

SPIRITUAL HEALING AND HEALTH

Chapter 1

ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SICKNESS

THE ORIGIN OF SICKNESS

Sin, sickness, and death began with the Fall. Regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God had said to Adam, **"in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."** Eve, and then Adam, obeyed Satan rather than God and partook of the forbidden fruit. When Adam, as the representative of mankind, disobeyed God, he, and all mankind fell prey to God's pronounced judgment—**"you shall surely die."** From that point on, sin and death entered the world. **"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned..."** Rom 5:12.

SICKNESS IS ASSOCIATED WITH SATAN

By Adam's obedience to Satan and disobedience to God, it was inevitable that God's prophecy would be fulfilled, **"in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."** Satan then had a legal right to afflict mankind with the curse of death.

From that point sin and death held mankind in bondage. **"For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come."** Rom 5:13-14.

Many passages throughout the bible make a clear connection between sickness and Satan. E.g.

"...God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him." Acts 10:38.

"So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound--think of it--for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" Luke 13:16.

Jesus has removed Satan's legal right to afflict us

By allowing Himself to be made a sacrificial offering for us on the altar of the cross, Jesus Christ has removed every legal claim of Satan against us. He has **"destroy(ed) (negated) him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release(d) those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."** (Heb 2:14-15).

SICKNESSES ARE DUE TO MANY CAUSES

There are some people who conclude that sickness is a direct result of personal sin—that is, if a person is sick, then they must have sinned. Despite Jesus removing every legal claim of Satan to afflict mankind with sickness, he still attacks us illegally. Sickness may be due to many causes. E.g.

Due to the Curse of the Fall.

The main reason for sickness is that the whole of mankind is subject to the curse of the Fall, and its consequence of sin, sickness, and death, which are now a part of the world. In many cases a person's sickness is not due to his having sinned, but rather to the fact that disease is a part of fallen mankind.

Unconfessed Sins

In healing a paralytic, Jesus established the relationship between sin and sickness. **"Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, 'Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you.'**" Matt 9:2.

To the Christian, righteousness is not a matter of our goodness or absence of sins, but acceptance of God's grace, and the atoning death of Jesus on the cross. However, we must discharge our sins by confessing them to God our Father. **"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"** (and all the power of sickness and death associated with it)." I Jn 1:9.

When people harbour guilt from unconfessed sins, they are often bowed down with unrelenting sickness until their sins are acknowledged and repented of, and then discharged through faith in the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus.

Unforgiveness

Although New Testament Christians are set free from the obligations of the Law, and now live in the dispensation of grace and forgiveness, our righteousness may be negated if we harbour unforgiveness in our hearts.

It is imperative that we forgive others of their sins against us, for Jesus said, **"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."** Matt 6:14-15.

If we do not forgive, we are not forgiven. If we are not forgiven, we do not have righteousness, and are therefore still under the law of sin and death. It is common in the healing ministry for sickness to resist all efforts made to overcome it until unforgiveness is uncovered and forsaken.

Dishonouring Parents

Paul warns us to **"Honour your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.** Eph 6:2-3. Conversely, if you dishonour your father and mother, all may not be well with you, and your days on earth may be shortened.

Not Taking Due Care for the Body's Well Being

We are stewards of our bodies, and if we neglect our care of them, the door is opened to physical depletion and sickness. Things like poor diet, lack of exercise, overwork, and emotional stress, may lead to sickness and disease and premature death. Paul emphasises this by his reference to a depleted and sick co-worker. **"I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker...because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me."** Phil 2:25

Not Discerning the Lord's Body

The following reading describes the meeting of the church for fellowship--involving the 'love feast' or fellowship meal, and as part of it, the taking of the Lord's Supper.

"For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognised among you. Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you. For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 1 Cor 11:18-27

Some members of the Corinthian Church failed to distinguish the difference between their ordinary meals and their fellowship feast, made holy by its central theme--the taking of the Lord's Supper. They ate and drank to satisfy the appetites of their flesh, without regard to others in the body of Christ. To their shame, **"one is (left) hungry (whilst) another is drunk."** They violated the primary condition for being a member of the body of Christ--that we have love for one another. **"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."** John 13:35.

They failed to recognise that our unity is through the cross of Christ. One way we discern the body of Christ is when we acknowledge in our hearts that we are made one in our common need of God's grace, and by our mutually receiving righteousness and salvation through Christ's broken body and shed blood. Communion is a fellowship meal where we, with Christ and His love in our midst, celebrate and receive the blessings of His sacrifice. Our common bond in Christ opens the door for His love to be manifested in our midst.

To violate the principle of love for one another is to remove us from unity with the rest of the body of Christ, and God's covenantal protection over us. That is why Paul warned, **"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep (have died). For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come."** 1 Cor 11:28-34.

A further aspect of not discerning the Lord's body, is in failing to understand that when we participate in Communion, we should "**proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.**" The Greek word, 'kataggello,' means to 'declare,' 'preach,' 'show,' 'speak of,' and to 'teach'—(Strong's)

When they took the bread, they failed to discern the meaning of Lord's sacrificed body. They treated this like an ordinary meal. They failed to see the bread for instance, as a symbol of the Lord's sacrificial body on which "**the LORD (God) has laid...the iniquity of us all**"--His body that "**was bruised for our iniquities**"--that bore "**the chastisement for our peace,**" so that "**by His stripes we are healed.**" Isa 53:6&5.

