

A stone sculpture of a man's head and torso, appearing to be made of rough, grey stone. The sculpture has several large, jagged holes: one on the right side of the head, one on the left side of the neck, and one on the left side of the chest. The background is a blurred green, suggesting foliage.

*Does God promise  
to always heal our  
bodies in this life?*

## *Did God promise to always heal our bodies?*

It is not always God's will to heal a person physically. A person may sincerely pray and truly have faith that God can heal, but if it is not God's will to provide the healing at that time, then no healing will come. (1 John 5:14) Sometimes God's blessings come in other ways besides physical healing.

If it were *always* God's will for people to be healed, then everyone would be healed every time he or she became ill. If good health were *always* God's will, then Christians should never die. We can't blame someone's problem of sickness on a lack of faith, for we know, biblically, that God sometimes uses illness to accomplish His will. Also, it's not just wayward believers who get sick. Paul "*left Trophimus sick in Miletus.*" (2 Tim 4:20) and Paul himself had a physical ailment that the Lord declined to heal. 2 Cor12:7-9

Often, Christians have an over-simplified idea of healing. They think that, if they are sick, they have only to ask God to heal them, and because God loves them, He will heal them straightaway. Healing is seen as proof of a person's faith and of God's love. This idea persists in some circles in spite of the truth that every mother knows: a parent does not give her child everything he asks for every time; no matter how much she loves him.

### **Healing in the Old Testament**

We need to understand that healings, even in the Bible, are very rare indeed. For the first 2,500 years of biblical history, there is no mention of any healings whatsoever. Then during the life of Abraham we have a possible healing, although it is only implied. (Gen 12:17–20) Then we have to wait until the life of Moses, who performs a number of signs to authenticate his authority as God's leader. However, the only healing associated

with Moses is Miriam's cleansing from leprosy. Num 12:13–15

In the covenant God gave to Israel, there were a number of provisions to regulate their lives, and there is an emphasis on physicality and material things in the Old Testament. In Deuteronomy 28, God promises to reward Israel's faithfulness with freedom from disease. This is the clue to the meaning of miracles in the Bible. God promised Israel health, long life, children, flocks, corn, grapes, etc.—and victory over their enemies—if they stayed faithful to the Lord. At the same time, God threatened them with sickness, barrenness, disease, drought, famine, the loss of livestock, and enemy occupation if they forsook the Lord. This is the context of Israel's relationship with sickness and healing. The promise to be kept "*free from every disease*" in Deuteronomy 7:15 was specifically part of the Mosaic Covenant with Israel under the theocracy; such a promise is not given to the church.

## **Healing in the New Testament**

With the coming of Christ, we have the fulfilment of the Mosaic Covenant (Matt 5:17) and a reversal of the effects of Israel's spiritual backslidings. Wherever Christ went, He healed the sick, but this was not just because of kindness on His part; His healings were always a sign from heaven of Christ's authority as Messiah. (John 7:31) He was giving Israel a taste of the kingdom of God. (Luke 11:20) Those who refused His authority were often left sick. (Matthew 13:58) At the pool of Bethesda, for example, Jesus healed only one in a huge multitude. John 5:1-8

The apostles were also given the specific power to heal the sick, and for thirty-seven years they went everywhere healing those who heard their message. Again, their miracles, including healing, were confirmation of the truth of the gospel the apostles proclaimed.

The twelve apostles did not heal everyone, either. Often, there were Christians left unwell in spite of the apostolic power. Paul says to Timothy, “*Use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.*” (1 Tim 5:23) Why didn’t Paul just lay hands on Timothy and heal him? It wasn’t because Timothy didn’t have enough faith; it was because it was not God’s will to heal Timothy that way.

The healing ministry was not for anyone’s personal convenience; rather, it was a sign from God—to the Jews of the Old Covenant primarily—of the validity of the apostles’ message.

### **Healing today**

We are not living in the apostolic days today. Of course, God can and does heal today when He wants to. The question we need to ask in any given situation is, what does God want? Does He desire to heal the individual in this life, or does He have another plan to show His

glory through weakness? Someday, all sickness and death will be eradicated. (Rev 21:4) Until then, there is a greater healing, the cleansing of sinful hearts, that God performs every day.

