

Healing

The twentieth Century has seen an epidemic in the teaching of, and the claims for gifts of miraculous healing. The Pentecostal/Charismatic movement claims gifts of healing are for today. Yet the general teaching and historic documentation of the early Church Fathers and down through the centuries has always been that the gift of healings tapered off after Jesus and His disciples. Have the gifts of healing returned?

One truth is certain - the Scriptures show clearly that these gifts were to prove the Messiahship of Jesus Christ and the credentials of the apostles: ***'And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. . .'***, (Jn.20:30,31); ***'...Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you...'***, (Acts 2:22).

When John the Baptist asked the disciples for proof of the Messiahship of Christ, Jesus said to His disciples: ***'Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached'***. (Lk.7:21-22);

The verses below make interesting reading when one considers the Greek tenses and moods of the verbs used. The Greek uses the *aorist indicative* - which means a *definite* time in the *past*. The action is specific at a set point in time past rather than continuous: ***'Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds'***, (2Cor.12:12); ***'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?'***, (Heb.2:3,4).

If the sign gifts were to authenticate the Messiahship of Jesus then do we need these gifts today?...But some would say that healing is promised in the atonement. However, the Bible reveals that it is the *resurrection* body that is in the atonement, (Eph.1:14; Rom.8:23; 1Cor.15:53-55; Job19:26). The work of the cross did *not* atone for the *mortal* body in this life. Any healing today is a direct and sovereign work of grace apart from the finished work of the cross.

1Peter 2:24 is often used for proof of healing in the atonement. This passage comes from Isaiah 53:5 where the prophet was talking about spiritual healing to Israel. Almost all the references to healing in the Old Testament are *spiritual* healing. The word 'salvation' is closely related to the word 'healing'. The Old Testament offerings were not for sickness but for *sin*, (Lev.16:3). The healing referred to in 1Peter 2:24,25 is clearly *spiritual* - the *forgiveness of sins*. The passage says ***'bore our sins'***, not our *'sicknesses'*. On the cross Jesus did not bear our diseases but rather our *sin*. This has been the teaching of the church for 1900 years until the 20th Century when healing ministries were spawned within the Pentecostal movement!

Some use Matthew 8:16, 17: ***'...took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses'*** which is a reference to Isaiah 53:4. This was spoken 3 years before the cross and the verse claims that Isaiah was fulfilled there and then. This Scripture refers to the earthly public ministry of Jesus as verse 16 clearly shows. Even if we were to accept this Scripture as bodily healing in the atonement it must still be *future*, (see Rom.8:23). In 2Corinthians 12:9 Paul glories in his physical ***'infirmities'*** which were not healed. This word is in fact the same Greek word as in Matthew 8:17. In agreement with Paul, Spurgeon once said: *'I venture to say the greatest gift God can give us is health, with the exception of sickness. Sickness has frequently been of more use to the saints of God than health has.'*

Aside from the above debates, *there is another litmus test*. Simply compare the claimed miraculous 'healings' of today with those of the time of Christ and the apostles. In the Gospel of Matthew alone it is clear that Jesus healed ***'all'***, (Matt. 23:24; 8:16; 10:1,8; 12:15; 14:36; etc.); and ***'every sickness'*** that came to him were *completely* healed, (12:13; 20:34;). Jesus healed ***'all'*** whether they had faith or not! (Lk.17:11-19; Matt.8:1,14; 12:10; 13:58). Added to this, many healings were to do with *organic diseases* which cannot be healed psychosomatically.

A *functional disease* is one in which an organ does not function properly. Functional diseases change the function of the tissue but not its structure and can be affected by the mind. An *organic disease* is one in which the organ is diseased, maimed, or even defunct. Diabetes, Downs Syndrome, infections, heart attacks, gallstones, cancers, broken bones and congenital deformities are all included as organic diseases. A functional disease might be a sore arm; an organic disease might be a withered arm or no arm at all.

Today's 'healings' are more to do with functional diseases. Even then only *some* are 'healed' and often 'partially' with the symptoms returning in a few days. These 'failures' are simply not *instant, complete* and 100% successful as in the true *gift* of healings. No one has ever been raised from the dead (modern healers give funeral parlours and cemeteries a wide birth) or healed of incurable diseases such as AIDS or Downs Syndrome! Downs Syndrome is a good test for those claiming to have the *gift* of healing. It cannot be healed psychosomatically.

