**The Gift of Healing - BD28-01**

In our study thus far, we have learned that some spiritual gifts are temporary. They were designed for us in the New Testament church only. These were to supply divine revelation until the New Testament Scriptures were written. They were also authenticate God’s messengers and the message which they brought. We found that in the nature of certain spiritual gifts, and of the fact that they have not appeared over the years historically, we have in this an indication that some gifts were temporary.

Satan today is very active in encouraging Christians to seek his counterfeits of the spectacular type of temporary fits. So we’ve looked at a certain number of these gifts thus far. Certain temporary gifts that we looked at were the apostle, the prophet, the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, the gift of discerning spirits, and the gift of miracles. The temporary gift of healing is a type of miracle gift, and it is the one that is in great prominence today, along with tongues. So Oral Roberts and Kathryn Kuhlman have acquired a dignity that has been unheard of in Pentecostalists before. The healing lines lining up for these healers are bigger than ever, and the offerings are too.

Jesus Christ Himself healed comparatively few people, of all those who lived in his day, because His ministry was not to alleviate the sufferings of humanity, but to provide a solution for the old sin nature which caused these sufferings in the first place. So the healings that He performed were simply to authenticate, again, Himself as the messiah and His message. The healings and the people who were healed were not the important thing. That miracle action was incidental to the point of His proving who He was.

It is natural, when we are ill, to pursue whatever source we can for healing of the physical body. But in desperate circumstances, people will seek out not only God but also the miracle healer. The sources of all physical suffering is sin. We know this from Romans 5:12 because we have had Adam’s sin imputed to us. So we have an old sin nature, and so we suffer, and we have physical breakdowns. But the gift of healing does not exist today as an operational bonafide spiritual gift in the New Testament sense of the word.

So we’re going to look at the gift of healing this morning, and if you can turn 1 Corinthians 12:9. “To another the gift of healings (plural) by the same spirit.” We have it mentioned again in verse 28. We have it in verse 30. The word “healing” simply means a spiritual gift which refers to the ability to correct physical ailments. The gift of physical healing is a specialized type of miracle gift. The plural indicates a variety of expressions. The possessor is able to exercise this gift when he’s filled with the Spirit. So it’s a tremendous effective expression of the fact that God is working.

I remind you again that with all spiritual gifts, the person who possesses this gift (and this is true of the gift of healing) is able to use this gift anytime (under the condition of being filled with the Spirit), anywhere, on anybody with 100% success. This gift in its successful use is not dependent on the faith of the patient. We have the incident in Acts 3:1-8 where Peter and John came up to the temple and found the man who sat there crippled from his birth. He asked them for an offering. They told him they didn’t have silver and gold, but what they had they would give him. They told him, “in the name of Jesus” to rise up and walk. This man wasn’t looking for healing. He didn’t have any convictions that they could heal him, but instantaneously he was healed. The Scriptures say he went away leaping and running and jumping, indicating that his ankle bones were really completely healed.

Today the healers cover their tracks by saying that you must have faith to be healed. The healers, for those who come down the line and the results are not produced, cover their tracks by saying, “Well that’s because you didn’t believe God. You didn’t have faith. You didn’t believe that God was able to heal,” and so on.

So the exercise of the gift of healing, as it was used in the New Testament, is something we have to understand. Before the completion of the Scriptures in about 96 AD, and the authentication of Christianity and its message, healing was a bonafide gift. The gift of healing was temporary because it was a miracle sign, so it was phased in and phased out after it served its purpose. This gift, once New Testament Scripture was completed, was phased out.

We have an interesting example in the case of the apostle Paul, who had (among the many other gifts that he had), we discover that he also had the gift of healing. In Acts 19:11-12, “And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul, so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them. And the evil spirits went out of them.”

