

Healing

Healing is a continuous theme that runs throughout the pages of the holy scriptures but even so people have not always been healed with the same regularity or for the same reasons.

During the lifetime of Jesus Christ and later on during the time of the early ministry of the apostles, God poured out and gave His gift of healing much more than He had ever done previously or ever has done since. The many miracles of healing that Jesus performed helped to establish His absolute credibility as the Son of the most high God the Father, they helped to build the people's faith in Him and who He *really* was.

It is evident today that God is not healing in the same manner or to the same degree as He did in the days of Jesus and His apostles. Today in our technologically advanced society, Christians and others can take advantage of the latest information on health standards and maintenance, and for those who can afford it the most up-to-date surgical techniques and medicines in combating illness, deformity and disease. For the growing numbers of people who do not trust modern health science or who cannot access it, knowledge in the use of herbal medicines and natural remedies is freely available and in most cases very affordable. Paying due concern for your own well-being and health by the *knowledgeable* use of medicines and suitably qualified 'practitioners' and/or herbalists, should in no way detract from a person's faith in the Lord God or lead them to develop doubt on His ability to heal. Also consider this, the 'medicine' may or may not work directly, it might just create within a person the 'placebo effect' whilst it is the Lord who is doing the actual healing, in fact *any* healing that occurs is *always* due to the grace of our Lord God, which is why even to this day some people against all the odds, survive epidemics and plagues whilst others do not, even though they have all received the same medical aid and treatment.

When most people think of healing they think about their *physical* well-being, but of course there is much more to healing than just the physical aspect. In this article we will look at different types of healing and whereabouts in the scriptures they are to be found.

We will begin with the most visible type of healing, the physical, the healing of our contracted sicknesses and of our bodily deformities and dysfunctions. For early biblical examples of this we'll read from **Genesis 20: 17.** 'So Abraham prayed to God: and God healed Abimelech and his wife, and his maidservants, and they bear children.' and now from **Numbers 12: 10.** 'And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle, and behold, Miriam became leprous, as white as snow. . . ' **13.** 'And Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, Heal her now O God, I beseech You'. The Lord did heal Miriam of her leprosy, and in both of these cases the healing was asked for by somebody who was very closely related to the afflicted person, the healing was asked for *on their behalf*. In Miriam's case the Lord Himself had struck her down with the leprosy and Moses begged the Lord for her healing. The Lord can afflict and the Lord can heal as we can read of in **Job 5: 18.** 'For He inflicts pain, and He binds up, He wounds and His hands also make whole'. When the Lord heals a person He heals the appropriate wound or illness *totally*, there are no 'secondary infections' when the Lord has healed a wound. But also the Lord may decide to just *alleviate* a condition, that is to say make the condition bearable for

the sufferer because the Lord wants to use that person's `suffering` to help mould that person's character, just as He did with the apostle Paul in **2 Corinthians 12: 7-9**. `And in case I should be exalted above measure (become big-headed) because of the abundance of revelations, (knowledge) there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to torment me, in case I should become exalted above measure. Regarding this thing, I earnestly asked the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore most gladly will I rather boast in my infirmities in order that the power of Jesus Christ may rest upon me`. Although this `thorn in the side` of the apostle Paul *may* have been `spiritual` rather than physical, it still applies that it is at the Lord's discretion whether He will heal at once or let an illness or a condition run its` course. Let`s read the words of the Lord from the book of **Deuteronomy 32: 39**. `Understand now that I, I am He, and that there is no god with Me: I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand`. But in case we should despair because of those words and start to plummet to the depths of self pity, we should consider these next words from **Romans 9: 18**. `Therefore He has mercy on those whom He will have mercy, and on whom he will He makes stubborn`. Those words should give hope to all *true* Christians, because if the Lord loves a person in spite of their sins then He will have mercy on them.

So should we expect the Lord God to heal us of our every ailment, instantly, as and when it arises? we know that He can. Does He *really* hear every word of our most earnest and urgent entreaties in our deepest of prayers? let`s have a read from the book of **2 Kings 20: 1-5**. `In those days Hezekiah was sick unto death. and the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, came to him and said to him, Thus says the Lord, Set your house in order; for you shall die and not live. Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall , and prayed to the Lord saying, I beg You O Lord, remember now how I have conducted myself before You in truth and with a perfect heart, and have performed that which is good in Your sight. And Hezekiah wept bitterly. And it came to pass before Isaiah had gone out into the middle court, that the word of the Lord came to him saying, Turn back and tell Hezekiah the captain of My people, Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father, I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears: behold, I will heal you, on the third day you shall go up to the house of the Lord`. In that scripture we can understand that king Hezekiah was allowed by the Lord to reach the point of death, and in what may well have been his final prayer to the Lord, he managed to beg of the Lord some extra years of life, fifteen in fact were given to him, but Hezekiah had a good bargaining tool, his life had been lived in trying to do that which was right in the Lord`s eyes, and the Lord honoured that fact and had mercy on him.