In taking the Lord's Supper, we proclaim or show forth His death, by the partaking together of the full benefits of His sacrifice. In discerning His body, we receive all that was achieved by His bearing in His own body the sicknesses and diseases that were due to us because of our sins. In failing to appreciate the nature of the sacrifice of the Lord's body, and taking communion as a common meal, some of the Corinthian members were sick, and many had even died prematurely.

Chapter 2

RIGHTEOUSNESS MUST BE RE-ESTABLISHED

Righteousness must be re-established to accomplish spiritual healing. Sin is disobedience to God, and results in death. Throughout the bible sickness, disease and death are associated with sin, and conversely, righteousness with life.

Old Testament

"As righteousness leads to life, so he who pursues evil pursues it to his own death." Prov 11:19.

"In the way of righteousness is life, and in its pathway there is no death." Prov 12:28.

New Testament

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom 6:23.

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." Rom 8:2. This is a spiritual law--sin leads to sickness, disease, and the power of death working in our mortal bodies.

"And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you." Rom 8:10-11.

In the New Testament readings, the Greek word used for 'life' is 'Zoe.' It is life from God—possessed of vitality and fullness, active and vigorous. It is the epitome of health and well-being, and is established through imparted righteousness.

In the Old Testament God set this condition before the children of Israel as an essential requirement for healing and health. **"If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you."** Exod 15:25-26.

In other words, if they were to experience His healing, they had to be obedient to His laws. And because this was impossible through human effort, God initiated a system of sacrifices and ceremonial washings to enable them to be righteous, (or have a right standing) before Him. Take for example, the set ritual prescribed for the cleansing and healing of a leper.

"...then the priest shall command to take for him who is to be cleansed two living and clean birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop. And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water. As for the living bird, he shall take it, the cedar wood and the scarlet and the hyssop, and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water. And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed from the leprosy, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose in the open field." Lev 14:4-7.

RIGHTEOUSNESS IS NOW THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

The Old Testament sacrifices foreshadowed the atoning death of Jesus Christ, sacrificed on the altar of the cross to achieve everlasting righteousness for us.

"For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh (physical flesh), how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God"? Heb 9:13-14.

Two Aspects of Christ's Atoning Sacrifice

1. He Bore Our Punishment in His Own Body

Regarding the Lord bearing our punishment, the bible says, **"(Jesus) Himself bore (took upon Himself) our sins (and their consequence of sickness and disease) in His own body on the tree (the cross), that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed."** 1 Pet 2:24.

As part of His atoning work for us, Jesus took upon Himself our sins--with all their legal consequences of sickness and disease due to the law of sin and death. As a result, the word says that we have **"died to sins,"** with their associated power of sickness and disease. That is why the reading concludes, **"by whose stripes you were healed."**

The burden of carrying the stress of the power of sickness and death due to our sins in His own body on the cross resulted in hastening Jesus' death (death through crucifixion often took 2-3 days). "**Pilate marvelled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time.**" Mark 15:44.

Having been set free from the power of sins, we now "**live for righteousness.**" Instead of being under the cloud of sickness and disease due to sins, we live according to righteousness, and its accompanying spirit of life. "**For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (due to righteousness) has made me free from the law of sin and death.**" Rom 8:2.

Isaiah confirms Christ's atoning death for our healing and health. "**Surely He has borne our griefs (Lit: sicknesses) and carried our sorrows (Lit: pains); yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement (chastening or punishment needed) for our peace (welfare--health, and prosperity) was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.**" Isa 53:4-5.

Some say that Isaiah's prophecy refers to the healing of our spirits, but Matthew's interpretation leaves us in no doubt that Isaiah was referring to physical healing.

"**When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses."** Matt 8:16-17.

2. His Blood Cleanses Us From All Unrighteousness

The Old Testament sets forth this foundational truth concerning blood. "**For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.**" Lev 17:11.

The life of the body is derived from the blood. To pour out the blood of an animal is to pour out its life. The sinner was under the curse of the law of sin and death, and in the light of God's righteous judgment, he deserved to die. Consequently, God accepts no less than the life (in its blood) of the substitutionary sacrifice as atonement for the sinner's life.

The Old Testament animal sacrifices prefigure the offering of the blood of Jesus Christ "**the spotless lamb of God,**" on the altar of the cross--His life poured out as atonement for our lives. We are redeemed, we are made righteous, we are made holy and blameless by the efficacy of Christ's blood.

Even more, the word says that we are cleansed from all the defilement of sin through the blood of Jesus. "**But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.**" I Jn 1:7.

According to *'Thayers Greek Lexicon,'* the Greek word *'katharizo,'* 'to clean,' has these additional meanings:

- (1) to make clean, to cleanse
 - (a) from physical stains and dirt or disease
 - (i) utensils, food
 - (ii) to cleanse a leper by curing him
 - (iii) to remove by cleansing
 - (b) in a moral sense
 - (i) to free from defilement of sin and from faults
 - (ii) to purify from wickedness
 - (iii) to free from guilt of sin, to purify
 - (iv) to consecrate by cleansing or purifying
 - (v) to consecrate, dedicate
- (2) to pronounce clean in a Levitical sense

From these we see that the blood of Jesus purges out the spiritual root of disease that causes the physical defilement. In fact, in the accounts of Jesus healing leprosy, the disease most aligned with sin, the word *'katharizo,'* is used instead of 'healed.' "**Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed (*'katharizo*)." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed (*'katharizo*)." Matt 8:3.**

Other meanings worth noting are:

- to free from all guilt from sin--"**...how much more shall the blood of Christ...cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God"?** Heb 9:14.
- to cleanse from all moral defilement--"**I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls**" Lev 17:11.