Here was the apostle Paul, and we see here in verse 11 that he had the power to perform miracles, and then an example of that power in verse 12 is the gift of healing. It was a miracle gift. It’s important to remember that healing is a miracle gift, and therefore we would expect the miracle of healing to phase in and then to phase out again, as miracles always have done in human history. Miracles have never consistently, year after year after year, persisted in human experience. God, when He worked supernaturally through miracles, has the purpose of authenticating. When he does that, the miracle ceased.

Now here’s the apostle Paul, if a piece of cloth was touched by him and then taken to the sick person, the person was healed. If he was possessed by a demon spirit, the demon spirit was driven out of him. Now of course you can immediately see where the radio preachers get this idea. When they ask you to send in an offering so that you can be sent a prayer cloth which you can lay upon the portion of your body which is sick. And if you do send in for it, the place where you should put it is on your head, because at the moment, this is the sickest part. Now this is where they get the idea.

Now, with Paul, it worked. It was actually that simple, that a person of cloth from contact with his body, with the miraculous power of healing, conveyed itself through the agency of that piece of cloth. If they put it on a sick person, he was healed. If they put it on a demon possessed person, he was cleansed. He was able to use this gift at will.

However, if you’ll turn to Philippians 2, the years passed by in the ministry of the apostle Paul. In Philippians 2:27, we read Paul’s discussion of a situation with a fellow worker, Epaphroditus, who became sick. As a matter of fact, Epaphroditus was so sick that they thought that he would not recover, and he was going to die. Philippians 2:27 says, “Epaphroditus was sick, near unto death, but God had mercy on him, but not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.” The apostle Paul says, “I am so grateful, and Epaphroditus has been a tremendous servant that you Philippians sent to me, and I want you to know that I was very concerned as he ministered to my needs, he fell sick, and it looked like he was going to die. I’ve already had enough sorrows, and I thank God that He did not take Epaphroditus’s life, that he raised him up from this illness and saved me the sorrow of this believer’s death, as well as my other problems.”

Now you would wonder immediately, “Paul, why didn’t you just heal Epaphroditus instead of confronting yourself with the hazard of this sorrow?” Well, obviously, the reason that Paul didn’t do it was by this time the gift was being phased out and Paul was not able to heal Epaphroditus. We not only have this evidence from about 51 AD that the gift was being phased out, and all Paul could do was pray (just as all you and I can do is to pray that in the plan of God this person could be healed). That’s all Paul could do, and Paul was grateful that it was in the plan of God that Epaphroditus should be healed.

But we also have, at the end of Paul’s life, another clear cut evidence that Paul, who once could heal just from a piece of cloth he had touched, that he could no longer exercise the gift of healing, because its testimony, its sign purpose had been fulfilled, and the gift was being phased out. We have this second evidence in 2 Timothy 4:20. “Erastus abode at Corinth, but Trophimus have I left at Miletus sick.”

Here was another associate of the apostle Paul, Trophimus. Paul is traveling with him. They get to Miletus and Trophimus is sick, and what can Paul do? Paul can’t wait. He has to go on. Instead of just healing Trophimus and saying, “Let’s go,” he has to make arrangements for him to be hospitalized at Miletus, and he has to leave Trophimus behind. Why? A man who could touch a piece of cloth and heal people at a distance can no longer heal one of his associates, because this book written at the very end of the ministry of apostle Paul indicates that the gift had been phased out and Paul had been caught up with the loss of the gift, along with all of the other believers at the time.

**Isaiah 53:5**

The basis today of the claim for divine healing is usually structured upon Isaiah 53:5. It says, “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.” If you were to go up to the average Pentecostalist and say, “Now where do you get the idea that healing gifts are in operation today when even the apostle Paul couldn’t heal at the end of his ministry?” he would take you, among other scriptures, no doubt to Isaiah 53:5. The words at the end of the verse “we are healed,” are interpreted as meaning physical healing.

