

FAITH HEALING, FAITH HEALERS & A BIBLICAL VIEW OF HEALING

XIII. **“FAITH HEALING” AND FAITH HEALERS.** “During the last three decades of the twentieth century a renewed worldwide interest in healing has emerged in both secular and Christian circles. Many circumstances have caused this interest to rage like a mighty river, potentially wreaking havoc in the lives of those who seek relief in these ‘healing waters.’ *First, the information explosion of recent times has recreated the Dark Ages in reverse.* During those cruel times of intellectual poverty, uneducated people did not possess enough knowledge to believe. Today, however, the available knowledge more than doubles every decade, and people do not know what to believe. *Second, a new wave of existential thought has joined the data deluge.* Belief in miracles creates a surging reaction to liberal theology with all its spiritually deadening effects. This wave has overflowed biblical boundaries at points and flooded people’s thinking with presumption disguised as faith... *Third, ‘experiential Christianity’ is the ultimate judge of truth today.* This mindset can be found within many age groups and denominational organizations, and the common denominator that unites them is experience. In this view, God’s reality cannot be expressed apart from experience, and experience can override biblical teaching. *Fourth, sickness runs rampant in our society.* A popular periodical reported that the health-care industry billed record increases in payment for medical services over the last decade... Each year the medical profession makes phenomenal advances in the raging war against disease. Yet an increasingly sick society, bent on instant cures, is willing to turn to whomever can offer the quickest and least expensive path to relief... Such a person, who has no hope from doctors and lies helplessly incapacitated without God’s intervention, feels irresistibly drawn toward this last-ditch, beckoning prospect of health.” (Richard Mayhue, *The Healing Promise*. Harvest House Publishers: Eugene, Oregon, 1994, pp. 27-29)

A. A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF FAITH HEALING. “Among those promoting healing (after 1940) were *Allen, Angley, Branham, Hagin, Kuhlman, Osborn and Roberts*... During the 1980’s the players changed radically. Few healers remain in the spotlight today who also stood there in the 1940’s through the 1970’s. The various elements in this new generation of healing defy compartmentalization because of their diverse overlaps; they cannot all be considered as one movement because of their varying uniquenesses. **However at least two strands seem to stand out:**

1. “On one hand we have adherents to a **‘health-and-wealth’ theology** preaching a prosperity gospel whose results come by way of **Positive Confession**. The teachers of this gospel make up what is commonly called **the Faith movement**... The health-and-Wealth teachers tend to have little formal education in Scripture and view God as prospering those people who show sufficient faith... First let us consider those who espouse a health-and-wealth theology. *Paul Yonggi (now David) Cho, Morris Cerullo, Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, Paul and Jan Cruoch, Kenneth Hagin, Marilyn Hickey, Robert Tilton, and Benny Hinn* rank among the more influential representatives. This movement focuses first on man and then afterward on God to supply mankind’s need of health and wealth. The Positive Confession element of the Faith movement has cultic origins.¹ A careful study of Satan’s two attacks on Job’s spiritual integrity--the removal of his wealth (Job 1) and the removal of his health (Job 2)--highlights the true basis of name-it and claim-it theology. Satan theorized that without health and wealth, Job would curse God. Job’s righteous response to God, however, proved Satan and the health/wealth movement wrong (Job 42:5-6).

2. “Then on the other hand are those who believe that **signs and wonders** should be evidenced in our time because the kingdom of God is now present... The signs-and-wonders teachers are generally well-educated and appeal to the glory and kingdom purposes of God as the basis for supernatural intervention... (they) explain inconsistent results as consistent with the present kingdom will of God... (this) group has been called the **Signs and Wonders movement** or **‘The Third Wave,’** or has been identified with John Wimber’s **Vineyard movement**. Visible personalities include *Jack Deere, Wayne Grudem (?), Kevin Springer, John Wimber, and C. Peter Wagner*. These (comments)... give an idea of what (John Wimber) believes about healing... ‘Stories like Naaman’s are not confined to biblical times... In sum, raising of the dead was a dramatic and infrequent event in the New Testament, but something that I believe is possible still today.’”(!) (Mayhue, pp. 29-32)

3. **The “Leader of the Pack” in Faith Healing: Benny Hinn.** “No one involved in healing ministry today approaches the visibility and recognition accorded to Benny Hinn. His recent books have been bestsellers; he also appears as a regular guest on the Trinity Broadcasting Network. Hinn intimates that he has taken up where Kathryn Kuhlman left off. Because of his unusually widespread influence and because he has attempted to express a theology of healing in Lord, I Need a Miracle (hereafter abbreviated as LINM), it becomes particularly important to examine what Benny Hinn teaches. This brief analysis will compare what Hinn

¹“Extensive documentation to support the charge of cultic origins has been provided by D.R. McConnell, *A Different Gospel* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988) and H. Terris Neuman, ‘*Cultic Origins of Word-Faith Theology Within the Charismatic Movement,*’ *Pneuma* (Spring, 1990), 32-55.” (Mayhue, p. 270). *The Seduction of Christianity*, by Dave Hunt & T.A. McMahon also thoroughly documents this fact-MWE

believes about healing with what the Scriptures teach. You can then make up your own mind about Hinn's teaching credibility (see Acts 17:11):

- a) "Benny Hinn does not pray 'Lord, Thy will be done' [LINM, p. 63]. Jesus Christ did (Luke 22:42).
- b) "Hinn believes that God always intends for believers to be healed (Ibid). In contrast, the Bible teaches that some of the greatest saints had physical infirmities from which they were never healed, including Jacob and Paul.
- c) "Hinn teaches that believers should command God to heal [LINM, pp. 74-75]. The Bible teaches we are to ask (1 John 5:14-15).
- d) "Hinn suggests that miraculous healing from God is gradual [LINM, pp. 79, 81, 83-84]. Healing by Christ and the apostles occurred instantly (see later in this paper).
- e) "Hinn teaches that faith on the part of the sick person is essential to healing. [LINM, pp. 85-87]. Lazarus and Jairus' daughter could not have exercised faith when they were raised from the dead.
- f) "Hinn writes that we must do our part before God can heal [LINM, pp. 58-62]. The Bible teaches that God is sovereign.
- g) "Hinn believes that Christians should not be sick [LINM, pp. 67, 72]. The Bible teaches that Christians can be sick and all will eventually die.
- h) "Benny Hinn implies that a person's healing can be lost and that the healed person must do certain things to keep the healing [LINM, pp. 100-102]. Nowhere in the Bible do we find such teaching.