Should Christians go to doctors? Did God promise healing? Not always. He gives us Doctors.

There are some Christians who believe that seeking medical attention is demonstrating a lack of faith in God. In the Word-Faith movement, consulting a doctor is often considered a lack of faith that will actually prevent God from healing you. In groups such as Christian Science, seeking the help of physicians is sometimes viewed as a barrier to using the spiritual energy God has given us to heal ourselves. The logic of these viewpoints is sorely lacking. If your car is damaged, do you take it to a mechanic or wait for God to perform a miracle and heal your car? If the plumbing in your house bursts, do you wait

for God to plug the leak, or do you call a plumber? God is just as capable of repairing a car or fixing the plumbing as He is of healing our bodies. The fact that God can and does perform miracles of healing does not mean we should always expect a miracle instead of seeking the help of individuals who possess the knowledge and skill to assist us.

Physicians are referred to about a dozen times in the Bible. The only verse that could be taken out of context to teach that one should not go to physicians would be 2 Chron 16:12. *“In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa was afflicted with a disease in his feet. Though his disease was severe, even in his illness he did not seek help from the LORD, but only from the physicians.”* The issue was not that Asa consulted physicians, but that *“he did not seek help from the LORD.”* Even when visiting a doctor, our ultimate faith is to be in God, not the doctor.

There are many verses that speak of using “medical treatments” such as applying bandages, (Isa1:6) oil, (James 5:14) oil and wine, (Luke 10:34) leaves, (Ezekiel 47:12) wine, (1 Tim 5:23) and salves, particularly the “*balm of Gilead.*” (Jeremiah 8:22) Also, Luke, the author of Acts and the Gospel of Luke, is referred to by Paul as “*the beloved physician.*”

Col 4:14

On the one hand, we have the story of a woman who had trouble with continual bleeding, a problem that physicians could not heal even though she had been to many of them and had spent all of her money. Coming to Jesus, she thought that if she but touched the hem of His garment, she would be healed; she did touch His hem, and she was healed.

Mark 5:25-30

On the other hand, Jesus, in answering the Pharisees as to why He spent time with sinners, said to them, “*Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who*

*are sick.*” (Matt 9:12) From these verses one might sift out the following principles:

1) Physicians are not God and should not be viewed as such. They can sometimes help, but there will be other times when all they will accomplish is the removal of money.

2) Seeking physicians and using “earthly” remedies are not condemned in Scripture. In fact, medical treatments are viewed favourably.

3) God's intervention in any physical difficulty should be sought. (James 4:2; 5:13) God does not promise that He will answer the way we will always want, (Isaiah 55:8-9) but we have the assurance that all He does will be done in love and thus in our best interest.

Psalm 145:8-9

So, should Christians go to doctors? God created us as intelligent beings and gave us the ability to create medicines and learn how to repair our bodies. There is nothing wrong with applying this knowledge and ability

towards physical healing. Doctors can be viewed as God's gift to us, a means through which God brings healing and recovery. At the same time, our ultimate faith and trust is to be in God, not in doctors or medicine. As with all difficult decisions, we should seek God who promises to give us wisdom when we ask for it.

James 1:5

**Full healing of our bodies will only come with the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

*'For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only*

*this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.'*

Rom 8:18-25

Healing from sin is the big issue now and always.

Faith in Jesus and a desire to be free from sin in order to walk with God is the work of God taking place in all those who trust in Him. If healing were guaranteed for all, all the time, there would be no need to call the elders to pray for the sick or for the operation of the gift of healing. But if a Christian becomes sick, he or she should faithfully and obediently ask God for healing according to the instructions of James 5:14-16. With this prayer, God's promise to "*raise up*" the sick person, it does not have to mean they will be

healed of sickness of the body for healing to be valid. But calling upon the Lord in faith and in obedience to Scripture is clearly the right thing to do. If physical healing was a valid conclusion, it should be all the time.