We must be honest with ourselves and admit that no one today possess the gift of healings as Jesus and the Apostles did! Divine healing is the *sovereign act of God in which he intervenes to heal the body without the use of human skills or means.* That counts out the faith healers of today; but does not throw out the possibility of the sovereign miraculous healing of God. *I believe in sovereign divine healing rather than divine healers.*

Today Christians are also being sold stories of the amazing miraculous healings of the late Kathryn Kuhlman, Smith Wigglesworth and others. A Dr. Nolen who worked alongside Kathryn Kuhlman wrote: *'...Mrs Kuhlman left the stage and the audience left the auditorium...All the desperately ill patients who had been in wheelchairs were still in wheelchairs. In fact, the man with the kidney cancer in his spine and hip, the man who I helped to the auditorium and who had his borrowed wheelchair brought to the stage and shown to the audience when he had claimed a cure, was now back in the wheelchair...As I stood in the corridor watching the hopeless faces leave, seeing the tears of the parents as they pushed their crippled children to the elevators, I wished Miss Kuhlman had been with me,...I wondered whether she sincerely felt that the joy of those 'cured' of bursitis and arthritis compensated for the anguish of those left with their withered legs, their imbecilic children, their cancers of the liver. I wondered if she really knew what damage she was doing...'*

Dr Nolen went on to explain that physicians as well as Charismatic healers can influence a patient and cure symptoms of disease by suggestion as this affects the automatic nervous system. Science has proven that sugar pills or 'placebos' will alleviate symptoms of sick people if the person is told they are pills that will cure them. Even after being told that the pills were only sugar, scientists have discovered that some still get benefits from the placebos *afterwards.* Psychosomatic faith affects the adrenal cortex and can boost the immune system. The mind is a powerful machine that may convince a person of 'truth' when it is programmed to accept a placebo of lies. Yet despite all this, placebos will *not* cure organic diseases such as Downs Syndrome.

Dr. Nolen continues: *'Search the literature, as I have, and you will find no documented cures by healers of gallstones, heart disease, cancer or any other serious organic disease. Certainly, you'll find patients temporarily relieved of their upset stomachs, their chest pains, their breathing problems...'*

Dr Nolen had Miss Kuhlman herself send him a list of the cancer victims she had seen 'cured', and he discovered: *'I wrote to all the cancer victims on her list - eight in all - and the only one who offered cooperation was a man who claimed he had been cured of prostate cancer by Miss Kuhlman. He sent me a complete report of his case. Prostatic cancer is frequently very responsive to hormone therapy. This man had had extensive treatment with surgery, radiation and hormones...Anyone who read his report, layman or doctor, would see immediately that it is impossible to tell which kind of treatment had actually done most to prolong his life. If Miss Kuhlman had to rely on this case to prove that the Holy Spirit 'cured' cancer through her, she would be in very desperate straits.'* (1)

Dr. Nolen did further follow up work on eighty two cases of Kathryn Kuhlman's healings, using names she supplied. Of the eighty two, only twenty three responded and were interviewed. Nolen's conclusion at the end of the entire investigation was that *not one* of the so-called healings were legitimate. Subsequent to this, *not one* faith healer anywhere gave him a single case of a medically confirmed healing.

The reports of healings and miracles from Smith Wigglesworth (1859-1947) are even more amazing, (See our article 'Smith Wigglesworth - The Facts' on our website at http://taministries.net/?page_id=131;) Most of what is written of Wigglesworth is typical of the healing claims today - *unsubstantiated stories.* The late Lester Summeral is responsible for many of the stories of the feats of Wigglesworth. Summeral recounts Wigglesworth punching corpses until restored to life or repeatedly punching cancer tumour victims until they died and then raising them from the dead. *Not one account of the raisings from the dead was ever authentically documented for proof.*

Summeral himself was exposed by the media for fraud for his 'Feed The Hungry' campaign and falsely prophesied that Jesus spoke to him that he would see the return of Jesus before the end of 1999. When Summeral died before this date he instantly became a false prophet.