"Amazingly, Hinn not only contradicts Scripture on the subject of healing, but he also contradicts himself. Hinn wrote in 1992...'...I heard Kathryn Kuhlman prophesy in her own inimitable way that the day would arrive, before the coming of the Lord, when the power of God would be so great that everyone would be healed...Of course she never saw it come, but it will come. The Holy Spirit has convinced me of that.' Later in a 1993 interview, Charisma magazine asked Hinn, 'You've mentioned some other changes in your theology. Have you changed your view of healing?' Compare his 1993 answer to what the Holy Spirit allegedly told him in 1992: '...Jacob walked with a limp. Elisha died a sick man...Even the apostle Paul had an infirmity-although we're not sure what it was. Why didn't God heal them? You know, my father died of cancer. Sadly, in the past, I stated publicly: Had my father known then what I know now, he wouldn't have died. How cruel! I'm not going to say that about anyone again. Yet I still believe that healing is promised to all of us as children of God. The Word of God is clear on that (sic)... So I believe with all my heart that healing is a part of our inheritance as believers... But now I have come to realize that God is sovereign, and there are things I just don't understand.'

NOTE: "Either the Holy Spirit spoke correctly in 1992 and Hinn has chosen to correct the Spirit in 1993, or the Spirit didn't speak what Hinn alleged in 1992 and he has resorted to damage control in 1993." (Mayhue, pp. 32-35)

B. AN EVALUATION OF FAITH HEALERS & THEIR TECHNIQUES. "The Christian community must come to grips with the fact that it is extremely rare when a reported healing begins to match up with the biblical model. **When God miraculously healed through the prophets, Christ, or the apostles, these qualities, among others, characterized the healing:**

1. It was immediate.
2. It was public.
3. It took place on ordinary, unplanned occasions.
4. It included illnesses that were untreatable by the medical community.
5. It was complete and irreversible.
6. It was undeniable, even to detractors.

"**Taking contemporary healing a step further, most of today's reported healings look little different than reported healings from the cults and other world religions.** John MacArthur makes this point. 'The gift of healing... has been claimed through the centuries by Christians and pagans alike. Historically, the Roman Catholic Church has led

the way in claiming the power to heal. They have boasted of healing people with the bones of John the Baptist, or Peter, fragments of the cross, or even vials of Mary's breast milk... *Oriental psychic healers say they can do "bloodless surgery."* They wave their hands over afflicted organs and say incantations. Supposedly people are cured. *Witch doctors and shamans even claim to raise the dead.* Occultists use black magic to do lying wonders in the healing arts. Mary Baker Eddy, founder of Christian Science, claimed to have healed people through telepathy. Satan has always held people in his dominion by means of counterfeit healings.'... **IF CONTEMPORARY HEALINGS LOOK LITTLE LIKE THOSE IN THE SCRIPTURE AND MUCH LIKE THOSE OF FALSE RELIGIONS, THEN THERE MUST BE EXPLANATIONS FOR THESE EXPERIENCES OTHER THAN THE POWER OF GOD.** Are these ministries of God or of man? Charles Swindoll answers the question for us.

"Now the critical question: Do I believe God has placed His healing powers in a few "anointed individuals" who claim to do divine healings? I say, unequivocally, I do not. In fact, I don't think I have ever ministered to any more disillusioned souls than those who had been promised healing by an alleged "healer" and then were not healed... In no way does this mean, however, that I do not believe God has the power to heal... and on unique occasions, He does do so. I believe that with all my heart. The problem comes when attention is focused on a person who claims healing powers, or on the series of emotionally overpowering events that surround a so-called healing service. *If those "divine healers" are authentic and "anointed" miracle workers of God, why aren't they out going floor-to-floor in hospitals and emergency wards? Why don't they prove the truth of their ministry there...humbly...unobtrusively...free of charge?* Then I would have reason to believe they are servants of the living God in whose lives the Spirit is consistently pouring out His power to heal.'" (Mayhue, pp. 35-37, citing MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos*, pp. 203-204 & Swindoll, *Flying Closer to the Flame*, p. 197)

C. THE IMPORTANCE OF A CORRECT, BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF HEALING. "After surveying what is being taught and written in the name of Christianity, we can see why a state of confusion about divine healing rests over the church. Questions like these perplex many people: *Is it real? If it is not real, how can I explain some of the apparent healings? How does it work? If it does work, why should I ignore or deny a good thing? Why the sudden appearance and increase of healing if it was possible all along? Is it biblical? Why am I sick? Should I quit taking medicine? Why haven't I been healed? Why are some leaders in the healing movement sick? Why do all people in the healing movement die?...*Maybe you have asked some of these questions yourself." (Ibid, p. 37)

The above questions are very important questions to which one must seek and find biblical answers. In that regard, the following **true story** illustrates the heart-rending tragedy of misunderstanding, even sincerely, what God's Word teaches in regard to physical healing:

"Larry and Alice Parker wanted God's best for their family of six. But their oldest son suffered from diabetes and regularly received insulin injections. When Daniel Badilla held special services in their Barstow, California, church, the Parkers 'walked the aisle' with 11-year-old Wesley. They sincerely sought a healing miracle.

"The preacher pronounced Wesley healed. Larry joyfully entered '*Praise God our son is healed!*' into Wesley's insulin log. But Wesley's next insulin test indicated differently. Yet by faith the Parkers claimed the healing and blamed the unexpected insulin results on Satan. Shortly afterward, Wesley began to suffer the nausea and severe stomach cramps that predictably indicate low insulin. Larry and Alice postponed medical treatment and sought God's continued healing power through prayer. In spite of their sincere faith, Wesley fell into a coma and died three days later. *Newsweek* magazine reported the tragedy nationally [Sept. 10, 1973, p. 31]. (Ibid, p. 27)

Richard Mayhue, in his book *The Healing Promise*, gives a follow up to the above story of the Parkers: "...**When people's lives could be at risk, we must have the sure Word of God, not the theories and reported experiences of men...** even though Larry and Alice had placed their full faith in God, Wesley still died. A lawyer in Indiana shared with me this letter that he received from Larry Parker. Years had passed since Wesley's death. During that time Larry struggled for the truth and found it only as he sought full scriptural counsel. He wrote:

"I am writing this letter with the hope and prayer that somehow I can share with you a lesson that I have learned at great expense. It is only by the grace of God, and the never-failing, all-encompassing love of Jesus Christ our Lord that my wife and I have been able to come through this trial... We wanted to see our son healed, but went about it the wrong way. It was during our trial for involuntary manslaughter and felony child abuse that my wife felt she could tell me what the Lord had shown her. She told me that our love, because it was lacking, failed Wesley, and that God's word says, "Love never faileth" (I Cor. 13:8). *I knew then that we had allowed what we thought was faith to cause us to forget to love.* As we prayed for Wesley and saw him in obvious pain, our love for him wanted to give him the insulin that we knew would stop his suffering. However, we felt that would be a lack of faith, and would cost him his healing. We learned that our actions were contrary to what the Scriptures say. God's Word says that love is greater than faith (I Cor.

13:13). The trouble (with faith-healing theology) lies with the fact that we confuse faith and belief. **We think that if we believe hard enough, the healing will take place. We tie healing to some ability on our part to believe enough, i.e., to have enough faith.** To withhold medicine, especially life-giving medicine, is a very presumptuous act on our part that actually hinders the Spirit of God from His work. *My prayer is that you will consider these thoughts at length, for they have come at an incomprehensible price that no one would voluntarily pay*” (Ibid, pp. 37-38).

D. POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS FOR “HEALINGS” BY FAITH HEALERS. People often tend to automatically assume if someone is healed of a genuine disease or disability, that it must be “of God.” However, such a blanket assumption is clearly wrong and can lead to serious error. Consider the following information:

“Dr. Jerome Frank, distinguished professor of psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University, *estimates that there are more patients treated by healers who are not licensed medical doctors than by those who are* [U.S. News & World Report, Feb. 12, 1979, p. 68]. Those people reason, ‘Since my religion works, why should I go to an expensive professional?’

“Because ‘religion works,’ **REPORTED HEALINGS EXTEND WAY BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES OF CHRISTIANITY.**(!) Restored health is not limited to the domain of the church. Christians don’t monopolize the field of apparent healings. What works for non-Christians can also work for Christians, even though it clearly does not come from God. *This means we must responsibly sort out authentic healings directly from the hand of God from those real or thought-to-be-real healings that have other explanations...*

“‘Miracles’ are common in tribal religions where the shaman, master of ecstasy, performs spectacular feats amid hysteria and rapture. In folk Islam, folk Buddhism, and folk Hinduism, various specialists practice the miraculous; some are magicians, others are medicine men and witchdoctors, and still others deal in the manipulation of the spirits that haunt the air. **ALL OF THEM ROUTINELY REPORT WONDERFUL SUCCESSES AT HEALING THROUGH THEIR MAGICAL MINISTRATIONS.** In high Islam we even find saints and sadhus who perform magic works of resurrection, along with fakirs and dervishes whose talent is limited to ecstatic healings. BUT HERE, TOO, REPORTS OF HEALINGS ARE COMMONPLACE... Two things are noteworthy about the claims of healing in folk religions and cults. THE FIRST IS THAT THEIR REPORTS ARE NUMEROUS AND PLAUSIBLE. THE SECOND IS THAT THEY ARE DONE IN A SPIRITUAL CONTEXT UTTERLY DIFFERENT FROM AND HOSTILE TO THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL [Lewis B. Smedes, ed., *Ministry and the Miraculous* (Pasadena, CA: Fuller Theological Seminary, 1987), p. 58].

EXPLANATIONS FOR REPORTED HEALINGS. “In an attempt to understand reported healings, we should always ask, ‘Could this be explained by...?’ I (Mayhue) have listed 12 possible answers to this important and practical question. Let’s begin with the most obvious:

1. “**GOD HEALED.** That God could have directly intervened and healed is a very legitimate possibility. Biblically, nothing prohibits God from reaching down directly to restore a person’s health... Our charismatic, Pentecostal brethren might be surprised to learn that non-charismatics *do* believe that God can and does heal.” (Ibid, p. 65)
2. “**MEDICAL TREATMENT WORKED.** Most people who go to faith healers and claim to be healed have also been to doctors. They have had medicine, and some have even had operations. In spite of that, they often fail to include the doctor when giving credit for healing... Jesus recognized the importance of doctors...(Mk. 2:17; Lk. 10:30-37) (Ibid, pp. 67-68)
3. “**HEALING CAPACITY OF THE BODY.** This is probably the one most-often overlooked explanation for reported healings. Our bodies are incredible pieces of machinery. *God created them with such marvelous design that they have the capacity to heal themselves of many physical problems.* We might call this natural/divine healing. To make the point, consider the conclusions reached in this interesting article:

‘As a protest to soaring rates for malpractice insurance, doctors in Los Angeles went on strike in 1976. *The result with no doctors around? An 18 percent drop in the death rate.* That same year, according to Dr. Robert S. Mendelsohn, doctors in Bogota, Colombia, refused to provide any services except for emergency care. *The result was a 35 percent drop in the death rate.* When Israeli doctors drastically reduced their daily patient contact in 1973, the Jerusalem Burial Society reported that *the death rate was cut in half.* The only similar drop had been 20 years earlier at the time of the last doctor’s strike [Parade (October 4, 1981), p. 27, cited in Mayhue, p. 68].

4. **“SPONTANEOUS REMISSION.** The medical field recognizes as unusual, but nevertheless real, spontaneous cures and regression of diseases for no apparent medically diagnosed reason. This seems to be particularly true of cancer [Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Healing and the Scriptures*, 1988, pp. 29-31; & Dr. Franklin E. Payne, Jr., *Biblical Healing for Modern Medicine* (Augusta, GA: Covenant Books, 1993, p. 153].

5. **“EMOTIONALLY INDUCED ILLNESS.** Doctors agree that stress can have a severely debilitating effect on the body. Kenneth Pelletier wrote these significant words:

‘Medical and psychological problems caused by stress have become the number one health problem in the last decade. One standard medical text estimates that 50 to 80 percent of all diseases have their origin in stress. Stress-induced disorders have long since replaced infectious disease as the most common maladies of people in the post-industrial nations. During recent years, four disorders--heart disease, cancer, arthritis, and respiratory diseases such as bronchitis--have become so prominent in the clinics of the United States, Western Europe, and Japan that they are known as ‘*the afflictions of civilization.*’ Their prevalence stems from poor diet, pollution, and most important, the increased stress of modern society [Pelletier, “*Mind as Healer, Mind as Slayer,*” *Christian Medical Society Journal*, 11:1 (1980), p. 8].

“Emotionally induced illnesses frequently can go into reverse. Removing the stress helps to remove the physical symptoms caused by that stress. For instance, Psalm 32 reveals that the cause of David’s physical distress was guilt over his sin with Bathsheba.

6. **“PSYCHOGENIC ILLNESS.** Doctors have confirmed that a psychogenic illness can falsely register an apparent physical infirmity in the mind. We normally call that a psychosomatic illness. Therefore, a change of mind can often cause a change in physical well-being.

“William Nolen, a world-renowned surgeon, tells of an amazing case of pseudocyesis (false pregnancy) that he encountered as a young Army doctor. *He treated a 35-year-old woman who had been married 12 years and had all the signs of pregnancy. He followed the pregnancy for seven months and all appeared normal. But in the eighth month, an associate discovered that the woman actually had a false pregnancy.* After that, it took only a short while for the patient’s body to return to normal [William A. Nolen, *Healing: A Doctor in Search of a Miracle* (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett Publications, 1976), pp. 253-255].

“Dr. Verna Wright comments: ‘This (psychogenic illness) is well illustrated by an incident that happened at Liverpool, where I trained. There was an asthmatic sufferer who was allergic to roses and always went into an asthmatic attack if she visited a rose garden. She came into the consulting room of my chief, who happened to have a rose on his desk, and she promptly had an asthmatic attack. It was in fact a plastic rose. It is clear that the psychological aspect of disease should not be underestimated [Wright, “*A Medical View of Miraculous Healing,*” in Peter Masters, *The Healing Epidemic* (London: The Wakeman Trust, 1988), p. 211. Also, read C. Samuel Storms, *Healing and Holiness* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1990), pp. 43-46].

