trying to get Job to turn on God and denounce Him. Job at the time did not realize it was the devil and not God that was afflicting him. Job 2:7 states plainly that *"Satan afflicted Job"* and yet Job in verse 10 says, *"Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?"*

Job 2:7-10
So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes. His wife said to him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!" He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

Revelation 2:13
I know where you live — where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city — where Satan lives.

Remember, the Bible is progressive revelation. The Old Testament dealt with types and shadows that pointed to the future Messiah. In the New Testament we can look back and see the life and ministry of the Messiah. We now live in the Epistles, the letters written to the Churches- Romans to Revelations. When we take Scriptures that applied to people who were not born again, and lived under the Levitical priesthood, and try to apply them to the Church that is under a new dispensation with a new Covenant, we will find ourselves in error with all kinds of erroneous conclusions.

We have much more light and explanation of God, His will, and the operation of the devil in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, Scripture was translated in the causative tense when in most cases it should have been translated in the permissive tense. God permitted many evil things to happen because people opened the door to the devil through their disobedience. In most cases people were just reaping the curse of the law. The book of Job is considered the oldest book in the Bible- this explains Job's conclusions. Folks misquote Isaiah 55:9 by implying this verse applies also to New Covenant believers today. Upon examination of the context we will see that God was talking to backslidden Israel, *"Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts."*

Is it any wonder that the Bible says the thoughts of the wicked are unlike God's thoughts? Well according to the Scripture, the context is addressing the "evil man's thoughts." So it was not talking about God's people who were in fellowship with Him! It's unfortunate that Christians living under the New Covenant, take this passage out of context and try to apply it to believers with a broad brush. The New Testament says that we have the mind of Christ in 1 Corinthians 2:16.

Isaiah 55:6-9
Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

In the New Covenant, according to Ephesians 2:6, *"God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus…"* by God's amazing grace! The Old Testament believers were servants, but in the better New Covenant we are made sons and friends of God in whom He confides with. So now God is sharing His thoughts with us so that His thoughts are now our thoughts.

John 15:14-15
I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

Galatians 4:7
So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

Ephesians 3:4-5
In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.

3. God is Not the Author of Evil

There is always a reason why bad things happen to good people, and we are not always going to know what those reasons are. However, I am not going to be so presumptuous as to accuse God of being the author of sickness, disease, trials, tests and temptations. Thank God for His Word, for in it He sets the record straight, and reveals that Satan is the perpetrator, the source and the author behind everything that is bad according to John 10:10- *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."*

Job, was walking in the light that he had, thinking that everything came from God good or bad; not making the correct distinction as we can today having the New Testament to explain the way things really are. Unfortunately for Job he accused God and attributing the works of Satan to the Lord.

Job 30:11, 18-23
Now that God has unstrung my bow and afflicted me, they throw off restraint in my presence. In his great power [God] becomes like clothing to me; he binds me like the neck of my garment. He throws me into the mud, and I am reduced to dust and ashes. "I cry out to you, O God, but you do not answer; I stand up, but you merely look at me. You turn on me ruthlessly; with the might of your hand you attack me. You snatch me up and drive me before the wind; you toss me about in the storm. I know you will bring me down to death, to the place appointed for all the living.

Job being made destitute by trials is in despair and suffering; in his limited understanding accuses God of such treachery. I love how God calls Job on the carpet and confronts him concerning his accusations in Job 38:2-3, *"Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me."* When we attribute God with the devil's work, we are calling evil good- bad idea! God only does good and the devil only does evil- simple theology.

Isaiah 5:20
Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.

I want to show you another example of God being falsely accused. Jeremiah was basically complaining to God, not wanting to be caught up in this impending judgment of the Babylonians who were coming to take the people of Israel away into captivity- Jeremiah 15:15-18. The People of Israel treated Jeremiah's prophecies of judgment with ridicule and mockery. As a result, the prophet had become bitter, allowing their rejection of the message to affect the messenger.

This caused Jeremiah to blame God and accuse Him of not treating the prophet justly. So the Lord rebuked him for his accusatory tone and told him to repent and God would continue to use him in the prophetic office. The Lord made it plain in Jeremiah 15:19, *"if you utter worthy, not worthless, words, you will be my spokesman."* So whenever we attribute evil to God, associating and making Him an accomplice and in cahoots with the devil, we are making a BIG mistake. That is what we are doing when we make statements like, *"God sent this affliction to make me humble like Job."*

Jeremiah 12:1-3
You are always righteous, O Lord, when I bring a case before you. Yet I would speak with you about your justice: Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all the faithless live at ease? You have planted them, and they have taken root; they grow and bear fruit. You are always on their lips but far from their hearts. Yet you know me, O Lord; you see me and test my thoughts about you. Drag them off like sheep to be butchered! Set them apart for the day of slaughter!

Jeremiah 15:19 AMP
Therefore thus says the Lord [to Jeremiah]: If you return [and give up this mistaken tone of distrust and despair], then I will give you again a settled place of quiet and safety, and you will be My minister; and if you separate the precious from the vile [cleansing your own heart from unworthy and unwarranted suspicions concerning God's faithfulness], you shall be My mouthpiece. [But do not yield to them.] Let them return to you — not you to [the people].

In conclusion, the Bible warns us not to open the door, give place or opportunity to the devil in Ephesians 4:27. There are reasons why bad things happen to good people, God permits them due to our negligence. Other times we have done nothing wrong, but for that reason the devil attacks us to keep us from advancing in God as in the case of Paul's thorn which we will cover later.

Job could have avoided a lot of heartache if he had Proverbs 21:23 available, *"He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity."* Just because bad things happen to good people, I am not going to change my belief in God's Word over their experiences. When reason contradicts revelation from God's Word, always go with the Word, whether we understand it or not. God is faithful, He cannot lie, His Word works, so if something goes wrong it's never God's fault! In the end Job repented and prayed for his friends and God restored back to Job twice as much as he had before in Job 42:10- Job was not a poor man!

Romans 3:3-4
What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge."

Sacred Cow #5- The Chastening of the Lord

This next sacred cow is akin to the previous one, but examines the notion that God hurts and afflicts us for our good, as a form of discipline. This is an important question, so in what manner does God discipline His children? Our friend Job has provided much fodder for religious folks to support their erroneous ideas concerning God's methods in these matters. Remember, inspiration assures that what was said was accurately recorded in the Bible, but does not necessary endorse it. We must consider the source and the context of the passage. From Job's perspective everything came from God, the good, the bad and the ugly. Thank God for the New Testament that sets the record straight as to who is the author of what, according to John 10:10 and Acts 10:38. Jesus is like the guy with the white hat, the good guy!

Job 5:17-18
Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal.

In John 8:31-32, Jesus declares that it is the knowledge of the truth that sets us free. We can't believe any further than the revelation we have of God's Word that is why the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul instructs us to let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly in Colossians 3:16. In Hebrews 11:6, we discover that "Faith" is what pleases God, so what He will always direct us to do is to have faith in Him through His Word.

So if God is interested that our faith grows, what causes that to happen? Romans 10:17 says that faith comes by hearing the Word and in James 2:26, faith without deeds is dead. So our faith grows as we hear God's Word and then act on and put God's Word first place in our lives. Occasions to act on the Word confront us daily. In all kinds of situations we have opportunities to say, "It is written" to the circumstances of life. This is how our faith grows.

Christians can have 10 miles of trials and not grow an inch unless they stand on God's Word in the midst of the trial; otherwise they just become another victim or another statistic. What I am trying to say is that there is nothing virtuous in a trial, test or temptation since they come from the devil in an attempt to kill us, steal from us and destroy our lives- they are enemies and should always be resisted with the Word! Now in spite of what the devil meant for evil, certainly God can turn it around for our good. Only if we walk by faith in God's Word, otherwise we run the risk of being ripped off in this life; God does not get the glory when we get victimized and mauled by the enemy.

There are many well-meaning Christians who have been deceived with religious ideology that God is so sovereign that He is the cause behind everything; He is pulling all the strings and is in control of everything whether it is good or bad. This kind of thinking finds its roots in the book of Job and many Old Testament passages that present a causative tense, when it should have been translated, God "permitted" or "allowed" those things to happen. This is more of an extreme view and is very fatalistic.

2 Peter 2:1-2
But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them — bringing swift destruction on themselves.

Please don't misunderstand me, I believe in the sovereignty of God as the Bible teaches it. God created the universe that is sovereignty, God sent Jesus to redeem us from sin, that is sovereignty and Jesus is coming again, that is God's sovereign will. Nothing in all creation could or will ever stop those things from coming to pass- its impossible because God is the Almighty God and there is none like Him. What people fail to realize is that God also sovereignly gave dominion and control of this world to Adam and Eve to rule over His creation in this earth in the first place as gods of this world. He has given us a free will to choose our eternal destinies- Romans 1:24. God won't violate or contradict His Word!

Genesis 1:26, 28
Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Deuteronomy 30:19
This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live

Unfortunately, we in turn gave it over to the devil and he became the god of this world. That is why this world is in such a mess. People will say, "if God is so good and sovereign, why is this world filled with so much evil?" God is honoring Adam's choice to turn this world over to the devil to kill, steal and destroy. Satan has a right to be here and do what he does and God is honoring that for the time being. However, that time will run out as stated in Mt. 8:28-29. Jesus will return at His Second Coming and the devil along with all his demons and fallen angels will be bound in the abyss for 1,000 years- Rev. 20:3.

John 10:34-35
Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I have said you are gods'? If he called them 'gods,' to whom the word of God came — and the Scripture cannot be broken…

Luke 4:5-7
The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours."

2 Corinthians 4:4-5
The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Matthew 8:28-29
When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. "What do you want with us, Son of God?" they shouted. "Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?"

God is not going to violate His original directive, and will allow man and the devil to have their way up to certain limits. For instance, God had to sovereignly intervene with Noah's flood in order to preserve the godly seed of man in preparation for Jesus' incarnation 2,000 years ago. He will not allow the devil to destroy mankind prematurely with nuclear war, at least not until the Great Tribulation Period. Even then, God sovereignly prevents total annihilation from happening in the future.

Matthew 24:22
"If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened."

Revelation 7:1
After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree.

When God's terrible judgments or wrath are poured out as recorded in the Bible, it has always been upon wicked unbelievers and not His own people. Consider Noah's flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, Korah's rebellion, the armies of the nations that attacked Israel and the Great Tribulation Period. These retributions happened by God upon sinners and not to His own covenant people. As we have said before, when God judges His people, He turns them over to Satan, but it is never by the hand of God that the punishment is handed out- 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, 11:27-32; 1 Timothy 1:18-20.

The difference is simple, Satan has no desire to destroy the wicked like Sodom and Gomorrah, because it was his handiwork that got it that way in the first place. That is why it took God to personally destroy it- the same goes for Noah's flood and other examples of wickedness that had to be purged from the earth. During the Great Tribulation Period, Satan is not about to kill the Anti-Christ, it will be done sovereignly by the hand of God. It was kind of bold of Abraham to challenge God's justice in Genesis chapter 18. This Scripture proves that God has a direct hand in destroying the wicked. God did not correct Abraham when he told God that it would be unjust for Him to destroy the righteous along with the wicked- to treat them the same. So when bad things happen to God's people, it is never by the hand of God, but is the work of Satan. God permits it alright, and allows us to reap what we have sowed when we fail to repent, but it is never God's perfect will.

Genesis 18:22-25
The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the Lord. Then Abraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing — to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

However, when it comes to God's covenant people, Satan is all too eager to dish out attacks, affliction and oppression of all kinds upon our lives. God certainly restrains Him because of the New Covenant that we are under. But when we open the door to the devil through unrepentant sin, through a permission of ignorance or a lack of faith, we are thus turned over to the devil and he has access to our lives as a result. Of course, if we repent of sin, judge ourselves, resist the devil in Jesus' Name and apply the blood and the Word, the devil has to back off. God will enforce our New Covenant rights when we stand on them by faith with a repentant heart.

Have you ever wondered, why God entered into covenant with Abraham or why we need to pray for God to act on our behalf? Why does He charge us with the task of preaching the gospel when He could do a better job of it? God in His sovereignty has chosen to include mankind in His plans for the earth and particularly His own children for furthering His Kingdom.

What distresses me is hearing Christians read into all the circumstances of life some mysterious reason for it happening. Certainly, nothing goes without His notice since He is omniscient (all knowing) and is omnipresent (everywhere at the same time) and omnipotent (all powerful). That does not necessarily mean God always has a reason or purpose behind everything. But that certainly does not stop Him from using the situations in life and turn them around for His glory. We need to realize that God gives mankind some leeway to make decisions, good or bad and reap the consequences, good or bad. For example, God does not stop His children from racking up all kinds of debt, He will counsel them not to, but if they override it, they have themselves to blame. God did not send the creditors against them to teach them a lesson. The lesson learned is by what they reap as a consequence, and God will be there to always work the good out of it for their ultimate well being- Romans 8:28. Realize, we can resist and grieve the Holy Spirit in our decision making.

Acts 7:51-53
"You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him— you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it."

Ephesians 4:30
And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

This is where I have issue with those well intentioned Christians who make God out as the cause for everything; or let's say they won't go that far, that God often times allows these bad things to happen to His children. In which case, they will say that sometimes God will cause negative circumstances to occur in order to discipline us or teach us something. However, that reasoning only creates confusion and doubt. How would a Christian know when something bad came from God or from the devil? How would we know when to resist the devil, and not be resisting God, if indeed He sometimes sends bad things our way?

There is no basis for faith, when the will of God can sometimes be the cause for the same things the devil is responsible for. How do we know when to resist the devil and not accidentally be resisting God's will? I believe in the sovereignty of God as the Bible teaches it, but when folks cross the line and put God in the same camp as the devil, and attribute what the devil does to God, I say no way, show me Scripture in the New Testament, particularly the Epistles that supports that! The problem with extreme sovereignty teaching is that makes God responsible for everything; not using the New Testament to rightly divide between the works of Satan and God.

Bad things happen in this life, to seemingly good people. Sometimes they are just accidents, bad decisions or the devil was involved. Let's not spiritualize these events as something sovereign from God, with some mysterious, esoteric purpose. The reason I am so adamant about this is because this philosophy carries over into the area of healing. Christians who are struggling to exercise faith in God's Word for their healing are also battling doubts in their minds that perhaps this sickness or disease is actually God's sovereign will and purpose for their lives. As a result, their hearts are divided over the matter and nothing happens except more suffering and pain.

When it pertains to Christians, the Lord is about giving life and the devil is about taking it, never shall the two entwine– John 10:10; James 1:16-17. God judges the wicked after His long patience and mercy has been exhausted, as we have already pointed out. Remember, God actively takes what the devil meant for bad or even bad circumstances due to bad decisions and will use them to get people saved, rededicated and in line with His purpose for their lives-turns lemons into lemonade in other words. God is never the originator, cause or author of bad things for His saints. Either we bring those things upon ourselves or we are out of fellowship with God, and the enemy is coming after our faith in God.

Luke 13:1-5, "Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus answered, 'Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them — do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.'"

Here are some other Biblical principles that further refute the notion that God sometimes causes bad things to happen to His people. Consider, Galatians 2:18, *"If I rebuild what I destroyed, I prove that I am a lawbreaker."* The context is Paul answering the question in the previous verse Galatians 2:17, *"If, while we seek to be justified in Christ, it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners, does that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not!"* Just as Jesus does not promote sin in order to save people, neither does He sovereignly make people sick in order to discipline them or teach them a lesson; just so afterwards when the lesson is learned, He can turn around and heal them.

It is either an all or nothing proposition; faith demands it in order to have a confidence and conviction that it is always God's will to be healed, to prosper, to be free from oppression and delivered from bad circumstances every time, all the time. I am not suggesting that we won't have any trouble, on the contrary, the devil and the world system will not sit idly by and watch God's People be blessed without trying to undermine and challenge it. I am just pointing out in Scripture that God is on our side and is not part of the problem, but is the solution to deliver His people as we trust in Him. Some Christians are confused in thinking that God is or is sometimes the instigator of trials, tests and temptations. The Bible refutes such a supposition. God does not contradict Himself, change or undue what He has done.

Psalms 34:19-20, "A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all; he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken."

John 16:33
"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

2 Timothy 3:12
In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted…

What is so dangerous about the error found in the excess of sovereignty teaching is that it robs people of faith, creates confusion and inserts doubts in folk's minds. I have tried to minister healing to Christians tainted by this religious tradition; they had cancer, thinking God put it in their lives so that through their suffering they were somehow glorifying God by it. I have spent hours teaching them from the Bible that God would never put on them sickness and disease, that only the devil would be responsible for it. The Bible tells them to resist that cancer as they would resist the devil, because that is where it came from, not from God, not ever! Sadly, they remained confused that it was somehow God's will to take them home, to heaven and to heaven they went. Now they know the truth that it was never God's will or intention for them to die of cancer, but it's too late, they cannot come back and finish the work God had called them to. As a result, what they were supposed to do for God and His kingdom now falls on the shoulders of other believers. Where does God get the glory in that? I hate religion it robs Christians of God's grace, provision and blessings for their lives. It robs the world of knowing Jesus as their Savior.

We blame God for so many things that the devil or man just brought upon themselves. It's unfortunate that some are so compelled to attribute it to God's sovereignty all the time- to look for some divine purpose or reason. There is a huge danger in doing this. If God can be the cause of some bad things, then when any bad thing happens, Christians are paralyzed to resist it because, "it might be from God" since He is sovereign. This line of thinking is not only bad theology but is slanderous to insinuate and attribute the works of the devil to God- just like what Job had done.

Some folks will take a couple of Scriptures like these (2 Corinthians 1:9; 12:7) and insist that God caused the trials and persecutions to come Paul's way as a means of keeping him humble and dependent on God. No, God turned around what the devil meant to destroy Paul and worked the good out of it by revealing to Paul that God was his source. There are so many occasions where the devil comes against Christians, that God has plenty of opportunities to provide side benefits of lessons learned to His children without creating contrary circumstances of life Himself, not that He does anyway. This is where people get confused and try to make God responsible for things He is not. God in His infinite wisdom can work through the affairs of men, their decisions, good or bad as well as the activities of the devil and use them for His sovereign purpose. But make no mistake about it, God is not the cause or author of death, sickness or disease, He does not kill us, steal from us or destroy our lives.

2 Corinthians 1:9
Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. <u>But this happened</u> that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.

2 Corinthians 12:7
<u>To keep me from becoming conceited</u> because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.

It is critical to understand that God did not cause, create or send evil our way because God is not the author of it, Satan is. God will allow or permit it, but He never is the cause of it in His children's lives. We need to remember that Satan is still the god of this world, until Adam's lease runs out, he has a right to be here and he will continue to stir up trouble for God's people whenever and where ever he can- we call these trials, tests and temptations. It is the same principle as Paul's thorn in the flesh; it is an attempt to discourage us from following God and give up because it becomes hard with all the resistance.

Romans 8:28
And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

If we interpreted the Scriptures as some do with their religious glasses, we would read into Jeremiah 29:11 as follows, "I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to make you sometimes sick and poor in order to keep you humble, plans to cause bad things to happen in your life on occasion in order to discipline you and teach you to follow me." Thank God, that is not what the Bible teaches, God's plans and thoughts toward His covenant people are ONLY plans for prosperity, hope and a future. Notice that these plans having nothing "HURTFUL" in them. So how could God sometimes send bad things our way, He doesn't because He is a good God and is the author of only good things for His children. The devil works hard to deceive Christians on this matter; that is why the Bible tells us not to be deceived in James 1:16. Be deceived about what James? That God would send bad things our way as well as good. No, God is responsible for only good all the time for His children.

Jeremiah 29:11
"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

James 1:16-17
Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Thank God, the Bible keeps this matter so simple for our faith to operate in, that a little child can understand it. There was this time, I was teaching a Bible study in a house and this little red headed 5 year old girl came to me afterwards and made a profound statement- "God is good and the devil is bad." I was blown away for a minute, knowing that the Spirit of God was speaking through her to bless me with a revelation that is already clearly taught in the New Testament. It is my heart's desire and prayer that all of the Body of Christ would have this revelation as this little girl does.

Matthew 11:25-26
At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.

Jesus left no room for doubt concerning the originators of who is responsible for the circumstances of this life, good or bad; it comes down to understanding this simple theology, Good God versus Bad devil as stated in John 10:10. If God was the cause of some bad things happening to Christians, then according to Jesus, His kingdom would be divided against itself and would fall. Praise God, this cuts through all the confusion and doubt that has hindered our faith concerning God's sovereignty. God will never put sickness on His children or be the cause of any evil in our lives. Therefore, our faith is strong to resist and pray against anything that comes to kill, steal or destroy our lives because the Bible tells us that those things are always from the devil and not God.

Luke 11:17-20
Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them: "Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall. If Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand? I say this because you claim that I drive out demons by Beelzebub. Now if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your followers drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you."

John 10:10 AMP
The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows).

So is God the author and sender of trials, tests and temptations? There has been an undercurrent in religious circles which says that trials, tests and temptations that we experience in life are designed of God to make us stronger. In other words don't fight it, allow it to run its course in our lives to the extent that we experience the full brunt of spiritual suffering, so that in the end we will come out of the fire as pure as gold- sound familiar? Certainly, if we overcome them through faith in God's Word we will develop perseverance and character in spite of them, not because of them inherently; due to the fact they came from Satan with the intent to destroy our faith in God. That is what needs to be understood clearly in order for us to have a basis to resist all evil that comes against us. Suffering according to the will of God (1 Peter 4:19) is not suffering for things that Jesus, as our substitute suffered for us in our place- sin, oppression, poverty, sickness and diseases etc. Rather suffering persecution for being a Christian.

Romans 5:3-5
Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

James 1:2-4, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

We can consider trials, tests and temptations with all joy only when we understand their source (devil) and intent (kill, steal and destroy), and if we face them fearlessly with the full armor of God. Then we are in a position where we can resist sickness, disease and all manner of evil by the power of the Holy Spirit and through faith in God's Word.

Isaiah 59:19 NKJV
When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.

Ephesians 6:13, "Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand."

So who is so interested in testing our faith in order to see if it is genuine or not- God or the devil?

1. Tests

Luke 22:31-32 AMP
Simon, Simon (Peter), listen! Satan has asked excessively that [all of] you be given up to him [out of the power and keeping of God], that he might sift [all of] you like grain. But I have prayed especially for you [Peter], that your [own] faith may not fail; and when you yourself have turned again, strengthen and establish your brethren.

Greek for "he may sift" peirazo (pi-rad'-zo); from NT:3984; to test (objectively), i.e. endeavor, scrutinize, entice, discipline: Intensive, "To ask, interrogate, inquire of, consult, or to demand of a person"

Ultimately every Test boils down to a test of obedience- to obey God's Word or not- it's a faith test! Do we really believe what we say? Somebody wants to know and it's not God. From Satan's perspective let's look at the reason behind "sifting as wheat." To sift as wheat is the act of separating or boiling down in order to find out what we are made of. In other words, the devil wants to know if we really are what we say we are, he wants to test our claim to be a faithful follower of Jesus Christ. His hope is that we fail and be proved false, a fake and discredit our testimony and make us irrelevant. The devil's goal is to put us out of commission from doing our part in fulfilling the Great Commission.

He certainly is not interested in our faith being strengthened or our character being built. If we win the faith battle that is the prize we gain- to the victor goes the spoils. In other words these tests come from Satan. He is the accuser of the brethren, and he is looking for dirt on you and me- Revelation 12:10. So tests confront us with a choice to obey or not obey as a result of the situation or circumstance.

Revelation 2:10
Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.

2. Trials

So what about 1 Peter 1:6-7, it almost sounds like God sends trials our way to make us strong. Or James chapter 1, we are told to count it all joy when we face trials of many kinds. The New Testament makes it clear that these trials are spiritual attacks from Satan with the express purpose to shipwreck and destroy our faith- they come primarily in the form of hardships, persecution and adversity in life. Satan is after our faith in God's Word according to Mark 4:14. Trials are not our friend, we should not embrace them, coddle up with them and yield to them; letting the enemy run rough shod over us. We are to resist trials, tests and temptations with the Word because they come from the devil- James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9.

1 Peter 1:6-7 AMP
[You should] be exceedingly glad on this account, though now for a little while you may be distressed by trials and suffer temptations, So that [the genuineness] of your faith may be tested, [your faith] which is infinitely more precious than the perishable gold which is tested and purified by fire. [This proving of your faith is intended] to redound to [your] praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One) is revealed.

James 1:2-4 AMP
Consider it wholly joyful, my brethren, whenever you are enveloped in or encounter trials of any sort or fall into various temptations. Be assured and understand that the trial and proving of your faith bring out endurance and steadfastness and patience. But let endurance and steadfastness and patience have full play and do a thorough work, so that you may be [people] perfectly and fully developed [with no defects], lacking in nothing.

1 Thessalonians 3:2-4
We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. You know quite well that we were destined for them. In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know.

The more we walk with God, the more intense the attacks from the enemy will be, but it's not God sending them- though He does work the good out of them. We don't thank God for trials in our lives, but are told to give thanks to God in the midst of them. Our attitude should be as a fighter, as more than a conqueror, victorious, triumphant and strong in the Lord and in the power of His might- Romans 8:37; 1 Corinthians 15:57; 2 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 6:10.

We don't thank God for trials but in spite of them, it's another opportunity to prove God's Word is true and put the devil under our feet through faith in God's Word. There are a lot of benefits to be had at what the devil throws at us. Our faith grows, we develop character and perseverance, but only if we overcome.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18- Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks <u>in all</u> circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

John 16:33-17:1 AMP
I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace and confidence. In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer [take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted]! For I have overcome the world. [I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you.]

2 Timothy 3:12-13
In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted , while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

Dear friends, there is no guarantee that we are going to be made strong by trials unless we pass the test and overcome the trial through faith in God's Word- that is where our choices become so critical. What about those unfortunate Christians who succumbed to the pressure and backslid and turned away from God- 1 Timothy 5:15, *"Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan."* Interesting, we don't hear a whole lot about the casualties of spiritual warfare, I'm not interested in glamorizing what the devil does, but I am not going to recoil or shrink back either- let's keep our eyes on Jesus!

Mark 4:16-17 AMP
And in the same way the ones sown upon stony ground are those who, when they hear the Word, at once receive and accept and welcome it with joy; And they have no real root in themselves, and so they endure for a little while; then when trouble or persecution arises <u>on account of the Word</u>, they immediately are offended (become displeased, indignant, resentful) and they stumble and fall away.

Hebrews 3:1
Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.

So when it comes to trials, what the devil meant for harm and evil, God will work the good, turn around and salvage some good out of it only if we respond in faith to God's Word in the midst of the trial. Otherwise we are no better for it, but rather are losing ground and experience a spiritual setback instead.

James 1:12
Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

3. Temptations

Some of those who are reading this material probably find that it all makes common sense. Fortunately you have not had your mind filled with religious inaccuracies concerning these matters so you are not confused in this area. This section of teaching is meant to clarify and set the record straight for those who have been so misinformed and confused.

If knowledge of the truth sets us free, then the doctrines of demons holds people in bondage. Now onto the subject of temptation; who is the tempter? Well it comes down to the devil and the sinful impulses of our physical bodies called the flesh.

1 Thessalonians 3:5
For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter might have tempted you and our efforts might have been useless.

James 1:13-15
When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

After using the word temptation in the sense of test or trial, James now uses it in the sense of a solicitation to sin. That's right, a test or trial by nature is an enticement or temptation to turn from God and doubt His Word! While a trial infers external difficulties, temptations refer to internal impulses for the enticement to sin. I want to point out something very important. After the Holy Spirit through James describes trials, tests and temptations in the majority of the first chapter, he makes a huge clarification and distinction to make sure no one confuses God with having anything to do with trials, tests and temptations by saying:

James 1:16-18
Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

Isn't it interesting that he says, "Don't be deceived" my dear brothers. Deceived about what, you may ask? That trials, tests and temptations come from God. Since every good and perfect gift comes from the God who does not change in this matter. With Him there are no exceptions, He is a good God and is the author of only good gifts- He's not the author of trials, tests and temptations!

Matthew 7:9-11
"Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

4. Biblical Discipline

Some have said that, "Everything that happens to our in lives is the will of God for us. That's God's way of disciplining us." If that were true, there would be no need to resist the devil. So if the Lord does not discipline us with trials, tests and temptations, how does He do it then? When we look at Hebrews 12:5 through verse 11, we see a parallel being made between earthly fathers and the heavenly Father disciplining their children.

Hebrews 12:5 AMP
And have you [completely] forgotten the divine word of appeal and encouragement in which you are reasoned with and addressed as sons? My son, do not think lightly or scorn to submit to the correction and discipline of the Lord, nor lose courage and give up and faint when you are reproved or corrected by Him.

