

The Cross of Christ

In this chapter we look at various aspects of the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Some are discussed in other chapters and will not be repeated here. In this chapter we limit our discussion to:

- Sacrifice for sin.
- Redemption.
- Who Christ died for.
- Reconciling all things.
- Jesus did not die spiritually.
- Healing in the atonement.

If any say that we have to bring an offering of prayer, fasting, or seed of money to obtain the gift of God, such as forgiveness or healing, then this is “Simony”, which means to buy the gift of God. This was common in Luther’s time. If by the offering of Christ “surely our diseases and afflictions were carried” then how can any one take an offering from us to carry them? (Is 53:4).

If we paint our house in corruptible paint, we must paint it again some years afterward. We have to paint it again because the paint is not good, it fades away. That is like the Old Covenant, in which offerings were made often. But if we are redeemed with the incorruptible blood of Christ then there is no more offering for sin. The job done by the blood and the infilling of the Spirit is so good that it does not have to be done again.

For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him. Knowing this, that Christ being raised from the dead, dies no more; death has no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died to sin once: but in that He lives, He lives to God. (Rom 6:7-10).

In that Christ’s death for sin was sufficient, He does not need to die again. In that His death was sufficient for us in one burial of the old man and new birth, we too do not need to die daily. Religion denies the efficacy of the work of Christ in His death to sin within us and *tries to do repeatedly what has been done once for all*. His death to sin *for us* is worked *in us* by Spirit baptism, when sin is put to death in us.

The message of the gospel is that we pass from death to life (John 5:24). We are raised up with Christ now as partakers of His resurrection. In new birth He puts to death the sin nature. Then we live in the life of Christ. We do not hold to the cross. *We pass through the cross once into life*. Paul said that he died daily. This is another matter. By this he meant that he learnt to trust in God through all circumstances and not in himself (2 Cor 1:8-10, 1 Cor 15:31).

We die physically, but for the Christian this death of the body is called *sleep*. The requirement of the law that we take up our cross daily is also fulfilled by the gospel, by Christ in us, which puts to death sin and causes us to live *by His faith for His purpose*. By this *Spirit baptism* our life is no longer our own. We are not *in self* anymore. We are married to Christ. The gospel, Christ in you, fulfils the whole law.

This is complete freedom because we do not do any of this. The new birth does it. We just live in it by faith. This is why Jesus came. Religion is trying *to be* or trying *to do* all of this, which Christ *has done*. When we know the truth it sets us free from trying to get into something that is given already in Him.

We do not try to use worship and other methods of trying to *get in*, but enjoy being *in*. We worship *in faith*, as those already *in*.

If one offering has put away our sin forever and Christ is in us, then there is no “brass heaven” to “pray through” and no wilderness. A theology of *God not hearing prayer* is based on the Old Covenant and on our infirmities. The cross has made the way open.

By a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh...Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed by pure water. (Heb 10:20, 22).

Remission

The cross of Christ took away our sin. The word used for this in the New Covenant is *remission* or *remit*. Remit means to *take away*, to remove utterly or completely. The Old Testament prophets spoke of this as removing our sins “as far as the east is from the west”, or as casting them into the sea (Ps 103:12).

In the Old Testament sins were *atoned* for, which means to *cover*. Sins were not removed or remitted under the Old Covenant. Because they were not removed they had to be covered each year. In the New Covenant sins are not atoned for or covered. They are removed, “Taken out of the way.” (Col 2:14).

Atonement is not used in the New Testament. Rom 5:11 (KJV) uses it, but this is a mistranslation. The word is *reconciliation* (ASV, *to be made at peace with God*). The New Testament does not use *atonement* so that in Christ we will not have an Old Covenant consciousness. (In English we still use *atonement* as a theological term for the cross, but we mean *remission*.)

Perfection

Only the spotless Son of God is worthy to take away sin. In the Old Covenant they had to bring a spotless and healthy lamb or calf (Lev 22:17-25). It could have no blemish or it would be rejected. This was to represent the spotless Son of God in His sinless perfection. He alone was worthy to die for our sin and remove it. Our sin can be taken away by no one less than the Son of God Himself.

For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin...in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have had no pleasure. (Heb 10:4, 6).

So long as the Old Testament temple stood it was a sign that sin still remained (Heb 9:8). The temple showed that man was still in sin and needed his sins covered to draw close to God. When Christ died for our sin the curtain in the temple was torn from top to bottom to show that sin had been put away and the way into God's presence was *forever* made open through Christ (Heb 10:19).

No More Sacrifice For Sin

Christ's sacrifice for sin was made *once forever*. There will never be any more testimony to the sin of God's people. If we are born again and continue in sin we will be disciplined for our good, but our sin is still put away in Christ. Sin has been forever put away. The sacrifice of Christ has forever perfected God's people.

But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice forever, sat down on the right hand of God...For by one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified...And

their sins and iniquities I will remember no more. Now where remission of these things is, there is no more offering for sin. (Heb 10:12, 14, 17-18).

There is no more offering for sin because the blood of Christ was perfect. Nothing more can be added to what Christ did for us on the cross. Any sacrifices people make for sin today, such as fasting or fulfilling other religious conditions, are of no value.

We went to a Sunday morning service and were led in prayer; "Lord, forgive us this sin and that sin and sins of commission and sins of omission and...". This is all right, but then at the evening service the same day with the same people we were led in the same prayer, making another offering for sin. Why such an Old Testament sin consciousness?

Consciousness of Sin

There is no more consciousness of sin. If Christ took away our sin then our sin is removed. We do not have sin or a consciousness of sin. If we have a sin consciousness we are living as an old Covenant worshipper. We are living as though the temple was still standing, as though Jesus had not died.

The old system under the Law of Moses was only a shadow, a dim preview of the good things to come, not the good things themselves. The sacrifices under that system were repeated again and again, year after year, but they were never able to provide perfect cleansing for those who came to worship.

If they could have provided perfect cleansing, the sacrifices would have stopped, for the worshipers would have been purified once for all time and their feelings of guilt would have disappeared. (Heb 10:1-2 [NLT]).

But in those sacrifices there is remembrance again made of sins every year...How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Heb 10:3, 9:14).

John said, "He who says he has no sin makes God a liar." (1John 1:8). John is not speaking of one cleansed by Christ, but one who denies Christ and his sin, saying he does not need redemption. John said that the blood of Jesus Christ the Son cleanses from *all* sin (1 John 1:7).