7. **“MISDIAGNOSIS.** An illness can sometimes be diagnosed wrongly. As a result, the prescribed treatment for the mistaken illness is ineffective. The patient may then go to a healer, who supposedly heals a diagnosed disease. Thus the healer is credited with healing an ailment which in reality the person never had... Misdiagnosis is far more common than we might imagine.

8. **“MISLEADING REPORT.** Often an alleged healing is embraced by people because of a convincing but misleading report. That is, *the sincerely given testimony just does not match the facts as they actually occurred.* George Peters... provides a vivid illustration...(the) Indonesian revival (written about by Mel Tari in “A Mighty Wind”) ...Peters decided to go to Indonesia to interview the people and find out firsthand what had happened. He talked to people who were ‘raised from the dead’ and questioned those who had been healed. His findings were published in the book *Indonesian Revival*... He writes... ‘The reports from Timor that God raised some people from the dead have startled many American Christians. *I do not doubt that God is able to raise the dead, but I seriously question that He did so in Timor. In fact, I am convinced that it did not happen...* I shall leave any judgments about these miracles to the reader. I went away satisfied that according to their usage of the word death and their concept of death, they had experienced resuscitation. According to my concept of death, no such miracles happened; I learned again the value of seeing words and concepts from the people’s point of view and interpreting them according to their mentality and understanding.’ ...Those people were either unconscious or in a comatose state. They had not yet reached the point where their life processes were irreversibly stopped... **REPORTS (HOWEVER SINCERE THE REPORTER) MAY NOT ACCURATELY**

PORTRAY WHAT TOOK PLACE. What seemed to happen through secondhand reports was not what truly happened. **Firsthand reports can also be out of sync with reality.** Dr. Wright chronicles this not-uncommon occurrence:

‘Patients often fail to understand the nature or the degree of seriousness of their condition. Let me give you an example from an Anglican church which placed a good deal of emphasis upon the healing ministry. A lady from this church who suffered from abdominal pain told the church prayer group that she was going into (the) hospital the following week for extensive surgery. Naturally they prayed for her. She came out of (the) hospital some fourteen days later and reported to the group that the operation had revealed that the disease had entirely disappeared, and they praised the Lord for this great deliverance.

It so happened that there was surgeon in the congregation, a man clearly sympathetic to the healing movement, or he would not have been there. With the patient’s permission he obtained sight of the medical notes and discussed them with the surgeon who performed the operation. He found that the surgeon had been extremely reluctant to operate and had only been persuaded to do so because of great pressure from the patient and her general practitioner. He opened the abdomen and rather as he anticipated he found nothing but a rather mobile colon. He therefore sewed the lady up again and her abdominal pain disappeared, but she soon began to suffer from migraine with increasing severity. Note the difference of perspective: to the healing group this was a miracle. Did they not have the testimony of the patient? She suffered from abdominal pain and extensive surgery was going to be necessary to rectify it; they prayed for her, the surgeon operated, and nothing could be found. But from the surgeon’s perspective a very different story emerged, and we may feel that it was significant that this lady’s symptoms soon changed from abdominal pain to migraine.’ (Dr. Verna Wright, “A Medical View of Miraculous Healing,” pp. 205-206, in Masters, “The Healing Epidemic” pp. 205-206, cited in Mayhue, pp. 74-75)

9. **“PLACEBO EFFECT.** The ‘*placebo effect*’ describes the patient improvement that occurs after receiving medicine or undergoing medical treatment which has little or no documented or demonstrable medical value.

“In the July 1993 issue of *Clinical Psychology Review*, Dr. Alan Roberts, director of medical psychology at Scripps Clinic and Research Foundation, reported the findings from a study of 6,931 patients who received treatments that later were medically discredited. *Unbelievably, almost one-third of the former patients reported good results from their treatment and 40 percent reported excellent improvement.* [Rita Reuben, “Placebos’ Healing Power,” U.S. News & World Report (November 22, 1993), p. 78].

“Dr. Payne comments: ‘What is remarkable is that it works! The effect is so consistent and strong that medical research is sometimes considered invalid unless a placebo is administered to one group of patients along with another group who receives the actual medication. Not uncommonly, the placebo group does as well, and sometimes better, than those who receive the medication. Further, the placebo can actually cause physiologic (“real”) changes! For example, blood pressure can be lowered, intestinal ulcers healed, and migraines relieved [Payne, pp. 152-153, cited in Mayhue]. *Faith healers often prove to be no more and no less than ‘spiritual placebos.’* This one factor alone would easily account for many of the reported healings at so-called healing meetings, although only a small fraction of those who attend ever claim to be healed. Most leave with their hopes dashed because the ‘placebo effect’ did not work for them. The unhealed pay the price in disappointment and doubt, while the faith healer continues to herald his ‘miraculous’ triumphs.” (Ibid, pp. 75-76)

10. **“MASS HYPNOSIS/HYSTERIA.** “When a John Wimber team conducted meetings in Leeds, England, five Christian doctors--including one of England’s leading psychiatrists--were in attendance. They became so incensed at what they all agreed was the attempted induction of hypnosis, that they filed the following report:

‘There was an hour’s repetitious chorus singing which began the proceedings. A fair amount of reeling and writhing commenced at the start of the singing. No space was found for a Scripture reading as such. The congregation was at no time called to prayers of confession of sin and repentance. “Hold out your hands. Feel heat coming through you. Your eyelids may feel heavy. You may feel like falling; some persons may scream. It is all right. You can see the Holy Spirit resting on people, the power of God resting on many.”... Volunteers were then put into trance while hands were laid on them. They were not unconscious and would, we were assured, hear what was said to them. They remained thus for many minutes with assorted shakings, tremblings, smilings, fallings, swayings and utterings... Throughout the building other individuals proceeded to fall into trance. *The audience was told that the Holy Spirit might lead some persons to scream or to breathe very deeply. As one expected from hypnotic states these things happened more or less at once.* Uncontrollable

laughter, crying, groaning, shrieking and sobbing, together with the murmurings of many who wished to minister some spiritual comfort to the affected brethren, made it more difficult to follow any more the official progress of events.’