But as you read through this context, such as verse 4, you discover that he is not talking about a physical illness, he is talking in this context about a spiritual illness brought upon us by the old sin nature which we possess. “Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.” And then he goes on, “he was wounded for our transgressions.” It’s our sin that was the problem. “He was bruised for our iniquities.” It is sin that is the issue in the context. It is sin from which we were healed.

Now the word “healing,” while it does apply to physical healing, it also applies, for example in Luke 4:18, to giving comfort to a broken heart. That’s called healing. In Hebrews 4:13, the same word “healing” is used in reference to correcting our conduct—getting our conduct healed and straightened out. In Matthew 13:15, the same word is used in reference to being brought to salvation.

Now here in Isaiah, he is speaking of the disease of the old sin nature, in which the soul is healed by the suffering and the death of Jesus Christ in our behalf. The Pentecostalist says, “He died for our sins to bring us salvation, but Isaiah tells us that He also died to bring us physical healing.” They phrase it by saying, “Healing is in the atonement.” This means to say that when you come to God and you accept what Christ has provided for the old sin nature disease in your soul, you’re spiritually healed. But if you will also come to Him for your physical ills, that was also on the cross, and you will be immediately healed physically. To confirm this, they quote Matthew 8:17. Because Matthew 8:17 quotes Isaiah 53:4. Matthew 8:17 says, “That is might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet saying, ‘He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.” This context, particular to verse 16, described how Jesus healed people possessed of demons, cast the spirits out, and healed all that were sick. Then verse 17 says, “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet saying, ‘He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.”

Alright, now Isaiah says, “He took our infirmities. He bore our sicknesses. Surely He had borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.” When did Jesus Christ bear our physical problems? All the time that He healed people was before the cross—before there ever was any atonement, before there ever was any provision for salvation. That’s when the verse in Isaiah was fulfilled. In Isaiah 53:4a, the first part that Matthew quotes, and connects with the ministry of Christ during the earthly healing ministry (connecting the two together), Jesus Christ performed this healing work which Isaiah promised. He did this before the atonement. This was not part of His dying on the cross. It was done before He ever went to the cross. So it cannot be a result of the atonement.

This is bad exposition of scripture to take Matthew 8:17 and say, “You see, Matthew 8:17, by this context, speaks about Jesus Christ bringing healing which Isaiah promised would come. Then it connects it with Isaiah 53:5 which speaks about our spiritual healing. His healing work was done before the cross. It was not part of the atonement. In that point He fulfilled what Isaiah promised, but when you get to Isaiah 53:3, he’s speaking about our transgressions, our iniquities, our sins, and our spiritual healing that our old sin nature has made necessary for us. His atonement solves the sin problem which caused the disease and thus provides the basis ultimately for our perfect resurrection body. But His healing work was done before.

On the basis of these scriptures, there is no way to say that when Jesus Christ died on the cross, He died not only to give you healing for your soul, but healing for your body. As a matter of fact, if healing is in the atonement, you see what this would mean concerning physical death? Now that you are born again spiritually, now that you have come to spiritual life, are you ever going to die again spiritually? Of course not. Why not? Because spiritual healing was in the atonement.

Now if physical healing was in the atonement, and you have become a Christian, and you accept that also, that also must be eternal. So you would never die. There would never be a single Christian that would die if healing were in the atonement. But it is not. The healing of Christ came before He went to the cross.

So it is God’s will that some Christians should not be healed. This is another factor of the healer concept today, that on the basis of these Isaiah passages, every Christian should have perfect health. It is not the will of God that any Christian should ever be sick. Of course immediately you think about the apostle Paul who prayed three times to have a certain physical ailment removed, and God said, “No,” which contradicts that. God uses illness to teach us, as He did to Paul, to depend on Him.

There is no scripture that declares that it is God’s will for Christians never to be sick. The consequence of sin is physical suffering. It will only be removed in the resurrection. Revelation 21:4 tells us that, “no more sorrows, no more tears, no more heartache.” All of these things are removed and then we have perfect physical status, but not before then. God is sovereign, and for some people it is in His plan that they should bear illness. For others, it is in His plan that they should be healed.