Jesus told Peter, "He that has washed needs not but to wash his feet, but is wholly clean." (John 13:10). It is claimed that while the cross cleanses us, we also need daily cleansing from bad attitudes and other sins we pick up from our daily walk (dust on our feet). This is not what Jesus said. Jesus said that His washing of Peter's feet was an example of the love that we should have for each other.

A wrong interpretation gives us a sense that sin is always present. We then live as Old Covenant believers waiting for sin to be put away. It is true that we must be on our guard against sin, but continually confessing sin is failing to embrace Christ and denying the cross and resurrection of Christ. When we are born again our heart testifies of life, not of sin and death.

Paul addresses this point in Galatians 2.

But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found to be sinners (go back to the law), is therefore Christ the servant (slave) of sin? God forbid. (Gal 2:17).

Whatever we call ourselves, we are also calling Christ, for He lives in us. In the context Peter was hoping to be made righteous by Christ, but also remember sin by the law in his daily walk. If Peter has

Christ in him and goes back to live under the law which declares him a sinner, he brings Christ with him into it.

Similarly, we do not join Christ to a harlot (1 Cor 6:15). Paul asks, "Is Christ therefore the minister (servant) of sin?" (Gal 2:17), meaning is He under sin's yoke with you? What testimony is this to the world, when we claim to have Christ in us and still bear a sin consciousness?

Let us draw near with a true heart, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (Heb 10:22).

This is referring to the work of the cross in cleansing us absolutely and finally from all sin. It is not referring to anything that we do. Our heart is sprinkled and washed through the blood of Christ on the cross, which gave us the new birth by His resurrection.

What is Sin?

John said, "If we sin", not *when* we sin. If we sin we should admit and turn away from the sin (1 John 2:1-2). When we think that temptation is sin we think that we must purify our hearts ourselves and this leads to condemnation and works. If we have sin in our heart we must repent. But temptation is not impurity. Rather, submit to God, resist the devil and he will flee (James 4:7).

Neither is sin making a mistake in life. We all make mistakes and are wrong about things. We sometimes look for a spiritual reason why we make a mistake, as though God were against us, as though there was no cross. Do not frustrate the grace of God (Gal 2:21).

Neither is sin a failure to meet social standards. We may beat ourselves about things that are not sin at all, due to religious or cultural ideas we carry. When we have self-righteousness we are completely undone when we fail in any way.

God does not punish every short coming. God is not harsh. Our infirmity is not sin. God understands the feeling of our infirmity and does not expect us to inflict ourselves with a sin consciousness because of it. When we speak of infirmity we are not speaking of sin. We all have infirmity in different ways, but try to cover it up because we think that it shows we are not holy.

For we have not a high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin. (Heb 4:15).

People are turned away from the church because of our ideas of what sin is. The world knows that sexual immorality is wrong and faithfulness and integrity are right. But it cannot take the religious ideas that Christians make law. We call some things sin which are not sin. There are human faults in all of us which are not sin because we have been redeemed. God's love turns our past faults to work for our good. God redeems everything: our past, present and future.

It is more 'sinful' in society to be over weight or to drop litter than to commit adultery. To be nice to others is more important than the direct commands of God. This outward social niceness is hypocrisy. Jesus called it, "Making the outside of the cup clean." (Luke 11:39). God prohibited artificial sweetening in Old Covenant sacrifices (Lev 2:11). Some say that even *disagreeing* is negative criticism and sin. This is the teaching of love cults, not of Christ.

Sin is the transgression of the direct commands of God (1 John 3:4). No one is perfect, but we are perfected by the presence of Christ in us, His love shed abroad in our heart. We are crucified to the world and its desires and we do the will of our Father (Gal 6:4, 1 John 2:5, 15-17). If we are crucified to the world we do not carry its guilt, but are free.

Asking for forgiveness is in the *Lord's Prayer*. This does not mean we should have a consciousness of sin. It does mean we should ask for and *accept* (as done) forgiveness if we sin. It does mean we should be merciful, just as we have received mercy ourselves (James 2:12-13). Sin consciousness is an enemy of our heart. That is why we have the breastplate of righteousness (Eph 6:14). Jesus Christ came to destroy the works of the devil, put away our sin (1 John 3:8).

Redemption

This shows the nature of redemption. *Redeem* means to buy back that which was once yours. Man was God's by virtue of creation. But when Adam fell he became a captive to sin and estranged from God. God redeemed us or bought us back from our captivity to sin, by paying the price (the blood of His Son) that would satisfy His own just requirements.

Not Our Own

Paul said, "For you are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor 6:20). When Jesus died for us He bought us. We are no longer our own.

If after Christ has redeemed us, we go back and live our own life, then we are dead, because our life has been condemned by the law. If we live in Christ's life then we are free. Christianity is not about following the law. It is about whose life we live. Do we live in self, to serve self, or do we live in Christ?

We do not follow the law, but by the Spirit our life is laid down and we live Christ's life. This is not grievous or difficult, or a struggle, for Christ is in us and we delight to do His will – we have a new nature that says "yes" to God by His Spirit within.

So, as a believer, we do not have our own life. We live to Him. If we go back to our own life we go back to death. We either live for the will of God or die. We have been set free from the prison house by the price of the blood of Christ. Then do not be in bondage to man and do not serve yourself.

For, brethren, you have been called to liberty, only do not use your liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. (Gal 5:13).

For Whom Did Christ Die?

If Jesus died for all men, then why are some not saved? Did Jesus fail? Was His work lacking in its ability to reach and save them? Was Jesus *trying* to save the world on the cross, but ultimately had no power over the results, that being left up to each man? Was Jesus *trying* on the cross, or was He *accomplishing fully* that which the Father sent Him to do?

Jesus' death on the cross was sufficient for the whole world, but effective only for the church. His cross saves those who believe and condemns the world. Jesus does not condemn them, but they reject His grace. "This is the condemnation, that light has come into the world and they have loved darkness." (John 3:19. See also John 9:39, 12:31, 16:9).

The Father sent Him to die for the people that the Father gave to Him. Jesus died to redeem those that the Father called and, by so doing, He accomplished completely what He died to achieve. God does not try. God has a sovereign, eternal perspective, even though it is beyond our own judgement and understanding.

To limit Christ's cross to only a *potential* salvation, limits the *potency* of God. Jesus did not die only that we may be *potentially* forgiven, but that our sins may be actually forgiven and remitted. His blood was shed for our full preservation. It is the blood of an everlasting covenant. His cross demands the full preservation of all saints, without one failure.

