



By His Stripes We Are 'Healed'?

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by

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Often I hear people and ministries preaching or writing on the subject of bodily healing and they use the phrase *'by his stripes we are healed'*. Many are unaware of the error of this and it being taken out of context and that the words are actually a *direct quote from the Old Testament where it has nothing to do with physical bodily healing*. Many link this phrase with healing being provided in the atonement made by Christ on the cross.

The Context

The phrase is found in 1Peter 2:24,25: *'Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes you were healed. For you were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls'*.

But this passage above is a quote from Isaiah 53:5,6 *'But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all'*.

Both passages have absolutely nothing to do with bodily healing in the atonement. One can search early commentaries for this in vain to find any reference to bodily healing in Christ's atonement. All tell it as it is in Isaiah 53 - it is healing of sin! The teaching that applies 1Peter 2:24,25 to bodily healing now is a recent invention being hatched in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century new Pentecostal movement.

The phrase *'in his own body'* refers to the sufferings of Jesus on the cross. The phrase *'on the tree'* refers to the cross. (The same Greek word referring to the cross is used in Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29; Gal.3:13).

The word rendered *'stripes'* is literally the swollen mark of a blow from beating or scourging, (in modern English we might say the marks of 'black and blue'). The phrase *'you were healed'* is referring to the *'transgressions'* in the same verse of Isaiah 53:5.

The word ‘*salvation*’ is closely related to the word ‘*healing*’ (Ps.41:4). In the Bible sin is often spoken of as a disease from which we can be ‘healed’. The fact that this is spiritual healing for sins is further attested to in the verses following in both 1Peter 2 and Isaiah 53 from which Peter quotes. The comparison between the two verses shows the context is sin, not bodily healing: 1Peter 2:25 ‘*For you were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls*’. Isaiah 53:6 ‘*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all*’.

In Isaiah this was specifically healing of, and forgiveness for, sin. The ‘*bore our sins*’ (1Peter) and ‘*laid on him the iniquity*’ (Isaiah 53) is not our ‘sicknesses’!

Atonement for what?

Almost all the references to healing in the Old Testament are spiritual healing. There are some references to bodily healing but the sacrifices in atonement to God were for sin, not bodily healing. The Old Testament atonement offerings were not for sickness but for sin (Lev.16:3)! On the cross Jesus did not bear our diseases, but rather our sin. He was not ‘made diseases’ but ‘*made sin for us*’ (2Cor.5:21). He died to pay the penalty of sin, not for immediate healing of sicknesses in the body. This has been the teaching of the church for 1,900 years until the turn of the twentieth century when ‘healing ministries’ were spawned within the new Pentecostal movement and later furthered in the Charismatic movement in the mid 20th century.

It could be said that there is a healing in the atonement for the body *in the future*. There will be a body with eternal life and no death or sickness. The promise and assurance of immediate healing from sin following repentance is clear in Scripture, but there are no such assurances for immediate bodily healing. The redemption of our bodies *did not occur on the cross*, but is future!: ‘*Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation*

groans and travails in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, that is, the redemption of our body' (Rom.8:21-23).

Some also attempt to use Matthew 8:16,17 to teach that healing for the body is in the atonement in this life: '*...He cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses'.*

Matthew 8:16,17 was spoken three years before the cross and the verse claims that Isaiah was fulfilled there and then. It refers to the earthly public ministry of Jesus as verse 16 clearly shows. It also refers back to the prophecies in Isaiah which teach that the Messiah would come with proof of his Messiahship which included healings.

We are not here saying God cannot heal a body. Miraculous healing is not ruled out in the Bible. But it is not guaranteed in the atonement for this life. Some Christians today seem desperate to see genuine healings and must find Scriptures that supposedly prove God will heal now in the atonement.

We must here also distinguish between 'healing' by God Himself and the 'gift of healings'. The two are today sadly confused. In the sovereignty of God, miracles and healings can occur at any time, but this author has yet to see a single human with any real 'gift' of healing as it was in the first century and described in the Bible. If such a person exists, they will have the gift as it was in the first century! Compare the following descriptions of the true gift of healing with the counterfeits of today who claim to have the same: Jesus and the apostles healed '*all*' and '*every*' (Matt.4:23,24; 8:16; 9:35; 10:1; 12:15...); they healed *instantly* (Matt.8:3; 20:30...'*immediately*'); they healed *completely* (Matt.12:13,15 '*whole*'; 14:36 '*perfectly whole*'...); they healed *at will* and there were *no failures* (Matt.8:3); and they healed *organic diseases* (Matt.4:23,24; 9:35; 15:30) - diseases that cannot be cured by psychosomatic means (e.g. AIDS, Downs Syndrome, etc).