So if a good Christian dad has to discipline his children for wrong doing, does he break their arm, or deprive them of food and water. Perhaps for serious offenses he would put cancer on his kids or subject them to a serious car accident in order to teach them some deep spiritual lesson in humility. I am being a little sarcastic here; the answer is obviously no way. Jesus said in Matthew 7:9-11, in paraphrase, "if you as earthly parents would not do such things to your children, and are evil in comparison with God, our heavenly Father would never do evil things to us either"- to infer otherwise is dangerous and unbiblical. God disciplines us with His Word that is how we are corrected and trained not with tragedy! Just look at what Jesus said in Revelation 3:19, *"Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent."* Rebuke refers to words, right?

Hebrews 12:7 AMP
You must submit to and endure [correction] for discipline; God is dealing with you as with sons. For what son is there whom his father does not [thus] train and correct and discipline?

Proverbs 3:11-12
My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.

2 Timothy 4:2
Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction.

2 Timothy 3:16-17
All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The word "chasten" or "discipline" in the Greek means to *child train* or *to educate*. We are called Disciples of Christ which mean those who are trained or under the tutelage of Jesus Christ- disciplined ones. Here is the key to rightly dividing what it means to be disciplined by the Lord- discipline is training. Hebrews 12:5 is not inferring that God is sending some calamity our way to teach us. That would be child abuse, not child training- a big difference!

But yet, some say "God sends sickness to discipline his children." If God was going to give sickness, He would have to steal it first because God does not have any, nor is He the author or creator of it and we won't find any of it in heaven either. It's a mystery to me why some people, when they get religious, lose all their common sense and quit thinking.

But someone will say, "But God works the good out of bad situations," yea but sometimes that was due to our own poor judgment or faith failure that got us into that predicament. It was never God's perfect will for it to happen that way. If we learned the lesson in the end, great, but there is an easier way, just obey God's counsel in His Word and avoid all that extra hardship. Just because God uses the bad situation does not mean He condones it, originated it or desires it for His children in the first place.

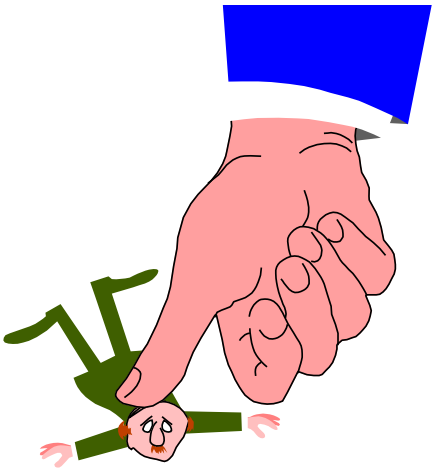
We make the bed we lay in often times and when we get tired of it, God is there to deliver us when we call for help. God's best is for us to obey His Word and avoid tragedy in the first place. Certainly, He uses bad experiences to salvage some good out of it so the experience is not a total loss- but why go down the road of the school of hard knocks? My encouragement is to take God's highway as opposed to our detours through the marsh and briar patches of life. Certainly some trials, tests and temptations are unavoidable because we are serving God in this world. However, let's eliminate the unnecessary hardships of life by straightening out our theology and shut the door to the devil from exploiting disobedience, ignorance or a lack of faith.

Consider Ephesians 6:4, *"Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the* ***training*** *and instruction of the Lord."* The word "training" is the same Greek word as "discipline" in Hebrews 12:5.

paideia (pahee-di'-ah); tutorage, i.e. education or training; by implication, disciplinary correction: KJV - chastening, chastisement, instruction, nurture.

Psalms 94:12- Blessed is the man you discipline, O Lord, the man you teach from your law.

To nurture a child is quite different from some of our preconceived ideas of discipline. Most people when they think of the Lord disciplining them, unfortunately think of God doing them harm. However, Biblical discipline (Ephesians 6:4 and Hebrews 12) are in the sense of nurturing. In 2 Timothy 3:16 concerning God's Word, it's useful for "training" which is also the same Greek word as discipline in Hebrews 12:5- God rebukes, corrects and trains us with His Word.



What some people call God disciplining His children is really child abuse in a cruel way! We can see how religious tradition has crept in and has driven these wedges into our thinking; that God is carrying out all kinds of calamity and trouble to give His children. Tornadoes, hurricanes and floods are not acts of God- no these are the acts of the devil not God! Now that's a sacred cow that needs to be kicked over. I know of dear Christians who have been wracked with cancer thinking God allowed it in their lives to teach them something or be glorified through their suffering- nothing could be further from the truth of God's Word!

If anything comes near to being a doctrine of the devil, it is the idea that God is making us sick, and God is causing us troubles in life. God and the devil have never changed places, regardless of what anyone says. God is still a good God, and the devil is still a bad devil. The devil is not perfecting the church. That is done through the washing of the water of the Word according to Ephesians 5:25-26.

Remember, Satan is the god of this world according to 2 Corinthians 4:4, so God allows the devil to operate for a time. But thanks be to God, through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, we don't have to allow the devil to work in our lives- we can resist him and he will flee from us in Jesus' Name!

2 Peter 3:15-16
Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

1 Timothy 4:1
The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

Here are some Scriptures that encourage us of the reality of God's sovereign work in our lives to become conformed to the image of Christ. But like everything else in God's kingdom, it requires our cooperation and faith for God's plans to be fully realized in our lives. This is where a balance is found between God's sovereign initiative according to God's Word and our response to His will through faith and obedience.

Romans 8:29
For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son…

Romans 16:25
Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ…

Philippians 1:6
…being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 2:12-13
…continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

Ephesians 2:10
For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Hebrews 12:2- Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith…

Jude 24 - 25
To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

Unit 8 Review:

Is God ever at fault for the bad things that come our way in this life?

Why would it be important to make this distinction, "Who is the agent of destruction, God or Satan?"

What is the big difference between truth and fact as it pertains to healing?

Why is fear such an enemy to folks wanting to be healed?

Where is the fallacy in suggesting that God sometimes will personally send bad things our way?

So who is so interested in testing our faith to see if it is genuine or not- God or the devil?

Sacred Cow #6- Paul's Thorn in the Flesh

One of the most prevalent objections raised today against the ministry of healing is Paul's "thorn in the flesh." One traditional idea has led to another. The widespread teaching that God is the Author of disease, and that some of the most devout of His children He has desired to remain sick, and glorify Him by exhibiting fortitude and patience. No doubt this has led to the idea that Paul had a sickness that God refused to heal. We do not believe that anyone who would take time to read all that God has to say on the subject of healing could ever form such a conclusion. Certainly there are many godly men and women who hold a contrary view, not only on this point, but on the whole subject of divine healing. It is merely a matter of study and investigation.

Someone so aptly stated that deception wouldn't be so deceiving if it wasn't so deceptive. Paul's thorn in the flesh is a deceptive sacred cow that holds many in bondage. Religious ideas about Paul's thorn have caused so many to suffer needlessly, believing they were pleasing God by remaining sick. Many people subscribe to the notion that God gave Paul some kind of illness in order to keep him humble and that God refused to heal him. Paul's thorn has been espoused to be anything from sore eyeballs to ingrown toenails; using Galatians 4:13-14 to espouse sickness when it was a reference to Acts 14:8-19.

In 2 Corinthians 11:16-33, Paul in defense to his credibility under attack by false apostles goes into great detail about suffering persecution, trials, tests and hardships for the sake of the gospel. Such hardships like beatings, ship wrecked, all kinds of dangers, and he was even stoned to death and raised back from the dead. Please keep this all in mind because it is crucial to understanding what Paul's thorn was. After this lengthy description he begins chapter twelve of second Corinthians talking about himself having visions and revelations and even going to heaven to see God.

Scripture interprets scripture, so let's see how the Bible uses the term of "thorn" elsewhere in the Bible. The expression "thorn in the flesh" is never used in the Bible to mean sickness. And every time the phrase is used in the Bible, it is specifically stated what the "thorn" was. In the Old Testament, God said to Israel, "If you don't kill those Canaanites when you possess the land, they will be thorns in your side. They will torment you." (Numbers 33:55; Joshua 23:13; Judges 2:3).

Witness 1
Before the Israelites entered the land of Canaan, Moses told them:

Numbers 33:55
"But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land, those you allow to remain will become barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides. They will give you trouble in the land where you will live."

Here, the scripture itself tells us plainly that the "barbs in your eyes" and "thorns in your sides" of the Israelites were the inhabitants of Canaan, and not eye disease or sickness. Moses was warning them that the Canaanites, if allowed to remain, would be a constant annoyance to them and a snare.

Witness 2
Many years later, Joshua said the same thing about the Canaanites:

Joshua 23:13
"Then you may be sure that the Lord your God will no longer drive out these nations before you. Instead, they will become snares and traps for you, whips on your backs and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land, which the Lord your God has given you."

Witness 3
In the book of Judges, the Lord told the children of Israel the same thing:

Judges 2:3
"Now therefore I tell you that I will not drive them out before you; they will be [thorns] in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you."

Witness 4
Our fourth witness is David, who said:

2 Samuel 23:6
But evil men are all to be cast aside like thorns, which are not gathered with the hand.

In all four cases, the Bible makes it explicit what the "thorns" are, so there is no need for wild speculations. And in every case, the "thorns" refer to personalities, not sicknesses.

Usage today
Today, we still use the same expression. According to The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (New Edition), when we say that someone is "a thorn in one's flesh/side," we are saying that that person is "a continual cause of annoyance or problems." Similar expressions are "pain in the neck" and "pain in the rear."

1. Paul's Thorn was not Sickness and Disease

Now if Satan is the god of this world and his kingdom of darkness is all about keeping people from the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, I wonder if he may have felt threatened by all of Paul's achievements and advancements in preaching the gospel all over the ancient world. I wonder if he may have said to himself, "Satan, you need to do something about this Paul fellow, he is getting too many people saved. I know I'll assign one of my most devious of demons to his case to stir up trouble wherever he goes. This demon will make life so difficult for Paul, stirring up so much persecution, that he will give up and quit the ministry!"

2 Corinthians 12:7
To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.

The original Greek word for "messenger" here is "angelos". According to Strong's Concordance, it means "a messenger, envoy, one who is sent, an angel, and a messenger from God".

In Paul's case, it was an angel of Satan. So, Paul's thorn was a demonic spirit sent by Satan to torment and annoy him; or a person or persons carrying that demonic spirit. It was certainly not eye disease, migraine or some sickness as many have wildly speculated.

This Greek word "angelos" appears 186 times in the Bible, and is translated "angel" 179 times and "messengers" the other seven times. In all 186 cases, without exception, it refers to a person and not a thing or disease.

It is also interesting to note that the Rotherham and Weymouth translations use the pronoun "he" to refer to Paul's "thorn" or "the messenger of Satan." "As for this, three times I besought the Lord to rid me of him." Both of these translators use personal pronouns of "he" and "him" when speaking of Paul's thorn; so these two pronouns, as well as the word "angel," or "messenger," prove that Paul's "thorn" was, as he himself plainly shows, a satanic personality and not some sickness. In other words, the Bible reveals that Paul's thorn was a satanic spirit being and not a disease.

Here we have it, Paul's thorn in the flesh was a "messenger of Satan" to torment or make life miserable for Paul. The word "torment" used here means to buffet, to strike with a clenched fist or open hand. In other words it was a steady buffeting, to keep the revelation of the gospel from being preached. In Genesis, God foretold that Jesus would come to the earth and crush Satan's dominion but in the process the devil would "strike his heel" or make him suffer for it through the crucifixion- Genesis 3:15. In other words when it comes to ministry, there is a price to be paid called persecution, we are told to pick up our cross and follow Jesus- Mark 8:34. That cross by the way is not sickness and disease, since Jesus already bore that burden for us through His redemptive work.

If Paul's thorn was sickness, then it would mean that Paul was continuously sick. But we don't see a sickly Paul in the Bible. And how could the apostle travel great distances, preaching boldly and healing the sick, if he was so sickly? The sick would have laughed at him for preaching about God's healing power! What we do find, however, is an apostle of God who was frequently persecuted by people, not sicknesses. Paul enumerates his sufferings or "buffetings" in 2 Corinthians 11:23-29 and 2 Timothy 3:10-12- not one time does he mention sickness or disease.

Paul not only tells us that his "thorn" was an angel of Satan, but he also tells us what the angel came to do: "to buffet me," or, as Rotherham translates it, "that he might be buffeting me." Now the word "buffet" means "blow after blow," as when the waves buffeted the boat, and as when they "buffeted" Christ! Accordingly, Weymouth translates "Satan's angel dealing blow after blow." Since buffeting means repeated blows, if Paul's buffeting was a disease, it would have had to have been many diseases or the same disease many times repeated, to be called buffeting.

The devil is not going to stand idly by while we contribute to the advancement of God's Kingdom in the earth. The enemy is going to stir up persecution, even by religious well-meaning Christian folks. That is why Paul said in Philippians 3:14, *"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus"* and 2 Timothy 2:3, *"Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus."* No one said serving Jesus would be a cake walk, the enemy will try to make it as difficult as possible, but not beyond what we can handle according to the faithfulness of God.

1 Corinthians 10:13
No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

God is Faithful to Restrain the Enemy from Overwhelming us with Temptations!

Since Paul was so prominent in the ministry, he was a target and received "special" treatment from the enemy- 2 Timothy 4:14-15; Acts 13:50; 17:5; 20:19

Acts 14:2, 5, 19-20
But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. There was a plot afoot among the Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them. Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city.

Since it was not sickness but an evil spirit, Jesus was telling Paul that he had to resist the devil. It was a matter of Paul acting on the authority of God's Word to defeat the purpose of the messenger of Satan according to James 4:7. James didn't say that the devil would flee from God, for it was not God's responsibility to resist him. But the devil will flee from us who are here on earth. So if Paul didn't resist this messenger of the devil in Jesus name, then God wouldn't. Let us say it another way, God couldn't if Paul didn't. Jesus couldn't do a thing about it, if Paul didn't act on the authority of God's Word. The moment Paul exercised His God given authority, the Lord's grace and power would have immediately kicked in. The Greater One (Holy Spirit) or as Jesus called Him, the finger of God would have flicked that demon out of the way- 1 John 4:4; Luke 11:20.

2 Corinthians 12:8-9
Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

God's grace is God's power at work in those who believe to do what they don't have the power in themselves to do. Jesus was encouraging Paul to speak the Word and the Name of Jesus and trample that "messenger of Satan" under his feet. When we realize that "*apart from Jesus we can do nothing*" in (John 15:15), but we "*can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*" in Philippians 4:13 NKJV, then what Jesus said in 2 Corinthians 12:9, *"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness,"* becomes a reality in our lives- Ephesians 6:10, *"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power."*

Luke 10:19-20
"I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Clearly God did not give the thorn to Paul in order to keep him humble! The Lord was saying to Paul, use the grace I have given you and resist the devil and trample him under foot- Luke 10:19-20.
Some have thought that Paul had too much pride because of the revelations. So God gave him a thorn in the flesh to keep him humble. I don't believe you can find in the New Testament any evidence that God had anything to do with giving Paul a thorn in the flesh. God does not give His ministers a revelation of His Word and then hinder them from preaching it.

Concerning verse 7, *"To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations…"* is referring to the fact, that if it had not been for the messenger of Satan assigned against Paul to stir up trouble, everywhere he preached, Paul would have been exalted to the point that he could have influenced the known world with this revelation of the gospel. Nothing would have stopped him from spreading the Good News of Jesus throughout the Roman world at that time.

But he was not able to preach it freely without a fight of faith, for Satan was hindering him at every hand. Paul couldn't command the devil to leave the earth, because he has a right to be here until Adam's lease runs out. We can't separate sickness and disease from Satan. Disease came with the fall of man. The Fall was of the devil. Sickness and sin have the same origin – the devil. Jesus' attitude toward sickness was an uncompromising overcoming battle over Satan. His attitude toward sin and sickness was identical. He dealt with sickness the same way He dealt with demons. Since sickness and disease are of the devil, we must follow in the footsteps and attitude of Jesus and deal with disease as Jesus dealt with it.

1 Thessalonians 2:18
For we wanted to come to you — certainly I, Paul, did, again and again — but Satan stopped us.

It is amazing that so many religious people say Paul's thorn was something other than a messenger of Satan when in the same verse that Paul mentioned it, he plainly stated what the thorn was. Even common sense would tell us God did not send the messenger of the devil to torment Paul and give him a hard time. Paul's statement concerning a "messenger of Satan" in the Interlinear Greek-English New Testament states it this way, "that me he might buffet." A personal pronoun is used here in the Greek text. That tells us it was not sickness at all.

2. Suffering According to the Will of God

1 Peter 4:19
So then, those who <u>suffer according to God's will</u> should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

A side point I would like to briefly explore with you is a sacred calf concerning misinformed folks who think succumbing to sickness is a means of suffering for Jesus. We need to ask ourselves- "Could we be suffering for the wrong reason?" The Bible clearly states that is a possibility for Christians.

Romans 8:17
Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

So what was Paul referring to when he wrote by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in regards to "share in His sufferings?" Was He referring to suffering sickness and disease like: Pneumonia, Cancer, Tuberculosis- NO! Biblical suffering is two-fold, crucifying our flesh (saying no to sin) and enduring persecution for being a Christian.

We know that healing is part of the atonement. Consider Isaiah 53 that in the same context of Jesus being pierced for our transgressions, by His stripes we are healed in verse 5. In verse 4 Jesus took up our sicknesses and carried our pains- also stated in Matthew 8:17 after Jesus had healed people in their bodies. So this is not talking about spiritual healing but specifically physical healing.

All evangelical Christians have a firm understanding that Jesus took care of all our sins through His death, burial and resurrection. So it would be unscriptural for us as Christians today to think we still need to suffer the penalty of sin which Jesus already did so on our behalf 2,000 years ago right? If I sin today, I stand on the promise of 1 John 1:9, without any need to do penance, to pay or suffer for my sin.

If healing is just as much a part of our redemption and atonement as the forgiveness of sins, what makes us think that we should suffer sickness and disease when Jesus had carried it for us and paid the price for our healing 2,000 years ago? To suffer for something that Jesus had suffered for us as our substitute is unbiblical and would be regarding God's grace in vain for our lives in this area- 2 Corinthians 6:1. Nor is suffering for doing wrong considered suffering for Jesus- 1 Peter 2:19-20. So let's look at true Biblical suffering briefly.

3. Suffering in the Body

The greatest form of Biblical suffering comes from bringing our bodies under subjection. Until our bodies are redeemed, we have to continually contend with the sinful nature in our physical bodies. We can always get away from people who are giving us a hard time, but we can't run away from our own body.

1 Peter 4:1-3
Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.

Does "Crucifying" the sinful nature in our body or beating it sound like fun? Of course the Bible is not telling us to be a sadomasochist; there is no grace to be gained by abusing our bodies according to Colossians 2:23; when we say "No" to fulfilling the evil desire of our body, that is Biblical suffering and is the most difficult to overcome. Hebrews 12:4, *"In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood."* Remember Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, His body did not want to go to Calvary. The struggle with His humanity was so intense that the blood vessels in His forehead burst open and bled.

Luke 22:44
And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

Matthew 26:41
"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

Hebrews 5:7-10
During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

The spirit is willing but the body is weak according to Matthew 26:41, because our body will always gravitate towards sin and selfishness. God has charged us with the sacred duty to bring our bodies under subjection and offer them unto God as a living sacrifice- Romans 6:1-23; 12:1-2.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5
It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God…

Like Jesus, we learn obedience through suffering, by obeying the Bible over the world, flesh and the devil- Hebrews 5:8, *"Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered…"* We do this out of love and honor for God and the joy of knowing that we can become useful to the Master in ministering to others by His power flowing through a sanctified vessel of honor- Hebrews 12:2.

2 Timothy 2:20-21
In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

Galatians 5:24-25
Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.

1 Corinthians 9:27
No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

1 Peter 2:11
Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.

4. Suffering Persecution

Nowhere in the New Testament will you find a scripture that supports the notion that suffering from a sickness is suffering for Jesus. In fact Jesus came to deliver us from the oppression of sickness and disease which is the work of Satan- Acts 10:38; 1 John 3:8. However, the Bible has numerous references concerning Christians suffering under persecution for being a Christian. Even Paul described his buffeting not consisting of sickness.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10
Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

1 Peter 2:21-24
To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

1 Peter 4:12-16
Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.

Notice what Peter says by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in regards to what a painful trial is and suffering for Christ- suffering for being a Christian and being insulted. How about in Hebrews 10:32-39, notice the example of suffering being used there: Insults, Persecution, Prison and the Confiscation of Property. No mention of pain, sickness or disease and for good reason, because it has never been God's will to endure and suffer such things.

Hebrews 10:32-39
Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him." But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.

2 Timothy 3:12
In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted…

For us as Christians, something is terribly wrong if we are suffering pain, sickness and disease. It would be just as wrong for us, walking in fellowship with God, to be harassed with condemnation, guilt, anxiety and fear. Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the Law according to Galatians 3:13- Poverty, Sickness and Death. So there is suffering according to the will of God and suffering for things that are not the will of God! It is our responsibility to ensure we are not being taken advantage of by the enemy so as to hinder our work for God and our testimony of God's power to deliver, save and to heal.

Sacred Cow #7- An Appointed Time to Die?

There are people who believe incorrectly concerning when and how they will die. They misquote Hebrews 9:27 and say, "Well you know everyone has their appointed time to die and they have no say so in the matter." But that is not what this passage of scripture is saying, "Just as man is destined to die once." The Bible is plainly stating that it is appointed unto man to die one time physically- this refutes the philosophy of reincarnation. The context of the passage is that Jesus has appeared once, that man will die once and Jesus was sacrificed only once- so what is the emphasis here on, "once." It's not talking about the specific timing of when a person will die but that they will die physically only one time and then face the judgment.

Hebrews 9:24-28
For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Some folks have the idea that everyone has a certain day, hour and time that is preset for everyone to die. Supposedly, when the clock clicks on your time to die, grim reaper comes on the scene to take you away ready or not. Whether you are 16, 25, 35 or 55 years old, when your number is up, for example at 3:45 PM Friday afternoon March the 10th it's exit stage left for you. How many times have you heard people say, "Well I guess it was just their time" that is not Bible or accurate. They are misquoting Hebrews 9:27, that a person will die at some appointed time, but the Bible is simply saying that man will die physically only once. Certainly, we are not promised to live down here in this present body forever if the Lord tarries His coming; we will die one time or as the Bible calls it, fall asleep.

The Bible calls it falling asleep in Him-Acts 13:36. We can have victory even in death, as a child of God knowing that we have finished our course with joy, and are going to heaven! Going to heaven in style, full of years, full life, aged and satisfied and ready to go- there is no defeat in that. Even when we lay our body down it won't be long before we will come and pick it up again, glorified! That is why the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 15:55, *"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"*

1. Promised a Long and Satisfying Life

What we are promised in the Bible is to live a long, full and blessed life. This makes a strong argument for healing doesn't it? We can't live a long life and be full of days if we die as a teenager or in our 20's and say we experienced life in full. We can't die in mid-life and say this scripture came to pass in our life. If cancer snuffs a person's life at age 49 did they live a full life, no they didn't. Was that God's perfect will for them, obviously no it wasn't. If they were saved, then they went to heaven and that is wonderful. However, they were robbed of the fullness of life they could have had here on earth. There is no way we can hyper-spiritualize Psalm 91; it is clearly speaking of length of physical life.

Psalms 91:15-16
"He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation."

Sometimes people think they are ready to go home early because they are tired of life. That is probably because they are not living on the level of victory they should be. If they were living in greater victory they would not be in such a rush to go home and be with the Lord. Some folks want the rapture to take place now because they are miserable in life- they owe money, marriage problems or problems on the job. That is not a good reason for the Lord to take us all out real quick- what about all those who have not heard of Jesus yet?

We should rise up in faith, use the authority in Jesus' Name and move up to a higher level in victory- we should enjoy life as God intends for us! When trials and tests come our way, count it all joy according to James 1:2, don't cry to the Lord "Oh, Please Lord take me out I'm tired…" that is being weak in faith. Jesus is not coming back for a wimpy defeated Church, cowering from the devil. Jesus is coming back for a glorious and triumphant church, so in the mean time we need to occupy until He comes, living on the level of victory He has called us to.

When we live like this we are not in a hurry to leave, we need to have a sense of purpose and reason to live. We have the gospel to preach and the Great Commission to obey! We are not just to be biding our time here on earth and wishing life would just hurry up and be over with- that is a big mistake!
The devil will be more than happy to accommodate us on that if we let him. The Lord does not look too kindly on grumblers and complainers. Consider the Israelites, 1 Corinthians 10:10 *"And do not grumble, as some of them did — and were killed by the destroying angel."*

Numbers 14:26-29
The Lord said to Moses and Aaron: "How long will this wicked community grumble against me? I have heard the complaints of these grumbling Israelites. So tell them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Lord, I will do to you the very things I heard you say: In this desert your bodies will fall — every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me.'"

Philippians 2:14-16- Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe.

2. The Death of the Righteous

A good example of the death of the righteous is Jacob. Having lived a full life he knew when his days were near and he called all his sons into the room and prophesied over each of them. At the end he pulled his feet up and gave up his spirit. No terrible ravenous disease, no tubes or drugs or racked with terrible pain. He was not forced out of his body prematurely, he was not robbed of life by the devil. That is the way to go, full of years, full of life and to see the fruits of your labor.

We don't have to die with one of Satan's stinking diseases! Not even two years of our life, not a day or an hour from our lives, it's not his to take, we belong to the Lord. Our bodies have been bought at a price and we are to honor God with our bodies by keeping it alive and in health until we have been satisfied and ran our whole course with joy- 1 Corinthians 6:20. I am going to live a full life, I have only one shot at this life. After this life is eternity and I can never come back and glorify God in this body! It is none of the devil's business when and how I go- we have a lot to do with it! Balaam said in Numbers 23:10, *"Let me die the death of the righteous, and may my end be like theirs!"*

Genesis 25:8
Then Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man and full of years; and he was gathered to his people.

Genesis 35:29 NKJV
So Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, being old and full of days.

Genesis 49:33
When Jacob had finished giving instructions to his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed, breathed his last and was gathered to his people.

1 Chronicles 29:28
So David died in a good old age, full of days and riches and honor; and Solomon his son reigned in his place.

2 Chronicles 24:15 NKJV
But Jehoiada grew old and was full of days, and he died; he was one hundred and thirty years old when he died.

I will Live to a Good Old Age, Full of Days!

3. How we Live can Add or Shorten our Life

How we live makes a difference. There are too many scriptures that tell us that how we live will have an effect on the quality and length of life. It is not God's fault or responsibility concerning how long we live. He has already provided His grace through His precious promises to enable us to live long and be satisfied with a good life. If we fail to receive it, then God did not fail, neither did His Word, we just failed to receive. The promise still stands and is available for all His children. However, there are conditions to longevity. We can't be violating God's Word and expect to enjoy a good and long life.

Job 42:16-17
After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. And so he died, old and full of years.

Deuteronomy 5:32-6:2
So be careful to do what the Lord your God has commanded you; do not turn aside to the right or to the left. Walk in all the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess. So that you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life.

Deuteronomy 11:8-10, 20-21
Observe therefore all the commands I am giving you today, so that you may have the strength to go in and take over the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, and so that you may live long in the land that the Lord swore to your forefathers to give to them and their descendants, a land flowing with milk and honey. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land that the Lord swore to give your forefathers.

1 Kings 3:14-15
"And if you walk in my ways and obey my statutes and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life." Then Solomon awoke — and he realized it had been a dream.

Proverbs 3:1-2
My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity.

Proverbs 4:10- Listen, my son, accept what I say, and the years of your life will be many.

Proverbs 9:11- For through me your days will be many, and years will be added to your life.

Proverbs 10:27- The fear of the Lord adds length to life, but the years of the wicked are cut short.

Psalms 55:23
But you, O God, will bring down the wicked into the pit of corruption; bloodthirsty and deceitful men will not live out half their days.

Ecclesiastes 7:17 NKJV
Do not be overly wicked, nor be foolish: Why should you die before your time?

"Death comes, then we blame our God,
And weakly say, "Thy will be done";
But never underneath the sod
Has God imprisoned any one.
God does not send disease, or crime,
Or carelessness, or fighting clans;
And when we die before our time,
The fault is Man's.
His is a God of life, not death;
He is the God that give us birth;
He has not shortened by a breath
The life of any on the earth;
And He would have us dwell within
The world our full allotted years.
So blame not God- for our own sin
Makes our own tears."

Douglas Malloch

4. So How Long is Long?

Is 45 long or 53, or how about 66? Many Christians look at Psalm 90 and think that 70 – 80 is the maximum life expectancy for people. However when you look at the context of this chapter, it is the Psalm of Moses concerning the backslidden Israelites who died in the desert living under the wrath of God. Look at verse 7 and you will see that this is not talking about people living under God's favor. Being cut off at mid-life is a curse and we have been redeemed from the curse of the law. In speaking of the millennial reign of Jesus on the earth consider what the Bible has to say about longevity in Isaiah 65:20, *"He who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed"*

In Numbers 14:29 the Lord declared that those 20 years and older would not enter the Promise Land, but would die in the desert- just as the Israelites said they would. In Numbers 14:32-35 they would spend 40 years in the desert, so that generation would have been dying around 70 or 80. So this is not meant to be the maximum for God's people walking in His will.