This is what Charles Wesley's hymn meant: "His blood availed for me.". It saved him, sanctified him, kept him and brought him to glory. "It is finished". This is the *full gospel*. Our eternal security was contracted on the cross. The gospel is not a *potential*, it is a *surety*.

TULIP

TULIP is an acronym for:

Total depravity.

Unconditional election.

Limited atonement.

Irresistible grace.

Preservation of the saints.

The term is often associated with Calvinism, but Calvin did not invent it. It came about after Calvin died, when Arminius put forward a view on salvation that was opposed to the uncaring and legalistic religion of the Calvinism of his day in Holland.

Arminius's view was summarized by five points:

1. Election is conditional on faith.
2. Christ's atonement was unlimited in its extent.
3. Total depravity.
4. Resistible grace.
5. The possibility of apostasy.

Though point three, *total depravity*, is the same for both Arminianism and Calvinism, it is held differently by the two positions. It should mean that man is born in sin and cannot have faith without God's gift.

Calvin did not refute any of these five points of Arminius. It is true that election is conditional on faith. God gives the faith to His elect. It is true that the atonement is unlimited. It is also true that those without faith will resist grace and fall away.

The five points of Calvinism (TULIP) were developed to clarify the position of grace in relation to these five points of Arminius. It is not true to say that TULIP fully represents Calvin's teaching. Likewise, one acronym cannot represent all of God's truth. Calvin spoke of many aspects not normally considered in a discussion on TULIP, such as believers falling away and the need for diligence and responsibility in the believer.

The purpose of TULIP is not to summarize all truth, but to clearly portray the *Doctrines of Grace*. In this sense TULIP is correct and consistent with teaching on the grace of God. We should be aware of these *doctrines of grace*, for they are the summary of the gospel of Jesus Christ. These are what make the gospel so rich to our understanding.

We cannot hold to one of these five points of TULIP without holding to all. If salvation is not unconditional, then it is not of grace, but grace and works. And if it is not of works, then it is not possible to lose it. This cannot be logically refuted, just as Paul says;

Even so at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if it be by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more

grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.
(Rom 11:5-6).

The debate in Holland was largely political. There was suspicion, not fair with regard to Arminius, but possibly true of others, that his theology played into the hands of the Roman Catholics of Spain. Spain had killed many Christians and was the occupying power in Holland. The *Spanish Inquisition*, through which many Christians died, was a long term policy of Spain and contributed to Spain's own demise as a world leader.

Today we say, "The intolerance of the protestant theological debate in Holland in those days was wrong". This lacks an understanding of the times and the issues involved. In our day we have gone the wrong way in the other direction. Mosques were forbidden in Europe in those days. Now they are well on their way to dominating Holland. Is throwing away our faith in the name of tolerance good?

Was the doctrine of *limited atonement* held by Calvin? Calvin taught both that Christ died for the church and that He died for all men. Our belief is that it is wrong to limit the atonement. Christ's atonement cannot be limited. A better term is effective, or *efficacious*, atonement. Christ's death alone, with nothing added to it, is effective for the eternal salvation of the saints. This is what the Bible teaches.

The Joy of the Lord

Looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame. (Heb 12:2).

What was the joy that was set before Him? It was the church, the family of God. It was the many He would justify, spoken of in Is 53:10 "...when He shall make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed (the church)...by His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify *many*; for He shall bear their iniquities".

This *many* is the *seed*, the church that He died for. The atonement fully achieved God's objective. It empowers (by His merits through grace) the saints to the end. Because of this atonement Christ now sits at the Father's right hand making intercession for us that we might be saved through Christ's life to the uttermost, i.e. to the end, the resurrection of our body and glorification with Christ (Phil 3:41, Eph 3:20).

Jesus prayed before the cross, "I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but for those which You have given Me...And for their sakes I sanctify Myself..." (John 17:19). *Sanctifying Himself* was setting Himself aside to do Father's will, in dying for those the Father gave Him. He died for those that He interceded for before His death and intercedes for now.

Hebrews

The book of Hebrews is about the elect. Jesus died for the church and lives to make intercession for the church. He is thereby the "surety" (certainty of our redemption and perseverance) for those the Father has given Him (Heb 2:13, 7:22).

Hebrews does not make sense except for the concept of "the preservation of the saints", which means that the Father keeps us by the New Covenant which He has bought by the blood of His Son.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is pleasing in His

sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Heb 13:20-21).

This passage shows that:

1. The cross secured an everlasting covenant.
2. The blood was shed not only for forgiveness of sin, but also to perfect and to preserve the saints in everything.
3. The Holy Spirit ministers not in His own will, but on the behalf of and to fulfil the full extent of all that Christ died to achieve. The Holy Spirit carries out what the blood secured: our forgiveness, our regeneration, our sanctification, our perfection, our preservation - for the elect, for those for whom Christ died.

Here we see the trinity at work. Christ died for those whom the Father had called and given Him. The Holy Spirit gathers those for whom Christ died. They work in cooperation with each other's will. This is stated by the Nicene and Apostle's Creed. *Christ proceeds from the Father and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.* They have no private ministry. There is submission and faithfulness to the Father's will.

The atonement was not a mere potential for forgiveness for those who cooperate, but it was a complete redemption for those called irresistibly. A look at Heb 2:10-17 will show us who He died for. Every term used refers to the church:

1. He died for the sons.
2. For those He was captain of.
3. For those that He sanctified.
4. For His brethren.
5. For the people.
6. For the children whom God had given Him, "Behold, I and the children whom God has given Me".
7. He died for the seed of Abraham, the elect.

Forasmuch then as *the children* (the seed) are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise partook of the same...For truly He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the *seed of Abraham*. (Heb 2:14, 16)

He redeemed the *children*. This term means the elect of faith (Rom 9:7). He did not take on Himself the seed of Adam in our redemption, but the *seed of Abraham*. The seed of Abraham in the New Testament is speaking not of a natural lineage, but of an election of grace. In the next chapter of this book we look at this term in Paul's teaching. *Adam* refers to the human race and *Abraham* refers to the elect, the father of faith.

In Ephesians Paul shows who Christ died for:

Husbands love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify it and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. (Eph 5:25).

