

DIVINE
HEALING
ABSOLUTELY
IS FOR
TODAY



DAVE ROOT

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This book follows *The Christian Writer's Manual of Style*, with the exception of certain words that have been intentionally capitalized (e.g., Atonement, Church, Gospel), including pronouns that refer to God (e.g., He, Him, His). In addition, numbers above ten are intentionally not spelled out (e.g., 12, 40, 72).

Disclaimer: As explained in the book, there is no guarantee that someone will be healed by following the steps in this book. Any sick person, whether the reader or others, should consult their physician before making any changes to prescribed medications or recommended health regimens.

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Introduction

Every one of us will need healing in our bodies at different points in our lives. Sicknesses, injuries, or other infirmities are not God's desire or His best for us.

In the mid-1990s, God began teaching me about divine healing, and I saw a number of healings in myself and in others. But then He put me into a wilderness season (as pastors and Bible teachers often call it), a season of testing that can last for many years and is often confusing, frustrating, or painful.¹ When this season was over, the Lord began to teach me truths about divine healing that I had never heard about before.²

In this book, you will see that divine healing still works today just the way it did in the New Testament. You will encounter fascinating patterns in the Bible concerning healing that you probably have not noticed before and discover why most Christians do not see healing miracles today. Finally, you will learn exactly how to heal yourself and others.

God wants all of us to be healthy so that we can fulfill His individual plan for our lives. The reality is that every Christian can heal the sick for the glory of the Lord, and this book will teach you how to do it.

Each chapter builds on what was taught earlier, so this book will be most beneficial if it is read in the order presented.

1 Dave Root, "Why Do Christians Experience Hard Times and Suffering?," Vivid Christianity, accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.vividchristianity.com/WhyDoChristiansExperienceHardTimesAndSuffering.htm>.

2 Dave Root, "How to Discern God's Guidance," Vivid Christianity, accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.vividchristianity.com/HowToDiscernGodsGuidance.htm>.

Throughout the book, healing always refers to divine healing by the power of the Holy Spirit in the name (the authority) of Jesus.

One purpose of this book is to see the *full* picture concerning divine healing, doing our best to be thorough, objective, and unbiased. My sincere prayer is that you will have a clear understanding of how divine healing works and see miracles of healing, bringing glory to the Lord Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, who came in the flesh, was delivered over to death for our sins, and was raised to life for our justification (1 Corinthians 12:3; 1 John 2:22–23; 4:1–3, 15; 2 John 1:6–7; Romans 4:25).

As we will see, God will do miracles to confirm a person's message, but only *if* the message is what He wants to be taught *and* if we have faith for miracles. If everything in this book says what God wants it to say and if He wants you to believe *everything* in this book, then He will confirm that for you by doing a miracle (if you are a Christian). For details, please see my website at VividChristianity.com.

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Part 1

1

The Great Commission

Have you ever wondered why multitudes of sick or injured people have been prayed for, sometimes for years, and yet we rarely—if ever—see or hear about anyone actually being healed?

If you were to do a survey of Christians and ask them why divine healing seems to be so rare, you would probably receive these types of answers:

- Divine healing died out in the first century.¹
- It is not always God's will to heal us.
- It is not always God's timing to heal us.
- We do not always have enough faith for healing.
- Doubts and unbelief might be hindering healing.
- Demonic interference might be preventing healing.
- Sicknesses might sometimes have a divine purpose, such as chastening or disciplining a person.

We will examine these issues (and many more) in depth so that we have a thorough understanding of what the Bible says concerning divine healing.

¹ Dave Root, "All Gifts of the Spirit Are Available Today," Vivid Christianity, accessed August 16, 2022, <https://www.vividchristianity.com/AllGiftsOfTheSpiritAreAvailableToday.htm>. My article shows that this view (known as cessationism) is a form of last-days apostasy (a falling away from proper beliefs).

God Always Intended for Healing to Be Done by People

If you study every example of healing in the New Testament,² you'll find that God did not directly heal people Himself (from heaven). Instead, healings always took place when a person other than the sick person was involved. (The only exception was Paul's viper bite in Acts 28:1–6, which we'll look at later.) John 5:3–4 is the only place in the New Testament where we are told that an angel influenced healing the sick, and some Bible commentaries suggest that this must have been a real angel while other commentaries point out that the oldest and best manuscripts do not even mention an angel.³ The New Testament does not provide any other evidence to support the idea that angels are ever involved in healing.

Instead, the overwhelming evidence in Scripture demonstrates that God always intended for healing to be done by people. If you are a Christian,⁴ then you will be able to heal the sick by following what is taught in this book. Some healings will happen instantly, right in front of your eyes, but some healings might take time to manifest. At times, nothing will seem to happen, and the reasons for these different results are summarized in chapter 9.

Jesus's Earthly Ministry

Forty days after Jesus was resurrected, He spoke to the apostles one last time, and then He physically ascended up to heaven in full view of the apostles (Acts 1:1–3).

Just before His ascension to heaven, He gave the Church (the body of Christ, which consists of every Christian) some commands, and pastors and Bible teachers usually refer to those as “the Great Commission.”

2 Dave Root, “Every Example of Healing in the New Testament,” Vivid Christianity, accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.vividchristianity.com/EveryExampleOfHealingInTheNewTestament.htm>.

3 “Verse-by-Verse Bible Commentary, John 5:4,” [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/commentary/john/5-4.html), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/john/5-4.html>.

4 Dave Root, “How to Receive Salvation,” Vivid Christianity, accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.vividchristianity.com/HowToReceiveSalvation.htm>.

In order to understand what Jesus commanded the Church to do in the Great Commission, we'll start by looking at the ministry that He carried out in the years prior to the cross.

As a number of Bible commentaries explain,⁵ Jesus began a public ministry when He was about 30 years old (Luke 3:23). One Sabbath day, He went into the synagogue in Nazareth and read out loud a prophecy from the book of Isaiah, which describes the Messiah *preaching* the Gospel, *healing* people, and *setting free* the captives:

Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. And *He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all*. So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And *He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah*. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to *preach* the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to *heal* the brokenhearted, to *proclaim liberty* to the captives and *recovery of sight* to the blind, to *set at liberty* those who are oppressed; to *proclaim* the acceptable year of the Lord.” Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And *He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”* (Luke 4:14–21, emphasis added)

In the above passage, Jesus made it clear that He is the Messiah by saying that Isaiah’s prophecy was fulfilled. This passage provides us with some information about Jesus’s earthly ministry, and we can see that it included both evangelism (preaching the Gospel) and physical healing.

5 “Verse-by-Verse Bible Commentary, Luke 3:23,” [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/commentary/luke/3-23.html), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/luke/3-23.html>.

Matthew 3 describes John the Baptist preaching the arrival of the long-awaited Messiah, whom John referred to as “the one who is to come” (e.g., Acts 19:4). However, John appeared to have doubts that Jesus was the Messiah because John sent two of his disciples to determine if Jesus was the one who is to come:

When the men came to Jesus, they said, “John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?’” At that very time Jesus *cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind.* So he replied to the messengers, “Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: *The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.*” (Luke 7:20–22 NIV, emphasis added)

The above passage further confirms that Jesus’s ministry included both evangelism and healing.

When some Pharisees warned Jesus that King Herod wanted to kill Him, notice how He replied:

On that very day some Pharisees came, saying to Him, “Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You.” And He said to them, “Go, tell that fox, ‘Behold, *I cast out demons and perform cures* today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.’” (Luke 13:31–32, emphasis added)

In the above passage, Jesus emphasized the healing aspect of His earthly ministry.

In Acts 10, God sent the apostle Peter to preach the Gospel to some Gentiles (non-Jews), and Peter explained Jesus’s ministry to them in this way:

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

In the above passage, Peter described Jesus's ministry by saying that He went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, which included casting out demons (Matthew 8:16, 28–32; 9:32–33; 12:22; 15:21–28; 17:14–18; Mark 1:23–26). Again, this emphasizes the healing aspect of His earthly ministry.

To summarize, Jesus had an earthly ministry before the cross that consisted of preaching the Gospel, healing, and casting out demons. Look closely at the above passages. Notice that healing is mentioned *many* more times than preaching the Gospel, and this is true all throughout the Gospels. Healing was *not* an afterthought or a minor aspect of Jesus's ministry, as some Christians claim, but instead, healing was very important to the Lord. Healing is still very important to the Lord as we will see.

Jesus Turned His Earthly Ministry over to the Church

Every time Jesus commissioned people to go out and preach the Gospel before the cross, He also gave them authority to heal the sick and cast out demons. Every single time.

First, we'll look at two of those commissions. Then, we'll examine the third and final commission in detail—the Great Commission—which applies to *all* Christians until the Lord returns for us.

From Luke 5 through 8, the original 12 disciples traveled with Jesus and learned from Him as He preached the Gospel, healed people, and cast out demons. Then, Jesus sent those men out on their own for a period of time and commissioned them to do the following:

Then He called His twelve disciples together and *gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure*

diseases. He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.... So they departed and went through the towns, *preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.* (Luke 9:1–2, 6, emphasis added)

In the above passage, Jesus sent out the 12 disciples to do the *same* things that He had been doing, which consisted of preaching the Gospel, healing people, and casting out demons. Notice Matthew’s version of Jesus’s commission to the 12 disciples:

Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.... These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ *Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.*” (Matthew 10:1, 5–8 NIV, emphasis added)

Many Christians quote the last sentence from the above passage in order to encourage people to give—whether money, time, energy, or abilities—but notice the specific context in which Jesus made that statement. He gave them authority to drive out demons and to heal diseases and sicknesses, then He told them to freely give what they had received *by putting that authority into action*. (As we will see, Jesus gave *all* Christians that same authority in the Great Commission, so we *all* should freely give what we have received by putting that authority into action.) Jesus knew that His time on earth was limited, and in the above two passages, He was training the disciples to carry on His ministry after He was gone.

How do we know that Jesus was training the disciples to carry on His earthly ministry? Notice what He said:

As You [Father] sent Me [Jesus] into the world, I also have sent them [the disciples] into the world. (John 17:18, emphasis and extra words added)

So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! *As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.*” (John 20:21, emphasis added)

Jesus said that He had come to earth to do the works that the Father had sent Him to do (e.g., John 4:34; 6:38; 9:4). In the above two verses, Jesus said that as the Father had sent Him, He had sent the disciples. In other words, what the Father had sent Jesus to do, Jesus then sent the disciples to do. John 20:21 (above) took place after Jesus was resurrected, so His intention was that the disciples were to continue His earthly ministry after He ascended back to heaven. This will be confirmed even further in a moment when we study the Great Commission in detail.

Shortly after Jesus commissioned the original disciples to function in His ministry on their own, He then commissioned dozens more disciples to go out and function in His ministry on their own:

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them....“Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you....’” The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, *even the demons submit to us in your name.*” (Luke 10:1–2, 9, 17 NIV, emphasis added)

These 72 people are never named, and they are never referred to by any title, such as apostles. They were simply dozens of average, ordinary believers, willing to step out in faith. In the above passage, we see the same things that we see in Jesus’s ministry and in His commission to the 12 apostles, which tells us that preaching the Gospel, healing people, and casting out demons were never meant to be just

for the apostles to do. It also further confirms that physical healing and casting out demons were an *important* part of Jesus's ministry, not an afterthought or a minor aspect of His ministry as Christians sometimes claim.

Pastors and Bible teachers refer to Jesus's third commission as the Great Commission because He gave these commands to the entire Church (with a capital C, meaning *all* Christians). We are still in the Church Age, which began on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:1–4 and will end at the Rapture,⁶ so the Great Commission applies to us modern Christians as well.

This is Matthew's version of the Great Commission:

Then Jesus came to them and said, "*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*" (Matthew 28:18–20 NIV, emphasis added)

In the above passage, Jesus commanded us to go into all the nations, making new disciples and baptizing them. Many Christians and ministries are out there fulfilling this call to evangelism. But as a whole, the Church has either missed or misunderstood what Jesus commanded next in that very same sentence. He specifically told us that as we go and make new disciples, we must teach them to obey *everything* that the original disciples had been commanded to do. As we have seen, this includes preaching the Gospel, healing the sick, and casting out demons.

Jesus said that He will be with us always, to the very end of the age (Matthew 28:20, above), which, in context, implies that He will be with us to help us carry out His commands. We must continue His earthly ministry while we wait for His return at the end of the age.

6 Dave Root, "The Rapture of the Church—Part One," Vivid Christianity, accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.vividchristianity.com/RaptureOfTheChurch1.htm>.

Before we look further at Jesus's final commands to the Church, some background information will be useful.

Scholars have made deductions and educated guesses about who wrote the books of the New Testament, but no one knows for certain who the actual authors were.⁷ Yet the 27 books in the New Testament are all canonized Scripture, which means that they are all officially recognized as the Word of God.

For example, the four Gospels are called Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, but these books are actually anonymous.⁸ In fact, all four Gospels appear to have been compiled from a number of different sources, such as eyewitness accounts, written documents, and oral tradition.⁹ In other words, portions of the Gospels appear to have been copied from other sources, and we don't know who those sources were.

In a moment, we'll examine Mark's version of the Great Commission (Mark 16:15–20), but first, we need to address the claim that this is part of a disputed passage. The issue is that two of the three oldest manuscripts from the fourth century do not contain Mark 16:9–20, although at least one of them contains space for those verses. Most of the other ancient manuscripts provide support for the inclusion of verses 9–20, and these verses are included in some form in all modern versions of the Bible.¹⁰

Some of the early Christian fathers, including Justin Martyr around AD 148, Tatian around AD 170, and Irenaeus around AD 175, quoted from verses 9–20, indicating that these verses were known and

7 Dave Root, "Who Wrote the New Testament?," Vivid Christianity, accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.vividchristianity.com/WhoWroteTheNewTestament.htm>.

8 John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty [New Testament Edition]* (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1983), 15, 95, 199, 267; *NIV Study Bible [Personal Size, Paperback, Red Letter Edition]* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2011), 1584, 1648, 1695, 1756.

9 Walvoord and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 13–15, 96–98, 199–201; *NIV Study Bible*, 1583.

10 "Verse-by-Verse Bible Commentary, Mark 16:9," [StudyLight.org](https://www.studydrive.org/commentary/mark/16-9.html), accessed May 14, 2023, <https://www.studydrive.org/commentary/mark/16-9.html>. See Smith's Bible Commentary, Dr. Constable's Expository Notes, and Gann's Commentary on the Bible for discussions on the authenticity of Mark 16:9–20, and note that all commentators treat this passage as Scripture.

accepted in the earliest days of Christianity.¹¹ Without verses 9–20, Mark’s Gospel ends at verse 16:8 on a note of fear, never even mentioning anything that happened after Jesus’s resurrection. Therefore, many scholars believe that the original ending of Mark might have been lost or destroyed and then added back in by scribes. This would explain why some of the wording in this passage suggests that Mark did not write verses 9–20 himself.

So Bible scholars don’t know who wrote verses 9–20, and because of this, it is sometimes referred to as a disputed passage.

But again, Bible scholars are unable to determine with certainty who wrote any of the Gospels or other books of the New Testament, and portions of the Gospels appear to have been copied from other sources of which we know nothing.

The primary issue, though, is whether Mark 16:9–20 is canonized Scripture. If it is, then we must believe it and obey it as the Word of God. A prominent Bible commentary says this about those verses:

Verses 9–20, though written or compiled by an anonymous Christian writer, *are historically authentic and are part of the New Testament canon....* Possibly these verses were brief extracts from the post-Resurrection accounts found in the other three Gospels and were known through oral tradition to have the approval of the Apostle John who lived till near the end of the first century. Thus the material was included early enough in the transmission process to gain acceptance by the church *as part of canonical Scripture. These verses are consistent with the rest of Scripture.*¹² (emphasis added)

It doesn’t really matter who wrote Mark 16:9–20, just as it doesn’t really matter who wrote the Gospels or any other books of the Bible. What matters is that God included this passage in the canon of Scripture, and therefore, we must believe it and obey it.

11 Walvoord and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, “Mark 16:9.”

12 Ibid.

Jesus said this in Mark's version of the Great Commission:

He said to them, "*Go* into all the world and *preach* the gospel to all creation. Whoever *believes* and is baptized will be *saved*, but whoever does *not* believe will be *condemned*. And these *signs* will accompany *those who believe*: In my name they will *drive out demons*; they will *speak in new tongues*; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will *place their hands on sick people, and they will get well*." After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. *Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.* (Mark 16:15–20 NIV, emphasis added)

We saw that Jesus had an earthly ministry consisting of evangelism, healing, and casting out demons, and in Matthew's version of the Great Commission, we saw that the Church has been commanded to continue this ministry until He returns for us at the end of the age.

Remember, God is our Father, and Christians are His adopted children, so we are in a spiritual family. We're all automatically in the *family* business, which is described in the Great Commission. The family business consists of displaying God's love, compassion, and power by talking to people about Jesus, healing people, casting out demons, and demonstrating miracles, all with the goal of setting the captives free by leading people to faith in Jesus. He is our boss in the family business, and like all bosses, He gives assignments to His people. Keep listening for your assignments throughout the day, every day, to carry out your part in the family business.¹³

With that in mind, here is a point-by-point breakdown of Mark's version of the Great Commission:

13 Dave Root, "How to Discern God's Guidance," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/HowToDiscernGodsGuidance.htm>.

- Jesus said to go into all the world. Undoubtedly, most pastors and Bible scholars would agree that this applies to us today.
- Jesus said to preach the Gospel. Undoubtedly, most pastors and Bible scholars would agree that this applies to us today.
- Jesus said that whoever believes and is baptized will be saved. Undoubtedly, most pastors and Bible scholars would agree that this applies to us today, even if they have different opinions concerning the meaning and method of baptism.
- Jesus said that whoever does not believe will be condemned. Undoubtedly, most pastors and Bible scholars would agree that this applies to all non-Christians today.
- Jesus said that signs will accompany those who believe. The above points all apply to us today, so this must apply to us today as well. Otherwise, we're being inconsistent in the way that we interpret Scripture.
- Jesus said that believers will drive out demons. This applies to us today as well, and in Part 2, you will learn how to cast out demons that cause sicknesses and other infirmities.
- Jesus said that believers will speak in new tongues. This also applies to us today as we will see in chapters 2 and 5.¹⁴
- Jesus said that believers can experience divine protection. This applies to us today as this commentary describes:

In the Greek the first two clauses in Mark 16:18 may be understood as conditional clauses with the third clause as the conclusion. An interpretive rendering would be, “And *if they be compelled* to pick up snakes with their hands and *if they should be compelled* to drink deadly poison, it shall by no means (*ou me*, emphatic negative; cf. 13:2) harm them.” This promise of immunity by *divine protection* in either situation *refers to occasions*

14 Dave Root, “Praying in the Spirit Means Speaking in Tongues,” Vivid Christianity, accessed July 2, 2021, <https://www.vividchristianity.com/PrayingInTheSpiritMeansSpeakingInTongues.htm>.

when persecutors would force believers to do these things....the New Testament records no actual instance of either of the experiences described here.¹⁵ (emphasis added)

As this prominent commentary explains, the New Testament does not describe anyone picking up snakes (notice that Paul did not pick up the viper on purpose in Acts 28:3–6) or drinking deadly poison, so we have no scriptural support for interpreting these as commands that Christians must follow. Instead, these are examples of the divine protection that is available to us as we properly obey the Great Commission.

- Jesus said that believers will place their hands on the sick and they will get well. Again, the rest of the passage applies to us today, and therefore, this must also apply to us today. Otherwise, we're being inconsistent in the way that we're interpreting Scripture.

How Did the Apostles Interpret the Great Commission?

The original 12 apostles lived and traveled with Jesus during His earthly ministry, learning from Him. Therefore, when Jesus gave them the Great Commission just before physically ascending to heaven, they had a much clearer understanding of His meaning and intention than those of us who lived hundreds or thousands of years after the fact. The apostle Paul also learned Christian truths from Jesus (Ephesians 3:1–3; Galatians 1:11–12), writing approximately half of the New Testament,¹⁶ so he, too, had a much better understanding of Jesus's commission to the Church than we do.

Therefore, in order to be certain that we are properly interpreting what Jesus commanded us to do, it is helpful to examine how the apostles and other Christians interpreted the Great Commission. If

15 Walvoord and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 196.

16 Dave Root, "Who Wrote the New Testament?," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/WhoWroteTheNewTestament.htm>.

the Great Commission involves preaching the Gospel in all the world, baptizing new believers, demonstrating miraculous signs and wonders, casting out demons, speaking in tongues, and healing the sick (as in Mark 16:15–20, above), then we should expect to see *all* those things happening after the cross.

In fact, the New Testament describes *all* those things happening after the cross. The apostles interpreted the Great Commission (the family business) to mean that Christians should continue Jesus's earthly ministry until He returns for us. This is why, throughout the book of Acts, we can find numerous cases of preaching the Gospel in all the world, baptizing new believers, demonstrating miraculous signs and wonders, casting out demons, speaking in tongues, and healing the sick just as Jesus commanded us to do. (The book of Acts is a chronological account of the spread of Christianity during the first 30 years after the cross.¹⁷)

Since Jesus has not yet returned, it is our responsibility to keep His earthly ministry going. Keep in mind that some of the healings and miracles in the New Testament were done by people who were not apostles, demonstrating that the mission of the New Testament Church extends to *all* Jesus's disciples, which includes us.

For example, Philip was not an apostle (Acts 6:2–6), yet he preached the Gospel, healed the sick, cast out demons, and performed signs and miracles, so he was carrying on Jesus's earthly ministry in obedience to the Great Commission:

Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. *Philip* went down to a city in Samaria and *proclaimed the Messiah there*. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the *signs* he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. For with shrieks, *impure spirits came out of many*, and many who were paralyzed or lame were *healed*....Simon himself believed and was baptized. *And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the*

17 Ibid.

great signs and miracles he saw. (Acts 8:4–7, 13 NIV, emphasis added)

Similarly, Ananias is never referred to as an apostle (Acts 9:10–18, below), so he was an ordinary Christian just like any of us. Yet he healed Saul of Tarsus, later known as the apostle Paul (Acts 13:9):

Now there was *a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias*; and to him the Lord said in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” So the Lord said to him, “Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called *Saul of Tarsus*, for behold, he is praying. And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.”....And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and *laying his hands on him* he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, *has sent me that you may receive your sight* and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and *he received his sight at once*; and he arose and was baptized. (Acts 9:10–12, 17–18, emphasis added)

Stephen was not an apostle (Acts 6:2–6), yet he did great wonders and signs:

And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. (Acts 6:8, emphasis added)

In addition, we’re told that various Christians (other than apostles) will be given spiritual gifts, such as miracles, healings, prophecy, tongues, and interpretation of tongues:

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 faith by the same Spirit, *to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another 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. (1 Corinthians 12:7–11, emphasis added)

And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second *prophets*, third teachers, then *miracles*, then *gifts of healing*, of helping, of guidance, *and of different kinds of tongues*. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? (1 Corinthians 12:28–30 NIV, emphasis added)

All the gifts of the Spirit are still available today as we will see in chapter 2, and they are given to Christians in order to help us carry out the Great Commission. You will learn more about spiritual gifts in chapter 5.

Notice that as the apostle Paul carried out the family business, he didn't do it merely with wise and persuasive words, but instead, he demonstrated the *power* of God in order to convince people:

My message and my preaching were *not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power*, so that your faith might *not* rest on human wisdom, *but on God's power*. (1 Corinthians 2:4–5 NIV, emphasis added)

In fact, Paul said that the kingdom of God is *not* a matter of talk but of *power*:

But I will come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, *but what power they have*. For the kingdom of God is *not* a matter of talk *but of power*. (1 Corinthians 4:19–20 NIV, emphasis added)

In the above passage, Paul said that he would put certain arrogant people to the test to determine what *power* they had, because the kingdom of God is not a matter of what we say; it's a matter of the power of God working through us. As we will see in a moment, God uses miracles to confirm a Christian's message, but only *if* the message is what He wants them to teach. In the above passage, if Paul had said that the kingdom is about talking with no power, then it would have simply been Paul's words versus the arrogant people's words. Paul's point was that it's not just about talking; it's about *power*, so God's power would either confirm Paul or the arrogant people. God's power will also confirm Christians' messages today.¹⁸

On another occasion, Paul again said that he did not use words alone to proclaim the Gospel, but instead, he demonstrated the *power* of the Holy Spirit:

For our gospel did not come to you *in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit*. (1 Thessalonians 1:5, emphasis added)

Furthermore, Paul said that he used signs and wonders through the *power* of the Holy Spirit to *fully* proclaim the Gospel:

¹⁸ Dave Root, "Cheat Sheet for Conversations with Christians," Vivid Christianity, accessed May 22, 2023, <https://www.vividchristianity.com/CheatSheet.htm>. See section #16.

I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done—*by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God*. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have *fully* proclaimed the gospel of Christ. (Romans 15:18–19 NIV, emphasis added)

Neither Paul nor the other apostles nor the ordinary Christians that we have seen in the New Testament relied on words alone to bring people to Jesus.

To further confirm this point, when the apostles Peter and John were released from jail after miraculously healing a man (Acts 4:1–3, 21–22), they and the other believers prayed to God (Acts 4:23–31). Part of what they prayed for was this:

Now, Lord, look on their threats, and *grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus*. (Acts 4:29–30, emphasis added)

Notice that they *specifically* prayed for healings, signs, and wonders to accompany the preaching of the Gospel. Immediately after their prayer, this is what happened:

And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and *they spoke the word of God with boldness....And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus*. (Acts 4:31, 33, emphasis added)

The pattern in these passages is that healings, miracles, signs, and wonders are meant to be used in evangelism. That is the family business we're in. There's not a shred of scriptural evidence that any of that was meant to come to an end during or shortly after the first century as we will see.

Neither Paul nor the other apostles nor the ordinary Christians that we have seen in the New Testament relied on words alone to bring people to Jesus, because the Great Commission does not tell us to preach the Gospel with words alone. Recall that Jesus specifically commanded the Church body to demonstrate the *power* of the Holy Spirit through signs and wonders, which include healing people and casting out demons. (Notice that Jesus performed signs and wonders by healing people in John 4:46–54 and 6:2.)

Paul said that Jews wanted signs, and Greeks (Gentiles) wanted wisdom. Instead of refusing to give them what they wanted, he specifically said that Christ is *both* the power and the wisdom of God:

Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. (1 Corinthians 1:22–24 NIV, emphasis added)

As we have seen, Paul and others used both words *and the power of the Holy Spirit* when they preached the Gospel (in obedience to the Great Commission).

In fact, Paul specifically said that the Gospel is *the power of God* for salvation, and we see *the power of God* confirming the preaching of the Gospel:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes,

for the Jew first and also for the Greek. (Romans 1:16, emphasis added)

Then the disciples went out and *preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.* (Mark 16:20 NIV, emphasis added)

This is another example of God's power working through Paul:

Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, *so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.* (Acts 19:11–12, emphasis added)

Immediately after the above passage, we see a number of Jews trying to cast out demons by invoking the name of “Jesus whom Paul preaches.” Some of them were badly beaten by a demonized man, and due to these incidents, the Gospel message spread widely (Acts 19:11–20). So once again, in Acts 19:11–20, we see *the power of the Holy Spirit* enabling the spread of the Gospel message.

Further, in the context of salvation and the authority and blood of Jesus, we again see *the power of God* and the word of Christians' testimony (i.e., witnessing or evangelism):

And I heard a great voice saying in the heaven, “Now did come *the salvation, and the power, and the reign, of our God, and the authority of His Christ, because cast down was the accuser of our brethren, who is accusing them before our God day and night; and they did overcome him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life—unto death.*” (Revelation 12:10–11 YLT, emphasis added)

Notice that Paul specifically said that *God's power* is for us:

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 1:18–20 NIV, emphasis added)

For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...that He would grant you...to be *strengthened with might* [literally, “power”¹⁹] *through His Spirit in the inner man*....Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, *according to the power that works in us*. (Ephesians 3:14, 16, 20–21, emphasis and extra words added)

In the above passages, Paul specifically said that *God's power is for us who believe*, which means that it is for *all* Christians. He prayed that the eyes of our hearts would be enlightened to this fact.

He also pointed out to Timothy that God has given us a spirit (or *the Spirit* in some translations) of *power*, love, and a sound mind and implied that we can be helped in our sufferings in ministry by *the power of God*:

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but *of power and of love and of a sound mind*. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel *according to the power of God*. (2 Timothy 1:7–8, emphasis added)

¹⁹ “Passage Lookup: Ephesians 3:16,” Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studyLight.org), accessed April 22, 2023, <https://www.studyLight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Ephesians+3%3A16>. Click the word *might* or *power* and see the definitions.