Psalms 90:7-10
We are consumed by your anger and terrified by your indignation. You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence. All our days pass away under your wrath; we finish our years with a moan. The length of our days is seventy years — or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.

If you are not satisfied at the age of 80 or 90 or even 100 then keep on living. In Genesis 6:3 God set man's life span to 120 years, this was a drastic cut in long life when you consider Methuselah who lived 969 years prior to Noah's flood. Not only were godly men living a very long time, but wicked people as well. Can you imagine how evil people could become increasingly wicked over a life time that spanned hundreds of years. I can see why God set the limit to 120 years after the flood. There is no other Scriptures in the Bible that has changed the 120 year mark. Look at Exodus 6:14-25 you can see the lifespan of men tapering off close to the 120 mark. Even today in our generation there are millions of people in the world living over 100 years old, even to 120. Most people know of folks who are alive today over 100 years old! I know my grandfather made it to 96 and was still playing golf at that age.

Genesis 6:3
Then the Lord said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years."

Exodus 23:25-26
Worship the Lord your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you, and none will miscarry or be barren in your land. I will give you a full life span.

Psalms 92:14- They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green,

Psalms 118:17- I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the Lord has done.

Job 5:26-27
You will come to the grave in full vigor, like sheaves gathered in season. "We have examined this, and it is true. So hear it and apply it to yourself."

Let's look at an example in the life of the apostle Paul when he was an old man. According to the scriptures, he had the choice to continue on living and be a blessing to folks or to go home and be with the Lord- according to Paul he could choose. Some folks think that God makes that decision for us. People have a lot more power, say-so and right in their life concerning when and how they die than what they think. We are not going to do anybody any good if we are in heaven. So let's maximize this life on earth today. For the believer, there is no such thing as retirement. We are called to bear fruit for the Lord all the days of our life!

Philippians 1:21-26
For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.

We have a lot to do with how long we live and the quality of life we live. When we reach the end of our race, we need to have a sense of completion that we finished the work and we kept the faith. The workers are few and the harvest is great, we don't need folks checking out early and leaving the burden on others to take up the slack. Obviously, like it was with Paul, Satan wants to take us out lest we do any more damage to his kingdom. People say I can't help it and it's not up to me when I die. No, the Bible teaches us to contend for living long and fight and overcome the attacks of the devil- let's believe God and stand on the promises of God for a long fruitful life for His glory!

Unless we choose to be a martyr (between you and God), no person or demon has the right to take our life- they could not take Jesus' life and they can't take our lives either- John 14:12. Consider Daniel in the lion's den or Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the book of Daniel, they stood on God's Word and God was faithful to His Word and protected them. If we are to honor God with our body, and fulfill our God given destiny and purpose in our generation, then nothing can take our life unless we open the door ourselves. If people believe the lie, that it's their time to die at age 30, they are vulnerable. If they believe the lie that they will die of a heart attack at age 50 like their uncle John, they are vulnerable. If they believe the lie that cancer runs in their family, they are vulnerable to attack. Side with the truth of God's Word over the facts of your family heath history- truth always overrides facts.

Hebrews 11:35
Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection.

John 10:17-18
"The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life — only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

1 John 5:18-19
We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him.

5. Keys to Living Long

People in the world are looking for the magic diet and exercise or climate as the secret to long life. Certainly those things are important; we can't be violating natural laws and expect it not to have an impact on our health. Unfortunately there are those who watch their diet and exercise and still die young, even Christians. Thank God, there are many specific passages in the Bible that provide us with instructions and principles for entering into God's provision of long life.

a. You Must be a Fighter
I am not talking about fighting other people. We must be convinced that it is our right to live long and that death is our enemy. We are talking about fighting for our redemptive rights- let's not let the devil steal it from us! Fight the good fight of faith, refuse to lie down and die. We can't be a quitter, so be strong in the Lord and not be a weakling, a complainer, or like the grumbling Israelites. I rejoice in the face of attack, I declare the praises of Him just as Paul and Silas did in the Philippian jail- Acts 16:11-34.

When people are sick for a long time, folks can get tired and it is easy to just let go- tired of the pain and treatment. Don't blame God or them since we are not in their shoes. But the reality is if we fight and won't quit we can live. It won't be easy and it's tough, it looks good to just go on to heaven. Don't be deceived and fall short, let's live our whole life and be a fighter. Paul fought the good fight of faith and finished the race. We can't just lie down, roll over and give up and die just because we are attacked. We need to have a sassy spirit that does not take no for an answer- our life is worth fighting for!

2 Timothy 4:6-8
For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

b. Must be Led by the Spirit
We can't confess protection and override the leading of the Holy Spirit. Follow the direction of God. Jesus did not run headlong into trouble nor did he put the Father to the test- Luke 4:9-12. The wisdom of God provides us with direction in the affairs of life and orders our footsteps. Some folks because of foolishness are not with us today. Like walking in front of a bus and saying the Lord will protect me- people have done stupid things.

We have to listen to and be led by the Holy Spirit according to Romans 8:14. We can't separate faith from protection, from being led by the Holy Spirit. The two go hand in hand, and the wisdom of the Lord will lead us and protect us. Why die before our time according to Ecclesiastes 7:17. We receive wisdom from God through the Word of God. Many accidents are prevented just from using common sense. In matters that we are unaware of, the Holy Spirit will keep us ahead of the devil and show us things to come John 16:13.

The Holy Spirit may say "Don't go there, wait five minutes." The foolish man is warned and keeps on going and suffers harm- you can die before your time that way. We can be led by the Spirit and avoid accidents and traps of the devil like Jesus. God has given His angels charge over us to protect us. For example, the Holy Spirit will reveal the enemy's plans to us ahead of time. Like when Elijah anticipated the enemy's ambushes by the Spirit for the king of Israel and warned him.

2 Kings 6:8-12 NKJV
Now the king of Syria was making war against Israel; and he consulted with his servants, saying, "My camp will be in such and such a place." And the man of God sent to the king of Israel, saying, "Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians are coming down there." Then the king of Israel sent someone to the place of which the man of God had told him. Thus he warned him, and he was watchful there, not just once or twice. Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was greatly troubled by this thing; and he called his servants and said to them, "Will you not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?" And one of his servants said, "None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom."

Proverbs 19:3- A man's own folly ruins his life, yet his heart rages against the Lord.

Matthew 2:22
But when Joseph heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee.

Matthew 12:14-15
But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus. Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. Many followed him, and he healed all their sick.

c. Learning and Practicing Honor in our Life
Living a life of honor is essential to longevity; according to Ephesians 6:1-3 we first learn what honor is by practicing it with our parents as children. This lifestyle of honor and respect for authorities carries on to how we treat our teachers, employers, ministers and everyone else including God. Rebellion will shorten our life Proverbs 17:11, *"An evil man is bent only on rebellion."* Even if we don't like the person in authority, we are still obligated to respect the position. 1Samuel 15:23, *"For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry."*

Ephesians 6:1-3
Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"-which is the first commandment with a promise— "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

Romans 13:1-3
Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you.

A great key to the move of the Spirit is to learn to reverence and honor the things of God and the people of God. This in turn translates into living a long and quality life on the earth- Proverbs 10:27, *"The fear of the Lord prolongs days."* The principle of practicing honor all the days of our lives is a key to living a good and long life.

Unfortunately in our society today, there is too much looseness and slackness; people don't dress up nice for anything except for funerals and weddings. I am not suggesting that we be religious about this, but it says something when we take the time to keep ourselves, it shows respect. Western society lost some things in the rebellion of the 1950's and 1960's. Just ask school teachers today how kids show respect to them- a spirit of anarchy will shorten the days of those who yield to it.

Psalms 15:4- But honors those who fear the Lord, who keeps his oath even when it hurts.

Proverbs 8:13
To fear the Lord is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.

d. Control of the Tongue
Evil talk is not just talking about cussing and gossip, but speaking doubt and unbelief is evil as well. Just consider the 10 spies who came back with a negative, bad and evil report according to the Bible. When the Bible talks about "Perverse" speech it is referring to talking contrary to the truth- Proverbs 6:12; 8:8 NKJV *"A worthless person, a wicked man, talks with a perverse mouth. All the words of my mouth are with righteousness; nothing crooked or perverse is in them."*

1 Peter 3:8-12
Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. For, "Whoever would love life and see [many Psalm 34:12] good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

When it's hot outside and someone says "Wow is it ever cold out here, I need a jacket!" We realize they are just being sarcastic, but how can they have faith in their words if they are speaking contrary to the truth- we are training our heart not to believe in what we say. To say that we are old when we are only 40 years old is bad talk- we are only 1/3 of the way there.

Numbers 14:36-38 NKJV
Now the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation complain against him by bringing a bad report of the land, those very men who brought the evil report about the land, died by the plague before the Lord.

Ephesians 4:29; 5:4 AMP
Let no foul or polluting language, nor evil word nor unwholesome or worthless talk [ever] come out of your mouth, but only such [speech] as is good and beneficial to the spiritual progress of others, as is fitting to the need and the occasion, that it may be a blessing and give grace (God's favor) to those who hear it. Let there be no filthiness (obscenity, indecency) nor foolish and sinful (silly and corrupt) talk, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting or becoming; but instead voice your thankfulness [to God].

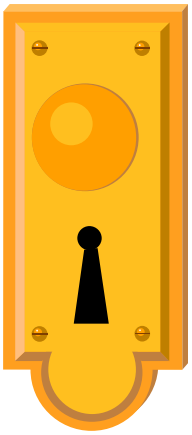
Isaiah 5:20
Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.

Proverbs 18:21- The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

Proverbs 21:23 - He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity.

It is imperative that we hold our tongue from talking death. We need to watch what we say about other people and judging them. The Lord takes this personal when we talk about others. It is never okay to talk negatively about people, we may think we are just giving our opinion, but it's still judging- it will cost us. It's a freeing thing not have to say anything about folks, it's between them and the Lord anyway- none of my business. Instead pray for them and speak faith over them. When it comes to taking communion we are admonished to recognize the body of the Lord. I believe that is partly referring to walking in love towards other Christians. Not walking in love is a reason or cause for folks to be weak, sick and dying prematurely.

1 Corinthians 11:28-32
A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.



The Bible has so much to say about the words that we speak; when you look at James 3:2-6 it is amazing to realize that the secret to controlling the body is found in controlling our tongue. The tongue is the rudder of our life the words we choose to speak will determine the course that our life takes. It has the potential of setting in motion God's provision for health and long life, or grants the enemy access to shorten them.

James 3:2-6
We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check. When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

Our Tongue is the Key to Our Healing!

Matthew 12:36-37
"But I tell you that men will have to give account on the Day of Judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

e. Obedience to the Plan and Will of God
We can't just go off on our own agenda and our own plan and do our own thing and have the full blessing of God in our life. If we disobey God's will for our life it is going to cost us. If we want the perfect will of God in blessing we have to do the perfect will of God in obedience.

Isaiah 1:19-20
"If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land; but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

If people become so hard headed that they refuse to follow God's will, it will shorten their days. Not that God shortens their days, the devil exploits their disobedience, and it gives him access to their lives. If Jesus is really our Lord, we aren't free to start a job and quit a job when we want to, or join a church when we want to and quit the church when something offends us. We are soldiers in the Lord's army; there are times when things are not going to be comfortable or easy for us. There are times when we want to leave and do something else, but unless the Lord releases us from that commitment, we need to stay put and remain faithful.

We can ask the Lord for a transfer, but many times it will come back denied. So are we going to stay where we are or are we going to go AWOL- "Out of the Will of the Lord." God will lead some folks to a church, but something gets them offended and they leave. He may lead them to a job and get hooked up and everything is going fine until something rubbed them the wrong way. We know it may not have even been our fault. Just because someone does not treat us right does not mean its okay to jump out of the will of God. Did we receive new orders from the Lord to make a change? Proverbs 29:18 *"Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint."*

1 Peter 2:19-20- For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God.

We can get in trouble by writing our own orders and signing the Lord's name to it. "Well I'm going over to such and such place and the Lord would not sign it." So they signed it themselves with the Lord Jesus' name on it. They will tell people, "The Lord has led me and released me from that, I feel led to do this or the other thing." But the Lord did not tell them to do that and now they are out of the will of God- that will cost us. It opens the door to all kinds of problems in our life, being out of the perfect will of God, out of His perfect protection and full grace. If we persist in that long enough it will shorten our life.

So a key to living long on the earth is in finding, and getting in, and staying in our place that God has ordained for us; obeying His will, and following His perfect plan for our life. That means seeking it, praying about it, pursuing and believing for it and just doing it when we find it out- stay with it no matter what. God does not have to repeat these instructions to us every Monday, unless He tells us otherwise, we stay where He told us to be and keep on doing that. 1 Corinthians 7:17, *"Nevertheless, each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him."*

Jeremiah 29:11
For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

It's not okay to do the will of God reluctantly and grudgingly. We may be obeying but are we willing about it; that may be a reason why we are not eating so hot. We have a free will and we can choose to do His will, and be willingly about it. If we happen to have a personal preference not to do something, but God says do it, we can change our attitude about it and get in agreement with the Lord- even if our flesh does not want to. The safest place to be in this world is in the perfect will of God. It takes faith to leave and it takes faith to stay. Remember rebellion and disobedience will open the door to the enemy and will shorten our life. Living in sin will age us, the way of the transgressor is hard- makes an old man or woman out of us.

Proverbs 13:15 AMP
Good understanding wins favor, but the way of the transgressor is hard [like the barren, dry soil or the impassable swamp].

Deuteronomy 30:20
That you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

f. Knowing how to Rest, Live in and Walk in Peace
When researchers studied folks who lived over 100 years old, they were looking for common characteristics. What they found from interviewing them is that they knew about stress management even before it became popular. They rarely showed anger and tended not to worry and had a good sense of humor. Even with all the funerals they went to, they handled those emotional blows and forged ahead. They did not fret and worry. You know there are reasons why Jesus told us to not worry about tomorrow and to cast our cares upon Him. It is because we are not designed to worry, carry cares, fear and be stressed out, because it will take a toll on us- high blood pressure, ulcers, due to our bodies getting overloaded.

Hebrews 4:1-2
Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.

We won't live long unless we learn to walk in peace; rest in faith as mentioned above. When we walk in faith every day, we are walking in the rest of God. No matter what happens, we put our faith and trust in God. The Bible says to be anxious for nothing, no excuses and no exceptions. We are told to give it all over to the Lord. It's not okay to worry about anything. We are not being irresponsible by not worrying, when we are casting our cares over to the One who can do something about them. It boils down to a lack of faith and to pride, by holding onto something we can't take care of and acting like the Savior.

1 Peter 5:7 AMP
Casting the whole of your care [all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares for you affectionately and cares about you watchfully. [Psalms 55:22.]

We are not to ask the Lord to *help* us with our problems, He wants to *take* it all. This way He will have it and we won't have it. We have heard this teaching before, but are we practicing it? We cannot live stressed out day in and day out and expect to live in full health and long life. Like a piece of machinery, if we use it outside its intended operation and overload it, we will break it by using it for something it was not designed for. We are not designed to worry, to fear, to carry cares, to be anxious and doubt. It will cost us, it will make us old before our time- turn our hair gray and give us wrinkles.

Proverbs 19:11- A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.

6. Reasons for being Stressed

It is not just the result of our occupation; we could be on a deserted Island and still be stressed because we are all alone. Really, in any situation a person can be stressed if they choose to yield to it. People are stressed not just because of their circumstances but because they yield to fear, to worry. We are the only ones responsible for it. Happy is the man who is not offended, so do not take offense. Can you picture Jesus worrying, being anxious and biting His nails, with people always trying to kill Him? Jesus was cool and walked in peace even in a crazy world. Jesus gave us that same peace He walked in so we would also walk in the same peace He did. If my heart is troubled and afraid I let it get that way- look at John 14:27. Resist fear and anxiety as you would resist the devil. When we are tempted to fear, speak the Word, resist that spirit of fear! We are the ones responsible for keeping our hearts from becoming troubled.

John 14:27
Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

If the burden seems heavy, something is wrong. The devil wants to make us his pack mule, and load us with so many cares and anxiety- taking on those responsibilities that belong to the Lord. We should never be burned out; God is not a cruel task master. We can't be led by needs or opportunities; we need to be led by the Spirit. Satan has a tactic here, his first choice is that we do nothing for God, but if that does not work, he will push us to the other ditch to become a workaholic. Don't believe the lie that God cannot be satisfied and we can never do enough. God knows we are only one person; He can be satisfied with us doing our part.

We can push ourselves too far and call it working for God, but God may not have told us to do some things. Wisdom is knowing exactly what the Lord would have us to do, and do only those things- following His plan, and pursue His purpose. The devil wants to spread us so thin to become a jack of all trades but master of none. Even if it's a good thing and needs to be done, did He tell us to do it? Remember in the Body of Christ, Jesus will give us our assignments. We won't become weary in well doing, if we only do what He told us to do! If we are not resting on the inside, we won't be resting on the outside. Live in rest and peace and we will live a long time. Everything in the world is trying to pull on us and stress us out- so resist it! Joel 3:10 *"Let the weakling say, 'I am strong!'"*

Matthew 11:28-30
"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Isaiah 40:29-31
He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Sacred Cow #8- Spiritualizing Experiences

Beware of forming spiritual interpretations solely on natural circumstances as a means of understanding the will of God. Since everything in this natural world is subject to change, and is subject to the influence of the devil. Deception can be readily had if we allow our beliefs to be based on what we see, feel and hear rather than on the Word of God. Personal experience by nature is very subjective and open to a wide range of interpretations, bias and cultural conditioning. Certainly there is a lot to be learned from observing the successes and mistakes of others, including our own lives. But if we come to a conclusion that is contrary to plain revelation in God's Word, we are to always go with God's Word.

2 Corinthians 10:3-6
For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.

Religious folks will go to one of two ditches. Either they will naturalize the Bible, by discounting the supernatural elements in the Bible, like claiming the parting of the Red Sea, Creation in 6 days, and Balaam's donkey speaking were all figurative, it really didn't happen that way. Since their natural minds can't grasp supernatural realities they try to explain it away by some natural cause they can understand.

The other ditch is to hyper-spiritualize the promises of God, relegating practically everything God promised for us to enjoy in the here and now in our lives as something we will receive in the future in heaven- won't do us much good in heaven now will it? When the Bible talks about healing for the physical body, they interpret it as spiritual healing. They claim that miracles were done away with when the early church apostles died. From this religious perspective, "just get by in this life and when we get to heaven we will get our reward." But I got news for those religious folks, not only do I have the plain revelation of truth that God is still doing miracles today and that all His promises are "Yes" and "Amen" in my life, but I have the fruit of these things in my life today.

There is an old saying, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating." It's too late to be talked out of it, I have already tasted and seen that the Lord is good, I have the proof of it in my life and God is so good! 2 Peter 1:3, *"His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him."* Think about it, the devil is the one who wants us in the ditch in these matters. Obviously he does not want us to experience all things that pertain to life and godliness and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. He wants us to be defeated, oppressed and robbed in life.

2 Corinthians 6:2- I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

2 Corinthians 10:5 AMP
[Inasmuch as we] refute arguments and theories and reasonings and every proud and lofty thing that sets itself up against the [true] knowledge of God.

So when the devil tries to dismiss the supernatural and God's precious promises for our life today, what do we do? We must demolish and refute those arguments with the truth of God's Word. So what is the rationale behind religious folks, trying to relegate everything to the future and spiritualize it? First, I believe these are deceptive lies from Satan that they bought into. Second, since they have been indoctrinated with theological theories and human traditions, they have no Biblical foundation for faith to receive the provision of God in these matters. So they are obliged to come up with a reason why they are not receiving the blessings of God in their lives. Why not accept the fact that God's Word is true and does not change and that we missed God somehow. Let's look at a few of what I call spiritual cop-outs:

Cop-out #1- "Well I guess it's just not the will of God for everyone to be healed"
Cop-out #2- "You can't expect too much in this life, after all we are just passing through"
Cop-out #3- "It's hard to say what God's will is, sometimes it's 'Yes' and sometimes 'No'"

These are spiritual cop-outs; basically rolling over and accepting defeat. As Jesus said so often, "According to your faith, be it unto you!" Instead, let's try looking inwardly for a change, "Well maybe I am missing it somehow, since God's Word is true and God's Word is God's will. I must not understand fully or perhaps I am not working the principles of the Bible correctly. Father I ask you for wisdom in this matter in Jesus' name so I can know what adjustments I need to make, so I can receive."

1. Delay is not Denial

When Daniel prayed, and the answer did not come as quickly as he may have thought, he could have blown the whole thing off and said "Well, I guess it just was not the will of God." We come to find out that Gabriel, the arch-angel was engaged in spiritual warfare for 21 days; Satan was trying to keep him from bringing the answer to Daniel's prayer. When it comes to believing God and standing on His Word, we need to keep standing no matter how long it takes. When we are standing, we are standing by faith, a quiet and still strength, a holy resolve, an unmovable conviction, knowing that it is impossible for God to lie. No fretting, no wringing of the hands in fear, no frantic repetitious praying. Ephesians 6:13 NKJV *"Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."*

Exodus 14:13-14
Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still."

Can you see how we have missed it as Christians in this area of knowing God's will, praying according to God's will, and receiving by faith according to God's will which is His Word- we give up too quick!

Delay is Not Denial!

Daniel 10:12-14
Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."

Can you imagine if Daniel gave up in prayer, dismissed it as not God's will and gave up. Gabriel in mid fight with the devil could have said, "Oh, devil never mind, Daniel stopped believing God, I'm going back to heaven now!" Did you know that angels are ministering spirits sent by God to bring the Word of God to pass in our lives- Hebrews 1:14. We dispatch them on assignments when we stand in faith and speak God's Word and we take them off the job when we speak fear, doubt and unbelief.

Psalms 103:20 NASB
Bless the Lord, you His angels, Mighty in strength, who perform His word, Obeying the voice of His word!

We need to realize that Daniel was standing on a promise from God concerning the deliverance of Israel out of captivity. Jeremiah the prophet had prophesied in (Jeremiah 25:11-14; 29:10) that they would be banished from the Promise Land for 70 years and then restored. Well that time was coming up, so Daniel was reminding God of His promise. Remember, faith begins where the will of God is known; God's Word is God's will, so Daniel's prayer was a prayer of faith.

Daniel 9:2-3
In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the Lord given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.

Isaiah 43:26-
Put Me in remembrance; Let us contend together; State your case, that you may be acquitted.

Psalms 105:8
He remembers his covenant forever, the word he commanded, for a thousand generations,

Keep reason where it is supposed to be, processing natural information for common sense use. However, when reason tries to take the place of being led by the Holy Spirit; when reason contradicts the revelation of God's Word; when reason thinks we are crazy to live by faith- go with the Word! To our natural mind, living by faith may not make a lot of sense, realizing our finite minds are limited, but our born again re-created spirits are not- 1 Corinthians 2:14-15 NKJV, *"But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Mark 9:23, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes."* Speaking in tongues, 1 Corinthians 14:2 is something our natural minds can't understand- that's okay! Our confidence comes from knowing God's will is God's Word; so we can pray with confidence and boldness. If I seem to be rather strong in this matter, my conviction comes from God's Word. Like Abraham in Romans 4:20-21, "*Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised."*

1 John 5:14-15
This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of him.

2 Corinthians 3:12- 2- Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold.

2 Timothy 3:14-17
But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of , because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

So no more building our beliefs and doctrines by what we see happen in the lives of others or even our own life. Our beliefs have to be rooted and established in the written Word of God- 2 Corinthians 5:7 NKJV - *"For we walk by faith, not by sight."* Otherwise the enemy will have a field day with our minds with all kinds of doubts. The cure for doubt is God's Word and the cure for unbelief, which is a stubborn refusal to believe the truth, is repentance- Mark 16:14 *"Jesus rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe."* Mark 16:14 NKJV *"He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe."*

James 1:6-8
But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

Luke 6:46-49
"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation . The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."

2. The Man Born Blind

Here is a sacred cow, some folks have the misinformed idea that God makes people crippled and deformed at birth so that He can somehow be glorified in it through their struggle to overcome the handicap. In my opinion, this evil line of thinking can only come from the enemy. Remember we live in a fallen world with death on the loose, this is the reason for birth defects; not some mysterious sovereign will of God. The mystery is that we have bought into those lies for so long.

In the beginning of John chapter nine we read an account of a man born blind. The religious thought of the day was that birth defects could be traced to the sin of their parents. One might reason that God set this man up to be born this way based on the Lord's comment in John 9:4*, "…but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life."*

Remember we have to look at the whole counsel of God's Word. No part of Scripture can be interpreted in such a way as to render it in conflict with what is clearly taught elsewhere in Scripture!

For example, if a given verse is capable of two renditions or variant interpretations and one of those interpretations goes against the rest of Scripture while the other is in harmony with it, then the latter interpretation must be used- 2 Corinthians 13:1. In 1 Thessalonians 5:18, the Bible tells us to give thanks "In" all circumstances, not "For" all circumstances, *"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."*

The glory of God was demonstrated in the blind man's life when Jesus had undid what the devil had done through the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, which had set in motion the curse of Satanic oppression- marring this man's life with physical blindness.

John 9:1-7
As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind ?" "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

1 John 3:8- The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

Acts 10:38
How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

Luke 13:16
"Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?"

Luke 4:18-19
"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

In light of the rest of Scripture, and these listed above to just name a few, the correct interpretation is that God is not responsible for birth defects, sickness, disease or death- that is the devil's doing. Jesus came to bring life and that more abundantly according to John 10:10. To undo what the devil did. Let's look at another example, concerning our good friend Lazarus who had died. Like the blind man, folks have read into what Jesus had said; something that was not there at all. We know this because their conclusions fly in the face of the rest of the New Testament. Some conclude that God allowed Lazarus to die just so He could raise him from the dead. Meaning that God causes people to be sick so he can make them well and so be glorified. *John 11:4, "When he heard this, Jesus said, 'This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it.'"*

That makes as much sense as me starving my children on purpose and then arriving one evening with a banquet of food, just to show how good of a provider I am. Besides, if God makes people sick then every Christian who gets sick should automatically be healed- right? No, what the devil meant for evil by killing Lazarus, Jesus worked the good and raised him from the dead. God does not create evil so that He can turn around and do good and so be glorified- that is twisted theology.

Romans 3:5-8
But if our unrighteousness brings out God's righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.) Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world? Someone might argue, "If my falsehood enhances God's truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?" Why not say — as we are being slanderously reported as saying and as some claim that we say — "Let us do evil that good may result"? Their condemnation is deserved.

3. God does not Contradict Himself

Here is an important Biblical principle, if God makes us sick so He can heal us and so be glorified then according to the Bible, God is a lawbreaker and is divided against Himself, so how can His Kingdom stand? God and the devil don't ever switch sides and help each other out. God is only about salvation and Satan is only about destruction. Galatians 2:18- **"If I rebuild what I destroyed, I prove that I am a lawbreaker."**

Matthew 12:25-27
"Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand?"

This is a critical concern that must be dealt with, the notion that God makes people sick so He can turn around and make them well. For starters, it would be a blatant contradiction on God's part and He would cease to be God. It would also mean that God was in league with Satan in the sickness and disease business. In the Gospel of Luke chapter 13 and verse 11 we see a woman who was delivered by a spirit of infirmity, *"A woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years."* This sickness was the direct result of an evil spirit afflicting her. The Bible makes it clear that Satan is in the sickness business and God is in the Healing business and the two are never intertwined.

We need to remember why Jesus came to earth according to 1 John 3:8, *"The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work."* Folks will try to read into John 9:1-7 that it was God's will for this man to be born blind so that Jesus would heal the man and thus be glorified. That would make as much sense as for a doctor today to go around purposely making people sick so he would have more business created in treating them for illnesses that he had caused- we would throw a person like that in jail. Here is another angle, the same logic of God making people sick could be applied to God making people sin so He could be glorified by saving them from sin and so show how holy and righteous He is. No, the Scriptures do not condone evil so that good may result, whether its sin or sickness as already stated in Romans 3:5-8. Jesus uses common sense to display such erroneous notions that slander the character of our loving Heavenly Father.

Matthew 7:9-11
"Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

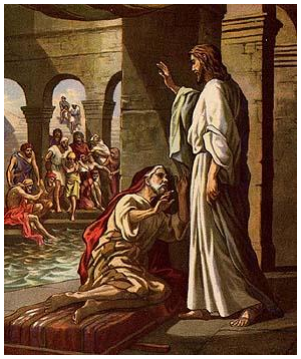
James 1:16-17
Don't be deceived , my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

The only power Satan has over Christians is deception, which comes in the form of lies and half-truths. His goal is to tie and bind up Christians with his ropes of lies, deception and religious tradition. Why you may ask? So he can plunder, rob and steal from us all the blessings, promises and inheritance God has given us to enjoy in this life and marginalize our testimony. When we get to heaven we won't need healing, peace, victory or prosperity. Nor will the devil be there to try and steal it from us. We need to realize the devil is a thief and he wants what God has given us in Christ- all of it, if we allow him.