- to consecrate or sanctify by cleansing or purifying--"**...who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing...**" Heb 10:29.

The combination of the punishment endured by Christ in His flesh due to our sins, and His life poured out in His blood, has completely wiped the slate clean of any legal accusation Satan can direct at us, or any right to afflict our bodies.

"And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements (legal accusations) that was against us, which was contrary to us (used to oppose us). And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it (the blood of the cross)." Col 2:13-15.

WHOLLY CLEANSED AND SANCTIFIED

Spiritual healing provides for our whole being. It is important to see that the cross of Jesus has set the foundation for us to receive total cleansing and righteousness. Through the sacrificed flesh and shed blood of Jesus, we are both inwardly and outwardly cleansed and made righteous.

The passage below describes our spiritual pathway into the abiding presence of God and His blessings. It is a path that must inevitably start with our acquiring the full benefits of Christ's sacrifice, thereby making our souls and our bodies righteous before God.

"Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest (into the abiding presence of God) by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way (by a spiritual path) which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His (sacrificial) flesh, and having a High Priest (Jesus Christ) over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." Heb 10:19-22.

The reading draws on the figure of the temple. When Jesus was crucified, the veil before the Holy of Holies that separated man from God was rent from top to bottom, signifying that the way into God's presence was now opened by Christ's sacrifice.

- To gain entry we must have our hearts, or inner man, sprinkled by the blood of Jesus. We must 'drink in' the blood of Jesus, by faith receiving its power to cleanse us inwardly from all moral degradation—to the end that our consciences are clear from all guilt. Remember, God said, **"I have given (the blood) to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls"**
- The veil is likened to Christ's flesh. To pass through the veil of Christ's sacrificed flesh our bodies have to be **"washed with pure (or cleansing) water."**

The word 'water' is sometimes used symbolically to represent the Word of God as a cleansing agent—as stated in this note from *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*: "The word 'water' is used symbolically in John 3:5, either of the Word of God, as in <1 Pet. 1:23> (cf. the symbolic use in <Eph. 5:26>), or of the (the word of) truth conveyed by baptism..."

Further Examples of the Cleansing Power of the Word.

"...that He might sanctify and cleanse her (the church) with the washing of water by the word..." Eph 5:26.

"You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you." John 15:3.

Our bodies are made spiritually clean and righteous when we receive by faith the full benefits of Christ's sacrificed flesh. Being washed in the word of truth is to receive what the word says about Christ offering His body as a sacrifice on the altar of the cross. E.g.

"Surely He has borne our (sicknesses) and carried our (pains)...the chastisement (or punishment needed) for our peace (our well being) was(laid) upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed." Isa 53:4,6.

He bore the full punishment for our sins in His own body on the cross--beatings so brutal that **"His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men." Isa 52:14.**

"(T)he chastisement for our peace (wholeness and well being) was upon Him." Our bodies are set free from the law of sin and death, and the curse of the law no longer rests on us

Our bodies are now sacred vessels for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. **"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you." 1 Cor 6:19.**

"...we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Heb 10:10

HEALING IS THROUGH THE WORD

"Their soul abhorred all manner of food, and they drew near to the gates of death. Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses.

He sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions." Ps 107:18-20.

Healing, like every other spiritual ministry, has its basis in what the word says was procured for us by the cross of Jesus Christ. In the case of healing, we must accept and receive to ourselves these basic truths:

- Jesus has already borne the punishment for our sins, bearing in His own body the sicknesses, pains, and infirmities due to us.
- We are made wholly righteous through His sacrificial flesh and shed blood.
- We are not subject to the law of sin and death. We died to the law in Jesus Christ.
- Every legal claim against us is nailed to the cross. Satan has no legal right to afflict our bodies.
- Our bodies are sacred vessels for the indwelling Holy Spirit.

These things have been done for us, but they are not automatically ours until we receive them by faith--just as salvation is not ours personally until we lay claim to it. Not only should we believe the word, we should, as with our salvation, proclaim it. **"For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."** Rom10:10.

This declaration of the biblical words of our healing becomes "the word of our testimony," by which we overcome Satan and his power of sickness and death. **"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death"** (or their total consecration)." Rev 12:11.

Why is it necessary to declare the word? Because the Holy Spirit and the Father bear witness in heaven to our belief that the word is true and applies to us, by doing what we claim the word says. **"For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one."** I Jn 5:7.

Chapter 3

THE NATURE OF SPIRITUAL HEALING

One of God's names is Jehovah Rapha, or 'He Who heals.' **"For I am the LORD who heals (rapha) you."** Exod 15:26.

When Jesus came to earth, He expressed the nature of God. Healings were the clearest affirmation of God's will and power working through Jesus Christ. When Jesus healed people, He not only proved His divinity, He expressed God's earnest desire to heal the ailments and suffering of mankind. Nor did He heal a select few. Luke the physician records, **"When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them."** Luke 4:40.

It is God's desire that we all may experience not just the healing of our diseases, but an ongoing overall health. This is reflected in John's pastoral letter to the young church. **"Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers."** 3 Jn 1:2.

