

## HEALTH AND THE GIFT OF HEALING

### INTRODUCTION:

Many have erred in including the whole topic of Divine healing under the heading of "the gifts of healing" - *I Corinthians 12:9*.

The gift of healing was a temporary sign-gift, and only makes up a part of the subject of Divine healing. Because of the confusion surrounding the "gift of healing" and that of "Divine healing" we will cover both of these subjects during this study.

Those who teach the "gift of healing" is still in operation accuse sound preachers of believing that God no longer hears prayer. This, of course, is a groundless slander perpetrated by those who refuse to study the Word of God.

People who are suffering from pain, fear of death, or grief for a sick loved one are often at the mercy of those men who claim to have the gift of healing.

Surely every saint needs to be well-grounded in the teaching of God's Word concerning health and healing.

### I. THE BLESSING OF HEALTH

A. Just As Christians Desire To See Their Brethren In Good Health - *III John 2*, Our God Has Made Many Provisions For The Well-Being Of His People.

B. Obedience To God's Word Will Normally Bring Better Health.

1. The Christian is to avoid:
  - a. worry
  - b. undue stress
  - c. fear
  - d. hatred / bitterness
  - e. gluttony
  - f. drunkenness
  - g. all of these are enemies of good health.
2. Even the promise of long life is attached to one of the Ten Commandments - *Exodus 20:12*.

C. The Nation Of Israel Was Given A Sound Program For Better Health Many Years Before The Findings Of Modern Science.

1. God's commands to them included:
  - a. sanitation
  - b. quarantine of the sick
  - c. wash in running water
  - d. the Sabbath rest
2. The prohibition of sexual immorality was a deterrent to the many social diseases that plague our country today.

D. All Of This Shows That While Holiness Is The Chief Desire Of God For His People, Yet He Has Consulted Their Physical Well-Being Also In The Giving Of His Commands.

## II. THE REASON FOR SICKNESS

Our view of healing will be greatly affected by our views on the purpose of illness.

Modern "faith healers" would have us believe that all sickness is a result of unbelief and that none need ever to be ill.

In a world where both the good and the evil often suffer, this view contradicts our experience as well as the Bible.

Looking at God's Word, we find that sickness may have many reasons.

### A. Illness May Be Punishment Of God

1. We think of some of the plagues that fell upon Egypt, or the smiting of the sorcerer with blindness by the apostle Paul - **Acts 13:6-12**.
2. It is interesting that in these cases, sickness was a sign as was healing in other cases.

### B. Illness May Be Permitted For God's Glory - **John 9:1-13**

1. God permitted this individual to be born blind so that Christ might be glorified in his healing.
2. No doubt God permits some illness so that saints may glorify God in the exercise of Christian patience during trials.
3. Notice that at this point the apostles held the Jews error that illness was always a result of personal sin.
4. Likewise modern healers make the sick responsible should they not find healing.

### C. Illness May Be Given To Keep Christians Humble – **II Corinthians 12:7-10**

### D. Illness May Be Given To Chasten Saints - **I Corinthians 11:29-31**.

### E. Illness Is Sometimes Not Explained - **I Timothy 5:23**

### F. Illness Is Sometimes Produced By Circumstances – **Philippians 2:30** - We Meet A Man Who Became Ill Through Placing The Importance Of God's Work Above That Of His Own Health.

### G. Illness May Be From Satan - **Luke 13:10-16**. In **verse 16** We Find A Woman Whom Satan Had Bound With Illness. Other Scriptures Speaks Of Demons Causing Physical And Mental Infirmities.