Matthew 12:29
"Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house."

4. Handouts at the Pool of Bethesda

John 5:1-6
Sometime later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lay — the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?"



It may seem like a silly question for Jesus to ask a man who has been crippled for 38 years, "Do you want to get well?" Was Jesus being cruel and insensitive, no He was trying to stir His faith. Jesus was basically saying, "Throw me a faith bone here, give me something to work with, because I love you and want to heal you." Jesus was moved with pity, mercy and compassion for this man having learned of his long time condition as a paralytic. So Jesus heals the man, great, all is well in verses 7-9, right?

John 5:9-15
The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, and so the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat." But he replied, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'" So they asked him, "Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?" The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there. Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you." The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

Look what Jesus gets for doing a good deed, it backfires on Him right; no I think this was also done as an important faith lesson for us. Spiritual handouts are not effective, and usually result in short-term healing anyway. Contrast that story with what happened with a crippled man in Lystra. Paul was preaching the gospel to a crowd and the crippled man was listening. Evidently the gospel message that Paul was preaching included the subject of healing because in order for this man to have faith to be well, he had to have heard it in Paul's preaching- Romans 10:17 NKJV *"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* I would venture to say that this man in contrast to the other man kept his healing, because <u>what gets you healed keeps you healed</u>. Just like what gets people wealthy keeps them wealthy- good disciplined business sense. In comparison to those who win the lottery usually blow it all. Folks who study the Word on healing and are disciplined to get it in their hearts will keep their healing.

Acts 14:8-10
In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed and called out, "Stand up on your feet!" At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.

Have you ever wondered why Jesus was such a stickler for people to exercise faith in Him and His Word. It is because He was looking for a long term permanent healing. Only having faith in our heart will do that. Jesus knew He would be doing a greater disservice to people by healing them without their faith being involved as was the case with the man by the pool of Bethesda.

Jesus had warned the man that a worse thing was liable to come on him if he did not stop sinning. If we don't have the Word of Faith in our hearts, Satan will simply come back, put the lying symptoms back on our bodies, we believe the lie and the same condition comes back and potentially a lot worse. As the old adage goes "Give a man a fish and feed him for a day, teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." This is why Jesus taught so much on the subject of faith during His earthly ministry. This is why we teach so much on the subject of faith as well! Honestly, signs and wonders are primarily a tool of evangelism in reaching the lost; since unbelievers are not in the New Covenant, they need gifts of the Spirit- Mark 16:20. The expectation for believers is for their needs to be met through faith in God's Word. Christians have been taught to wait by the Pool of Bethesda, looking for a spiritual handout. Jesus has already prepared a table before us and beckons us to come and dine- Psalms 23:5, no need to starve friends!

Matthew 12:43-45
"When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first."

5. Beware of the Fleece

A huge distinction between Old Covenant believers and New Covenant saints is the way in which we serve, worship and know God. For the Old Covenant believer, God was understood by outward signs and physical symbols. Since they were not born again, their spirit man was not alive to God, but was spiritually dead due to sin. This limited God in His dealings with those folks, to the natural or physical realm in order to get their attention. For example, let's look at a man named Gideon. A quick background, Israel was backslidden, worshipping idols which opened the door for Satan to use the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples to oppress them in a miserable way- read Judges chapters 6-8. Finally, the Israelites cried out to God for help and the Lord sent an angel to speak to Gideon. Well, the angel appeared to Gideon as he was gathering some food in secret so the Midianites would not see him.

Judges 6:12-13
When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior." "But sir," Gideon replied, "if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, 'Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the Lord has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian."

Notice that the angel by faith called him a "Mighty Warrior" certainly a faith statement of calling those things that are not as though they were- Romans 4:17. I find it even more interesting that Gideon had the gall to accuse the Lord of abandoning His people when it was the Israelites who had abandoned the Lord and prostituted themselves to idols- ah, but the Lord is merciful, faithful and kind!

To make a long story short, Gideon agrees to go ahead and lead Israel out of the oppression of their enemies, but he wants a sign to make sure that what the angel was saying was true. I guess the angel's word was not good enough for Gideon. But it was for the centurion.

Matthew 8:8-9
The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

Anyway, I should not be so hard on Gideon, he was not born again like we are and did not have as much of God's revelation available to Him as we do today. So Gideon asks for a sign; if he was going to risk his neck, he wanted some proof that this was God's will for his life.

Judges 6:36-40
Gideon said to God, "If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised— look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said." And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew — a bowlful of water. Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece. This time make the fleece dry and the ground covered with dew." That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.

My question is this, "could not have Satan appeared as an angel of light and done for Gideon what the angel of the Lord did?" Absolutely! And I don't think Gideon would have known the difference, because he would not have had the Holy Spirit within Him bearing witness with his spirit that it was the devil.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15
For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.

Now God put up with Gideon's silly little tests because he was spiritually dead and incapable of hearing the still small voice of the Holy Spirit inside of him- we however do not have such an excuse. In the New Covenant, there is a greater expectation from God for us to live by faith. After the Word, God leads His children through the inward witness of the Spirit- Romans 8:14, *"…because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."*

This is what is meant to be led by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit will bear witness with our spirit concerning God's will and plan for our life. The Spirit of God will give us peace and joy in our spirit as a way of agreeing with and encouraging us in a certain direction. If He wants us to stop, wait or not pursue a certain direction, there will be a stern check in our spirit that grabs our attention. The manner in which the Holy Spirit leads us has a close correlation to traffic signals. Like "Green" meaning go, "Yellow" slow down and pray, and "Red" stop, look and listen.

Be Led by the Spirit and the Word!

Romans 8:13-16
For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

The Thomas kind of faith is a faith that has to see first in the natural, with the five senses before one believes; however this is not Bible faith. This is the realm where unbelievers operate, the physical and mental realms. Christians who continue to live that way are called carnal or worldly according to 1 Corinthians 3:1-3. We need to grow up by feeding and practicing God's Word in our life, then we can discern truth from error and then we will learn to follow the leadings of the Spirit of God.

John 20:24-29
Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

1 Corinthians 3:1-3
Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly — mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?

A side note concerning Old Covenant believers, notice that their form of worship was outward and physical, since they did not know what it was to truly worship God from their spirit. Why else would Jesus say in John 4:23-24:

"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

That is why David in 2 Samuel 6:14, danced in the natural, the only way he knew how, *"David, wearing a linen ephod, danced before the Lord with all his might."* There is a New Covenant form of worship that is different from the Old Covenant and to mix the two is like substituting brass for gold- 1 Kings 14:26-27. I don't have time to cover this here, in the New Covenant we have the capacity to worship God in Tongues and in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. We worship God with sanctified bodies, renewed minds in reverence and in awe with uplifted holy hands- 1 Corinthians 14:14-18; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Romans 12:1-2; Hebrews 12:28; 1 Timothy 2:8.

God wants us to grow up and learn to be led by the Holy Spirit in our spirit. So are we led by fleeces, physical signs that can be counterfeited by the enemy or are we going to follow the safe witness of the Spirit in our hearts? In the New Covenant, we live by faith, God deals with us through our born again spirit. This way Satan cannot deceive us, because he has no access there. Let us see people by their spirit and through the eyes of God's Word.

Ezekiel 36:26-27
I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Hebrews 8:10-9:1
"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.

Galatians 2:6
As for those who seemed to be important — whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance.

2 Corinthians 5:16-17
So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

One final point, I personally believe that most problems in a believer's life, originate from actions, and decisions he/she makes. It's too easy to blame the devil or reason that God in His sovereignty is trying to teach me some deep spiritual truth. If only we had not have maxed out our credit cards, dated that unbeliever, got mad, and got offended at that person, the list goes on and on- Galatians 6:7-8. God is never at fault and never to blame, if something does not work out for us.

Proverbs 19:3- A man's own folly ruins his life, yet his heart rages against the Lord.

We are personally responsible for a lot of things. Sure the devil does come in, and attacks us even when we are walking in God's will, but let's not be so quick to rationalize our problems on something else. God uses His Word to teach His children. If your child disobeyed you, would you put cancer on him, make him a cripple or break his leg. NO WAY! The authorities would put you in jail for child abuse. Our loving Heavenly Father does not treat His children this way. Some may think I am overly simplifying this, but I love Jesus' style, He always seems to keep things simple, truth is that way. When man gets his hands into it, things have a tendency of getting complicated.

Matthew 11:25-26
At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure."

Unit 9 Review:

What was Paul's "Thorn in the Flesh" according to 2 Corinthians 12:7?

Is it ever God's will to suffer for Jesus by suffering pain, sickness or disease, why?

So how long are we promised to live according the Bible?

What are some of the keys to living a long life on the earth?

What is meant by the statement, "Delay is not Denial" as it pertains to healing?

Why is our faith so important in us receiving our healing?

III. How to Receive your Healing

Introductory Comments

The first unit was about establishing the will of God concerning healing; obtaining this revelation knowledge is the first crucial first step in receiving healing. The second unit addressed all the obstacles and roadblocks in receiving healing, thrown up by the devil and the religious traditions of men. Questions and doubts in folk's minds must first be dealt with before they can operate in faith and confidence in order to appropriate redemptive healing for themselves and others. Now, we have come to the third unit, this is where we get into the nuts and bolts of the practical application of God's Word in order to apply the healing grace of God for our body and soul.

Hebrews 4:1-3
Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. Now we who have believed enter that rest…

What we must learn now are the principles of faith in relation to receiving divine healing; mixing our faith with God's healing Word, releases God's power to heal us and others. Through the hand of faith we reach out and receive from God in the spiritual realm in order to make it manifest in the natural world. Learning to operate in the spiritual laws of faith, hope and love are vital if we are going to experience any success in the kingdom of God, let alone the area of healing.

1 Corinthians 13:13
And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

A. Healing Dynamics

We need to realize that there is more than one way for people to receive healing. In other words, a number of methods for receiving healing are recorded in the Word of God. The reason for this is simple, our Heavenly Father just wants us healed and He has provided many avenues by which we may receive our healing.

The primary method that has been provided for all of God's children is by simple faith in God's Word. When we hear the Word of God ourselves, believe it as truth in our spirit and act on it, we receive. That is what it means to receive healing by faith in God's Word. I believe this is God's highest and best way to receive healing, because we are actively participating in hiding God's Word down in our hearts. What gets us healed, keeps us healed. It is just as important to learn how to keep our healing as it is to obtain it. The same Word we build in our spirit to receive healing is the same Word that is raised as a standard against the enemy who will inevitably try to take it from us. As the old saying goes, "Give someone a fish and feed him for a day, teach him how to fish and feed him for a lifetime." God's ultimate will is for permanent healing- not just short-term or temporary.

What Gets us Healed, Keeps us Healed!

A second way to minister or receive healing, is through the laying on of hands – the healing anointing flows through us and to us. As we study the life and ministry of Jesus and the apostles, the laying on of hands was a common practice. As a matter of fact, Jesus incorporated this ministry in the Great Commission, and in Hebrews chapter six as a fundamental doctrine of Christ. The laying on of hands has an even broader application through the point of contact principle; from simple hands being laid on someone to coming in contact with mud, spit, clothing, oil, shadow, and full body contact as illustrated in the Bible. The method of contact is only a means to an end; the end itself is always found in personally imparting and transferring the anointing, the power of the Holy Spirit into the lives of others.

A third way to receive healing is in conjunction with what older Pentecostals often called, "praying the power down" – receiving our healing when the supernatural power of God is in manifestation. This is also referring to the Nine Manifestations of the Spirit according to 1 Corinthians chapter 12. When the need becomes immediately critical and there is no time for a person take a few months to build their faith up to receive healing, spiritual gifts are an immediate solution. Thank God we can "Break Glass" so-to-speak and call on God's intervention on the scene.

1 Corinthians 14:1
Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.

All of these methods are scriptural, all of them require faith, and thank God, all of them work! We are going to discuss these three methods throughout this unit, with our main focus on the two most essential ingredients which are required for each of them to work – faith and power.

1. God's Method of Healing is Spiritual

Physical healing that comes from God is spiritual in nature. It is not mental as Christian Science and Unity and other metaphysical teachers claim. Neither is it physical as the medical world teaches. When God heals, He heals through the spirit of man and healing virtue in turn resonates and quickens the mortal body.

Psalms 41:3- The Lord will sustain him on his sickbed and restore him from his bed of illness.

Proverbs 18:14- A man's spirit sustains him in sickness, but a crushed spirit who can bear?

John 4:24- God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.

Zechariah 12:1
The Lord, who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, and who forms the spirit of man within him…

When natural man heals, he must either do it through the mind that is governed by the physical senses, or he does it through the physical body by manipulating the laws of nature. We know through Scripture that man is a trichotomy, a three part being. I am a spirit, I have a soul and I live in a body. Conscience is the voice of my spirit, and through my spirit I contact God and the spiritual world. I have a soul which is made up of my mind, will and emotions, reason is the voice of my soul and with it I contact the intellectual realm. Feelings are the voice of my physical body, with the five senses I contact this natural world. Life's greatest forces are spiritual in nature. This natural world is a product of the spiritual world. The material universe has a beginning, the spiritual realm does not; for God who is a spirit being dwells there from eternity past to eternity future. I guess we ought to get acquainted with this spiritual realm that is more real than this material world. We do so through faith in the Word and by the Holy Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24
May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

The fruit of the re-created human spirit in Galatians 5:22-23 are spiritual, *"love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."* Just as the forces of evil: fear, hate, pride, envy and the like are also of a spiritual origin. When Jesus comes on the scene as the Healer, He requires that our faith be in operation in order to receive:

Matthew 9:22 "…your faith has healed you."
Matthew 9:29 "… according to your faith will it be done to you."
Mark 9:23 "…'If you can'?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes."
Mark 10:52 "…your faith has healed you."
Luke 17:19 "…rise and go; your faith has made you well."
Luke 18:42 "…receive your sight; your faith has healed you."
Luke 8:25 "…where is your faith?"
Mark 4:40 "…why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"
Mark 6:6 "…and he was amazed at their lack of faith."

I guess we could call Jesus one of those "Faith Teachers," because He sure talked about it a whole lot. Since faith is spiritual and of the heart, then healing is received through the spirit of man- Psalms 107:20 *"He sent forth his word and healed them."* Man's sin gave Satan the legal right to bring a curse upon humanity, but the Word (Jesus) has delivered them from it- John 1:1-3

Romans 8:11
And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

Romans 5:18-21
Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Promises of God work when we follow them according to directions. Refuse to be affected by temporal things to the contrary- 2 Corinthians 5:7, *"We live by faith, not by sight."* None of these things (Information from the five senses) move me, I am moved only by what I believe in God's Word and not by what I feel, see or hear. The Word is the healer today; folks receive healing by acting on the Word. That action is called faith, speaking the Word out of our mouths and from our hearts. Healing belongs to us, reach your faith out and say, "Healing is mine I take it now in Jesus Name!"

2. An Act of Obedience Releases our Faith

Hezekiah in Isaiah 38:1-5, 20-21 had become sick and sought the Lord in repentance and the Lord added fifteen years to his life. He was given instructions by Isaiah in Isaiah 38:21, *"Isaiah had said, 'Prepare a poultice of figs and apply it to the boil, and he will recover.'"*

One very able Bible scholar who was a medical doctor, minister, and Hebrew student says that according to the Hebrew translation, Hezekiah had a carbuncle on his neck, which can be very serious. God already told Hezekiah that he would not die but would live for fifteen more years. Therefore, the poultice of figs was not necessary of any medicinal aid. I don't believe it had any curative powers whatsoever. It served no medical purpose. I believe that God told Hezekiah to lay a lump of figs on the boil as an act of obedience and faith, just as He told Naaman the leper to dip in the Jordan River seven times so that his leprosy would be cleansed. Dipping in the muddy Jordan didn't have any curative value. It didn't heal Naaman any more than the poultice healed Hezekiah. But their act of obedience, in submitting to the Word of the Lord did heal them.

Sometimes, by the leading of the Spirit, God will direct sick people to do some outward demonstration in order to release their faith. For example, when ministering to crippled folks who cannot walk, the Spirit of God may direct the person ministering to them not to lay hands on them or pray over them. Instead, tell them to get up and run. If they would obey the Word of the Lord and make every attempt they can to move, they would be healed. This act of obedience is used by God often times as a catalyst to their faith.

When it pertains to manifestations of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12), imitating what the Lord told someone else to do in order to receive their healing is no guarantee we are going to be healed that same way. However, if the Lord speaks to you personally to perform some corresponding action and you act upon it in faith, you will be healed.

3. Our Faith Plays a Role in Receiving Healing

2 Timothy 4:20- Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I [*Paul*] left Trophimus sick in Miletus.

Some quoting this verse argue that divine healing must not always be God's will since Paul left Trophimus sick at Miletus. But they fail to understand that Paul did not carry healing power around with him. Trophimus' faith played a part in his own healing. Let's be real here, Paul was an amazing man of God, but He was not Jesus, Paul had weaknesses and shortcomings- 2 Corinthians 11:29. Consider the dispute he had with Barnabas over John Mark in Acts 15:39, *"They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company."* I am grateful for Paul's obedience and service to God, but I don't idolize him, he made mistakes. And like the rest of us today, he was subject to attack and liable for opening the door to the devil through disobedience. Paul's thorn in the flesh was not sickness and disease as we have already pointed out earlier. It was a demonic entity that followed him around to stir up persecution for him.

In Galatians 4:13-14 Paul makes reference to a "bodily ailment or infirmity," the Greek word denotes more than illness, but also frailty, feebleness or weakness in mind, body or morally speaking. I believe this is in reference to Acts 14:8-19, in the city of Lystra, within the province of Galatia; Paul was stoned to death. Even though he was raised from the dead, there were residual effects, like in Acts 16:33.

Galatians 4:13-14, "As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you. Even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn."

Healing is primarily a faith proposition on the part of the individual who receives. No matter how much faith a minister may have, the effects of an individual's doubt will nullify that minister's faith. This is another area where some folks have made a great mistake. They think that if a minister has faith and he/she prays the prayer of faith for them, they'll get healed – whether they have faith or not. Even under Jesus' ministry not everyone was healed. On one occasion in his own hometown of Nazareth, only a few people received healing.

Mark 6:1-6
Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. "Where did this man get these things?" they asked. "What's this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles! Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor." He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their lack of faith.

The original Greek translation of verse 5 says that Jesus laid hands on a few sick folk with minor ailments and healed them. So in this case, the few who did get healed only had minor things wrong with them. Well, why couldn't Jesus heal everyone there who needed healing? Because of their unbelief (verse 6)! Notice that Jesus "Could Not" it didn't say that He "Would Not" do any miracles there. Jesus couldn't just override their unbelief any more than He can override a person's will. Someone might ask, "But isn't Jesus the Son of God? Isn't He Sovereign?" Emphatically, yes! But Jesus can't override someone's unbelief. He won't do it. He would have to violate His Word to do that. So how did Jesus help people? He went around their villages teaching them the Word of God to cure their unbelief.

Matthew 4:23
Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people

Matthew 7:28-29
When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

Matthew 9:35
Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.

Luke 20:1
One day as he was teaching the people in the temple courts and preaching the gospel…

Luke 21:37-38
Each day Jesus was teaching at the temple, and each evening he went out to spend the night on the hill called the Mount of Olives, and all the people came early in the morning to hear him at the temple.

John 8:31-32
To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Notice the Divine Order: Teach and Preach and then people get healed!!!

Acts 2:42-43
They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.

Acts 4:2
They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.

Acts 5:25
Then someone came and said, "Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people."

Acts 5:28
"We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood."

Acts 5:42
Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.

Acts 18:11
So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.

Acts 28:23
They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.

Acts 28:30-31
For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible declares that any matter can be established or settled when it is verified by two or three witnesses- Deuteronomy 19:15; Matthew 18:16; 2 Corinthians 13:1. Well I have supplied more than that in order to drive the point home that: *"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* according to Romans 10:17 NKJV. The key for people to receive anything from God is they must have faith to believe before they receive. Therefore, the Word of God must be taught (explained) and preached (proclaimed) so the Word gets in their heart- planting seed for a harvest, for Jesus said:

Matthew 21:22- "If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

As in the ministry of Jesus, so it is today, not everyone will get healed just as not everyone will get saved. However, that does not mean God had failed or that His Will on the matter had ever changed, because neither God nor His Word ever changes! God's Word is settled forever in Heaven and on Earth!

Mark 13:31- Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.
Malachi 3:6- "I the Lord do not change."
Hebrews 13:8- Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Romans 3:3-4
What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge."

That is a question worth pondering upon, "Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness?" I encourage you to meditate on that for the Lord will give you further insight through His word into this most important question. That's the reason I said that healing is primarily a faith proposition on the part of the individual who receives, because God has already settled the matter for His part- it is always His will to heal all the time, every time.

The Bible says in Amos 3:3, *"Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?"* And Jesus said in Matthew 18:19, "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven." The Negative side of this verse would be, of course, that if they don't agree, it won't be done. Our faith plays a part in our healing.

Full of Faith and the Holy Spirit
Let's use a situation in the Early Church to illustrate the connection between faith and the Holy Spirit. One of the ministries of the Church was too distribute food amongst the widows. Unfortunately the Non-Jewish widows were being overlooked. So the Apostles appointed seven deacons to oversee the daily distribution of food. The only requirement was that they be known among them as being full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom.

Acts 6:1-6
In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

Now all seven of these men were Spirit-Filled believers since it was part of the qualifications, but notice the distinction they make concerning Steven. Not only was he full of the Holy Spirit, but he was also full of faith. That would account for the miraculous signs that were at work in his ministry.

Acts 6:8
Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people.

If we are full of the Holy Ghost, we're full of power. What I mean is we've already got the Powerhouse in us! Well, every one of those seven men was full of power. But that doesn't mean that every one of them was full of faith. Consider this; every Spirit-filled believer – every believer who maintains the Spirit-filled experience – is full of power. He doesn't have to get full; he is full. Now to be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with power. Jesus said in Acts 1:8*, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you…"* So we read in Acts 6:3 that the apostles said in Acts 6:3, *"…choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom."*

All seven men listed in Acts 6:5 were full of the Holy Spirit. That means that all seven of these men were full of power. But apparently, there was only one of them who did any miracles and signs among the people, and that was Stephen. Every one of them had the power to do miracles and signs. Why didn't they do them then? Because it takes faith to give action to the power! This is where many of us have missed it. We've thought that if we had the power, the miracles and the wonders would just automatically follow, but they won't. We saw that in Acts chapter 6. All seven of those men were full of power, but only one of them did any miracles or wonders, and that was Stephen. And Stephen wasn't even one of the Twelve. He wasn't a preacher or an apostle or an evangelist. In fact, according to the Scripture, he never did become an evangelist or an apostle or pastor; he lived and died a deacon. Signs and Wonders always follow the Word.

Mark 16:20
Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

2 Corinthians 10:15-16
Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow, our area of activity among you will greatly expand, so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you.

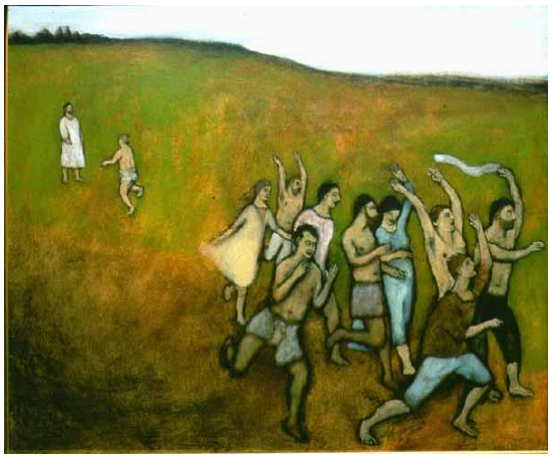
To be full of faith is to be full of the Word of God, having it abiding in our spirit. I am not talking about head knowledge, rather a personal revelation of the truth of God's Word on healing in our spirit.

Romans 10:17 NKJV- So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

John 15:7-8 NKJV
If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

4. Healed as They Went

Whether people get healed instantaneously or progressively over time, it is still from God. It may be that when Paul left Trophimus, he was still sick from all outward appearances, but the healing process had already begun in his spirit and was working its way into his physical body. Often gradual healings are greater than instant healings, because some people who are quickly healed forget about God. On the other hand, those who are healed gradually as they continue to believe God's Word often develop strong faith. This is very advantageous to the individual for future needs and for ministering to others.

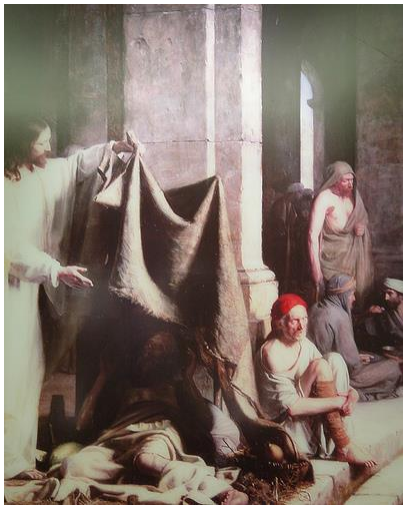


Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well." Luke 17:12-19 NKJV

Mark 8:22-25
They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?" He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around." Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.

5. Divine Intervention

Many Christians who desire healing are waiting for an intervention of divine sovereignty from God to initiate something on their behalf. Of course, God does occasionally move in a sovereign way, but that is not His ordinary way of doing things. I'll show you in the Bible what I mean by the intervention of divine sovereignty, when God initiates healing on His own out of mercy.



John 5:1-4 NKJV
After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.

In this passage, we read that the first person who stepped into the pool of Bethesda after the angel had troubled the water was healed of whatever illness he/she had. It didn't make any difference what the illness was, and it didn't make any difference whether the sick person was an adult or a child, a man or a woman. It didn't make any difference whether they were God-fearing or not – or, as we would say, saved or unsaved. It didn't make any difference whether they were pretty or ugly, rich or poor. And it didn't make any difference what color their skin was. The first person in the pool got healed and was the only one to get healed. It was that simple.

In the case of the pool of Bethesda, God worked a healing miracle on behalf of the crippled man. It's true that if God wants to work a miracle, He can. He doesn't have to ask me or you or anyone else for permission to do so. And that's what is meant by the intervention of divine sovereignty or God initiating something on His own. When God initiates something on His own and there is an intervention of divine sovereignty, very often only one person gets healed. Someone may ask. "Why?" Well, I don't know, because if I knew, I would tell you why, but I'm not the one who is doing it- God is. If this example in the Bible of receiving healing by God's sovereignty is any indication of how often God operates in this way, most folks are in for a very long wait or may never be healed by that way.

Healing is Available Now – So why Wait?

John 5:5-9 NKJV
Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me." Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked.

This man had been an invalid for 38 years, and when Jesus knew about it, He was moved with compassion and mercy to heal him. Jesus began the conversation as always, with a faith provoking question to get the person to believe so they can receive. This man could only make a pitiful response, there was not an ounce of faith in him. Regardless, Jesus sovereignly chose to heal the man. Another reason why it had to be done sovereignly is because this man had no faith in Jesus; he did not even know that it was Jesus talking to him.

John 5:10-15 NKJV
The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed." He answered them, "He who made me well said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.'" Then they asked him, "Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you." The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

Remember I have said when it comes to an individual developing faith in his/her spirit, "What gets you healed keeps you healed." This classic example proves the point why God prefers folks to receive healing through their own faith than to receive a handout from God without faith- in the long run it can do them more harm. Notice what Jesus said in John 5:14, *"See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."*

That is proof positive why God rarely does things sovereignly for folks apart from their faith- it rarely lasts. That is why Jesus was constantly making statements like, *"According to your faith, be it unto you."* In other words, Jesus was saying, "If you are waiting on my sovereignty to heal you when I have already provided it for you in the past according my Word, you are going to be waiting a long time."

The same principle applies to those who are delivered from demon oppression and possession. If we don't get the Word rooted and built up in them, they will fall right back into the same old sin. This will open the door again to the devil and they will end up in worse shape. The demon returns and according to the Bible, "finds it empty, swept, and put in order." Notice the word "Empty;" without the Word and the Holy Spirit in them- resulting is a spiritual vacuum for the enemy to fill.

Matthew 12:43-45 NKJV
"When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first."

So often we are Waiting on God but God is Waiting on us to Mix His Word With our Faith!