He said the same things to the church at Corinth about God's *power* and love in the context of our sufferings in ministry:

But in all things we commend ourselves *as ministers of God*: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, *by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, by the word of truth, by the power of God.* (2 Corinthians 6:4–7, emphasis added)

But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for *my power is made perfect in weakness.*” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, *so that Christ's power may rest on me.* That is why, *for Christ's sake*, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For *when I am weak, then I am strong.* (2 Corinthians 12:9–10 NIV, emphasis added)

Therefore, the spirit (or Spirit) of *power* that we have been given (2 Timothy 1:7–8, above) is made perfect in weakness and helps us in our sufferings in our ministries. (If you recall, Jesus said that divine protection is available to us as we carry out the Great Commission.) Again, *God's power is for us who believe* (Ephesians 1:18–20, above).

In addition, notice that Jesus told the apostles *not* to forbid anyone from casting out demons and doing miracles in His name:

Now John answered Him, saying, “Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us *casting out demons* in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us.” But Jesus said, “*Do not forbid him*, for no one who works a *miracle* in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me.” (Mark 9:38–39, emphasis added)

Bible commentaries²⁰ tend to point out that the man casting out demons was probably a believer (possibly one of the 72 believers in Luke 10:1–17), even though he was not one of the apostles who followed Jesus everywhere He went. The above passage shows that miracles, healings, and casting out demons were never meant to be just for the apostles to do. *All* Christians should be doing these, even today.

The miraculous healing of one person can bring numerous people to Christ. For example, when Peter and John healed a lame man, all the people ran to them, greatly amazed (Acts 3:11), and many people believed (Acts 4:4). When Philip, who was not an apostle, healed people and cast out demons, the crowd of people paid close attention to what he said, and all the people believed and were baptized (Acts 8:5–13). When Peter healed a paralyzed man, all those who lived at Lydda and Sharon turned to the Lord (Acts 9:32–35). When Peter raised Tabitha from the dead, this became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord (Acts 9:36–42). When Paul healed a lame man in Lystra, the crowd thought that he and Barnabas were gods (Acts 14:8–13).

In the same way, when *you* heal people wherever you go, it will get people’s attention, resulting in the salvation of some. This is what you have been authorized to do in the Great Commission. This is the family business you’re in.

In fact, we should have such an expectation of seeing healings and miracles right in front of our eyes that we are not surprised in the least when they happen. If you go through the New Testament and examine every instance in which Jesus, the apostles, or ordinary Christians performed healings and miracles, notice that they were neither astonished nor jumped for joy when a healing or miracle happened. Jesus expected healings and miracles because those were part of what the Father had sent Him to do. The apostles and other Christians expected healings and miracles because Jesus explicitly commanded the Church body to go out and do the *same* things that He had been sent to do as we saw earlier.

20 “Verse-by-Verse Bible Commentary, Mark 9:38,” [StudyLight.org](https://www.studydrive.org/commentary/mark/9-38.html), accessed May 11, 2023, <https://www.studydrive.org/commentary/mark/9-38.html>.

When Jesus, the apostles, and other Christians performed healings and miracles in the New Testament, we never see any reaction from them. They simply used these to help preach the Gospel.

We should cultivate that same expectation of seeing healings and miracles right in front of our eyes: in shopping malls, on the streets, in people's homes, and wherever we happen to be. For example, try this: Stand up and hold a soft unbreakable object in front of you. Release the object and let it drop to the floor, paying close attention to your reaction. You probably had no reaction whatsoever because the result was exactly what you expected to happen. You weren't surprised, amazed, or astonished that it fell to the ground, and therefore, you didn't jump for joy and praise the Lord and get all excited. This is why we never see any reaction from Jesus or the apostles when they did miracles and healings because they fully expected these results, just as you fully expected the object to fall to the floor.

We are members of the *same* Church body that the apostles and other Christians in the New Testament were members of, and we have received the *same* commission that they did, directly from Jesus as we saw earlier. Some of us will be called to carry out this commission where we live and work, and some of us will be called to travel to distant places. We each have an individual path laid out for us by the Lord, so we will all participate in the family business in different ways.

The point here is that every Christian is authorized to talk to people about Jesus, heal people, and cast out demons. This doesn't mean that we will all become traveling preachers like Paul and Philip; it simply means that we should make ourselves available for any opportunities that God places in front of us, whether they come daily or rarely.

That is exactly what Jesus did, and we have been commanded to live as He did:

Whoever claims to live in him *must live as Jesus did*. (1 John 2:6 NIV, emphasis added)

Jesus told the disciples that they would be His witnesses (Acts 1:8), but we have seen that their witnessing (evangelism) included doing miracles, healings, and casting out demons.

If you recall, Jesus was sent to fulfill the following prophecy by proclaiming the Gospel and healing people:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (Luke 4:18–19 NIV)

As we have seen, it is our responsibility to continue Jesus's ministry by doing what He did, which includes both witnessing (evangelism) and demonstrating the power of the Holy Spirit.

The apostle John used miracles for evangelism as well, because he said that he had recorded Jesus's miracles specifically so that people would believe that Jesus is the Son of God:

And truly Jesus did *many other signs* in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; *but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.* (John 20:30–31, emphasis added)

Even Jesus didn't rely on words alone to convince people to believe Him, but instead, He repeatedly told people that they should believe Him because of His miracles, which He referred to as His "works"²¹:

Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do

21 "Verse-by-Verse Bible Commentary, John 10:25," [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/john/10-25.html>.

not believe. *The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me.*" (John 10:24–25, emphasis added)

If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, *believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.* (John 10:37–38, emphasis added)

But although *He had done so many signs before them*, they did not *believe* in Him. (John 12:37, emphasis added)

Think about this for a moment: Are any of us *better* at sharing the Gospel than Jesus or the apostles were? Probably not. Yet Jesus and the apostles used *miracles* to convince people to believe in Him. In the Great Commission, as we saw, Jesus specifically told the Church body to do the *same* things that He did, which is why the apostles used miracles for evangelism and why *we* are meant to use miracles for evangelism.

In fact, Jesus stated it even more clearly and directly so that we couldn't possibly miss His meaning and intention, again referring to miracles as His "works"²²:

Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves. Most assuredly, I say to you, *he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do*, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. *If you love Me, keep My commandments.* (John 14:11–15, emphasis added)

22 "Verse-by-Verse Bible Commentary, John 14:11," [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/commentary/john/14-11.html), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/john/14-11.html>.

In the above passage, Jesus said that *anyone* who believes in Him—including you—can do the *same* things that He did and even greater things.

The author of the book of Hebrews pointed out that God Himself uses signs, wonders, and miracles for evangelistic purposes (confirming the message of salvation):

How shall we escape if we neglect *so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit*, according to His own will? (Hebrews 2:3–4, emphasis added)

Jesus said on another occasion that His miracles should have caused people to repent, referring to the miracles as His “mighty works”²³:

Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For *if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes*. But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for *if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day*. But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.” (Matthew 11:20–24, emphasis added)

23 “Verse-by-Verse Bible Commentary, Matthew 11:20,” [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/commentary/matthew/11-20.html), accessed April 13, 2023, <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/matthew/11-20.html>.

So once again we see Jesus using miracles to convince people to repent, and in the Great Commission, He specifically told the Church body to do the *same* things that He did. This is why the Church (the body of Christ) needs to be operating in *all* the spiritual gifts:

Now *to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good*. To one there is given through the Spirit *a message of wisdom*, to another *a message of knowledge* by means of the same Spirit, to another *faith* by the same Spirit, to another *gifts of healing* by that one Spirit, to another *miraculous powers*, to another *prophecy*, to another *distinguishing between spirits*, to another *speaking in different kinds of tongues*, and to still another *the interpretation of tongues*. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines. (1 Corinthians 12:7–11 NIV, emphasis added)

All spiritual gifts are needed in the body of Christ in order for us to continue Jesus's earthly ministry until He returns. We'll look more closely at spiritual gifts in chapter 5.

Finally, this passage is quite revealing:

Therefore, *leaving the discussion of the elementary principles* of Christ, let us go on to perfection, *not laying again the foundation* of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, *of laying on of hands*, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. (Hebrews 6:1–2, emphasis added)

The above passage mentions several *elementary* and *foundational* principles, and included in this list is the laying on of hands. As we'll see in chapter 6, the laying on of hands was most frequently used in the process of healing in the New Testament. The laying on of hands is grouped with repentance, faith, baptisms, the resurrection of the

dead, and eternal judgment as an elementary and foundational principle, and therefore, the laying on of hands was meant to be taught to every Christian, even today. It is no less important than the other principles listed above. Later, we will see how the laying on of hands is involved in healing.

Summary and Final Thoughts

Jesus said that *signs will follow* those who *believe* (Mark 16:17).

Jesus said that those who *believe* will *lay hands on the sick and they will be healed* (Mark 16:18).

Jesus said that *anyone* who *believes* in Him will be able to do the *same* things that He did (John 14:12).

We simply need to *believe* and step out in faith, just as Peter stepped out of the boat in faith and walked on water (Matthew 14:29).

Remember, the New Testament describes the apostles and other Christians going into all the world preaching the Gospel, healing the sick, casting out demons, and demonstrating signs and wonders, just as Jesus commanded us to do. In chapter 2, we'll see that these have never ceased or died out. These are all part of our family business.

For example, Paul urged people to imitate him and to follow his example as he followed Christ's example (1 Corinthians 4:16–17; 11:1; Philippians 3:17; 4:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:5–7). Notice that he never said to imitate only the *non-miraculous* things he did, he never said to imitate him but *only* until the end of the first century, and he never said to imitate him but *only* until the New Testament was completed. (We will look at these issues in more detail in chapter 2.) In his letter to the Philippians (3:17 and 4:9), Paul specifically said that his life was an *example* for them, a *pattern* for them to follow, and that they should do or put into practice what they had *seen* him do. In numerous passages that we have examined, what was the pattern of Paul's life, the pattern he repeatedly said that *all* Christians should imitate and put into practice? The pattern of Paul's Christian life was trying to set the captives free by talking to people about Jesus and demonstrating

the power of the Holy Spirit, exactly as Jesus commanded us to do in the Great Commission. That is the family business we're in as children of God.

We've seen that healing was *not* an afterthought or a minor aspect of Jesus's ministry as many people claim. Instead, healing was *very* important to the Lord, and He never withheld healing from anyone who wanted it. Instead, this is what He did:

- He healed them *all* (Matthew 4:23–24).
- He healed them *all* (Matthew 8:16).
- He healed them *all* (Matthew 9:35).
- He healed them *all* (Matthew 12:15).
- He healed them *all* (Matthew 14:14).
- He healed them *all* (Matthew 14:35–36).
- He healed them *all* (Matthew 15:30).
- He healed them *all* (Matthew 19:2).
- He healed them *all* (Matthew 21:14).

Jesus still heals people, but now He does it through any Christian who will step out in faith, armed with the proper knowledge, which this book will provide.

2

Common Questions and Objections

Many people believe that miracles and healings died out in the first century. However, when I studied the reasons why they believe this, I discovered that there's not a shred of scriptural support for their view.²⁴

To understand why and to increase your faith for healing, we will examine some common objections and the proof texts that people use when they claim that healing died out in the first century. Then, we will consider some questions that often come up concerning healing.

Objection #1:

Paul's thorn in the flesh was never healed, so healing was already dying out in the first century.

To begin with, we should determine what this thorn in the flesh was. In fact, Paul told us exactly what it was: a messenger or angel of the devil (2 Corinthians 12:7, below).

Paul didn't use a Greek word for sickness or injury concerning his thorn, but instead he used the Greek word for messenger or angel (*ángelos*), and he specifically said that it was a demonic angel:

24 Dave Root, "All Gifts of the Spirit Are Available Today," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/AllGiftsOfTheSpiritAreAvailableToday.htm>.

And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, *a thorn in the flesh* was given to me, *a messenger* [ángelos] *of Satan* to buffet [kolaphizō] me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I *pleaded* with the Lord three times *that it might depart* [aphístēmi] *from me*. And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for *My strength is made perfect in weakness* [asthénéia].” Therefore most gladly I will rather *boast* in my *infirmities* [asthénéia], that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take *pleasure* in *infirmities* [asthénéia], in *reproaches*, in *needs*, in *persecutions*, in *distresses*, for Christ’s sake. For when I am *weak* [asthenéō], then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:7–10, emphasis and Greek words²⁵ added)

When people are sick or injured, they usually go to a doctor, use medication, rest, or take other steps to get well. But notice that Paul did none of these things concerning his thorn. Instead, he boasted and took pleasure in it. Therefore, if we use Paul’s example in the above passage to argue that divine healing died out in the first century and is not for today, then we should follow his example by taking pleasure in our infirmities rather than taking steps to get well. Otherwise, we’re being inconsistent in how we’re applying the above passage.

Just to be clear here, there is nothing wrong with going to a doctor, using medication, resting, or taking other steps to get well. When we examine 1 Timothy 5:23 in Objection #3, we will see that Paul told Timothy to drink a little wine for medicinal purposes. My point is simply that if we’re going to use Paul’s thorn in the flesh as an example to show that healing died out in the first century and is not for today, then we should be consistent and actually follow Paul’s example in that passage.

However, Paul’s thorn had nothing to do with a sickness or injury.

25 “Passage Lookup: 2 Corinthians 12:7–10,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studydrive.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?search_form_type=interlinear&q1=2+Corinthians+12%253A7-10), accessed April 10, 2021, https://www.studydrive.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?search_form_type=interlinear&q1=2+Corinthians+12%253A7-10.

For example, notice that Paul did not ask God to *heal* him from this thorn, but instead, he asked God for it to *depart* from him. The Greek word *aphístēmi* translated as *depart* in the above passage is the same Greek word used in Acts 12:10 when an angel “departed” from Peter.²⁶ In the 13 other New Testament occurrences of this Greek word, it is never used in reference to sicknesses or injuries. (Here are all the references²⁷: Luke 2:37; 4:13; 8:13; 13:27; Acts 5:37–38; 15:38; 19:9; 22:29; 1 Timothy 4:1; 6:5; 2 Timothy 2:19; Hebrews 3:12.)

Paul was not asking for healing from any sickness or injury. Instead, he wanted this demonic angel to leave him because it tormented, buffeted, or harassed him (depending on the Bible translation). In addition to this verse (2 Corinthians 12:7), this Greek word occurs four more times in the New Testament, where it essentially means “to receive a beating.” (Here are the references²⁸: Matthew 26:67; Mark 14:65; 1 Corinthians 4:11; 1 Peter 2:20.) This Greek word is always used in the New Testament to describe someone beating or brutally mistreating someone else.

Furthermore, Paul did not just *ask* God to take this thorn away, but instead, he *pleaded* with God to take it away (2 Corinthians 12:7–10, above). The New Testament does not record a single example of anyone healing a person by pleading with God for the healing.²⁹ Jesus never pleaded with God to heal anyone, the apostles never pleaded with God to heal anyone, and no other Christians ever pleaded with God to heal anyone. This is not how healing works as we will see in chapters 3 and 4.

26 “Passage Lookup: Acts 12:10,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studyLight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Acts+12%3A10), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studyLight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Acts+12%3A10>.

27 “Old/New Testament Greek Lexical Dictionary: Entry for Strong’s #868 [Frequency Lists: KJV],” Bible Lexicons, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studyLight.org/lexicons/greek/868.html), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studyLight.org/lexicons/greek/868.html>.

28 “Old/New Testament Greek Lexical Dictionary: Entry for Strong’s #2852 [Frequency Lists: KJV],” Bible Lexicons, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studyLight.org/lexicons/greek/2852.html), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studyLight.org/lexicons/greek/2852.html>.

29 Dave Root, “Every Example of Healing in the New Testament,” <https://www.vividchristianity.com/EveryExampleOfHealingInTheNewTestament.htm>.

Paul was not pleading to be healed from any sickness or injury; he was pleading to be delivered from the persecutions and hardships that were brought on by this demon, this thorn in the flesh.

When Paul boasted about his thorn, he said that he was boasting about infirmities, reproaches, needs, persecutions, distresses, and anything else that made him weak because God's strength is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:7–10, above).

The English word *infirmities* in 2 Corinthians 12:7–10 (above) can imply sicknesses or injuries, and the Greek word for *infirmities* in that passage (*asthénéia*) is sometimes used for sickness in the New Testament.³⁰ But it's often defined as the *weakness* that results from sickness or other human frailties:

*Weakness, sickness....*In 2 Corinthians 11:30; 12:5, 9–10, Paul speaks of his *weaknesses* (*astheneías*) referring to the results of Adamic sin which, however, in no way should be overwhelming because the power of God is made manifest through our *weaknesses*.³¹ (emphasis added)

1. *want of strength, weakness...esp. feebleness, sickliness*
 2. *disease, sickness*
 3. *poverty*
 4. *in moral sense, feebleness, weakness*
 1. *to be weak, feeble, sickly...to be weak in limb*
 2. *to be needy...of those unable to pay taxes*
 3. *to be too weak to do a thing, not to be able*³²
- (emphasis added)

30 “Old/New Testament Greek Lexical Dictionary: Entry for Strong's #868 [Frequency Lists: KJV],” Bible Lexicons, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/lexicons/greek/868.html), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/lexicons/greek/868.html>.

31 Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, “*asthénéia* (G769)” (Chattanooga, Tennessee: AMG Publishers, 1992).

32 “Old/New Testament Greek Lexical Dictionary: Entry for Strong's #769 [Liddell-Scott-Jones Definitions],” Bible Lexicons, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/lexicons/greek/769.html), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/lexicons/greek/769.html>.

1. *want of strength, weakness, infirmity*
 - a. of the body
 1. its native *weakness and frailty*
 2. *feebleness* of health or sickness³³ (emphasis added)

Paul also used the Greek word *asthenéō* in that passage, which is defined as follows:

*To lack strength, be infirm, weak, feeble.*³⁴ (emphasis added)

1. *to be weak, feeble, to be without strength, powerless*
2. *to be weak* in means, needy, poor
3. *to be feeble, sick*³⁵ (emphasis added)

*To be weak, feeble.*³⁶ (emphasis in the original)

Again, the English translation as *infirmities* gives us the impression of sicknesses or injuries, but the Greek words that Paul used are primarily defined as being *weak* in some way, especially as Paul used them in 2 Corinthians 12:7–10 (above). In Objection #2, we will see that when Paul used the word *asthenéō* in his letters, the vast majority of the time, it meant “weak.”

For further confirmation that *infirmities* means “weaknesses” here, notice that Paul used both those Greek words several verses earlier in 2 Corinthians 11:24–30 when describing more of his sufferings and *weaknesses*:

33 “Old/New Testament Greek Lexical Dictionary: Entry for Strong’s #769 [Thayer’s Expanded Definition],” Bible Lexicons, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/lexicons/greek/769.html), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/lexicons/greek/769.html>.

34 Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, “*asthenéō* (G770).”

35 “Old/New Testament Greek Lexical Dictionary: Entry for Strong’s #770 [Word Definition: Thayer’s Definition],” Bible Lexicons, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/lexicons/greek/770.html), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/lexicons/greek/770.html>.

36 Ibid. See *Abbott-Smith Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*.

Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. Who is *weak* [*asthenéō*], and I do not feel *weak* [*asthenéō*]? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn? If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my *weakness* [*asthénēia*]. (2 Corinthians 11:24–30 NIV, emphasis and Greek words³⁷ added)

So Paul's thorn was a demon that harassed him with hardships and sufferings wherever he went. All this torment prevented Paul from becoming conceited or exalted so that God's power would be made perfect in Paul's weakness.

In order to fully understand what a thorn is, here are all the other passages in the Bible where we clearly see thorns in the flesh³⁸:

But if you do not drive out *the inhabitants of the land* from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain *shall be irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you* in the land where you dwell. (Numbers 33:55, emphasis added)

37 "Passage Lookup: 2 Corinthians 11:23–30," Strong's Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=2+Corinthians+11%3A23-30), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=2+Corinthians+11%3A23-30>.

38 "Word Search: thorn," Strong's Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=thorn), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=thorn>.

Know for certain that the Lord your God will no longer drive out *these nations* from before you. But *they shall be* snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and *thorns in your eyes*, until you perish from this good land which the Lord your God has given you. (Joshua 23:13, emphasis added)

“And you shall make no covenant with *the inhabitants of this land*; you shall tear down their altars.” But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this? Therefore I also said, “I will not drive them out before you; but *they shall be thorns in your side*, and their gods shall be a snare to you.” (Judges 2:2–3, emphasis added)

So Gideon said, “For this cause, when the LORD has delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, then *I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness* and with briers!”....And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth. (Judges 8:7, 16, emphasis added)

No longer will the people of Israel have *malicious neighbors who are painful briers and sharp thorns*. Then they will know that I am the Sovereign Lord. (Ezekiel 28:24 NIV, emphasis added)

Notice that throughout the Bible, every example of some form of thorn in the flesh always describes people bringing suffering upon other people. Paul made it clear that his thorn was a demon that was bringing suffering upon him, which is exactly the same way that a thorn in the flesh is used everywhere else in Scripture.

For all these reasons, Paul’s thorn in the flesh was *not* a physical infirmity that was never healed. Therefore, it does not imply in any way that divine healing was dying out in the first century.

Objection #2:
**Paul couldn't heal Trophimus, so healing
was already dying out in the first century.**

People sometimes assume that healing was dying out in the first century because they assume that Paul was unable to heal someone as we see here:

Erastus stayed in Corinth, but *Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick*. (2 Timothy 4:20, emphasis added)

The Greek word translated as *sick* is *asthenéo*,³⁹ which we saw in Objection #1 with the meaning of “weak.” In addition to 2 Timothy 4:20 (above), here are all the places where Paul used *asthenéo*⁴⁰:

And not being *weak* [*asthenéo*] in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. (Romans 4:19, emphasis and Greek word⁴¹ added)

For what the law could not do in that it was *weak* [*asthenéo*] through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh. (Romans 8:3, emphasis and Greek word⁴² added)

39 “Passage Lookup: 2 Timothy 4:20,” Strong's Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=2+Timothy+4%3A20), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=2+Timothy+4%3A20>.

40 “Old/New Testament Greek Lexical Dictionary: Entry for Strong's #770 [Frequency Lists: KJV],” Bible Lexicons, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/lexicons/greek/770.html), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/lexicons/greek/770.html>.

41 “Passage Lookup: Romans 4:19,” Strong's Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Romans+4%3A19), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Romans+4%3A19>.

42 “Passage Lookup: Romans 8:3,” Strong's Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Romans+8%3A3), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Romans+8%3A3>.

Receive one who is *weak* [*asthenéō*] in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is *weak* [*asthenéō*] eats only vegetables. (Romans 14:1–2, emphasis and Greek words⁴³ added)

It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made *weak* [*asthenéō*]. (Romans 14:21, emphasis and Greek word⁴⁴ added)

But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are *weak* [*asthenéō*]. For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? And because of your knowledge shall the *weak* [*asthenéō*] brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their *weak* [*asthenéō*] conscience, you sin against Christ. (1 Corinthians 8:9–12, emphasis and Greek words⁴⁵ added)

To my shame I admit that we were too *weak* [*asthenéō*] for that! (2 Corinthians 11:21 NIV, emphasis and Greek word⁴⁶ added)

43 “Passage Lookup: Romans 14:1–2,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Romans+14%3A1-2), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Romans+14%3A1-2>.

44 “Passage Lookup: Romans 14:21,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Romans+14%3A21), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Romans+14%3A21>.

45 “Passage Lookup: 1 Corinthians 8:9–12,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=1+Corinthians+8%3A9-12), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=1+Corinthians+8%3A9-12>.

46 “Passage Lookup: 2 Corinthians 11:21,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=2+Corinthians+11%3A21), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=2+Corinthians+11%3A21>.

Who is *weak* [*asthenéō*], and I am not *weak* [*asthenéō*]?
Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?
(2 Corinthians 11:29, emphasis and Greek words⁴⁷ added)

Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches,
in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake.
For when I am *weak* [*asthenéō*], then I am strong. (2
Corinthians 12:10, emphasis and Greek word⁴⁸ added)

Since you are demanding proof that Christ is speaking
through me. He is not *weak* [*asthenéō*] in dealing with you,
but is powerful among you. For to be sure, he was crucified
in weakness, yet he lives by God's power. Likewise, we are
weak [*asthenéō*] in him, yet by God's power we will live
with him in our dealing with you. (2 Corinthians 13:3–4
NIV, emphasis and Greek words⁴⁹ added)

For we are glad when we are *weak* [*asthenéō*] and you
are strong. (2 Corinthians 13:9, emphasis and Greek
word⁵⁰ added)

Since he was longing for you all, and was distressed
because you had heard that he was *sick* [*asthenéō*]. For
indeed he was *sick* [*asthenéō*] almost unto death; but God
had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest

47 “Passage Lookup: 2 Corinthians 11:29,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=2+Corinthians+11%3A29), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=2+Corinthians+11%3A29>.

48 “Passage Lookup: 2 Corinthians 12:10,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=2+Corinthians+12%3A10), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=2+Corinthians+12%3A10>.

49 “Passage Lookup: 2 Corinthians 13:3–4,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=2+Corinthians+13%3A3-4), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=2+Corinthians+13%3A3-4>.

50 “Passage Lookup: 2 Corinthians 13:9,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=2+Corinthians+13%3A9), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=2+Corinthians+13%3A9>.

I should have sorrow upon sorrow. (Philippians 2:26–27, emphasis and Greek words⁵¹ added)

As we can see in the above passages, Paul used the word *asthenéō* with the meaning of “weak” in his letters the vast majority of the time. Therefore, we should consider the possibility that Trophimus was *weak*, not sick, in Miletus. If so, was he weak in faith? Was he feeling mentally weak in the sense of being overworked, burned out, or overwhelmed? Was he physically weak or exhausted from traveling or other activities? Was he weak while recovering from an illness or injury, perhaps after Paul healed him from something? No one knows because his weakness, illness, recovery, or death is not mentioned anywhere else in the New Testament.⁵²

We should also consider the possibility that he was sick and that Paul didn’t heal him for some reason. Did Paul *try* to heal him but was unable to? If Trophimus was sick, did Paul hear about it as he was leaving Miletus when he had no time to go heal Trophimus? Did something else prevent Paul from going to Trophimus and healing him? Again, no one knows. Without any details, we can’t form any conclusions from this verse.

The only thing Paul tells us about this situation is that “Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick.” All he gives us are two short phrases without any explanation, just a quick summary of some events along the way, as if they were no big deal.

But imagine if, after decades of healing miracles, Paul had reached a point where healing was dying out. Is it reasonable to think that he would not mention it, that he would not take a moment to explain that the age of healing was passing away or to express some dismay that no one would be able to heal the sick any longer?

51 “Passage Lookup: Philippians 2:26–27,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Philippians+2%3A26-27), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Philippians+2%3A26-27>.

52 “Old/New Testament Greek Lexical Dictionary: Entry for Strong’s #5161 [Frequency Lists: KJV],” Bible Lexicons, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/lexicons/greek/5161.html), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/lexicons/greek/5161.html>.

We've seen a number of possible reasons why Trophimus was left weak or sick in Miletus, and none of them can be proven. Therefore, this verse doesn't support any argument either for or against the view that healing was dying out in the first century.

Objection #3:
Paul couldn't heal Timothy, so healing
was already dying out in the first century.

Paul told Timothy to drink a little wine and not just water because Timothy was experiencing stomach problems:

Stop drinking only water, and *use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses*. (1 Timothy 5:23 NIV, emphasis added)

Based on this verse, some people assume that Paul couldn't heal Timothy, as if Paul were losing his ability to heal people. But clearly, Paul was *writing* to Timothy. Paul was nowhere near Timothy and could not have laid hands on him even if Timothy needed it, and therefore, this verse does not justify the view that Paul was losing his ability to heal people or that healing was dying out.

As we discovered in chapter 1, healing was never meant to be just for the apostles to do. It would be unreasonable to assume that Paul was the only person in the world at that time who could heal people, and yet he did not tell Timothy to go out and find someone to lay hands on him or tell Timothy to receive divine healing for himself. Paul simply told him to drink some wine.

Dating back to the time of the ancient Greeks, wine was used in a number of therapeutic applications—as a sedative, an antiseptic, a diuretic, a digestive aid, etc.⁵³ Whatever was bothering Timothy's

53 Piareta Nikolova, *et al.*, "Wine As A Medicine In Ancient Times," *Scripta Scientifica Pharmaceutica* 5, no. 2 (2018): 14–21, Medical University of Varna, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338481586_Wine_as_a_medicine_in_ancient_times.

stomach, Paul felt that all he needed to do was to stop drinking only water and to drink a little wine to help his stomach feel better.