He gave Himself for the church. In John, Jesus said the same:

I am the good shepherd: The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep...I am the good shepherd and I know My sheep and am known of mine ...and I lay down my life for the sheep. (John 10:11, 14, 15).

He gave His life for His sheep, whom He knew.

Christ Died For All

But we do not limit the atonement. Christ died for all mankind. God sent His Son to save the world. This is true whether or not someone is effectually called by God. Those who perish, perish not only because of their sin, but because they reject the grace of God that was freely and fully offered to them. Sinful man rejects the atonement for sin, though it is sincerely and urgently offered (2 Cor 5:19-20).

That God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them; and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. (2 Cor 5:19).

Christ died for all men. See also 1 John 2:2, where the *whole world* also means all tribes, nations, tongues and all generations. He died for "whosoever" believes. The invitation is open to all. There is no limitation whatsoever in the cross of Christ, nor to our preaching and gospel invitation.

The fact that Christ died for all, makes the ungratefulness of the sinner even more apparent. They reject such kindness and mercy by their own will. There is no "limited atonement". God is not responsible for the death of a sinner.

The Pearl of Great Price

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hid in a field; which when a man has found he hides it and, for joy thereof, goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it. (Matt 13:44-46).

In this parable the field is the world, meaning all mankind. Here a man was in the field and he found a treasure. He loved the treasure and wanted it. So he hid the treasure and went and sold all he had and returned and bought the whole field to get the treasure.

This is a picture of what Jesus Christ came to do. The treasure and the pearl are the church, which He loves. He hid the treasure in the field, meaning the world does not know us. The sin, suffering and curse are in the world, but all the while He is calling out His church.

Jesus sold all He had to buy that field. He shed His blood on the cross. He bought the whole field, that is, the whole world, so that He could get the treasure. So what was on His mind when He was on that cross? The pearl, meaning the church was. His atonement was sufficient for every man and for the whole world, but designed or efficacious for the church.

And because Jesus died for the world, God can apply general grace to the world any time He pleases, without any accusation against Him.

Reconciled All Things

Jesus reconciled all things *to the church*, that we might be partakers of His inheritance. That “He reconciled all things” does not mean that He saved all things, all people, or powers and dominions. The subject is *our redemption*. We will look further below at passages that are used by some to teach *universalism*.

Christ brought *all things* under His dominion *for our redemption, as our captain*, High Priest, brother, for the seed of Abraham. The subject of Christ reconciling all powers to Himself is presented in the context of His redemption of the seed of Abraham. For He took on Him the seed of Abraham in his incarnation and suffering:

That you might know...His *inheritance in the saints*...He has put *all things* under His feet and gave Him to be the head of all things *to the church*. (Eph 1:18, 22).

He put all things under His feet, *to the church*, meaning that He did it for us, i.e. in respect to us, to raise us up and place us over all things in Him. We are now complete *in* Him.

He has made us able to be partakers of the *inheritance* of the saints...who has *delivered* us from the kingdom of darkness...in whom we have *redemption* through His blood...and He is the head of *the body*, the church...to reconcile *all things* to Himself. (Col 1:12-20).

Paul is speaking of our inheritance. He is not saying that all men or powers are saved. He is saying that in Christ the church is redeemed from the whole curse of the law. There is no power, nor former curse from any earthly parentage, or dominion that can be over the child of God.

For Everything

You have put *all things* in subjection under His feet. For in that He put *all* in subjection under Him, He left *nothing* that is not put under Him. But now we see not yet all *things* put under Him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death *for every man* (*lit. thing*). (Heb 2:8-9).

When Christ died He reconciled *all things* to Himself. Vs. 9, in the Greek text, says *every thing*, not every *man*. He brought under His authority *all things* in heaven and earth. This is a reference to Psalm 8, where God put all things under His feet, for the church. Christ is Creator and already in possession of the world. In His incarnation He died and rose for us, to lift us above all enemies. The enemies confess Jesus Christ as Lord, not in salvation, but in *subjection* to His power.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven and *things* in earth and *things* under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil 2:5-11).

This is the humbling and exaltation of Christ. It is about His sovereign rule, not the salvation of His enemies. When He became a man He did not leave His power in heaven. He was always the Son of God and in full possession of His powers. However, as a man He voluntarily humbled Himself and submitted His powers to the will of the Father, to redeem us.

The bringing of all powers under the feet of the seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ, is further seen in Colossians. As the Son of God, He was already in full authority over these powers, as was fully demonstrated in His ministry on earth. Even in the Old Testament, after the Fall, God and His Son were always in full control and possession of this earth and all authorities. But on the cross He put them under Him in relation to our redemption, for us.

For by Him were *all things* created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers: *all things* were created for Him and by Him...And, having *made peace* through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile *all things* to himself; by Him, I say; whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. (Col 1:16, 20).

This is about the making of peace between God and the seed of Abraham. Because we have this peace through His blood, all enemies have been reconciled and put under our feet in Him.

Absolute Redeemer

These verses are speaking of the supremacy of Christ. He both created all things and redeemed creation on the cross. Through one man's sin death entered the world. Through the second Adam (Christ) all things were redeemed. We have to take these passages carefully.

1. It was not just spiritual death that entered the world through Adam's sin, but death in all its forms.

Some hold that physical death was in the world for millions of years before Adam's sin and Adam's sin only brought spiritual death to man. The Bible does not distinguish between spiritual death and physical death. Dualism is Platonic and not biblical. God is holistic. Sin is spelt *death* (Rom 6:23).

Death is death and it comes from sin. Paul talks of this in Rom 5:12 and 1 Cor 15:22. Death entered the world through sin. In 1st Corinthians 15 in particular it is clear that the subject is the physical bodily resurrection and thus physical death. In Romans 5 there is nothing to show that Paul is referring to spiritual death alone. If physical death was not by Adam, then the physical resurrection is not by the cross.

But this is further clarified in our text here from Hebrews 2. Adam's sin meant that creation fell with him. This is why it was necessary for Christ to reconcile all things on the cross. Christ's death did not just redeem man, but also creation that was cursed by God as a result of Adam's sin.

In the Hebrew language, a word used to speak of wellness is *shalom*. In English it means *peace*. In Hebrew thought peace means wholeness in every aspect, spiritually, emotionally, socially, financially and physically, with nothing lacking. Sickness is seen as lacking shalom. The Hebrew believed that man lost shalom in the Fall. They viewed death holistically, not in spirit/body categories.

