

FAITH IS ACTION



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Reach Up!

"...He was wounded for our transgressions...
and with His stripes we are healed..."

Isaiah 53:5

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the Healing Covenant

part one

By R.G. Hardy

Does God heal today?... Yes! Why does God heal today?...

There are many Christians today who are *hoping* to be healed. Some believe that it is *luck*. They may even say to another Christian friend, *“Pray that tonight is my lucky night!”* Well, there is no luck about healing. It is a certainty, a sure thing founded on the Word of God. One does not receive healing by *hoping* or by *wishing*. If one is to be healed, it is because God has made a *covenant of healing* unto His people, and it is a *legal document*: a divinely-ordained law.

Anything and everything that God does, He does because of *His Word*. God is sovereign, and therefore, He is not limited in any way, or by anything. He is, however, bound by His Word which He has spoken, and by the covenants which He has made. If we are to benefit by these covenants and promises, then we must obey the Word concerning that covenant, and appropriate faith in God’s ability and His reliability to perform it. There are no magic formulas for healing. The *only formula* for one’s healing is *faith!*

I tell you what: In these days, we better know how to believe God for our healing. It costs too much to get sick! Every time I see what the latest estimate of daily hospital care is in this nation, *it scares me well!*

God has a divine program of healing

benefits for His people, and *it is His will for us to be healed!* Let me say right up front: *God does not get any glory out of the suffering or sickness of one of His children!* This is *totally* against all teaching in the Word of God in *both Testaments*. Jesus declared in John 10:10, *“The thief cometh not, but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”* Abundant life does not consist of sickness and disease by anyone’s interpretation! We are going to see that God has enacted a *legal covenant of healing* which is a binding statute unto His children.

In the book of Exodus, God drew up a contract with His people, and He made this agreement a statue, a divine ordinance, forever settled in Heaven. God declared that He was going to call a people unto Himself, and that if they would obey His commandments, and walk in His statutes, He would be unto them a God, and they would be His people. In so doing, He made a covenant with them, which included everything they needed: Life, blessings, prosperity, *and healing.*

He called His Old Testament children, leading them out of Egypt, the house of bondage into a land of promise and blessings that flowed with milk and honey (which typify blessings in abundance). And God is still calling a people out of the land

of bondage, out of the house of sin and fear, and into His kingdom of joy, peace, power, and victory. Before the Israelites entered into the Promised Land, however, they wandered in the wilderness still bound by fear. Although delivered out of the dominion of Pharaoh, they had not yet experienced the land flowing with milk and honey. They were still not assured of God's promises, until Moses sent forth the twelve spies to search out the land, and they returned with the bountiful pomegranates and figs and grapes, the fruit of the land.

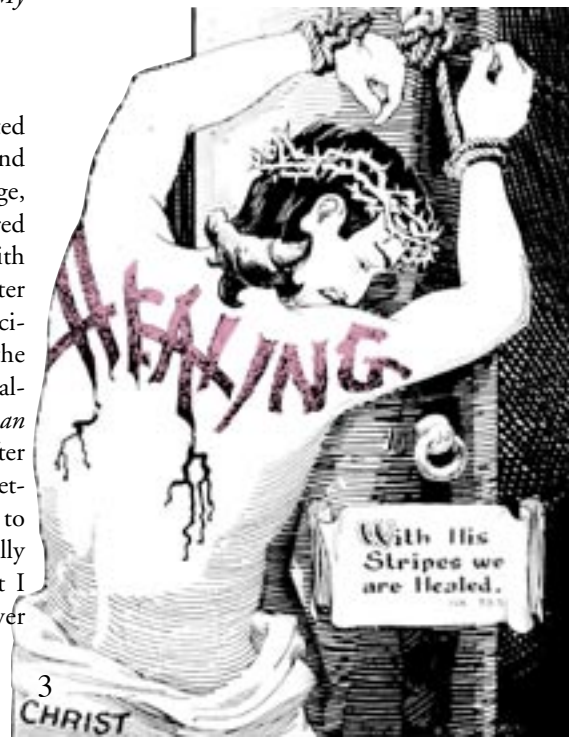
Saints, I have been living in the land of promise! Over 40 years ago, God took me into the Promised Land. I had been in the house of bondage, the house of fear, in servitude and terror. I was full of fear, sickness, and infirmity, but Jesus came on the scene, and said, *"I want to take you into the Promised Land. If you will be My child, and will serve Me and obey My Word, I am going to free you from your bondage and lay My blessings upon you."*