Another claim is that some today possess the gift of healing. Healing was a sign gift, as we have indicated, in the infancy period of the church age before the New Testament scriptures were completed. It was a supernatural manifestation of the Holy Spirit to convince unbelievers of the authority of the message and the messenger. These purposes have been met, so the gift has ceased. And yet, we have people today who say, “I have the gift of healing.” They will come to town, they will set up a tent, or they will rent a huge auditorium, and they put out a sign that says that if you want to be healed of your physical problems, Isaiah tells us that it is already in the atonement, and that you should just come to the meeting and they will heal you.

But the New Testament healing took place without any fanfare, without any faith necessarily on the part of the patient. The New Testament healers who were in fellowship were able, at their option, to heal the lepers. Our healers are not healing lepers. The New Testament healers had their healings confirmed, such as the man at the gate who leaped and ran and demonstrated, and it was a permanent healing. That’s another thing about New Testament healing. Many of the healings that take place in healing tents today are not permanent. Under the spur of the emotions, a person is moved to feeling better, and this is equated with somebody being healed.

I’ve stood by healers while they’re telling people who are having heart attacks that they have believed that their heart has just been healed. And these people, just as sick looking and as green and just as death looking as can be, while the operator (the healer) is telling them, “I believe God. God can heal and I believe your heart is now perfect.” Now this is blasphemy and this is ignorance of the greatest kind.

There’s no healer today who will accept the challenge of getting on a platform (and I don’t care how big his name is), there is no healer in operation today anywhere in the world who will stand on a platform and accept certain terminal fatal cases to be brought up on that platform, of cancer, of tuberculosis, or something else, and have a competent group of doctors say, “This person is going to die. He has a terminal disease,” and then for the healer to perform his work, and then have that same group of doctors to examine him and say, “You have cured his disease.” There is not healer in the world who will do that today.

There is no healer today who will stand up on a platform and let you go up to him and open your mouth and say, “Look here. I have these fillings. Please heal me.” You go and find one and prove me wrong. Now if you were walking around in New Testament times and you had a toothache, and I wouldn’t doubt that there were some people who came up to the Lord Jesus and said, “Lord, I have a toothache,” He was going to heal that tooth. The Lord wasn’t going to give you some medication. He wasn’t going to give you an aspirin. The next morning you weren’t going to have that toothache. The pain was going to be gone. And if you had a tooth missing, and you went up to the Lord Jesus and said, “We have this beautiful crop of corn, but I have this tooth missing. Every time we have a crop of corn, I’d like to have them in,” He’d put them in. And He wouldn’t put false ones on each side of the good ones. Now this is really ludicrous. You have to have a certain type of mentality, really, if you know any doctrine at all, if you take seriously a healer.

**The Sources of Disease**

Remember what the sources of disease are. They are, first of all, the result of the fall in Eden. When we went into sin, all of creation was affected, and that’s where disease came from. It never comes from God. Secondly, the old sin nature in the soul has now broken down the structure of our immaterial being, so that it affects our material being, and we have diseases and illnesses of various kinds from that. Then the third source of disease is Satan himself.

When it comes to the matter of the fall, this is expressed in our physical breakdown. When it comes to the old sin nature in our soul, this is express in psychosomatic breakdowns. This comes from two Greek words. One is “psuche,” which is the word for “soul,” and “soma” which is the word for body. “Psychosomatic” means the soul (the immaterial, the mentality) affecting the body. And psychosomatic illnesses are illnesses that are symptoms of illnesses entirely produced by our minds.

I read recently that you can even have the symptoms of pregnancy produced by a mental attitude. That was almost unbelievable. But here is what the mind is able to do over the body. We had a doctor who was visiting us recently here at Berean, and after the service I talked to him. I asked, “How many people do you get coming into your office who are not really sick?” He said, “A fantastic number.” I said, “What do you do? Give them a little pill made of sugar?”