If we look into the book of Job, we can read of all of the horrible afflictions which he suffered *directly* at the hands of Satan. Not only did Job suffer physically but he lost most of that which was dear to him and which he greatly loved including all of his children, but eventually the Lord healed him and also `healed` his situation. Now the odd thing about the book of Job is this, never once is the word `healed` mentioned but the word `blessed` is used. **Job 42: 12**. `So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job (his later life) more than his beginning. .` (his earlier life in which he was greatly blessed anyway) No matter how much Satan injured and cruelly treated him, Job *never* lost his faith in the Lord, he never doubted that the Lord *could* heal him. Job`s only real contention with the Lord was whether or not He *would* heal him and how long he would have to suffer until if and when that healing occurred. There are many more instances in the bible where the word `blessed` can be read as `healed`. It was Job`s steadfastness and unending faith in the Lord that eventually brought about his healing, just as it was the faith of the

woman who had an `issue of blood` in the new testament that healed her, and we can read of that in **Matthew 9: 20-22**. `And behold a woman who was diseased with an issue of blood for twelve years came behind Him, (Jesus) and touched the hem of His garment, because she thought to herself, If I can just manage to touch His garment then I will be healed. But Jesus turned about Him and when He saw her He said, Daughter, be of good comfort, for your faith has healed you. And the woman was healed from that hour`. Yes we can all put up with suffering for a while, just as long as we know that there is soon to be an end to it, which is where an individual's faith comes into play, because not knowing for certain of an end to suffering or hardship *in this life*, creates and strengthens faith. Whoever said that being a true Christian was easy?

I know that there have been and that there will be, many times when we have or will despair of ever being healed, we may even feel that we must be loathed and despised by our Lord God because of the sufferings that we sometimes undergo. But let's consider what the Lord thought about King David, did He despise him? We'll enter the scripture at a point where King Saul is being informed by the prophet Samuel that he is about to have his kingship taken from him and given to another, (David) **1 Samuel 13: 14**. `But now your kingdom shall not continue: for the Lord has sought Him a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be captain (king) over His people, because you have not done that which the Lord commanded of you`. As the scripture tells us, the Lord seeks for Himself `a man after His own heart`, now there cannot be many greater accolades that have been given to a man by the Lord God, than that! And yet, was king David allowed to have a peaceful, worry-free, joyous, `painless` life? Well let's hear from king David in his own words by reading **Psalms 6: 1-3**. and **6-7**. `O Lord, rebuke me not in Your anger, neither chasten me in Your hot displeasure. Have mercy upon me O Lord, because I am weak. O Lord, heal me; for my bones are troubled. My soul also, is greatly dismayed; but You, O Lord, how long? I am weary with my groaning, all night long I make my bed to swim; I water my couch (bed) with my tears. My eye is consumed because of grief; it waxes old because of the number of my enemies`. Of course the Lord did heal David, more than once, and it was not for nothing that David got down on his knees three times a day to pray to and beseech our Lord God for mercy, sound instruction and healing. But even so, King David's life was not and would *never* be free from trouble and strife because he had Uriah the Hittite deliberately killed so that he could take Uriah's wife from him. And so because of that evil deed which king David had committed the Lord had this to say to him, **2 Samuel 12: 10-12**. `Now therefore, the sword (war) shall never depart from your house: because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife. Thus says the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against you from within your own house, and I will take your wives from before your eyes and give them to your neighbour, and he will lie with your wives in public view, because you did this secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel and in broad daylight`. Even for all of this the Lord forgave David, but he still had to carry the fruits of his sin(s) to the grave. So we can take some comfort in the fact that although we *will* suffer in this present lifetime, it does not necessarily mean that the Lord hates us, on the contrary, it more often than not means that He loves us as it states in the book of **Hebrews 12: 6**. `For whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and scourges every son whom He receives`. We must never give up asking the Lord for relief from suffering, for healing and for forgiveness of our sins because I think that the need for healing is just one of the ways that the Lord uses our infirmities to keep us in regular communication with Him. Think back on your life so far, when is the time that you are more likely to have kept in touch through regular prayer with the Lord our God, when all things

are going well and all is plentiful? or when you are not so well and life is a bit hard and miserable? Such is the `human condition`.

How many people in this world have prayed for healing in doubt, you know, just on the off-chance that it would be better than not bothering to pray for healing at all? I suspect that a lot of people have done, and as a consequence they have received no healing whatsoever and so they`ve never bothered to pray again convinced that there is no God or that they should have used their priest or minister as a go-between. But no true Christian should pray in doubt, for they know that whatsoever they ask for in earnest faith is indeed heard by the Lord and that it is at His discretion to do what is ultimately best for the individual concerned. At this point let`s read the last line from **Romans 14: 23.** `for whatsoever is not of faith is sin`. This is where a Christian`s faith is truly tested, for faith is never giving up, keep on praying for healing and the Lord *will* eventually heal! How many of us have ever considered that what we may think of as a damaging and painful affliction, may actually be working in us or another individual, a powerful and undying spiritual development? Only the Lord really knows, for indeed He does `work in mysterious ways`.