MY PERSONAL TESTIMONY

I took God at His Word, and accepted His offer, and He took me at my word, and delivered me. I was only 22 years of age, with a new wife and baby, when I incurred a crippling back injury which left me with my left leg drawn up three inches shorter than my right. I was in constant excruciating pain. I was so twisted up, until the doctors at Johns Hopkins hospital in Baltimore lightly referred to me as the *"human corkscrew,"* but it wasn't funny to me. After six months of treatment, I was still no better, and in fact, they were not even able to alleviate my pain. Then the ole devil really started tormenting me, telling me that I was no good, never had been, and never would be. I had to agree with him.

All my life, from a young boy of six, I stayed in trouble, serving time in reformatories, correctional institutions, and jail. Satan drove me, and unable to resist, I was bound by sin and bent on running the risks. Finally, I had started getting it together. Now a young adult with a new family, I was trying to live a clean life. Then like a bomb had fallen, my life was destroyed by this terrible infirmity, and I felt that it left me a burden and a free-loader on my family. I was unable to work, and the insurance company was trying to beat me out of my disability wages. The doctors wanted to perform an experimental operation on me that was possibly life-threatening. The other possible danger, if I survived, was to be totally paralyzed. It was a no-win situation, I calculated, and I began to earnestly consider suicide as my only solution.

That's when Jesus intervened! My



mother had been a Holy Ghost-filled Christian for many years who had tried to lead me to the Lord, but I had been so utterly bound by demon powers that I fought hard to resist. One night she stopped by the house after a special service she had attended. The church was in revival with all the saints praying and fasting. She had told them about my condition and asked them to have special prayer for me, which they did. Knowing that I could never come to church, she had them pray over a *prayer cloth*, which she brought to me that night.

A MIRACULOUS HEALING!

She asked if she could put the prayer cloth on me and pray. “*After all,*” she asked, “*What could it hurt?*” I reasoned that she was right, although I didn’t think God would bother with me since I never bothered with Him. She laid the prayer cloth on me and prayed. I said nothing. My unsaved wife stood by in the small kitchen, saying nothing, but looking skeptical and perturbed by the intrusion. And that was it. I sat there a few minutes, waiting for the pressure to lift. Mom left the room, and I got up in my usual twisted manner. I had only taken a couple of leg-dragging steps when suddenly something like lightning shot through my body, and instantly I straightened up! I hollered for my wife to turn and see, and she stared in amazement. Actually, we were both a little frightened by the awesome power of God! I was instantly and miraculously healed, and I was not even saved at the time (but it wasn’t long after!) No, these folks who oppose divine healing have come too late to tell me that stuff! *I know what God did for me!*

If you were ever to meet me in person, you may find that I am somewhat on the

short side (5 ft. 6 in.), but you will also note that *both my legs are the same length!* Maybe God just shrunk my right leg, I don’t know—but they are both the same!

Needless to say, that was a turning point in my life. Shaken to my soul by this undeniable experience of God’s miracle working power in my own body, I could no longer shove God out of my mind. Shortly thereafter, as God continued to deal with me, I got saved. Again, it was a supernatural experience that took place in my own home, but this time I was completely alone. It was late, almost midnight. Oddly enough, my mother had persuaded my wife, *but not me*, to go to church that night. They had not arrived home yet, when I began to sense a powerful presence approaching my house. (I found out that God knows where you live!) I actually felt this supernatural being walking down my street, up my sidewalk, up the steps, through the door, and down the hallway, entering into my living room where I sat breathless and excitedly nervous. Someone once asked me how I knew that it was God? I replied, “*How do you know when you step in front of a blast furnace?*”

I mean to tell you, that place was *on fire!* God spoke to me, and for the first time in my life, *I knew it was Him!* Oh, He had been speaking to me for a long time, but I didn’t know that it was Him before then. And He gave me the *terms of His covenant*. He told me, “*Son, if you will meet these terms, I will deliver you and save you. And if you will give me your body that I have healed, I will keep you healed, and I will use you.*”

Right there in my parlour, with no preacher or singers or altar workers, or anyone—God laid His hands on me, and I felt like I had stuck my finger in an electric socket! God not only led me out of

the house of bondage, He led me into the Promised Land!