Mt 8:13	Great	The Faith of the Centurion	"Go! It will be done just as you believed it would."
Mt 9:29	Great	Two blind men receive their sight	"According to your faith will it be done to you."
Mt 14:36	Great	The woman with the issue of blood	"Your faith has healed you."
Mk 10:52	Great	Blind Bartimaeus receives his sight	"Go, your faith has healed you."
Lk 17:19	Great	The 10 men with leprosy	"Rise and go; your faith has made you well."
Lk 7:50	Great	A sinful woman is forgiven	"Your faith has saved you; go in peace."
Mt 15:28	Great	A Canaanite woman cries out to Jesus	"Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted."
Mt 14:36	Great	People begged to just touch Jesus' cloak	All who touched him were healed.
Mt 8:24	Little	Jesus sleeping in a boat during a storm	"You of little faith, why are you so afraid."
Mt 14:27	Little	Jesus walking on the water and Peter	"You of little faith, why did you doubt."
Mt 6:30	Little	Jesus discourses on God's provision	"O you of little faith. So do not worry about tomorrow."
Mt 16:8	Little	Jesus just fed the 5000-disciples doubt	"You of little faith, why are you talking about having no bread?"
Mt 17:19-20	Little	"Why couldn't we drive it out?"	"Because you have so little faith."
Mt 13:58	Lack	Jesus returns to home town	He did not do many miracles there- due to their lack of faith
Mt 16:14	Lack	Disciples doubted the Lord's resurrection	Jesus rebuked them for their lack of faith

Jesus Calms the Storm
Mark chapter 4 gives us another example of divine intervention.

Mark 4:35-40
That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

This miracle didn't happen on account of the disciples' faith, because in verse 40, Jesus asked His disciples why they didn't have any faith. Jesus expected them to have faith because He had told them, *"Let us pass over to the other side"* (v. 35). He hadn't said, "Let's go halfway and sink."

No, this miracle didn't happen because the disciples had faith. The Lord just did it of His own accord. God will do that sometimes. Unfortunately, many Christians are waiting for some kind of divine intervention to happen in their lives. It may happen, but it may not happen. But one thing I'm sure of: God's best, God's greatest, and everything God has is at our disposal by the claim of faith. We don't have to wait for His divine intervention, which may or may not happen. We don't have to wait for God to initiate something in a special way. God's will for His children is that they lay claim of the promises of God that pertains to every area of life and godliness.

Instead of fogging up the window looking in from the cold, let's open the door and sit at the Master's table and dig in. Instead of being like Oliver Twist, "Please sir, may I have some more…" know that He has already given us the Kingdom, now it's up to us to take possession and claim this New Covenant Promise Land- let's come boldly to His Throne of Grace! If we shrink back for whatever reason, it's not God's fault, we need to grow up and stop expecting God to spoon feed us all the time. Let's mature and learn how the Kingdom of God operates and maximize this mighty redemption for God's glory!

Walking on Water

We find another illustration of a divine intervention in Matthew chapter 14. It wasn't Peter's faith that saved him. He had a little faith to walk on the water for a while, but then he started to sink. The Lord, through His own kindness and goodness, saved Peter.

Matthew 14:25-31
During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

There is something about God initiating something on His own that none of us can understand. There is a mystery about it. If we could understand everything about God, He would cease to be God. We don't even understand everything about humans, much less God. Why do we try to figure God out when we need to just accept Him as God?

Remember, in the case of the angel troubling the water in John chapter five, only one person got healed. This is one example of God initiating something on His own in the area of healing. We've studied other examples of divine intervention including the time Jesus stilled the water and caused the storm to cease in Mark chapter 4 and the time he saved Peter from drowning in Matthew chapter 14. These two acts of sovereignty were in the area of saving people.

While God does occasionally intervene on His own initiative, we need to understand that it is not God's ordinary way of doing things. He ordinarily does things in our lives through our faith – by us believing Him and taking Him at His Word. The reason He has given us His Word is so that we can have faith, for we know that "faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God" according to Romans 10:17.

Are We Waiting for God to Intervene
Unfortunately, many Christians are waiting for divine intervention, for God to move sovereignly. They are waiting for God to initiate something out of the ordinary, which He may or He may not do, while all the time, God's best – everything He has for us – is at our disposal by the claim of faith. Let's listen to a story that Brother Hagin related:

"I remember a dear lady who was bedfast with terminal cancer. Medical science did all they could do for her, and then they gave her up to die. This lady was not a member of the church where I was preaching, but the pastor had visited her and she told him that she wanted me to come and pray for her. I went with the pastor to visit her. As always, I looked to the Lord to see if He would initiate or say something. He didn't say anything. I didn't have any kind of manifestation of the Spirit. Well, what do you do if the Lord doesn't initiate something? You give people the Word of God. You put the Word into them in order to get them to believe God. And if you can get them to believe God, then you can agree with them. So that's what I began to do with this lady who was dying of cancer. I began to give her the Word so that she could believe and be healed. But she wasn't interested in believing the Word of God. She was convinced that there was a person somewhere who was going to heal her. I told her, 'I'm sorry to disappoint you, sister, but there is no one anywhere who can heal you or anyone else. No person can do it.' She said, 'Well, I'll just lie here and hope that there will be.' I said, 'You will die in hope then.' And I'm sad to say that she did die."

Healing by a Manifestation of the Spirit
Here is another example that Brother Hagin gave that illustrates how on occasion God does move sovereignly to heal people by a manifestation of the Spirit.

"I knew another woman who was bedfast and dying with terminal cancer. She had deteriorated to the point where she couldn't even feed herself, much less get up out of bed. As we prayed together, there was a manifestation of the Spirit. In other words, the Lord initiated something. Now, please understand this: I can't initiate a manifestation of the Spirit. I am not God. But, as I prayed for this woman, I heard the Lord speak to me and tell me to do something. So I did what He said to do; I went to the head of the bed and said, 'Come out, you spirit of doubt and fear in the Name of Jesus.' The woman rose up shouting and jumped out of bed. She went from not being able to get out of bed to being instantly healed. She went out in the backyard and sat down and ate watermelon with us that very afternoon! Glory to God! The Lord initiated something on His own that day. Now, I'd be a fool to tell everyone who has cancer that that's the way healing is ministered. I'd be a fool to tell people, 'I found out how to get people healed. Just cast the spirit of doubt and fear out of every one of them.' No, that may not be the problem with every person. Again, if the Lord doesn't tell you anything, just put the Word into people. There is a connection between God's Word and healing. People are healed by hearing and saying words."

What gets us Healed, Keeps us Healed! Prayer is Important, but it can't take the place of God's Word!

Some folk are trying to do with prayer, what only the Word of God can do. Prayer is important because it is a method for expressing our faith, but we must first have faith in our spirit on the matter we are praying about, otherwise we are just blowing hot air.

Healed by Hearing and Speaking God's Word
Finally, let's look at a third example from Brother Hagin that illustrates God's main, highest and best way to receive healing- simple faith in His Word.

"I knew another woman who had been diagnosed with terminal cancer and was told by her doctor that medical science had done all they could do for her. When I went to pray for her there wasn't any manifestation of the Spirit- the Spirit of God didn't say anything to me. What did I do? I did the same thing I tried to do with the first woman who was dying; I gave her the Word. But unlike the first woman, this woman decided she would put God's Word into practice for herself. She received the Word as I gave it to her and began to speak it. And do you know what happened? The same doctors who diagnosed her couldn't find any cancer in her body – it had disappeared! She was healed by hearing and speaking God's Word! Remember, I didn't lay hands on that woman and pray for her to be healed. It was her faith in God's Word that made her whole. You see, all of God's provision is ours by the claim of faith. But faith must be released through the words of your mouth. While doubt can cause you to receive something less than God's best, faith will cause you to receive God's best. And, remember, faith must be released through your words."

Mark 11:22-24
"Have faith in God," Jesus answered. "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

The gifts of the Spirit do not have to be in manifestation in order for someone to receive healing. Miraculous healings can still take place where there was no move of the Spirit whatsoever or nobody around, but people simply believed God's Word. Simply by teaching people what the Word of God says about healing and letting them receive healing from God's Word. We don't have to be in a special meeting to get healing. "I really need to get to where the anointing is" but already we have the anointing, for the Word of God is anointed!

I can read it in my living room and the same anointing is there. He sent His Word and healed them. That Word is anointed. And it's anointed whether we feel it or not. People are waiting for a manifestation of spiritual gifts when they can get healed through faith in the Word of God and not even have anyone lay hands on them. It's the Word that will set us free. Himself (JESUS) took our infirmities. We don't have to wait for a special service or meeting or have a certain man or woman lay hands on us. I didn't say that we wouldn't have a battle, but we OVERCOME them by the blood of the lamb and the word of our testimony.

Preach the word, God said. It's through the Word, that we have healing, and assurance of the life hereafter, of deliverance, etc. When we start preaching the Word, the anointing will be there and people will find the power of God for whatever they need.

6. The Church United

Christ planned to carry on His healing ministry during His absence by means of the whole Church, which is His Body, not through an obscure member of that Body. He said in Mark 16 that "These signs will follow THEM"- the Church, not "him" or "her"- the individual. It is not the faith of a lone or solitary evangelist but that of the Spirit-filled Church as a whole which brought healing to all the sick in the streets of Jerusalem after Jesus had resurrected and ascended into heaven; and had sent His successor, the Holy Spirit. Some do not like public healing services, but here, God when He had His way, had the multitudes healed right on the streets.

He wanted His compassion to be made known to the world as the basis for faith- it's the goodness of God that leads people to repentance according to Romans 2:4. God began His works in this dispensation as He wants them to be continued; and that is, through the whole Church; with every member filled and kept filled with the Holy Spirit.

The greatest number of conversions, for instance, is brought about by an outpouring of the Holy Spirit and through a Church in one accord; and this is the way that all were healed in the streets of Jerusalem. God's wholesale dealings with men and women, both in saving and healing, is by the outpouring of His Spirit and through a Spirit-filled, united and praying Church. His method is revealed by the promise, *"I will pour out My Spirit"* and the statement, *"They were all filled with the Spirit."* A Spirit filled and praying Church produces an atmosphere in which it is easy for God to work and hard for the devil to interfere; the Holy Spirit is more than a match for the devil.

In the revival belt, during the Finney and other great revivals, sinners were put under conviction as soon as they would step off the train where a revival was in progress. Mr. Finney tells of such a unity in prayer that every adult person on a street three miles long was saved, except one. The Christians united together and prayed for that one, and he too was saved; oh the power of the corporate anointing, when we are all in one accord and in unity. That is where the Holy Spirit will manifest and that is where the power of God will be in operation to save, heal and deliver- demonstrations of the Spirit's power, 1 Corinthians 2:1-5.

Romans 15:5-6
May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 4:24, 31
When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

Some of our theology today, causes many people to anchor in past blessings without a daily renewing of the fullness which constituted the initial blessing, when they, as Christians, were filled with the Spirit. Unless the Church is filled and kept filled with the Holy Spirit it is impossible for the spiritual atmosphere of our meetings to be what it must be in order to keep God from being limited or hindered; by maintaining a spiritually charged atmosphere, produced by the whole Church being filled with the Spirit and all praying for the work of Christ. The power of God is present to heal as it was at the beginning. God's way is for the whole Church to be filled and kept filled with the same Holy Spirit which saved and healed those multitudes in New Testament times.

Luke 5:17
One day as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there. And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick.

Ephesians 5:18-19 AMP
And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but ever be filled [Greek- Be being filled, continuous tense] and stimulated with the [Holy] Spirit. Speak out to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, offering praise with voices [and instruments] and making melody with all your heart to the Lord…

In a remarkable document signed by twenty bishops of the Episcopal Church in Australia, is given a wonderful report of the miracles of healing manifested in the cathedrals of that Church in various cities in Australia. In this report they say, "The faith which is needed is not merely individual but corporate faith, the faith of the home, of the ministry and of the whole Church. The Body, not a lone member of it, must cooperate with Christ its Head if its sick members are all to be healed. The most marked groups after the mission came from parishes where the wave of intercession had been highest and swept farthest. The world today is waiting for afresh revelation of the presence and power of God in the work of the Church and in the life of its members. It has already seen and felt once more the wonder of Divine healing."

7. Jesus Opened not His Mouth so we Could!

Jesus came as our substitute, to absorb in Himself the full wrath of God almighty on account of the sins of the whole world. Jesus had to be silent and not call out for help as the Lamb of God. He was innocent and bore the punishment for our sin- becoming a curse, taking on all of Satan's death, sickness, poverty, oppression and misery on our behalf. The fact that Jesus could call on twelve legions of angels proves that He was innocent, they had no legal right to take Him- Jesus had done nothing wrong. He was sinless and spotless and could have appealed to the righteous Judge of the universe and would have been delivered, but mankind would have been lost. So Jesus opened not his mouth, did not ask for deliverance for the joy of seeing us saved and ransomed from the clutches of the enemy.

DVD still: The Passion Of The Christ

Matthew 26:53-54
"Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"

Hebrews 12:2-3
Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

The devil only has a legal right to oppress the guilty and afflict the unrighteous. The devil only has a legal right to attack people and oppress them with poverty, sickness, mental anguish and fear, who have committed sin. The innocent and the righteous, he has no legal right to have at them. It was just too tempting for the devil to condemn and afflict Jesus, but it wasn't legal and he lost. If the devil had known what it would have cost him, he would not have crucified the Lord of Glory as the Bible says. The devil fell right into God's trap and lost his hold on humanity through sin; by Jesus taking away the sin of the world, John 1:29, *"Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"*

1 Corinthians 2:7-8
No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

They beat Jesus, slapped Him, spit in His face, pulled out His beard, flogged and crucified Him, but He did not open His mouth except to say things that spoke of redemption, Jesus said, *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing"* in Luke 23:34. Even the blood of Jesus spoke only of mercy and forgiveness Hebrews 12:24, *"…to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel."*

Isaiah 53:7
He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

1 Peter 2:23-24
When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

Let's look at an great example in the Bible where Paul had been arrested by the Romans, whom God had used to save his life from a lynch mob that was trying to kill him in Jerusalem. As was customary, the Roman commander ordered that Paul be flogged and then questioned in order to find out why the Jews were trying to kill him.

Acts 22:23-28
As they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, the commander ordered Paul to be taken into the barracks. He directed that he be flogged and questioned in order to find out why the people were shouting at him like this. As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, "Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn't even been found guilty?" When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and reported it. "What are you going to do?" he asked. "This man is a Roman citizen." The commander went to Paul and asked, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" "Yes, I am," he answered. Then the commander said, "I had to pay a big price for my citizenship." "But I was born a citizen," Paul replied.

When it comes to Claiming our Redemptive Rights in Jesus, we must Open our Mouths!

Don't you know that Paul was glad that he could say "Yes, I am a Roman citizen" and avoid a severe flogging. Paul challenged their legal right to whip him. Back then if an individual was a Roman citizen, they were somebody and they had rights under Roman law. Nobody could just sentence them without a fair trial and had a chance to defend themselves. And if they did not like the outcome of the trial, they could appeal to Caesar himself, which later on, that is exactly what Paul did in Acts 25:11. Those who were not citizens had no rights; they were of the level of a slave in the eyes of the Romans- inferior. Therefore, Roman citizenship was of great value and highly esteemed.

Philippians 3:20
But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ…

Colossians 1:13-14 AMP
[The Father] has delivered and drawn us to Himself out of the control and the dominion of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, In Whom we have our redemption through His blood, [which means] the forgiveness of our sins.

John 5:24
I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

1 John 3:14- We know that we have passed from death to life

Now why did Paul miss this whipping, this painful punishment- you got it, Paul opened his mouth. Paul spoke up and challenged them and said, "Is it legal…" and those words brought them to a screeching halt. If Paul could stop from getting a beating because he was a Roman citizen, how much more can we stop the devil from afflicting us because we are a citizen of heaven- we were born into God's kingdom when we confessed Jesus as Lord! Now the devil has the power and ability to work sickness, oppression and death, just look around in the world and see his handiwork. But, it is not legal for the devil to punish citizens of heaven who have already been redeemed from sin and are walking in fellowship with God. If we are repentant of sin, and confessing his/her righteousness and innocence through the blood of Jesus, Satan can't touch us!

1 John 5:18-19
We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him. We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

So what does the Scripture say we are to do when the devil wants to stretch us out and afflict us with the scourge of cancer and the lash of the flu, let the redeemed of the Lord say, "devil, is it legal for you to do this for it is written, 'As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed my transgressions from me' (Psalms 103:12) and 'Surely he took up my sicknesses and carried my pains' (Isaiah 53:4)."

Psalms 107:2 AMP
Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He has delivered from the hand of the adversary,

Revelation 12:10-11
For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

Jesus did not open His mouth so we could open our mouth and say- "devil is it legal for you to afflict me and oppress my life?" If we stay quiet and silent about it, he will keep on beating us as much as we will take even though it is not legal. Sadly these Christians will cry out to the Lord, "Oh God, give me strength to endure this trial so that I stay faithful to you." No my dear brother or sister, when the devil comes and tries to strike us with a plague, hardship or oppression we need to speak up immediately and say, "No, devil it is not legal for you to put this on me, a child of God, a citizen of heaven!" He knows it's not legal for him to do it, but he is hoping that we don't know it and keep quiet about it so he can get away with it and keep on making our lives miserable. So many of God's children keep taking the devil's stuff and become a door mat to the enemy and Jesus keeps telling them, "I took that for you, stop taking that, it's not legal for the devil to put that off on you!" The spirit of faith speaks God's Word! We have to know what belongs to us in Christ and we have to speak and stand up for our rights in Christ! When we do this, the Greater One, the Holy Spirit inside us will back us up, heaven will back us up!

2 Corinthians 4:13
It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak.

The only thing that gives Satan power over the Christian is deception. The devil will exploit ignorance and a lack of knowledge, Christians who don't know to speak up will just keep taking a beating from the enemy. So the next time the devil comes and tries to steal, kill, destroy, make sick, poor and oppressed, we must immediately open our mouths and challenge, defy and resist the devil with the Word and say "No" in the Name of Jesus!

We can't play with our redemption or try faith like a lucky charm, we have to know what we believe about healing; we can't be moved by what we see or don't see or feel or don't feel. We have to stand steadfast against it and refuse it any place in our lives- be strong in faith.

Romans 4:20-21 KJV
He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

Now we see how critical it is for us to understand our rights and privileges and enforce Satan's defeat in our lives according to the redemption that was wrought through Jesus Christ 2,000 years ago.

Romans 8:31-35
What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Unit 10 Review:

What is the primary way that God heals His children and why?

When someone prays for us in faith, is our own faith important?

Is the Healing Ministry of Jesus to continue only through the Five-Fold ministry gifts?

Even though Jesus was innocent, He did not open His mouth at Calvary, why?

Why is it so important that we speak out and enforce our redemptive rights?

What is the only thing that gives Satan power over the Christian?

B. All Kinds of Prayers

Ephesians 6:18
And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with <u>all kinds of prayers</u> and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

The Bible teaches that there are several kinds of prayer. However, I will not go into detail on all of them in this series. Right now let's concentrate on prayer for healing. During the life and ministry of Jesus, He was living under the Old Covenant. The New Covenant did not go into force until after His resurrection. Jesus was alluding to a new kind of prayer in John 16:23; as children of God under the New Covenant we have been given direct access to the Father through Jesus' Name.

John 16:23-24
In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

That is what Jesus meant when He said, "In that day…" speaking of the day we live in today, the Age of Grace where the New Covenant is in force through Jesus Christ as our Mediator and Great High Priest.

Hebrews 4:16
Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

During the interim when the Old Covenant was going out and the New Covenant was coming in, Jesus taught the disciples to pray what we call "The Lord's Prayer" in Matthew 6:9. However, just before He returned to heaven, Jesus changed His disciples' way of praying. He did not teach New Covenant believers to pray the Lord's Prayer; He had taught His disciples to pray that way at the time. I am not saying that the Lord's Prayer isn't beautiful. I did not say we cannot learn something from it – because we can learn much from it. But where is the Name of Jesus in that prayer? The disciples didn't pray one thing in the Name of Jesus, did they? They didn't ask the Father for one thing in the Name of Jesus. This is not the New Testament Church at prayer! This is not the New Testament norm for prayer!

There's something we need to see here in John chapter 16: Just before Jesus went away, He changed the disciples' way of praying. Under the New Covenant between God and the Church, we are to come to God the Father through Jesus Christ. One reason we have missed a great deal is that we have tried to pray as they did back in the days of the Old Covenant. Notice Jesus said John 16:24, *"…Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete."* Of course, this includes all kinds of prayer, and it includes claiming healing for ourselves and others as well.

How could our joy be full if we or our loved ones were at home sick? That would be impossible, wouldn't it? Every believer has a right to claim their healing in Jesus' Name or for any other blessing mentioned in God's Word. And if a believer asks in the Name of Jesus, he/she has an absolute guarantee that God will grant the answer to his/her petition. If we were getting more answers to prayer, we would have more joy. And if more of our joy were showing, we would get more people saved and healed. Healing is involved in these verses. We have a right to claim our healing in the Name of Jesus. God does hear and answer the prayer of faith based on the Word.

1. Prayers Based on the Word Get Results

Prayer is successful only when it is based on the promises of God's Word! Faith begins where the will of God is known and God's Word is God's Will. Our prayers are powerful when we pray God's Word.

1 John 5:14-15
This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of him.

I have enclosed what are called the "Epistle Prayers" from God's Word. I have personally been praying them over my life and others for many years. Notice that I have personalized them by changing the tense to first person. Praying these prayers will increase the flow of God's grace and revelation in your life!

Father, I ask you in the name of Jesus, that you would fill me with the knowledge of your will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that I might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. Strengthen me with all might, according to your glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness. I give thanks unto you Father, for you have made me able to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light: For you have delivered me from the power, authority and the dominion of darkness, and have translated me into the Kingdom of your dear Son: In whom I have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 1:9-14

Dear Holy Father, I ask you in Jesus name, that your love which has been shed abroad in my spirit by the Holy Spirit, would abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that I may approve things that are excellent and that I may be sincere and without offence until the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Christ Jesus, unto the glory and praise of God.

Philippians 1:9-11

Father, I ask you in the name of Jesus that you would give unto me, the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of you and your Word. That the eyes of my understanding would be enlightened; that I may know what is the hope of your calling, and what is the riches of the glory of your inheritance in the saints, and the exceeding greatness of your power to me who believes, according to the working of your mighty power, which you wrought in Christ, when you raised him from the dead, and set him at your own right hand in the heavenly places. You set him far above all principality, and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.

Ephesians 1:17-21

For this cause, I bow my knees unto the Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. Father in Jesus name I ask you according to the riches of your glory, that you would strengthen me with might by your Spirit in my inner man; that Christ may dwell in my heart by faith; that I being rooted and grounded in love, would be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that I would be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto you Father who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that I can ask or think, according to the power that works in me, unto you be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Ephesians 3:14-21

2. Asking vs. Claiming

When I tell people they don't have to pray to be healed, they look at me in amazement. Many have failed to receive healing because they have based their faith on prayer instead of on God's Word. They expected prayer to do for them what only God's Word can do for them.

This is where a lot of potential confusion can take place. Sometimes we find ourselves asking for things that we already have in Christ. We should be appropriating our inheritance through faith in God's Word for things God has already given us through our redemption that Jesus had already obtained for us. For example, when the Bible specifically tells us to ask for something, like wisdom, than we are to ask for it:

James 1:5-8
If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

Luke 10:2
He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.

Ephesians 1:17
I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

Yet when it comes to redemptive items like healing, it has already been provided; it just needs to be appropriated through faith! I like to use the 'Car Keys' analogy. If I give you my car keys because you need to borrow my car and the next minute you turn around and ask me again for my car keys, I will say "I already gave you the keys to my car; they are in your hand right now." If you persist in asking me for something I already gave you, well eventually I will get a little frustrated with you. When we ask God to heal us when He already did so 2,000 years ago, *"by His stripes we were healed"* according to 1 Peter 2:24 we are praying when we should be proclaiming what is already an established fact- redemptive provisions need only to be appropriated by speaking the Word from our heart.

1 Peter 2:24-25
He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

When it comes to the New Birth, the sinner need only confess Jesus as their Lord and believe in their heart that God has raised Jesus from the dead. There is no prayer of petition to ask for salvation in Romans 10:9-10. Salvation has already been provided as a free gift for all humanity to just receive by claiming it in Jesus' Name.

Acts 4:12
Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

When it comes to redemptive issues, confession brings possession! God has done all He is going to do about our sin, healing, peace, eternal life and everything else that is wrapped up in redemption- Jesus said it is "Finished" for a reason! We don't have to work for it, earn it or pray for it. It's just a matter of receiving the gift of eternal life, so it is with healing. As a matter of fact, the only sin that sends the unbeliever to hell is the sin of rejecting Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Notice John 16:9 talks about the sin (singular) of not believing on Jesus. Jesus has already dealt with every sin that was ever committed or will be committed in the future, for every human being that has or ever will live on this earth. This amazing act of God's grace was accomplished at Calvary 2,000 years ago according to Hebrews 9:26, *"But now Jesus has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself."* All that is left for unbelievers to do now is just receive eternal life by confessing Jesus as their Lord and Savior and believe it in their heart- simple! Likewise, as for receiving healing, all that is left for Christians to do is confess that "By His bruise we were healed," and believe it in their heart.

John 16:8-9
When he comes [Holy Spirit], he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me…

John 3:36
"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

John 1:11-13
He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

Really, it all comes down to faith and believing God's Word in our spirit. God's word conceived in the spirit of man produces the life and the power of God for our lives. The Curse of the law is summed up in these three: Poverty, Sickness and Death.

Galatians 3:13-14, 22
Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit. So that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

Whatever we have been redeemed from, we do not have to ask God for it- just claim it through faith in God's Word in Jesus' Name! The price has been paid, the gift has been given, and all that is left for us to do now is just enjoy it- Luke 17:21, **"…because the kingdom of God is within you."**

3. Making a Demand in the Name of Jesus

The Name of Jesus belongs to us as Christians, and we have a right to use that Name. But we need to know the power and the authority that's in Jesus' Name, and we must learn to exercise that authority.

John 14:12-14- I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Many times, when we just sort of "skim" over the Word of God, we miss the impact of what the Word is saying. For example, many people believe that John 14:12-14 is a reference to the subject of prayer. However, a closer examination of this passage will reveal that it's really referring to the believer's right to exercise spiritual authority in the Name of Jesus.

According to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, the meaning of the Greek word "ask" in John 14:13-14 implies a demand of something due. Jesus told the disciples in John 14:14, *"You may ask [demand] me for anything in my name, and I will do it."* Jesus is not talking about prayer here; He was talking about using His Name as a basis for authority. Like when we drive out demons in the Name of Jesus.

In the Early Church, healing was used as a means of advertising the Gospel as well as a means of blessing and helping people. The Apostle Peter knew that there was power in the Name of Jesus. Peter used the authority in that Name to command sickness and disease to go. In one case he raised a woman named Dorcas up from the dead and as a result many people were saved, Acts 9:42-43 *"This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord."* Signs and wonders add credibility to the Gospel message that it's from God.

Acts 9:32-35
As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the saints in Lydda. There he found a man named Aeneas, a paralytic who had been bedridden for eight years. "Aeneas," Peter said to him, "Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and take care of your mat." Immediately Aeneas got up. All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

In the account of the crippled man who was healed at the Gate called Beautiful in Jerusalem we see a perfect example of "Demanding" in the Name of Jesus- Acts 3:1-16. Peter didn't demand anything of God when he commanded in Acts 3:6, *"Then Peter said, 'Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.'"* God never made that man crippled to begin with- Satan did, either directly or indirectly. Peter used the Name of Jesus to set the crippled man free from the bondage of Satan. Peter demanded that the man arise and walk in Jesus' Name, because Jesus said, *"Whatever you demand in My Name, I will do it!"*

If a pain comes we say, "In the Name of Jesus Christ- Leave my body!" The pain must go. We are the master of our own body- we are to rule it. We have a right to freedom from pain and sickness. In the Name of Jesus, command it to leave. We are not demanding it of the Father, because the Father has given us authority over these demoniacal forces. We can use the Name to break the power of the devil over the unsaved and make it easier for them to accept Christ- 2 Corinthians 4:4. In that Name according to Mark 16:18, *"they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."* Every believer should understand this clearly, that he/she has a right to perfect deliverance from the hand of the enemy in that Name.

When the man was healed, the crowd thought that Peter and John had healed him. If people aren't careful, they will look to man to heal them. Later in Acts 3:16, Peter told the people exactly how the crippled man had been made whole:

Acts 3:16
By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.

Acts 4:12
"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

Mark 16:17-18
"And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

As we can see in the Scriptures, it is all in the Name of Jesus that releases the power of God. Another example of demanding of the devil in Jesus' Name is when we cast out demons of those who are possessed or oppressed by them.