When Jesus Christ walked this earth as flesh and blood and after His resurrection, there were thousands of miracles of healing performed not only by Himself but by His disciples after Him. So if I can, I will try and give a flavour of the number of these miracles of healing by using just *some* of the scriptures, firstly **Matthew 4: 23-24.** `And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all types of sickness and all types of disease amongst the people. And His fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought to Him all sick people that were afflicted with all manner of diseases and torments, and those who were possessed with demons, and those who were lunatics, and those that had the palsy; and He healed them`. And now **Matthew 9: 35.** `And Jesus went about all of the cities and all of the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and all kinds of disease amongst the people`. And, breaking into the scripture and reading from the last line of **Matthew 12: 15.** `... and great multitudes followed Him (Jesus) and He healed them all`. Now we`ll read about some miracles of healing performed by the disciples after Jesus had ascended to the Father, **Acts 8: 6-7.** `And the people with one accord paid attention to the things that Philip spoke, hearing and seeing the miracles which he performed. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out from many who were possessed with them, and many that were stricken with palsies and also those who were lame, were healed`. And **Acts 19: 11-12.** `And God worked special miracles by the hands of Paul, so that from his body were brought to the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them and the evil spirits (demons) departed from them`.

From those scriptures we can see that physical healing and demonic possession were well covered, but what about `spiritual` healing? The healing of an individual`s or of a nation`s sin-sick spirit is perhaps less obviously noticed within the scriptures, but it is there, and it is none the less note-worthy when it occurs. Let`s read the words of the Lord God as He speaks about His people, Israel, **Isaiah 57: 16-18.** `For I will not contend (with Israel) forever, neither will I always be angry, because the spirit (of the people) would fail before Me, and also of the souls (the individuals) whom I have created. For the sin of his (Israel`s) covetousness, I was angry, and he continued rebelliously after the way of his own heart. I have seen his ways and I will heal him, I will guide him also and restore comforts to him and to his mourners`. In that last scripture we have read of the Lord`s willingness to heal His people Israel of their sinning ways, and this healing was to bring about a dramatic change in their circumstances and fortune, but it

was *not* to be achieved overnight, instantly, they had to wait for it, how long? well let`s read a bit further on, **Isaiah 59: 16.** `And the Lord (who was to become Jesus Christ) saw that there was no worthy man (no man capable of doing for Israel, that which needed to be done) and He wondered that there was no intercessor, (nobody able to speak on Israel`s behalf before God the Father) therefore His arm brought salvation to Him, and it sustained Him`. So what happened, who *could* heal Israel of their sins by making *direct* representation to God the Father? Let`s read a bit further, **Isaiah 59: 20.** `And the Redeemer (Jesus Christ) shall come to Zion, (the people of Israel) and also to them that turn away from sin in Jacob, says the Lord`. So the people of Israel had to wait until the coming of Jesus Christ before a mass healing or forgiveness of sins was made available to them, *if they chose to use it!* and this choice remains with us to this day. We can read again of this promise of the *possibility* of national healing if we turn to the new testament and read the words of Jesus in **Matthew 13: 15.** `For this people`s heart has grown hard, and their ears have grown dull of hearing, and their eyes have closed; in case at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, (they don`t want to admit that they do wrong) and should then be converted, so that I would then heal them`. The apostle Paul repeats these words in acts 28: 27.

King David realised the need for spiritual healing as we can read of in two of his prayers to the Lord, **Psalms 41: 4.** `I said, Lord, be merciful to me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against You`. And in **Psalms 51: 4.** `Create in me a clean heart O God, and renew a right spirit within me`. Straying from the commandments of the Lord creates in all of us the need for spiritual healing, but not many people realise this and even fewer ask for the healing of their `spirit`. It is crucial for us all as individuals to realise the need for spiritual healing, to recognize the need to repent before the Lord God of our sins, for by this very act we acknowledge before the Lord that we know that we are not perfect in His sight, and if we do this He is willing to forgive us our sins as long as He knows that we have not deliberately set out to commit sin, that is to say that our sins have not been premeditated or more importantly, *consistently* and *repeatedly* premeditated.

Praying for personal spiritual healing will also eventually help us to avoid making as many `honest` mistakes that we may be prone to make, that is to say we may pursue a line of action at any given time which we think will be for the best but eventually it all turns horribly wrong and others as well as ourselves suffer as a consequence. If we *constantly* had full, *right thinking* spiritual awareness then we would not be prone to make these sort of `honest mistakes`. I can recall an old saying that my mother used to quote to me; `The road to hell (damnation) is paved with good intentions`, which is perhaps why so many perceived `good` politicians come unstuck so often as most if not all are spiritually ignorant. If a person is not right spiritually then how can they ever hope to make decisions which will bear good fruit? We all have sin dwelling within us, and most times we can recognize it when it makes itself manifest because most of us know the difference between right and wrong. But we also all have `hidden` sin within us and it is this sin which others often-times see in us but which we ourselves are blinded to and it is commonly known as being part of our `personality`, either loathed or loved by others depending on *their* own spiritual well- being and orientation.