This verse gives us no indication at all that Timothy had an issue that needed divine healing, so this verse doesn't teach that divine healing was dying out. In fact, we're told that Timothy had frequent illnesses (plural). The only way for Timothy to have had illnesses (plural) is if he somehow *recovered* from each illness, whether by natural means or divine healing. Either way, this verse does not imply that Timothy was never healed or that healing was dying out.

Objection #4:

**Paul had an eye condition that wasn't healed,
so healing was already dying out in the first century.**

People sometimes assume that Paul had an eye condition that was never healed. This assumption leads to a further assumption that healing must have been dying out in Paul's time.

Notice the NIV and KJV translations of Galatians 6:11:

See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand! (Galatians 6:11 NIV)

Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand. (Galatians 6:11 KJV)

Some people assume that Paul needed to write using large letters so that he could read what he had written because they assume that he had poor eyesight or possibly an eye injury. They assume that this eye condition was never healed, and they assume it's because healing was dying out.

When we examine the above translations of this verse, however, we can see that scholars hold various opinions as to Paul's meaning. Did he mean that he wrote each individual letter large enough that he could see it or that he had poor handwriting? Did he mean that he

had written an unusually long letter to the Galatians in his own hand? Scholars are divided on the answers to these questions.

A number of Bible commentaries⁵⁴ say that Paul wrote the entire book of Galatians by hand himself instead of dictating it to a scribe as he usually did (e.g., Tertius in Romans 16:22). Since this was unusual for Paul, it shows that he was conveying his deep caring and concern for the Galatians, which could easily be the reason why he pointed out that he had written the entire letter with his own hand. But again, Bible scholars do not all agree with each other about what Paul actually meant in Galatians 6:11 (above).

Earlier in the book of Galatians, Paul mentioned a physical infirmity that he had when he first preached to the Galatians:

As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you, and even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn....I can testify that, if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me.
(Galatians 4:13–15 NIV)

Numerous Bible commentaries⁵⁵ generally agree that in Galatians 4:15 (above), Paul probably did *not* intend to imply that he had an eye condition of any kind when he visited Galatia.

According to those Bible scholars, Paul's choices of Greek words, the order of the words, the emphasis given, and other reasons indicate that the phrase "you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me" is best understood as a figure of speech and should not be taken to mean that he had an infirmity in his eyes.

For example, if a modern English-speaking author writes that his new house cost him an arm and a leg, we would not assume that he has actually lost an arm and a leg. We recognize "it costs an arm and

54 "Verse-by-Verse Bible Commentary, Galatians 6:11," [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/commentary/galatians/6-11.html), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/galatians/6-11.html>.

55 "Verse-by-Verse Bible Commentary, Galatians 4:15," [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/commentary/galatians/4-15.html), accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/galatians/4-15.html>.

a leg” as a somewhat common figure of speech. Paul was probably using a similar figure of speech in the above passage according to those Bible scholars.

In fact, Jesus used a similar figure of speech as well:

If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. (Matthew 5:29)

We don’t have enough information to know if Paul had any kind of eye condition in Galatia, what his infirmity was, or whether it was ever healed.

According to the *NIV Study Bible*, Paul wrote Galatians in AD 48–49, AD 51–53, or AD 53–57, depending on whether his visit to Galatia was during his first, second, or third missionary journey. His first journey lasted from AD 46–48, his second lasted from AD 49–52, and his third lasted from AD 53–57, so he had the supposed eye condition mentioned in Galatians 4:13–15 (above) during one of these time frames.⁵⁶

Paul was shipwrecked near the island of Malta on his way to Rome in AD 60,⁵⁷ and this is what happened on the island:

Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold. *Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand.* When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, “This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, the goddess Justice has not allowed him to live.” *But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects.* The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead; but after

⁵⁶ *NIV Study Bible*, 1969, 2528.

⁵⁷ *NIV Study Bible*, 1879. Here we find that Paul arrived in Rome in AD 60, and Acts 28:1–9 took place shortly before his arrival in Rome.

waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god. There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and showed us generous hospitality for three days. His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, *placed his hands on him and healed him*. When this had happened, *the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured*. (Acts 28:1–9 NIV, emphasis added)

The native people of Malta were well aware of how dangerous the viper was that bit Paul. Based on long experience, they expected that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead. When nothing happened to Paul, they were so amazed that they said he was a god. So this was not a harmless snake; it was a poisonous viper.

Paul suffered no ill effects from the viper bite, although we're given no information about how he was kept safe or how he was healed. He then healed Publius's father, and then he healed the rest of the sick people on the island. We see no indication at all that healing was dying out at this point. Yet these healings took place *years* after Paul visited Galatia and *years* after he wrote the book of Galatians, possibly a decade or more later based on the dates that we saw a moment ago.

The passages in Galatians do not support the view that healing was dying out in Paul's time for the following reasons:

- We have no way of knowing what Paul's infirmity was in Galatians 4:13–15.
- We don't know if he was ever healed of the infirmity.
- Paul *was* healed or kept safe from the viper bite on Malta.
- Paul healed *every* sick person on Malta years after he wrote the book of Galatians, possibly a decade or more later.

Objection #5:

Miracles were performed for the purpose of founding the church and confirming the apostles' authority to write inspired Scripture. Miracles have passed away; they are no longer needed.

People sometimes claim that the so-called miraculous gifts of the Spirit were foundational, based on this passage:

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, *built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets*, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him *the whole building* is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. (Ephesians 2:19–21 NIV, emphasis added)

Their argument is that God's building was built on the *foundation* of the apostles, so the apostles were given certain spiritual gifts to help *found* the church. After the first century, miracles, miraculous gifts of the Spirit, and apostles were no longer needed because, at that point, the church was established and all New Testament Scripture had been written, according to that argument.

However, notice that Paul used the same imagery here that he used in the above passage:

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are *God's building*. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder *I have laid the foundation*, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. *For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is*

Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this *foundation* with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. (1 Corinthians 3:9–13, emphasis added)

This passage says that God's building was built on the *foundation* of Jesus Christ, so according to the above argument, we must conclude that Jesus was *foundational* and therefore is no longer needed after the first century. This is obviously wrong, which clearly shows the error in the argument that apostles and their spiritual gifts were foundational and therefore temporary (only for the first century).

We can confirm the error in the above argument even further by noticing what this passage says:

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, *not laying again the foundation* of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. (Hebrews 6:1–2, emphasis added)

In the above passage, we're told that repentance from dead works, faith toward God, the doctrine of baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment are *foundational*, so according to the above argument, we must conclude that they are no longer needed after the first century. Again, this is obviously wrong, which further demonstrates the error in the argument that apostles and their spiritual gifts were foundational and therefore temporary (only for the first century).

The above passages (Ephesians 2:19–21; 1 Corinthians 3:9–13; and Hebrews 6:1–2) all use the same Greek word *themélios*, meaning

“foundation.”⁵⁸ The foundations in the above passages were never intended to be temporary or only for the first century. For example, the building in which you live was probably built on a foundation, and it’s still there. It is wrong to assume that a foundation must be temporary. Consider that higher math is built on the *foundation* of addition and subtraction, yet we use addition and subtraction all our lives. It is completely wrong to assume that if something is a foundation, then it must be temporary.

Another argument is that the apostles had certain gifts of the Spirit in order to *confirm* their apostolic ministry or that the apostles did miracles because this *confirmed* their authority for writing inspired Scripture, based on passages such as these:

Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and *confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it*. (Mark 16:20 NIV, emphasis added)

Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in *the Lord, who was bearing witness* to the word of His grace, *granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands*. (Acts 14:3, emphasis added)

I persevered in demonstrating among you *the marks of a true apostle, including signs, wonders and miracles*. (2 Corinthians 12:12 NIV, emphasis added)

58 “Passage Lookup: Ephesians 2:20,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Ephesians+2%3A20), accessed March 18, 2023, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Ephesians+2%3A20>; “Passage Lookup: 1 Corinthians 3:10–12,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=1+Corinthians+3%3A10-12), accessed March 18, 2023, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=1+Corinthians+3%3A10-12>; “Passage Lookup: Hebrews 6:1,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Hebrews+6%3A1), accessed March 18, 2023, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Hebrews+6%3A1>. In all of these, click the word *foundation*.

How shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. *God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.* (Hebrews 2:3–4 NIV, emphasis added)

People sometimes claim that the apostles were given miraculous spiritual gifts for the purpose of confirming their authority to write inspired Scripture. This is a false claim, however, because *few* of the apostles wrote any New Testament books, and some books of the New Testament were written by people who were *not* apostles.⁵⁹

Signs, wonders, and miracles are some of the marks of an apostle (2 Corinthians 12:12, above). If God appoints any people as apostles today, then they will be able to do signs, wonders, and miracles.⁶⁰ Therefore, the fact that these confirm the authenticity of apostles does not in any way prove that signs, wonders, miracles, healings, or any gifts of the Spirit have ceased or died out. Recall that in chapter 1, we saw that *all* Christians are authorized to participate in Jesus's earthly ministry, demonstrating the power of God through signs, wonders, and miracles. Those have never ceased or died out.

Another reason why many people believe that certain gifts of the Spirit have passed away is because the apostle Paul specifically said that some gifts will pass away:

Love never fails. But *where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.* For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but *when completeness*

59 Dave Root, "Who Wrote the New Testament?," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/WhoWroteTheNewTestament.htm>.

60 Dave Root, "New Testament Passages Concerning Women—Part Two," Vivid Christianity, accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.vividchristianity.com/NewTestamentPassagesConcerningWomen2.htm>. My article shows that there's not a shred of scriptural evidence that apostles were only for the first century.

comes, what is in part disappears. (1 Corinthians 13:8–10 NIV, emphasis added)

In the above passage, Paul said that some (perhaps all) gifts of the Spirit will pass away when completeness comes.

Many people argue that the New Testament was finished in the first century, which was the completion of God’s revelation to us and was therefore the completeness to which Paul was referring.⁶¹ Since he said that certain spiritual gifts will pass away when completeness comes, the argument is that the so-called miraculous gifts of the Spirit passed away in the first century after the New Testament was completed.

However, completeness does not refer to the New Testament for these reasons:

- The Greek word for *completeness* (*téleios*⁶²) in the above passage is translated as *perfect* in other versions of the Bible, and one Greek dictionary defines it in this way:

Finished, that which has reached its end, term, limit; hence, complete, full, wanting in nothing.⁶³

If we believe that this Greek word in the above passage is referring to the completion of the New Testament, we are reading something into the passage that it does not actually say. Paul could easily have been referring to the completion of our salvation, which will occur when Jesus returns for us as in the following passage:

Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you *will carry it on to completion until*

61 “What does it mean that tongues will cease (1 Corinthians 13:8)?,” [CompellingTruth.org](https://www.compellingtruth.org/tongues-will-cess.html), accessed December 18, 2023, <https://www.compellingtruth.org/tongues-will-cess.html>.

62 “Passage Lookup: 1 Corinthians 13:10,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=1+Corinthians+13%3A10), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=1+Corinthians+13%3A10>.

63 Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, “*téleios* (G5046).”

the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:6 NIV, emphasis added)

The word *completeness* in 1 Corinthians 13:10 (above) can have various meanings, so it doesn't automatically mean that Paul was speaking of the completed New Testament.

- One way to understand what Paul meant by the Greek word *téleios* is to examine every place that he used it in Scripture. Apart from the verse we are studying (1 Corinthians 13:10), Paul used *téleios* seven other times⁶⁴ in the New Testament:

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and *perfect* [*téleios*] will of God. (Romans 12:2, emphasis and Greek word⁶⁵ added)

We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the *mature* [*téleios*], but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. (1 Corinthians 2:6 NIV, emphasis and Greek word⁶⁶ added)

Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding

64 "Old/New Testament Greek Lexical Dictionary: Entry for Strong's #5046 [Frequency Lists: KJV]," Bible Lexicons, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/lexicons/greek/5046.html), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/lexicons/greek/5046.html>.

65 "Passage Lookup: Romans 12:2," Strong's Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Romans+12%3A2), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Romans+12%3A2>.

66 "Passage Lookup: 1 Corinthians 2:6," Strong's Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=1+Corinthians+2%3A6), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=1+Corinthians+2%3A6>.

be *mature* [*téleios*]. (1 Corinthians 14:20, emphasis and Greek word⁶⁷ added)

Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become *mature* [*téleios*], attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:13 NIV, emphasis and Greek word⁶⁸ added)

Therefore let us, as many as are *mature* [*téleios*], have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. (Philippians 3:15, emphasis and Greek word⁶⁹ added)

He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully *mature* [*téleios*] in Christ. (Colossians 1:28 NIV, emphasis and Greek word⁷⁰ added)

Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand *perfect* [*téleios*]

67 “Passage Lookup: 1 Corinthians 14:20,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=1+Corinthians+14%3A20), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=1+Corinthians+14%3A20>.

68 “Passage Lookup: Ephesians 4:13,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Ephesians+4%3A13), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Ephesians+4%3A13>.

69 “Passage Lookup: Philippians 3:15,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Philippians+3%3A15), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Philippians+3%3A15>.

70 “Passage Lookup: Colossians 1:28,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Colossians+1%3A28), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Colossians+1%3A28>.

and complete in all the will of God. (Colossians 4:12, emphasis and Greek word⁷¹ added)

With the sole exception of Romans 12:2, every time Paul used the Greek word *téleios*, he was clearly referring to the maturity or perfection of Christians, which will not be fully complete until Jesus returns for us.⁷²

This gives us a valid reason for taking Paul's use of *téleios* in 1 Corinthians 13:10 (above) as another reference to the completion of our maturity when Jesus returns for us as Paul pointed out just two chapters later:

Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but *we will all be changed*—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and *we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.* (1 Corinthians 15:51–53 NIV, emphasis added)

In the above passage, Paul described the completion of our salvation when Jesus returns for us and we are transformed into our perfect, immortal bodies.⁷³ The internal evidence of Paul's consistent use of *téleios* gives us a strong reason for understanding *completeness* as a reference to our ultimate perfection in heaven.

- In the passage we've been examining, notice that Paul said that when completeness comes, then what is in part will disappear:

71 "Passage Lookup: Colossians 4:12," Strong's Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Colossians+4%3A12), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Colossians+4%3A12>.

72 Dave Root, "Cheat Sheet for Conversations with Christians," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/CheatSheet.htm>. See section #25.

73 Dave Root, "The Rapture of the Church," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/RaptureOfTheChurch1.htm>.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know *in part* and we prophesy *in part*, but *when completeness comes, what is in part disappears*. (1 Corinthians 13:8–10 NIV, emphasis added)

From the context, “what is in part” refers to our use of the spiritual gifts mentioned here. The gifts of the Spirit are given to us to be used while we’re in our physical bodies on earth, and our use of the spiritual gifts is imperfect because, in the above passage, Paul said that “we know *in part* and we prophesy *in part*.”

But when completeness comes, referring to the completion or perfection of our salvation at the return of Jesus, then we will no longer need these gifts of the Spirit because we will not be in these fallible, mortal bodies. Therefore, our “in part” use of the spiritual gifts will cease or disappear.

In addition to 1 Corinthians 15:51–53 (above), we are given more information about what will happen when we receive the completion or perfection of our salvation:

But our citizenship is in heaven. And *we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body*. (Philippians 3:20–21 NIV, emphasis added)

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that *when He is revealed, we shall be like*

Him, for we shall see Him as He is. (1 John 3:2, emphasis added)

These passages tell us that when Jesus returns for us, then we will be transformed to be like Him. Our previous mortal, fallen state of existence will be completely done away with when Jesus returns. Paul was referring to this completion of our salvation in 1 Corinthians 13:10 (above); he was not referring to the completion of the New Testament.

- In the context of 1 Corinthians 13:10, if Paul had mentioned the completed New Testament in any way, then this would strengthen the argument that completeness refers to the completed New Testament.

But in the context of 1 Corinthians 13:10, Paul never said anything about a completed New Testament. Further, in the entire book of 1 Corinthians, Paul never said anything about a completed New Testament.

In fact, Paul *never* mentioned any such thing as a new set of Scriptures (a New Testament) in *any* of his letters.

In the following passages, notice that Paul always referred to his writings as “letters” or “epistles,” *not* as new books of Scripture. Here are all the passages where Paul made a reference to his own writings⁷⁴:

I wrote to you in *my letter* not to associate with sexually immoral people. (1 Corinthians 5:9 NIV, emphasis added)

For even if I made you sorry with *my letter*, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive

74 “BibleGateway–Keyword Search: letter,” BibleGateway, accessed May 13, 2024, <https://www.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?quicksearch=letter&version=NKJV>; “BibleGateway–Keyword Search: epistle,” BibleGateway, accessed May 13, 2024, <https://www.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?quicksearch=epistle&version=NKJV>.

that *the same epistle* made you sorry, though only for a while. (2 Corinthians 7:8, emphasis added)

I do not want to seem to be trying to frighten you with *my letters*. For some say, “*His letters* are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing.” Such people should realize that what we are in *our letters* when we are absent, we will be in our actions when we are present. (2 Corinthians 10:9–11 NIV, emphasis added)

Ye see how large *a letter* I have written unto you with mine own hand. (Galatians 6:11 KJV, emphasis added)

After *this letter* has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read *the letter* from Laodicea. (Colossians 4:16 NIV, emphasis added)

I charge you by the Lord that *this epistle* be read to all the holy brethren. (1 Thessalonians 5:27, emphasis added)

So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or *by letter*. (2 Thessalonians 2:15 NIV, emphasis added)

And if anyone does not obey our word in *this epistle*, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. (2 Thessalonians 3:14, emphasis added)

I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand, which is the distinguishing mark in *all my letters*. This is how I write. (2 Thessalonians 3:17 NIV, emphasis added)

As we can see, Paul *never* referred to his letters as new books of Scripture.

In addition, he never referred to any other person's letters, epistles, or other writings as new books of Scripture. Here are all the places where Paul used the Greek word for *Scripture*⁷⁵:

Which He promised before through His prophets in *the Holy Scriptures*. (Romans 1:2, emphasis added)

What does *Scripture* say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." (Romans 4:3 NIV, emphasis added)

For *the Scripture* says to the Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." (Romans 9:17, emphasis added)

As *Scripture* says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame." (Romans 10:11 NIV, emphasis added)

God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what *the Scripture* says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel. (Romans 11:2, emphasis added)

75 "Old/New Testament Greek Lexical Dictionary: Entry for Strong's #1124 [Frequency Lists: KJV]," Bible Lexicons, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/lexicons/greek/1124.html), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/lexicons/greek/1124.html>.

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in *the Scriptures* and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. (Romans 15:4 NIV, emphasis added)

But now made manifest, and by *the prophetic Scriptures* made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith. (Romans 16:26, emphasis added)

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to *the Scriptures*, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to *the Scriptures*. (1 Corinthians 15:3–4 NIV, emphasis added)

Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” (Galatians 3:8 NIV, emphasis added)

But *Scripture* has locked up everything under the control of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. (Galatians 3:22 NIV, emphasis added)

Nevertheless what does *the Scripture* say? “Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.” (Galatians 4:30, emphasis added)

For *Scripture* says, “Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain,” and “The worker deserves his wages.” (1 Timothy 5:18 NIV, emphasis added)

And that from childhood you have known *the Holy Scriptures*, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All *Scripture* is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:15–16, emphasis added)

As the above passages demonstrate, when Paul talked about “Scripture,” there is no evidence that he ever had the concept of a completed New Testament in mind.

Paul’s letters are certainly inspired Scripture, which Peter confirmed in 2 Peter 3:15–16, but Paul himself *never* made any kind of reference to a new set of Scriptures.

Therefore, we have absolutely no scriptural evidence for taking Paul’s vague statement, “when completeness comes, what is in part disappears” (1 Corinthians 13:10 NIV), as a reference to the completed New Testament because Paul never mentioned such a thing as a New Testament or a new set of Scriptures. After Paul died, 70 or so years went by before anyone even *tried* to put together a New Testament.⁷⁶ This makes it even less likely that Paul had such a thing in mind in 1 Corinthians 13:10.

- After using the word *completeness*, Paul elaborated on it in three illustrations, all of which deal with our maturity as believers. None of these illustrations has any bearing on the completed New Testament.

His first illustration immediately follows his use of the word *completeness*:

⁷⁶ Dave Root, “Who Wrote the New Testament?,” <https://www.vividchristianity.com/WhoWroteTheNewTestament.htm>.

But when *completeness* comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. *When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.* (1 Corinthians 13:10–11 NIV, emphasis added)

This illustration describes maturity, but notice that Paul was *not* talking about the maturity of the New Testament. He was talking about our maturity as Christians, which will reach completion or perfection when Jesus returns and transforms us from mortality to immortality as we have seen.

Since Paul elaborated on completeness with an illustration that, in context, describes our maturity as Christians, this further confirms that he was not talking about the New Testament.

- The next illustration that Paul used immediately follows the previous illustration:

For now we see in a mirror, dimly, *but then face to face.* (1 Corinthians 13:12, emphasis added)

Seeing face-to-face in 1 Corinthians 13:12 (above) implies seeing another person, which indicates that Paul meant we will see and know God clearly rather than only dimly as we do now as a number of Bible commentaries point out.⁷⁷

The apostle John confirmed that we will see God clearly (as He is) after Jesus returns and transforms our bodies to be like His:

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that *when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.* (1 John 3:2, emphasis added)

⁷⁷ “Verse-by-Verse Bible Commentary, 1 Corinthians 13:12,” [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/commentary/1-corinthians/13-12.html), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/1-corinthians/13-12.html>.

Paul explained his statement about completeness by saying that we will see face-to-face, which has nothing to do with the completion of the New Testament because even with a complete New Testament, we still do not see God as He is (face-to-face) as we will when Jesus returns for us.

- This is Paul's third illustration concerning completeness:

Now I *know* [*ginōskō*] in part; *then I shall know fully* [*epiginōskō*], *even as I am fully known* [*epiginōskō*]. (1 Corinthians 13:12 NIV, emphasis and Greek words⁷⁸ added)

One Greek dictionary defines the two Greek words shown in the above verse in this way:

In 1 Corinthians 13:12 the two words are used together, *ginōskō* as our knowledge here on earth, and *epiginōskō* as *our knowledge in our perfect state in heaven, even as we are known (epiginōskō) in a fuller way by Him here on earth.*⁷⁹ (emphasis added)

Paul's illustration of knowing fully in 1 Corinthians 13:12 does not describe the completion of the New Testament because the New Testament was completed almost 2,000 years ago, and yet we still do not know fully, even as we are fully known. Even with a complete New Testament, we still do not have a full, complete knowledge of God.

It is believed that the last New Testament book (Revelation) was written in AD 95–96 and that the first formal list of New Testament books was compiled around AD 140. The New

78 "Passage Lookup: 1 Corinthians 13:12," Strong's Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=1+Corinthians+13%3A12), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=1+Corinthians+13%3A12>.

79 Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, "ginōskō (G1097)."

Testament canon was officially approved in AD 397. The apostle Paul is believed to have been martyred around AD 67–68, so he died long before the completion of the New Testament.⁸⁰

Paul said, “when completeness comes....*then I shall know fully*, even as I am fully known” (1 Corinthians 13:10, 12 NIV, emphasis added). Some people believe that completeness refers to the completion of the New Testament, but Paul did not live to see the completion of the New Testament. When Paul spoke of completeness, it cannot be a reference to the New Testament because that would contradict his prophecy that he would “know fully” when completeness comes. As we saw, there is no evidence whatsoever that Paul expected the completion of a new set of Scriptures, so we have no reason at all to make the assumption that he expected to know fully at the completion of the New Testament.

To summarize, all the evidence indicates that the completeness that Paul spoke of refers to our transformation from mortal, imperfect bodies to immortal, perfect bodies when Jesus returns for us. None of the above verses (nor any other Scripture verses) suggest that the New Testament is the completeness that Paul described.

As we have seen, miracles, healings, and the so-called miraculous gifts of the Spirit have never ceased or died out. It is unscriptural to refer to the first century as the age of miracles because the Bible never mentions such a thing. We have seen that Paul said that signs, wonders, and miracles are some of the marks of a true apostle, but we also saw that non-apostles did signs, wonders, and miracles as well. Those and *all* the gifts of the Spirit are needed for carrying on Jesus’s earthly ministry in obedience to the Great Commission, and they will only pass away when He returns for us.

We have now examined the passages that are frequently used as evidence that miracles, healings, and the so-called miraculous gifts of

80 Dave Root, “Who Wrote the New Testament?,” <https://www.vividchristianity.com/WhoWroteTheNewTestament.htm>.

the Spirit ceased or died out during or shortly after the first century. We found that those passages provide no support at all for that view.

Now let's take a close look at some common questions concerning divine healing.

Question #1:
**Isn't it true that only those who have
the gift of healing will be able to heal the sick?**

The answer is no because there's actually no such thing as the gift of healing anywhere in the New Testament.

Here are all the places in the New Testament where we can find anything similar to the gift of healing⁸¹:

For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another *gifts of healings* by the same Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:8–9, emphasis added)

And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then *gifts of healings*, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. (1 Corinthians 12:28, emphasis added)

Do all have *gifts of healings*? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? (1 Corinthians 12:30, emphasis added)

⁸¹ "BibleGateway–Keyword Search: gift healing," BibleGateway, accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?quicksearch=gift+healing&version=NKJV>.

In 1 Corinthians 12:8–9,⁸² 28,⁸³ and 30 (above),⁸⁴ the Greek words for *gifts* and *healings* are both plural. The New Testament says that there are gifts (plural) of healings (plural), but it never says that there is such a thing as the gift of healing (singular).

Consider that everyone can draw, no matter how badly, but some people are gifted in certain areas of drawing, and others are gifted in other areas of drawing. Similarly, some people will have spiritual gifts in certain areas of healing (e.g., restoring eyesight), and others will have spiritual gifts in other areas of healing (e.g., restoring missing limbs).

But the New Testament never says that anyone will receive “the gift of healing.” There’s no such thing.

82 “Passage Lookup: 1 Corinthians 12:9,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=1+Corinthians+12%3A9), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=1+Corinthians+12%3A9>. Hover over the Greek words for *gifts* and *healing*, and notice in the Lexical Parser that they are both plural nouns; “Verse-by-Verse Bible Commentary, 1 Corinthians 12:9,” [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/commentary/1-corinthians/12-9.html), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/1-corinthians/12-9.html>. Search for *healings*, and notice that a number of Bible commentaries point out that the Greek words for *gifts* and *healings* are both plural.

83 “Passage Lookup: 1 Corinthians 12:28,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=1+Corinthians+12%3A28), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=1+Corinthians+12%3A28>. Hover over the Greek words for *gifts* and *healings*, and notice in the Lexical Parser that they are both plural nouns; “Verse-by-Verse Bible Commentary, 1 Corinthians 12:28,” [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/commentary/1-corinthians/12-28.html), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/1-corinthians/12-28.html>. Search for *healings*, and notice that most Bible commentaries have translated the Greek words for *gifts* and *healings* in the plural.

84 “Passage Lookup: 1 Corinthians 12:30,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=1+Corinthians+12%3A30), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=1+Corinthians+12%3A30>. Hover over the Greek words for *gifts* and *healings*, and notice in the Lexical Parser that they are both plural nouns; “Verse-by-Verse Bible Commentary, 1 Corinthians 12:30,” [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/commentary/1-corinthians/12-30.html), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/1-corinthians/12-30.html>. Search for *healings*, and notice that the Greek words for *gifts* and *healings* are always translated in the plural.

Question #2:

If you believe that you can heal the sick, then why not go clear out all the hospitals by healing everyone?

If the New Testament tells us to clear out hospitals, then that's what we must do. What we find in the Gospels, however, is that Jesus did not always heal everyone around Him nor did He make it a practice to search for people to heal. His consistent practice was to heal people who came to Him or who were brought to Him.⁸⁵

For example, He healed a lame man at the pool of Bethesda, but we don't see any indication that He healed any of the numerous other sick people there (John 5:2–9).

Jesus went in and out of the temple many times (e.g., Luke 22:53), yet He never healed a lame man who was placed at one of the gates of the temple every day (Acts 3:1–8).

On His way to Jericho, Jesus passed a blind man who was sitting by the roadside, begging (Luke 18:35–43). The blind man had to shout several times to get Jesus's attention, and then Jesus healed him. There is no indication that he would have been healed if he had not called out for Jesus's attention.