Luke 10:17-20
The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Some Christians think of the Name of Jesus in the same way they think of a good luck charm. They have about as much faith in the Name of Jesus as they have in a rabbit's foot! They say, "Maybe it will work," or "I hope something good comes out of it." As long as they just try the Name of Jesus as though it's some sort of good luck charm, nothing will happen for them; unless of course God in His mercy intervenes on their behalf and does something for them in spite of their doubt. We have to get a revelation of the Name of Jesus down in our spirit, which is where it works. That is only accomplished by meditating on the Scriptures concerning the use of the Name continually- let's not try, rather let's do what the Word says, speak the Name of Jesus.

The Name of Jesus belongs to us as a Christian, and we have a right to use that Name. When sickness or disease tries to attack us, we can command it to leave our body. When symptoms come, demand it to leave in Jesus' Name! If sickness or disease comes to us, instead of accepting it and talking about our troubles, say, 'In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, leave my body!" And the sickness or disease must go! We may say, "I tried that, and it didn't work." Using the Name of Jesus doesn't work by trying it; it works by doing it! Our spirit man – who we really are on the inside – is the ruler of the body. In other words, we are the ruler, or the caretaker of our own body. We are the ones who must exercise dominion over it – not someone else. We honor God by keeping our body pure from sexual immorality, but we also honor God by keeping it from being oppressed by sickness and disease. I have said before, sickness and disease is like spiritual graffiti from the devil to desecrate the temple of God where the Holy Spirit dwells. It is our responsibility by the Grace of God to keep that from happening- by grace and through faith in God's Word.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17
Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20
Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

Jesus has given us His Name, the Name that is above every name (Philippians 2:9-10) to forbid Satan from trespassing against our body with sickness or disease! The Apostle Paul reaffirms this truth when he talked about bringing the body under subjection by our spirit; by the renewing of our mind with the Word. To bring something into subjection means to rule over something or to take authority over something. I like what Smith Wigglesworth said: "If someone asks, 'How is Smith Wigglesworth feeling today?' I tell him, 'I never ask Smith Wigglesworth how he feels; I tell him how he feels!'"

1 Corinthians 9:27
No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Romans 6:19
I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.

That's right in line with what Paul said: *"I beat my body and make it my slave."* So instead of us serving our body's appetites or allowing ungodly things like sickness to enslave us, we bring our bodies under subjection to God's Word. Sadly, many Christians live their lives being ruled by their bodies and unrenewed minds. They are just like the world, carnal or earthly. As baby Christians still struggle with sinful bad habits and the sinful nature in the body, they also stay dominated by what dominates the world- death, in the form of sickness and disease.

1 Corinthians 3:1-3
Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly — mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly.

Yet every Christian has the ability to bring his or her body into subjection, as Paul did. Just because Paul was an apostle, doesn't mean he was any more saved than us; he didn't have any more authority over his body than we do over ours. But Paul exercised his authority; he brought his body into subjection. The Holy Spirit through Paul is admonishing all believers to do the same.

Romans 12:1-2
Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.

We are the ruler of our own body. If we weren't the ruler of our own body, then we wouldn't be told to bring it into subjection, and we couldn't present it to God as a living sacrifice according to Romans 12:1. We wouldn't be able to take authority over any sickness or disease that might try to harm us. But we are the ruler of our own body, and, thank God, we have a right to freedom from pain, sickness, and disease in the Name of Jesus! But we must exercise the authority which belongs to us in that Name. Certainly, God will help us through the power of the Holy Spirit, but He will not do it for us.

When we take authority over sickness or disease in our body and command it to leave in Jesus' Name, we are demanding something due us: freedom from whatever it is that has attacked our body according to John 14:14, *"You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."* We are not demanding anything of God; we're demanding something of demonic forces because sickness and disease come from the devil, not from God. Jesus told His disciples to pray in Matthew 6:10, *"...your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."* There isn't any sickness in Heaven, and God doesn't want us to be sick here on earth. When we take authority over sickness or disease in our body, we're just taking our place as a child of God with certain rights. We're just exercising our authority and demanding our rights!

Ephesians 4:23-24
To be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Our minds are the key to receiving healing from God. It is only the renewed mind that can grasp these truths. Our spirit has been recreated, but not our mind. Our natural minds receive all of its knowledge through the senses, so it must be renewed. This renewing of the mind comes through meditating and acting on the Word. The renewed mind is enlightened by the Word to understand that all there is to be done for our healing is to praise the Father for it. It says, "My diseases were laid on Christ and He put them away. I am healed. I thank the Father that it is already done." The pain may be there, the soreness may be very real. These are only the testimony of the senses. We refuse to listen to the witness of our senses. We accept the Word of God and act upon it, as surely as God sits on the throne. He will make His Word good in us- our new reality to enjoy.

We do not ask for power, for we have already received the power source of the Holy Spirit within us. We do not ask for Redemption, for He is our Redemption. We do not ask for Sanctification, for He is made unto us Sanctification. We do not ask for Righteousness, because He is made unto us Righteousness. This faith life is the most beautiful thing in the world. We step out of the old sense realm where we have lived as the world does today.

1 Corinthians 1:30
It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God — that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

Many times, however, Christians will just slip back into the natural, or back into religious thinking which tells them they don't have a say-so about anything that happens to them. Rather than dominating their circumstances, these Christians are being dominated by their circumstances. They have been religiously brainwashed instead of New Testament taught. We need to know the authority God has given us, believe in that authority, and exercise it. If we don't know the authority God has given us as we should, we need to meditate upon the Scriptures which tell us who we are in Christ, and the authority which God has given us in the Name of Jesus.

The Name of Jesus won't work just because we saw or heard someone else use it. That's where folks miss it sometimes. They say, "Well, my pastor said such-and-such." But they don't study the Word for themselves. We must be convinced of the Word of God ourselves and then act on the Word because we believe it's true. The Name of Jesus will not work for us as it should until we apply ourselves to the study of its meaning and its worth.

When we understand the authority we have in the Name of Jesus, we can also use that Name to break the power of the devil over unsaved people, particularly our unsaved loved ones. We command sickness or pain or whatever tries to come against us to leave in Jesus' Name. Our problem has been in asking the Lord to save so-and-so, but the truth of the matter is Jesus has already provided salvation for them; it's now up to them to receive Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior. However, there is something or rather someone that is hindering that from happening- that's right, the devil.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4
And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

The Bible tells us that it's the devil that blinds people from the truth of God's Word that Jesus is Savior and Lord. No sane person would purposely want to go to hell for all eternity, they must be deceived. If people knew the truth about heaven and hell and if they understood that Jesus died to save them and give them eternal life, they would not go down the path of destruction. That is what the devil does; he deceives people- likes what he did to Adam and Eve.

John 8:44
When he[Satan] lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Revelation 20:3
He threw him[Satan] into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore…

Many times, if we expose a person to the Word, the Word will give him/her light, and spiritually he/she will be able to see the truth. But sometimes, the power which is controlling an unsaved person needs to be broken, or rendered ineffective before he/she can see the truth and act on it.

Psalms 119:130 AMP
The entrance and unfolding of Your words give light; their unfolding gives understanding (discernment and comprehension) to the simple.

God highly exalted Jesus, the Person and gave Him a Name which is above every name. And the Name and the Person are one. For example, if my name were John Smith, people wouldn't think of me as Harvey Alligator. No, if they know my name, then when they think of me, they think of my name. Or, if they know my name, when they think of my name, they think of me. The name and the person are one. Thank God, the Lord Jesus Christ and His Name are one!

Philippians 2:9-11
Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

So every being in heaven, earth, and under the earth are subject to the authority and dominion of Jesus Christ- that includes Satan and all his hosts. They must surrender to that Name, because the Name of Jesus is superior to every name that can be named! Here is an example of using the Name of Jesus to break the power and influence of the devil over a person's life in preventing them from receiving Jesus as Lord and Savior: "I take the Name of Jesus and break the power of the devil over so-and-so [substitute their name], and I claim his/her deliverance and salvation."

Use the Name of Jesus in Faith

When we get the revelation of the power and authority we have in the Name of Jesus, no one can steal that revelation from us. We must use the Name of Jesus in faith; otherwise, we will be ineffective and we won't get results. Unbelief cries and begs and pleads, but faith speaks and then shouts the victory! Through faith in the Name of Jesus, we can exercise authority over the power of the enemy in our life, and experience deliverance, healing, and victory! Jesus said in John 14:14, *"You may ask[demand] me for anything in my name, and I will do it."* We won't get the revelation of that scripture just by reading it once or twice; we won't get it by hearing someone else's testimony of how it worked for them. We'll get the revelation of the power of the Name of Jesus by careful study, meditation, and application of the truth of God's Word.

Someone might say, "Well, I don't know about that. I tried using the Name of Jesus once, and it didn't work." Once the reality of the authority that's in the Name of Jesus has dawned on us – once the authority that's in the Name of Jesus has become a reality in our spirit – our days of trying will be over, and our days of doing will begin! Every believer should clearly understand the power and authority in the Name of Jesus and the believer's right to use that Name. Let's meditate upon the scriptures that tell us who we are in Christ and what authority we have as a believer. As we do, those scriptures will become a reality to us. And we will begin to exercise our right to perfect deliverance from the bondage of Satan – for ourselves and for our loved ones – in the Name of Jesus!

4. Agree in Prayer

Matthew 18:19-20
"Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

Frequently we take verse 20 out of its setting and apply it only to church services – but that really isn't what it's talking about. Actually, verses 19 and 20 go together. According to verse 20, wherever two people are, agreeing in prayer, Jesus is there to see that what they agreed on happens. Jesus is not talking about a church meeting here, although He is present in church meetings. Where two people are united and are demanding healing for themselves or their loved ones in Jesus' Name, their prayers are bound to be answered, because God watches over His Word to make it good (Jeremiah 1:12)!

Matthew 18: 19 says *"two of you on earth,"* not "two of you in Heaven" just two. And the phrase *"anything that they shall ask"* could include healing couldn't it? Sometimes we get into the natural and think. Now, if I could get enough people – maybe a thousand are agreeing with me, or even ten thousand praying, that would really get results! That is human reasoning. God said that two could get the job done. Two is the most that He ever mentions we need! He didn't say to get the whole church to agree on it. We couldn't get a whole church to agree on something to save our life anyway! But if two of us agree, that's all it takes.

There is Power in Agreement!

Jesus said, *"... if two of you on earth agree about* ***anything*** *. . .* ***it will be done*** *for you by my Father in heaven."* Jesus didn't say it might be or it's a possibility. I have had folks come to me in an altar line to agree with them concerning some financial, physical or spiritual need. I like to join hands with them while praying since it denotes a physical expression of our agreement with our spirits. We agree that this need is met – not that it is going to be, because that is not faith, which would be future tense. That would be hope, not faith. We agree that the need is met, so we are praising God because we have agreed that it's a done deal. By faith it is done right now, and we count it as done.

Suppose I was to ask them after we prayed, "So is it a done deal?" If they were to say something like, "Well if its God will it sure is…" or "I sure hope so." Then that is not believing, but rather hoping. As a result, there is no agreement and it won't work as a consequence. There is no use in our going around blaming God and casting bad reflections on the Bible if it didn't work. Friends, if it didn't work, we didn't work it, because Jesus Christ cannot lie! We must admit that we missed it, and then correct ourselves. If a person is not in faith when they come to us for the prayer of agreement, it would be better for them to wait, get the Word in them until they are settled in their spirit concerning the will of God on the matter. Then come for prayer and get the results that only faith can bring.

5. Add Praise and Thanksgiving to our Prayers

With all the different kinds of prayer, we also need to add praise to our prayers, because it's in an atmosphere of praise that God can move more readily in our midst. Praise has been called the "Note of Victory." In other words if we are wringing our hands and are downcast and depressed, there is no faith present is there? The fact that Jesus is our healer is embodied in the "Gospel" message or the "Good News." Well if we believe the report, we will be full of joy and peace- praising God for the victory.

Isaiah 61:1-3 NKJV
"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, Because the Lord has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified."

Romans 15:13
May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

A great example of this is found in the account of Paul and Silas who were thrown in jail for delivering a servant girl from demon possession in Acts chapter sixteen. These two from a natural point of view had every reason to whine and complain about their situation; having been severely flogged and put in the stocks in the darkest cell in the dungeon. However, they made a choice to pray and praise the Lord.

Acts 16:25-26
About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose.

Praise and Rejoicing is the Note of Victory!

As a result, God's power descended into that jail and shook it from its foundation so that everyone's chains came loose and the jail doors flew open. What if they had expressed their feelings of fear; whined and complained about their situation- attempting to be authentic. I believe they would have been stuck in that jail for a very long time. Was it God's will for them to be delivered, absolutely, but remember their faith was required for their deliverance. Joy and praise is a form of corresponding action to our faith, so let the praise and thanksgiving flow and see the power of God manifest.

Proverbs 17:22- A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:4-7
Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

According to these Scriptures it is never okay to whine and complain, it's actually sin to give into it. Let's let the peace of God rule our hearts as we enter into His rest and rejoice in the Lord for the victory He has already won for us on our behalf- Colossians 3:15.

Philippians 2:14-16
Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life…

6. Final Prayer Tips

The Word of God and the spiritual laws within God's Word define the parameters from which the principles of prayer operate. No one has access to the Father except through Jesus, so until a person is born again, there is no prayer life until he/she is born again. Once a person receives the new birth, they need to be taught and become acquainted with the Kingdom of God and the spiritual laws that govern it.

- ## RULE #1: Free Will

Deuteronomy 30:19
This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.

Our prayers cannot override another person's free will- we can't force the blessings of God on someone if they do not want it. Nor can we make someone like us. Any attempt to manipulate or force someone through prayer is in reality witchcraft!

- ## RULE #2: The Love Rule

Galatians 5:6
The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

1 Peter 3:7
Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

If we are not walking in love towards others then we can expect our prayers to be hindered!

RULE #3: The Obedience Rule

James 4:17
Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.

1 John 3:21
Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God

Unrepentant sin will result in condemnation in our life. Our own heart will testify against us that we are out of fellowship with God. Use 1 John 1:9 to purify your heart from all acts of sin.

RULE #4: The Repetitious Prayer Rule

Matthew 6:7
And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.

The prayer of faith is prayed once, and then we thank the Father for answering our prayer thereafter.

RULE #5: The Will of God Rule

1 John 5:14-15
This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us- whatever we ask- we know that we have what we asked of him.

We all know that faith begins where the will of God is known. If the will of God is in doubt concerning a need, it is impossible to pray the prayer of faith until we find Scripture that covers the need. Too many Christians present their prayers to God too quickly without doing a little research in the Bible. We need to find promises in God's Word that cover the need we have. Next, does the Bible instruct us to ask God for it or to just claim it as a promise already provided: James 1:5 tells us to ask God for wisdom and Hebrews 4:16 tells us to come to the throne of Grace to receive mercy and find grace.

Many times, whatever we need, the Bible tells us that Jesus had already provided it for us; therefore, all we have to do is simply apply it in our lives through faith- personalizing the promise by confessing it over our lives. Other times we need to use the authority in the Name of Jesus and put the devil under our feet. Through the Word and the Spirit of God we can find the appropriate course of action to take in dealing with the issue.

The Bible tells us in 2 Timothy 2:15 to study the Word of God. Hosea 4:6, *"my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge."* What we don't know, we can't experience, even when it is part of our inheritance. We must be diligent to find out through the Word of God who we are, what we have, and how we are to live in Christ Jesus!

RULE #6: The Right Motive Rule

James 4:1-4
What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

God wants to bless His children with good things (1 Timothy 6:17), but if our motive is to compete and compare ourselves with others, those covetous greedy prayers will not be answered. The promises of God are activated by our faith in God's Word. Faith comes from the heart, and faith works by love. If our heart is not right then no matter how pretty our words sound, they will just drop to the ground as dead seed.

RULE #7: The Law of the Harvest Rule

"The seed is the Word of God" according to Jesus in the parable of the sower, Luke 8:11. I want to discuss how the seed gets into our hearts, and how it grows there in order to produce a harvest. The law of seed time and harvest goes back to Genesis 1:11-12; 8:20-22. God's natural and spiritual creations operate on these eternal laws. Here is something that we should never forget. Words are seeds, but God's Word is incorruptible seed (1 Peter 1:23). There is a big difference between the two.

Sometimes people think it's going to happen just because they say it. Saying it is involved in planting it. The problem has been that people say a few things; they plant a few seeds, then go off and leave them. We must care for that seed, because it takes time for things to manifest. When we preach the Gospel we are sowing seeds; by speaking words, in this case, Gospel words. When we speak words, we are sowing seeds. If we don't like the harvest we have been receiving, then we had better check on the seed we have been sowing- we could be sowing weeds (idle words). What we are today is a product of the words we spoke yesterday. What we say is what we will eventually get, because if we keep saying it, we will eventually believe it in our heart. The things that we believe in our heart, will come to pass in time. God made our spirit to produce whatever (Indiscriminate) we plant in there. If I don't like the harvest, all I have to do is simply check on the seeds (words) I have been sowing.

Remember it's not going to happen just because we say it once. Generally speaking, we must say it over a period of time for it to be really planted in the soil of our heart. The following Scriptures cover the principles of faith that move mountains. None of the circumstances that are spoken to will appear to have changed, but in time they will if we hold fast to our confession of faith (Hebrews 4:14; 10:23). Jesus said that they would obey our faith filled words. Our faith filled words are the seeds that will move the mountains out of our life. The sowing is in the saying:

The Sowing is in the Saying!

Mark 4:14, 20
"The farmer sows the Word. Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop--thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown."

God's Word is sowed in our hearts when we speak it through meditating on the promises of God. The seed contains the spirit life of God (John 6:63)! Yet until it is sowed into our spirit, it does not produce anything. Unless a farmer plants the seed He can't expect a harvest. The act of sowing or planting is a pre-requisite for any kind of a harvest. The same is true for the believer; the harvest or manifestation of the promise comes after the word of promise has been sowed into our heart. Then God causes it to grow, and the harvest comes in a process of time.

Proverbs 20:4
A sluggard does not plow in season; so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing.

Proverbs 18:20
From the fruit of his mouth a man's stomach is filled; with the harvest from his lips he is satisfied.

Isaiah 61:11
For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

When a seed comes into contact with the soil, and water, the seed germinates. The creative life within that seed is released. God's Word is incorruptible seed, and the life within that seed is God's grace (His life, power and ability). Water is a type of the Holy Spirit (John 4:10-14; 7:37-39). He acts as a catalyst to the Word, releasing the grace of God within it in order to produce the life of God that results in a harvest of blessing, and provision for our lives.

In the natural, the soil will not argue with the farmer, and produce something contrary to what is planted. For example, if we were to plant wheat, but the soil decides to produce corn. Some people have gotten the idea that it does not matter what kind of seed they sow, and it does not matter what they say. People will often say, "Well, God knows what I meant." Maybe so, but the issue is our heart is it not? It's programmed by God to produce whatever we sow in it (our words, good or evil). The soil of our heart does not decide whether the words we plant (say) are right or wrong. It will simply produce a harvest according to the type of seed we have planted there.

Some people in an attempt in being honest will share with others how they feel. Even when they pray, they pray the problem instead of reminding God of the promise (Isaiah 43:46 KJV).Thus, they put a death sentence over themselves with their words (Proverbs 21:23). A believer can have faith in God through the Word of God or faith in the devil by believing the words of the devil. Let's be consistent, and work faith on the positive side! We exalt God when we proclaim His Word above the circumstances of life. We exalt the devil when we yield to the circumstances of life and speak defeat, worry, and fear (Job 3:25). If we live by God's words, we would certainly die by embracing the devil's words (Genesis chapter 3; Matthew 4:4)

Remember, we have said that words are seeds but God's Word is incorruptible seed. The devil understands these principles, and he uses them to accomplish his purposes in people's lives. He will use whoever will yield to him to plant seeds (speak words) of doubt, fear, and failure into people. If people hear that long enough, that seed will get into their hearts, and they will believe and receive a harvest of evil in their lives. As believers we have the right through Jesus Christ to sow God's Word in our lives, and into the lives of others in order to produce a harvest of righteousness, and blessing for God's glory.

Read the story about Sennacherib threatening Jerusalem in Isaiah chapter 36 and the story of the Israelites at Kadesh Barnea in Numbers chapters 13 & 14. These are vivid examples of seeds that the devil planted in folks lives in order to destroy them (Matthew 13:37-42).

The Human Heart Is God's Production Center

Just think of it, we may not know how the kingdom of God operates to produce a harvest, but if we just know and work the principles, we can receive God's provision for our life. I may not know how a brown cow eating green grass and can produce white milk, but I can still drink it and receive the benefits from it. However, as God gives us more understanding of the particular workings of these spiritual laws, we will be able to operate in them more fully- PRAISE THE LORD!

The Process of Growth

Mark 4:26-29
He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain- first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

We can't rush the harvest from the confession of our faith! Let's look at the process of the growing seed:

- A man scatters seed
- The seed sprouts and grows
- First the stalk
- Then the head
- Then the full kernel in the head
- When the grain becomes ripe- harvest time

- Seed of God's Word is sown by saying it
- Watered through thanksgiving/Word
- Reaped through prayer/led by the Spirit

2 Corinthians 1:20
For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

Here Jesus is drawing a parallel between the natural process of seed time and harvest that operates in the natural world and the spiritual process of seed time and harvest that operates in the spiritual world. Jesus said, *"This is what the kingdom of God is like…"*As believers if we do not learn to operate in this spiritual law, we are in a world of hurt. This law works whether we know all the little details or not, *"though he does not know how."* If we will just work the Word, the Word will work for us. If it is not working, then we are not working the Word according to directions. The man just sowed the seed and the soil took care of everything else. While we are asleep, this principle is working. Our spirit never sleeps, and is producing the substance for the things we hope for.

1 Corinthians 3:6-9
I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

> **Paul Planted the Seed:** Paul preached the gospel and thus planted the seed.
> **Apollos watered it:** Apollos was a teacher and taught that same Word that Paul preached.
> **God made it grow:** God is the one that causes His Word to grow and produce fruit- John 15

What a rest, no manipulation, striving, and straining required. Just sow the seed, water it with praise, and thanksgiving for what His Word is doing, and God will make it grow. There are some other elements that will determine the fruitfulness of our harvest- 30, 60 or 100 fold- like walking in love, holiness and integrity of heart.

When the Word of God is spoken, faith is released through the air; that same creative force of God that the Father spoke in the beginning when He created the heavens, and the earth. This Word which is spoken comes to the ears of the hearer. At this point, a decision is made to accept or reject it. The human will is the door to the human heart. Upon accepting the Word, it penetrates the human spirit and germinates in the soil of his/her heart (Ezekiel 17:5-8).

Everything that we receive from God enters first into the human spirit, where it is conceived by faith. It's in the womb of the spirit where the seed is conceived, and produces spirit life. This is the reception center of everything we receive from God. Faith in the heart gives the human spirit the ability to conceive what God has promised in His Word. It won't happen until it is conceived, just as a child is conceived in his/her mother's womb. Then after conception, eventually there will be a manifestation, harvest or birth. Sometimes we must say things over and over before we really believe them- this is called Bible meditation. Faith comes by hearing the Word, not by having heard it a few of times.

The point is, what we say is what we sow. But it won't happen just because we say it once. It won't happen just because we say it a hundred times. Hearing the Word causes faith to come. Saying is involved in working the principle. It is conceived when we believe and doubt not in our heart. The kingdom within us, (Luke17:20-21) has been sown with the seed we have been speaking. When our spirit conceives the promise we spoke, it will work night and day to produce and bring it to pass. The soil, the heart, the spirit of man, is designed by God to produce what is sown in it- good or bad. It is the seed that determines the type of harvest, not the soil. We are the ones who control the kind of seed that we sow into our own hearts- **Galatians 6:7-10.**

Don't Dig up your Seed
We have seen that seeds are words, and the soil is the human spirit or heart. However, what instrument do we use to sow the seed- the tongue! The tongue has the potential to sow God's Word for a harvest of blessing, but it can also dig it up, and sow weeds that will produce a curse. In Genesis, after the fall of man, Adam caused certain curses to befall him and this earth. One of those curses was the introduction of weeds which I believe is a type of evil words- the capacity to speak good and evil. Proverbs says that life and death are in the power of the tongue. Until the fall, I believe that Adam only used his tongue for life. When Adam sold out to Satan and committed high treason, man received Satan's sinful nature in his spirit, and with that the ability to speak death. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil also refers to the ability to speak life, and death with our tongues (Deuteronomy 30:19). When we speak God's word one moment, and then speak doubt and fear (devil's words) the next moment, we have just dug up our seed.

James 1:6-8
But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

Faith in the heart gives it the ability to conceive God's promise. Once it is conceived, we will eventually have a manifestation of that promise. But it takes time. It is a process. As I have been saying, this is not a fad! This is a way of life! This is not something we try. If we are just going to try it, it won't work for us. We must have the attitude, "God said it, I believe it, and that settles it. As for me and my house, we are going to believe God's Word." Remember, we will not attain water walking faith overnight. Just because we are tired of taking that medicine that keeps us alive, is no reason to just say, "Well bless God today I'm going to start living by faith." We will more than likely die by faith if we have not developed it, and have received a full manifestation of healing in our body. Let's just keep taking that medicine, and believing God at the same time until we don't have to take it anymore.

Luke 8:15
But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.

After sowing the healing Word of God in our spirit, we believe it is growing before we see it grow. That faith in God's Word is our "evidence" of things not seen- Hebrews 11:1. In Christ, we have perfect evidence for faith. Any man or woman can get rid of their doubts by looking steadfastly and only at the evidence which God has given for our faith. Seeing only what God says, will produce and increase faith. This will make it easier to believe than to doubt; for the evidences for faith are so much stronger than those for doubting. Don't doubt your faith; doubt your doubts for they are unreliable.

Unit 11 Review:

Why is it important to pray God's Word in order to get results?

When it comes to matters that are included in redemption, like healing, do we still have to ask for it?

Is John 14:12-14 talking about prayer?

Why is praise and thanksgiving so important in receiving our healing?

Of the seven prayer tips, which one do you think is the most important and why?

What is meant by the statement, "do not dig up your seed?"

C. Methods to be Healed

1. The Manifestations of the Spirit

We are discussing biblical ways to receive healing. There are many different methods listed in the Bible whereby we can receive healing. One way to receive healing is through the manifestation of one of the gifts of the Spirit. The nine manifestations of the Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians, 12:8-10 are often divided into three separate categories, because they naturally seem to fit there. Any of the nine manifestations of the Spirit may be used for the purpose of healing. However, we will most likely see the healing power of God manifested through the power gifts: the working of miracles, the gift of faith, and the gifts of healings. Often times, these "power" gifts will work together.

Working of miracles is defined as a divine intervention in the ordinary course of nature that can't be explained in the natural. For example, the dividing of a river by the sweep of a mantle is an example of the working of miracles in operation (2 Kings 2: 14). After Elijah ascended into heaven in a chariot in the whirlwind, Elisha received his mantle and smote the Jordan River. Dividing the waters by a sweep of his mantle was the working of miracles because that was a supernatural intervention in the ordinary course of nature.

In the area of healing, many times miracles are received; however this is not necessarily the working of miracles but is simply called healing miracles. Everything that God does is miraculous, in a sense, but receiving healing by supernatural means is not a miracle in the same sense that turning common dust into insects just by a gesture is a miracle- Exodus 8:16. Or turning common water into wine just by speaking a word is a miracle- John 2:7-11. Those two occurrences are examples of the working of miracles.

Although in the Old Testament people were healed and the gifts of healings were in operation, gifts of healings were more commonly in operation in the New Testament than they were in the Old Testament. On the other hand, the working of miracles was more prominent or more commonly manifested in the Old Testament than in the New Testament, with the exception of the gift of working of miracles in Jesus' ministry.

Special Faith
Now I want to focus on the special operation of faith through the manifestation of the Spirit. I like the Weymouth translation of 1 Corinthians 12:9, because it calls this spiritual gift "special faith." You see, this faith is special faith because every believer already has faith according to Romans 12:3. For example, there is saving faith, or faith to receive salvation.

Ephesians 2:8
For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God…

The faith by which we are saved is given to us through hearing the Word. The Bible says, *"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* Romans 10:17 NKJV. But the manifestation of faith is distinct from Bible faith. It is a supernatural manifestation of one of the nine gifts of the Spirit. The manifestation of "special" faith is a gift of the Spirit to the believer that he/she might receive a miracle, whereas the working of miracles is a gift of the Spirit to the believer that he/she might work a miracle. One gift receives something, and the other does something. But these gifts are very closely related. We're just differentiating between them for the purpose of defining them.

So then, we said that the manifestation of "special" faith is separate and distinct from Bible faith. It is also distinct from the fruit of faith that we're taught about in the New Testament.

Galatians 5:22 KJV
But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith…

Galatians 5:22 says that faith is a fruit of our born again, recreated human spirit. However, if we look up this word in the original Greek translation, we will find that it refers to faithfulness. The fruit of the spirit are for character, but the manifestations of the Spirit are for power. A fruit is something that grows. So faith, or faithfulness, is a spiritual fruit that grows in the life of the Christian to establish him/her in spiritual character. The manifestation of "special" faith however, is given supernaturally by the Spirit of God, as He wills according to 1 Corinthians 12:11. So we can see that there are different kinds of faith: Bible faith from hearing God's Word, the fruit of faith that develops in our spirit after salvation. But the manifestation of "special" of faith comes after the baptism in the Holy Spirit- is received and is as the Spirit wills.