## III. THE GIFT OF HEALING

### A. The Gift Of Healing Was The Ability To Heal At-Will Through The Power Of God.

1. This was a sign gift that accredited the preaching of Christ and His disciples - *Matthew 11:2-5; Mark 16:17-18; Acts 2:22; Acts 4:29-30; Hebrews 2:3-4.*
  2. The early apostles preached the gospel and healed.
    - a. The healing was to bring attention to and verify the authenticity of the gospel.
    - b. Unlike the modern healers who emphasize and preach healing as an end in itself.
- B. The Gift Of Healing Ceased As The Bible Was Completed And The Message Fully Accredited.**
1. As with the giving of the law on Mount Sinai the gospel is not in need of continual accreditation.
  2. In the latter books of the New Testament we see a decrease in the mention of healing and an increase of unhealed sickness - *I Timothy 5:23; II Timothy 4:20; Philippians 2:25-30; II Corinthians 12:7-10*
    - a. It is interesting to note in this regard that New Testament Christians always viewed healing as a sign and never a mere personal blessing.
    - b. Even the church at Corinth, so prominent for its possession of sign-gifts was full of sick people who were being chastened – *I Corinthians 11:30.*
- C. God Has Never Promised His People Perfect Health This Side Of Glory - Revelation 21:4.**
1. Those who claim to presently possess the gift of healing not only make a false claim, but display a serious ignorance of the nature and purpose of this gift.
  2. To teach that it is always God's will to heal is to cruelly torture and deceive those who hurt, and to confuse the child of God who is suffering according to the will of God.

#### IV. THE ARGUMENTS OF FAITH HEALERS

Those who claim to have the gift of healing, and those who teach that it is always God's will to heal give various defenses for their doctrine. Satan has always been an expert at quoting Scriptures. Let us examine some of these arguments.

##### A. Healing Was Purchased In The Atonement

1. While it is a great truth that Christ died to redeem our mortal bodies, yet it is also true that we have not yet received the redemption of the body - *Romans 8:23, I Corinthians 15:22-54.*
  - a. Some of the blessings of our salvation are future and no amount of faith (or rather presumption) will change this.
  - b. Christians will continue to be sick and die till Christ returns.
2. Note also, that those verses used to teach that the atonement provides for present healing have been misapplied.

- a. Compare *Isaiah 53:4* with *Matthew 8:16-17*. This portion of Isaiah was fulfilled during Christ's earthly ministry.
- b. Compare - *Isaiah 53:5* with *I Peter 2:24-25*. This portion of Isaiah refers to the healing of the soul from sin.

**B. Christ Never Changes - *Hebrews 13:8***

- 1. *Hebrews 13:8* - declares that Christ is ever the same in His Divine nature and wonderful love.
  - a. In no way does it prove that Christ's plan is the same in every age.
  - b. Those who quote this Scripture to prove that the gift of healing still exists forget that for the first thirty years of Christ's life He healed no one.
- 2. We also note that Christ's forerunner never healed any one at all - *John 10:41*.

**V. DOES GOD STILL HEAL?**

A. While The Saint Who Knows God's Word Will Reject The Claims Of Modern Healers, I Have, Personally, Never Met A Christian Who Denied That God Still Heals.

B. While The Days Of Signs And Sign-Gifts Are Past, God Will Ever Remain A Miracle Working God.

- 1. We are glad to state that God can and still does heal all forms of sickness.
- 2. We may not always know whether or not it is God's will to heal, but we can never doubt His ability.
- 3. Many can testify to having experienced the healing power of God.

**VI. OUR DUTY IN REGARD TO OUR HEALTH**

A. We Should Exercise Proper Care Of Our Physical Body And Never Bring Needlessly Harm Our Health - To Do So Is To Tempt God.

B. We Should Pray To God When Sick - *II Corinthians 12:7-9*; *II Chronicles 16:12*

C. We Should Examine Our Heart For Sin When Ill Sometimes Illness Is A Result Of Chastisement For Sin - *I Corinthians 11:30-31*; *James 5:16*.

D. We Should Call On Others To Pray For Us When We Are Ill - *James 5:14-16*.  
(Note that these elders are not faith healers who are called. The sickness in question here seems to be a result of chastisement.)

E. We Should Use Proper Means For Healing - *I Timothy 5:23*; *Colossians 4:14*; *Luke 10:33-34*.

F. We Should Submit To God's Will

1. God does not always heal His people.
2. Sometimes they are given the opportunity to glorify God by displaying true Christian behavior during trials - *I Thessalonians 5:18; II Corinthians 11:27; 12:7-10.*
3. Notice that true faith can be displayed in sickness as well as in healing - compare *Hebrews 11:33-35a* with *Hebrews 11:35b-39.*