He said, “That’s one technique. But I can usually tell when they walk into my office and they tell me what’s wrong with them. I can almost always tell that there’s nothing wrong with them, and that I’ve got a psychosomatic case on my hands. I sit down and do the examining just to confirm it, and almost always what I suspected at first confirms that there is nothing wrong with them. So I sit and talk with them and see what’s bothering them. There’s usually something on their mind that’s bothering them. I try to find what’s bothering them, and try to get them to put it out of their mind and take a different perspective toward.”

I thought, “That’s exactly it.” A fantastic number, in our hypochondriac-oriented society, of people are running around with psychosomatic illnesses, with nothing wrong with them at all in the world.

All of you parents experience this at one time or another. You have this kid who has to go to school and he knows that today is the day for the big math exam. So, suddenly as school bus time arrives, he gets a fantastic pain in his stomach. He just doesn’t feel at all well. He explains to you that he feels terrifically sick and he doesn’t feet that he should go to school today. You take his temperature, and when you’re not looking, he huffs on it real good, and holds it by the stove, and puts it back in his mouth. Pretty soon he really seems quite sick, so you prop him up, and make him comfortable, and turn on Captain Kangaroo, and ask if that would make him feel better, and he assures you it would. Then pretty soon, after the school bus leaves, he makes a considerable recovery very quickly, and pretty soon he’s out in the backyard playing. Now that’s called psychosomatic illness, and you have to be a smart parent not to be “psychoed” by his “sematics,” and to apply your “psycho” to his “sematics” at the appropriate point in time. So this old sin nature of ours creates psychosomatic illness. Then Satan causes sickness, and doctors unfortunately don’t take that into account.

Reasons For Healing

Now what are the reasons people are healed by healers? Are they healed? Yes, they walk into the tents and they walk into the auditoriums, and there are changes made. Reason number one is that God may sovereignly plan to heal a patient in spite of the nonsense of the healers. God sometimes plans to heal, and He does heal, in spite of what the healer is doing.

A second reason that people are healed (an explanation of what actually takes place) is that the naturally body defenses and the healing mechanism take their course. I’ve heard it said that people often get well about as much in spite of the doctors’ treatment as because of it. We have natural functioning mechanisms of defense, and the body takes over and makes us well. Now the healer may happen to come in at a strategic point and do his little job, and convey the idea that he has healed you.

Sometimes people go to a doctor, and they’ve had an illness, but they wait—they prolong. Their body mechanism gets them over the hump. By the time they get to the doctor, the doctor says, “Well, you’re already over the peak of this. Just take it easy and ride it out now.” Now if the healer comes along at about that time, he gets credit for something purportedly that he can do.

A third reason is the illusion that results from the mind over the body so that symptoms are removed because the patient expects healing. Some of you told me about seeing the Johnny Carson show where Oral Roberts was on, and you know that he made considerable stock out of his association with Billy Graham because he is seeking a dignified position now. He left the Pentecostal group and joined the liberal method church in order to take a more dignified position in the religious world. Some of you told me about his relating incident. Billy had gone to India, and a lady had reached out and grabbed Dr. Graham because she thought he was the healing man and she touched him. And immediately Oral Roberts said that Billy said, “It just seemed to help her so tremendously, and she thanked him for having helped her.” Now that sounds like psychosomatic to me. There wasn’t anything wrong with the woman. She got the wrong healer but it didn’t make any difference. It still worked out. It still works out as long as you stand up and say, “Touch me and I’ll heal you.” If you get people psyched to that, and all they’ve got is something the mind created it in the first place, the mind can undo it in the second place.

These are some of the reasons people are healed from these illusions of illness that are created, that are not really there. Many of the healings in Christian Science, Pentecostalism, and the Roman Catholic Church are to be explained by this, in this category.