1 Corinthians 12:9-10
…to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers…

1 Corinthians 12:11
All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

Many times people – even Christians – who haven't studied the Bible say, "Well, if God gives me faith, I'll have it. And if He doesn't, I won't." They read in First Corinthians 12:9, *"to another faith,"* and they may think that's how all faith works. But that verse is talking about the manifestation of "special" faith, which is separate from all other kinds of faith. The manifestation of "special" of faith is a gift of the Spirit to the believer that he/she might receive a miracle! Remember, the working of miracles employs faith that actively works a miracle. But special faith employs faith that passively expects a miracle as a sustained or continuous action. There may not be anything that the person sees at the moment to confirm that he/she has the answer. But special faith will carry over a long period of time. In other words, its manifestation can be sustained or continued for the purpose of receiving a miracle.

This special faith is also a supernatural endowment by the Holy Spirit whereby that which is uttered or desired by man, or spoken by God, eventually comes to pass. In other words, when this power gift is in operation, we believe God in such a way that God honors our word as His own and miraculously brings to pass whatever we believe or say. So the miracle, utterance, assurance, curse or blessing, creation or destruction, or removal or alteration has to manifest when it has been spoken under the inspiration of this gift.

Smith Wigglesworth said that if we will take a step of faith – use the measure of faith we have as a Christian – when we come to the end of that faith, very often this supernatural gift of special faith will take over. Under Wigglesworth's ministry, at least three different people were raised from the dead. In his book Ever Increasing Faith, Wigglesworth related one instance of his neighbor being raised from the dead. One day Wigglesworth visited a sick neighbor who had been close to death. After coming home from an open-air meeting the following day, Wigglesworth learned that his wife Polly was at this neighbor's house. As Wigglesworth approached the house, he heard screaming. He went inside and found the sick man's wife, crying, "He's gone! He's gone!"

Wigglesworth said, "I just passed by the man's wife and went into the room. Immediately, I saw that he was gone. I could not understand it, but I began to pray. My wife was always afraid that I would go too far, and she laid hold of me and said, 'Don't, Dad! Don't you see that he is dead?' But I continued praying. "I got as far as I could with my own faith, and then God laid hold of me. It was such a laying hold that I could believe for anything. The faith of the Lord Jesus laid hold of me, and a solid peace came into my heart. I shouted, 'He lives! He lives!' And my neighbor is still living today."

As I said before, the working of miracles performs a miracle, but the gift of special faith receives a miracle. So the working of miracles is more of an act, whereas the gift of special faith is more of a process. We can see that by the gift of special faith, the miraculous was manifested in the Scriptures. People were supernaturally fed and sustained. Angels stood guard over and protected the servants of God. Men were delivered from the ferocity of beasts. And the dead were raised to life. But the present-day use of this power gift is still the same. In the same way that the gift of special faith was manifested in Bible days, it can be manifested to receive supernatural blessings, protection, or provision today! By this power gift, the dead can be raised. But it takes supernatural faith – special faith – for those things to happen!

The three power gifts – the working of miracles, the gift of special faith, and the gifts of healings – will very often work together. In the case of raising the dead, all three of these power gifts work together. First of all, in raising the dead, it takes supernatural faith the gift of special faith – to call a person's spirit back after it has left the body. Then it takes the working of miracles because the body would have started to deteriorate, as in the case of Lazarus- John 11:39. And then raising the dead also takes the manifestation of gifts of healings because if the person who was raised from the dead wasn't healed, whatever he/she died from would still affect the body and he/she would die again. So the person would have to be healed too. Therefore, all three of the power gifts are in manifestation when someone is raised from the dead.

Gifts of Healings

We have looked at the "power" gifts of the Spirit – the gifts that do something – mentioned in First Corinthians 12:9 and 10. We have discussed the working of miracles and the gift of special faith. Now I want to focus on the gifts of healings. In the original Greek translation of 1 Corinthians 12:9 and 30, this gift is listed as "gifts of healings" – both gifts and healings are plural. Therefore, we will refer to this spiritual manifestation of the Spirit as the gifts of healings. As we study the gifts of healings in Scripture, we see that they are manifested for the supernatural healing of diseases and infirmities without natural means of any sort.

For example, Luke, the writer of the Acts of the Apostles and the Gospel that bears his name, was a medical doctor by profession. He accompanied Paul on many missionary journeys and was traveling with him when they were shipwrecked on the island of Melita. When we read the account in Acts 28, nothing is ever said about Luke ministering to anyone while they were there. But the Bible says that Paul ministered to several on the island who were sick or had diseases, and they were healed. How? By the supernatural power of God!

Acts 28:8-9

His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured.

Now some have mistakenly thought that the gifts of healings refer to the fact that God has given us doctors and medical science. Of course, we believe in medical science and doctors, and thank God for what they can do – we are certainly not opposed to them. But the gifts of the Spirit are supernatural. They have nothing to do with medical science. Healing that is supernatural doesn't come by a diagnosis and the prescribing of treatment. It comes by the laying on of hands, anointing with oil, or sometimes just speaking God's Word in faith! So we not only believe in natural healing, but we also believe in supernatural healing!

Now the main thing we need to understand is that there is a difference between the manifestation of the gifts of healings and receiving healing by one's own faith in God's Word. That is why I am emphasizing that people can receive healing simply by exercising faith in the Word of God – because it always works. There is no "As the Spirit wills" clause associated with it as it is with "Gifts of Healings" in 1 Corinthians chapter 12. I believe that God's primary and best way to receive our healing is through simple faith in God's promises. That way what gets us healed, keeps us healed. We are less likely to lose our healing because the same faith that got us healed in the first place continues to work in our spirit to keep us well- Hebrews 4:12, **"For the word of God is living and active…"** However, keep in mind that it may take an individual months of study and meditating on God's Word to get faith in their heart to be healed, but it's worth it! If we don't have that kind of time, then we need to look to God for a manifestation of gifts of healing 1 Corinthians 14:1, *"Follow the way of love and <u>eagerly desire</u> spiritual gifts…"*

So when people are not at a place spiritually to receive healing on their own (the first and best method), the Lord has provided other avenues to be healed like spiritual gifts and ministries with a healing anointing on individuals. So when a believer with a special healing ministry draws attention to that anointing, it is not to draw attention to themselves but to raise the expectancy of folks. As a result, they wouldn't need any more faith than just to expect Jesus to heal them through that believer as the gifts of healings are in manifestation.

Mark 11:22-24
"Have faith in God," Jesus answered. "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."

For instance, one could use the principles of faith in Mark 11:22-24 in relation to healing (anytime and every time), since it falls under *"Whatever you ask for in prayer"* and is supported by countless other Scriptures. So, our confession would be "I believe I receive healing for this _____ (Fill in the blank)." God honors faith in His Word, so the healing power will manifest as Jesus said, *"According to your faith, be it unto you!"* Through this method of simple faith in God's Word, no one needs to lay hands on us. No one may even know about the condition, but God's power would still fall on an individual who takes God at His Word and receives it for themselves. However, when the gifts of healings are in operation, they're manifested through another person unto us, as the Spirit wills- that's the difference. Remember, the healing always comes from God, regardless of the method.

Healing as a Gift vs. Gifts of Healings
Now some have said, "Any time you receive healing, it's a manifestation of the gifts of healings." But I disagree with that statement. Healing is a gift, all right, in the general sense that anything you receive from God would be a gift. But that doesn't necessarily mean that these spiritual gifts are in operation. For example, when one stands on Mark 11:22-24 as I illustrated above, receiving healing through that method is not gifts of healings.

Others have taken this reasoning one step further, saying, "Healing is a gift. So anytime you get healed, you have received a gift of healing." But I can't accept that explanation either, because it doesn't line up with Scripture. Take a look at First Corinthians 12:28-30.

1 Corinthians 12:28-31
And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?

Notice in verse 28 that God "appointed" some in the Church. Paul isn't talking about spiritual gifts, because he said in verse 27, *"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."* No, Paul is referring to men and women equipped with spiritual gifts for ministry offices. God set members equipped with spiritual gifts in the Church – first, apostles; second, prophets; third, teachers; and so forth. We see the "gift" of the apostle, prophet, or teacher is a ministry gift given to the Church, not an individual gift that someone might receive (Ephesians 4:8, l1). In other words, it's not given to bless ourselves! It's given in order to bless others- it's a ministry!

First Corinthians 12:28 goes on to say, *"then workers of miracles,"* meaning: "After those who are equipped with the ministry gifts which Paul just mentioned, there are some in the ministry who are equipped with the gift of the working of miracles." A better way to say it would be that the gift of the working of miracles operates by the Spirit more consistently or often in some people's ministries.

Next Paul mentions the gifts of healings, and he asks a few rhetorical questions: "Does everyone have the ministry of an apostle?" Certainly not. "Does everyone have the ministry of a prophet?" No. "Does everyone have the ministry of the teacher?" No. We could all teach to some extent, of course. But there are those whom God has put in the Church who are specifically equipped or anointed by the Holy Spirit with a teaching gift or anointing. So, we see the gifts of healings are not referring to gifts given to individuals to bless them personally. They are ministries of healing that are given to some in order to bless others. I like to say it this way: The gifts of healings are supernatural manifestations of the Spirit that are manifested through someone to someone else!

A special healing anointing can be imparted to any believer called to minister to the sick in specialty areas. Since God has provided a diversity of function in the Body of Christ, so that an interdependence is cultivated within the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. As we have mentioned that "Gifts of Healings" in the Greek refers not just to general healing but healing in different areas of the human body. With that in mind, it seems that the Holy Spirit will manifest healing more often through certain individuals for specific alignments or conditions. For instance, in the natural we have eye doctors, dentists, chiropractors, heart specialists and so on who specialize on certain parts of human anatomy. The Holy Spirit can use any believer at any time to minister healing to others, but it seems certain individuals are specially anointed to minister more often to eye problems or hearing, or tumors etc. with greater success. Remember 1 Corinthians 12:28. *"…also those having gifts of healing,"* refers to members in the Body of Christ with specific healing ministries to certain areas of the body as well as in general healing.

This principle of deferring to other ministries can be seen when Philip the evangelist had preached Christ in Samaria and many folks were saved in 1 Corinthians chapter 8. After Philip had water baptized the disciples, he could have prayed for them to also be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Yet he deferred to Peter and John who seemingly had a special ministry along those lines.

Acts 8:14-17
When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Another example, all believers are to share Christ with the lost, but evangelists and exhorters (Romans 12:8) have a special anointing to win souls to the Lord. My spiritual gifting is in teaching and ministering the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. If a friend of mine who was an evangelist or exhorter was with me and we came across an unbeliever, I would defer to my brother to do the ministry. But once that person got saved, my friend would in turn defer to me to get him/her filled with the Spirit. This is how the Body of Christ is optimized in its operations. Of course if my evangelist friend was not with me, I could still witness to the lost. Altar call teams should function this way, everyone is equipped in a general sense to minister to a variety of needs, but we should defer to specialized ministries when they are present in order to maximize the anointing for the benefit of others.

2. The Healing Anointing

The Anointing
Acts l0:38 indicates that the terms "the anointing," "the Holy Ghost," and "power" are virtually synonymous with each other. This means that we are able to use these terms interchangeably when discussing the subject of the healing anointing and the power of God.

Acts 10:38
How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

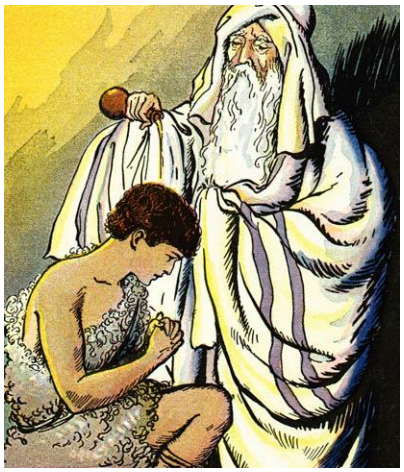
First, let's discuss the broader subject of the "Anointing" before we draw in the application of healing. As a born again Christian, we are already anointed. What does "anointing" mean? Well this term has its use from Genesis to Revelation. In the Old Testament, olive oil was poured upon the head of the prophet, priest and the king to be commissioned for service. It represented the Holy Spirit upon their lives, to empower them to carry out God's work in the earth.

4886. mashach, maw-shakh'; a prim. root; to rub with oil, i.e. to anoint; by impl. to consecrate; also to paint:--anoint, paint.

Moses poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him to consecrate him.
Leviticus 8:12

Consider the life of David, after he was anointed by Samuel to be the next King of Israel in place of Saul. Like Samson, the Spirit of God came upon David, who was only a teenager at the time, enabling him to kill a lion and a bear. David, through faith in His God and the anointing upon his life, faced Goliath, who was one big bad dude. It was his faith in God that released the power of God, the anointing upon David to kill Goliath.

1 Samuel 17:34-37
But David said to Saul, "Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you."



So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power.

1 Samuel 16:13

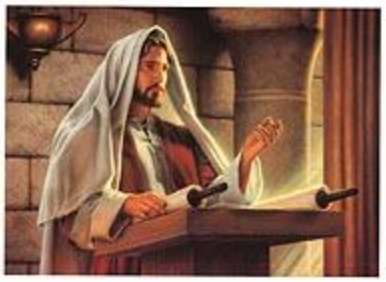
Consider, Samson who exhibited great exploits of strength, it was because he was anointed with the Holy Spirit and Power. All the prophets who operated in spiritual gifts, they also were anointed by the same Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, during the Old Testament days, only a very few people had the Holy Spirit upon their lives; not in them, that came with the New Covenant after Jesus' resurrection- John 14:17; 20:22.

Samson went down to Timnah together with his father and mother. As they approached the vineyards of Timnah, suddenly a young lion came roaring toward him. The Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat. But he told neither his father nor his mother what he had done.

Judges 14:5-6

All the events recorded in the four Gospels were still considered to be under the Old Testament era, with the Old Covenant still in effect. Yet the Holy Spirit was active upon the lives of the Old Testament saints even until the beginning of the Age of Grace.

Isaiah 10:27 (KJV)
And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.



Luke 4:18-19
"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

The Baptism with the Holy Spirit is the Anointing of the Holy Spirit upon the life of the believer to empower us to do our part in helping fulfill the Great Commission in power!

1 Corinthians 4:20, "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power."

In John 3:34, it states that Jesus had the Spirit without limit. The entire measure of the manifestation of the Spirit of God was on Jesus- Isaiah 11:1-3; Luke 4:1, 14, 18-19. Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit at the Baptism of John in Luke 3:22. It was then that Jesus began His ministry in the power of God. Now the Church of Jesus Christ, His Body is now anointed by the Spirit as He was when He walked the earth 2,000 years ago.

Mark 5:27-30, 34
When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

Luke 6:17-19
He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coast of Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by evil spirits were cured, and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.

Matthew 12:28
But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

As Christians we all have the same anointing, the person of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us! The capacity and motivation to follow after God has already been built into our spirit through the new birth. Unlike religion that requires the individual to muster his/her own personal resources to masquerade as something they are inherently not- this is what Jesus referred to as "Living Water" in John 4:10.

Jesus went on to speak of the dual work of the Spirit in the life of the believer, the Spirit within (New Birth) and the Spirit upon (Baptism with the Holy Spirit). The anointing within is primarily for our spiritual benefit, but the Spirit upon is for every believer to fulfill the Great Commission with power- referred to as rivers of living water in John 7:37-39. Jesus was our example to follow and to continue His work until His Second Return- John 14:13-14. Not in our own strength, but by the Power of the Holy Spirit.

Luke 24:49
"I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

Acts 1:8
"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

1 John 2:20, 27
But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit — just as it has taught you, remain in him.

5545. chrisma, khris'-mah; from G5548; an unguent or smearing, i.e. (fig.) the spec. endowment ("chrism") of the Holy Spirit:--anointing, unction.

Notice the Greek word "Chrisma" which is the root word for "Charismatic." The anointing is synonymous with the person of the Holy Spirit- we can use both words interchangeably and still be meaning the same thing. The anointing is simply an adjective that describes the operations and workings of the Holy Spirit; the influence that the Holy Spirit has upon the lives of God's children or His manifest presence in a corporate gathering of Christians- which is known as the corporate anointing.

The King James Version of the Bible translated this Greek word as "Unction." This word has the basic meaning as "Anointing;" however, it has a further meaning of spiritual fervor or zeal.

1 John 2:20, 27 (AMP)
But- you hold a sacred appointment, you have been given an unction- you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all know [the Truth]. But as for you, (the sacred appointment, the unction) the anointing which you received from Him, abides (permanently) in you…

It is easy to misunderstand the anointing as some esoteric cosmic force ("Use the Force Luke" in Star Wars), impersonal and generic like some forces of nature such as electricity or gravity- invisible yet very real. Certainly the anointing is a powerful energy that produces tremendous results- parting of the Red Sea, raising the dead, the blind receiving their sight, the lame walking and any other miracle that we can think of. The anointing is the result of a person, the person of the Holy Spirit. The anointing is the grace of God, the power of God, the creative force of God manifested through the "Person" of the Holy Spirit. "He" is God the Holy Spirit, not an "it."

The Holy Spirit can be grieved:

Ephesians 4:30
And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

The Holy Spirit can be resisted:

Acts 7:51
"You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!

The Holy Spirit can be blasphemed:

Mark 3:29
"But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin."

The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Godhead:

Matthew 28:19
Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

The Anointing / The Holy Spirit / The Power of God

The Anointing and the Power of God is all talking about the same thing- the Mighty Holy Spirit. So when we lay hands on folks in faith according to God's Word, our expectation is that the power of God that rests upon our lives will flow through us into others for their healing, deliverance and blessing.

The anointing is also tangible. The word "tangible" means perceptible to the touch. In other words, something that is tangible is capable of being touched. For example, we know that the anointing that went into the woman with the issue of blood in Mark chapter 5 was tangible because Jesus knew immediately when that power went out of Him. Jesus was aware of an outflow of that healing power, and the woman was aware of the reception of that power. So the power had to have been tangible.

The anointing is measurable, in other words some individuals have a greater manifestation of the Spirit of God operating in their life and ministry than others. Concerning the individual anointing, we know that God anoints individuals to minister. There are different offices in which God calls them to minister – the office of the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher. Jesus stood in all five of them, so He had the anointing that goes with every office. Jesus had the anointing without measure (John 3:34).

Members of the Body of Christ have the anointing in a measure. Of course, Jesus was and is the Son of God. But Jesus was not ministering as the Son of God. He was ministering as a mere man anointed with the Holy Spirit! If Jesus was ministering on the earth as the Son of God and not as a man, then He wouldn't need to be anointed. But the Bible plainly states that Jesus was anointed in order to minister on the earth (Luke 4:18; Acts l0:38).

2 Kings 2:9-11
When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?" "Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit," Elisha replied. "You have asked a difficult thing," Elijah said, "yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours — otherwise not."

The anointing for ministry automatically comes with the calling to stand in whatever office God has called us to. But the healing anointing is something different and separate from a ministry anointing. Every believer can lay hands on the sick in obedience to God's Word and folks will get healed. However, Jesus as Head of the Church will anoint individuals with a greater anointing to bring healing to the sick.

We need to understand that healing is by degree. And the degree of healing is determined by two conditions. Number one, the degree of healing power administered to a member of the Body of Christ. A person can be less anointed or more anointed to minister healing just like a preacher can be less anointed or more anointed to preach. In the same way, a person can be less anointed or more anointed with the healing anointing.

Luke 5:17
One day as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there. And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick.

The second condition that determines the degree of healing is the degree of faith released by the individual to give action to that healing power. What was the power that flowed from Jesus' hands or was stored in His garments? Was it power that was inherent in Him as the Son of God? No. Where did that power come from? It came from the Holy Spirit, and that same power – the healing power of God – is available today.

Acts 10:38
…how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

Revelation Knowledge
This natural realm that we know of as contacted by our five physical senses is a product of the spiritual realm which in turn is contacted by our human spirit. As a result, the natural realm in its laws and operations is very similar in parallel to the spiritual laws that govern the spirit realm. Why else would Jesus in all His parables use so many natural, concrete examples to illustrate abstract, unseen spiritual truths- like the parable of the sower among many? I believe that this was by design and not by accident. God in His wisdom made our natural world a reflection of the spiritual world so it would be easier for us to understand it. In other words this physical world is a visual aid to understand the spiritual world.

Romans 1:20
For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

For example, in the natural we have this big ball of fire in our solar system call the sun. It is a power source for all natural life on this planet of ours. Without it earth would be a cold, dark dead planet. Among many things, there is one essential contribution that the sun makes for this planet- "Light"!

Natural light is the key ingredient to photosynthesis in plant growth which is the foundation to our food supply on this planet. Light also illuminates this planet so we can see all that God has created and come to understand it in all its wonders, color and marvelous variety. As natural light produces life and illumination, so also the Word of God has the same affect upon us for the spiritual realm. God's Word is spiritual food (Luke 4:4): it's the bread of life for our spiritual development, it's a revealer of spiritual truth, and it's a portal or door into experiencing God's Kingdom.

Psalms 119:130 AMP
The entrance and unfolding of your words give light; their unfolding gives understanding (discernment and comprehension) to the simple.

The Bible acts as our spiritual eyes into the unseen realm that is more real than this natural world. The Bible is the truth that reveals things as they really are! Revelation knowledge is spiritual understanding revealed to the spirit of man. This spiritual light of God's revelation knowledge is a key ingredient to our development, growth and spiritual maturity. It is the creative and life changing power of God that is at work in us who believe.

1 Thessalonians 2:13
And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

Luke 17:20-21
Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you."

John 6:63
The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.

In this dispensation of Grace that we live in today, the Holy Spirit has been sent forth to be our teacher, comforter, advocate, counselor and one called alongside to help! This is what is meant by "Counselor" in the Greek- parakletos. He lives inside us to make Christianity a reality and not a dead religion.

John 14:16-17
And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

One of the main tasks that the Holy Spirit fulfills in the life of the believer is as our teacher or mentor. The Bible calls us disciples, "Disciplined Learners" of Christ; the Holy Spirit is our Master Teacher! He takes the truth of God's Word and reveals it to our spirit on a personal basis.

John 14:26
But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

John 16:13
But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"- but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ. 1 Corinthians 2:9-16

The Apostle Paul was an avenue through which the Holy Spirit spoke through and revealed many of the wonderful truths about redemption that we enjoy in the New Testament- the Believer's user manual for this glorious redemption in Christ.

Ephesians 3:2-5
Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.

Therefore, his prayer for the saints is that they would come to know, understand and act upon these redemptive principles in order to appropriate God's amazing grace in their lives. Ignorance of these truths is costly according to Hosea 4:6. So the obvious first step before acting on revelation truth is to know revelation truth. The source is the Holy Spirit through God's Word, and is something we must ask for according to Ephesians 1:17. I personally have been praying this prayer regularly over my life (personalizing it by putting my name into it), since I first found out about it in the late 1980's. Since then, God has been so wonderfully pouring into my life the "Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation" concerning:

a) The hope to which he has called me
b) The riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints
c) His incomparably great power for me who believes

The Healing Power of God

A good analogy for understanding the anointing or the power of God was made by the late Rev. John G. Lake when he said, "Electricity is God's Power in the natural realm; Holy Ghost power is God's power in the spirit realm." You see, just as electricity is in existence in the natural world, the power of God is in existence in the spirit world. And just as there are laws that govern the operation of electricity in the natural realm, there are also laws that govern the operation of spiritual power. The problem has been that in times past, we have thought that if the anointing was present, it would automatically manifest itself and just work automatically. That's just not so.

For example, electricity has been in existence in the earth since God created the universe. But did that electricity just automatically light up a house, cook a meal, or warm or cool a house? No, because for many years, man didn't even know electricity existed. Even after electricity was discovered and man knew it existed, it didn't automatically begin to operate. Man had to come in contact with it somehow to make it work. Acquiring the knowledge of natural laws that governed electricity was essential. Then over time, the practical application of that knowledge has spawned into all the wonderful inventions that we enjoy and benefit from today.

In other words, Adam and Eve could have had a computer and a microwave oven, because the natural laws were in operation for them to tap into. What they lacked was the technology, the understanding of how to work it- so it is with Christians. When we fail to tap into our glorious redemption and inheritance in Christ, we are living in the spiritual Stone Age of barely getting along in life. Hardly scratching the surface of all the mighty precious promises that God has given us for all things that pertain to life and godliness- 2 Peter 2:1-4; 2 Corinthians 1:18-21. Again what is the difference? The key to unlocking God's grace in our lives is revelation knowledge!

Well, if we could just get into our minds the fact that the healing power of God is in existence in the spirit world and that it also has laws that govern its operation, then men and women could learn to tap into that power and be blessed by its benefits. I've heard people ask, "If the power of God to heal exists, why doesn't it just move on our behalf?" That's where we've missed it. We've thought, well, if it's so, it'll just manifest by itself. But no, there's something that has to be done on man's end before there will be a manifestation of the healing power. It's like saying, "Well if its God's will for us to have electricity in our homes, then when lightning strikes outside, it will automatically heat our homes, cook our food and run our appliances." Obviously we have to learn how to work in cooperation with those laws of nature in order to harvest its power for our lives- so it is with the power of God.

Here is an important note, the spontaneous display of lightning in the sky reminds us of the presence of electricity in the world with a wonderful potential that can be tapped into. Today, we have learned to do so through more controlled and predictable manners to harness that power.

The manifestations of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 is a display of God's power to produce signs and wonders, which includes "Gifts of Healings" for our lives. These manifestations of the Spirit are as the Spirit wills according to 1 Corinthians 12:11. They are spontaneous and out of our control, just as in the natural when we see the raw display of electricity in the form of lightning; yet both forms of power are from God to get our attention- both can be received for our benefit and for His glory. The promises of God in the Word shows us how we can deliberately, purposely and regularly tap into the power of God as often as we like- devotional tongues is a good example, 1 Corinthians 14:18, *"I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you."* Why else would He make them available for us; just so we can gaze at them in wonder from a distance? Clearly, God's intentions is for us to utilize His precious promises and His anointing for our lives so we can be blessed and more importantly, to be a blessing to others.

God's Word shows us how to plug into God's power to light up our lives as simple as plugging a lamp into a wall socket. We can tap into the power of God for our benefit and for others just as easy as we have learned to harness the power of electricity; through knowledge and understanding of spiritual laws- just as we have come to understand natural laws! Since the anointing flows like electricity, one could say that each believer connects to the power source, the Holy Spirit through faith in God's Word. Unfortunately, doubt, unbelief or not walking in love grieves the Holy Spirit and thus short-circuits the flow of God's power in and through our lives.

As I write this I can sense the objections of religious folks to this, "How dare you think that you can use God's power for yourself and regard it as something common as you would electricity! God is sovereign and mysterious and would never allow Himself to be abused and used by common man!" Who said anything about "abusing" God or taking advantage of Him, it was His idea in the first place.

Ephesians 1:3
Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

2 Peter 1:3-4
His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

2 Corinthians 1:18-22
But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No." For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes." For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

Psalms 103:2-3
Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits — who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases…

Matthew 7:9-11
"Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

John 10:10 AMP
The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows).

3 John 2 AMP
Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in every way and [that your body] may keep well, even as [I know] your soul keeps well and prospers.

1 Timothy 6:17-18
Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

James 1:16-17
Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Our God is not stingy or withholding from His children, the character of God as outlined by Holy Scripture reveals a loving, generous Father, *"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us…"* according to Ephesians 3:20. Some unfortunate religiously brainwashed folks have been sold a lie that God will make us poor and sick in order to keep us grateful and humble. The Lord reveals His heart in Matthew 20:1-16 in the parable of "The Workers in the Vineyard" as it pertains to His generous nature apart from our works to deserve or earn anything from God. He just gives us His kingdom because of who He is, Matthew 20:15, *"Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?"* So as I said before, I am not being presumptuous or trying to selfishly exploit God by tapping into Heaven's resources. I am just responding to an invitation to come and dine, and it would be rude for me to say no or to sheepishly take only a morsel of God's grace out of being religious through false humility or ignorance. I hate religion, it's from the devil, and it's a stumbling block and robs people of God's grace and goodness for their lives.

Luke 12:32 AMP
"Do not be seized with alarm and struck with fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom!"

Psalms 23:5-6
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Psalms 91:15-16
He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation."

Okay, back to the healing anointing. So, as we have seen in the natural, just as electricity has the potential for all kinds of wonderful applications in one's life, but it's not automatic without us doing something to tap into that power. It's the same way with God's power – the anointing. That simply means that as we learn more about the anointing and what the Word of God says about it, we will be able to flow with the anointing, tap into the power, and gain greater benefits from it.