Many of the psalms written by king David were written when he was in spiritual distress, one in particular comes to mind and I`ll only quote some of it for now, but you can read it all for yourself from your own bible later, **Psalms 32: 1-5.** `Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes not sin, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. When I kept silence (did not pray about my sins) my bones grew old because of my groaning all the day long, because day and night Your hand was heavy upon

me. My moisture (freshness of life) is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. (Therefore) I acknowledge my sin to You, and my guilt I have not hidden. I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord; and (then) You forgave the iniquity of my sin`.

Although physical healing will relieve us of pain and bodily suffering in this present life, it is the spiritual healing which in the long term is the most beneficial for us, because without it why should we expect any further healing at all? and it follows that if we are spiritually healed or at least in the process of being spiritually healed then mental and emotional healing will also take place. Even so, the emotions have been healed as specific items as we can read of in **Psalm 147: 3**. `He (the Lord) heals the broken in heart and He binds up their wounds`.

There is yet another kind of healing mentioned in the scriptures and it is that of inanimate `things` such as the land or the earth as outlined in **Psalm 60: 2**. `You have made the earth to tremble; You have broken it: heal the wounds thereof because it shakes`. Water can also be `healed` as we can read of in **2 Kings 2: 21**. `And he went forth to the source of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus says the Lord, I have healed these waters, there shall not be any more from them death or barren land`. and in **Ezekiel 47: 8**. `Then said He to me, These waters issue out towards the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea, which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed`. `The altar of the Lord which was broken down` was `healed`, as is mentioned in **1 Kings 18: 30**. `And Elijah said to all the people, Come near to me. And all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord which was broken down`. According to Strong`s biblical concordance the word `repaired` as used in that last scripture, means `healed`. So we can see that healing can mean repairing or more accurately, `putting right`. Even such obscure things as `backsliding`, otherwise known as faithlessness, can be healed, let`s have an example from **Jeremiah 3: 22**. `Return (to the Lord) you backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings`. and from **Hosea 14: 4**. `I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely. .`. It becomes apparent from the scriptures that there is nothing at all that the Lord cannot put right, there is nothing at all that the Lord cannot heal, but only *if* and *when* He considers it necessary. He is not a God who `mollycoddles` mankind, who `wraps them up in cotton wool` and constantly `meddles` in their affairs by altering or healing the natural consequences of their actions. Mankind has to learn to take responsibility not only for themselves but also for others.

We should understand that the miracle of healing is only possible because of the Lord God`s grace towards us, *we have no right to it whatsoever*, and so if it appears to be denied to us on any specific occasion then we should `soldier on` as best as we can, never giving up the hope that one day it *may* be given. After all, isn`t that what faith is all about? and if an individual does not have faith then they cannot receive any healing at all from the Lord God. Amongst all of the blessings that the Lord offered to the nation of Israel was the keeping away from them of certain diseases from their midst as we shall read of in **Exodus 15: 26**. `If you diligently pay attention to the voice of the Lord your God, and will do that which is right in His sight, and will perform his commandments, and keep all of his laws, I will put none of these diseases upon you which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord that heals you`. Notice in that scripture that the promise of the Lord is conditional, and God goes on to extend that promise to cover the land and their animals in **Exodus 23: 25-26**. `You shall serve the Lord your God, and (in return) He shall bless your bread and your water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of you. There shall be nothing that aborts their young, nor be barren in your land; the number of days I will fulfill`. The opposite to these blessings of healing are the curses pronounced by the Lord for disobedience. The book of Deuteronomy outlines these curses in some detail, we`ll read an