Despite all the wild unsubstantiated healing claims, Wigglesworth's daughter, who assisted at his meetings, was never healed of deafness. Wigglesworth also suffered for years with gallstones and later with Sciatica. He prophesied a mighty restoration of the gifts of the Spirit and revival *before the end of the twentieth Century*.

Today the claims continue. This ministry has investigated what is believed by many to be the *best* 'documented' healing of modern times - the healing of Jean Neil which was captured on video at a Reinhard Bonnke crusade. This 'healing' was investigated by a Christian doctor (who believed in healing) and he proved it to be a tragedy of misdiagnosis and false documentation, (see the article on The Healing of Jeanon our website). Although Bonnke was asked to take the Video off the market, it is still being sold today.

Likewise, Hinn, Hill and Kilpatrick (Pensacola), Cerullo, Bonnke and the late John Wimber were all challenged to produce *one* single authentic and documented case of an organic healing. *None* were verified as miraculous.

In England a Dr. May, a Christian who does believe that God heals, challenged prominent faith healer Morris Cerullo to produce one case of healing. With great difficulty Dr. May eventually received cases from Cerullo. On examination there was nothing to substantiate the claims.

Many (including children) have *died* because of false healing claims to do with Benny Hinn, Cerullo and others. Many stop taking pills for a life threatening situation, believing they are healed by 'Word of Faith' teaching espoused by popular TV evangelists today, only to die soon after. (2)

The fact is our bodies are not now saved, for that redemption is *future*, (Rom.8:23). The source of sickness is not entirely Satan as many teach. It was not Satan who decreed that sorrow, death and pain should be the wages of sin. That was God's doing, (Gen. 3:3). The sources of sicknesses are from God, (Ex.15:26 Dt.28) and from Satan, (Lk.13 Matt.4:24), but ultimately God is in sovereign control.

One author has boldly issued a challenge that exemplifies the farce of the claims that the gift of healings are in existence today: *'I here put a challenge to all those who lay claim to a personal ongoing 'healing ministry' today: Don't just tarry in your tent meetings waiting for all those poor people to line up in front of you. Instead, go out into the casualty departments of your local hospitals on a Saturday night and bring instantaneous organic healing to the battered and broken victims of the brawls and accidents that present themselves here for treatment. Then nip up to the surgical wards and lay your hands on the amputees and hopeless cases, so that their truncated limbs and diseased entrails will be returned to them. When those places have been emptied, find your local 'institute for the blind' and bring some colour into their lives for the first time with your remarkable healing powers. Then buzz over to the offices of the 'spastic society' and get them to take you out to their many training centres, where you can restore those withered limbs on the spot...make that Downs Syndrome melt away from those little faces...take a taxi across to the local mortuary and bring some of it's frigid occupants out with you for a breath of fresh air...While we're on the subject, isn't it about time you discarded those eye glasses?...Why wait? For those are the kinds of healings which the Lord Jesus and the Apostles carried out in the course of their ministry, (eg. Lk.22:50,51; Mk.3:1-5; Lk.8:43,44; Jn.9: 1-11; 11:43,44)...Do not make the false claim you are doing the works of Jesus...'* (3)

God, for His purposes, does not necessarily want everyone to be physically healed, (Lk.4:25-27). The gospel of physical healing is a false gospel and offers false hope. It is an *addition* to the vital doctrine of the atonement. It confuses and adds to the message of the Gospel of grace that comes from the work of Jesus on the cross for our *sins*.

One author says: 'If Christians believe the unsubstantiated claims of present day Charismatic leaders they will believe anything! If they believe the ludicrous and extravagant yarns of extrovert, spiritually deluded showmen, how will they stand against the lying wonders to be unleashed by the Devil during the final apostasy?' (4)

Terry Arnold

(1) 'Healing: A Doctor in Search of a Miracle' by Dr. William Nolen (2) 'Signs and Wonders - Exposed' videos (Parts 1,2 & especially Part 3) - document the deaths and devastation caused by Benny Hinn and other faith healers. (3) Alan Morrison, England (4) 'The Charismatic Phenomenon' by Masters & Whitcomb, P.68