The Switch of Faith
Now that we understand something about the power of God as "heavenly electricity," as it were, let's extend the analogy a step further concerning faith. Another thing about the laws that govern this heavenly substance is this fact: The thing that turns the heavenly power on in the spiritual realm can be compared to an electrical switch on a wall that turns on earthly power – electricity – in the natural realm. In the natural, when we turn a light switch on, electricity flows right into the lighting fixtures and lights up the room. When we turn the switch off, the lights go out. So in the spiritual realm, the thing that turns on the heavenly power could be called the switch of faith!

Mark 5:25-34
And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'" But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

Remember Jesus said to the woman with the issue of blood in Mark 5:34, *"…Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."* Obviously it was not the Lord's will for her to suffer sickness and disease. Jesus said that her faith had made her whole. In other words, she had turned on the switch of faith for healing and activated the power of God! Notice that Jesus immediately was aware that the anointing flowed out from Him. Also, notice that the woman with the issue of blood cooperated with the anointing that flowed from Jesus into her, and she was healed.

The healing anointing flowed out of Jesus' clothes and into the woman with the issue of blood. But Jesus said to her, *"Your faith has healed you."* It wasn't the healing anointing alone that healed this woman. It was her faith in the healing anointing that healed her. Or we could say it like this: It was her faith and the healing anointing that healed her! The healing power of God – the anointing – is a tangible substance. It is a heavenly materiality. Believe that, and it can begin to work for you. There is a God-ward and man-ward side to everything. When it comes to receiving, it's not all God and it's not all man. God provides the grace (Power of God in His Word which is anointed by the Holy Spirit) and we mix it with the principles of faith (our part), and God's creative power is released!

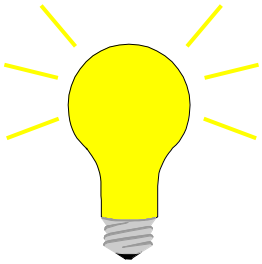
Ephesians 2:8-9
For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.

Jesus said to the woman, *"Your faith has healed you."* Some might say, "I thought it was the power which flowed out of Him that made her whole." Well, really, it was a combination of the two. Both of them – faith and power – are important in their place. Someone who is anointed might minister the power of God, and the anointing may flow through him or her just as electricity flows through a conduit. Yet, although electricity is present all the time, unless someone turns a switch on, there's not going to be any manifestation of it. In the same way, we have to turn the switch of our faith on to receive a manifestation of the healing power of God or anything else from the Lord for that matter!

Many people have thought that if the power of God was present, it would just manifest itself, regardless of whether or not anyone believed in it or believed for it. Then if there was no manifestation, they've thought, "Well, the power is not here." They'd start singing, "Oh. Lord, send the power just now." Because they couldn't see the anointing or feel it in manifestation, they thought it wasn't there. But the power of God is always present everywhere all the time- God is omnipresent. God didn't leave most of His power over in one town and then leave only a little bit of it wherever you are! No, wherever God is, all of His ability, all of His power, all of His capabilities are present everywhere at the same time. What God is looking for is faith; that is what He responds to- Luke 18:8, *"However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"*

Likewise, in Luke 6:19, folks came to Jesus to be healed; it was the touch of faith that caused the power to flow! Faith completes the circuit between man and God for His power to flow to hurting humanity. So the battle is just to get people to believe the Bible for whatever they need.

Luke 6:17-19
A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coast of Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by evil spirits were cured, and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.



So if the power is not flowing, no one has plugged into God through faith in His Word. Just as our house is wired for the power of electricity to flow, the power is always available to be tapped into. So it is with the power of God, the Holy Spirit is everywhere in the earth today, ready to give power to the faint- Isaiah 40:29; 2 Chronicles 16:9. Unless we plug into the power of God through faith, there will be no manifestation of God's power in our lives. It is never God's fault when we fail to plug into His amazing grace and receive our needs met, because the power is always available for us to tap into and receive 24-7. Many people don't know how to connect with God; instead of being taught faith they have been indoctrinated with a psychology of unbelief and doubt- or emotion to plead and beg in a desperate manner. They want to be healed, but still don't know if it's God's will for them; as a result, they are not making a connection with God through faith and their lives remain void of God's power.

Romans 1:16-17
I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes…

The good news is that every sinner, anywhere at any time can receive the power of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Every saint, can appropriate, tap into and receive the power of God to meet any and every need of their life through faith in God's Word. So the key to having this revelation knowledge is in acting on it. However, not everyone is at the level in his/her faith where one can just believe God's Word for himself/herself and receive healing through faith in the Word alone. Therefore, we should endeavor to teach and preach all of it – every side of divine healing – and to minister to people on all levels of faith and by all methods of healing. Notice in Hebrews 4:2, the words "Combine" or in the KJV "Mix" in conjunction with entering into God's rest. The Promise Land for the New Covenant believer is to experience all of Christ's redemption and inheritance for this life. God's Word contains God's grace and power- it is released through our faith. Faith is the catalyst that brings on the reaction or manifestation of God's power in our lives.

Hebrews 4:1-3
Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine [mix] it with faith. Now we who have believed enter that rest…

So we can see that it's not a matter of having more power that gets the job done. We must turn our faith on in God's Word in order for God's power to flow into our lives. Certainly, it's true that it's *"…Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty"* according to Zechariah 4:6.

However, we still have to cooperate with God's Spirit by believing in Him if we want to receive the blessing of God. We've got to learn to mix faith with the power. The power of prayer brings into manifestation the power of God, but it must be the prayer of faith.

James 5:14-16
Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

James 5:16 AMP
The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working].

Now notice that the prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available. This tremendous power is in the spirit realm all the time, isn't it? But the prayer of the righteous makes it available. Or, let's say it another way. The prayer of the righteous brings the power of God into manifestation. Old time Pentecostals used to call it, "praying the power down."

Therefore, the Biblical principle of making God's power available is through the prayer of faith. When it comes to praying for others, even though the power is in manifestation, faith has to be exercised by the individual; for it's by faith that we receive any and everything that comes from God.

In ministering the tangible healing power of God, one could lay hands on people and sense the power of God go into them and then come right back out. Why? Because they didn't take hold of it! This usually happens because folks are trying to receive healing with their mind- the same can be said of receiving the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and speaking with other tongues. But divine healing is not mental. We can't contact God with our mind because He is not a mind; He is a spirit, John 4:24, *"God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."*

Natural man heals through the mind or through the physical senses. But when God comes on the scene as the Healer, He heals through the person's spirit. Let me explain. God contacts us through our spirit, not through our mind or body; as I have said, God is not a mind. Likewise, He is not a man- Numbers 23:19. Although He has a spirit-body over in the spirit world – angels do too – God is not a physical being, He is a spirit. Therefore, He contacts us through our spirit, just as we contact Him through our spirit.

When God heals, He does heal physically; however it's through the human spirit or man's heart- where faith dwells. God heals people through their faith – and the Bible says that faith is of the heart, the human spirit. So divine healing is not mental as Christian Science, Unity, and other metaphysical teachers claim. Neither is it only physical as many in the medical world claim. It is spiritual – but only in the sense that it involves faith in the power of God as God's Word proclaims. When people quit trying to contact God with their mind and believe they receive in their heart, they are healed instantly! We have to believe we receive the things of God by faith – and we believe with our heart according to Romans 10:10, *"For it is with your heart that you believe…"*

Sometimes, the healing power of God is ministered to a sick person so that the person is manifestly supercharged with heavenly electricity. Yet no real or final healing takes place until something occurs that releases the faith of the individual.

The power of God could be in manifestation to where the whole place is shaking, but that power is not released in us except through faith, "Healing, you're mine and I take you now in Jesus Name!" That simple confession is a way to release our faith and let the power in. Faith in God's Word opens the door for Jesus to come in and heal us!

Revelation 3:20
Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

That is why it is so important to teach people how to operate in faith. When they mix their faith with the power of God, healing comes forth. The healing anointing is a tangible substance. And the Word of God reveals to us the rules and laws that govern its operation. The Lord Jesus Christ revealed and applied the laws of the Spirit, which demonstrated the fact that the healing power of God is a tangible substance, a heavenly materiality. Now we won't receive any of this power from Heaven if we don't believe there's any there. If we don't believe it exists, we'll never get it applied to our circumstances to do us any good. The healing power of God will not benefit us until we believe in it, lay hold of it intelligently by faith, and simply receive it. But, thank God, through our faith in the holy written Word and in the mighty power of God, we can receive divine healing! By believing what God's Word says about the healing anointing, we can enjoy all the blessings and benefits of this power from Heaven that is available to us today.

Well, thank God for the Word, and thank God for every avenue of healing:

1. Simple faith in the anointed Word of God
2. The laying on of hands by believers anointed with the Holy Spirit
3. Those specially anointed to minister to the sick
4. For supernatural manifestations of the healing power of God according to 1 Corinthians 12

We know that each of these methods of healing is scriptural and that they all work mightily on our behalf – when we mix faith with the power!

3. The Laying on of Hands

As Christians, we have the nature of God in us. We have the life of God in us. The Spirit dwells in us. It is that power within us that goes out through our hands in the Name of Jesus and heals the sick. Sometimes it is accompanied by manifestations; the recipient actually senses the life of God being poured into his/her body. Other times there is no manifestation. It makes no difference whether or not there is any feeling; our evidence that the one we are praying for is healed is based upon the integrity of Holy Scripture.

The laying on of hands is a fundamental principle of the doctrine of Christ.

Hebrews 6:1-2
Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

The Laying on of Hands is a Doctrine of the Church!

1. Repentance from acts that led to death– This is talking about progressive sanctification in the life of the believer to live a holy life and turn from the old way of life we had as sinners.

2. Faith Toward God – Understanding the "Word of Faith" and "Spirit of Faith" principles in the Bible are crucial for living the successful Christian life. It's only through faith that we know God, live for Him and participate in His Kingdom.

3. Doctrine of Baptisms – Notice this is in the plural. There are three baptisms spoken of in the New Testament. First, there is the new Birth. When a person is born again, he/she is baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ- 1 Corinthians 12:13. Second, there is water baptism, which is an outward sign of an inward work of grace- Acts 10:46-47. Third, there is the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the Bible evidence of speaking in other tongues- Acts 10:45-46; 11:15-17.

4. The laying on of hands – we will examine this next.

5. Resurrection of the Dead – Notice Hebrews 6:2 does not say "the" resurrection. It says, ". . . the resurrection of the dead. . . ." Had it said "the resurrection," there would be just one resurrection; but there is more than one resurrection, so it says "resurrection of the dead." This includes the first resurrection, the second resurrection, and all other resurrections. It includes the fact that the dead in Christ shall be raised first; then we who are alive and remain at the coming of Christ will be caught up too (this is the rapture of the saints).

6. Eternal Judgment – Again, it is not "the" doctrine of "the" eternal judgment; it is simply "and eternal judgment." This is because there is more than one judgment, and saints and sinners are covered in this doctrine.

These six fundamental principles are the foundation upon which the Church is built. Therefore, not one of them should be treated lightly or cast aside as something unimportant to the Body of Christ. As a matter of fact, the Bible calls these truths "Elementary" or "Milk" for new believers to digest. Before a child goes to High school or Middle school, they first go to Elementary school in order to learn the basics. Sadly, many Christians do not even understand these basic doctrines of the Church, even after being saved for many years.

Hebrews 5:11-14
We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

This failure of grasping the basics is partly attributed to the individual but mostly it's the five-fold ministry gifts (Ephesians 4:11) responsibility to train believers in these and other essential truths of the Word. The five-fold ministry gifts are the leadership gifts in the body of Christ. Their effectiveness to fulfill Ephesians 4:11-16 will be reflective in the lives and fruitfulness of all believers.

Ephesians 4:11-16
It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

If I were to say, "I don't much believe in the New Birth, water baptism, or the baptism in the Holy Spirit," folks would be ready to quit on me right now and run me out, and I wouldn't blame them. And we would be certain something was wrong with me if I were to say, "I don't think the dead will ever be resurrected," or "I don't go along with this judgment business. I don't think there's going to be any judgment." Again, Christians would say, "There's something wrong with that fellow. He's not solid. He doesn't believe the fundamental principles of the doctrine of Christ." Well, no matter what else we believe, we must believe the fundamentals. I can fellowship with anyone who believes the fundamentals. And if one of the fundamental principles is right, they are all right. We can't leave anyone of them out.

The Bible has a great deal to say about the doctrine of laying on of hands. That's why it's surprising to me that some Christians see no significance at all in this scriptural ordinance and doctrine. We hear lots of sermons on repentance, and we hear a little preaching on faith. But we rarely hear any teaching on the laying on of hands. The lack of teaching on the subject has given many believers the wrong impression that it's unimportant and of no particular value to us. But if it's a fundamental principle of the doctrine of Christ, it is valuable! To deny, minimize or ignore this fundamental principle of Jesus Christ is a serious matter.

Impartation
Actually, the laying on of hands is a theme that runs through the entire Bible. There are several scriptural purposes for employing the laying on of hands. Let's examine some examples from both the Old and New Testaments. The central purpose for the laying on of hands is "Impartation" and the "Transference" of the anointing into another person.

Impart Blessing:
Jacob laid his hands on his grandsons and spoke words of blessing over them.

Genesis 48:14
But Israel reached out his right hand and put it on Ephraim's head, though he was the younger, and crossing his arms, he put his left hand on Manasseh's head, even though Manasseh was the firstborn.

All throughout the ministry of Jesus, He was regularly laying His hands on people. On one occasion, He released a blessing upon children through the laying on of hands.

Matthew 19:13-15
Then little children were brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.

Separation unto Ministry and Equipping:

The Bible reveals that another purpose for which the laying on of hands was used was to equip men to serve God. The following passage of Scripture tells us that when the time had come for Moses to leave this earth, God directed Moses to lay his hands upon Joshua, Israel's next leader, to impart a measure of the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon him.

Numbers 27:18-23
So the Lord said to Moses, "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand on him. Have him stand before Eleazar the priest and the entire assembly and commission him in their presence. Give him some of your authority so the whole Israelite community will obey him. He is to stand before Eleazar the priest, who will obtain decisions for him by inquiring of the Urim before the Lord. At his command he and the entire community of the Israelites will go out, and at his command they will come in." Moses did as the Lord commanded him. He took Joshua and had him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole assembly. Then he laid his hands on him and commissioned him, as the Lord instructed through Moses.

Later in the Book of Deuteronomy, we read that Joshua had the same spirit of wisdom that Moses had because Moses had laid his hands upon him. This implies that what Moses had was transferred to Joshua through the laying on of hands.

Deuteronomy 34:9
Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him. So the Israelites listened to him and did what the Lord had commanded Moses.

A common New Testament practice was the laying on of hands on those who were being ordained and separated unto the ministry.

Acts 13:1-4
In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit…

The laying on of hands was also used in imparting spiritual gifts. Now when I say "spiritual gifts," I'm not talking about what we call the nine gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians chapter 12. What I'm talking about is similar to what took place in Exodus chapter 29, when God imparted through Moses an anointing of the Holy Spirit and wisdom to Joshua. In the New Testament example of this we see Paul addressing the Roman believers and Timothy.

Romans 1:11-12
I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong— that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.

2 Timothy 1:6-7
For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

1 Timothy 4:14
Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

What is interesting to note in both examples is the reference to faith and the action of fanning into flame the gift of God. In other words, once grace deposits and truth impartations are made into a person's life, they are not to just sit on it and become fat and sassy. We still need to act on spiritual disciplines of reading our Bible and praying regularly and put into practice those gifts from God. Otherwise they will grow dormant and cold and inoperative- that's not what it means to be a good steward of the grace of God, now is it?

2 Corinthians 10:15-16
Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow, our area of activity among you will greatly expand, so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you.

Ephesians 3:2-3, 7-8
Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ

Colossians 1:28-29
We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

The doctrine of laying on of hands does not end with the ordination of ministers, however, as so many denominations believe. That is only one facet of laying on of hands as we see in the Scriptures. There is also scriptural precedence for the laying on of hands on those being installed in certain church offices. In Acts chapter 6, seven men were selected to wait on tables, freeing the apostles to give themselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word. The apostles laid their hands on the seven, who were called deacons "helpers" in the Greek.

Acts 6:1-7
In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

Receiving the Baptism with the Holy Spirit:
Another use of the laying on of hands in the New Testament was for helping believers receive the Holy Spirit. In Acts 8:17, when Peter and John laid their hands on Philip's Samaritan converts, they received the Holy Spirit.

Acts 8:14-19
When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

Then in Acts 19:6, Paul laid hands on the disciples at Ephesus, *"…and they spoke in tongues and prophesied."*

Acts 19:1-7
While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all.

In nearly every instance in the Book of Acts where people were filled with the Holy Spirit, they received by the laying on of hands. The exceptions were the spontaneous outpourings of the Spirit in Acts 2 and Acts 10. Of course people can be filled with the Spirit in other ways, but the laying on of hands is one scriptural method. So we see, the laying on of hands has several distinct purposes.

Ministering Healing through the Laying on of Hands:

There are more scripture references concerning healing in connection with the laying on of hands than concerning anything else. Every Christian should practice the doctrine of laying on of hands on the sick, because Jesus incorporated it into the Great Commission.

In the New Testament, we see some distinct purposes for which the laying on of hands was used. The number one reason the laying on of hands was used in the New Testament was to minister healing.

Mark 16:17-18
"And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

Notice that in verse 18, the sick shall recover. Yet some folks think it says, "Lay hands on the sick, and they'll get worse," or "Lay hands on the sick, and if it's the will of God, they'll recover. If not, they'll remain sick for some sovereign reason." No, let's be as definite as Scripture is about it. Let's just say what the Bible says: "Believers shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover!"

Jesus Christ Himself freely employed laying on of hands in healing people. In Mark 6, we see Jesus in His hometown of Nazareth:

Mark 6:5-6
He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their lack of faith.

Notice this text is speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself – the Son of God. It doesn't say He wouldn't do mighty works in Nazareth; it says He couldn't. It seems, therefore, that the laying on of hands will work when nothing else will! The few who were healed that day were healed by the laying on of Jesus' hands. There are several accounts of Jesus' laying hands on people in the New Testament. Matthew 8:15 says that when Jesus entered Peter's house, He found Peter's mother-in-law sick with a fever.

Matthew 8:15
He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him.

Praise God, the blind man was healed by the laying on of Jesus' hands. Some will say, "Jesus prayed for that blind man twice." I do not know that He even prayed for him at all, for the Bible does not say He prayed. The Bible says He laid hands on him twice! Therefore, it is scripturally correct to lay our hands a second time on a sick person, if necessary. It is good to know what Jesus did in certain circumstances. Then we will know what to do.

Mark 8:22-25
They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?" He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around." Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.

In the case of the deaf man, the Bible does not say that the people asked Jesus to heal the man, although it is implied. It says they asked Him to put His hands on him. In these two cases, notice that groups of people brought the blind man and the deaf man to Jesus. These people, as well as the sick themselves, believed in the laying on of hands. The multitudes expected healing through the laying on of hands – and they got the desired results!

Mark 7:32-35
There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged him to place his hand on the man. After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue. He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "Ephphatha!" (which means, "Be opened!"). At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.

People will say, "I had hands laid on me for healing, and I didn't recover." Well the million dollar question is to ask those same people, "Well, did you expect to recover?" They usually answer, "No. I just thought I'd try it out and see if anything would happen." People who are just "trying it out" are not going to get healed, because they're not in faith. If we don't expect to be healed or delivered through the laying on of hands, then having hands laid upon us will be in vain. If we want the laying on of hands to work for us, we have got to believe in it. Without faith, the laying on of hands is a mere ritual, and nothing happens. I think these folks see the laying on of hands like rubbing their socks on the carpet during winter, hoping some sparks will fly and perhaps zap them with some healing power.

Mark chapter five tells us that Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue in Galilee, also believed in the laying on of hands. He didn't say, "Come and pray for my daughter who is sick." He didn't even say, "Come and heal her." He said in vs. 23, "Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." Jairus believed his daughter would be healed when hands were laid on her, and he made a confession of his faith.

Mark 5:22-24
Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet and pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." So Jesus went with him.

While Jesus was on His way, some people from Jairus's house notified him that in the meantime, his daughter had died. Notice in verse 41, it says that Jesus "took her by the hand…" In other words, Jesus touched her. He took her by the hand, and she was raised from the dead and healed.

Mark 5:35-36, 41-43
While Jesus was still speaking, some men came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. "Your daughter is dead," they said. "Why bother the teacher anymore?" Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, "Don't be afraid; just believe." He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha koum!" (which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). Immediately the girl stood up and walked around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Some might try to argue that since this healing took place during Jesus' earthly ministry, it has no application for us today. Yes, Jesus laid hands on sick people, but He exhorted all believers to lay hands on the sick too! In Mark 16:18 Jesus said, *"…they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."* If the Great Commission does not apply today then sure, laying hands on the sick has been done away with as well. As long as the Gospel message of Salvation is being preached throughout the world, then it will continue to contain a message of physical healing as well.

Matthew 24:14
And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

People still preach repentance and water baptism. No one objects to that. Well, why not preach all of the Great Commission? Why stop with just part of it? Why not preach the laying on of hands? Laying on of hands is part of the Great Commission too! The disciples obviously took Jesus seriously. Acts 5:12 NKJV, *"And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people."*

When Paul was shipwrecked on an Island called Malta, the father of the ruler of the island was ill. Paul went to his house and after prayer and the laying on of hands, the man was healed along with a whole lot of other people on the island. Obviously, Paul believed in and ministered healing through the laying on of hands.

Acts 28:8-9
His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured.

There are other unique ways in which healing was administered. Not only were the sick healed. But the demon oppressed were delivered as cloths Paul had laid his hands on were laid upon their bodies. These cloths were anointed with the same power Paul was anointed with. When we talk about anointed cloths, we do not mean cloths anointed with oil.

Acts 19:11-12
God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

Some people in modern times might think that the transfer of the anointing through cloth is only superstition. But it's not superstition; it's a viable fact. It happened just the way the Word of God said it happened. In other words, the healing anointing, emanating from Paul, transformed those handkerchiefs into "storage batteries" of Holy Spirit power. When they were laid on the sick, they charged the body with the healing anointing, and the diseases departed from them.

God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul (vs. 11). Paul laid his hands upon the cloths. God uses men's hands. He works through men's hands. Some will say, "The apostles could do that, but it is not for us today." It seems to me that intelligent people should have caught on to that worn-out lie by now. Jesus didn't say these signs would follow just the apostles. He said these signs would follow those who believe! Consider Acts 5:15 in reference to Peter's shadow coming into contact with people; people had faith in the anointing of the Holy Spirit to heal them. Notice also in verse 16, *"…and all of them were healed."* The word "All" means everyone without exception. Just consider the law of averages in play concerning the sheer volume of people in Jerusalem. If it was possible for it not to be God's will for some of them to be healed, then surely the ole "If it by thy will" clause would have been inserted into this verse, but it wasn't praise God!

Acts 5:15-16
…people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and all of them were healed.

We don't have to run around looking for someone special to lay hands on us. It doesn't make any difference who lays hands on us for healing, because of what the Bible says. The truth is, if anyone who believes in healing through the laying on of hands lays hands on us, we'll be healed! Our faith is not in the person praying for us; rather our faith is in the Word of God!

To say that any believer cannot lay hands on the sick today is to say that one of the other fundamental principles of the doctrine of Christ has been done away with. And if laying on of hands for healing has been done away with, no one would have a right to believe in the doctrine of repentance or any of the fundamental principles of the doctrine of Christ.

For example, the doctrine of baptisms includes water baptism. If you attended a church service where people were baptized in water upon the profession of their faith, you would probably never doubt the efficacy of that ceremony because you read about this ordinance in the Word- Hebrews 6:1-2. Well, the doctrine of laying on of hands is just as holy and sacred as the other fundamental principles of the doctrine of Christ! I'm not going to take anything away from the doctrine of Christ. I believe all of it. I am a follower of Christ. I for one am a stickler for the doctrines of Christ. And one of the doctrines of Christ is the laying on of hands.

Laying on of hands can be done in two ways:

First, any believer can lay hands upon a fellow believer as a point of contact to release faith and expect that person to be healed. There are some people – friends and neighbors, for example – we can pray for whom no one else could. It also is scriptural for husbands and wives to lay hands on each other and for parents to lay hands on their children when they are sick and expect them to be healed in the Name of Jesus.

Second, there is such a thing as a ministry of laying on of hands – a special anointing. As God wills, a person can be supernaturally anointed with healing power like Jesus or Paul was anointed. When the person who has a ministry of laying on of hands, lays hands on the sick in obedience to the spiritual Law of Contact and Transmission, his/her hands transmit God's healing power into the body of the sick person, effecting a healing and a cure.

Examples of Point of Contact:

Scripture	**Parallel Passages**	**Biblical Occurrence**
Acts 28:8		On the Island of Malta, Paul heals official's father
Acts 19:11		People were being healed & delivered by Paul
Jn 9:6		Jesus heals the man that was born blind
Lk 13:10-17		Jesus heals a woman bent over by a spirit of infirmity
Lk 4:40		Jesus heals a crowd of people at Capernaum
Mk 8:22-26		Jesus heals a blind man at Bethsaida
Mt 15:29	Mk 7:33	Jesus heals a deaf and dumb man
Mt 10:5	Mk 6:13; Lk 9:2	Jesus sends twelve disciples out
Mt 13:54	Mk 6:5; Lk 4:16	Jesus laid his hands on a few sick folk in Nazareth
Mk 3:7-12		Large crowd came to touch Jesus and be healed
Mt 14:36	Mk 6:56; Lk 6:19	People of Gennesaret recognize Jesus
Mt 9:29		Jesus heals two blind men
Mt 9:20-21	Mk 5:21; Lk 8:34	Woman with the issue of blood
Mt 8:15	Mk 1:31	Peter's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever
Mt 8:3	Mk 1:40-42; Lk 5:13	Jesus heals a man of leprosy
Acts 8:15-18		Peter & John pray for Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit
Acts 19:6		Paul prays for 12 men near Ephesus to receive the HS
Acts 9:17		Ananias prays for Saul to be healed and receive the HS
Mt 19:13	Mk 10:13; Lk 18:15	Jesus blesses the little children- Isaac, Jacob, Joseph etc.
Acts 20:10		Eutychus fell out of a 3rd story window and died
Mt 9:25	Mk 5:35; Lk 8:54	Little girl is raised from the dead

Empty Hands on Empty Heads

I realize that there is an unprofitable kind of laying on of hands. There are extremes of it in the Church world. One extreme is a mere ritual. There are churches that have a ritual of laying hands on people to confirm them. According to some church creeds, one receives the Holy Spirit at this time- not at all talking about the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. But this is a mere ritual and formality, and nothing happens. On the other hand, there have been extremes even in Full Gospel circles. People have had hands laid on them for nearly everything you could mention – and some you couldn't. I am not going to be frightened out of a New Testament practice, however, because of fanaticism, nor am I going to be frozen out because of formality. The real is not done away with because of excesses. I'm going to practice the New Testament doctrine of laying on of hands and it's going to produce New Testament results!

One thing is for certain, when we lay hands on folks it must be for Biblical reasons. The Word of God and the Holy Spirit always agree, so if the Holy Spirit leads us to minister in the laying on of hands, it will be in harmony with Scripture. Without faith in God's Word as we minister the laying on of hands, we will be guilty of laying empty hands on empty heads.

1 Timothy 5:22
Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.

Enforce the devil's defeat through the Word, the Blood and the Name!

Unit 12 Review:

What is the Bible referring to when it talks about the "Anointing?"

Why would "Electricity" be a good analogy to describe the "Anointing" of God?

When I talk about the "Switch of faith" what am I referring to?

Is the doctrine of "laying on of hands" important, why?

What examples does the Scripture give us for ministering the laying on of hands?

What was the number one reason the laying on of hands was used?

“Healing is the Children’s Bread” – Reference Material:

The following sources of material have made significant and substantial contributions to the content of this training lesson.

“The Healing Study Course” by Kenneth E. Hagin
©1999: RHEMA Bible Church aka Kenneth Hagin Ministries, Inc.

“Bodily Healing and The Atonement” by Kenneth E. Hagin & Roy H. Hicks, D.D.
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“Christ The Healer” by F.F. Bosworth
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“Jesus the Healer” by E.W. Kenyon
© 1968 Kenyon’s Gospel Publishing Society

“Kicking Over Sacred Cows” by Charles Capps
© 1983, 1987 Charles Capps Ministries

Unless noted otherwise, all Bible quotations are from the New International Version, Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1978.

All revelation truth that we receive as children of God, comes from the Lord, by the Holy Spirit. Everything good that we have, we have received, so to God be the glory!

John 3:27
To this John replied, “A man can receive only what is given him from heaven.”

1 Corinthians 4:6-7
Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, “Do not go beyond what is written.” Then you will not take pride in one man over against another. For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?

1 Corinthians 1:31- Therefore, as it is written: “Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.”