BIBLICAL DEFINITIONS OF HEALING

The Old Testament

The Hebrew word '*rapha*' has these various meanings: 'to mend'—'to cure'—'to heal'—'to repair'—'to thoroughly make whole'—'to make healthful'—'to restore to its normal condition.' It is used in a wide number of applications:

- Healing the mind and emotions. **"He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds."** Ps 147:3
- Healing the nation's sinfulness. **"I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."** 2 Chron 7:14.
- Healing water. **"Thus says the LORD: 'I have healed this water; from it there shall be no more death or barrenness.'" 2 Kg 2:21.**
- Healing the earth. **"You have made the earth tremble; you have broken it; heal its breaches, for it is shaking."** Ps 60:2.
- Healing the soul. **"LORD, be merciful to me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against You."** Ps 41:4.
- Healing behavioural attitudes: **"Return, you backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings."** Jer 3:22.
- Healing the nation of Israel. **"When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was uncovered."** Hosea 7:1.
- The natural healing process. **"and he returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which he had received at Ramah"** 2 Chr 22:6.

Although '*rapha*' is also used to describe natural healing, it is still through the life giving power of God that works in the healing process.

The New Testament

We may discover the nature of healing in the New Testament by seeing how the four Greek words for healing are translated.

1. 'therapeu'--primarily signifies "to serve as an attendant or menial servant," "to worship"--then, "to care for the sick, to treat, to cure, to heal."
2. 'aomai'--"to heal," "to make whole,"--it is used of physical treatment figuratively, of spiritual "healing"
3. 'sozo'--whilst primarily translated "to save," it is also translated by the verb "to heal" in the KJV of <Mk 5:23>, and <Lk 8:36>, and frequently "to make whole." The idea is that of saving from disease and all its effects.
4. 'diasozo'--"to save thoroughly"--is translated "heal" in <Lk 7:3>, KJV.

It is helpful to analyse these meanings in order to gain a more complete insight into the nature of the healing ministry. For instance, the primary meaning of 'therapeu,' is to serve as a menial servant, and has the additional meaning, 'to worship.' This attitude is expressed in the ministry of Jesus Christ the Healer. He was a menial servant to mankind. He did not express independence, nor did He seek His own glory. His dependence on God is conveyed in His words, **"...the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do..."** (John 5:19), and, **"...the Father who dwells in Me does the works."** (John 14:10). The fact that it was God doing the works was recognised by His disciples. **"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst."** Acts 2:22.

The healing ministry should be devoid of any grasping for personal power and glory. Ministrants of spiritual healing should adopt the role of a menial servant, working under the Lord's initiation and direction,

being continually dependent on Him to do the works. Because of their humility and dependent attitude, each act of healing becomes an act of worship acknowledging the glory of the cross, and the power of the risen Lord.

Furthermore, we see that healing is associated with being made whole, or restored wholly. God's concern for the whole person is illustrated in Paul's prayer for his children in the Lord. **"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless (in a state of righteousness before God) at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you (God) is faithful, who also will do it."** 1Thes 5:23-24.

Healing involves the whole person—spirit, soul, and body. Many physical ailments have their root causes in sickness in the soul. E.g.: hatred, fear, anxiety, unforgiveness, jealousy, depression, and so on. Before physical healing can be accomplished, the sickness in the soul must be exposed and dealt with. In such cases the spiritual gifts of 'word of knowledge' and 'discernment of spirits' are particularly valuable ministry tools.

And finally, healing is linked with salvation. As well as its primary meaning "to save," 'sozo' has these additional meanings: 'to heal,' 'to restore to health,' 'to preserve,' 'to keep safe.' The ministry of salvation is very much in harmony with that of healing. When Philip the evangelist preached the gospel of salvation and was believed, many were healed. **"Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralysed and lame were healed."** Acts 8:5-7.

Chapter 4

FAITH FOR HEALING

Faith is a crucial issue in healing the sick, but because of misunderstanding, it has become a stumbling block to many people. This is because of the many misconceptions about biblical faith that have been propagated--particularly by the 'Faith Movement.'

The Faith Movement teaches that you can do anything if YOU only have enough faith. If YOU have enough faith, you can speak to a mountain and it will be moved at your command. They point to this particular passage:

"Have faith in God. 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. Truly I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." Mark 11:22-24.

By forcing a literal interpretation, you are burdened with the idea that if your faith is up to it, you can direct a literal mountain into the sea. If your faith is up to it, you can be healed of any disease. This emphasis on your faith often leads to failure, followed by self-condemnation, and disillusionment.

HAVE THE FAITH OF GOD

The reading starts, **"Have faith in God."** But the literal rendering of the Greek is **"Have the faith of God."** (*"Young's Literal Translation of the Holy Bible"*) The following reading supports the view that faith is a grace from God.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God..." Eph 2:8/

Peter also made it clear that when the Lord initiates a ministry, He supplies the anointing and the faith to carry it out. **"And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all."** Acts 3:16. Here, Jesus is both the object and source of the faith that healed the lame man.

When Jesus was using the illustration of a "mountain," He was using a Jewish metaphor for an obstruction or problem that is blocking one's way. When we are obedient to the initiations and instructions of the Lord, nothing is impossible, and no 'mountain' can withstand His almighty power. But to rely on our own faith is to invite frustration and discouragement.

God's Faith and Anointing Operating in the Gifts of the Spirit

Let us now consider how faith operates in the use of the gifts of the Spirit. The key bible reading concerning the gifts of the Spirit is 1 Cor 12:7-11.

"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another (the gift of) faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another (the gift of) prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills."

The gifts of the Spirit are a manifestation of the Holy Spirit's power. They are empowerments of the Spirit that come on a person in a moment of time to accomplish God's will. They do not reside in a person permanently, nor are they continually active. They are momentary anointings of the Holy Spirit to enable us to carry out ministries to other members of the body.