A number of passages say that Jesus healed all the sick people in various places, but these people had come to Him or were brought to Him. Jesus did not seek them out to heal them.

We have no scriptural command or precedent for trying to empty out hospitals for the following reasons:

- Jesus did not always heal everyone around Him.
- He did not make it a practice to seek out people to heal.
- We have no record of Jesus or the apostles emptying out leper colonies or similar places.

85 Dave Root, "Every Example of Healing in the New Testament," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/EveryExampleOfHealingInTheNewTestament.htm>.

Question #3:

I know people who prayed to be healed, and other Christians prayed for their healing. Why weren't they healed?

Many Christians have had that experience, and it's partly because there is no guarantee that we will see someone healed. If we knew for certain that every person we lay hands on would be healed, then we would not need any faith. Yet healing requires faith, and faith requires that we don't know the outcome for certain. We will look more closely at faith in chapters 4 and 7.

In addition, several factors can prevent healing, and we'll examine those in Part 2.

But the biggest reason why we rarely—if ever—see anyone healed is because there is a huge difference between the way they healed the sick in the New Testament and the way that most Christians pray for the sick today.

Think about how you've prayed for anyone who needed healing or how you've heard other Christians pray for someone's healing. No matter how long or elegant the prayers are, they usually boil down to "Father, please heal that person. In Jesus's name. Amen."

Praying for healing is not scriptural because not a single person in the entire New Testament was healed by someone who prayed for them.⁸⁶ We're not doing healing the way they did it in the New Testament, and therefore, we're not seeing healings like they did.

Question #4:

What proof do you have that healing works today like it did back then?

This is a logical question, but what evidence would convince you?

After all, no matter how many pictures, videos, medical reports, or testimonials that anyone provides, wouldn't you still be skeptical? Wouldn't you wonder if they had been faked in some way?

⁸⁶ Ibid.

On the other hand, if a Christian who knows how healing works comes to visit you, then he or she might be able to convince you by healing someone right in front of you.

But if the Lord does not send someone to you to demonstrate a healing, then the next best way to convince you is to write a book that demonstrates from Scripture that all Christians have been commissioned to continue Jesus's earthly ministry, addresses the main questions and objections that people tend to have concerning divine healing, and describes in specific detail how to heal the sick. Then you will have all the proof you need, directly from the Lord, as you watch Him healing people through your hands.

This book aims to do exactly that.

Question #5:
**Doesn't the Bible say that God disciplines
those He loves, so He might not heal everyone?**

This question is based on passages such as the following:

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink *judgment on themselves. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment. Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined* so that we will not be finally condemned with the world. (1 Corinthians 11:26–32 NIV, emphasis added)

And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: “My son, do not despise the *chastening* of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the Lord loves He *chastens*, and *scourges* every son whom He receives.” If you endure *chastening*, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not *chasten*? But if you are without *chastening*, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days *chastened* us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no *chastening* seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. (Hebrews 12:5–11, emphasis added)

Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. (Revelation 3:19 NIV, emphasis added)

In the above passages, we can see that God disciplines Christians (perhaps severely) for their disobedience, and we are specifically told that this includes sickness and death (1 Corinthians 11:26–32, above). (Death is figuratively referred to as “sleep” in the New Testament, e.g., John 11:11–14; Acts 7:59–8:2; 1 Corinthians 15:15–21, 50–54; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–17.) Another example is Acts 5:1–11, which describes a husband and wife, apparently Christians, who lied to God out of greed or hypocrisy, and God killed them. Hebrews 12:5–11 (above) says that if we are *never* disciplined (chastened) by God, then we are *not* His children. This means that all Christians should expect to be disciplined by God at times, and if we don’t correct our disobedience, then we are forcing

Him to use a more severe form of discipline to get our attention. Therefore, when we experience frustrating or painful situations, we should ask God if we are being disciplined and how to correct our disobedience.⁸⁷

In chapters 3 and 4, you will see that God wants us all to be healthy so we can carry out the assignments that He needs us to do. If He puts a sickness on us for discipline due to our lack of obedience, it is not permanent; it can be healed because God does not refuse healing to anyone as we will see. However, if the lack of obedience is not corrected after the sickness is healed, then God will continue the discipline, possibly in a worse way (e.g., in John 5:14, Jesus healed a man and then told him to *stop* sinning or something worse might happen to him).

As you will see in chapter 3, sin is the root cause of all sicknesses and infirmities. But this does not mean that when we have a sickness or other infirmity, it is because God is disciplining (chastening) us nor does it mean that God wants us to remain unwell. He wants us all to be obedient and healthy.

The following is another passage that people sometimes use for justifying their sicknesses:

Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but *the Lord delivers him out of them all*. (Psalm 34:19, emphasis added)

This verse says that many are the afflictions of the righteous, but this doesn't justify our lack of healing because it specifically says that the Lord *delivers* us from afflictions. In fact, afflictions in the above passage are not actually sicknesses. All of the more than 600 occurrences of the Hebrew word for *afflictions* throughout the Bible always refer to something evil, harmful, ugly, or bad in some way, which includes how terrible, severe, or serious a disease or sickness might be (Deuteronomy 7:15; 28:35, 59; 2 Chronicles 21:19; Job 2:7).

87 Dave Root, "How to Discern God's Guidance," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/HowToDiscernGodsGuidance.htm>.

But the Hebrew word for *afflictions* in the above verse never refers to any sicknesses or infirmities.⁸⁸

God might use an existing sickness to teach us something or put a sickness on us for disciplining us to get our attention. But this does not mean that He wants us to remain sick as we will see.

Question #6:
You say that God never directly healed
anyone in the New Testament, but didn't
He directly heal Epaphroditus?

This question is based on the following passage:

But I think it is necessary to send back to you *Epaphroditus*, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also *your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs*. For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. Indeed *he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him*, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. So then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him, because *he almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me*. (Philippians 2:25–30 NIV, emphasis added)

The above passage says that Epaphroditus was ill and almost died, but what does it mean when it says that God had mercy on him?

One possibility is that God had mercy on Epaphroditus by directly healing him. However, this passage does not actually say that God directly healed him, and as we'll see throughout this book, the New

88 “Old Testament Hebrew Lexical Dictionary: Entry for Strong’s #7451,” Bible Lexicons, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/lexicons/eng/hebrew/7451.html), accessed August 4, 2023, <https://www.studylight.org/lexicons/eng/hebrew/7451.html>.

Testament does not at all support the idea that God directly heals anyone Himself. Divine healing is always done through people on earth who will step out in faith and obedience.

Epaphroditus risked his life (Philippians 2:30, above) during one or more journeys to bring supplies or assistance to Paul.⁸⁹ So a second possibility is that on one of these journeys, Epaphroditus became ill and was close to death, but God had mercy on him by enabling him to reach Paul in time for Paul (or someone else) to heal him. He was close to death, so perhaps he had a dangerously high fever or was unconscious due to his illness and, therefore, was unable to receive divine healing for himself.

None of these possibilities can be proven because Epaphroditus's illness, healing, or death is never mentioned anywhere else in the New Testament.⁹⁰

In chapters 3 and 4, you will see that only the second possibility fits with the rest of Scripture concerning how healing works.

Question #7:

If healing the sick is always supposed to be done by people, then why did the apostles pray for God to stretch out His hand to heal?

In Acts 4:1–3, Peter and John were arrested and imprisoned. After they were released, the apostles and disciples praised God and prayed for Him to enable them to preach the Gospel with great boldness. This is one of the things they prayed for:

Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus. (Acts 4:30 NIV, emphasis added)

89 “Verse-by-Verse Bible Commentary, Philippians 2:30,” [StudyLight.org](https://www.studydrive.org/commentary/philippians/2-30.html), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studydrive.org/commentary/philippians/2-30.html>.

90 “BibleGateway–Keyword Search: Epaphroditus,” BibleGateway, accessed April 17, 2021, <https://www.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?quicksearch=Epaphroditus&version=NKJV>.

On the surface, the apostles appear to be asking God to heal people Himself. But in a number of instances throughout the Bible, God said that He would stretch out His hand and do something, or someone asked God to stretch out His hand and do something, yet the actions were done by someone else.

For example, twice we see the devil asking God to stretch out His hand to afflict Job, and each time, God essentially replied, “Very well, then, go afflict Job.” So God agreed to stretch out His hand, but the devil is the one who actually performed the actions:

Then the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.” “Does Job fear God for nothing?” Satan replied. “Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But now *stretch out your hand and strike everything he has*, and he will surely curse you to your face.” The Lord said to Satan, “*Very well, then, everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.*” Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord. (Job 1:8–12 NIV, emphasis added)

Then the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason.” “Skin for skin!” Satan replied. “A man will give all he has for his own life. But now *stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones*, and he will surely curse you to your face.” The Lord said to Satan, “*Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life.*” (Job 2:3–6 NIV, emphasis added)

Before God sent ten plagues on Egypt so that the Israelites would be freed from slavery, He said He would stretch out His hand against Egypt. However, Moses and Aaron were the ones who stretched out their hands and brought on most of the plagues (Exodus 7:14–21; 8:1–6, 16–17; 9:8–10, 13–26; 10:12–15, 21–23):

Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and with mighty acts of judgment I will bring out my divisions, my people the Israelites. And the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord when *I stretch out my hand against Egypt* and bring the Israelites out of it. (Exodus 7:4–5 NIV, emphasis added)

God said He would stretch out His hand to destroy wicked cities, which was accomplished (at least in part) by people with swords:

The word came to Jeremiah from the Lord when King Zedekiah sent to him Pashhur son of Malkijah and the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah. They said: “Inquire now of the Lord for us because *Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon is attacking us*. Perhaps the Lord will perform wonders for us as in times past so that he will withdraw from us.” But Jeremiah answered them, “Tell Zedekiah, ‘This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: *I am about to turn against you the weapons of war that are in your hands, which you are using to fight the king of Babylon and the Babylonians who are outside the wall besieging you*. And I will gather them inside this city. *I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and a mighty arm* in furious anger and in great wrath. I will strike down those who live in this city—both man and beast—and they will die of a terrible plague. After that, declares the Lord, I will give Zedekiah king of Judah, his officials and the people in this city who

survive the plague, sword and famine, *into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon* and to their enemies who want to kill them. *He will put them to the sword; he will show them no mercy or pity or compassion.* ‘Furthermore, tell the people, ‘This is what the Lord says: See, I am setting before you the way of life and the way of death. Whoever stays in this city *will die by the sword*, famine or plague. But whoever goes out and surrenders to the Babylonians who are besieging you will live; they will escape with their lives.’” (Jeremiah 21:1–9 NIV, emphasis added)

The word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, set your face against Mount Seir; prophesy against it and say: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am against you, Mount Seir, and *I will stretch out my hand against you* and make you a desolate waste. I will turn your towns into ruins and you will be desolate. Then you will know that I am the Lord. Because you harbored an ancient hostility and delivered the Israelites over to the sword at the time of their calamity, the time their punishment reached its climax, therefore as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, *I will give you over to bloodshed and it will pursue you.* Since you did not hate bloodshed, bloodshed will pursue you. I will make Mount Seir a desolate waste and cut off from it all who come and go. *I will fill your mountains with the slain; those killed by the sword will fall on your hills and in your valleys and in all your ravines.*” (Ezekiel 35:1–8 NIV, emphasis added)

As we can see, when the apostles asked God to stretch out His hand to heal, this does not mean that they were asking Him to heal people directly Himself. When He stretches out His hand to heal, He does it through Christians who will step out in faith.

We find a similar situation in this passage:

Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all parts of the country, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda. There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. And Peter said to him, *“Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed.”* Then he arose immediately. So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord. (Acts 9:32–35, emphasis added)

Aeneas was paralyzed and had been bedridden for eight years. God could have directly healed him at any time during those eight years, but He didn’t.

We don’t know if Peter laid hands on Aeneas, but this healing only happened as a result of Peter’s presence there, and Peter said that Jesus had healed Aeneas. Again, when Jesus stretches out His hand to heal, He does it through Christians who will step out in faith. The above passage says that Christians were in Lydda, so some of them might have been able to heal Aeneas. In Question #8, we’ll see some possible reasons why they did not heal him.

Question #8:

**If every Christian is meant to be obeying
the Great Commission, then why don’t we see
all Christians doing that in the New Testament?**

The New Testament focuses on certain people and certain events. We are not told what all the other Christians, including most of the apostles, were doing back then, so we don’t know if (or how) other Christians were obeying the Great Commission.

But keep in mind that people are people, both then and now. Most Christians in the first century probably were not obeying the Great

Commission for many of the same reasons that most Christians today probably are not obeying it. For example:

- Perhaps Christians (both then and now) haven't been taught that they are meant to participate in Jesus's earthly ministry.
- Perhaps Christians (both then and now) don't know how to discern God's guidance,⁹¹ so they cannot properly fulfill their assigned roles in the body of Christ.
- Perhaps Christians (both then and now) don't have enough boldness to go out and preach the Gospel, heal people, and cast out demons.
- Perhaps not all Christians (both then and now) are full of faith and the Holy Spirit as we see here:

Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, *seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom*, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, *a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit*, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch. (Acts 6:2–5, emphasis added)

- Perhaps not all Christians (both then and now) are willing to be obedient to the Lord. In the Parable of the Sower (below), notice that Jesus described four groups of people. The fourth group is the *only* one endorsed by Jesus because they are producing a crop and are fruitful, which means they're *doing works of obedience and will receive rewards* (Romans 14:10–12; 1 Corinthians 3:11–15; 4:5; 2 Corinthians 5:10):

91 Dave Root, "How to Discern God's Guidance," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/HowToDiscernGodsGuidance.htm>.

The seed is the word of God. Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then *the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved*. Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, *but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away*. The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, *but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature*. But the seed on good soil stands for *those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop*. (Luke 8:11–15 NIV, emphasis added)

Those are some possible reasons why most Christians in the first century might not have been participating in the Great Commission, and the same reasons probably apply to most Christians today.

Question #9:
**Doesn't predestination mean that the only people
who will be healed are those who were
predestined to be healed?**

God knows the end from the beginning (Isaiah 41:4; 45:21; 46:10), so from His perspective, all our futures are already set in stone. From a human perspective, however, we are able to make certain choices that help create the future that God foresees.⁹² This is why we are repeatedly warned not to sin, because we can make choices about what to do and what not to do.

92 Dave Root, "Our Lives Are Not Predestined," Vivid Christianity, accessed May 4, 2022, <https://www.vividchristianity.com/OurLivesAreNotPredestined.htm>.

People are predestined to receive healing only in the sense that God already knows who they are. But it still requires the choices, faith, and actions of those doing and receiving healing.

Question #10:

**If every Christian can see miracles of healing,
then why did James tell us to call for the
church elders to pray for us?**

Notice what James wrote:

Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. (James 5:14–16 NIV, emphasis added)

This is the *only* passage in the entire New Testament that tells us to call for the elders or to be anointed with oil when we are sick.⁹³ In addition, it implies that the elders' prayer of faith will heal the sick, but then it says to pray for each other so that we may be healed.

When I asked the Lord⁹⁴ why this passage doesn't appear to fit well with all the other New Testament teachings on physical healing, He first prompted me to look more closely at the book of James itself.

93 Dave Root, "Every Example of Healing in the New Testament," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/EveryExampleOfHealingInTheNewTestament.htm>.

94 Dave Root, "How to Discern God's Guidance," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/HowToDiscernGodsGuidance.htm>.

James's letter is thought to be the earliest New Testament book (AD 45–48),⁹⁵ and according to Bible commentaries,⁹⁶ he was writing to Jewish Christians scattered throughout the world.

No one in those days had a complete New Testament to study, because even if the book of James had been written as late as AD 60 (as some people suggest), quite a number of New Testament books still had yet to be written.⁹⁷

His letter was not intended to be a manual on how healing works, and his original readers, dispersed around the world without much New Testament teaching available to them, probably did not have a strong or complete understanding of Christian doctrines, such as healing. Because of this, it was reasonable for James to tell them to call for the elders when they were sick.

But then the Lord prompted me to look up James 5:14–16 in a Bible commentary, which says that the Greek word translated as *sick* in this passage is the same word that we've seen several times in this chapter with the meaning of "to be weak." The Bible commentary explains James 5:14–16 as follows:

A great deal of misunderstanding has resulted from these verses....

The heart of the problem lies in just what James meant when he referred to the "sick." Actually there is no reason to consider "sick" as referring exclusively to physical illness. The word *asthenei* literally means "to be weak." Though it is used in the Gospels for physical maladies, it is generally used in Acts and the Epistles to refer to a weak

95 Dave Root, "Who Wrote the New Testament?," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/WhoWroteTheNewTestament.htm>.

96 "Verse-by-Verse Bible Commentary, James 1:1," [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/commentary/james/1-1.html), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/james/1-1.html>.

97 Dave Root, "Who Wrote the New Testament?," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/WhoWroteTheNewTestament.htm>.

faith or a weak conscience....That it should be considered “weak” in this verse is clear in that another Greek word (*kamnonta*) in James 5:15, translated sick person, literally means “to be weary.” The only other use in the New Testament (Hebrews 12:3) of that word clearly emphasizes this same meaning.

James was not referring to the bedfast, the diseased, or the ill. Instead he wrote to those who had grown weary, who had become weak both morally and spiritually in the midst of suffering. These are the ones who should call for the help of the elders of the church....

James said that the elders should pray over him and anoint him with oil. It is significant that the word “anoint” is *aleipsantes* (“rub with oil”) not *chriō* (“ceremonially anoint”). The former is the “mundane” word and the latter is “the sacred and religious word” (Richard Chenevix Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, ninth ed. Reprint. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950, pp. 136–7). “Therefore James is not suggesting a ceremonial or ritual anointing as a means of divine healing; instead, he is referring to the common practice of using oil as a means of bestowing honor, refreshment, and grooming” (Daniel R. Hayden, “Calling the Elders to Pray,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 138. July–September 1981:264).... Thus James’ point is that the “weak” (*asthenei*) and “weary” (*kamnonta*) would be refreshed, encouraged, and uplifted by the elders who rubbed oil on the despondents’ heads and prayed for them.

For the fallen, discouraged, distressed weary believer, restoration is assured and the elders’ prayer offered in faith will make the sick person (lit., “weary one”) well

(i.e., will restore him from discouragement and spiritual defeat), and the Lord will raise him up....

The conclusion is clear: therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other....The healing (that you may be healed) is not bodily healing but healing of the soul.⁹⁸ (emphasis and citations in the original)

One of the difficulties in translating the Greek manuscripts of the Bible into other languages is that people must make interpretations and educated guesses about the intended meaning of a passage in order to properly translate the passage. As explained in the above quote, James 5:14–16 describes the restoration of weak or weary Christians from spiritual discouragement, not the divine healing of sick people. Neither James 5:14–16 (above) nor any other New Testament passages tell us to anoint people with oil for divine healing.⁹⁹ Anointing with oil is not needed for healing.

Summary and Final Thoughts

Several passages in the New Testament are often used as evidence for cessationism, which is the view that miracles, healings, and the so-called miraculous gifts of the Spirit ceased or died out during or shortly after the first century. As we saw, there's not a shred of scriptural support for that view.¹⁰⁰ There is no such thing as an age of miracles that has passed away.

Many modern Christians seem to feel that a *non*-miraculous life is normal and that the Christians in the New Testament lived during a special time, experiencing supercharged Christian lives. But what

98 Walvoord and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, “James 5:14–16.”

99 Dave Root, “Every Example of Healing in the New Testament,” <https://www.vividchristianity.com/EveryExampleOfHealingInTheNewTestament.htm>. Search for Mark 6:7-13.

100 Dave Root, “All Gifts of the Spirit Are Available Today,” <https://www.vividchristianity.com/AllGiftsOfTheSpiritAreAvailableToday.htm>. My article shows that cessationism is a false doctrine and a form of last-days apostasy (a falling away from proper beliefs).

source of information gives them that idea? The *only* infallible source of written information that we have is the Bible, which specifically says that healings and miracles are to continue until Jesus returns at the end of the age as we saw in chapter 1.

The New Testament does *not* tell us to live a non-miraculous life. Instead, the New Testament is *filled* with instructional examples of how miracles, signs, wonders, healings, and the gifts of the Spirit are meant to operate during the entire Church Age.¹⁰¹

If God had intended for those things to come to an end after the first century, then where is the “New Testament, Part Two” that teaches the rest of us in the following millennia how to act? There is no “New Testament, Part Two” because the New Testament itself is our instruction manual for how to act. This includes seeing healings and miracles and using the gifts of the Spirit, all of which require faith.

There is only *one* Church, only *one* body of Christ, so all modern Christians are part of the *same* Church Age that began on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:1–4 and will end at the Rapture.¹⁰²

In chapter 1, we saw that Jesus used miracles to convince people to believe in Him, and He specifically told the Church body to do the *same* things that He did. This is why the apostles used miracles for evangelism and why *we* are meant to use miracles for evangelism.

John the Baptist never did any miraculous signs (John 10:40–41), and Jesus said that His testimony was a *greater* witness than John’s *because of* His miracles (John 5:33–36). Therefore, according to Jesus, a message that is confirmed by miracles is a *greater witness* than a message that is not confirmed by miracles.

101 Dave Root, “The Rapture of the Church—Part One,” <https://www.vividchristianity.com/RaptureOfTheChurch1.htm>. My article shows that the Church Age began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1–4) and it will end when Jesus returns for us.

102 Ibid.

3

It Is Finished

In my denominational background, I was taught that healing (along with other miracles) passed away in the first century, although God might occasionally heal someone today in response to our prayers (which is a contradiction, if you think about it). So when the Lord began teaching me¹⁰³ the concepts we're about to examine, frankly, they were difficult for me to grasp. Perhaps they will be difficult for you as well because they require a shift in our perspective about the nature of divine healing.

Our Assumptions Are Preventing Us from Seeing Miracles of Healing

Take a moment and consider this question: What do you think will move God to heal someone today?

Would you say that God might heal people based on their *desire* or *need* for healing? If that's true, then most people who really desire or need to be healed would be healed by God, yet this isn't what we see happening.

Would you say that God might heal people based on their *faith* for healing? Many Christians have faith that God heals people today,

¹⁰³ Dave Root, "How to Discern God's Guidance," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/HowToDiscernGodsGuidance.htm>.

yet they're not being healed by God. Christians have sometimes been miraculously healed in modern times, but the problem is that most people don't know how faith works in healing (because if they did, they might receive healing).

Would you say that God might be waiting until we've done enough *praying, crying, or pleading* for healing? Multitudes of Christians have been praying, crying, or pleading for healing, sometimes for many years, yet they're not being healed by God.

So what *does* move God to heal someone today?

Nothing.

As we will see in this chapter, nothing we say or do will move God to heal anyone Himself.

When Christians pray for healing for themselves or for someone else, their underlying assumption is that God will either approve or deny their requests for healing. Because of this assumption, they tend to make statements such as these (in no particular order):

- "I'm believing that God will heal me."
- "I'm patiently waiting for God to heal me."
- "I believe that God can heal me if He wants to."
- "Why isn't God healing me?"
- "Maybe it's not God's will to heal me."
- "Maybe God isn't healing me because He wants to teach me a lesson."

You have probably heard Christians say these things, and perhaps you have made some of these statements yourself. I certainly have.

When we make statements such as these, we're assuming or hoping that God might do something to heal us. But this is a false hope, a false assumption, because He *won't* do anything to heal us.

Why? Because He has *already* done His part. He has already met all our healing needs.

Perhaps you have an idea where I'm going with this. If so, we will be examining much more evidence than you might expect.

Imagine someone who wants to receive salvation. Imagine that he makes one or more of the following statements, which are the

same as the above statements except with the word *save* in place of the word *heal*:

- “I’m believing that God will save me.”
- “I’m patiently waiting for God to save me.”
- “I believe that God can save me if He wants to.”
- “Why isn’t God saving me?”
- “Maybe it’s not God’s will to save me.”
- “Maybe God isn’t saving me because He wants to teach me a lesson.”

If you search online to learn how to receive salvation (i.e., how to be forgiven of your sins so that you will go to heaven), what you will find is that all Christian churches teach that believing in Jesus is a requirement for receiving salvation while some churches include other requirements, such as water baptism.¹⁰⁴ What you *won’t* find are anything like the above statements, because those statements are based on a wrong understanding of how salvation works. So this man is making the above statements based on wrong assumptions about how to be saved. His wrong assumptions are *preventing* him from receiving salvation because he is not doing what is required.¹⁰⁵

In exactly the same way, our wrong assumptions are *preventing* us from seeing healings because we are not doing what is required.

Spiritual Blessings Are Hidden until We Do Something

In order to correct the wrong assumptions that we tend to have about divine healing, we need to lay some groundwork.

As Christians, the Holy Spirit provides us with the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23): love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The fruit of the Spirit

104 Dave Root, “Everything We Need to Know about Water Baptism,” Vivid Christianity, accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.vividchristianity.com/WaterBaptism1.htm>. My series examines *every* New Testament passage on water baptism, showing that baptism is not a requirement for receiving salvation and that full immersion after receiving salvation is the only proper method of baptism.

105 Dave Root, “How to Receive Salvation,” <https://www.vividchristianity.com/HowToReceiveSalvation.htm>.

is always there inside us. However, it takes an act of our will in order for these attributes inside us to be seen outwardly in the physical world. The fruit of the Spirit is inside us, but we must *do* something so that love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control are outwardly visible.

We must *walk* in love (Ephesians 5:2), *act* with patience toward people (1 Thessalonians 5:14), *exercise* self-control (2 Peter 1:5–6), etc., so that these inward attributes can be seen outwardly in the physical world.

Similarly, the Holy Spirit provides us with spiritual gifts for the roles, functions, and assignments that God has in mind for us, and we are meant to *use* these gifts for the good of others (1 Corinthians 12:4–11; Ephesians 4:11–12). If you have a spiritual gift as an evangelist, for instance, then it is inside you at all times and is always available, but you must *speak* to people so that this gift can be seen outwardly in the physical world in order to benefit others.

The point here is that God provides the fruit of the Spirit and gifts of the Spirit inside us, and we must *do* something so that these inner blessings can become outwardly visible.

When we receive salvation, we are immediately born again (John 3:3–8; 1 Peter 1:23), which takes place inside us. After that, it's up to us to walk in the Spirit and be led by the Spirit and work out our salvation through daily obedience (Galatians 5:16–25; Philippians 2:12–16). However, at first, we might not have any visible changes in our behaviors. Over time, our inner salvation becomes more and more visible outwardly in the physical world as our behaviors change. We must *do* something (our changed behaviors) so that the inner blessing of salvation can become outwardly visible.

A pattern is emerging that allows us to see that God provides a number of spiritual blessings to us, inside us, and these blessings are not outwardly visible unless we *do* something.

Now, hold that thought, because we need to thoroughly examine and understand a critical piece of the puzzle.

Physical Healing Is in the Atonement

When we speak of the Atonement, this refers to the humiliation, brutal torture, execution, and resurrection of Jesus. His death on the cross atoned for *all* sins, enabling us to receive forgiveness for our sins so that we will be allowed into heaven when we die.¹⁰⁶

In the Atonement, Jesus was stripped, scourged brutally on His back with a whip, then dressed in a purple robe (simulating the robe of a king). A crown of thorns was then pressed onto His head, a reed was placed in His right hand, and He was mocked, spat on, beaten, and crucified (Matthew 27:26–35; Mark 15:15–25; John 19:1–18).

I was taught that physical healing was not provided for us in the Atonement, but the scriptural evidence convinced me otherwise when I examined it later. Physical healing really *is* in the Atonement, and in a moment, we will take a thorough look at the evidence.

It's a fact that Christians rarely—if ever—see anyone healed today, no matter how much praying is done. To explain this, many people assume that healing died out during the first century. As we saw in chapter 2, the cessationist view has no scriptural support. It is a lie from the devil and a form of last-days apostasy (a falling away from proper beliefs).¹⁰⁷

The reason why divine healing seems to be so rare is that we haven't put the scriptural puzzle pieces together correctly. Our perspective is wrong because healing works differently than most Christians assume it does.

Since physical healing was provided in the Atonement, this has a huge impact on *how* people are healed.

We're about to discover the key that unlocks the reason why most Christians never see any healings, no matter how much praying is done. To do this, we will take a close look at the connection between healing and atonement throughout the Bible.

106 Dave Root, "Understanding Jesus," Vivid Christianity, accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.vividchristianity.com/UnderstandingJesus1.htm>. My series provides an in-depth examination of the dozen or so purposes and results of the Atonement.

107 Dave Root, "All Gifts of the Spirit Are Available Today," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/AllGiftsOfTheSpiritAreAvailableToday.htm>.