example in **Deuteronomy 28: 20-22**. `The Lord shall send upon you cursing, confusion and rebuke in all that you set out to accomplish until ultimately you are destroyed and quickly perish because of the wicked things that you have done and by so doing have forsaken Me. The Lord shall make the disease cling to you until He has destroyed you from off the land that you possess`. and in **verses 58-59**. `If you will not observe to do all the words of this (My) law that are written in this book, so that you may reverence this (My) glorious and awesome name , THE LORD YOUR GOD. Then the Lord will make your sicknesses terrible, and also the sicknesses of your children, and these sicknesses will be serious and continuous and long lasting`. (from generation to generation) Healings as with the Lord`s blessings come only with obedience to His laws, but what then about faith, isn`t that enough to get a person healed? didn`t Jesus once say to somebody something like, `go on your way, for your faith has healed you`? Let`s read it word for word in **Mark 5: 34**. `And He (Jesus) said to her, Daughter, your faith has made you whole, go in peace and be healed of your plague`. and there`s a similar example in **Luke 8: 50**. `But when Jesus heard it He answered him saying, Fear not, believe only, and she shall be made whole`. So, Jesus is *appearing* to say that all a person needs to get divine healing is to just simply believe, but can this be so? Let`s now read from the book of **Mark 9: 17-29**. I will not quote all of the verses but just enough to make sense of what is being said. `And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought to You my son who has a spirit which makes him dumb. and wherever this spirit takes him, it tears him and makes him foam at the mouth and gnash with his teeth, and he becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to cast the spirit out, but they could not. Often this spirit has cast him into the fire and into the waters to try and destroy him, so if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help. Jesus said to him, If you can believe (that Jesus can heal) all things are possible to him who believes. And immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, Lord I believe, help You mine unbelief`. Then Jesus casts out the evil spirit after the father of the possessed boy cries out to Him for his belief to be strengthened. The disciples of Jesus obviously had faith, they believed, but that belief was not enough in this instance to enable them to heal, to cast out the demon. `And when Jesus came into the house, His disciples asked Him in private why it was that they could not cast out the evil spirit. And Jesus said to them, This kind (of spirit) can only be removed by prayer and by fasting`. This scripture is interesting in the fact that obviously the faith needed as part of the healing process to have the evil spirit cast out has nothing at all to do with in this instance the person who is possessed, because he obviously didn`t even know what was going on as both mentally and spiritually he was `absent`. Instead the faith was required by the boy`s father who, not being totally convinced that Jesus could perform the `exorcism`, cried out to Him for healing for *himself*, for the healing of *his* unbelief, his doubt in Jesus` claim that He was indeed the Son of God, even Emmanuel, God with us, because he knew that if he could *truly* believe that, then he could believe that *nothing* was impossible for Jesus to accomplish. Faith is obviously the key element to any divine healing but, as with most worthwhile things in life, it takes time to develop fully and unshakeably. But as regards a lot of miracles, including healing, there are two parts to having the faith required, first is that the Lord can heal, and the second is that He will heal. The first step on the ladder for a person to *develop* their faith is to recognize the fact that do not yet have it in sufficient quantity or strength to perform miracles or rather, allow miracles to be performed on their behalf. One thing about faith is this, faith, even a small amount, once it has begun to be used and tested, strengthens and increases the more that it *is* used and put to the test as long as the individual concerned does not begin to doubt! Remember when the apostle Peter wanted to walk on the water to go and meet Jesus, and Jesus

told him that he could do it if he had the faith to do it, *and so he did*, until he realised the sheer enormity of what he was actually doing and he began to *doubt* his own ability, and it was at that moment that he began to sink beneath the storm-tossed waves. Faith starts off small but it has the ability if properly exercised to `move a mountain` as Jesus said in Mark 11: 23. This being the case, I think that we should realise that although we *may* have the faith to `move mountains`, it is in fact the Lord who will perform the actual moving through our belief in Him, and if any miracles are to be performed at all, they will be done at His discretion, and this of course includes the miracle of healing.

The scriptures indicate that there are various levels or degrees of faith. There is of course the `basic` faith that all true Christians are required to have for their salvation, and this faith will be enough in some cases for personal, `private` healing, but not enough to openly go about performing the miracle of healing on others. The sort of faith required to do that particular miracle of healing cannot be `pulled out of a hat` as it were, because it is a God-given gift bestowed upon an individual at a specific time. Sometimes this gift, this faith, this knowledge if you like of being able to heal another or others exists for a specific time/instance only, sometimes it remains with an individual for the remainder of their life. **1 Corinthians 12: 7-9.** `The manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit by. To one is given by the spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same spirit. To another is given faith by the same spirit, to another the gifts of healing by the same spirit`. And so healing is an act of God, *whether we deserve it or not*, because only the Lord knows whether the healing say of an unworthy evil person will influence to the better and/or prolong the life of a particular worthy `good` person or persons, or likewise whether the none healing of a `good` person is to be for the better of others in the long term. We should remember, God the Father did not spare His only begotten Son Jesus Christ, He did not `heal` or alter the situation that was to lead to His death, He allowed Him to be sacrificed for *our* long-term benefit. So healing or the lack of it should not be used as a definitive pointer to an individual`s righteousness or lack of righteousness or to the fact that they must be a sinner above all sinners because of the affliction that they suffer, let`s read **Luke 13: 2-3.** `And Jesus answering said to them, Suppose you that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans because they suffered such things? I tell you no, but except that you repent, you will all likewise suffer. Take the case of Timothy for another example, the young and inexperienced `pastor` who was under the spiritual tutelage of the apostle Paul, let`s read from **1 Timothy 5: 23.** `No longer drink just water, but use a little wine for your stomach`s sake and also for your frequent ailments`. Although Timothy was very dear to Paul and he regarded him as a son, there is no account of Paul ever having divinely healed him of his frequent ailments. True practising Christians should *always* be striving to be in the Lord`s `good books` for by so doing we will keep alive our faith and realise that it needs to be strengthened by being tested, often daily, we can read of what the apostles asked of Jesus concerning their faith and it is quite simply this; **Luke 17: 5.** `And the apostles said to the Lord, Increase our faith`.