A fourth reason is that the healer works in deception with an accomplice who pretends to have an illness. I won’t burden you with stories. You can read all kinds of books on this, of people who once used to be in collusion with healers, and the practices that they would pull in meetings, as they would go forward as pathetic twisted cripples. Then at some appropriate strategic time, like just before the offerings, they would get healed, and they would go running out of the auditorium, breaking their crutches as they went. Some of the healings you have are the frauds of people who were in collusion with the healers.

A fifth reason is neurotic people who for some reason finally get stabilized so that their physical hang-ups leave them. If you get rid of your neurotic attitudes, and you get a relaxed mental attitude, you’d be surprised at how much better you’ll feel physically.

A sixth reason is that emotional expectation causes the patient to feel better. The healing is not permanent. The problem is not removed, but under the excitement of the moment, and the anticipation, people have been able to do fantastic things as the adrenalin started flowing in their bodies, and they felt better, and a purported healing took place.

A seventh reason is that healers avoid terminal cases. They just avoid that in the healing line, and consequently, it makes them look very very successful with those that they do deal with.

Number eight, and this is a major reason for what takes place in the healing movements, is that Satan through demons cures the patient. This however is followed by mental and emotional stresses. Again, there has been plenty written on this by people who have been through this themselves. They can tell you about having gone to the healers, and having received healing from their problem, but then found themselves torn up in their minds and torn up emotionally until they thought they were on the verge of madness. When they rejected the satanic influence that had been behind it, their illness returned, even to the case of limbs being lengthened and shortened. Satan can make a short limb long, and he can return it to its shortened sized.

Healings under Satan are of two kinds. One is white magic. White magic is done in all sincerity by the healer. It’s done on the basis of false doctrine, but it is done in sincerity. Because this healer is doctrinally disoriented and pursuing a practice that is opposed to the will of God, he exposes himself to demonic manipulation. I am not saying that all people like Oral Roberts and Kathryn Kuhlman are deliberate frauds. I think they are probably very sincere, very sincere, and very genuine people, but just as mistaken as they can be because they are doctrinally disoriented. You don’t have to talk to these people very long or read very much of their writings to find that they hardly know up from down when it comes to sound doctrine. They have this hang on this one thing, “I have a healing quality about me.”

In their sincerity, they’re exposed to satanic manipulation. So the demon works along with the healers. What does the healer do? Under white magic, he quotes Scripture, he prays to God, he lays hands on the patient, he anoints him with oil, he invokes the name of Jesus, he repeats sacred liturgy, and he commands the demons to leave and the illness to depart. Now this is exactly what you will hear if you attend a healing meeting. But you should understand what you are in the presence of if there is healing taking place with white magic being performed. Satan is quite happy to convey the illusion that this gift exists, and he goes along with the healer, because as long as he can keep people chasing temporary gifts, he will delay the execution of Project Footstool upon himself. Many Christians are ensnared by these white magic techniques.

You know how it is with Christians. If a Christian hears somebody pray, he says, “Oh, what a beautiful Christian.” He hears somebody repeat a verse of Scripture, and he says, “Oh, what a nice Christian.” He hears somebody praise the Lord or use some sacred words, and he immediately projects that here is somebody in contact with God. Satan uses this for white magic.

There is also black magic. Black magic is similar in its results—identical, as a matter of fact—to white magic, except that the healer openly appeals to Satan. This is what the witch doctor does. He works with demons and he works with Satan. He is openly seeking the assistance of Satan. He goes into a pact with Satan, and it is pure black magic. But he brings about the same thing. This is why the gibberish tongue-speaking takes place in primitive societies today just like it does in Dallas. This is why the healing takes place around a campfire in a primitive society just like it does in a big auditorium in Dallas. There is no difference. One is white magic and the other is black magic. The results in either case can be very spectacular.