In the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah described some of what the future Messiah would do for us:

Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; 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 for our peace was upon Him, and by His *stripes* we are healed. (Isaiah 53:4–5, emphasis added)

According to the above prophecy, Jesus bore our griefs, carried our sorrows, was wounded for our transgressions, was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. Jesus did far more for us in the Atonement than we can really comprehend.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, if physical healing is in the Atonement, then this really shouldn't be such a surprise to us.

Notice that Isaiah specifically said that Jesus will be stricken and smitten. According to *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary*, the Hebrew words¹⁰⁹ for *stricken* and *smitten* mean “violently, to strike” and “give [wounds]...(give) stripes,” respectively. The vicious flogging that Jesus received on His back, leaving bloody ribbons of flesh (His stripes), certainly fulfills this part of the above prophecy. Isaiah also said that Jesus will bring peace (peace with God) and healing to us.

Here is more of that prophecy in Young's Literal Translation:

Surely our sicknesses he hath *borne* [*nâśâ'*], and our pains—he hath *carried* [*sâbal*] them....and their iniquities he doth *bear* [*sâbal*]....and he the sin of many hath *borne*

108 Dave Root, “Understanding Jesus,” <https://www.vividchristianity.com/UnderstandingJesus1.htm>.

109 “Passage Lookup: Isaiah 53:4–5,” Strong's Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.org), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Isaiah+53%3A4-5>.

[*nâśâ*']. (Isaiah 53:4, 11–12 YLT, emphasis and Hebrew words¹¹⁰ added)

The Hebrew word *nâśâ*’ means “to lift, bear up, carry, take,” and the Hebrew word *sâbal* means “to bear, bear a load, drag oneself along.”¹¹¹ Look closely at the words in English in the above passage, then carefully notice the parallelism of the Hebrew words.

We are clearly told that Jesus *bore* all our sicknesses and pains just as He *bore* all our iniquities and sins. This indicates that physical healing is in the Atonement, which agrees with all the scriptural evidence that we are about to see.

In the New Testament, the apostle Peter referenced this prophecy in Isaiah:

Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed. (1 Peter 2:24, emphasis added)

Here we see that Peter was paraphrasing Isaiah 53:4–5 (above).¹¹² First, he mentioned the cross, where Jesus bore our sins, and then, in this context of the Atonement, Peter said “by whose stripes you were healed.”

We do not need to wait until we’re in heaven before we can receive the forgiveness of sins or healing. These blessings are for us while we are here on earth because of the Atonement.

110 “Passage Lookup: Isaiah 53:4–12,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Isaiah+53%3A4-12), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Isaiah+53%3A4-12>. Click the relevant English words to see the Hebrew words.

111 Ibid.

112 “Verse-by-Verse Bible Commentary, 1 Peter 2:24,” [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/commentary/1-peter/2-24.html), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/1-peter/2-24.html>.

Peter used the word *stripes* in 1 Peter 2:24 (above), and the Greek word is *mōlōps*.¹¹³ *Strong's Greek Dictionary* says that *mōlōps* means “blow mark: stripe.”

Isaiah used the word *stripes* in Isaiah 53:4–5 (above), and the Hebrew word is *chabbûrâh*.¹¹⁴ *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary* says that *chabbûrâh* means “blueness, bruise, hurt, stripe, wound.”

In both the Greek and the Hebrew, these words specifically refer to wounds or stripes. Peter and Isaiah were not talking about Jesus's death; they were talking about His wounds or stripes.

In *The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament*, the Greek word *mōlōps* is described as follows:

A welt, a mark of fighting, a blow or wound made in war, also a scar, wheal, or *the mark left on the body by the stripe of the whip. Used figuratively in 1 Pet. 2:24 referring to stripes, quoted from Is. 53:5.*¹¹⁵ (emphasis added)

The Greek word *mōlōps* specifically refers to a mark on the body resulting from a wound, especially the type of stripe marks created by the vicious flogging that Jesus received on His back.

When Peter and Isaiah referred to Jesus's stripes, they meant His *stripes*, not His death.

Notice that Peter didn't say that Jesus's *death* healed us, but instead, Peter said that Jesus's *stripes* healed us. The stripes from a whip are not the same as a death on a cross.

First Peter 2:24 (above) cannot be referring to *spiritual* healing (i.e., salvation) as many people want to believe. This is because we were reconciled to God, receiving salvation, through Jesus's *death*, not by His stripes:

113 “Passage Lookup: 1 Peter 2:24,” Strong's Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studydrive.net/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=1+Peter+2%3A24), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studydrive.net/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=1+Peter+2%3A24>.

114 “Passage Lookup: Isaiah 53:5,” Strong's Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studydrive.net/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Isaiah+53%3A5), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studydrive.net/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Isaiah+53%3A5>. Click the word *stripes* or *scourging*.

115 Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, “*mōlōps* (G3468).”

For if when we were enemies *we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son*, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be *saved* by His life. (Romans 5:10, emphasis added)

It is impossible for 1 Peter 2:24 (above) to be referring to *spiritual* healing (salvation) because it is impossible to receive salvation by Jesus's stripes. We receive salvation by Jesus's *death*.

Peter and Isaiah were both speaking about physical healing from Jesus's stripes, and we can further demonstrate this by examining what the apostle Matthew wrote concerning Isaiah's prophecy:

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."* (Matthew 8:16–17, emphasis added)

Matthew quoted the same prophecy from Isaiah that Peter quoted in 1 Peter 2:24, where he said, "by whose stripes you were healed."

The above passage tells us that Jesus fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy by *physically* healing people. Matthew has given us very specific and very clear evidence that Isaiah and Peter were both talking about *physical* healing being provided for us in the Atonement.

In order to be thorough, we need to understand the meaning of the word *fulfilled* in the above passage. Some people argue that when a prophecy is fulfilled, then it has been accomplished once and for all, never to be fulfilled again. According to this argument, Isaiah's prophecy of healing was fulfilled before the cross (Matthew 8:16–17, above), so Isaiah's prophecy doesn't mean that physical healing is in the Atonement.

However, this argument doesn't stand up to scrutiny.

Notice that Jesus's healings in the above passage were *not* a once-and-for-all fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy because Jesus

continued to heal people throughout His earthly ministry (e.g., Matthew 9:35; 12:15; 14:14, 35–36; 15:30; 19:2; 21:14).

In the same way, after telling some of Jesus’s parables, Matthew said that they fulfilled another prophecy (in Psalm 78:2):

Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable. *So was fulfilled* what was spoken through the prophet: “I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.” (Matthew 13:34–35 NIV, emphasis added)

Even though Jesus’s parables immediately prior to Matthew 13:34–35 (above) fulfilled that prophecy, they were not a once-and-for-all fulfillment because He *continued* to use parables (e.g., Matthew 21:33, 45; 22:1). All these parables were part of the fulfillment of the prophecy in Psalm 78:2, just as all of Jesus’s healings were part of the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy.

Matthew 8:16–17 (above) and Matthew 13:34–35 (above) both use the same Greek word *plērōō*, meaning “to fulfill,”¹¹⁶ which shows that it is wrong to claim that the prophecy in Matthew 8:16–17 was accomplished once and for all, never to be fulfilled again. In other words, that Greek word does not always mean “fulfilled once and for all.”

Furthermore, we can be *certain* that Matthew 8:16–17 (above) was not a once-and-for-all fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy because, at that point, Jesus had not yet been wounded with stripes as Isaiah had prophesied.

When Jesus healed people before the cross in Matthew 8:16–17 (above), this does not prevent physical healing from being in the Atonement. If it did, then we would have a problem. Since Jesus forgave the sins of individual people before the cross (e.g., Matthew

¹¹⁶ “Passage Lookup: Matthew 8:16–17,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Matthew+8%3A16-17), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Matthew+8%3A16-17>; “Passage Lookup: Matthew 13:34–35,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Matthew+13%3A34-35), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Matthew+13%3A34-35>.

9:2, 6–7; Luke 7:48–50), would we claim that this prevents the forgiveness of sins from being in the Atonement? Of course not. As we have seen, the forgiveness of sins is one of the specific purposes for the Atonement. The fact that Jesus healed people and forgave people’s sins before the cross does not indicate that healing and forgiveness were excluded from the Atonement.

So far, we have seen that the prophet Isaiah wrote that “by his stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:4–5) and the apostle Peter made a reference to this prophecy by saying that “by whose stripes you were healed” (1 Peter 2:24). Both of these statements were made in the context of the Atonement. Further, Matthew made it clear that the healing in Isaiah’s prophecy, which is based on Jesus’s stripes, specifically refers to *physical* healing (Matthew 8:16–17).

Physical healing is in the Atonement because the Atonement was when Jesus received the stripes by which we were healed.

In addition, salvation and healing are so closely linked together in the Bible that the same Greek word (*sōzō*) is used both for salvation from sins *and* for physical healing¹¹⁷:

And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for *He will save* [*sōzō*] *His people from their sins*. (Matthew 1:21, emphasis and Greek word¹¹⁸ added)

And the Lord *added to the church daily those who were being saved* [*sōzō*]. (Acts 2:47, emphasis and Greek word¹¹⁹ added)

Nor is there *salvation* in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men *by which we*

117 “Passage Lookup: Matthew 1:21,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Matthew+1%3A21), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Matthew+1%3A21>. See the Strong’s definition for *sōzō*.

118 Ibid.

119 “Passage Lookup: Acts 2:47,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Acts+2%3A47), accessed June 9, 2023, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Acts+2%3A47>.

must be saved [sôzō]. (Acts 4:12, emphasis and Greek word¹²⁰ added)

Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. She said to herself, “If I only touch his cloak, I will be *healed* [sôzō].” Jesus turned and saw her. “Take heart, daughter,” he said, “your faith has *healed* [sôzō] you.” And the woman was *healed* [sôzō] at that moment. (Matthew 9:20–22 NIV, emphasis and Greek words¹²¹ added)

And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet and begged Him earnestly, saying, “My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be *healed* [sôzō], and she will live.” (Mark 5:22–23, emphasis and Greek word¹²² added)

Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has *healed* [sôzō] you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. (Luke 18:42–43 NIV, emphasis and Greek word¹²³ added)

120 “Passage Lookup: Acts 4:12,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Acts+4%3A12), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Acts+4%3A12>.

121 “Passage Lookup: Matthew 9:20–22,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Matthew+9%3A20-22), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Matthew+9%3A20-22>.

122 “Passage Lookup: Mark 5:22–23,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Mark+5%3A22-23), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Mark+5%3A22-23>.

123 “Passage Lookup: Luke 18:42–43,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Luke+18%3A42-43), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Luke+18%3A42-43>.

These are just a few of the many occurrences of the Greek word *sōzō* throughout the New Testament. In the first three passages above, it means salvation from sins, and in the last three passages, it means physical healing. Salvation and physical healing are linked together in this one Greek word, which is consistent with the fact that the forgiveness of sins, atonement, and physical healing are all linked together throughout the Bible as we will see.

For further evidence that salvation, atonement, the forgiveness of sins, and physical healing are linked together throughout the Bible, you might recall that God told Moses to make a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Jesus compared Himself to that bronze snake, saying that just as Moses lifted up the snake, so Jesus must be lifted up so that everyone who believes in Him *will receive salvation and eternal life* (John 3:14–17). The specific purpose of Moses’s snake on a pole, however, was that anyone who was bitten by a venomous snake could look up at the bronze snake and *be physically healed* (Numbers 21:4–9).

We can confirm this connection between forgiveness and physical healing even further by taking a close look at Jesus’s response when He was accused of blasphemy because He claimed He had the ability to forgive people’s sins:

“For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise and walk’? *But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins*”—then He said to the paralytic, “*Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.*” And he arose and departed to his house. (Matthew 9:5–7, emphasis added)

In the above passage, how did Jesus prove that He has the power to *forgive sins*? He proved it by *healing* someone. Forgiveness of sins and physical healing are closely linked together in the Bible, just as they are closely linked together in the Atonement.

There is nothing unusual about finding physical healing linked with salvation, atonement, and the forgiveness of sins in the Bible just as

illnesses, diseases, and death are often found in connection with sin. We see this concept in the story of the man who was healed by Jesus and was told that if he didn't stop *sinning*, then something *worse* might happen to him (John 5:1–14). Bible commentaries explain that Jesus's words indicate that the man's sins probably caused his infirmity.¹²⁴

The first-century Jews would not have found this concept unusual because it can be seen all throughout the Old Testament.

For example, in Genesis 3:16–19, we see that Adam's and Eve's *suffering and death* were due to their *sin*:

To the woman He said: “*I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.*” Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: *Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life.* Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread *till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.*” (Genesis 3:16–19, emphasis added)

Exodus 30:11–16 says that each Israelite man must pay a *ransom* as an *atonement* so that no *plague* will come upon them:

Then the Lord said to Moses, “When you take a census of the Israelites to count them, *each one must pay the Lord a ransom* for his life at the time he is counted. *Then no plague will come on them....*The rich are not to give more than a half shekel and the poor are not to give less when you make the offering to the Lord *to atone for your lives.*”

124 “Verse-by-Verse Bible Commentary, John 5:14,” [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/commentary/john/5-14.html), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/john/5-14.html>.

Receive *the atonement money* from the Israelites and use it for the service of the tent of meeting. It will be a memorial for the Israelites before the Lord, *making atonement for your lives.*” (Exodus 30:11–12, 15–16 NIV, emphasis added)

In Leviticus 26:21, God said He would bring *plagues* on the Israelites according to their *sins*:

Then, if you walk contrary to Me, and are not willing to obey Me, *I will bring on you seven times more plagues, according to your sins.* (Leviticus 26:21, emphasis added)

In Numbers 12:1–11, Miriam became *leprous* due to her *sin*:

Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite. “Has the Lord spoken only through Moses?” they asked. “Hasn’t he also spoken through us?”....*The anger of the Lord burned against them*, and he left them. When the cloud lifted from above the tent, *Miriam’s skin was leprous*—it became as white as snow. Aaron turned toward her and saw that she had a defiling skin disease, and he said to Moses, “Please, my lord, I ask you not to hold against us *the sin we have so foolishly committed.*” (Numbers 12:1–2, 9–11 NIV, emphasis added)

In Numbers 14:27–30, the Israelites were wandering with Moses in the wilderness, and with the exception of Caleb and Joshua, they complained about the powerful people living in the Promised Land. Because of *their lack of faith in God*, everyone 20 years and older *died* in the wilderness, except Caleb and Joshua:

I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me. Say to them, “As I live,” says the Lord,

“just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: *The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in.*” (Numbers 14:27–30, emphasis added)

In 2 Samuel 12:7–14, King David’s son *became ill and died* because David had *sinned* by having Uriah killed and sleeping with his wife:

Then Nathan said to David....“This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘I anointed you king over Israel....I gave you all Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. *Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own....*’” Then David said to Nathan, “I have *sinned* against the Lord.” Nathan replied, “The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. *But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the Lord, the son born to you will die.*” (2 Samuel 12:7–9, 13–14 NIV, emphasis added)

In Psalm 107:17–20, people *suffered affliction because of their iniquities* (sins) and needed to be *healed*:

Some became fools through their rebellious ways *and suffered affliction because of their iniquities*. They loathed all food *and drew near the gates of death*. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. *He sent out his word and healed them;*

he rescued them from the grave. (Psalm 107:17–20 NIV, emphasis added)

In Job 33:21–25, we see *healing* associated with a *ransom*:

His flesh wastes away from sight, and his bones stick out which once were not seen. Yes, his soul draws near the Pit, and his life to the executioners. If there is a messenger for him, a mediator, one among a thousand, to show man his uprightness, then he is gracious to him, and says, “Deliver him from going down to the Pit; *I have found a ransom*”; *his flesh shall be young like a child’s, he shall return to the days of his youth.* (Job 33:21–25, emphasis added)

In Psalm 103:2–4, *the forgiveness of sins, physical healing, and redemption* are included in the Lord’s benefits:

Bless the Lord, o my soul, and forget not *all His benefits: who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies.* (Psalm 103:2–4, emphasis added)

In 2 Chronicles 30:18–20, we once again see *healing* in connection with an *atonement*:

But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, “May the good Lord provide *atonement* for everyone who prepares his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, though he is not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.” And the Lord listened to Hezekiah and *healed* the people. (2 Chronicles 30:18–20, emphasis added)

In Isaiah 33:24, we once again see *healing* and *the forgiveness of sins*:

No one living in Zion will say, “*I am ill*”; and the *sins* of those who dwell there will be *forgiven*. (Isaiah 33:24 NIV, emphasis added)

In Leviticus 14:1–18, an *atonement* is connected with *healing*:

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “This shall be the law of the leper for the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought to the priest. And the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall examine him; and indeed, if the leprosy is *healed* in the 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....So the priest shall make *atonement* for him before the Lord.” (Leviticus 14:1–4, 18, emphasis added)

In Numbers 8:19, Aaron and his sons had to make an *atonement* so that no *plague* would strike the Israelites when they went near the sanctuary:

From among all the Israelites, I have given the Levites as gifts to Aaron and his sons to do the work at the tent of meeting on behalf of the Israelites and to make *atonement* for them so that *no plague* will strike the Israelites when they go near the sanctuary. (Numbers 8:19 NIV, emphasis added)

In Leviticus 15:13–15, when a man was *cleansed* from a disease-related discharge (see Leviticus 15:2–12), then he had to make a *sin offering* as an *atonement* to make him ceremonially clean:

When a man is *cleansed* from his discharge, he is to count off seven days for his *ceremonial cleansing*; he must wash his clothes and bathe himself with fresh water, and he will be clean. On the eighth day he must take two doves or two young pigeons and come before the Lord to the entrance to the tent of meeting and give them to the priest. The priest is to sacrifice them, the one for a *sin offering* and the other for a burnt offering. In this way he will make *atonement* before the Lord for the man *because of his discharge*. (Leviticus 15:13–15 NIV, emphasis added)

In Numbers 25:6–13, a *plague* was stopped due to an *atonement*:

Then an Israelite man brought into the camp a Midianite woman right before the eyes of Moses and the whole assembly of Israel while they were weeping at the entrance to the tent of meeting. When Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, saw this, he left the assembly, took a spear in his hand and followed the Israelite into the tent. He drove the spear into both of them, right through the Israelite man and into the woman's stomach. *Then the plague against the Israelites was stopped*; but those who died in the plague numbered 24,000. The Lord said to Moses, "Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, has turned my anger away from the Israelites. Since he was as zealous for my honor among them as I am, I did not put an end to them in my zeal. Therefore tell him I am making my covenant of peace with him. He and his descendants will have a covenant of a lasting priesthood, because he was zealous for the honor of his God and made *atonement* for the Israelites." (Numbers 25:6–13 NIV, emphasis added)

In Numbers 16:46–48, Aaron made an *atonement* for the Israelites and stopped a *plague* that was killing them:

Then Moses said to Aaron, “Take your censer and put incense in it, along with burning coals from the altar, and hurry to the assembly to make *atonement* for them. Wrath has come out from the Lord; the plague has started.” So Aaron did as Moses said, and ran into the midst of the assembly. The plague had already started among the people, but Aaron offered the incense and made *atonement* for them. He stood between the living and the dead, *and the plague stopped*. (Numbers 16:46–48 NIV, emphasis added)

In 2 Samuel 24:25, yet another *plague* was stopped when *sacrifices* were made:

David built an altar to the Lord there and *sacrificed* burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then the Lord answered his prayer in behalf of the land, and *the plague on Israel was stopped*. (2 Samuel 24:25 NIV, emphasis added)

This is not meant to be a complete list, but these examples show that there is nothing unusual or surprising about the connection between healing and atonement, sacrifice, ransom, and forgiveness of sins throughout the Bible. Therefore, it should not seem unusual or surprising to us that physical healing is included in Jesus’s Atonement.

Bread from Heaven

What we have seen is that the stripes on Jesus’s *body* purchased physical healing for us, and His *blood* purchased salvation for us. Does something about this sound familiar? Notice these passages:

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; *this is my body.*” Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. *This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*” (Matthew 26:26–28 NIV, emphasis added)

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, “Take, eat; *this is My body.*” Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. And He said to them, “*This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many.*” (Mark 14:22–24, emphasis added)

Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “*This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.*” Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, “*This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.*” (Luke 22:17–20, emphasis added)

Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks *a participation in the blood of Christ?* And is not the bread that we break *a participation in the body of Christ?* Because there is *one loaf*, we, who are many, *are one body, for we all share the one loaf.* (1 Corinthians 10:16–17 NIV, emphasis added)

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. (1 Corinthians 11:23–26, emphasis added)

These are all the passages in the New Testament that describe the Lord’s Supper, and we’re told that the cup represents the New Covenant in Jesus’s blood, which was shed for the forgiveness of sins.

Look closely at all the descriptions of the Lord’s Supper (above) and notice that the bread is never said to represent the New Covenant or the forgiveness of sins. This is because the cup and the bread do not symbolize the same things.

In all the descriptions of the Lord’s Supper, we are told two things about the bread. First, it represents His body that was given or broken for us, which is usually interpreted as a redundant way of saying that His body was given in death *for the forgiveness of our sins* (it is redundant because the cup of wine or juice represents Jesus’s blood that was shed *for the forgiveness of our sins*). But what we’ve seen is that His body was given and broken for us when He received the stripes for our physical healing. The bread that we break represents His broken body *because of His stripes*, which is why there are two elements in the Lord’s Supper. If the Lord’s Supper were *only* about the New Covenant and forgiveness of sins, then only the cup would be needed. In the next section, we’ll see why 1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (above) says that the bread and the cup both proclaim His death.

Second, we’re told that we are one bread and one body, for we all share the one loaf of bread (1 Corinthians 10:16–17, above). As Christians, though we are many, we are all members of the one body of Christ, the Church (Romans 12:4–8; 1 Corinthians 12:12–27; Ephesians

3:6; 4:11–16; 5:23; Colossians 1:18, 24). When each person ate a *broken piece* from the loaf of bread during the Lord's Supper in the New Testament, this symbolized that they were each a small *piece* of the one true loaf, which is Christ. We will come back to this later.

Jesus also used the imagery of bread in this passage, referring to Himself as the bread that came down from heaven:

“Very truly I tell you, *the one who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*” Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, *unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.*” (John 6:47–58 NIV, emphasis added)

In the first part of the above passage, Jesus said that those who *believe* have *eternal life*. Then He said a number of times that if we eat His flesh and drink His blood, we will *live forever*. So eating His flesh and drinking His blood is a metaphor for *believing* in Him for salvation. At the moment we receive salvation, He now lives *inside us* (John 14:20–23; 15:4; 17:20–23; Romans 8:9–10; 2 Corinthians

13:5; Ephesians 3:17; Colossians 1:27), and the word picture that He used for this in the above passage is eating His flesh and drinking His blood. This metaphor is a picture of bringing Him *inside us* the moment we receive salvation.

The bread that we eat at the Lord's Supper represents His body, and the cup that we drink represents His blood, but we've seen that the purpose and the symbolism of the Lord's Supper are different from the purpose and the symbolism of eating His flesh and drinking His blood in the above passage. Therefore, the above passage is not a reference to the Lord's Supper.

In the above passage, Jesus compared Himself with manna, which was the bread from heaven that God gave Moses and the Israelites during their 40 years in the wilderness (Exodus 16:35). Notice what Moses said to the Israelites concerning the manna:

And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. So *He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna* which you did not know nor did your fathers know, *that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.* (Deuteronomy 8:2–3, emphasis added)

This passage says that God allowed the Israelites to be hungry, and then He provided manna—the bread from heaven—for them. The parallel is that God causes us to hunger spiritually by drawing us to Jesus (e.g., John 6:44, 65), the true bread from heaven.

This passage also says that the purpose of feeding them with manna every day was to let them know that we do not live by bread alone, but we must live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord (Deuteronomy 8:2–3, above). The parallel is that we must eat the true bread from heaven in the sense of receiving salvation

through proper faith in Jesus as we saw a moment ago and listen to every word that proceeds from His mouth each and every day.¹²⁵

The Israelites ate manna for 40 years, and in all of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, every time someone got sick or died during those 40 years (with one possible exception) it was due to their sins. (Here are all the references: Exodus 17:8–13; 32:19–28, 31–35; Leviticus 10:1–2; Numbers 11:1, 31–34; 14:22–24, 28–37; 15:32–36; 16:23–35, 44–49; 20:1, 23–28; 21:5–9; 25:1–9; Deuteronomy 2:14–15; 34:4–7.)

The one possible exception is that Moses’s sister Miriam died in the last year of their wandering at approximately 130 years of age, but we’re not told the specific cause of her death (Numbers 20:1).¹²⁶

So the Israelites’ diet for 40 years essentially consisted of manna and water (although they were allowed to buy food from people at least once in Deuteronomy 2:2–6 and God gave them quail to eat for their punishment in Numbers 11), and it appears that the only time people died was due to their sins (again, we don’t know why Miriam died). We are not told that anyone died of old age.

Instead, in the following passages, we are told that all the Israelites were sustained on manna and water and lacked nothing and that if they *obeyed* the Lord, then no one would be sick, and their feet did not swell during their long marches through the wilderness. We’re also told that Moses’s eyes were not dim nor was his natural vigor diminished when he died at 120 years of age at the end of the 40 years and that Caleb, at 85 years old, was just as strong and vigorous after the 40 years as he was at the beginning of their wandering:

So he cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree. When he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet. There He made a statute and an ordinance for them, and *there He tested them, and said, “If you diligently*

125 Dave Root, “How to Discern God’s Guidance,” <https://www.vividchristianity.com/HowToDiscernGodsGuidance.htm>.

126 “Verse-by-Verse Bible Commentary, Numbers 20:1,” [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/commentary/numbers/20-1.html), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/numbers/20-1.html>.

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.” (Exodus 15:25–26, emphasis added)

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

For the Lord your God has blessed you in all the work of your hand. He knows your trudging through this great wilderness. *These forty years the Lord your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing.* (Deuteronomy 2:7, emphasis added)

Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. (Deuteronomy 8:4 NIV)

Then the Lord said to him, “This is the land of which I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’ I have caused you to see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there.” So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day. *Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished.* (Deuteronomy 34:4–7, emphasis added)

Now the people of Judah approached Joshua at Gilgal, and *Caleb* son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, “You know what the Lord said to Moses the man of God at Kadesh Barnea about you and me. *I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to explore the land.* And I brought him back a report according to my convictions, but my fellow Israelites who went up with me made the hearts of the people melt in fear. I, however, followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly. So on that day Moses swore to me, ‘The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children forever, because you have followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly.’ Now then, *just as the Lord promised, he has kept me alive for forty-five years since the time he said this to Moses, while Israel moved about in the wilderness. So here I am today, eighty-five years old! I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I’m just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then.*” (Joshua 14:6–11 NIV, emphasis added)

And destroyed all the firstborn in Egypt, the first of their strength in the tents of Ham. But He made His own people go forth like sheep, *and guided them in the wilderness like a flock; and He led them on safely, so that they did not fear;* but the sea overwhelmed their enemies. And He brought them to His holy border, this mountain which His right hand had acquired. (Psalm 78:51–54, emphasis added)

The above passages say that the Israelites lived on *manna* and water for 40 years, and they lacked nothing and had nothing to fear and did not get sick as long as they remained *obedient* to God. Jesus compared Himself to *manna*, and when we’re *obedient* to Him, then

we can be healed (as we'll see in Part 2) just as the Israelites stayed healthy by eating the original *manna* and being *obedient* to God.

Jesus made another reference to bread as well. In Matthew 15:21–28, a Gentile (non-Jewish) woman asked Jesus to heal her daughter. In His reply, He said that *healing is the children's bread*. Because of the cross, all Christians are God's children (e.g., Romans 8:14–23), and therefore, to Jesus, healing is just as important as food for us.

We have seen that Jesus symbolically referred to bread in several ways, and that *all* those references relate to healing. He said that He is the true bread from heaven who gives us healing just as the Israelites were kept healthy for 40 years by eating the bread from heaven and being obedient to God. He also said that healing is as important as bread for the children of God.

In addition, we've seen that the stripes on Jesus's *body* purchased physical healing for us, and His *blood* purchased salvation for us, which are symbolized by the bread and the cup in the Lord's Supper.

Concerning the Lord's Supper, if you ask any Christian why we use red wine or dark juice instead of white wine or water, they will probably say it's because white wine and water do not symbolize Jesus's blood. This is the correct answer, which demonstrates that we understand the importance of getting the symbolism right.

However, many, if not most, churches are getting the symbolism wrong when they eat the bread.

