**IS THERE “HEALING IN THE ATONEMENT?”**

**by Shawn Brasseaux**

*(*I am Shawn Brasseaux, the Bible teacher and web administrator of arC Ministries (ambassadors for the risen Christ ministries). Located in Louisiana. We are a nondenominational grace-oriented ministry and local assembly of Bible-believing Christians.)

Pentecostals and other Charismatics hold to the doctrine of “healing in the Atonement.” Predicated upon Isaiah 53:5, the basic idea is that Jesus Christ purchased physical healing for us at Calvary (the word “Atonement” obviously being Christ’s sacrificial death). Is this really what the Prophet Isaiah was saying in that famous passage? We will look at God’s Word and see what it **actually** says.

Indeed, Isaiah 53:5 says of Messiah’s crosswork, *“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him;****and with his stripes we are healed****.”*But, before we just grab the part of the verse we like and make it say something we want it to say, **we need to let the Bible interpret itself.** We do ***not*** need a lexicon, Dr. “So-and-So’s” commentary, or some denominational handbook to explain Isaiah. **The Holy Spirit Himself** will teach us. Will we be willing to hear ***Him*** and conclude that just maybe ***He*** might be right?

It is supposed that, through Jesus’ shed blood, we have the authority to declare healing and recovery from every disease and illness. If we are Christians, we should not be sick or dying. According to these “healing-in-the-Atonement” adherents, Calvary’s cross is the means whereby Father God has **guaranteed** us Christians physical healing. We just have to claim that deliverance in “Jesus’ name.” We are told ***not*** to believe the diagnoses from medical professionals. While they see cancer in us, heart disease in us, or some other verifiable medical condition, we are told to ignore that reality and live in a delusional world. We are urged to declare, “I have Jesus not cancer! I have Jesus not a knee injury or back pain! I have Jesus, Jesus, Jesus….” Surely, dear friends, this assumption is extremely dangerous, spiritually and physically. **In fact, it is not faith at all. It is unbelief!**

The Apostle Peter quoted Isaiah 53:5 in 1 Peter 2:24. We will look at this verse in context: *“[21] For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: [22] Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: [23] Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: [24] Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness:****by whose stripes ye were healed****. [25] For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”*

Through Peter, the Holy Spirit interpreted Isaiah 53:5 for us. The healing is ***not*** physical healing. It is a***spiritual*** healing, a healing of the soul, forgiveness of sins, the spirit given life. He *“bare our sins in his own body on the tree”* is indicative of ***spiritual*** healing rather than ***physical*** healing.

By the way, the verse before Isaiah 53:5, ***verse 4 of Isaiah chapter 53,*** is a reference to **physical healing** **under special circumstances**: *“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.”* The Holy Spirit interpreted this verse for us in Matthew 8:16-17: *“[16] When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: [17] That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,****Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses****.”* Isaiah 53:4 predicted Messiah’s healing ministry, the miraculous demonstrations that validated the Gospel of the Kingdom that He and His apostles preached. The sicknesses that brought Israel sorrow, Jesus came and healed them. Their infirmities that brought them grief, Jesus came and healed them. Please make special note that Jesus’ earthly ministry of healing miracles occurred ***before*** the cross, ***notat*** the cross or ***through*** the cross.

Interestingly, when James wrote about physical healing (James 5:13-15), He did ***not*** quote Isaiah 53:5, *“with his stripes we are healed.”* Is that not a demonstration that the *“healing”* of Isaiah 53:5 is a different type of healing than that of James 5:13-15? The Apostle, and the Holy Spirit guiding him, knew this to be true, and thus did not quote the verse. Another fascinating tidbit is that James 5:13-15 is a passage of Scripture commonly appealed to in order to support modern-day healing crusades. Evidently, unlike those who like to quote him, James did ***not*** believe there was physical healing in the Atonement.