2. God did not lose His creation in the *fall*.

After Adam sinned God remained Lord of the earth and the earth remained His. But God cursed the earth after the *Fall* and on the cross Christ redeemed not only man, but also the earth and *all things from His curse*. After Adam's sin God said that man would toil on the earth hence forth and man has been toiling since then. Satan was not the one who cursed the earth.

The Curse

This is explained once again by Paul in Rom 8:20-23:

For the creature (mankind) was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself (the redeemed) 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 (mankind) groans and travails in pain together until now. And not only they, but we ourselves also (the redeemed), which have the first fruits of the Spirit... waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. (Rom 8:20-23).

Some interpret this *body* as referring to the spiritual body saved by the gospel. It appears to be speaking of the physical body of the redeemed at the resurrection, who already have the first fruits of the Spirit in salvation.

The whole of mankind travails under the curse which was put on it by God, in hope, i.e. in design, that through it He may call out His people, the church. This was His purpose before creation and before the *Fall*, though He did not cause Adams's fall. The vanity that mankind was subjected to in the *Fall* includes physical death, which shall be reversed in the resurrection.

J. B Phillips paraphrases Rom 8:20-21:

The world of creation cannot as yet see reality, not because it chooses to be blind, but because in God's purpose it has been so limited—yet it has been given hope. And the hope is that in the end the whole of created life will be rescued from the tyranny of change and decay, and have its share in that magnificent liberty which can only belong to the children of God!

Phillips interprets creation as the whole of created life, not just mankind. He also shows Christ has redeemed the whole of created life and will restore it at the resurrection. This does not mean there is no eternal judgment for the wicked, as some twist the text, as they also twist all the other passages that speak of eternal judgment. The whole of creation is redeemed *to the church*.

The Second Adam

The cross makes all things new:

1. A new creation. Christ the second Adam becomes the Head of a new race.
2. A New Covenant. The whole old system (Old Covenant) is overthrown by His cross and resurrection. This is the beginning of the New Heaven and New Earth, the New Covenant in Christ.
3. The resurrection of the dead and a renewed body. The completion of the New Heaven and New Earth by the removal of the curse, at the end of the age.

Going back to our first text in Hebrews 2 the meaning is clear. The Father has put all things in subjection under the feet of Jesus through His death and resurrection. "But", the author said, "we do not yet see all things subdued, but we see Jesus" seated at the Father's right hand. We see this in history and we see this by the Holy Spirit.

Since all things are reconciled to Christ's authority, when God's time is come He will subdue all enemies under His feet. The church will not do this. The Father will. But He will do it in His time. Until

then there is no battle by God against the enemy. The enemy and the vanity of the curse is allowed to continue for a season, while He gathers in His elect.

Tasted Death For Every Thing

In Heb 2:9 it says that Christ tasted death for every man. The word “man” is not in the original Greek. The Greek word means “thing”. The section starts in vs. 8 saying that *all things* are put under Christ’s feet and concluded in vs. 9, saying that Christ tasted death to *reconcile or subdue all things*.

So in Colossians where it says that all things were reconciled to Christ on the cross it means they were brought into subjection to the Son of God forever. This puts down two false teachings:

1. It puts to bed the false idea that creation as a whole did not fall with Adam and was not thus reconciled by the second Adam on the cross.

Death came to all creation through Adam’s sin. Before Adam sinned there was no death in the earth, whether we call it spiritual or physical. The curse we see on the earth – death, suffering, rage, disease, war, tears – all will be put down at the fullness of time, when the Father subdues all enemies under Christ’s feet at the end of this age.

2. It puts to bed the teaching that Jesus saved everybody on the cross.

What we mean by this is the teaching of *ultimate reconciliation*, or *universalism*. It is taught by these groups that since Christ died for all men that all will be saved and that none will go to hell. Heb 2:9 says He tasted death for “everything”.

Ultimate Reconciliation

It is also taught that people do not have to be born again, but all are saved even if they continue in sin. This is outside the realms of orthodox Christian faith. When Christ reconciled all things to Himself it means that He subdued all things under His total authority and will, to the church, to reverse the Adamic curse.

Universalists quote 2 Cor 5:19, “To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them: and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”. They say that this means that all are saved because all are reconciled.

Paul continued, “Now we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ’s stead, be reconciled to God.” (2 Cor 5:20). If all are saved why would Paul urge that we preach to them? What would be the point of repentance, or of faith? This false teaching is also taken from John:

And He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world. (1 John 2:2).

This verse is often used to either show that Jesus died for all men, which is true, or to show that all men will be saved, which is not true. What the verse means is that Jesus died not only for the Jews, but for His people in every nation, tribe, kindred and tongue. It means that Jesus did not just die for an exclusive club, but for His people from all races and in every generation.

Universalists deceive people from passages such as Rom 5:10-21, saying that just as death came to all through Adam, so life came to all through Christ. They say this means that every human being will be saved regardless of whether they believe in this life. They say there is no hell. The correct reading of the passage shows that *in Christ* all live, just as all in Adam die. But you must be *in Christ*!

This life is the only opportunity we have for being saved, “For He said, I have heard you in a time accepted and in the *day of salvation* I have helped you: behold *now is the accepted time*, behold now is the day of salvation.” (2 Cor 6:2). This means this present life, before we die.

The meaning of scripture is plain. We do not judge God’s word, rather we accept it. God’s word judges us. We do not change God’s word because we do not like judgement or hell, rather God’s word must change us. We do not conform God to a human image, but rather God conforms us to the image of His Son.

Jesus Did Not Die Spiritually

Jesus Christ bore our sin *in His body* on the cross, that we being dead to sin, should live to righteousness (1 Pet 2:24). Jesus did not die spiritually on the cross. He bore our sin *in His body*, not in His spirit. He did not suffer in hell for our redemption.

2 Cor 5:21 says that He was made to be sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. This is true, but being made to be sin does not mean in His spirit. It means He carried away our sin in His own body on the cross.

Every epistle of Paul or Peter teaches that Christ atoned for (remitted) our sin by the shedding of His blood. Look through Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, Hebrews and all other epistles, where each one sets out in clear passages how Christ redeemed us from our sin. In each passage only His blood is mentioned.

See Romans 3, Ephesians 1, Colossians 1 and Hebrews 9 to 10 in particular, all of which outline in detail our redemption. Nowhere in these passages does it say that Christ redeemed us by suffering in hell. Unless a doctrine is taught directly in a passage of scripture, “line upon line” we should not accept it.