Along with this, in black magic particularly (and it has its expression in white magic), is the use of fetishes—something to protect against sickness. Did you ever carry the left hind leg of a rabbit? That’s a good luck charm. Did you know that? I actually used to walk around with the left hind leg of a rabbit in my pocket. I’d go crazy about a four-leafed clover and press it into my wallet. Those are fetishes. They are good luck charms. When you ride with people in their cars, they have those good luck charms hanging there (and some of them should).

This is all part of the black magic nonsense. It’s calling upon supernatural demonic powers. The mascot—what’s the idea of a mascot? It’s black magic. It’s something to give you a defense against something that is happening to you. Usually it’s something bad you want to happen to the other team, so you have a mascot out there.

Satan is a tremendous worker of the healing miracle. The reports of the healings are usually so far distant that neither you nor I can generally check up on them. Satan is a great deceiver. I want to get into this a little bit this morning because the Bible is full of the fact that Satan is, number one, a source of disease. He is the source of Paul’s physical ailment in 2 Corinthians 12:7. This thorn in the flesh which was so painful to Paul was permitted by God to be imposed by Satan upon the apostle Paul to keep him dependent upon the Lord. The sources of illness that Job suffered in Job 2:6-8--what happened to Job was because of the working of Satan. He made Job sick. Satan uses demons to cause illness. In Matthew 12:22, you have demons who cause blindness and dumbness. In Luke 13:11-13, 16, you have a crippled woman spoken of as a result of demonic activity. In the Lord’s healing ministry, Acts 10:38, it is described how He has removed demons from people along with having their sickness removed. Likewise with mental illness—the man who was the demoniac that we have already looked at in Mark 5:5, 15, the result of demonic activity.

So Satan, as the instrument of divine discipline, which is what God permits him to be sometimes, actually imposes sickness upon people. Satan loves to get a spiritually calloused believer. In Luke 22:31-32, you have the story about how he is trying to get Peter because he wanted to sift him as wheat. What Satan wanted to do was to make Peter sick, to impose physical ailment upon him.

In the Corinthians church, you had the case of incest within the congregation. The person who was guilty of it was delivered to Satan in 1 Corinthians 5:5 for physical illness to be imposed upon that individual. Hymenaeus and Alexander in 1 Timothy 1:19-20 were delivered to Satan for action upon their physical bodies.

Satan is a murderer. He can go actually that far in his imposition of destruction upon your physical body. He can actually kill you, and he will, eagerly, except that God prevents him. He has the power to impose death (Hebrews 2:14-15). It was he who killed Job’s children (Job 1:18-18). He was forbidden to kill Job, as a matter of fact (Job 2:6). He motivated Cain to kill Abel (John 8:44). Satan is declared a murderer from the beginning (1 John 3:12). God delivers Christians to Satan for the sin unto death. When a Christian moves to the point of being so totally calloused, and so rejected in making confession of known sin, that he is now in the place of being brought under the judgment of the sin unto death, God delivers him to Satan for execution (1 Corinthians 5:5, the man in the Corinthian church).

So Satan is a source of disease. By this same token, Satan is a source of healing. When demons who cause the mental or the physical illness are removed, healing instantly results (Matthew 9:32-33). By Satan’s command, the demons simply leave. So he aids the miracle healer today. Or, by regeneration, in the command of God, the demon leaves and the person is healed. Remember that not all supernatural phenomena are from God. Since Satan has the power to inflict disease, he can remove it and fake a healing. We have many historical examples of healings among pagan societies. The New Testament world was filled with demon-energized healers and miracle workers. Please remember that. There were a lot of people running around in the New Testament world as healers among pagan groups. The temple in Alexandria, Egypt reported multitudes of healings. A night’s sleep in a temple in Greece was beneficial to thousands. It cured them. There were other miracle workers in the first century, and one was even called a heathen Christ because he was so spectacular.