Those physical healing verses referenced above were ***not*** written to or about us in this the Dispensation of the Grace of God. When advising sick Timothy, Paul***never*** told him, “Claim your healing in the Atonement, Timothy! God has promised you deliverance from those sicknesses! You are a Christian and you are not supposed to be ill!” Yea, on the contrary, Paul instructed Timothy to use wine—medicine—for his stomach problems and his **frequent** sicknesses (1 Timothy 5:23). The Apostle also admitted that, in his last epistle, he had to leave a brother in Christ ***sick*** at Miletum: there was **no** miraculous healing for Trophimus in 2 Timothy 4:20. Moreover, there was **no** physical healing for Paul himself in Acts 16:22-23,33 (when he was beaten with *“many stripes”*); 2 Corinthians 11:22-28 (his various health risks and injuries sustained in the ministry); 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (which included his *“infirmities”*); and Galatians 4:13-15 (his *“infirmity of the flesh,”* possibly a reference to partial blindness in light of Galatians 6:11).

The danger in claiming physical healing through Calvary’s cross is that well-meaning and desperate people often overlook the ***spiritual*** healing available through Calvary. It is a focus on the **temporary** healing of a body that will go to the grave and rot and decay, rather than an emphasis on the salvation of the spiritual body**that will last forever**. One day, we who have relied exclusively on the Lord Jesus Christ, His perfect sacrifice at Calvary for our sins, will receive glorified bodies fashioned like His body (Philippians 3:20-21). The fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians goes into great detail about that resurrection of Christians at the Rapture, when Jesus Christ comes to take His Body into the heavenly places. You can read more about that in your own personal Bible study.

We read in Romans 8:18,22-24: *“[18] For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us…. [22] For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. [23] And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. [24] For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?”*

In the above verses, Paul talked about how we suffer under the curse of sin. **Even as Christians**, our bodies grow sick and eventually die. Being a child of God does ***not*** insulate us from illness and it does ***not*** guarantee us good health. As long as God continues to operate our program, Israel’s program will be postponed, and as long as Israel’s program is postponed, the curse of sin being lifted (in Israel’s kingdom) is also delayed. Anyone who says otherwise is ***not*** sound in his or her theology.

Hence, we read Paul’s words in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18: *“[16] For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. [17] For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; [18] While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”*

While known for his “faith-healing testimonies,” his “miracle water,” and other religious trinkets, a television preacher had to admit recently that he was growing older and weaker, his head was balding, and he and his wife were getting more and more wrinkles on their skin. He read 2 Corinthians 4:16 on-air, and then commented, “Our outward bodies are perishing [decaying and dying].” Brethren, talk about religious tomfoolery, talk about dishonesty! As a dear brother in Christ always says, “All the healing claims aside, the death rate is still one-a-piece!”

Beloved, all the religious nonsense aside, and in contradistinction to the “healing-in-the-Atonement” doctrine, the Bible view is, **we are subject to sickness, we can and do have sickness, and whether well or sick, we still have Jesus.** It is ***not*** that we ignore our sickness and refuse medical treatment. We have sickness and we ***also*** have Jesus Christ. It is ***not*** “We have Jesus not sickness.” Whether or not we live with a sickness for the rest of our earthly lives is irrelevant. God’s grace is still sufficient in ***all*** troubles, as Paul learned about his own trials, tribulations, and illnesses (2 Corinthians 12:7-12). We can glory in our tribulations (Romans 5:1-5), find value in those trials and troubles. Whether or not that sickness is terminal (takes our life) is irrelevant. God has given us the grace to endure all of life’s troubles (Philippians 4:13). We can use the eyes of faith to see that these problems are only temporary. Thank God that they are ***not*** forever. Compared to eternity, they are a simple blink of the eye, a fraction of a second, nothing. The Lord Jesus Christ is with us, in health ***or in sickness!***

**CONCLUSION**

Research into the history of the “healing-in-the-Atonement” tenant yields proof that it has left many deceived, disappointed, and ***dead*** people in its wake. Innumerable souls disregarded medical advice because they did not understand God’s Word rightly divided. Until the day that their lives were taken by the various diseases that religion said they did not suffer from, they kept quoting God’s healing verses to Israel as though those verses were given to them in the current dispensation. They found false hope and pseudo-peace in divine words given ***to others***. Not only were they deceived by others, they deceived others with their own actions, and wrested God’s Word in the process.

