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(December, 2003)

Dear television pastor, I have got some concerns about healing; and am also struggling with 'being saved'! I am now terminally ill with heart disease. I have an 'at rest' heart rate of 110+ (40% above what it should be).

Can we 'claim' healing in the same way as salvation? I struggle to have 'faith' to be physically healed! And if and when you are not healed - the simple (but glib) answer of some is: 'You didn't really have faith to be healed'!

I have about a dozen books, all essentially guaranteeing physical health and healing. So I wonder and question what went wrong?...Can we really 'claim' healing like many Pentecostalists say, because 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever'?

Now much to my regret, disappointment and anger (even rage), am I finding out that the 'healing gospel' as proclaimed by many television ministers does not work (as in the much advertised 'healing crusades' of Benny Hinn (twice); Marilyn Hickey and Rodney Howard-Browne)!...If the 'healing gospel' and the 'prosperity gospel' does not work, does the 'salvation Gospel' also not work?

I pray at this extreme time of dying I very definitely do not give up on saving grace. It would be particularly easy to turn against God...but I wonder why I have not been physically healed? I would appreciate some genuine, meaningful reply to this letter...anything would be OK - tracts, Bible verses, booklets, magazines, etc. (I.B., Brisbane, Qld.)

Editors reply: Dear...[I am not a '*Television pastor*']...we are praying for your situation and that the peace of God would fill you, that you might know that God is sovereign in all circumstances and that your mind might be at rest.

To answer your questions:

- We don't 'claim' healing in Scripture. But we do 'receive' eternal life on believing.

- Most of the people healed in Scripture were not believers and faith is not mentioned as a *requirement* to be healed. Those that say that healing did not take place because of a 'lack of faith' are often using this as an excuse for a lack of the true gift of healing as demonstrated by Jesus and His apostles.

- Bodily healing is *never* guaranteed in this life. Quite the opposite. *Our bodies are dying and not redeemed until glorification*, (Read Rom.8:23).

- Yes Jesus is 'the same yesterday and tomorrow' but this refers to his *nature and character*. He simply is not doing the same things today! For example, he is not on earth in a body walking around healing to prove his Messiahship - that has already been done.

- Yes, the healing Gospel is a *false Gospel*! 1Peter 2:24 is often used for proof of healing in the atonement. This passage quotes from Isaiah 53:5 where the prophet refers to spiritual healing for 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 turn of 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 again 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 would still be *future*, (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. Further, Epaphroditus was ‘*sick nigh unto death*’, (Phil.2:27); Trophimus was ‘*left at Miletum sick*’, (2Tim.4:20); Timothy took medicine for his sickness, (1Tim.5:23).

In agreement with Paul, Charles 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.*’

- Benny Hinn, Marilyn Hickey and Howard-Browne have *no proven documented case of any organic healing*. Benny Hinn’s top five ‘*healings*’ were proven false.

- There is no such thing as a ‘healing’ or ‘prosperity’ gospel. But there is a salvation Gospel as Jesus put it forth in Scripture. Bodily healing is not the promise of the Gospel, but eternal life is! The ‘healing gospel’ is ‘another gospel’ warned of by Paul.

- Why you have not been healed is for God to know. But I know this - we are all *dying* because we were born in sin.

I have enclosed some reading material as you requested and please remember we pray for you earnestly.

Love, Terry Arnold

Quotable's

'I must be frank with you: the greatest danger besetting American evangelical Christianity is the danger of anti-intellectualism...for anti-intellectualism is truly the refusal to love the Lord our God with our minds as required by the first of Jesus' commandments...As God has given us minds, we can measure obedience by whether we are loving with those minds, and disobedience by whether we are not...A sure sign of a genuine reformation of our appalling anti-intellectualism will be the rise of a new generation of Christian apologists'.

(*'Fit Bodies Fat Minds'* by Os Guinness, P.11,18,150)

'The new gospel is based on flawed philosophy (felt needs) and misguided methodology (market driven)...a muted gospel of self esteem and personal fulfilment. The old Gospel was about an offended God; the new gospel is about a wounded us. The old Gospel was about sin; the new gospel is about needs; the old Gospel was about our need for righteousness, the new gospel is about our need for fulfilment. The old Gospel is offensive to those who are perishing; the new gospel is attractive. Many are flocking to the new gospel, but...how many are actually being saved?...'

(*Calvary Contender*, No.15, 2000)



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