A lot of the examples of faith related to us through the pages of the new testament are relatively uncomplicated and simple, on the surface as it were, but without being `shallow`. The people who Jesus met on His many miles of travelling to and from various villages, towns and cities across Israel had not had the time to spend in His company to truly get to know Him and so develop any firm conviction that He really was who He proclaimed Himself to be, the very Son of God! They had only the tales related by others of the miraculous things that He had performed in other places upon other people, and so when He came to their particular town or city they

flocked to see Him `perform`, they simply believed that He could do it. And so, just like many concert-goers these days, they may not have seen or heard their particular group or band perform `live` before, but they attend that concert in the sure belief that their group or band will be able to `deliver the goods`.

Most people had no prior knowledge of Jesus` coming, sure they knew about the prophesised Messiah, but this Jesus person and His group of very ordinary working guys who went by the title of `apostles`? People went out to see *Jesus* and His `entourage` perform acts of miraculous healing, they certainly didn`t flock in their hundreds and thousands to greet the `Messiah`. These uncomplicated, ordinary people were healed in their thousands simply because Jesus had compassion towards them and they believed that when their turn to be healed came along then it would happen, just as it had happened to the previous person who had been healed and so on down the line. **Matthew 14: 14.** `And Jesus went forth and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion towards them, and He healed their sick`. Some reading this may think that it was easy for a person in the presence of Jesus to `believe` that something could be done to heal themselves when they`ve just seen scores of miracles of healing already performed on others before them. Well ok, but consider this, simply `believing` *may* have healed that individual but it certainly was not going to be enough to enable that individual to appear favourable for the rest of their lives before the Lord or to attain salvation as Jesus Christ indicated in **Matthew 11: 23-24.** `And you (the people of) Capernaum, which are exalted to heaven, shall be brought down to hell, because if the mighty works (the miracles) which have been performed within your walls had been performed in Sodom, then it would still be here to this day. (the people of sodom would have repented) Therefore I say to you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you`. Can we understand from what Jesus has said here that obviously the people of Capernaum believed that Jesus could heal, did heal, but that merely believing is not going to get any of them into a favourable position with the Lord if they continue to ignore His laws and His commandments. *Belief, on its` own is not enough!* And in these times in which we live, with the absence of Jesus Christ amongst us in the flesh, belief, without obeying or at least trying to obey the Lord`s commandments, is not enough to get a person healed.

Healing, or rather being *able* to heal, especially others, is not part of God`s spiritual or moral law, that is to say it is not something that we are all expected to achieve or that we can achieve, it is *not required* of us by the Lord, it is as mentioned before, a freely given gift of God bestowed upon a chosen individual. Some reading this article will have heard of stories of miracles of `healing` being performed by empowered `christian` doctors` in staunch Roman catholic countries like south America and those scattered around the Caribbean, which often have a kind of `voodoo` mixed in with their `christian` ceremonies. These sort of `healings` consist of the sort of Satanic `power` that was used by the Egyptian `magicians` who tried to emulate/copy the miracles of the Lord God demonstrated to them through the prophet Moses at the time of the Exodus. And to this day Satan`s practitioners try to copy miracles from the holy scriptures performed by God`s ministers by using `props` such as handkerchiefs and the like being pulled from their bodies or from the bodies of their `patients`. Well, that sort of thing has all been done before, a long time before! let`s once again read this scripture from the book of **Acts 19: 11-12.** `And the Lord God worked special miracles at the hands of Paul, so that from his body were produced for the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them`. We should all appreciate and accept as a warning just what exactly those Satanic practitioners, those `magicians` from ancient Egypt eventually achieved both for

themselves and for the Egyptian people at the time, by their sorcery! The fact that Satan can *appear* to `heal` *flesh and blood* through the workings of those who profess to heal in the name of Jesus Christ but in reality practice sorcery, points to the fact that *there is more to healing* than `just believing` or saying that you believe in the Lord God`s ability to heal. True healing not only involves the individual`s physical body but also their spirituality, Satan and his human `puppets` *cannot* heal anybody spiritually, in fact in all of those cases of mystical fleshly `healing` there is only anecdotal evidence that *any* true healing, let alone any long-term healing, ever took place at all, but rather that it was all `smoke and mirrors`, trickery.

Everybody has a choice when and if to ask the Lord for healing either for themselves or for others. If no healing is forthcoming despite desperate entreaties and prayers offered to the Lord it must be understood that this is not always because sin has prevented it from being granted. Remember, the Lord has His plans for each and every one of us and if being healed of whatever ailment at any particular time doesn`t fit in with His plan then we must patiently wait and never give up praying and hoping to be healed. Even the apostle Paul was refused healing *altogether* of an affliction that he asked the Lord to remove from him, let`s remind ourselves and read once again from **2 Corinthians 12: 7-9**. `And less I should be exalted above measure because of the abundance of revelations shown to me, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, less I should be exalted above measure. Because of this thing I asked the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you: because My power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, so that the power of Jesus Christ may rest upon me`.