There is ***spiritual*** healing available through Jesus Christ’s work at Calvary’s cross. In Christ, there is forgiveness of sins, abounding grace, unparalleled peace, everlasting love, and eternal life in heaven. All that we need is ours in Jesus Christ. We have ***not*** been promised miraculous bodily healing in this the Dispensation of Grace. God has given us medical professionals, medicine, and immune systems, and if they cannot help us, all the more reason to move on into heaven and get that new body, one that will never grow sick or old but will last forever!

**Is Physical Healing Provided in the Atonement?**

**by Charles F. Baker**

Every true Christian believes that spiritual healing, salvation of the soul from sin, is to be found only in the death of Christ, but there is disagreement as to whether His death is supposed to provide physical health also for the believer. Some teach that Christ bore our sicknesses upon the Cross as well as our sins, and that it is therefore as much the will of God that we be healed of sickness as to be saved from sin. Since salvation is received through faith, healing must come in the same manner, and if one is not healed it proves he doesn’t have faith. If the premise of this argument is true, i. e. that Christ died for our sickness and that God is not willing that any should be sick, then the above conclusion logically follows; but we ask: Is the premise true?

This teaching is based upon Matthew 8:17: “Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses,” a quotation from Isaiah 53:4. But the all important thing to see is that Jesus fulfilled this scripture three years before His death. He was bearing their sicknesses all during His earthly ministry, but He never bore any one’s sins until He died upon the tree. Since the Bible declares that He fulfilled the work of bearing sicknesses before Has death, any teaching is proved false which claims He fulfilled that work in His death.

The second important fact is found in the word “bare”. Peter tells us that Christ “bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” This word is “anaphero” in the Greek, and means to bring to the altar or to offer a sacrifice. It is used in Hebrews 9:28: “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many”; and most significantly the translators of the Septuagint chose this word in Isaiah 53:12: “and he bare the sins of many.” But there is an entirely different word used regarding the bearing of sickness in Matthew 8:17. It is “bastazo” and means to lift or to carry or to endure. It is never used of bearing sins. This is the same word John the Baptist used in Matthew 3:11: “whose shoes I am not worthy to bear.” Paul used it in Galatians 6:2: “bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” Paul asked Christians to do in Romans 15:1 exactly what Christ did: “bear the infirmities (or sicknesses) of the weak,” but he never told any Christian to bear the sins of another. And again, most significantly the Septuagint uses this same word in Isaiah 53:4: “surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.” Thus Christ bore sicknesses in an altogether different sense from which He bore sins.

The third fact is based upon logic. If healing is in the atonement to the same extent as salvation, then one possesses salvation to the extent he enjoys physical health. But since all Christians in the past have died, and mostly from disease, this would prove that all had lost salvation; for all surely lost health.

Fourthly, Paul, the model Christian, gloried in his infirmities (II Corinthians 11:30; II Corinthians 12:9 and 10—this word means sickness, the same word as used in Matthew 8:17). If sickness is contrary to the will of God, then Paul gloried in being out of the will of God, and it was the grace of God which taught him to do it.

Fifthly, this teaching denies such scriptures as Romans 8:23: “but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” Yes, praise God, our salvation includes a body as perfect as Christ’s own glorious body, but none will receive it until the resurrection for which we wait.

Lastly, let it be noticed that God promised health to Israel along with other temporal blessings. He revealed Himself as Jehovah-Ropheca, the Lord that healeth thee (Exodus 15:26). See also Deuteronomy 28:1 to 14. But not one of these promises can be found directed to the Body of Christ, but often just the opposite. God not only promised to heal but to make rich (Deuteronomy 28:11 and 12). Therefore if you are not rich it is just as much a sign of unfaithfulness as if you are sick.

Surely we believe that God hears and answers prayer for the sick, but plain scripture forbids us to believe that healing is in the atonement or that sickness brands one as unfaithful or disobedient.   (<https://www.bereanbiblesociety.org/is-physical-healing-provided-in-the-atonement/>)