Where the word says that **"to one is given the word of wisdom..."** etc, it does not mean that a person is given a manifestation of power as a permanent possession--some part of God's attributes given to be a part of their personal makeup. It is **"the manifestation of the Spirit"** that is appointed as a tool of ministry. The Holy Spirit commits Himself to manifest His power to anoint a person's ministry with a certain gift, provided the Lord has initiated the ministry. Note that it is the Lord who initiates and controls a genuine ministry. It is He who supplies the necessary faith. The person cannot manifest a genuine gift as if it were his possession to operate as he chooses. Most errors in ministry occur when people think that they have gifts within themselves as their personal possession, and try to make them operate. E.g. Presenting a word of knowledge even though the Lord hasn't given them one.

Healing Faith Operates in the Same Way as in the Gifts of the Spirit

Faith for a healing ministry operates on the same basis as in the use of the gifts of the Spirit. Faith for a spiritual ministry must be spiritual faith--the faith of God. Trying to stir up our own faith results in a soulish substitute that cannot bear fruit. Spiritual faith is a momentary anointing to fulfil a ministry initiated by the Lord. It results from obedience to the Lord's initiation or instruction, and trusting that He will supply all that is needed to carry out the ministry or task.

Remember the stalwarts of faith in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews.

"By faith Noah, being divinely warned... prepared an ark"

"By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called...And he went out..."

"By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed...because she judged Him faithful who had promised."

"By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac..."

"By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come."

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days."(V 30)

These men were not carrying out their own ideas. They acted in obedience to God's direct command, or to what they knew He had put on their hearts—and it was accounted to them as faith. It was because they acted in obedience that God rewarded them with an anointing of faith.

Remember when Peter was confronted with the challenge of walking on water. He knew his own faith wasn't up to it, and so he said, **"Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus."** Matt 14:28. He knew that if Jesus commanded and he acted in obedience, he would be given the necessary faith.

The same principle can be seen in Jesus' ministry of healing. He often issued a command as a prelude to the healing. E.g.

"Stretch out your hand"

"take up your bed and walk"

"do not be afraid, only believe, and she will be made well"

"Go, wash in the pool of Siloam"

The believer was required to believe that Jesus was the Christ, and as a consequence, act in obedience.

Jesus is sovereign Lord. It is He who should initiate, and we who should respond in obedience. He said that without Him we can do nothing. **"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me...without Me you can do nothing."** John 15:4-5.

We should not initiate a ministry, or try to minister healing to everyone who has a need, but only those to whom the Lord directs us. Only the Lord knows who is open to receive at any moment of time, and His sovereign will should govern every ministry. It is only when He directs, and we respond in obedience that we can be sure of the operation of His faith in the ministry.

What should we do if someone seeking healing approaches us, and we are not sure if the Lord has initiated the ministry? They themselves may be responding to a direction of the Lord, and so unless forbidden by the Lord, we should meet their needs in love. We should take our stand on what the Scriptures say, leaving the results to the Lord. E.g. **"these signs will follow those who believe... they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."** Mark 16:18.

FAITH AND THE SCRIPTURES

The Scriptures are called "**the sword of the Spirit,**" (Eph 6:17), because they are empowered by the Holy Spirit when the Lord directs a ministry of the Word. Without the anointing of the Spirit, the words in the bible have no more power than the words in any other book. When the Holy Spirit empowers the words we are reading, or those put on our hearts, they become '*rhema,*' or 'living words' to us personally. We can respond to a rhema with confidence that the Lord is speaking to us personally, and will reward our obedience by releasing His faith.

"Your Faith Has Made You Well"

When Jesus preached and taught the multitudes, His words and ministry were empowered by the Holy Spirit. He said, "**The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.**" John 6:63. When people responded in obedience to these 'living words,' or to what the Holy Spirit put on their hearts, it was accounted to them as faith, and Jesus often responded with words like, "**your faith has made you well,**" Matt 9:22, "**Your faith has saved you,**" Luke 7:50, or, "**According to your faith let it be to you.**" Matt 9:29.

Similarly, a genuine 'word of knowledge' is a personal word from the Lord, and His words "**are spirit, and they are life.**" When we respond in obedience to a genuine word of knowledge, it is accounted to us as faith, and the Lord's faith is released to meet our need.

FAITH--LOVE--HUMILITY AND OBEDIENCE

The Lord never intended faith to be the focal point of every ministry. If love, humility and obedience are present, faith will follow. Consider these verses:

"And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." (1 Cor 13:13)

"For in Christ neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which works (is energised or made effective) by love." (Gal 5:6)

In these readings, love is deemed to be the most important attitude. In fact the second reading declares that faith works by being energised or made effective through love. In this respect, love operates in two areas.

1. One of Jesus' final instructions was, "**If you love Me, keep My commandments.**" John 14:15. Love produces obedience. If we love God, we will be obedient to His commands. And if we follow His instructions, He will release His faith.

2. In a healing ministry, we must not only take into account the faith of the one conducting the ministry, but also the faith of the receiver. Paul makes this comment about our demeanour when ministering to others. "**though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.**" 1 Cor 13:2.

A ministry that is clinical and detached, leaves the sick person cold and untouched. The reading above says that "**faith...works by love.**" (Gal 5:6) The Greek word, '*energeo,*' for 'works,' means to 'be energised,' or 'made effectual.' Divine love has an energising spiritual power that operates in a ministry, to make the faith of the receiver effective.

In conducting a healing, or any other ministry, we should endeavour to minister in love--not our love, but the love of the Lord. Jesus likened Himself to a vine, and we His branches. He wants us to continually draw on His life within us. In this case we must ask Him to release His love in our hearts so that our ministry might be energised through love.