The fact that one person may seek to be anointed in order to achieve healing whilst another doesn`t, does not mean that the anointed person suddenly becomes or should be considered to be more righteous than the unanointed person and is therefore given preferential treatment by the Lord. Because, as in most things pertaining to miraculous healing, individual circumstances will dictate the outcome. It is not uncommon for those who seek to be anointed for healing to have suffered and borne their particular affliction for a long time, often for years, and they are seeking something special from God. For a true Christian to ask for anointing for healing is not for them to be desperately seeking a `last ditch` remedy all else having failed, it is not merely having a bit of `mumbo jumbo` and theatre introduced into their faith and it is not a display of a lack of faith, indeed, to be anointed for healing is an open display of faith. Let`s have a read of a scripture where the healing of the brethren of God`s church is being talked about, **James 5: 14-15**. `Is anybody sick amongst you? then let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will heal the sick and the Lord shall raise him up, and his sins shall be forgiven him`. How many of us reading this article can actually `move a mountain` because of our faith? and yet *because* of our lack of ability to do this there should not be any of us who should begin to doubt that we do not possess enough faith to be healed by the Lord, and many of us who have not been physically healed may well have already been spiritually healed without having realised it!

There is perhaps, out there in the wider world, a blanket misconception that if something that is earnestly sought and prayed for is not granted to a person, then it is due in part or whole to that person`s faith not being strong enough. Maybe. But it must be remembered and I`ll state it again, if the Lord does not want to grant a thing to happen at any given time, and this includes an individual`s healing, (usually physical healing) then it will not be granted. Consider this, God the Father even denied His own Son Jesus Christ when entreated by Him in earnest prayer for release from the ordeal of having to suffer on the torture stake/the cross, because God the Father

knew that salvation for mankind had to happen *that way*. We can read some of Jesus' entreaty to His heavenly Father in **Luke 22: 41-42**. `And Jesus withdrew from his disciples about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed saying, Father, if You be willing, remove this cup (take away this coming ordeal) from Me: nevertheless, not My will but Your will, be done`. The act of healing being granted to an individual or more especially to a nation can sometimes `bypass` the need for all concerned to have sufficient faith or to merit any healing or forgiveness at all, it can be a situation where God's mercy has overruled all usual requirements as we can read of in the book of **Romans 9: 15-16**. `For He (God) says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that wills or of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy`.

The amount or strength of faith within a person, especially one's own faith, is difficult to calculate. There is a `danger` of an individual over-estimating their own or another's faith which can border on actually tempting the Lord God. Drastic and hurried actions based on faith which isn't strong enough to withstand those actions can be disastrous, let's read an example of this in **Acts 19: 13-16**. `Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took it upon themselves to call over them who were possessed of evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by the name of the Lord Jesus whom Paul preaches. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, who did this. And the evil spirit (demon) answered them and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you? And the man in whom the evil spirit was, jumped upon them, and overpowered them, and prevailed against them so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded`. There are things which we should not suppose that our faith will somehow `automatically` heal, neglect of a physical`medical` condition as worrying as it might be, being one of them. Fear and mistrust of doctors and hospitals will have a sound reason to exist for certain individuals, but the greater fear of one thing that overrides the lesser fear of another should not be confused with faith, fear is the opposite of faith. If you feel you need to, then go and see a doctor or a herbalist or suchlike, and then have faith that the Lord will work His miracle of healing *through* that person or at the very least that you may receive wise counsel from them. Luke was a medical doctor before he was called to be an apostle and was still referred to as such having received his apostleship, and there is no record of him ever having been rebuked by Jesus Christ or anybody else because of what he was or that which he practised. It is very easy for many of us to confuse stubbornness with faith, peer pressure can inhibit an individual from doing that which in their heart they know they should be doing, some people will suffer physical ill-health quite needlessly having developed a `martyr complex`, and so it is possible for some people to reject sincere and caring human medical help (as opposed to rejecting prescribed, useless or more often than not damaging, drugs) because they have convinced themselves that by having done so they have somehow increased and strengthened their faith in the Lord, when in fact they may well in the long term have achieved just the opposite!