Notice what the apostle Paul said:

Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And *is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?* Because there is *one loaf*, we, who are many, *are one body, for we all share the one loaf.* (1 Corinthians 10:16–17 NIV, emphasis added)

When it is time to observe the Lord's Supper in many churches, everyone puts the bread into their mouth and eats it when they're told

to do so. However, Paul said in the above passage that Christ's body is the one true loaf (symbolized by *the bread that we break*) and that each Christian participates in the body of Christ as an individual *piece* (symbolized by *the broken piece* of bread that we eat), sharing in the one true loaf.

If we don't break the bread when we observe the Lord's Supper, as they did in *all* the descriptions of the original Lord's Supper (that we saw earlier), then we're getting the symbolism wrong. Before eating the bread, we need to break it and only eat part of it. The rest can be thrown away because in the New Testament, we're never told what to do with the remaining bread that is not eaten.

Remember, in the original Lord's Supper, Jesus *broke* the bread and said to *do this* (Luke 22:19, above). In 1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (above), Paul repeated the fact that Jesus *broke* the bread and said to *do this*. Paul also said that the bread that we *break* is our *participation* in the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16–17, above). This is how a prominent Bible commentary explains that passage:

The one loaf of bread, of which all partake, *pictured their unity as members of the one body of Christ.*¹²⁷
(emphasis added)

The one loaf is a picture of our unity in Christ, so breaking the bread and eating the broken piece symbolizes our individual participation in the body of Christ as Paul put it in 1 Corinthians 10:16–17 (above). If you receive a wafer or square of bread in church for the Lord's Supper, that's your one loaf. To get the symbolism right, you need to break it and eat only part of it.

We know that symbolism is important to God because symbolism is found throughout the entire Bible. The bread and the wine or juice do not literally and physically become the body and blood of Christ because, when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, He was physically present and alive at the table while the disciples ate the bread and drank the wine. Instead, the bread and the wine or juice are symbolic,

¹²⁷ Walvoord and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, "1 Corinthians 10:16–17."

and it's very important that we get the symbolism right and observe the Lord's Supper correctly.

Notice what Paul wrote to the church in Corinth when he found out that they were observing the Lord's Supper improperly:

So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment. Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world.
(1 Corinthians 11:27–32 NIV, emphasis added)

According to the above passage, many of the Christians in Corinth were weak and sick and had died *because* they had been observing the Lord's Supper improperly. (As we saw in chapter 2, Question #5, death is figuratively referred to as "sleep" in the New Testament.) This demonstrates how important it is to observe the Lord's Supper correctly, and it shows a connection between *obedience* and *healing* as we've seen throughout this chapter. Notice that Paul said that they were not properly discerning the *body* of Christ (not His blood but His *body*), which caused many of them to be weak or sick or to die. Since they did not discern that Jesus's body was broken (His stripes) for our physical healing, represented by the bread that we *break*, this affected their physical health.

In the Atonement, Jesus gave His blood and His body for us, but He gave each of them for different reasons, which are symbolically pictured in the Lord's Supper. We break the bread in remembrance of

the fact that His body was broken (His stripes), enabling us to receive physical healing, and we eat the broken piece of bread to symbolize that we are each a piece of the one true loaf that is Christ. The wine or juice symbolizes the New Covenant in Jesus's blood, and we drink it in remembrance of the fact that His blood enables us to receive forgiveness of sins.¹²⁸

Jesus's *blood* purchased our salvation, and the stripes on His *body* purchased our physical healing.

Sin Was Not Punished

But *how* did Jesus's stripes purchase our physical healing?

The answer is actually quite simple, but the explanation is rather complicated because most Christians have probably never taken a close look at what was going on in the Atonement.

It might require quite a bit of thought and prayer before this starts to make sense. However, it's not necessary to believe this answer to heal people.

If you search online for "atonement theories," the most commonly held view appears to be that Jesus died on the cross in our place to pay the penalty for sin, receiving the punishment that we deserved as our Substitute.

This is a misunderstanding of what happened in the Atonement.

Jesus said that He came to fulfill the Law of Moses and the prophets (e.g., Matthew 5:17; Luke 24:44), which means that He fulfilled the atonement rituals in the Law of Moses, for example. Some of these rituals, which were commanded to be done every year on the Day of Atonement, are described in Leviticus 16. First, the high priest (Aaron) killed a young bull as a sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household and sprinkled its blood to cleanse the earthly tabernacle or Most Holy Place (Leviticus 16:6, 11, 14–20). He also took two goats as a sin offering for all of Israel (Leviticus 16:5–10, 15, 21–22).

128 Dave Root, "Cheat Sheet for Conversations with Christians," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/CheatSheet.htm>. See section #18 for more information on how (and how often) to observe the Lord's Supper.

One goat was slaughtered as a sin offering to make atonement for the sins of the Israelites, and its blood was sprinkled to cleanse the earthly tabernacle (Leviticus 16:9, 15–20). Aaron laid both hands on the head of the other goat and confessed all the Israelites' sins over it. He then sent it into the wilderness to make atonement for the Israelites by carrying away their sins (Leviticus 16:10, 21–22).

The sin offerings for individual Israelites all essentially worked the same way. The one who unintentionally sinned brought an animal to the priest, then placed their hand on the animal's head (Leviticus 4:2–4, 13–15, 22–24, 27–29, 32–33). This was apparently for the purpose of placing the sin onto the animal as in Leviticus 16:21, although that's not specified. Then the animal was killed, and the priest performed certain actions with the animal's blood and body.

When animals were killed as sin offerings, sin was not punished; it was put to death. This was not a permanent atonement; sacrifices were needed for each occurrence of sin (Leviticus 4).

In exactly the same way, when Jesus was killed as a sin offering, sin was not punished; it was put to death. This was a permanent atonement; no more sacrifices are needed to atone for sin (Hebrews 9:25–28; 10:11–14).

Jesus was human, so His dead body was handled in accordance with Jewish burial customs (Matthew 27:57–60; Mark 15:42–46; Luke 23:50–56; John 19:38–42) instead of being gutted and burned as the sacrificed animals were (Leviticus 4:27–31; 16:25–27). He is both our High Priest (Hebrews 3:1; 4:14; 6:20; 9:11) and our sin offering (Isaiah 53:10; Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 7:26–27; 9:11–14, 22–28; 10:10–14 NKJV), and He sprinkled His own blood on the heavenly tabernacle or Most Holy Place (Hebrews 9:11–28).

Many Christians believe that Jesus died on the cross in our place as our Substitute, taking the punishment that we deserved for our sins. But throughout the New Testament, when it mentions the cross and its effect on sin, it does *not* speak of punishment; it speaks of *death* as in these examples:

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! *We are those who have died to sin*; how can we live in it any longer? (Romans 6:1–2 NIV, emphasis added)

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were *baptized into his death*? We were therefore *buried with him through baptism into death* in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we *have been united with him in a death like his*, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. (Romans 6:3–5 NIV, emphasis added)

For we know that *our old self was crucified with him* so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because *anyone who has died has been set free from sin*. Now if we *died with Christ*, we believe that we will also live with him. (Romans 6:6–8 NIV, emphasis added)

Knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For *the death that He died, He died to sin once for all*; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. *Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin*, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:9–11, emphasis added)

Therefore, my brethren, *you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ*, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. (Romans 7:4, emphasis added)

For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. *And so he condemned sin in the flesh.* (Romans 8:3 NIV, emphasis added)

For if you live according to the flesh you will die; *but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body*, you will live. (Romans 8:13, emphasis added)

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that *one died for all, and therefore all died.* And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. (2 Corinthians 5:14–15 NIV, emphasis added)

For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, *thereby putting to death the enmity.* (Ephesians 2:14–16, emphasis added)

Since *you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world*, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules? (Colossians 2:20 NIV, emphasis added)

Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For *you died*, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. *Therefore put to death* your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness,

passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. (Colossians 3:2–5, emphasis added)

Here is a trustworthy saying: If *we died with him*, we will also live with him. (2 Timothy 2:11 NIV, emphasis added)

Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that *we, having died to sins*, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed. (1 Peter 2:24, emphasis added)

We’re repeatedly told that Christians have *died* to sin because of Christ’s atoning sacrifice. We’re never told that sin was punished on the cross. In Romans 8:3 (above), we see that Jesus condemned sin, and a number of Bible commentaries¹²⁹ say that the Greek word for *condemned* refers to being *put to death* (e.g., Romans 5:16–18).

Sin was put to death—*not* punished¹³⁰—on the cross, which atoned for all the sins of the world throughout all time.¹³¹

The Bible doesn’t tell us how or when all the sins of the world were placed onto Jesus. In fact, it doesn’t actually say that He took all the sins of the world to the cross.

It says that He *atoned for* all the sins of the world.

Consider that sometimes, the Bible says that Jesus was delivered up for and died for and gave Himself for and was the atoning sacrifice for and bore our sins (e.g., Isaiah 53:11–12; Romans 4:25; 1 Corinthians 15:3; Galatians 1:4; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 2:2; 4:10). Sometimes, it says that He was the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world (e.g., 1 John 2:2). Sometimes, it says that He poured out His blood for and

129 “Verse-by-Verse Bible Commentary, Romans 8:3,” [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/commentary/romans/8-3.html), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/romans/8-3.html>.

130 Dave Root, “Understanding Jesus,” <https://www.vividchristianity.com/UnderstandingJesus1.htm>. My series provides an in-depth examination of the Atonement and explains in more detail that sin was not punished on the cross.

131 Dave Root, “Our Lives Are Not Predestined,” <https://www.vividchristianity.com/OurLivesAreNotPredestined.htm>. My article shows that the Calvinist view of Limited Atonement is completely unscriptural and completely wrong.

bore the sins of many (e.g., Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:28). Sometimes, it says that He was made sin (singular) and has put away sin (singular) (e.g., John 1:29; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 9:26).

So the writers of Scripture used a variety of ways and terms to describe how Jesus atoned for our sins. This means that we need to be cautious about looking at just one or two passages and assuming that “this is what happened.” We should try to see the *full* picture because looking at a partial picture can easily lead us to the wrong conclusions.¹³²

In the Old Testament, animals were killed for a number of reasons, sometimes simply for food. The fact that an animal was killed did not automatically make the animal a sin offering. In order to be a sin offering, the appropriate animal needed to be brought to the priest, and a hand needed to be placed on its head, and the animal needed to be killed before the Lord (Leviticus 4:1–35). All these were the requirements in order for the animal to be a sin offering.

Jesus fulfilled all the requirements for the atonement rituals in the Law of Moses, yet we don’t see anyone placing their hand on His head according to the requirements for a sin offering.

Or do we?

In the Atonement, the Roman soldiers mocked Jesus as the King of the Jews just before taking Him away and crucifying Him (Matthew 27:26–35; Mark 15:15–20; John 19:1–18).

This mocking of the sin offering was *not* a part of the atonement rituals in the Law of Moses. However, it had a very specific and very critical purpose. While mocking Jesus as the King of the Jews, one of the soldiers placed a crown of thorns on His head. In this way, the requirement of placing a hand on the head of the sin offering was fulfilled.

We’re not specifically told that a soldier touched Jesus’s head, but He could only be a sin offering if He fulfilled *all* the requirements for a sin offering. Therefore, someone placed their hand on His head, transferring sin onto Him.

¹³² Dave Root, “How to Study the Bible,” Vivid Christianity, accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.vividchristianity.com/HowToStudyTheBible.htm>.

*Easton's Bible Dictionary*¹³³ and the *Holman Bible Dictionary*¹³⁴ define sin as disobedience to God's commands, laws, or wishes. It's a rebellion against God caused by self-centered thoughts, desires, or motives, leading to outward acts that are the manifestations of sin. All the individual sins listed in the Bible (e.g., murder, adultery, lying, stealing) are different manifestations of our disobedience to God, whether we do them intentionally or not.

In order to atone for all the sins of the world, it was not necessary for Jesus to have all sins throughout all time transferred onto Him. *All* sins are manifestations of one thing: our disobedience to God.

Transferring just one sin onto Jesus meant that the root sin (so to speak)—disobedience—was transferred onto Him. By putting that root sin to death on the cross, He put to death all the manifestations of sin that spring from that root. In this way, He put to death and atoned for all the sins of the world throughout all time. This is why we're told that He took away the sin of the world (John 1:29) and that God made Him to be sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21) and that He put away sin (Hebrews 9:26). When the Bible speaks of sin in the singular in those verses, it's referring to the fact that there is a root sin (which is manifested in all our individual sins).

Jesus is referred to as the second Adam and the last Adam because He atoned for the condemnation of *all* people caused by the first Adam:

Therefore, just as *sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned....* Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who is a pattern of the one to come. But the gift is not like the trespass. For *if the many died by the trespass*

133 "Sin," *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/dictionaries/eng/ebd/s/sin.html), accessed May 13, 2023, <https://www.studylight.org/dictionaries/eng/ebd/s/sin.html>.

134 "Sin," *Holman Bible Dictionary*, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/dictionaries/eng/hbd/s/sin.html), accessed May 13, 2023, <https://www.studylight.org/dictionaries/eng/hbd/s/sin.html>.

of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! Nor can the gift of God be compared with the result of one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ! Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. (Romans 5:12, 14–19 NIV, emphasis added)

For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. (1 Corinthians 15:21–22, emphasis added)

And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. (1 Corinthians 15:45–47, emphasis added)

The above passages say that Adam's *one* act of disobedience, that *one* root sin, is the cause of *all* sin and death entering the world.

Notice the parallels in the above passages:

- All people are sinners because of one man, the first Adam, who committed one sin and brought condemnation and death to the world by his disobedience.¹³⁵
- All people can receive forgiveness of sins because of one Man, the second Adam, who took on one sin and brought justification and life to the world by His sacrifice.

As Paul said in the above passages, it only took *one* sin to bring condemnation onto the whole world.

Similarly, it only took *one* sin for Jesus to become a sin offering, just as it only took *one* sin for an animal to become a sin offering in the Old Testament. Jesus took the root sin to the cross and put it to death, purchasing our salvation. He is called the second Adam and the last Adam because He did the same thing as the first Adam but essentially in reverse (as described in the above passages).

In chapter 2, we saw that often, when God stretches out His hand to perform certain actions, they are actually done by someone else (see Question #7). When the Father laid on Jesus the iniquity (sin) of us all (Isaiah 53:6), He did it by causing the crown of thorns to be placed on Jesus's head. This transferred sin to Jesus by someone's hand touching His head as required in certain atonement rituals.

Perhaps you've never understood the Atonement in this way, but once it becomes clear to you, then it is quite simple to understand how Jesus's stripes purchased our physical healing.

When Jesus was viciously flogged on His back, creating the stripes, the bloody ribbons of flesh, this was *not* a part of the atonement rituals in the Law of Moses. This flogging was not required in order for Jesus to atone for our sins, but like the mocking, it had a very specific and very critical purpose.

Consider that if Adam and Eve had not sinned, they would have had access to the tree of life and lived forever (Genesis 3:22–24). God had said that if they eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, then they would surely die (Genesis 2:17). In that verse, the Hebrew

¹³⁵ Dave Root, "Understanding Jesus—Part Two," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/UnderstandingJesus2.htm>. My article explains why everyone after Adam and Eve (except Jesus) inherited sin and its consequences from Adam.

literally means “dying, thou shalt die.”¹³⁶ They didn’t actually die immediately after eating the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:1–5:5), but instead, their bodies began breaking down bit by bit, until they died of old age, sickness, or injury.

Similarly, our bodies are breaking down slowly every day and are vulnerable to sicknesses and injuries. To paraphrase Genesis 2:17, “dying, we shall die.” The root cause of our physical death and our vulnerability to sicknesses and injuries is Adam’s disobedience, because if he had *not* disobeyed God, then we would have access to the tree of life and live forever, even today.

We’ve seen that Jesus fulfilled the Law of Moses, and two passages in the Law of Moses shed a bit more light on Jesus’s stripes. Notice that any wicked man needed to be beaten with 40 stripes or lashes or blows in the presence of a judge:

If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked. And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number. *Forty stripes he may give him*, and not exceed: lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee. (Deuteronomy 25:1–3 KJV, emphasis added)

In order to fulfill the Law of Moses and pay the price for the Jews’ wickedness, Jesus took the lashing described in the above passage in the presence of His Father who judges righteously (1 Peter 1:17; 2:23). This lashing was administered by the Romans under Pontius Pilate

136 “Verse-by-Verse Bible Commentary, Genesis 2:17,” [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/commentary/genesis/2-17.html), accessed April 20, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/genesis/2-17.html>. Search for *dying*.

(Matthew 27:24–26; Mark 15:15; John 19:1), and they had no limit on the number of stripes given to a condemned person.¹³⁷

Concerning Jesus's stripes, this is the other significant passage in the Law of Moses:

If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, the Lord your God, then the Lord will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues—great and prolonged plagues—and serious and prolonged sicknesses. Moreover He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you. Also every sickness and every plague, which is not written in this Book of the Law, will the Lord bring upon you until you are destroyed. (Deuteronomy 28:58–61)

According to the above passage, if the Jews disobeyed the Law of Moses, then God would place all manner of sicknesses and diseases on them. Once again, we see a link between sin and sickness, and between obedience and healing, just as we've seen throughout this chapter. (We will look at more examples in chapter 4.) In order to purchase our physical healing, Jesus paid the price for the Jews' wickedness, described in Deuteronomy 25:1–3 (above).¹³⁸

The lashing that Jesus received was necessary for fulfilling the Law of Moses, but as we saw earlier, His stripes from the lashing did not atone for our sins because it was His *death* that atoned for our sins.

137 "Verse-by-Verse Bible Commentary, Matthew 10:17," [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/commentary/matthew/10-17.html), accessed July 5, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/matthew/10-17.html>. Search for *Romans*.

138 Dave Root, "Covenants, Dispensations, and the Ten Commandments—Part One," Vivid Christianity, accessed July 6, 2021, <https://www.vividchristianity.com/CovenantsDispensationsAndTheTenCommandments1.htm>. My article shows that the New Covenant was specifically made between God and the Jews, but Gentiles (non-Jews) can *share in* some of its promises and blessings by receiving salvation.

By fulfilling the Law of Moses, Jesus's obedience canceled all the infirmities that were promised for the Jews' disobedience, which are described in Deuteronomy 28 (partially quoted above).

When we understand that Jesus put to death the root of *all* sins on the cross, we can easily see that He also put to death the root of *all* infirmities (disobedience) by taking the stripes to the cross. He conquered all disobedience with His obedience, canceling all the infirmities mentioned in the above passage. This is why Isaiah said that by His *stripes* we are healed and why Peter said that by His *stripes* we were healed.

As I said, this might require quite a bit of thought and prayer before it becomes clear because it's probably a new and unfamiliar idea that you've never considered. If you work through this section a few times, then you'll be able to see how all the pieces fit together.

However, it's not necessary to believe this explanation of Jesus's stripes in order to heal people as long as you understand that Jesus's *blood* purchased our salvation and the stripes on His *body* somehow purchased our physical healing.

According to John 19:30, Jesus's last words on the cross were, "It is finished."¹³⁹ As some Bible commentaries point out,¹⁴⁰ the Greek word for "It is finished" is *tetelestai*, and ancient receipts for taxes have been found with the word *tetelestai* written on them, meaning "paid in full." With His death, Jesus had paid in full the purchase price for the forgiveness of our sins as well as the purchase price for our physical healing. This is why both Isaiah and Peter put the word *healed* in the past tense:

By His stripes *we are healed*. (Isaiah 53:5, emphasis added)

139 Luke 23:46 records Jesus's last words as, "Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit." Here Jesus was quoting from Psalm 31:5, as He was completing the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies on the cross as in John 19:28–30. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that "it is finished" were actually His last words because with His death, all prophecies of the Messiah's first coming had been fulfilled.

140 "Verse-by-Verse Bible Commentary, John 19:30," [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org/commentary/john/19-30.html), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/john/19-30.html>. Search for *paid*.

By whose stripes *you were healed*. (1 Peter 2:24, emphasis added)

In Isaiah, the word *healed* is in the perfect mood which “expresses a completed action” such as “one completed from the point of view of another action yet future.”¹⁴¹ Our physical healing is a completed action and an accomplished fact because it was purchased for us in the Atonement.

In chapter 1, we saw that Jesus commanded the Church to continue His earthly ministry until He returns, which involves preaching the Gospel, healing people, and casting out demons. He has not yet returned, so divine healing absolutely is for today; we just haven’t understood how it works.

In chapter 2, we saw that when people have objections to the idea that healing is for today, their arguments don’t stand up to scrutiny. Divine healing absolutely is for today; we just haven’t understood how it works.

In this chapter, we’ve seen overwhelming scriptural evidence that physical healing was purchased for us in the Atonement. This is a perfectly reasonable conclusion based on *all* the scriptural evidence and it was necessary because Jesus commanded us to continue His ministry of preaching the Gospel, healing people, and casting out demons as we saw in chapter 1. Physical healing absolutely is in the Atonement; we just haven’t understood how it works.

The Main Reason Why Most Christians Never See Anyone Healed

Salvation was purchased for us in the Atonement, so does that mean everyone is *guaranteed* to receive salvation? Yes, but only under

141 “Passage Lookup: Isaiah 53:5,” Strong’s Interlinear Bible Search, [StudyLight.org](https://www.studydrive.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Isaiah+53%3A5&t3=eng_kjv), accessed June 27, 2021, https://www.studydrive.org/study-desk/interlinear.html?q1=Isaiah+53%3A5&t3=eng_kjv. Click the number 8738 next to the word *healed* in this passage.

the proper conditions (e.g., Romans 10:9–10).¹⁴² These conditions are not difficult, but they must be met. For example, in order for you to buy medicine at a store, the store must provide the medicine, and you must pay for it and take it home. Both parties in the transaction need to do their part so that you own the medicine. Concerning salvation, God has already done His part in the transaction at the Atonement (He has *already* paid for it), and we must do our part in order to receive it.

In exactly the same way, physical healing was purchased for us in the Atonement, so does that mean everyone is *guaranteed* to receive healing? Yes, but only under the proper conditions (described in Part 2). As with salvation, these conditions are not difficult, but they must be met. Concerning physical healing, God has already done His part in the transaction at the Atonement (He has *already* paid for it), and we must do our part in order to receive it.

With this in mind, we can now return to the part where I said, “hold that thought,” in a previous section. If you recall, we saw a pattern demonstrating that God provides a number of spiritual blessings to us (in our spirits), and these blessings are not visible outwardly in the physical world unless we *do* something. We must *walk* in love, *act* with patience toward people, *exercise* self-control, etc., so that these inward attributes can be seen in the physical world. In exactly the same way, we must *do* something (our changed behaviors) so that our inner salvation can be seen in the physical world.

Putting together the information in the preceding sections creates a shift in our understanding about the nature of divine healing.

Physical healing comes to us by the same Atonement that brought us salvation. Therefore, just like salvation, healing is a *spiritual* blessing that we receive in our spirits. We must *do* something so that our healing is visible in the physical world in the same way that we must *do* something so that our salvation is visible in the physical world. We *automatically* receive healing (in our spirits) when we fulfill the

142 Dave Root, “Our Lives Are Not Predestined,” <https://www.vividchristianity.com/OurLivesAreNotPredestined.htm>. My article shows that people are not specifically predestined by God to receive salvation and that salvation is available to everyone.

conditions in the same way that we *automatically* receive salvation (in our spirits) when we fulfill the conditions.

As in the analogy of buying medicine at a store, healing (just like salvation) is a simple, unemotional transaction, in the sense that if both parties do their part, then the desired result is achieved. We do not need to pray, ask, cry, beg, or plead in order to receive healing or salvation.

Continuing the store analogy, imagine that the cashier pays for the medicine himself and gives it to you for free, then hands you the receipt. Your part in the transaction is to thank him, trust that the receipt proves that the medicine is legally yours, and then go home and take the medicine. If you doubt that it is legally yours, and therefore, you leave it on the counter and go home without it, then the medicine won't do you any good. Our doubts can cancel the transaction. The only way the medicine will help you is if you trust that the receipt proves that it is legally yours.

In the Atonement, God *completed* His part in the transaction, both for salvation and for healing. He does not need to do anything else for us to receive either one. Jesus paid for both, and the Scripture passages we have seen are our receipt (as in the store analogy). He is now legally bound to give us salvation and physical healing when we properly do our part in the transaction.

This is the key that unlocks the reason why most Christians never see anyone healed. Praying for healing (for ourselves or others), asking God to heal us (or others), crying, begging, or pleading for healing, patiently waiting for God to heal us, etc., have *no* effect on receiving healing just as they have no effect on receiving salvation. When we do those things and nothing else, then we are not doing our part properly in the transaction, and therefore, we are not achieving the desired result.

Earlier, I said that there is no guarantee that we will see someone healed, and when I made that statement, we didn't have enough pieces of the puzzle for my meaning to be made clear. The proper conditions must be met to see anyone healed, but as we'll see later,

we can't *force* someone to meet the conditions. For instance, when a blind man wanted to be healed, Jesus told him to *receive* his sight, and then the man *received* his sight by his faith (Luke 18:35–43). People must do what is needed so that their healing is outwardly visible, but we can't force them to do it properly. Therefore, we have no guarantee of the results when we heal people. We might see an instant healing, we might need to be persistent, or perhaps, there won't be any change.

For example, even Jesus did not always see instant healings. Notice that He made *two* attempts to heal a blind man before the man's eyesight was fully restored:

Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. So He took the blind man by the hand and *led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything.* And he looked up and said, "I see men like trees, walking." *Then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly.* Then He sent him away to his house, saying, "*Neither go into the town, nor tell anyone in the town.*" (Mark 8:22–26, emphasis added)

Apart from this passage, in every example where Jesus gave sight to blind people, we are simply told that they were healed, usually after He said or did something (Matthew 9:27–30; 11:2–5; 12:22–23; 15:29–31; 20:29–34; 21:14; Mark 10:49–52; Luke 7:21–22; 18:35–43; John 9:1–7). Some of those passages specifically say that *their* faith had healed them. In the above passage, however, Jesus laid hands on a blind man and then asked *if he saw anything*. This indicates that Jesus did *not* assume that the man would be instantly healed.

Jesus had already denounced the towns, including Bethsaida, in which most of His miracles had been performed because they did not repent (see Matthew 14:17–21; 15:34–38; Mark 6:38–44; 8:1–9 and

compare them with Matthew 11:20–22 and Mark 8:19–26). Bethsaida was so lacking in faith that Jesus denounced them, which is why He led the blind man out of that town, away from their lack of faith, and why He did not assume that the man had faith for his healing. The blind man’s partial healing enabled him to have enough faith for a full healing, which he then received.

After the man’s sight was restored, Jesus told him not to go into Bethsaida or talk to anyone there, possibly because doing so could have affected the man’s faith and his healing. Whether we like it or not, people’s faith is a big factor in healing and miracles as we will see throughout this book, even when it was Jesus doing the healing and miracles. For example, because of people’s lack of faith in Jesus in His hometown, He “did not” (Matthew 13:54–58) or “could not” (Mark 6:4–6) do many miracles or healings there.

Summary and Final Thoughts

Think about the words that you (or others) have used when praying for anyone who needed healing. No matter how long or elegant the prayers are, they usually boil down to “Father, please heal that person. In Jesus’s name. Amen.” Praying for healing is not scriptural because not a single person in the entire New Testament was healed by someone who prayed for them.¹⁴³

In a few passages, people prayed *beforehand*, but the healing itself was not done through any type of prayer. For example:

There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and showed us generous hospitality for three days. His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, *after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him.* (Acts 28:7–8 NIV, emphasis added)

¹⁴³ Dave Root, “Every Example of Healing in the New Testament,” <https://www.vividchristianity.com/EveryExampleOfHealingInTheNewTestament.htm>.

Peter sent them all out of the room; then *he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, “Tabitha, get up.”* She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. (Acts 9:40 NIV, emphasis added)

“Take away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.” Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?” So they took away the stone. *Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.” When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.* Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.” (John 11:39–44 NIV, emphasis added)

Jesus never told anyone to *pray* for the sick, but instead, He said that we will *heal* the sick as we saw in chapter 1. There’s a big difference between the two because healing is not accomplished by praying for God to do it from heaven.

We have seen that Jesus symbolically referred to bread in several ways, and they *all* relate to healing. He said that He is the true bread from heaven that gives us healing just as the Israelites were kept healthy for 40 years by eating the bread from heaven and *obeying* God. He also said that healing is just as important as bread for God’s children. In addition, the bread in the Lord’s Supper represents His body that was given or broken for us for our physical healing.