So Satan will fake miracles just as he will in the tribulation period. He’s going to fake them then in order to gain converts (2 Thessalonians 2:9, Revelation 16:14). He fakes miracles today and it’s no strain. All of the supernatural phenomena that we have are not from God, so don’t be deceived every time somebody comes along and says, “Well my uncle went down and he got healed.” It’s not a question of whether he was healed or not. It’s not a question of whether or not this took place. It’s a question of the healer’s action, of his sound doctrine, and of the place of the gift of healing as a miracle gift in our day. The only way you can decide that is on the basis of doctrine. Satan is going to delude people in the tribulation just like he deludes them today.

So we summarize. Nobody has the gift of the gift of healing today, any more than Paul did at the end of his ministry. God does heal today as a result of our prayers, and sometimes in a very spectacular way. God does not heal today through an agent healer. I hope you understand that. I’ve had some complaints from people who thought I was saying that God does not perform miracles of healing. He does and He can, but the point is there is nobody in this world, Oral Roberts or Kathryn Kuhlman or anybody else, who can walk up and through the power of God create an instantaneous healing for you. They can’t make your fractured bones heal on the spot. They can’t. They can’t. They can’t. Nor can they fill your teeth or anything else. They certainly can’t raise the dead.

Now Satan can’t do that either, but Satan can counterfeit a whole lot of the healing miracles, and that’s exactly what he does. The healers today are frauds of the self-deluded type or deliberate deception. God healers in response to our prayers, but not in response to the laying on of the hands of some healer.

What about those that God does not heal? What should you do? Run in desperation to a healer? You will if you’re doctrinally disoriented. But if you understand death, you will put it in perspective, and you will realize that death is part of the plan of God. Death is entering a new phase of your relationship to God. I’ll guarantee you that while it is God’s plan for you to live, you will live. And when it is in God’s plan that He has finished with His ministry from you, you will go to any number of healers or any number of doctors, and you will not live. Now, use all the medical assistance you can to get well. Use all of the power of prayer. But any healing you get from a healer today is of demonic accomplishment, or a psychosomatic delusion. Sound doctrine preserves us from pursuing this in the face of even death itself.

We have something a lot better. We have the Scriptures which tell us, “Fear not, for I am with thee.” Cast your care upon Him. We just need to confess our sins, and the results will follow. Running to healers in the face of a fatal illness is because you’re confused.

The healers grow wealthy doing this. If I were a healer today, do you know where I would be operating, if I could control my old sin nature? I wouldn’t be putting up tents and opening auditoriums and running healing lines and passing out cards for people to come through to be healed. The place where I would be going would be through the hospitals. I’d go right down the line and empty every hospital in Dallas, and put every doctor out of work. I’m not particularly fond of hospitals to begin with, and I wouldn’t mind doing that as it is. I would rather be healthy than sick, as you would too. I’d go through every hospital bed and I’d empty it. I haven’t heard of a single healer who’s going around doing that. For one reason, it’s hard to collect an offering that way. Nobody is emptying the hospitals. They’re working on the gullible, the desperately spiritually-disoriented people. But if you really had the gift of healing, that’s what you would do too.

When God’s plan brings you to the point of dying, then go on with Him. Doctrine sustains us in life, and it can only sustain you in death. Do you remember Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego? They knew doctrine. When the king said, “Bow down and worship my image,” they said, “Sorry, king, doctrine says, ‘No.’” Expedience says, “Yes.” Saving our heads says, “Yes.” Doctrine says, “’No.’ We go with doctrine. We leave our lives with God.” And they came out of that fiery furnace without even the smell and the odor of the burning upon them.

That’s the position that you and should take and that I commend to you. We go with doctrine. Even in the face of serious illness, we don’t go to healers, knowing that this gift is non-existent from God today, and what appears to be its operation is entirely the counterfeit of Satan, or of our own minds. Our healing depends upon the sovereignty of God. So use your prayer, and use your medical know-how, but take the attitude of Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego, and stay in the Lord’s service, and stand by doctrine. That’s the course of healing in our day for the enlightened believer.

John E. Danish, 1971