“The team of doctors then wrote: ‘Hypnotic trance with suggestion is a powerful psychological tool. It has many uses. Psychosomatic disorders and physical symptoms related to neurosis are very likely in the short term to respond to this treatment. Relief of pain as in dental extraction or childbirth is relatively commonplace with hypnosis. In the Wimber team’s meeting we saw no change that suggested any healing of organic, physical disease... The hypnotic state, though conscious, is not what Scripture means by self-control, the mind of Christ in us or mind renewal. To describe these trances, their visible or audible features, or any healings experienced as the perfectly legitimate result of hypnosis--*to describe this as the plain work of the Holy Spirit is a deception.*” (Ibid, pp. 76-77)

11. “**DELIBERATE DECEIT.** “...The Christian community needs to admit that there have been cases of deliberate fraud... ‘Last fall the National Courier, a biweekly tabloid published by Logos International, launched a testimonial series on miracles. One of the first stories was about faith healer Alice Pattico, who claimed she had been healed in a 1974 Kathryn Kuhlman meeting from breast and brain cancer and addiction to painkilling drugs. She said her breasts, which had been removed in surgery, were restored, and that God had filled thirteen holes that had been drilled in her head in 1973 to administer laser beam surgery. She and her husband provided the Courier with doctors’ letters to document her claims.’ ...Later, Moody Monthly published a follow-up report *about the National Courier’s subsequent retraction when it became apparent that the facts had been falsified.* ...More recently faith healers W.V. Grant and Peter Popoff have been thoroughly exposed by James Randi as frauds. Popoff received electronic transmissions from his wife Elizabeth as the supposed ‘word of knowledge’--not from God, as he claimed. Grant rented wheelchairs, put healthy people in them, and then later allegedly healed them.” (“*Retraction,*” Moody Monthly [February, 1977], p. 53; cited in Mayhue, p. 76).

12. “**SATANIC INVOLVEMENT.** Is Satan ever involved in healing? Second Corinthians 11 indicates that Satan disguises himself and his ‘apostles’ as angels of light. They appear and act as though they are from God. They come as close as they can to the real article while actually being false... Satan can actually hurt people in his attempts to imitate God. Job is the most familiar biblical illustration. Remember also the lady who was afflicted for 18 years, probably by Satan through demons...(Luke 13:16)... *On at least four occasions the Scriptures credit Antichrist and the false prophet with the satanic power to perform signs* (2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 13:3-12; 16:14; 19:20). It is impossible to know for sure how real or perceived these powers might be. ...However, not even good angels are given creative power. Since Satan and his demons are evil angels, we can reasonably conclude that with regard to miraculous healing, which would require creative power, neither Satan nor demons can actually heal. Nonetheless, they are masters at deceitful perceptions, attempting to convince people that they can do things that in reality they cannot.” (Note: All above quotes in #'s 1-12, from Mayhue, pp. 65-80).

XIV. THE BIBLICAL TEACHING REGARDING HEALING. Since all kinds of groups and people including members of false cults, false religions, etc., claim to be able to heal people, **if we are going to recognize true healers, and the hand of God as opposed to other sources for alleged healings, we are going to have to go to the only source of absolute truth-the Bible,** to find out how to recognize true healing from false healing, and those who possess the true gift of healing, from those who are counterfeit.

A. **THE OLD TESTAMENT RECORD.** Ex. 4:11; Dt. 32:39; Job. 5:17-18; Isa. 45:7; Lam. 3:37-38. “What testimonies! By His own declaration, God assumes ultimate responsibility for health or sickness, for life or death... *From the time of Abraham (about 2200 B.C.) until the time of Isaiah (about 750 B.C.), ONLY 20 SPECIFIC HEALING INCIDENTS APPEAR IN THE OLD TESTAMENT RECORD:* five in the time of Job and Abraham, five in the time of Moses, two in the time of Samuel, and eight from the time of David until Isaiah. Then from about 750 B.C. onward, no recorded healings through men occurred until the time of Christ!² (See chart in appendix “*The Old Testament Healing Record*” for complete listing).

²”John Wimber and Kevin Springer, *Power Healing* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1987), 244. Appendix C, ‘*Healing in the Old Testament,*’ needs to be used with great caution and careful study lest one be left with erroneous impressions. Of the 75 texts cited, only 15 deal with a particular incident of physical healing. Most deal with spiritual, national, or millennial restoration, not physical healing. It is a bit ironic, considering the book’s emphasis, that three of the texts listed contain the message that ‘there is no healing’ (Jeremiah 46:11; 51:8-9; Hosea 5:13). Surprisingly, the list does not include six of

“AFFLICTED BY GOD. God physically afflicted people on numerous occasions. This aspect of God’s justice often escapes our attention. People quickly seek healing, but conveniently ignore God’s judgment. For example, God brought a crushing blow to the Egyptians when they refused to let the Jews return to Palestine (Exodus 12:29-30). Literally thousands of firstborn people and cattle lost their lives as a punishment for a nation’s disobedience. God is not always easy on His own people, either. Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron... (Lev. 10:1-2)... Ezekiel became a widower in the midst of his prophetic ministry... (Ezekiel 24:16-18).

1) **“SIN-RELATED SICKNESS.** Some physical affliction came because of personal sin, although the person afflicted was not always the sinner. Surprisingly, when affliction was most appropriate, God occasionally withheld it. After Aaron led the nation into idolatrous worship, for example, the Lord smote the people, but not Aaron (Exodus 32:35)... On other occasions the one who sinned received God’s physical chastisement. Miriam...(Num. 12:1-15)... and Korah (Num. 16:1-50)... Even a person who did not sin sometimes became the subject of God’s affliction. The most prominent example involves the child born out of David and Bathsheba’s immoral relationship (2 Samuel 12:1-23).

2) **“UNEXPLAINABLE SICKNESS.** The Old Testament contains many cases of unaccountable illness. They seemingly have nothing to do with sin or even a known disease...Mephibosheth...(2 Sam. 4:4)...the death of the Shunammite’s son (2 Kings 4:18-37)... Daniel turned ill more than once after receiving prophetic visions (Daniel 7:28; 8:27).

3) **“SATAN INVOLVED.** Only the well-known Old Testament episode of Satan afflicting Job indicates that Satan could be an agent for sickness (Job chapters 1 and 2).

4) **“SAINTS WERE SICK.** Believers were not immune to physical infirmities. Isaac (Genesis 27:1) and Jacob (Genesis 48:1) became sick and later died. Job was severely smitten with boils (Job 2:7).

“HEALED BY GOD. God not only afflicted but He also healed. And no one can accuse the Lord of having one favorite healing technique. The means of healing varied widely and numbered almost as many as the actual healings themselves. Healing methods ranged from God’s direct intervention, to human prayer, to some of the most bizarre methods imaginable... Miriam (Num. 12:13-15)... Nebuchadnezzar...(Daniel 4:28-37) ...Naaman... (Numbers 21:4-9). *Certainly no Old Testament norm emerged as a healing method that God consistently favored.*

1) **“GOD HEALED UNBELIEVERS.** It was not necessary for a person to have a saving relationship with God to be healed ...the Syrian general (2 Kings 5:1-14) and a Babylonian king (Daniel 4:28-37). God sovereignly healed whomever He wanted.