Why do faith healers purposely shy away from such people who have these diseases and why do not the faith healers visit the hospitals where increasing numbers die of cancers and organic diseases?

Some Christians seem not to have realised that God is just not healing like He did in the first century. The reason for this is because the purpose for the healings in the first century is now fulfilled - it was to prove the Messiahship of Jesus (Jn.20:30,31; Lk.7:21,22; Acts 2:22).

The gifts in 1Corinthians 12 were called 'sign gifts' because they *pointed to* and approved the Messiahship of Jesus Christ and the credentials of His Apostles (2Cor.12:12 '*signs of an apostle*'). We are also not saying that the atonement on the cross does not have a future plan of healing in glorification. But that 'healing' is future (Rom.8:23). That healing is not guaranteed in this life is further attested to by 2Corinthians 12:9 where Paul glories in his physical '*infirmities*' which were not healed. Further, Epaphroditus was '*sick nigh unto death*' (Phil.2:27), Trophimus was '*left at Miletum sick*' (2Tim.4:20) and Timothy took medicine for sickness (1Tim.5:23).

D.A Carson, observed: '*The cross is the basis for all the benefits which accrue to believers; but this does not mean that all such benefits can be secured at the present time on demand, any more than we have the right and power to demand our resurrected bodies*'.

Unlike the healing of sin through the 'stripes' of Jesus, there is no Scripture that guarantees bodily healing in this life. False teaching using the phrase '*by his stripes we are healed*' adds to the Gospel and diverts attention away from *salvation from sin*. It becomes 'another gospel' and the judgement for expounding this is serious.

Jesus did not die for our sickness *on the cross*. He died for our sin! Yes, it is the original Adamic sin that caused sickness, but that sin has not yet been eradicated from the world. Thus the redemption of our bodies is future in a place where there is no sin whatsoever. If there is bodily healing in the atonement during this earthly life and we are healed 'by his stripes', then why are our bodies dying every day and

sicknesses prevail? Praise God if He heals a body, but to misuse Scripture for the spiritual *healing of sin* and read into it bodily healing, is to preach '*another gospel*'. *The true gospel is about the healing of sin*, not anything to do with bodily healing!

This is just another way Satan can divert people from the Gospel of Christ crucified for our sin to something else - bodily healing, which is not the Gospel. '*By his stripes*' concerns the '*transgressions*' as spoken of in Isaiah 53. *The promise of the healing of sin is at the heart of the Gospel*. Isaiah 53 is all about Christ offering His body as a substitute to have sin credited to himself on a cross as a sacrifice to satisfy the justice of a Holy God! To use '*by his stripes*' to claim bodily healing now is to take a classic passage on salvation from sin (Isaiah 53) and turn it into something that it was never meant for.

Our spirits need to be Justified once now, our souls need to be sanctified continuously now and the 'hope' is our bodies will one day be glorified. What was Jesus crucified for? What was He wounded and bruised for? What were the 'stripes' for? What do we need to be healed of now?

'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities... with his stripes we are healed... the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all' (Is.53:5,6).

About the Author and the Ministry

Terry Arnold holds a Doctorate in Theology (Dth), a Masters degree (MABS) and several diplomas. He was founder and president of South Pacific Bible Institute, a Bible college training and equipping people for ministry. In addition he was the founder of Hervey Bay Bible Church in Queensland, Australia. He has for 25 years served as an elder and then pastor.

Terry is the author of several books and is involved in a full time ministry of teaching, informing and equipping the church. He is also editor of a growing worldwide publication 'Diakrisis (Australia)'.

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TA Ministries is a non-denominational and non-profit faith ministry founded in 1989 when the book 'To Catholics Whom I Love' was written by Terry Arnold. This book went through several re-prints and served as a fruitful outreach to Roman Catholics. In 1996 the ministry became a full-time operation with the introduction of a free newsletter, later named 'Diakrisis (Australia)'. Diakrisis is published bi-monthly to teach, inform and equip the church of Biblical truths and to warn of false teaching. It has also been a valuable reference aid to hundreds of pastors/elders.