Any practising Christian should always continue to walk in faith and to really appreciate that everybody's time comes sooner or later when they must die, either quite suddenly and unexpectedly or because of an illness which has been suffered long or not so long. Obviously in a case where a person dies of an illness, divine healing of that illness if it has been requested, has not been granted. Every true Christian will live their life in their faith, they will suffer their illness in their faith and they will die in their faith. Death is not an end to life, rather, to those who are chosen, it is a doorway to a promised, new and better one. The apostle Paul suffered much after the crucifixion of Jesus, he was even stoned almost to death, but he never lost faith, he never gave up on hope. We can read just one account of his tribulations in **2 Corinthians 1:**

8-10. `For we would not, bretheren, want to leave you ignorant of our troubles which afflicted us in Asia, so that we were burdened beyond measure and beyond strength, insomuch that we despaired for our lives. We had the sentence of death within ourselves, we could not save ourselves but we had faith in God to save us, God who raises the dead and who delivered us from so great a death, and who continues to deliver; in Him we trust that He will yet (continue to) deliver us`. The Lord God heals people every day, the difference is these days we do not *see* it, miracles are not deliberately made a spectacle of as they were in the new testament times. The healing of an individual and their faith which brought about that healing have now more or less become private affairs between the individual healed and the Lord God, and very seldom do they act as the man acted who was healed through the apostle Peter in **Acts 3: 7-9**. `And he (Peter) took him by the right hand and lifted him up; immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he, leaping up, stood and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God. And all of the people saw him walking and praising God`.

On the other hand if an individual is not healed, even after much prayer on their behalf and anointing, then we must accept that it is the Lord`s will, but we *should* take comfort in the knowledge that those prayers *have* been heard and that the Lord has other plans for the sick person which we are not privy to. Regarding that fact, think on this next scripture, **Isaiah 57: 1**. `The righteous perish and no man lays it to heart, and devout men are taken away, nobody realising that the righteous are taken away from the evil yet to come. They shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness`. If a person seeks medical help they should not feel that they are somehow watering down their faith, indeed, any worthwhile thing that any man seeks to do either for himself or for others, the Lord will assist him, and this includes healing. The Lord has healed us in the past and will continue to do so, but this does not mean that a true Christian has no responsibility to try to take care of his own health by supposing that all his or her sickness will suddenly sometime soon, vanish overnight. Ask yourself, do you suffer a raging toothache day after day, week after week, or do you try to see a dentist as soon as possible? Would you try to walk as best as you could on a broken leg in the knowledge that one day it *may* heal without any complications or would you seek medical help immediately? How long will you suffer a pounding headache before taking painkillers? All the afore mentioned a person may seek assistance for the healing of without even asking for *divine* healing because in our modern times we *expect* and trust that medical knowledge will heal us in *certain* circumstances and for certain ailments, although having stated that, any true Christian will give the Lord thanks afterwards for their relief of pain and for their healing. The Lord is not affronted if we try to take care of of own infirmities without asking for healing, He only takes offence if we do not credit Him when we *are* healed of those infirmities.

Consider this, to constantly `bother` the Lord by asking for divine healing for even the most trifling of ailments which would have healed on their own soon enough anyway, might begin to overinflate the feeling of self-worth for the individual Christian concerned, by confusing for them the vital, and constantly demonstrated analogy between healing and the forgiveness of sin as related to us in the book of **Matthew 9: 2-5**. `And behold, they brought to Him (Jesus) a man sick with the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus, seeing their faith, said to him who was sick with the palsy, ;Son, be of good cheer, your sins be forgiven you. And certain of the scribes thought to themselves, this Jesus blasphemeth, but Jesus, knowing their thoughts said, Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier to say, Your sins be forgiven you, or to say, arise and walk?` Can we appreciate through the reading of that last scripture that if a Christian constantly asks for the Lord for divine healing and then *imagines* that they have been divinely healed when in fact

they have not,(of petty illnesses which would have simply gone away naturally) then there is the very real danger of them imagining that they have been granted forgiveness of their sins as well, when in fact, just like the healing, nothing has been granted to them at all!

Seeking medical help from doctors or herbalists etc., in no way precludes anybody from attaining any future healing from the Lord. Now I know that we've had this scripture once before in this article but once again I would like us to read from the book of Luke where a woman had been seeing various `doctors` for many years but that this in no way prevented Jesus from healing her when she sought for Him to do so. **Luke 8: 43-44.** and **48.** `And a woman having an issue of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her money on physicians, but could not be healed by any of them, came and touched the hem of His (Jesus`) garment, and immediately her issue of blood stopped. And Jesus said to her, Daughter, be of good comfort, your faith has made you well, go in peace`. This woman believed so much that Jesus could/would heal her that she knew in her heart that if she could only but touch the hem of His garment that that would be enough for her to be healed. The same depth of faith needs to be in each and every one of us. We can no longer actually, physically approach the Lord in the flesh, however, instead we have been given another option, we *can* still reach out and `touch the hem of His garment` this time by way of sincere prayer, *never doubting* that we *will* be heard. **James 1: 6-7.** `But ask in faith, not doubting, for those that doubt are like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. Let not them think that they shall receive anything from the Lord`.

When the time comes and the Lord finally and forever establishes His kingdom upon this earth, healing, for those who still need it, will be freely available and easy to access as we can read of in this final scripture **Revelation 22: 2.** `In the midst of the street of it and on either side of the river was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations`. But until this time arrives we who are true Christians must continue in the faith and the belief that the Lord will heal us all eventually, it`s just that some of us have to wait a little bit longer than others.