Rom 8:18-23

We don't always understand suffering beyond the fact that man's suffering has been brought upon itself as a race when Adam sinned by disobeying God. While we may ideally have the mind of Christ if we abide in Him, our full maturity in Biblical understanding may still be inadequate. We may be inclined to grab at verses to justify our human interests because we want to see God's will is what we want from a human perspective. If our hope is for happiness in the world we can see, we may want our lives to be comfortable and problem free while we live on earth, but God did not promise comfort; He told us we will have tribulation. *"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I*

*have overcome the world.” (John 16:33) ‘And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.’*

Rom 5:3-5

So our primary need is to always trust in the Mystery of God’s Sovereignty according to His word in the context He gave it for our understanding. God's Sovereignty places the emphasis of our existence where it should be; on Him and eternity, and on our walk with Jesus Christ; and on our being transformed into the image of His Son. Many have been hurt by the unjustified promises of the misguided, who suggest God will heal us all of all things material all the time.

If what we promise isn’t true and therefore unbelievable, how are those who lack

understanding ever going to believe anything else we say concerning God's word? So Jesus said *"If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."*

John 8:31-32

However, God often heals in spite of our confusion and misrepresenting His word. Sometimes He heals one person and not another; sometimes He heals us of one disease, and leaves another where His grace is sufficient for our needs. In every situation, we must remember the truth is His word, not the misuse of His word, or an inaccurate interpretation of what He has promised.

We have seen some miraculous healings from time to time. Sometimes healing is entirely unexpected, sometimes soon after a prayer of faith. But sometimes we don't see physical healing, even after there has been considerable prayer by many who are in a right and faithful obedient standing with God. Sometimes God's healing takes place in our

minds; sometimes our emotions are realigned with His purposes. Whatever the case, we must not put God in our box. God is not our domestic assistant; we cannot domesticate God and demand He do what we decide we want according to our understanding.

God remains Sovereign in every situation we may face. If we are experiencing difficulty, God knows and God loves us; He decides what course of action is in our ultimate best interest. For God, our best interest is that we be changed from one degree of glory to another as we are transformed into the image of His Son. So God uses all things. *'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. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.'*

Rom 8:28-29

*'Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight, we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.'*

2 Cor 5:6-8

### **Conclusion: Healing and asking**

Our everyday experience shows us God does not give physical healing to everyone we ask to receive; therefore, we should not tell people He will heal their bodies when we know in most cases He doesn't. And we should search all the scriptures to examine in context if we can find a number of instances which supports healing for all.

If healing is according to his will, and we often obviously don't know what that is because we ask in hope, then we should not suggest He will, or even hold to idea's his physical healing is for all this side of His Parousia.

If we believe physical healing is promised all the time, we should be able to supply clear textual contextualised evidence from a number of places to this effect, excepting the fact that the Bible explains the Bible.

If there is evidence in a number of places of sick Christians, then we must also acknowledge this fact as we consider the evidence revealed in the Bible of truth.

Evidence of sick Christians obviously doesn't support physical healing for all, all the time.

If we testify that God will give physical healing, and physical healing doesn't happen, will that person conclude we don't know what we are talking about, or will they decide the one to whom we testify is not true or trustworthy?

Furthermore, whatever happened between the miraculous healings we see in the book of Acts, and Paul leaving his brother Trophimus behind at Miletus because of illness, (2 Tim 4:20) and In Philippians 2:27 we see

Epaphroditus was sick to the point of death; in these things we don't fully understand, but something changed in God's economy according to His will for miraculous physical healing not to be available for devoted servants of God when it had been available for all unbelievers in spreading the gospel earlier. It appears that the miraculous healings were active in the process of evangelising the gentiles, but once the Church was established the healing miracles ceased. So what does Paul say is God's intention for us?

*We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.'*

Rom 8:28-29

We know God loves us so we trust in Him as we live by faith and not by sight.

We abide in His love.

# Living Water Resources



Come to the River

Compiled by

Robert C May

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[cometotheriver@optusnet.com.au](mailto:cometotheriver@optusnet.com.au)