2) **“GOD RESTORED LIFE.** In the entire Old Testament, only three people received restoration to life from the dead. The widow’s son at Zarephath was healed through the hand of Elijah (1 Kings 17:17-24). Elisha raised the Shunammite’s son (2 Kings 4:18-37). The third instance remains unforgettable...the man touched the bones of Elisha (and) revived and stood up on his feet (2 Kings 13:20-21).

SUMMING UP THE OLD TESTAMENT RECORD: “Saints suffered... God afflicted... Healing methods varied widely... Unbelievers recovered... Sinners went physically unpunished... The innocent were struck down... Satan proved insignificant... Resurrections were rare... Faith requirements are never directly mentioned...

“So what can we conclude from these facts? Basically this: God’s special interventions during the 2,000-plus years starting with Job and Abraham...and ending with Christ fall shockingly short of most people’s expectations. The Old Testament gives infinitesimal attention to healing in comparison to everything else addressed from Genesis to Malachi. God afflicted more than He healed. His healings were few and far between. And when God did choose to heal, His methods defied predictability.... If we set aside the highly unusual, one-of-a-kind circumstances out of the 20 incidents of Old Testament healing, we are left with eight healings...

1. Genesis 20:17--Abraham prayed for Abimelech’s household.
2. Genesis 21:1--the Lord took note of Sarah.
3. Genesis 29:31--God opened Leah’s womb.
4. Genesis 30:22--God remembered Rachel.

the 20 Old Testament occurrences of specific healing (Genesis 21:1-2; 29:31; 30:22; Numbers 25:1-9; 1 Samuel 1:19-20; 2 Samuel 24:1-17; and Job 42).” (Mayhue, references, p. 273)

5. 1 Samuel 1:12-16--Hannah prayed for herself.
6. 1 Kings 13:6--The man of God prayed for Jeroboam.
7. 2 Kings 20:3--Hezekiah prayed for himself.
8. 2 Chronicles 30:18--Hezekiah prayed for Israel.

“... **On three of the above occasions, God healed without any human prompting. Twice God answered the prayer of the afflicted. Three times God healed in response to someone else’s prayer.**

B. **THE GOSPEL RECORD.** “At no other time in human history have so many people been healed from such a multitude of diseases in so short a time as during Christ’s three-year public ministry... (Mt. 9:33 cf. Mk. 2:12; Lk. 10:24; Jn. 9:32).

(For a complete listing of every healing mentioned in the Gospels, see the chart in the appendix: “*The Healing Ministry of God Through Jesus.*” This list is taken from Richard Mayhue, “*The Healing Promise,*” pp. 96-97)

PURPOSE OF CHRIST’S HEALINGS: “Various reasons existed for Christ’s healing ministry, **all of which contributed to the authentication of the person of Jesus as the true Messiah.** Christ never performed healing miracles merely for their physical benefit, as we can see from these New Testament passages. Healing miracles were---

- Matthew 8:17 A preview fulfillment of the messianic prophecy in Isaiah 53:4.
- Matthew 9:6 To let people know that Christ had the authority to forgive sins (see also Mk. 2:10; Lk. 5:24).
- Matthew 11:2-19 To authenticate the messianic ministry for John the Baptist, who was in prison (cf. Isa 35; see also Luke 7:18-23).
- Matthew 12:15-21 A preview fulfillment of the messianic prophecy in Isaiah 42:1-4.
- John 9:3 To let people see the works of God on display in Christ.
- John 11:4 For the glory of God through Christ.
- John 20:30-31 To call people to believe that Jesus is the Christ.
- Acts 2:22 God’s authentication of Christ. (All above, Ibid, p. 98)

“CHARACTERISTICS OF CHRIST’S HEALINGS.

1) “**HEALING HAD PURPOSE.** Although Jesus did many miracles, He did not perform them indiscriminately. He did not always heal everyone who needed healing (John 5:3-5), nor did He perform signs on request (Matthew 12:38-40), nor did He use His powers to avoid the cross (Matthew 26:52-53). Our Lord’s miracles always accomplished the purposes documented above.” (Ibid)

2) “**HEALING WAS IMMEDIATE.** With three exceptions, all of Christ’s healings were instantaneous (Mt. 8:22-26; Lk. 17:11-19; John 9:1-7). No recuperative period was needed... There were no relapses or misunderstandings about being healed... Also, the three delays in healing involved *minutes* only, and the men involved were *totally* healed...”

3) “**HEALINGS WERE ABUNDANT.**

4) “**HEALING IN ABSENTIA.** *Healing did not require Jesus’ physical presence.* He merely thought or spoke the word, and healing was accomplished. A centurion’s slave (Matthew 8:5-13), a Canaanite’s daughter (Matthew 15:21-28), and the son of an official in Capernaum (John 4:49-53) received their healings apart from Jesus’ presence.” (Ibid, pp. 99-100)

5) “**HEALING METHODS VARIED.** (Christ touched, spoke, used spittle, plugged ears, & anointed with clay)

6) “**JESUS APPROVED OF DOCTORS.** Jesus recognized the normal means of physical healing--a doctor and medicine. Not once did He demean the medical profession... (Matt. 9:12). He approvingly told of the Samaritan who used oil, wine, and bandages to help the abandoned Jew (Luke 10:30-37).

7) “**HEALING FOR GOD’S GLORY.** Although sickness can result directly from personal sin, as evidenced in the Old Testament, nowhere in the Gospel accounts is sickness attributed directly to personal sin. However, Scripture states twice that sickness occurred so that God could be glorified... (cont. pp. 100-101)

8) “**CHRIST’S MINISTRY WAS UNIQUE**. Scripture states emphatically that in previous history there had never been a healing ministry like Christ’s... (Matt. 9:32-33).

9) “**JESUS SHUNNED ACCLAIM**. Jesus went out of His way to avoid public approval or reward for His healing miracles... Luke 10:20... Christ never sought fame and fortune through healing. For a while He drew large crowds who heard His kingdom message, but later they crucified Him in spite of all the miracles.

10) “**HEALINGS WERE UNDENIABLE**. The spectator reaction to Christ’s healings proved phenomenal. Everyone, including His enemies, stood amazed, astounded, and unable to deny or discredit the miracles. In fact, one of the most incredible statements affirming Christ’s ministry came from the unbelieving Pharisees and priests: ‘*Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, “What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation”*’ (John 11:47-48).’

11) “**REACTIONS WERE WIDESPREAD**. Christ’s healings brought widespread reaction. Mark 1:45...Even though he remained in unpopulated areas, people came to Him from *everywhere*.

12) “**CHRIST’ HEALING DID NOT NECESSARILY SAVE**. Christ’s miracles could not be denied (John 3:2), *but they did not necessarily lead to faith*... (Luke 10:12-15).

13) “**FAITH WAS NOT NECESSARY**. *An expression of a personal faith was NOT a necessary requirement for healing.* (Lazarus (Jn. 11), Jairus’ daughter (Mt. 9), & the widow’s son (Lk. 7) *were all dead and incapable of displaying faith.* Yet they arose from the dead. Furthermore, wherever Jesus healed the multitudes it can be assumed that most, if not all, eventually rejected Christ and His gospel. In Luke 17, when Jesus healed ten lepers, only ‘one of them...turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him’ (vv. 15-16). Note Jesus’ response: ‘Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine--where are they? Was no one found who turned back to give glory to God, except this foreigner?’”