There may be some verses in scripture that may be wrongly used to teach the spiritual death of Christ. We may stick certain verses together and come up with any doctrine. Correct doctrine is to be taken from plain teaching in whole passages. There is nowhere in scripture where the apostles set out to teach a doctrine of the spiritual death of Christ to redeem us from sin. It is not in the Bible.

Why Have You Forsaken Me?

Jesus prayed on the cross, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Ps 22:1). This does not mean that Jesus died spiritually and was separated from God. Jesus Christ is the Son of God – divinity – and He cannot die spiritually. He suffered in the flesh and in the anguish of His soul in the Garden of Gethsemane.

To say He was separated from the Father on the cross is Nestorian and denies His divinity. He is God. God did not *come out of Him* on the cross.

In Psalm 22 David prayed a Hebrew style *lamentation*, referring to Christ’s sufferings. The Psalm opens with, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”. Here Jesus is referring to the injustice of the cross. It is not saying that God separated Himself from fellowship or left Jesus spiritually dead. It means that the Father allowed injustice to have its day, for the purpose that they would crucify Jesus. David prayed similar lamentations when his enemies had the upper hand, when David had only done them good.

Habakkuk prayed a similar prayer. “Why does the oppressor prosper? Where is God? Has He forsaken justice and the poor?” This is not unbelief, but Hebrew lamentation, an expression of grief. God answered Habakkuk that He was working out His purposes and allowing wickedness only for a season. He said in the meanwhile the “just shall live by his faith”.

Is 53:1-5 reflects the same idea: "They considered Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted.". The people watching Jesus die said God must have forsaken Him to let Him suffer in that way. But no, God "wounded Him for our transgressions".

Is 53:8 claims, "He was taken from prison and from judgement and who shall declare His generation?". This phrase in the Hebrew means, "Who shall stand for Him in court?". No one that He healed stood for Him before Pilot or before the Jews. No one that He delivered came forth, not even the 12 disciples. One disciple sold Him. Peter cursed Him. Justice was taken from Him.

Jesus knew the reason. "Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows". It was for us. After the opening of Psalm 22, Jesus continued, "I will declare Your name to My brethren, in the midst of the church I shall sing praise to You. And again, I will put My trust in Him...". (See also Heb 2:12-13).

According to Psalm 22 and Hebrews 2, these were the words of Jesus on the cross. Does this sound like the prayer of a spiritually dead man separated from His Father? Of course not! His faith prevailed and He justified many! This is an example of how we can so easily misread the scriptures when we are ignorant of Hebrew literary style.

Jesus in Hell

In the Old Testament the animal sacrifices for sin died physically. There is no mention of spiritual death for any of these typological sacrifices. Some people refer to Acts, where Peter said that Jesus was "loosed from the pains of death" in His resurrection (Acts 2:24-28). They infer from this that Jesus suffered in pain in hell.

Peter said that he was speaking of the physical resurrection of Christ's body. In the Old Testament it was stated that both the righteous and wicked went to hell, or Hades. It meant the grave, the place of the dead. It was stated that the righteous dead were separated from the unrighteous, who are still there in torment (Luke 16:23). In the New Covenant, the dead in Christ are now with Christ in heaven (2 Cor 5:8).

Peter said that the Father did not leave Jesus' soul in hell, the place of the righteous dead. Peter was not referring to the place of torment. The subject of Peter was the resurrection of the body of Christ. His body was not allowed to see corruption. He was "loosed from the pains of death" means the physical agonies He suffered in death. His body was revived. Peter did not state here that Jesus suffered in hell.

The Bible does not speak of a double resurrection of Jesus: of Christ being born again in hell and then raised from the dead physically, as some teach. When the Bible says that He is the *first born from the dead*, it means that He is supreme. *First born* refers to headship, being *the heir or supremacy*. Christ is supreme.

Jesus was not spiritually *born again*. This teaching came by E. W. Kenyon. We love much of Kenyon's teaching, but not his views which we hold to be similar to *Christian Science*, started by Mary Baker Eddy. We are not making the claim that Kenyon was connected to these, but some of the things he taught about *confession* and other matters we believe were influenced by non-Christian American ideas of the day.

Peter said that Jesus preached to the spirits in prison, who disobeyed in Noah's day (1 Pet 3:19). It is likely that these were the spirits of the men who perished in the Flood. The word used there for *preach* in the Greek does not necessarily mean that the preaching was evangelistic in nature, that is, to offer a chance of salvation. It means just to *declare* or *announce*.

Christ merely declared His victory and the vindication of Noah's faith. He did not give any one in torment in hell an opportunity to be saved. He just declared His lordship, as Philipians says, "Every

knee shall bow and every tongue confess, in heaven, on earth and under the earth, that Jesus Christ is Lord". So when Jesus was in hell He announced His victory. He was not suffering there.

Jesus Went to Hell in Victory

Jesus did not suffer in hell under the foot of the devil. The devil did not ever have Jesus in captivity, not once, not for a moment. Christ has always been in supremacy over the devil, even in death. He offered His life freely. It was not taken from Him by the devil. He laid it down to satisfy the justice of a loving Father.

His death was orchestrated entirely by the Father and the devil was led into a trap. Satan was conquered on the cross, by the Son of God who endured the cross despising the shame, staying faithful to His Father throughout. Satan was already conquered when Jesus *gave up His spirit*, meaning when He departed from His body on the cross. At that point the price was paid and our redemption was *finished*.

The Bible only tells us a little about what happened between the death and resurrection of Christ. We should preach what the Bible does say and not make up what it does not say. We have enough to do without tickling people's ears with fables. The *Apostles Creed* says that Christ descended into hell and we know He did that. But the Creed does not say that Christ suffered in hell.

The Blood of Jesus Christ Alone

Christ redeemed us by His blood and His blood alone. This is what the Bible teaches. We add nothing to His blood. Adding anything to Christ's blood for our redemption is false doctrine.

In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace. (Eph 1:7).

In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins. (Col 1:14).

Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins...(Rom 3:24-25).

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God...So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many...(Heb 9:14, 28).

Notice here: He bore the sins of many, not of all, but those who come to Him. He was offered to God, not to the devil. He was offered once on the cross, not a second time in hell. He redeemed us by His blood in every text that speaks of our redemption.