If you believe that faith is the key to answered prayer, then you'll find yourself striving much of the time to obtain more faith. And that will result in stress and failure. Let us see how Jesus responded when His disciples asked Him to give them more faith.

"The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.' He replied, 'If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this sycamore tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea," and it will obey you.'" (Luke 17:5-6)

Instead of replying in the affirmative to their striving for faith, Jesus said that they had only need of faith as big as a mustard seed to perform miracles. He then went on to show them what their attitude should be.

"And which of you, having a servant ploughing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'? But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'? Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'" Luke 17:7-10

The disciples had expected Jesus to miraculously implant an additional measure of faith in each of them. Instead, He told them to adopt the attitude of a bond slave. An attitude of love, obedience, and humble dependence on the Lord are required if He is to receive the glory, and respond by anointing our ministries with faith.

IT IS THE LORD WHO HEALS

We are told in Isaiah that the yoke of oppression is broken by the anointing. **"his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke (figurative--repression and oppression) from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing."** Isa 10:27 (KJV). Whilst this primarily applies to Assyria's oppression of Israel, the principle applies to all oppression of God's children. For instance, it is the anointing of the Lord that breaks Satan's burden of oppressive sickness.

It is the Lord who heals, using us as His instruments. Without His anointing we are powerless. Even if we have the gift of healings, unless the Lord provides the anointing for the ministry, we will achieve nothing. That is why we must take our eyes off our faith, our current spiritual state, and ourselves. The Lord's strength is made perfect in our weakness, so our concentration should be on love and obedience.

SPIRITUAL HEALING AND MEDICAL TREATMENT

Medical Treatment Was Not Condemned in the Bible

Some healing ministers in the Faith Movement have condemned receiving medical treatment in conjunction with a faith healing. They say that if you present yourself for a faith healing ministry, and then continue with medical treatment, you are displaying a lack of faith, and you have lost your spiritual healing. This has resulted in some people discontinuing much needed medical treatment, and tragically, some even dying.

First of all, we should note that physicians and medical treatments were not condemned in the bible.

"When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick." Matt 9:12.

"Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you." Col 4:14.

"No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities." 1 Tim 5:23.

"A merry heart does good, like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones." Prov 17:22.

"Now Isaiah had said, "Let them take a lump of figs, and apply it as a poultice on the boil, and he shall recover." Isa 38:21.

Secondly, we should not assume that spiritual healing is superior to medical healing, or that all Christians are obliged to seek spiritual healing.

All knowledge, including medical knowledge, emanates from God. He is the source of all knowledge, and so it is concerning the practice of medicine. It is not so much that man has used his human skills to make huge advances in medical science, but rather that God has released some of His knowledge to mankind when they have reached a stage where they can understand it.

Not only is God the source of all medical knowledge, He is the source of healing life. **"If He should set His heart on it, if He should gather to Himself His Spirit and His breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust."** Job 34:14-15.

When confronted with a sickness, a Christian should first commit his situation into God's hands, seeking His guidance concerning the treatment. Of course he should lay claim to what Christ procured for him on the cross, proclaiming his righteousness and healing in the Lord, and rebuking the symptoms in Jesus' name. But this should not deter him from seeking normal medical treatment.

Chapter 5

OPERATIONS OF HEALING

Spiritual healing may operate in a number of ways in the body of Christ.

PERSONAL PRAYER AND TESTIMONY

This should be the primary avenue for spiritual healing in the body of Christ. Once we have been taught the foundational truths regarding the healing and health procured for us by Jesus on the Cross, it is our responsibility to stand against Satan's attacks on our bodies. We do this through prayer, and testimony to Jesus having borne the punishment needed for our well being in His own body on the Cross.

Maintaining Our Health Spiritually

The writer of Proverbs tells us that words of healing in the bible are like a medicine or curative that promotes health to our whole being.

"My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings.

Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart;

For they are life (vigour and vital energy) to those who find them, and health (Lit: a medicine) to all their flesh (i.e. the whole person)." Prov 4:20-22.

We are encouraged to keep them in our minds and hearts, so that we might use them as we would a medicine—as words of testimony in our daily prayers to maintain our health. They are a fitting element to inject into our daily praise, worship, and thanksgiving. We should have a 'library' of healing words that we may recall from our minds and hearts to use as a healing medicine. E.g.

"Bless the LORD, O my soul...Who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases... Who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's." Ps 103:1,3,5.

"He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses." Matt 8:16-17.

"For I am the LORD who heals you." Exod 15:26.

"And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will...lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." Mark 16:17.

"But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves." Mal 4:2.

"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy (negate) him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Heb 2:14-15.

Rebuking Disease

The gospels present an account of the rather strange occurrence of Jesus rebuking a fig tree. **"Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it**

and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." And immediately the fig tree withered away." Matt 21:18-19.

Why did Jesus use this occasion to rebuke the fig tree. After all, petty anger wasn't in His nature. He was using this occurrence to teach us an important principle. We read on: "**And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither away so soon?" So Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done.**" Matt 21:20-21

Jesus was talking about a 'mountain,' or obstruction to our well-being, which could be rebuked (censured, admonished, or forbidden), or ordered to leave our circumstances. We have an example in His own ministry. "**But Simon's wife's mother was sick with a high fever, and they made request of Him concerning her. So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. And immediately she arose and served them.**" Luke 4:38-39. When Jesus rebuked the fever it, like the fig tree, 'withered away,' and the fever left her.