We learned how to observe the Lord’s Supper properly, and we saw that many Christians in Corinth were sick or had died *because* they were observing the Lord’s Supper improperly. This demonstrates the

importance of doing it correctly and it agrees with the other passages we saw which show that illnesses, diseases, and death are often found in connection with sin, confirming the link between *obedience* and *healing* as we saw throughout this chapter.

We saw that the root sin of disobedience was probably transferred to Jesus when a soldier placed the crown of thorns on His head, fulfilling the requirement of placing a hand on the head of the sin offering. It's very symbolic that sin was transferred to Jesus by a garland of thorns placed on His head as He was made the *curse* for sin (Galatians 3:13) because thorns are representative of God's original *curse* for sin (Genesis 3:17–18). The crown of thorns on the cover of this book is intended to be a reminder of all the humiliation and suffering Jesus went through for each one of us in the Atonement, which, in addition to thorns, included being scorned and rejected by His own people, stripped, scourged on His back with a Roman flagrum (which “would quickly remove the skin” and could inflict “deep lacerations, torn flesh, exposed muscles and excessive bleeding”¹⁴⁴), mocked, spat on, struck repeatedly on His head with a staff, and then crucified on the cross (Matthew 27:24–31). The garland of thorns on the cover of this book is lying on the ground to show that He is no longer wearing that humiliating and painful crown. Instead, He was crowned with glory and honor after dying to atone for our sins (Hebrews 2:9), and He is now sitting at the right hand of God (Hebrews 12:2).

We also discovered that God is not going to *do* something to heal us Himself because He has *already* done His part in the Atonement.

As in the analogy of buying medicine at a store, healing (just like salvation) is a simple, unemotional transaction, in the sense that if both parties do their part, then the desired result is achieved. We do not need to pray, ask, cry, beg, or plead in order to receive healing or salvation.

144 “Roman Scourge Instrument,” The Roman Scourge, Bible History, accessed March 4, 2023, <https://bible-history.com/past/flagrum>.

4

The Battle Is in Your Mind

The fact that healing was provided for us in the Atonement has a huge impact on how we heal the sick. For example:

- It's a waste of time to say, "God, please heal me," or "God, please heal that person."
- It's a waste of time to say, "I believe that God will heal me."
- It's a waste of time to say, "I'm patiently waiting for God to heal me."
- It's inaccurate to say, "God can heal me if He wants to."
- It's inaccurate to say, "Why isn't God healing me?"
- It's inaccurate to say, "Maybe it's not God's will to heal me."
- It's inaccurate to say, "Maybe I haven't prayed enough."

As we have seen, God has *already* done His part, and this is probably the biggest reason why so many people are not seeing any healings. They're asking God to heal them (or someone else) and waiting for Him to heal them, but He is not going to do something that He has already done.

For example, imagine that you own an item that is broken, so you ask a repair person to do something to fix it, and you wait for it to be repaired. This is how Christians tend to think of healing. When their body needs to be fixed (healed), they ask God to do something to fix it, and they wait to see if He will heal them.

But that's an incorrect understanding of how healing works.

Here's a better analogy: Imagine that you need a pen to write with, so I set my pen on the table in front of you and give you permission to use it. If you keep asking to use my pen, or cry, beg, and plead to use my pen, or patiently wait to be allowed to use my pen, you're wasting your time because I've *already* made it available to you. You simply need to pick it up and use it. You can ask, cry, beg, or plead *while* you're picking up my pen and using it, but the asking, crying, begging, or pleading have no effect on me because I have *already* given it to you. You don't need to ask for it. It is your responsibility to do your part because I'm not going to *force* you to use my pen.

When Christians see or experience divine healing, they assume that God did the healing as a result of prayer. But the above analogy shows that the healing took place *despite* anyone's prayers. Healing happens when the proper conditions are met; we don't need to pray for it because God has *already* given it to us.

Implications of Physical Healing in the Atonement

Would God discipline us or teach us by refusing to give us joy? No, because He has already given us joy through the Atonement (i.e., the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22–23). He has *already* given it to us, so it's *always* His will for us to be joyful, even if we sometimes experience a lack of joy.

Similarly, would God discipline us or teach us by refusing to heal us? No, because He has already given us healing through the Atonement. He has *already* given it to us, so it's *always* His will for us to be healthy, even if we sometimes become sick or injured.

If we're not feeling joy, could God *use* that to teach us something or draw us closer to Him? Absolutely, but this doesn't mean that it's His *desire* for us to be without joy or that He is *denying* us joy.

Similarly, if we are sick or injured, could God *use* that to teach us something or draw us closer to Him? Absolutely, but this doesn't

mean that it's His *desire* for us to be sick or injured or that He is *denying* us healing.

Here's another way to understand it. Consider a radio station that constantly broadcasts a signal to everyone in the area. Since the signal is freely available to everyone, it is always the station's will for people to receive the signal. The signal is *always* available, and *no one* is ever denied. It's up to *us* to tune our radios to the proper frequency in order to receive the signal. If we're not on the proper frequency, then the problem is on *our* side, not on the station's side.

Now let's use that illustration in the context of salvation. Because of the Atonement, salvation is freely available to everyone as we saw in chapter 3, so it is always God's will for people to receive salvation. Salvation is *always* available, and *no one* is ever denied. It's up to *us* to receive salvation by doing our part as we saw in chapter 3. If we don't do our part, then we won't receive salvation, in which case the hindrance is on *our* side, not on God's side.¹⁴⁵

Now let's use that illustration in the context of healing. Because of the Atonement, healing is freely available to everyone as we saw in chapter 3, so it is always God's will for people to receive healing. Healing is *always* available, and *no one* is ever denied. It's up to *us* to receive healing by doing our part as we saw in chapter 3. If we don't do our part, then we won't receive healing, in which case the hindrance is on *our* side, not on God's side. This is not meant to place blame on anyone, but instead, it means that we can learn what to do and then be healed.

The Key Factors for Miracles

In the New Testament, we sometimes see miracles being initiated from heaven, such as when God spoke in an audible voice or when people experienced visions (e.g., Matthew 3:17; Acts 9:10–16; 10:1–7, 9–17; 12:7–10; 16:9; 18:9–10; 26:13–19).

¹⁴⁵ Dave Root, "Our Lives Are Not Predestined," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/OurLivesAreNotPredestined.htm>. My article shows that people are not specifically predestined by God to receive salvation and that salvation is available to everyone.

But when miracles were initiated from earth after the cross in the New Testament, these two key factors were involved:

- the authority of Jesus
- the faith of people

Let's examine each of these in order to better understand what they mean, starting with the authority of Jesus.

Before the apostle Paul received salvation, he persecuted Christians in the authority of the Jewish chief priests:

I [Paul] too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. *On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the Lord's people in prison,* and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. (Acts 26:9–10 NIV, emphasis and extra word added)

Notice that Paul wasn't acting in his *own* authority, but instead, he was acting in the authority of *a higher power* (the chief priests). The chief priests sent Paul on a mission, and he acted in their authority.

When Jesus sent out the 12 apostles to operate in His ministry of preaching the Gospel, healing people, and casting out demons, He delegated the necessary authority to them. Therefore, they were acting in *His* authority:

Then He called *His twelve disciples* together and gave *them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. He sent them* to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. (Luke 9:1–2, emphasis added)

When Jesus sent out the 72 average, ordinary believers to operate in His ministry of preaching the Gospel, healing people, and casting out demons, He gave them authority over the enemy. Therefore, they were acting in *His* authority:

After this *the Lord appointed seventy-two others* and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them.... “Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you....’” The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.” He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. *I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy*; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” (Luke 10:1–2, 9, 17–20 NIV, emphasis added)

When Jesus sent out the Church body to operate in His ministry of preaching the Gospel, healing people, and casting out demons as we saw in chapter 1, He was delegating these tasks to us. Therefore, we do these things in *His* authority:

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “*All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*” Amen. (Matthew 28:18–20, emphasis added)

He said to them, “*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.* Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: *In my name they will drive out demons*; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all;

they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.” (Mark 16:15–18 NIV, emphasis added)

So when we preach the Gospel, heal people, and cast out demons, we’re not acting in our *own* authority, but instead, we’re acting in the authority of a higher power (Jesus).

In Mark 16:15–18 (above), Jesus said that His followers would cast out demons and heal people “in my name.” In the following passage, notice that the apostle Peter healed a man “in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth”:

Then Peter said, “Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: *In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth*, rise up and walk.” And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. (Acts 3:6–7, emphasis added)

This healing came to the attention of the Jewish rulers, who asked Peter by what power or name he did this:

The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest’s family. They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: “*By what power or what name did you do this?*” (Acts 4:5–7 NIV, emphasis added)

They understood that performing an action in the *name* of another person is equivalent to performing the action in the *authority* of that other person.

So when we are sent out by a higher power to do something and we do it in the name of that higher power, we are doing it in the full authority of that higher power. For example, when police officers say,

“Stop in the name of the law,” they have the full authority of the law backing them up.

The second key factor when miracles were initiated from earth was people’s faith.

But what is faith? First, let’s look at what faith is *not*:

- Faith is not an emotion. For example, if you’re a Christian, then you have faith in Jesus as your Savior, but you’re not constantly full of emotion, shouting, jumping, etc. Faith can sometimes bring out emotion in us, but faith itself is not an emotion.
- Faith is not knowledge. For example, when Hurricane Ike was heading toward Houston in 2008, I asked the Lord if I needed to do something to protect my house from damage. He told me that I didn’t need to do anything, so I had faith that my house wouldn’t be damaged. After the hurricane had passed across Houston without damaging my house, at that point I *knew* that my house was unharmed, and therefore, I no longer needed to have faith that my house would be unharmed. So faith is different from knowledge.
- Faith is not hope:

And now abide *faith, hope*, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13:13, emphasis added)

As the above verse shows, faith is different from hope.

Now let’s look at what faith *is*. In a moment, we will examine some New Testament miracles, and we’ll see that faith for miracles has two essential components:

- confidence
- saying or doing something that won’t always make sense to us

We tend to think of faith as trust, confidence, or belief, which is true, but we should keep in mind that faith needs to be demonstrated through actions:

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone *claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them?...* In the same way, *faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.* But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and *I will show you my faith by my deeds....* You foolish person, do you want evidence that *faith without deeds is useless?* Was not our father Abraham considered righteous *for what he did* when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that *his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.* And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend. You see that *a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone....* As the body without the spirit is dead, *so faith without deeds is dead.* (James 2:14–26 NIV, emphasis added)

Hebrews 11:1 is the only definition of faith in the Bible¹⁴⁶:

Now *faith is confidence* [*substance* in the KJV] in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. (Hebrews 11:1 NIV, emphasis and extra words added)

This is how one Bible commentary explains Hebrews 11:1:

The word rendered “substance”—*ὑπόστασις hypostasis*—occurs in the New Testament only in the following places. In 2 Corinthians 9:4; 2 Corinthians 11:17; Hebrews 3:14, where it is rendered “*confident*” and “*confidence*,” and in Hebrews 1:3, where it is rendered “*person*,” and in

146 “Verse-by-Verse Bible Commentary, Hebrews 11:1,” [StudyLight.org](https://www.studylight.org), accessed April 11, 2021, <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/hebrews/11-1.html>. See Barnes’ Notes on the Whole Bible.

the passage before us....*A belief that there is such a place as London or Calcutta, leads us to act as if this were so, if we have occasion to go to either; a belief that money may be made in a certain undertaking, leads people to act as if this were so; a belief in the veracity of another leads us to act as if this were so. As long as the faith continues, whether it be well-founded or not, it gives all the force of reality to what is believed. We feel and act just as if it were so, or as if we saw the object before our eyes. This, I think, is the clear meaning here.* We do not see the things of eternity. We do not see God, or heaven, or the angels, or the redeemed in glory, or the crowns of victory, or the harps of praise; but we have faith in them, and this leads us to act as if we saw them. And this is, undoubtedly, the fact in regard to all who live by faith and who are fairly under its influence.¹⁴⁷ (emphasis added)

The above quote points out that the Greek word *hupóstasis* is most often translated as *confident* or *confidence*, and in that quote, we see the two components of faith or belief: confidence plus acting on our confidence. One Greek dictionary of the New Testament defines *hupóstasis* as follows:

The ground of confidence, assurance, guarantee, or proof.¹⁴⁸

In addition, notice how the following passage is translated. In the NKJV, belief is equated with faith, and in the NIV, trust is equated with faith:

But to him who does not work but *believes* on Him who justifies the ungodly, his *faith* is accounted for righteousness. (Romans 4:5 NKJV, emphasis added)

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, “*hupóstasis* (G5287).”

However, to the one who does not work but *trusts* God who justifies the ungodly, their *faith* is credited as righteousness. (Romans 4:5 NIV, emphasis added)

We see a similar situation in other passages, such as this one, in which the NKJV translates a Greek word as *believing* and the NIV translates it as *trusting*:

So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had *believed*. (Acts 14:23 NKJV, emphasis added)

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their *trust*. (Acts 14:23 NIV, emphasis added)

So when we see *faith* or *belief* in the New Testament, they refer to confidence or trust.

Our Citizenship Is in Heaven

Imagine an American ambassador to Russia who is of Russian descent. He is not married, has no children, and speaks Russian fluently. Although he lives in Russia and looks and speaks like a Russian, he is actually an American citizen. Therefore, he is completely unconcerned about Russian politics, their economy, or other concerns that Russians might have. While on a hiking vacation in a remote area, he slips, hits his head, and is knocked unconscious. He awakens in a Russian village in the home of a nice family who have treated his wounds, but he has amnesia and can't remember who he is.

Over time, the village's concerns, politics, and economy become his concerns as well since he feels as if he is a member of the village. But when he regains his memory and realizes that he's not a citizen of the village or of Russia but instead a citizen of America, he then returns to the embassy. Now he is able to operate in the authority and power granted to him by the American government, which he couldn't do while living in the village because he was not thinking and acting as an ambassador.

Now let's consider some important points in this illustration:

- Although the American ambassador lives in Russia and looks and speaks like the people of Russia, he is actually a citizen of a *different* place (America) because of his physical birth in America. The analogy is that although we live in the world and look and speak like the people of the world, we are actually citizens of a *different* place (the kingdom of heaven) because of our spiritual birth when we received salvation.

The apostle Paul said that he was born a citizen of Rome (e.g., Acts 16:37; 22:27–28) and he enjoyed all the rights and privileges of a citizen of Rome (Acts 22:24–29). Yet Paul also said that all Christians are citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20) and members of God's household (Ephesians 2:19) and that God has seated us in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6). Jesus is our King, and we are citizens of His kingdom, which is in another place and not of this world (John 8:21–23; 18:36).

Notice the tense of the verbs in the following passages. Our citizenship *is* in heaven:

For *our citizenship is in heaven*, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. (Philippians 3:20, emphasis added)

We *are* members of the household of God:

Now, therefore, *you are* no longer strangers and foreigners, but *fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God*. (Ephesians 2:19, emphasis added)

We *have been* made to sit in the heavenly places:

And raised us up together, and *made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus*. (Ephesians 2:6, emphasis added)

Jesus *is not* of this world. We are the body of Christ, so we *are not* of this world either:

But he continued, “You are from below; *I am from above*. You are of this world; *I am not of this world*.” (John 8:23 NIV, emphasis added)

- The ambassador lives in Russia for a specific purpose: to be the ambassador to Russia from America. The analogy is that we are here on earth to be ambassadors from heaven.

Notice the tense of the verb. We *are* Christ’s ambassadors:

We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. (2 Corinthians 5:20 NIV, emphasis added)

- The ambassador has the freedom to make many choices on his own, such as what to eat, what to wear, and other day-to-day decisions. But as an ambassador, he must say and do what the American government tells him to say and do.

The analogy is that we’re able to make many choices on our own,¹⁴⁹ but we must continually listen to and obey our

149 Dave Root, “Our Lives Are Not Predestined,” <https://www.vividchristianity.com/OurLivesAreNotPredestined.htm>.

heavenly King throughout the day, every day, so that we can carry out the assignments that He needs us to do.¹⁵⁰

- Before his hiking accident, the ambassador was completely unconcerned about Russian politics or the Russian economy because he lived in Russia but was not of Russia.

The analogy is that we live in the world, but we are not of the world (John 15:19; Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 10:2–5; Ephesians 2:1–2; Philippians 3:17–19; Colossians 2:8, 20; James 4:4; 1 John 4:4–6):

Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I

150 Dave Root, “How to Discern God’s Guidance,” <https://www.vividchristianity.com/HowToDiscernGodsGuidance.htm>.

in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. (John 17:11–23, emphasis added)

For example, I am a citizen of America with all the related rights and responsibilities. If I receive a summons to serve on a jury at a trial, then I would do my civic duty. I vote in the elections that our heavenly King tells me to vote in, and I vote for the people whom He tells me to vote for. I'm not concerned about who wins any election or what might be happening in the world unless our King tells me to take action on a certain issue. If the Lord tells us to get involved in a specific way concerning politics or other earthly matters, then taking those actions would be proper and appropriate. But if He does *not* tell us to get involved in an earthly issue, then it might not be proper or appropriate to take any action, no matter how small, based on our own feelings and motives.

It's all about having the proper perspective. As ambassadors for our King, our job is to obey what He tells us to do, in His written instructions (the New Testament) and His spoken instructions. He knows the outcome of every election and every world event, and He has planned out everything accordingly. He is in control, so we don't need to be concerned about what is happening in our own countries or in the world. It is very important to learn how to discern His guidance because only He knows how to steer us down the best path for the best outcome.¹⁵¹

While we're in the world, we have jobs, chores, errands, and other responsibilities. These are part of life. But there is

151 Ibid.

a point at which we need to let go of concerns, fears, or anger over larger issues. It's all a matter of maintaining the proper perspective.

Remember, the ambassador was temporarily living in the Russian village, but he was not of the village. He might have cared about the people of the village, but he did not recall where his true allegiance must be (to the government of America) because of his amnesia. The village was *not* his true reality. Their concerns and fears were *not* meant to be his concerns and fears.

In exactly the same way, we are temporarily living in the world, but we are not of the world. We should care about the people of the world, but our true allegiance must be to the kingdom of heaven. This world is *not* our true reality. The concerns and fears of this world are *not* meant to be our concerns and fears.

- It's critical that the ambassador follows the orders that he receives from the American government, every single day, so that the president's plans and purposes are carried out.

The analogy is that it's critical that we follow the guidance that we receive from the kingdom of heaven, every single day, so that our King's plans and purposes are carried out. He does not carry out most of His plans and purposes Himself on the earth; He carries them out *through us as His physical body*.

The purpose of the above analogies is to clarify the importance of maintaining the proper perspective, thinking and acting like the ambassadors from heaven that we really are. As we saw, when the American ambassador had amnesia and thought of himself as a member of the remote Russian village, he could not operate in the authority granted to him by the American government.

When we lose sight of who we really are (citizens of heaven) and think of ourselves as people of this world, we cannot operate in the power and authority granted to us by our King. Pay close attention to what Christians say or write, and you will probably find that most

Christians think and act as if they belong to this world. This is a big reason why most Christians never see any healings or miracles and never accomplish most of the assignments that God tells them to do.

We need to understand that Christians are citizens of heaven *right now* and that we are meant to be Christ's ambassadors on the earth *right now*, operating in the power and authority granted to us by our heavenly King as we saw in chapter 1.

Faith Often Involves Risks

We saw that the two essential components of faith are confidence or trust plus actions, but we need to understand that our actions of faith won't always make sense to us or to others. A *risk* is usually involved. Maybe a miracle will happen, or maybe it won't. Maybe we'll look or feel foolish. Maybe we'll be ridiculed.

Unfortunately, most Christians will often lack the courage to step out in faith and take a risk. (I've chickened out more times than I care to remember.) Because of this, they will miss out on miracles. Those who step out in faith and try to heal people will risk rejection and ridicule from other Christians, but they are more likely to see miracles for the glory of the Lord.

For example, consider Jesus's first miracle. He was at a wedding where they had run out of wine, and He told the servants to take some water to the master of the banquet as if the water were, in fact, wine. That action didn't make any sense, but the servants *obeyed* Jesus, took a *risk*, and a miracle happened:

Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom

aside and said, “Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.” (John 2:7–10 NIV)

Notice that the servants, in *obedience* to Jesus, *risked* looking foolish and *angering* the master of the banquet, and a miracle happened.

Here’s another example of taking a risk. One night, the disciples were in a boat during a storm when, suddenly, they saw Jesus walking toward them on the surface of the water. Moments later, Peter got out of the boat and walked on water. That action didn’t make any sense, but it resulted in a miracle:

And the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.” “Come,” he said. Then *Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!”* Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “*You of little faith,*” he said, “*why did you doubt?*” (Matthew 14:24–31 NIV, emphasis added)

Peter was a fisherman, so getting in and out of a boat was a common occurrence for him before he met Jesus. In the above passage, notice that Peter got out of a boat in the *normal* way, walked in the *normal* way, and found himself walking on water.

The key point is that Peter, in *obedience* to Jesus, *risked* failure and *risked* looking foolish. Eleven other apostles were in that boat,

but none of them risked failure or risked looking foolish, and none of them experienced a miracle.

Another key point is that when Peter took his eyes off Jesus and looked at the wind and the waves, he became afraid and doubted. Then he lost the miracle. This demonstrates that our *minds* hinder the miracles. The battle is won or lost in our *minds*.

Here's another example. Peter had been fishing all night without catching anything, and he was on shore washing his nets when Jesus told him to go fishing again. That action didn't make any sense because Peter had caught nothing all night. But he *obeyed* Jesus and ended up catching so many fish that his net was stretched to the breaking point:

When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon [Peter], "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." But Simon answered and said to Him, "*Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.*" And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. (Luke 5:4–6, emphasis and extra word added)

Notice that Peter let down the net in the *normal* way, but the key point is that in *obedience* to Jesus, he *risked* looking foolish, and a miracle happened.

Consider the pattern in the above passages. In each case, people *obeyed* Jesus and performed *actions that didn't make any sense*. They demonstrated *confidence* or *trust* by *risking* failure and *risking* looking foolish. In each case, they could have refused to perform those actions due to pride, fear, or doubt. This might have protected their dignity, but the implication is that the miracles would not have happened. Again, the battle takes place in our minds because our minds can hinder miracles and healings.

Remember, we saw that Peter was walking on water—just like Jesus—*until* he doubted in his mind and became afraid.

When Jesus encountered a paralyzed man, He told the man to stand up and go home. That action didn't make any sense:

“But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—*He said to the man who was paralyzed, “I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.* (Luke 5:24–25, emphasis added)

When Jesus encountered some lepers, He told them to go show themselves to the priests. This was required under the Law of Moses when a leper was healed (Leviticus 14:1–3), but this action didn't make any sense because they went to see the priests *before* they were healed (they were healed as they went):

Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!” When he saw them, he said, “*Go, show yourselves to the priests.*” *And as they went, they were cleansed.* (Luke 17:11–14 NIV, emphasis added)

When Jesus encountered a man with a withered hand, He told the man to stretch out his hand for it to be healed. That action didn't make any sense:

Now when He had departed from there, He went into their synagogue. And behold, *there was a man who had a withered hand.* And they asked Him, saying, “*Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?*”—that they might accuse Him. Then He said to them, “What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the

Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out?....Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.” *Then He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other.* (Matthew 12:9–13, emphasis added)

When Peter encountered a man who was lame from birth, he told the man to walk. That action didn’t make any sense:

One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. Now *a man who was lame from birth* was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. *In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.*” *Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.* (Acts 3:1–8 NIV, emphasis added)

When Peter encountered a paralyzed man, he told the man to stand up. That action didn’t make any sense:

There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. And *Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed.” Then he arose immediately.* (Acts 9:33–34, emphasis added)

When Paul encountered a lame man who had never walked, he told the man to stand up on his feet. That action didn't make any sense:

In Lystra there sat *a man who was lame. He had been that way from birth and had never walked.* He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed and *called out, "Stand up on your feet!" At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.* (Acts 14:8–10 NIV, emphasis added)

Once again, we see a pattern of people doing things that didn't make any sense. For instance, if someone has never walked in their entire life (Acts 14:8–10, above), it would sound ridiculous to tell them to stand up. But those people demonstrated *confidence* or *trust* by performing *actions that didn't make any sense*. They took a *risk* of failure, a *risk* of looking foolish, in *obedience* to what they were told, and miracles happened.

In the above passages, sometimes we are specifically told that the healing happened *after* (or as a result of) their acts of faith. For example, Luke 17:11–14 (above) says that when the lepers went off to see the priests, *then* they were healed. Acts 3:1–8 (above) says that when the lame man allowed Peter to help him up, *then* his feet and ankles became strong.

We see another clear pattern in all the above healings and in every healing throughout the New Testament. Many Christians today will pray for someone's healing, but usually, they wait until they are at home or in their car. However, in the entire New Testament, not a single person was healed by someone who went home and prayed for them. For example, neither Jesus nor the apostles ever walked away from sick people to pray for them elsewhere in private. Every healing in the New Testament was done with the sick person right there (or through another person's faith), usually by laying hands on the person.¹⁵²

152 Dave Root, "Every Example of Healing in the New Testament," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/EveryExampleOfHealingInTheNewTestament.htm>.

We can also see another interesting pattern in the above passages, which holds true for all the New Testament miracles initiated on earth. Notice that the water was turned into wine while the servants did the completely ordinary actions of filling up the waterpots with water and then drawing some out. Peter walked on water while he did the completely ordinary actions of getting out of a boat and walking. People were healed while they did the completely ordinary actions of standing up or stretching out their hand, and so on. These actions did not make any sense at the time, but they were all just ordinary actions.

In other words, when all the healings and miracles (initiated on earth) took place in the New Testament, the circumstances before the miracles were totally *unsensational* in every way. The people who did these miracles didn't jump up and down and shout for joy and sing hallelujahs and pump up their faith or their emotions before the miracles occurred, and there were no angels overhead blowing trumpets, and so on. Look closely at the above passages and notice that those events were all ordinary and unsensational in every way, except that the results were miraculous. (Granted, when Jesus walked on water during a storm in the middle of the night, this was out of the ordinary, which is the exception that proves the rule.)

I point this out because when you start seeing sick or injured people instantly healed right in front of you, you'll find that it all seems so unsensational that you'll sometimes wonder if a miracle actually happened. The first times I saw people instantly healed (friends and family members who were all Christians), it was quite strange how low-key and ordinary it all seemed. I said some things to them, and they did what I told them to do, and then their pain or infirmity was gone. We were excited that it actually worked, and we thanked the Lord, but then all I could think of to say was something like, "Well, um, you're healed now, so, um, I guess I'll talk to you later." It took me by surprise that there is no fanfare that accompanies miracles until I saw this pattern in all the miracles and healings in the New Testament. It's not like in TV shows and movies where a

cone of bright light suddenly surrounds the person or angel when they do miracles. So just be forewarned that miracles usually won't feel very miraculous.

Life Is Like a Simulation

A number of scientists, academics, and future thinkers believe that our universe might be a computer simulation run by future humans (or by other advanced beings).¹⁵³ I don't share their views, but they might be closer to the truth than they realize.

Every computer simulation has a creator (a programmer or team of programmers), and the name we'll use for one of these creators is Bob. Bob created the simulation, so he lives *outside* the simulation in a place that his creations can't really imagine. The name we'll use for this place is Bob's realm.

The Bible tells us that the universe (and everything in it, including us) has a Creator, and one name we use for this Creator is God:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
(Genesis 1:1)

God created the universe, so He lives *outside* the universe in a place we can't really imagine. The name that we usually use for this place is heaven.

Time runs differently in Bob's realm than it does in his computer simulation. For example, he programmed his simulation so that he can rapidly run it forward or backward, allowing him to see any points in the simulated people's future or past.

Time runs differently in God's realm than it does in our universe because God lives outside our universe and, therefore, He does not experience time as we do. What we think of as the past, present, or

153 Fouad Khan, "Confirmed! We Live in a Simulation," *Scientific American*, April 1, 2021, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/confirmed-we-live-in-a-simulation>; Calum Chace, "Are We Living In A Simulation? Can We Break Out Of It?," *Forbes*, November 16, 2022, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/calumchace/2022/11/16/are-we-living-in-a-simulation-can-we-break-out-of-it>.

future, these concepts only exist within our physical universe. In His omniscience, God sees it all.

If we think of our universe as something like a simulation, we can see some similarities between the reality that Bob created and the universe that we think of as reality. Both places have a creator, and both of these creators live *outside* those places where time runs differently for them.