Made Jew and Gentile One

Because Christ's cross fulfilled and removed the ceremonial law there is no longer any division between Jew and Gentile. Under the Old Covenant the ceremonial law was a barrier between Jew and Gentile, because the Gentile did not observe the law. Paul shows that in Christ, believing Jews and Gentiles have been brought into one body. Paul explains that the cross has brought Gentiles into the body of believers – that is, has included the Gentiles into the commonwealth of Israel, which is Christ.

In Christ Jesus, you (Gentiles) who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who has made both (Jew and Gentile) one and has broken down the middle wall of partition (the law) between us (Jew and Gentile);

Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of two (Jew and Gentile) one new man (the new creation in Christ), so making peace...For through Him we both (Jew and Gentile) have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now therefore you (Gentiles) are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God. (Eph 2:12-19).

There is no Jew or Gentile

There is only one body in Christ. There is not a Jewish church and a Gentile church. There is not an Australian church or a Nigerian church. The cross has made one new man in Christ from all believers. There is only one church. There is no such thing as a so-called "messianic church". Churches that are racially segregated are like synagogues of the Diaspora, not churches in Christ. Racist or tribalistic churches of any colour or nation or tribe are not the family of God.

Not Paid to the Devil

God did not buy us back from the devil, but from sin. Satan is the prince of darkness, but he does not own anything. Christ shed His blood to satisfy the just requirements of God's law. The price of redemption was not paid to the devil, but paid to satisfy the law.

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. (Rom 3:25-26).

Justice requires that the law is satisfied. If we have a speeding fine it must be paid. If we do not have the money and someone pays the fine for us then the law is satisfied. In the same way God would not be just to forgive us without settling the just requirements of the law. It is God's kindness that while we were sinners He sent His Son to take the penalty for our sin. We sinned against God, but He took the punishment for it in His Son.

But God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom 5:8).

Healing in the Atonement

There has been controversy over whether physical healing is *guaranteed* in the atonement. Every blessing of God is in the atonement. The atonement brought us *shalom*, meaning soundness in our whole life. All things are redeemed by Christ on the cross. However, when *healing in the atonement* is taught to mean that physical healing is guaranteed to all, then it is wrong.

Jesus is the healer. Healing is a *charisma*, which means a grace, free gift, based on the merits of Christ and not on our own holiness, faith or works. Because we have sometimes not understood this we have attached many false and strange teachings to healing. These teachings try to explain either why someone is sick, or how they can get God to heal them.

Reasons why people are sick are said to include curses, sin, lack of faith, past failures or unforgiveness for other people. It is claimed that there are *barriers* to healing. It is said that healing

comes to us through a channel and that channel can be blocked by sin or unbelief. This is Old Covenant teaching. If Christ lives in us there is no channel to be blocked. He has dealt with sin.

The problem with this type of teaching is that it produces law. And that is followed by condemnation for those who are not healed. Jesus bore our sin on the cross, so He is not establishing conditions for us to meet to be healed. Healing is a gift.

When we look through Paul's epistles we see that he established *no theology* for:

1. Why someone is sick.
2. How to get them healed.

Paul did not enter into this area of speculation. Some have claimed that Paul's teaching on communion in 1st Corinthians 11 shows that God makes people sick because they sin. It is true that God did discipline some of the Corinthians. James also said that if we have sinned we can repent and God will forgive and heal. The James text is not meant as a guarantee, so we cannot say that if someone is not healed they must not have faith.

It is also true that the way we live can damage our body and encourage disease. There can be physical reasons why someone is not well, such as lack of hygiene, poor diet, mosquito bites, or cancer. Some diseases can be brought on by things like constant anxiety. But some people get the same diseases without living wrongly at all. We do not know all there is to know about these things.

We are not speaking here about Christians who are obviously in sin. We need to encourage such to repent. We are speaking about Christians who live godly lives and yet are sick. There should be love in the body of Christ rather than blame. The problem arises when we judge others when they are sick. We then develop pharisaical attitudes, judging by outward appearance.

Jesus did not speculate on why people were sick, such as the blind man. The disciples asked, "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he is born blind?". Jesus answered, "Neither." (John 9:2-3). Not once did He claim someone was sick because of the sin of an ancestor or because of their own particular sin. Though He did warn one man, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come to you." (John 5:14).

The man then went straight to the Jews and told them who it was that healed him and then the Jews sought to slay Jesus. Whether the man did this in good intent, or to clear his obligation with the Jews, we do not know. But here is a warning that sin can bring trouble, either by the natural consequences of our life style, or by God's judgement, as it did with Judas who betrayed Christ.

Healing is the Life of Christ

Healing is not method. It is Christ living and working by grace within us. We declare healing by the faith He gives. We have no method that guarantees healing, but a person, Jesus Christ, who heals according to His will. The healing ministry is the healing life of Christ, who dwells in us and who heals by His faith.

Some have said it is always His will to heal and, if we are not healed, it is because we have not met the conditions. Paul never taught this anywhere. Christ redeemed us. He paid the price. Redemption belongs to Him and is given out as He wills.

Some people think that because redemption is a legal act then we can claim our rights in it by faith. The Bible does not teach this. Faith is God given. It is not something that we make or claim our self. When God gives faith we have faith.

“All the promises of God are yes and amen in Christ.” (2 Cor 1:20). This does not mean that if we are in Christ then we can claim all God’s promises how we please. It means that God has fulfilled His promises in Christ. God goes on fulfilling His promises through the active ministry of His Son in us, by His own will. It is *in Christ*. Christ is the seed to whom the promises were made (Gal 3:16).

Is Christ also *healing to our body* and not just to our soul? Yes, He is. Did He suffer for our sicknesses? Most definitely, yes He did. Does He want us healed in every way? Yes, most defiantly He does. But this does not mean that we can condemn people, or make strange doctrines about why people are not healed. We walk in faith, hope and love.

Arguments for Healing in the Atonement:

1. Healing was in the Old Covenant. God revealed Himself as *Jehovah Rapha*, the Lord that heals (Ex 15:25-26). It is claimed healing was thus a covenant right. This was shown when Jesus said, “Ought not this daughter of Abraham be loosed from this infirmity?” (Luke 13:16).

But we also know that Jesus healed by the gifts of the Spirit. Healing is in our covenant, but this does not make it a right. The New Covenant is not law. It is grace. “The law of the Spirit of life” is referring to His grace (Rom 8:2). If it was law, we would all be dead.