Jesus also rebuked demons. i.e. He censured and forbade their activity and power. The mountain of their destructive influence departed. "**And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour.**" Matt 17:18.

Rebuking a disease and its accompanying ailments in Jesus' name on a daily basis is important in breaking the power of Satan's attack. However we must establish our grounds before we rebuke, and so unless it is preceded by a testimony to the power of the cross in cancelling Satan's claims over us, it will have little effect.

THE HEALING MINISTRY OF THE ELDERS

This instruction is given to the church by James: "**Is anyone among you sick (Grk: *astheneo*—'weak,' 'feeble,' 'powerless,' 'without strength')? 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, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.**" James 5:14-15. It is worthwhile to sectionalise this reading to study its various thoughts.

Is anyone among you sick?--Whilst the reading covers all kinds of sickness, it refers particularly to those who are physically depleted and feeble, and therefore unable to pray for themselves.

Let him call—The onus is on the sick person to call the elders. This obedience to the Word is in itself an act of faith.

for the elders of the church—not the 'minister', but the elders (plural) of the church. They are the shepherds of the flock, and part of their responsibility is to tend to the sheep. Healing is a biblically designated part of this pastoral care. When contacted, they should direct at least two from their midst to perform the ministry in line with the word in James.

let them pray over him—In effect they are standing between the sick person and Satan. Their prayer should be a proclamation of all that was achieved by Christ's sacrificed flesh and shed blood, claiming it on behalf of the sick person. They should pronounce him wholly righteous through Christ's shed blood, his sins forgiven, and every claim of Satan renounced. The sickness, disease, or infirmity should be rebuked and rejected in Jesus' name. They should then declare him to be healed in Jesus' name.

anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord--Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. To anoint the sick person with oil in the name of the Lord, is to call on the Holy Spirit by the authority of the Lord's name, to anoint the ministry in the power of the resurrection. Note from the following reading the involvement of the whole Godhead in the healing process, and that it is the Holy Spirit who empowers the ministry. "**And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin (in its natural state), but the Spirit is life because of righteousness (through Jesus Christ). But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He (God the Father) who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal (subject to the power of death—so still alive) bodies through His Spirit (the Holy Spirit) who dwells in you.**" Rom 8:10-11.

And the prayer of faith will save the sick—The prayer of faith is a prayer prayed in obedience to the instructions of the word, confident that they will be honoured. Jesus responds to the elders firstly on the basis of their authority in the body as shepherds, and secondly, their obedience to the instruction given to them in James 5:14.

And the Lord will raise Him up—Again we see that it is the Lord who anoints and heals after we respond in obedience to His instructions. In this case the instructions are set forth clearly in the word.

The words, "**will raise Him up,**" indicate a gradual restoring rather than an instant miraculous cure. This is the norm for nearly all spiritual healings, and this should be made clear to the sick person. Even in Paul's ministry not every person was healed instantly. He wrote, "**Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick.**" 2 Tim 4:20.

If a person is expecting an instantaneous cure, their attention is drawn to a continual appraisal of their symptoms—often resulting in introspection, disappointment, and accusations of lack of faith or unworthiness. It is much easier to receive a gradual healing than to expect a miraculous instant cure. Mark's instructions, "**they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover,**"(Mark 16:18), also point to a gradual healing.

if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven—Provided that the elders have not detected unforgiveness, the ministry as outlined above is one of establishing righteousness and cleansing from all the defilement of sin. Under the direction of the Holy Spirit, their sins may be pronounced forgiven—as instructed by the Lord. "**And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."** John 20:22-23.

LAYING ON OF HANDS

There are operations of healing concerning ministry to one another. The spiritual warranty for laying on of hands is Mark's instruction to THOSE WHO BELIEVE, that is, all Christians. "**And these signs will follow those who believe...they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover** (be made well)." Mark 16:17-18. This may be accompanied by anointing with oil (representing the presence of the Holy Spirit in the healing). "**And they (the disciples Jesus sent out to minister) cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them.**" Mark 6:13

THROUGH DELIVERANCE

A large proportion of Jesus' ministry on earth was devoted to deliverance from demon spirits--spirits that were often the cause of sickness. In Jesus' case this appeared to bring about immediate healing. E.g.

"As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke." Matt 9:32-33.

And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour." Matt 17:14-18.

"Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw." Matt 12:22.

Demon spirits haven't left the earth, or diminished in number. In fact Revelation suggests that their numbers will be increased towards the end of the age as the bottomless pit is opened. This makes the deliverance ministry all the more relevant for the present age.

The word of our testimonies to Christ's victory over Satan through the cross is the basis of any deliverance ministry. By proclaiming the cross, the legal rights and power of the spirits is broken, and they have to leave when commanded by the authority of Jesus' name.

Deliverance is certainly not required in every healing, but those engaged in the healing ministry should be open to the possibility of it being needed. However, before attempting such a ministry, it is important to meet these conditions.

- Those operating the ministry should be mature Christians, who are experienced in spiritual warfare.
- They should be appropriately equipped with the gifts of the Spirit. E.g. ‘discernment of spirits,’ and ‘word of knowledge.’
- The ministry should be under the oversight of the elders.

HEALING MEETINGS

Healing meetings conducted by an evangelist are another avenue for spiritual healing. When Philip the evangelist preached salvation through the cross of Christ, **"the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralysed and lame were healed."** Acts 8:6-7.

It should be noted however, that the ministry of the evangelist is to the unsaved, and the burden of his message is salvation through the cross of Christ. The accompanying signs and wonders are a demonstration of God's saving grace, and as in the case of Philip's ministry to the Samaritans, many are convicted and saved. It is more common in such a meeting for non-Christians or new Christians to receive miraculous healing than those mature in the faith. This is because mature Christians are expected to receive healing and health through claiming the benefits of the cross.