14) “**ANOTHER’S FAITH HONORED**. At times Christ healed when someone other than the one afflicted displayed his faith. Note especially Matthew 17:19-20... (Christ) informed them that they lacked faith. The parallel passage in Mark 9:28-29 adds that prayer would have been successful. *Thus anyone who claims that a person can remain unhealed because of his or her own lack of faith needs to be corrected and warned. In this case the deficient faith belonged to the would-be healers.*

15) “**HEALINGS WERE NOT PREARRANGED**. Jesus healed from the beginning of His ministry (Matthew 4:23-25) to the end (John 11:1-44). Often He initiated the interaction and approached the person, as He did the lame man at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-9). Furthermore, Jesus always healed during the normal course of His daily ministry... (Mt. 9:27-29...

16) “**HEALING BY THE DISCIPLES**. People other than Christ performed healings in the Gospel accounts... For example, Jesus Himself sent the disciples on their preaching and healing excursions (Matthew 10:1-15). Seventy others went out with a similar commission from the Lord to preach and heal (Luke 10:1-16). The evidence is stunning. Christ’s healings were--

- undeniable
- spectacular
- overwhelming
- abundant
- awesome
- instant
- authoritative
- without limitations
- total
- convincing

“No one before or since has even fractionally approached the power of Jesus Christ to heal. He remains forever unique. No one could possibly claim to have a healing ministry like Christ’s. However, God’s healing power did not stop with His Son but continued on through the apostles. The Acts and New Testament epistles tell that story next.” (All above points & quotes: Ibid, pp. 104-105).

C. **THE APOSTOLIC RECORD.** “The Lord Jesus Christ left His disciples with this expectation in the Upper Room: ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me, the works that I do shall he do also’ (John 14:12). He commissioned the twelve to preach the gospel accompanied by powerful works of God (Mark 16:14-18)... And Jesus kept the promise He had made in John 14:12. *Just as He Himself had been authenticated by miracles (Acts 2:22), so too were the apostles* (Hebrews 2:1-4)... *Over the approximately 30-year span of Acts, only 16 incidents of healing are recorded.* They follow the outward movement of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome” (Ibid, p. 108). Mayhue divides the healings into two categories: a) *The healing ministry of God directly* (Acts 9:17-18 cf. 22:12-13; 14:19-20; 28:1-6), (and), b) *The healing ministry of God through men* (Acts 2:43; 3:1-10; 5:12-16; 6:8; 8:7; 9:32-35; 9:36-43; 14:3; 14:8-18; 19:11-12; 20:7-12; 28:7-8; 28:9)... (the first seven)... accompanied gospel preaching in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria (Acts 1-12). Only six healings...appear in all of Paul’s journeys (Acts 13-28). Since there appears to be little repetition of the same scenario, Acts 4:29-30 would come the closest to establishing any pattern of healing ministry. There the apostles preached the Word while God did the healing.... As we did with Jesus in the Gospels, let us look at the major features of God’s healings in the book of Acts.”(Ibid, pp. 107-109). (Note: See the chart in the appendix “The Healing Ministry in Acts” for a complete listing).

IN THE BOOK OF ACTS. (Note: All the following headings are taken verbatim from Mayhue):

1. **“HEALING TECHNIQUES VARIED.** “... (1) By command (Acts 3:6). (2) By being in the healer’s shadow (Acts 5:15). (3) By touching a cloth from the healer’s body (Acts 19:11-12). (4) By prayer and the laying on of hands (Acts 28:8-9).
2. **“HEALING WAS IMMEDIATE.** “...the healings were instantaneous, with no recuperative period required. *No one claimed their healing by faith, for they obviously had not received it yet if they were not healed on the spot(!).*
3. **“UNBELIEVERS WERE HEALED.** “As in Christ’s ministry, saving faith in Jesus Christ was not a necessary requirement for healing... ‘The multitudes... saw the signs which (Philip) was performing. For in the case of many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out of them shouting with a loud voice; and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed (Acts 8:6-7). At the same time that unbelievers were being healed, saints such as Dorcas were ill (!) (Acts 9:36-43).
4. **“FAITH OF THE AFFLICTED HONORED.** “*At times the faith of the afflicted was praised (Acts 3:16)... Yet at other times a personal faith was not necessarily required of the afflicted...(Acts 9:34).*
5. **“HEALINGS WERE UNDENIABLE.** “...Even the most vocal opponents of the gospel could not explain away the healings since they were so publicly spectacular (Acts 4:16-17).
6. **“SIN-RELATED SICKNESS.** “Sometimes God afflicted people because of personal sin... (Acts 5:5, 10; 9:8; 12:23; 13:4-12).
7. **“LIFE RESTORED.** “Two people were raised from the dead--Dorcas (Acts 9:36-43) and Eutychus (Acts 20:9-12). Add to these two the three Old Testament resuscitations plus the three in Christ’s ministry, and **only eight specifically named people were raised from the dead in all of Scripture** (not counting the onetime happening in Mt. 27:51-53).
8. **HEALING IN ABSENTIA.** “God worked so powerfully through Paul that cloths touched by him could bring healing without his presence (Acts 19:11-12).
9. **NONAPOSTOLIC HEALING.** “Rarely did someone other than the twelve heal. *The only possible exceptions involve Stephen (Acts 6:8), Philip (Acts 8:7), and Barnabas (Acts 14:3).*

IN THE EPISTLES. “While the Gospels indicate that the disciples would see God do great miracles through them, *just the opposite proves true in the epistles (!).* There is no biblical expectation that the postapostolic generations of Christians would experience or perform the healing miracles of either Christ or His apostles.” (Ibid, p. 112)

1. **PURPOSE OF HEALING.** “**God used signs, miracles, and wonders to authenticate the apostles and their ministry (Rom. 15:18-19; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:4)**... *If non-apostolic Christians through the centuries were supposed to perform such deeds, then they could not have served as the signs of apostleship* (see 2 Cor. 12:12). The signs by the apostles attested that their words had equal authority with those of Jesus Himself, for He had chosen them as His spokesmen (See Matthew 10:11-15, 20, 40; 1 Cor. 14:37). True signs could be

counterfeited, but they would not fool God (Matt. 7:21-23). The church received continual warnings to be alert, to be on guard, and to be discerning (Acts 20:17-32; 2 Cor. 11:13-15).” (Ibid)

2. **THE DECLINE OF HEALING.** “**In the epistles, Paul’s frequency of healing declined with the passing of time.** (1) Gal. 4:13-14-*Paul was ill.*, (2) 2 Cor. 12:7-10-*Paul was possibly afflicted.*, (3) Phil. 2:25-30-*Epaphroditus was ill.*, (4) 1 Tim. 5:23-*Timothy was ill.*, (5) 2 Tim. 4:20-*Trophimus was ill.*

3. **MEDICINE APPROVED.** “Paul recognized and recommended medicine...(1 Tim. 5:23).