2. Psalm 103:3-4 says that God heals all our diseases, forgives all our iniquity and crowns us with long life. When this is taken as a guarantee rather than as a praise of the works of God, it leads to conclusions such as, “If any one dies early they are in the sin of unbelief”. None of the first apostles taught this and not one of them had long life on earth.
3. Healing is seen in Isaiah 53 as included in the work of the cross. The Hebrew words say He *bore* our *diseases*, but in the wider context it is clear that healing is used poetically in the prophets for reconciliation, healing of our soul and relationship with God. This is the overall context of Isaiah 53. There is no reason why this reconciliation should not include wellness for the *whole man*.
4. It is said that healing in the atonement is supported by Matt 8:17 where Matthew quoted Is 53:4 “Himself bore our infirmities and carried our diseases”. Matthew may have meant that the miracles of Jesus point to Him as the redeemer, who came to take away our sin. This is why He healed the lame man, that “You might know that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins.” (Mark 2:10).
5. Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the law (Gal 3:13). In this passage Paul is speaking of condemnation versus life through the gift of the Spirit. If healing was guaranteed on this basis, then so should all the affects of the curse be lifted, such as ageing and physical death, when and how we claim them. Some people make the ridiculous claim they can demand these things by faith.
6. Christ healed all and said, “If you have seen Me you have seen the Father”, meaning it is the Father’s will to heal all. Jesus did not heal all, all of the time. When the leper said, “If You are willing You can make me clean”, Jesus answered, “I am willing, be clean.” (Matt 8:2-3). This is further said to be proof of God’s will to heal every person.
7. This last point is sometimes coupled with the claim that since God has healed all in the atonement it is pointless asking Him to heal us as He already has. All that is needed is to claim what He has done. This shifts the onus onto the person and opens the door to guilt and blame.

While we preach that it is God's will to heal and that we should freely receive by faith, extreme doctrines have such bad pastoral implications that they must be exposed. The apostles ever claimed that God would heal all.

The woman with the issue of blood pressed through to touch Jesus, risking humiliation due to the law which stated that she should be out of public view. We pointed to many other examples in the Gospels in an earlier chapter. We see them in our own time. We encourage faith and see the many fruits of it, including healing.

These examples do not show that God heals all if we meet conditions. Jesus' testimony about unbelief was to point out the hardness of man's heart without grace. But grace meets this inability, not laws on faith and *barrier removal*. When He said, "Your faith has made you well", He was pointing us to grace as opposed to law and showing that the basis of salvation is Christ's merits and not ours.

A Theology of Healing

Our problem is that we seek healing instead of the healer...The woman who had an issue of blood didn't struggle to be healed by mental effort. She just wanted to touch Jesus.

All blind Bartimaeus did was crowd into his heart-rending cry the sound of helplessness and his belief in the love, power and compassion of Jesus of Nazareth. Even though our blessed Lord did tell him it was his faith that made him whole, I am sure that what faith he had was given him by the Lord Himself.

Can a man (Bartimaeus) generate enough faith to find healing in walking a few feet on a dusty road? The presence of Jesus was the source of faith in those days and it's the presence of Jesus that is the source of our faith in these days – even as Jesus said, "Without Me, you can do nothing." (Charles S. Price, *The Real Faith For Healing*).

God heals and miracles are for today. He heals because Jesus suffered for our sin. We are blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ and healing is one of these (Eph 1:3). He has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Pet 1:3). But it is not true that all we have to do is claim and confess our healing. Christ is our healer.

The *faith movement* talked about acting on our faith. This is true, if we have faith. But acting and confessing will not bring faith. Faith comes by the revelation of Jesus Christ. When Jesus said, "Have faith in God", literally it is "Have *the faith of God*." (Mark 11:23-24). He was pointing to their unregenerate heart and pointing them to the grace of God who gives us faith.

While the healing miracles pointed to Jesus as the redeemer, they did not prove that healing is guaranteed to all believers due to the atonement. They do prove healing is part of the ministry of Jesus that continues after His resurrection, while He works through His church.

In all Paul's epistles Paul had no theology of healing. He believed:

1. Christ healed through *charisma* (gifts). This means manifestations of His life.
2. God healed through mercy.

But beyond this, Paul developed no theology at all.

The healing the prophets spoke of in passages like the "brazen serpent" and Isaiah 53 stand for healing of the soul, i.e. redemption (Num 21:9, John 3:14-15). Healing in the atonement means life

and relationship with the Father through the Son of God. Because we are whole people this includes the body, but does not include a guarantee of physical healing for every person in this life.

Some apply conditional healing like this from the law (Ex 15:26), as though we are still under the law. These verses have no place in *charisma*. Applying conditions from verses such as Ex 15:26 to healing ministry today has no place. Ex 15:26 is the Old Covenant. The verse says, "If...then...".

We can encourage from the Exodus 15 and speak on faith and our new heart, without putting people under the Old Covenant. Jesus called healing "the children's bread" (Mark 7:27). This is true. It is based on gifting (*charisma*), not on law.

Benson Idahosa and Smith Wigglesworth saw gifts in faith and rebuked some for unbelief. They rebuked their lack of respect and honour for God, "Do you not know who God is?", but did not make people feel they were not good enough to have faith. But it is wrong to go around blaming people if you do not have the gift to change the situation.

Katherine Kuhlman by the Spirit saw those God healed and called them out. Jesus was manifesting His life through her. She never claimed it was anyone's faith. When you take the message of these people without the gift and make a method it becomes law and dead. People then minister the letter and not the Spirit and life. The law kills, because if we do not continue in all of it we are under a curse. We should not minister the curse.

Paul never said people needed more faith so they could be healed. It is wrong to say sickness is a punishment from God for sin. "Himself took our infirmities and carried our diseases". He took our punishment and is not laying it upon us again. Paul showed no blame when he spoke of team workers who were sick. He did not see it as a spiritual problem, get frustrated at God, or claim healing by faith (Phil 2:27, 1 Tim 5:23, 2 Tim 4:20).

Jesus breaks the power of sin and heals our body by grace. He does both by grace. One is not a condition for the other. He does both by the hearing of faith, which He gives, not by the works of the law.

God loves those who are sick. He came to set us free. He did not come to blame. There is no method or formula. Jesus is the healer. Healing because Christ lives in us and continues His work is the biblical view. He gives the faith we lay a hold of and He heals.

If you say that faith guarantees healing, then do you ever have a cold; do you heal every person you meet; or do you lie about going to a doctor, to cover your own failure of the law that you have made?