TEACHING

Meetings in which there is sound teaching concerning healing procured by the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, provide a sound basis for listeners to claim spiritual healing. Healings may occur in the meeting without an altar call or laying on of hands--just by people believing and personally receiving the word.

Those who participate in receiving healing should be made aware that recovery may take some time, and that there is a need to make ongoing daily testimonies to break the power of the disease completely.

False Ministries and Healings

It is currently popular in Charismatic circles to call people to the front of the meeting to receive healing by being slain in the (S)pirit. This is often without any reference to Jesus, or discerning His body bearing the punishment for our sins on the cross. Any healing ministry that does not have a basis of sound teaching on the atoning work of Jesus on the cross is of extremely doubtful origin, and is usually accompanied by the spirit of Antichrist.

TAKING COMMUNION

Whilst primarily a communal remembrance of Christ's sacrificial death, the elements pointing to Christ's sacrificial flesh and shed blood provide legitimate grounds to claim our sicknesses laid on Him, and our bodies healed. Again, this should be re-enforced by daily testimony until the healing is complete.

THE END TIME MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST

We read in Ezekiel that the glory of the Lord will re-enter the temple, or church. Towards the end of the age we should expect to see greater manifestations of the Lord's glory as His personal Spirit enters into the church's circumstances. We should see a glorious array of healing ministries comparable to those of His earthly ministry. For the most part they won't be operations of the gifts of the Spirit, but the Lord's Spirit working directly in our midst.

In preparation for this time, the Lord has been preparing vessels through whom He can manifest His glory. They will have willingly embarked on the path of the cross and will have had the power of their flesh broken. They will have no interest whatsoever in personal glory or recognition. In fact they will have a holy fear of contaminating the Lord's glory. They will be consecrated to the Lord, and will be entirely at His disposal. He will direct them through His Spirit, they will respond in obedience and His glory will be revealed in miraculous works.

THE FULLNESS OF THE GODHEAD IS INVOLVED IN HEALING

James the apostle indicates the possibility that the reason some people's prayers are not answered is because they are not asking properly. **"Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss..."** James 4:2-3.

The main reason we ask amiss is that we have not fully understood the operation of the members of the Godhead in the process of healing.

God the Father

God the Father is the source of all things—the source and upholder of life.

"If He should set His heart on it, if He should gather to Himself His Spirit and His breath, All flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust." Job 34:14-15.

He is the source of all provision and all blessings.

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning." James 1:17.

As the source of every perfect gift, He is the originator of our salvation and healing grace. Even before the foundation of the world He provided the atoning sacrifice needed for the healing of our bodies. Isaiah, through the enlightening of the Spirit, writes,

"Yet it pleased the LORD (God the Father) to bruise Him; he has put Him to grief. (or made Him sick, or sickness)

When You make His soul an offering for sin."

Just as God made Jesus **"who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him,"** (2 Cor 5:21), He also made Him sickness that we might have health.

Jesus Christ

All our blessings from God come to us through Jesus Christ. **"yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live."** 1 Cor 8:6.

As a sacrificial offering, He willingly obeyed the will of the Father. **"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth."** Isa 53:7.

Crucified in weakness, He was raised in glory and triumph to the right hand of the power of God. Even His spilt blood was raised to the heavenly altar by the power of the Holy Spirit. **"how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"** Heb 9:14.

Now He is at the right hand of God, both as the sacrificial offering and as our High Priest. The Old Testament High Priests offered daily sacrifices for the sins and sicknesses of the people. Because Jesus Christ's sacrifice is eternal, its evidence is registered forever in heaven. The stripes and nail prints speak of the suffering He bore in His own body for our healing. His blood on the heavenly altar testifies to the righteousness it has brought to our souls. Jesus now offers our testimonies to what His cross has done for us. He is our mediator, presenting our prayers and testimonies to God.

The Holy Spirit

It is through the Holy Spirit that Jesus presents to us the healing truth of the cross, and it is through the Holy Spirit that Christ presents our prayers to the Father. **"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you."** John 16:13-14.

The Holy Spirit is the agent by which healing operates. **"And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."** Rom 8:10-11.

Praying for Healing

Our prayers must be initiated by the Spirit rather than by fleshly appeals or pleading. We must pray by the Spirit through Jesus Christ—presenting our testimonies of what Jesus has done for us on the cross.

Jesus, as our High Priest, presents our spiritual testimonies to our Heavenly Father, who then releases His faith in our hearts to receive salvation or healing. **"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."** Eph 2:8.

The healing may come by the Spirit in whatever way sovereign God chooses. For instance, as miraculous healing by the use of the gifts of the Spirit, or His own quickening of our mortal bodies by His

Spirit who dwells in us. It may be an act of grace as the Spirit falls on a crowd in response to the preaching or teaching of an evangelist.

It may be by the rising tide of the healing life of Jesus in us. **Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." ... "whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."** John 4:10, 14.

God may choose to cleanse us inwardly by the refining of suffering, and in this case the outward healing will be prolonged until the inner work is completed.

Although the operations may differ, these principles remain firm.

- The healing truth of the cross is revealed by the Spirit.
- Our prayer testimonies to the cross are directed by the Spirit to Jesus our High Priest and Mediator.
- Jesus as our High Priest, presents them to God.
- God releases His faith in our hearts to receive healing.
- It is God who governs the manner of healing.