4. **SIN-RELATED SICKNESS.** James 5 will be discussed more thoroughly below. “In the meantime, please observe that this passage says nothing about healing which in any way resembles healing through the apostles.”

5. **THE DISAPPEARANCE OF HEALING.** “Healings became significantly less noticeable with the passing of time in the apostolic era. *Paul mentions nothing about future healing ministry in his last three epistles--1 and 2 Timothy and Titus.* In his other letters, Paul also mentions nothing about current healing except to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 12:9, 28, 30). *Neither 1 or 2 Peter say anything about healing,* although Peter does alert his readers to the possibility of suffering (1 Pet. 4:19). *Nor does John mention healing in his three epistles.* Interestingly, *not one of the non-apostolic epistles--Hebrews, James, and Jude--instruct the saints about future miraculous healing ministries.*

Specific instructions from Christ to the church say absolutely nothing about physical healing either (Revelation chapters 2 and 3). In fact just the opposite happens: Jesus prepares the church at Smyrna for suffering and death (2:10), warns the church at Thyatira of God’s impending judgment involving sickness and death because of immorality and idolatry (2:22-23), and rebukes the Laodiceans for boasting in their physical health to the exclusion of spiritual well-being (3:17-18).” (Ibid, pp. 112-114)

SUMMARY OF WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES REGARDING HEALING. “The biblical evidence can be summarized this way: **Healing is noticeable in the Old Testament** (over a span of 2000 years), **overwhelming in the Gospels** (about three years), **occasional in Acts** (about 30 years), and **negligible in the epistles** (about 40 years). As the apostolic age ended, miraculous healing by direct human intervention ceased. And the healings reported by early church historians do not compare to the biblical record as to the miraculous quality of instant, total, and undeniable healing.” (Ibid, p. 114)

AN EXPLANATION OF 1 PETER 2:24. “The Bible does contain a healing promise. Many have misunderstood it. Look at 1 Peter 2:24 carefully... can you see it? ‘*By His wounds you were healed.*’ What does Peter mean?... Two foundational truths help get us off to a right start in understanding Peter and divine healing. *First*, every human being, when conceived, possesses a congenital spiritual defect--a sin disability that needs to be healed. *Second*, Peter addresses our need for spiritual restoration in 1 Peter 2:24 with his discussion of Christ’s provision of salvation’s healing... **First Peter 2:24 has everything to do with spiritual healing, which the Bible calls salvation. In fact, 1 Peter 2:18-25 means just the opposite of what most healing advocates teach.** Peter argues that since Christ physically and spiritually suffered for our spiritual healing (verses 21-24), then we should be willing to physically suffer in this life at the hands of men (verses 18-21) because we have already received God’s healing promise of eternal salvation (verses 24-25). Peter actually validates the divine purpose in human suffering rather than eliminates it... **Tragically, this wonderful truth of eternal salvation (our spiritual healing of which Peter writes) has been seriously mistaught by many people today.**” (Mayhue, pp. 18-20)

“BUT GOD DOESN’T CHANGE, SO SHOULDN’T MIRACULOUS HEALINGS STILL BE THE NORM!” ANSWER: **NO!** “One of today’s greatest threats to a correct interpretation of the Bible is assuming that any specific historical experience in Scripture is a valid, general expectation for today. This line of thinking... normally rests on such passages as Malachi 3:6, ‘*For I am the Lord, I change not,*’ or Hebrews 13:8, ‘*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and forever.*’ ... (But) **First, God’s ability to do something is not the real issue.** God is able to do *all* things at *all* times in *any* way He chooses. **Second... it is wrong to reason that because God has done a certain thing in the past He will automatically do it for you or others today... Unless we can show by the authority of Scripture that it is God’s will to do something, then to say He will do it and demand that He perform is to sinfully presume on God.** **Third... God has always warned about the counterfeit--false prophets (Dt. 13:1-5; 18:14-22), false apostles (2 Cor. 12:12), and even false believers (Mt. 7:13-23). Jesus warned that neither exclamations such as ‘Lord, Lord,’ nor experiences like miracles or exorcisms necessarily distinguish between the true and false (Mt. 7:21-23).** To generalize is to open the gate of error and deception.

“IF WE WERE TO APPLY GENERALIZATION TO ALL BIBLICAL EXPERIENCES, WE WOULD COME TO SOME RATHER OBVIOUS WRONG CONCLUSIONS... Because God supernaturally supplied food to the Jews in the wilderness (Ex. 16:1-21) and prevented their clothes and shoes from wearing out during their four-decade journey (Dt. 29:5), we

would expect God to feed and clothe us that way today. We are not expecting to be taken up to the third heaven as Paul was...*Nor do we believe that leprosy patients who dip seven times in a river will be cured* (2 Kings 5:1-14).

BEWARE, TOO, OF MAKING EXPERIENCE THE ULTIMATE DETERMINER OF TRUTH. “This line of reasoning says that if I have an experience that is portrayed somewhere in Scripture, then it must be from God. This person uses experience to validate Scripture, rather than vice versa. First we need to go to the Bible and ask if the experience could possibly be from God.” (Ibid, p. 116). Remember that in the church at Corinth, they apparently had some who felt they were glorifying God in their tongue’s speaking and didn’t even realize (?) that they were saying ‘*Jesus is accursed*’ (1 Cor. 12:3)... If an experience could come from God, then it needs to be tested by Scripture and other godly people. Jesus taught that fruit would be the test (Mt. 7:20). Paul said that prophets were to be tested by prophets (I Cor. 14:29 cf. I Thess. 5:21-22; 1 Jn. 4:1). (Ibid, pp. 113-114).

(Note: E-K below are unfinished at this time [3/05]-mwe)

E. ISAIAH 53 - IS THERE “HEALING IN THE ATONEMENT?”

F. CALLING FOR THE ELDERS: AN EXAMINATION OF JAMES 5:?

G. IS IT SINFUL OR AN EVIDENCE OF FAITHLESSNESS FOR A BELIEVER TO BE SICK?

H. WHAT ABOUT SATAN &/or DEMONS AS A CAUSE OF SICKNESS? (“SPIRITUAL WARFARE”).

I. INTERPRETING AND UNDERSTANDING CORRECTLY THE FAVORITE VERSES USED BY FAITH HEALERS.

J. THE SPIRITUAL GIFT OF HEALING.

1. WHAT WAS ITS ORIGINAL PURPOSE?

2. IS IT STILL IN OPERATION TODAY?

K. DOES GOD STILL HEAL TODAY?

XVI. SUMMARY REGARDING THE TOPIC OF SICKNESS AND HEALING.