The moment someone in Bob's realm runs his computer program, the simulated people and their universe spring into existence, fully formed. To the characters in the simulation, it *appears* as if they had been born and then grown to adulthood in that reality, and Bob could have programmed childhood memories into them. To the astronomers in the simulation, it *appears* as if their universe had been evolving over billions of years. To the paleontologists in the simulation, it *appears* as if the fossilized bones they're finding are millions of years old. Yet all of that suddenly sprang into existence the moment the program was run.

Similarly, God could have created our universe to *appear* as if it has been evolving for billions of years. If He chose to create the universe and the earth in six days, that would be easy for Him to do.

Bob's computer simulation is temporary. The simulated people and their universe only exist for as long as someone in Bob's realm is running Bob's computer program.

Similarly, the Bible says that our visible universe is only temporary because it will pass away and that God's realm (that we can't see) is eternal and is therefore the true reality:

Those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.
(1 Corinthians 7:31 NIV)

While we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are

seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:18)

Imagine that Bob places a version of himself into the simulated reality, and we'll use the name Josh for this second person of Bob. Since Bob is the programmer, he put some special software into the heart of Josh that gives Josh various enhanced abilities.

Similarly, God placed His Son into our world, and we use the name Jesus for the second Person of God. When Jesus was baptized, God gave Him something special (Luke 3:21–22), which we call the Holy Spirit or the third Person of the Trinity. This gave Jesus the ability to do healings and miracles in our world.¹⁵⁴

In Bob's computer program, every character (including Josh) will always be part of the simulation. They can never enter Bob's realm.

But in our universe, when we receive salvation, then God's Spirit immediately comes to live in our hearts (John 14:16–23; Romans 5:5; 8:9–11; 1 Corinthians 2:12–14; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 1:21–22; 5:5; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 2:22; 2 Timothy 1:14; 1 John 3:24; 4:12–16). As we saw in chapter 1, we have the ability and the authority to do healings and miracles—just as Jesus did—through the power of the Holy Spirit. Because of the Holy Spirit living inside us, when our bodies die, our spirits are immediately taken up to God's realm, which is the true reality.

Bob might decide to start running his simulation, then walk away and let it run for hours or days, occasionally coming back to check on his simulated people to see what they're up to. In a similar way, it's easy for us to think of God as being out there somewhere and mostly uninvolved in our day-to-day lives.

But this is the complete opposite of reality because God lives inside each Christian. He's with us every moment of every day, and He sees and hears everything we do, say, or think. He is involved in

¹⁵⁴ Dave Root, "Understanding Jesus," <https://www.vividechristianity.com/UnderstandingJesus1.htm>. My series shows that *all* of Jesus's miracles before the cross were done by the power of the Holy Spirit, not by Jesus's divine power. On earth, Jesus was the perfect human and our perfect role model.

each of our day-to-day lives down to the smallest detail, whether or not we are aware of it.

Sadly, we tend to go about our daily lives, hardly ever giving Him any thought, rarely listening to anything that He tells us, and only thinking about Him when we are in need. He gave us the freedom to make choices,¹⁵⁵ so He waits patiently for us to listen to Him and obey Him, rewarding those who do so.

With diligent practice, you can learn how to discern His guidance within you, and once you start gaining faith that you're hearing Him, then He will answer your questions about Scripture passages, tell you what you are allowed (or not allowed) to do, and schedule each day so that you will have the best, safest, and most effective life possible.¹⁵⁶

The purpose of this section is to show that according to the Bible, this world that we think of as reality is very much like a computer simulation. This world feels real to us, and we tend to get all caught up in the cares, worries, fears, or pleasures of our daily lives. But this world is temporary; we are just visitors here. This world is *not* our true reality. God's realm is the only true reality.

Summary and Final Thoughts

Throughout this book, we've seen that all Christians collectively are the body of Christ. When Jesus ascended to heaven in Acts 1:9, He took His body with Him. Just as your head constantly tells different parts of your body what to do, where to go, and what to say, our Head (Jesus) constantly tells different parts of His body what to do, where to go, and what to say, so it is very important that we learn how to discern His guidance.¹⁵⁷ He is directing our individual activities as the Head of the body as we saw in chapter 3. Each part of Christ's physical body (each Christian) needs to be listening to and obeying

155 Dave Root, "Our Lives Are Not Predestined," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/OurLivesAreNotPredestined.htm>.

156 Dave Root, "How to Discern God's Guidance," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/HowToDiscernGodsGuidance.htm>.

157 Ibid.

our Head because if we are not listening to Him then we are not fully obeying Him (think about it for a moment), and we'll be disciplined (perhaps severely) as we saw in chapter 2 (Question #5).

In chapter 2, we saw, once again, that we need to continue Jesus's earthly ministry because there's not a shred of scriptural support for the cessationist view, which says that miracles, healings, and the so-called miraculous gifts of the Spirit ceased or died out during or shortly after the first century.

In chapter 3, we saw that breaking the bread in the Lord's Supper symbolizes that we are a *part* of the one true loaf, which is Christ. We are not our own (1 Corinthians 6:19–20); *we are part of His body*.

In this chapter, we've seen the following:

- We are citizens of heaven, and we are here on earth with jobs to do as ambassadors from heaven.
- This world is not the true reality but is only temporary, very much like a computer simulation, and God's realm is the true reality.
- We need to win the battle in our minds. Our natural minds can hinder healings and miracles, so we need to get out of our minds and be connected with our spirits.

Do you see the pattern?

Throughout the New Testament, we are repeatedly told in various ways that we need to *change our perspective* about who we are as Christians and why we're here on earth.

Recall the illustration of the American ambassador to Russia. When he was acting in his position as ambassador, then he was standing in the authority given to him by the American government. When he had amnesia and was living in a remote Russian village, he still had all his authority as the ambassador, but he could not use any of that authority *because his perspective was wrong*. He thought he was a citizen of the village, and the concerns and fears of the village had wrongly become his concerns and fears.

In order to consistently operate in the authority our heavenly King has given us, it is important that we correct our perspective.

For example, notice that Jesus had the proper perspective because He knew He was not of this world, and the same applies to us:

And He said to them [the Jews], “You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.” (John 8:23, extra words added)

If you [the disciples] were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. (John 15:19, extra words added)

Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are....But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. (John 17:11, 13–16)

Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.” (John 18:36)

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:2)

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. (Colossians 3:1–10 NIV)

As Jesus said, we are in the world but not of the world. He knew that He was from a different place, not of this world, and He said that the same applies to us. *This is the perspective that we need to maintain.*

As Romans 12:2 (above) says, we must not allow ourselves to be conformed to this world in our thinking or actions. Instead, *we need to be transformed in the perspective that we hold in our minds.*

As Colossians 3:1–10 (above) says, we must set our hearts and our minds on God's realm and let go of the concerns, fears, or anger over most issues of the earthly realm.

For example, if you go to a foreign country on vacation, you're just visiting for a limited time. Therefore, you are not concerned about who the leaders are, who wins any election, or other concerns that the people of that country might have. We need to maintain the perspective that we're from another kingdom and we're visiting the earth for a limited time. But we're not just here on vacation; we're here as ambassadors, which means that we have a job to do here.

As Christians, we are called servants of the Lord (e.g., Matthew 6:24; Romans 6:22; 2 Timothy 2:24; Hebrews 9:14; Revelation 1:1; 2:20). Therefore, imagine a new butler to the lord of the manor at an English estate. He has the instruction manual describing the butler's duties and can perform some of his duties after studying the instruction manual, but those are *not* his only duties. In order to properly function as a butler to the lord of the manor, it's not his place to do whatever *he* feels like doing all day, but instead, he must be available to the lord of the manor all day, every day. In exactly the same way, as servants of the Lord, we should think of ourselves as His butlers. We must obey everything that the instruction manual (the New Testament) tells us to do, but those are *not* our only duties. In order to properly function as butlers to the Lord, it's not our place to do whatever *we* feel like doing all day, but instead, we must be available to the Lord all day, every day.¹⁵⁸

While we're in the world, we have duties and responsibilities just like the people of the world do, such as taking care of our families, having jobs, doing chores, running errands, obeying laws, or civic duties (e.g., voting or serving on jury duty).

But we need to let go of the larger issues, concerns, and fears of the world. We can *only* stand in our proper position, exercising the authority given to us, when we have the proper perspective of who we are in Christ. Politics, the economy, world events, or other issues that cause anger or fear in the people of this world are not your concern unless the Lord specifically prompts you to be involved with them. We need to let go of these issues and leave them for our heavenly King to handle. Our job is to maintain the proper perspective and do what our King tells us to do throughout the day, every day, because He will tell us how to respond to worldly issues.¹⁵⁹

God knows the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:9–10), which means He knows the entire future of the world and He has planned everything out from before the universe was created (1 Corinthians

158 Dave Root, "How to Discern God's Guidance," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/HowToDiscernGodsGuidance.htm>.

159 Ibid.

2:7; Ephesians 1:4–5; 1 Peter 1:20). He knows the outcome of every world event in advance, and He has made plans accordingly. Ideally, we would not be worried, fearful, anxious, or angry about events in our lives, our countries, or the world (e.g., Matthew 14:25–31; 17:5–7; 28:8–10; Luke 5:9–10; 8:22–25, 49–50; 12:4, 6–7, 11–12, 22–32; 21:12–15; John 14:27). We probably won't live up to this ideal, but we should strive for it. Sometimes, these events will impact us, but as we continually listen to and obey our heavenly King, He will guide us on the path that leads to the best outcome.¹⁶⁰

Notice what Jesus said in the Parable of the Sower:

Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. (Mark 4:18–19 NIV)

In the above passage, Jesus described a group of people who have priorities that revolve around their *own* lives and worldly issues. They represent worldly Christians who aren't trying to be obedient to God. Notice that we're not told that they refuse to believe in Jesus, but instead, we're told that they have *no spiritual maturity* (Luke 8:14). They're like the American ambassador in the remote Russian village with wrong priorities and a wrong perspective of who they are in this world. Jesus said that this chokes their Christian life, making them unfruitful (because the word they heard gets choked). Clearly, this is a problem.

In fact, we're told that if we're friendly with (or love) the things of the world, this actually makes us *enemies* of God:

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15–17)

Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (James 4:4)

Once again, we are clearly told to straighten out our perspective by not allowing ourselves to love or be friendly with the world's values and worldly priorities. Otherwise, we are spiritual adulterers and adulteresses against God, aligning ourselves with His enemies.

Notice that righteous people are foreigners and strangers on earth, even in Old Testament times:

I am a stranger on earth; do not hide your commands from me. (Psalm 119:19 NIV)

All these people [Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Sarah] were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them. (Hebrews 11:13–16 NIV, names added)

Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. (1 Peter 1:17 NIV)

We are *not* people of this world. We are commanded not to conform to the thinking or values of the people of this world because that chokes our Christian lives and makes us unable to continue Jesus's earthly ministry as He commanded us to do. We can *only* stand in our proper position, exercising the authority given to us, when we have the proper perspective of who we are in Christ. He is the Head, and He is constantly directing the activities of His physical body on earth, *which is us*.

5

Spiritual Gifts

In chapter 2, we saw that none of the gifts of the Spirit have ever ceased or died out.

These passages provide important information about spiritual gifts:

For as we have many members in one body, *but all the members do not have the same function*, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. *Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us*, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. (Romans 12:4–8, emphasis added)

Now *to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given* for the common good. *To one there is given through the Spirit* a message of wisdom, *to another* a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, *to another* faith by the same Spirit, *to another* gifts of healing by that one Spirit, *to another* miraculous powers, *to another* prophecy, *to*

another distinguishing between spirits, *to another* speaking in different kinds of tongues, *and to still another* the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and *he distributes them to each one, just as he determines*. (1 Corinthians 12:7–11 NIV, emphasis added)

And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. *Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?* (1 Corinthians 12:28–30, emphasis added)

Some people will have one or more of these gifts, and other people will have other gifts, but the wording in the above passages shows that no one will have *all* the spiritual gifts. No doubt, Jesus had *all* the spiritual gifts, but we're not told that anywhere in the Bible.

In chapter 2, we saw that everyone can draw, no matter how badly, but some people are gifted in certain areas of drawing, and others are gifted in other areas of drawing. In a similar way, some people will have spiritual gifts in certain areas of healing (e.g., restoring eyesight), and other people will have spiritual gifts in other areas of healing (e.g., restoring missing limbs).

If people have a spiritual gift for evangelism, for example, then they will have days when they're on fire and other days when they're less effective (perhaps they're distracted by various issues or didn't get enough sleep). Spiritual gifts vary in intensity, which is why Paul urged Timothy to stir up or fan into flame the gift of God (2 Timothy 1:6), and some people will have a greater degree of a certain gift than others. For instance, Paul spoke in tongues more than anyone else (1 Corinthians 14:18), and he said that we receive and use spiritual gifts according to the grace we've been given and in proportion to our faith (Romans 12:6).

In 1 Corinthians 12:1–31, Paul listed a number of spiritual gifts and said that they are distributed among the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit. In the middle of that passage, he made an analogy of a human body, pointing out that if the whole body were an eye, then it would have no hearing, and if it were an ear, then it would have no sense of smell. Continuing the analogy, he said that the eye can't tell the hand that it's not needed, and the head can't tell the feet that they're not needed. *All* the parts that Paul mentioned are useful in the human body, and in exactly the same way, *all* the gifts of the Spirit need to be used in the body of Christ, even today.

In two of the passages shown above, the *gift* of speaking in tongues is mentioned, which is different from *praying* in tongues (praying in the Spirit).¹⁶¹ Now let's take a quick look at how praying in tongues relates to spiritual gifts.

When we speak in tongues, the words come from the Holy Spirit through our spirits and out of our mouths, bypassing our minds (1 Corinthians 14:14). Therefore, there needs to be communication between our spirits and the Holy Spirit within us.

When we receive salvation, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside us, which pastors and Bible teachers refer to as the indwelling Holy Spirit. As an analogy, it's as if we have a wrapped gift inside us that contains the Spirit of God. Consider that baptism in water means *immersion* in water,¹⁶² and in exactly the same way, baptism in the Holy Spirit means *immersion* in the living water of the Holy Spirit (John 4:9–14; 7:37–39).¹⁶³

Using that analogy, being baptized in the Holy Spirit means that Jesus has unwrapped the package and has *poured out* the gift (Acts

161 Dave Root, "Praying in the Spirit Means Speaking in Tongues," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/PrayingInTheSpiritMeansSpeakingInTongues.htm>. My article examines *every* New Testament passage on tongues, showing that "praying in the Spirit" and "praying in tongues" are two ways of saying the same thing, and that this is not the same as the gift of tongues.

162 Dave Root, "Everything We Need to Know about Water Baptism," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/WaterBaptism1.htm>.

163 Dave Root, "How to Receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit," Vivid Christianity, accessed May 20, 2021, <https://www.vividchristianity.com/HowToReceiveTheBaptismOfTheHolySpirit1.htm>.

2:17–18, 33; 10:45), which *immerses* us in the Holy Spirit. The indwelling Holy Spirit (the wrapped package in that analogy) is a deposit or pledge that guarantees we will go to heaven when we die (2 Corinthians 1:21–22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:13–14), but there is no direct communication through the wrapped package.

The specific purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is to make that communication possible by allowing Jesus to unwrap the package and *immerse* us in the gift. Many Christians and Bible commentaries say that at the moment we receive salvation, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in our hearts and baptizes us into the body of Christ (which they wrongly believe is the *baptism* of the Holy Spirit).

The New Testament does say that the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts at the moment of salvation, but when we try to be thorough, objective, and unbiased and look for the *full* picture in the New Testament concerning the gift of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, it's clear that we must choose to receive this gift in obedience to God (after we automatically receive the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation) because it empowers us by providing certain gifts of the Spirit for the assignments that God needs us to do. Then, we are able to pray in the Spirit (i.e., pray in tongues) in obedience to Ephesians 6:18 and Jude 1:20.¹⁶⁴

Praying in tongues (even for just a few moments) several times a day enables us to be open to the filling of the Spirit (which we will examine later in this chapter), enables us to discern God's guidance within us,¹⁶⁵ and enables the Holy Spirit to work through us.

Some spiritual gifts are used in divine healing, such as the message or word of knowledge, discerning of spirits, faith, gifts of healings, and miracles. Since none of us have *all* the gifts of the Spirit, it would be unreasonable to expect that any person can heal *all* infirmities.

In books, blogs, and other accounts, Christians have reported seeing healing miracles over the past century or longer, but they have

164 Dave Root, "Praying in the Spirit Means Speaking in Tongues," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/PrayingInTheSpiritMeansSpeakingInTongues.htm>.

165 Dave Root, "How to Discern God's Guidance," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/HowToDiscernGodsGuidance.htm>.

been frustrated that they can't heal certain people, including their own family members. One reason for this might be that they don't have the necessary spiritual gift(s) for those specific healings. This could be why we tend to see Christians traveling in pairs or larger groups in the New Testament, and it's why we will be more effective today when we heal people in pairs or larger groups.

Based on what the Lord has shown me, we don't need any spiritual gifts for healing sicknesses, so all Christians can heal sicknesses and diseases by following the instructions provided in Part 2. For other infirmities, one or more spiritual gifts might be needed.

You don't always need to know which spiritual gift(s) you have or which spiritual gift(s) are needed for a particular healing nor do you need to know how to use most of the gifts. If the required gifts are present in you, your team, or the person who needs healing, then the healing will occur when the other requirements are met (described in Part 2). The only exceptions are the gifts in which the Holy Spirit provides information to the person with the gift, such as a word of knowledge or discerning of spirits.

Gifts of the Spirit Used in Healing

These gifts in particular will be used in certain healings:

- Word of knowledge (1 Corinthians 12:8)

If you have this gift, God will sometimes provide information to you concerning healing or other issues. You might see, hear, or sense a word, phrase, or picture in your mind, such as the name of an infirmity or a part of the body, and this tells you what type of healing God wants you to do. Sometimes, you might feel a tingling, heat, discomfort, or pain in a part of your body, which is God telling you the type of healing He wants you to do. Sometimes, you just know on the inside what needs to be done.

Jesus occasionally performed unusual actions while doing a healing, such as spitting on a blind man's eyes (e.g., Mark

7:32–35; 8:22–25; John 9:6–7), which was probably due to a word of knowledge He received.

If you receive a word of knowledge, it's best to ask the Lord what to do about it.¹⁶⁶ For example, be sensitive to a person's dignity if God reveals a specific disease or a sin that needs to be addressed. Blurting out the word of knowledge you received could embarrass the sick person if others hear it. When Jesus had words of knowledge about people's sins, such as a Samaritan woman at a well (John 4:7–42), He did not put condemnation on them and neither should we. (Also see John 8:3–11.)

- Discerning of spirits (1 Corinthians 12:10)

If you have this gift, God will sometimes provide information to you about the afflicting spirits (if any) that are causing or influencing the infirmities that you encounter (e.g., Matthew 9:32–33; 12:22; 17:14–18; Luke 13:11). For example, He might give you the name of the demon so you can use that name to cast it out.

- Faith (1 Corinthians 12:9)

God gives every Christian a measure of faith through which the gifts of the Spirit can operate (Romans 12:3–8). But if you have the gift of faith, God will sometimes provide you with more faith for a specific task.

Healing requires faith (e.g., Matthew 8:5–13; 9:2–8, 20–22, 27–29), but at times, it's difficult to believe that a healing will take place, so it's helpful to have someone on your team who has this gift.

- Healings (1 Corinthians 12:9)

We have seen that some people will have spiritual gifts in certain areas of healing (e.g., restoring eyesight), and other people will have spiritual gifts in other areas of healing (e.g., restoring missing limbs).

166 Dave Root, "How to Discern God's Guidance," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/HowToDiscernGodsGuidance.htm>.

You do not need to know which gifts of healings you or your team have. If the required gifts are present in you, your team, or the person who needs healing, then the healing will take place automatically when the other requirements are met.

- Miracles (1 Corinthians 12:10)

In chapter 1, we saw that all Christians are authorized to do miracles in evangelism. But if you have this gift, God will do more (or different) miracles through you than through those who don't have this gift, including special healing miracles (such as the handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched the apostle Paul and were used to heal people in Acts 19:11–12). Some healings need a miracle (e.g., restoring a missing limb), and some do not (e.g., healing a sickness).

Be Filled with the Holy Spirit

Jesus and some of the apostles and other Christians are sometimes described as being filled with the Spirit or full of the Spirit:

Then Jesus, being *filled with the Holy Spirit*, returned from the Jordan and was *led by the Spirit* into the wilderness, being tempted for forty days by the devil....But *Jesus answered him, saying*, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.’” (Luke 4:1–2, 4, emphasis added)

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were *filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak* in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. (Acts 2:1–4 NIV, emphasis added)

Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest's family. They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?" Then Peter, *filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them....* "Know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed." (Acts 4:6–10 NIV, emphasis added)

And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and *they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.* (Acts 4:31, emphasis added)

"Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you *who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom.* We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, *a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit*; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. (Acts 6:3–6 NIV, emphasis added)

When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. But he [Stephen], being *full of the Holy Spirit*, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and *said*, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of

Man standing at the right hand of God!” (Acts 7:54–56, emphasis and name added)

Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again *and be filled with the Holy Spirit*.” Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again....Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. *At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God*. (Acts 9:17–20 NIV, emphasis added)

Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch....he was a good man, *full of the Holy Spirit and of faith*. (Acts 11:22, 24, emphasis added)

But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. Then Saul, who also is called Paul, *filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said*, “O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?” (Acts 13:8–10, emphasis added)

And the disciples were *filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit*. (Acts 13:52 NIV, emphasis added)

Do not get drunk on wine, which *leads to debauchery*. Instead, *be filled with the Spirit*. (Ephesians 5:18 NIV, emphasis added)

These are all the passages in the New Testament that describe Jesus and Christians being filled with or full of the Spirit.¹⁶⁷

But what does it mean to be filled with or full of the Spirit?

The moment we receive salvation, the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts, which pastors and Bible teachers refer to as the indwelling Holy Spirit as we saw earlier. We don't receive a partial amount of the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation, and being filled with or full of the Spirit doesn't mean that somehow, we have more of Him than before. Either we have Him inside us or we don't.

In Ephesians 5:18 (above), Paul made a direct comparison between being drunk and being filled with the Spirit. One reason is because alcohol influences people's thoughts, words, and actions, usually accompanied by a boldness to say and do things they wouldn't say or do otherwise. In a similar way, when we are filled with the Spirit, He influences our thoughts, words, and actions, which might also be accompanied by a boldness to speak and act in certain ways as we see in some of the previous passages.

Paul said not to be drunk with wine but to be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18, above). Just as we can choose to be drunk, we can choose to be filled with the Spirit. When we're drunk, we've given up much of our control to the alcohol. In order to be filled with the Spirit, we must give up much of our control to the Spirit. Praying in tongues frequently throughout the day recharges our spiritual batteries, fills more and more of us with the Spirit, and enables us to give up more of our control to the Spirit (more on this in chapter 7).

Paul said that if we're drunk with wine, then essentially, we'll be *led* by the alcohol into dissipation or debauchery. Similarly, being filled with the Spirit involves being *led* by the Spirit.

In the above passages, each time we are told what happened when people were filled with the Spirit, notice that they were led by the Spirit to do something, usually involving speaking with boldness.

¹⁶⁷ "BibleGateway-Keyword Search: filled with Spirit," BibleGateway, accessed May 16, 2021, <https://www.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?quicksearch=filled+with+Spirit&version=NKJV>; "BibleGateway-Keyword Search: full of Spirit," BibleGateway, accessed May 16, 2021, <https://www.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?quicksearch=full+of+Spirit&version=NKJV>.

Ideally, we all would be in a constant state of being filled with the Spirit. Realistically, we all get caught up in the busyness of our daily lives. But the more we get our minds off ourselves and off the world and the more we allow ourselves to be filled with the Spirit (led by the Spirit), the more effective we will be in the assignments that the Lord needs us to do as His body here on earth.

“He...Gave Gifts to His People”

In Exodus 6:6, God said that the Israelites would be redeemed and set free from their captivity as slaves in Egypt. After the ten plagues, Pharaoh set the Israelites free, and the Lord made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the Israelites, giving them silver, gold, and clothing (Exodus 12:33–36).

This was a foreshadowing of Christians being redeemed by the Lord and receiving gifts from Him. Just before discussing certain spiritual gifts, the apostle Paul said that when Jesus went up to heaven, He took captives with Him and gave gifts to His people (Ephesians 4:8 NIV). In that verse, Jesus is described as doing two things when He went up to heaven: leading captivity captive (NKJV) and giving gifts to people. For a number of scriptural reasons, those who were in captivity whom Jesus led or took to heaven were all the righteous people throughout history who died before He was resurrected.¹⁶⁸ The gifts mentioned in that verse are the spiritual gifts we receive from the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus first gave to His disciples (on the evening of the day He was resurrected, according to John 20:19–22), after He had gone to the Father (John 16:5–7).¹⁶⁹

Jesus redeemed us (Galatians 3:13; 4:4–5; Titus 2:13–14; 1 Peter 1:18–19; Hebrews 9:12) by offering His life as a ransom. God was not holding humans captive, so He did not want or need a ransom; the devil is the one who held us captive and agreed to a ransom.¹⁷⁰

168 Dave Root, “Understanding Jesus,” <https://www.vividchristianity.com/UnderstandingJesus1.htm>. My series shows that Jesus went up to heaven twice on the day He was resurrected.

169 Ibid.

170 Ibid.

We're told that Jesus came to the earth to take away our sins and to *destroy* the devil's work (1 John 3:5, 8) and that by His death He *destroyed* or *broke the power of* the devil (Hebrews 2:14–15). We're also told that He *disarmed* the authorities, the principalities, and the powers (referring to the devil and his angels as in Ephesians 3:10; 6:11–12), making a public spectacle of them and triumphing over them by the cross (Colossians 2:13–15).

Because Jesus redeemed us from captivity to the devil, we are now His purchased possession:

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of *the church of God, which he bought with his own blood*. (Acts 20:28 NIV, emphasis added)

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and *you are not your own? For you were bought at a price;* therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, *which are God's*. (1 Corinthians 6:19–20, emphasis added)

In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of *the purchased possession*, to the praise of His glory. (Ephesians 1:13–14, emphasis added)

With your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. (Revelation 5:9 NIV, emphasis added)

Because He purchased us, this means that we are not our own; we are His (1 Corinthians 6:19–20, above). As we saw in chapter 4,

we are His servants or butlers to carry out the assignments that He needs us to do (e.g., Romans 1:1; 12:11; 1 Corinthians 4:1; Philippians 1:1; 3:3; Colossians 4:12; 2 Timothy 2:24; James 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; Jude 1:1; Revelation 1:1). As we saw in chapter 1, Jesus has authorized and commissioned us to continue His ministry of proclaiming liberty to the captives and healing those who are oppressed by the devil.

The devil's domain consists of such things as sin, sickness, fear, death, and destruction, but God's domain consists of such things as life, love, blessings, peace, and protection.¹⁷¹ Doing evangelism or healing is doing warfare against the devil. For example, notice what these passages say:

Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. *His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.* (Ephesians 3:8–10 NIV, emphasis added)

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 6:10–12 NIV)

According to the above passages, God's intention is that through the Church (the entire body of Christ, meaning *all* Christians), His wisdom should be made known to the principalities and powers (NKJV) or the rulers and authorities (NIV) in the heavenly realms. God gives spiritual gifts to His servants so we can continue setting the captives

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

free through evangelism, healing, and casting out demons. We saw in chapter 2 that none of the gifts of the Spirit have ever ceased or died out, so we must receive *and use* all the gifts that God wants to give us. This is why it is so important that we choose to receive the gift of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in obedience to God.¹⁷²

Summary and Final Thoughts

No one will have *all* the spiritual gifts, so it would be unreasonable to expect that any person can heal *all* infirmities.

All the parts that Paul mentioned are useful in the human body, and in exactly the same way, *all* the gifts of the Spirit need to be used in the body of Christ, even today.

We must choose to receive the gift of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in obedience to God because it empowers us by providing certain gifts of the Spirit for the assignments that God needs us to do.

When people are full of the Holy Spirit, He influences their thoughts, words, and actions. Each time we are told what happened when people were filled with the Spirit, they were led by the Spirit to do something, usually involving speaking with boldness.

God gives spiritual gifts to His servants so we can continue setting the captives free through evangelism, healing, and casting out demons, carrying on the warfare against the devil's domain that Jesus began during His earthly ministry. None of the gifts of the Spirit have ever ceased or died out, so we must receive *and use* all the gifts that God wants to give us.

172 Dave Root, "How to Receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit," <https://www.vividchristianity.com/HowToReceiveTheBaptismOfTheHolySpirit1.htm>.