THE HEALING COVENANT

God and I made a covenant that night, over 40 years ago, and He has never failed to keep the terms as I have kept the terms. When God led His people out of Egypt, He then declared unto them His *covenant of healing*:

“So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter... And the people murmured against Moses saying, What shall we drink?”

And he cried unto the LORD (Jehovah: The Covenant God); and the LORD shewed him a tree (THE NEW COVENANT tree is the cross!), which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them,”

THE STATUTE

“And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all of his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee.” (Exodus 15:22-26).

Here God revealed Himself to His people by His *covenant Name*: “*Jehovah Rapha*,” thy Healer! He made a healing covenant with them, and He told them that if they would meet the terms by obeying His commandments and living righteously in His sight, He would be their Healer, and would, in fact, *keep them from sickness!*

Concerning His laws, God has stated that “in the mouths of two or three witnesses, shall every word be established,” and the covenant was repeated in Exodus 23:24-26:

“Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images. And ye shall serve the LORD thy God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee... the number of thy days I will fulfill.”

God promised His people not only healing, but *divine health!* He promised them that they would not die ahead of time from sickness and disease, but would enjoy long life and sound health! I want to stress the fact that this was a *legal, binding covenant and statute!* God is on record in Psalm 89: 34: “*My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.”*

As long as the terms of the covenant were met, God was obligated to fulfil His part of the covenant, without exception! God told His people that if they would serve notice on the devil by casting out the idols, tearing down the false gods, and would serve Him, He would do something mighty and beneficial for them:

First He stated that He would bless their bread and their water. My God, if we ever needed our bread and water blessed, it's now! With all the pollutants in the air and in the waters, and all the additives, pesticides, antibiotics, and chemicals in our foods, we need this blessing! I'm sure that this blessing alone would take care of a lot of sicknesses today! If you are obeying God, then your food is blessed and your water is blessed, and God will keep all these diseases and adverse affects from you! In fact, in the NT in Mark 16:18, Jesus promised, “*If you*

drink any deadly thing...” (in the Greek this does not mean on purpose, but if by chance, which is unlikely), *“it shall not hurt you.”*

KEPT FROM PREMATURE DEATH

Child of God, this is not by wishing or hoping, but by believing the promises of God, and then acting on them! If you will obey God, by rooting out all of the idols, and tearing down all of the works of wickedness, refuse to serve the gods of the world and the flesh, keep God’s commandments, and walk in His statutes—God said that He will not only heal you, but *keep you in health!* Not only that, but He promised, *“The number of your days I will fulfill!”*

Listen, I want to live until I die! I am not going to be sick til I die—I am going to live! If God does not keep me here until the rapture, then I want to be preaching or praying when I go. I don’t want to be wrestling on a bed of sickness! I don’t want my ministry to be aborted early because of sickness or disease. If God wants to call me home any time, I’m ready, but I want to go enjoying the blessings of the covenant!

Some of you may be thinking that this was an *Old Testament covenant*, and I agree with you. But that covenant was so wonderful, so powerful that it healed three million Jews at one time, and not one of them died during that forty year period in the wilderness from sickness! They only died from *sin and disobedience!*

David caught sight of the covenant, and he began to rejoice in song declaring, *“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all of his benefits!”* (Psalm 103).

THE COVENANT BENEFITS

“...Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thine diseases;” (vs. 3).

These are the first two benefits, coupled together in the same verse, and without doubt, the most important. Now, if God can and will forgive you of all your sins, then He will also heal you of all your sicknesses! If one can believe God that the first is done, than why not the rest? Is it any easier for God to save than to heal? I am reminded of the time when Jesus told the crippled man that his sins were forgiven, and the Pharisees raised their eyebrows. Then Jesus told the man to take up his bed and walk so that they might know that He not only had power to heal, but also to save! (Mark 2:3-12).

The next benefit is that He *“redeems thy life from destruction...”* Now when one is redeemed, the devil can’t do anything to destroy you! Psalm 107:20 says, *“He sent his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction.”*

“Who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies” (vs. 4). This entails all of God’s graces and takes care of anything that is not specifically covered in His contract.

“Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s” (vs. 5).

God is going to supply your needs until you have nothing to ask for—you’re satisfied—you’re fed—you’re filled with good things! James said, *“Every good and perfect gift cometh down from the Father of lights...”* (Js. 1:17).

When God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, *“there was not one feeble person* (sick, infirm, senile, old) *one among their tribes!”* (Ps. 105:37).

God literally renewed their youth in one night! When Moses died at the age of 120, *“his eyes were not dim; neither were his natural forces* (the body’s ability to renew itself)

abated" (Deut. 34:7). At age 85, Caleb testified that he was as strong as he was at 45! God had renewed their youth!

This is God's Covenant, and God has to do it, if we meet the terms thereof! I still imagine there are those who concede that it sounds great, but that it is afterall, an *Old Testament Covenant*, and that's not good enough for them.

In fact, Jesus did say that He was going to make a *better covenant with us!* As good as this old covenant was, *it wasn't good enough!*

A BETTER COVENANT

"By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament" (Hebrews 7:22). In other words, whatever God did for Israel, He is going to do even **better** for us! He gave us a *better healing covenant*, because He has given us a *better Lamb* than the lamb out of the flock. Better than the shedding of its blood, was the blood of His Son!

"But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises" (Hebrews 8:6).

A mediator is someone who makes sure that both parties perform and receive their agreed parts. Jesus is going to insure that we obey God's terms, and when we do, then He is going to go to God and insure that He keeps His part of the covenant. As good as the first covenant was, it was not faultless, or there would have been no need for a second. (Heb. 10:9). But God has given us His Son to be the mediator of a better covenant, and as our High Priest, He has a more excellent ministry, established upon better promises. And on the Cross, He ushered in this new and better way, and not only paid the price for sin,

but for our *healing!*

Christ Your Healer

"Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:4-5).

This great OT prophet, Isaiah, looking through the telescope of time, beheld the Son of God in His agony and sufferings, and declared, *"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows..."* The word for "griefs," *choliy*, should have been translated *sicknesses* as it is elsewhere from the Hebrew. Also, the Hebrew *makob* translated "sorrows" literally means "pains."

The quotation and fulfillment of this prophecy in Matthew 8:16-17 prove that the bearing of our griefs and sorrows (sickness, and pain, disease) was **physical:**

"When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias (Isaiah) the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."

Beholding the Messiah wounded, pierced, bruised, and crushed, Isaiah pronounced that He was *stricken and smitten of God!* It was God's stroke that was laid upon Jesus. Man didn't smite Him, and neither did the devil: God smote Him, because in so doing, He was utterly disannuling and breaking the powers of Satan to hold men in sin and sickness any longer!

If you are to recognize God's will for you to be healed, then you must recognize that not only did Jesus pay the price

for your sins and for you to obtain eternal salvation, but He also suffered for your sicknesses and disease, and for your *physical healing!* The Hebrew word in verse 5, *rapha*, means “to mend, cure, heal, and make whole.” It refers to *physical healing*, and has no reference to spiritual healing whatsoever.

Does God want His children to be healed? Jesus paid a bloody, painful price so that we do not have to carry sicknesses! When He stood in Pilate’s Judgment Hall and was beaten and lashed with those cat-o-nine tails (thirteen leather thongs with bits of broken glass and metal embedded into ball shapes on the ends), the blood that ran out of those stripes was not for the saving of our souls — *but for the healing of our bodies!* And Peter, looking back at this scene declared: “...By whose stripes ye were healed!” (1 Peter 2:24).

It’s already done. Our healing was procured at Pilate’s whipping post. When that Roman soldier picked up that whip and began to scourge the flesh of Jesus, tearing it open with every stroke, and the blood and mutilated tissue poured out, God was saying: “*There goes cancer! There goes diabetes! There goes heart trouble!*”

No, the devil didn’t do this to Jesus. He was duped into playing his part. When he realized what it would mean, the last thing he wanted was for Jesus to go to that cross. Colossians 2:15 declares: “*And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it (the cross).*”

It was God Who laid His stroke upon Jesus, and it even pleased Him to do so, because He knew that it meant our complete deliverance from the dominion of Satan:

“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him:

he hath put him to grief...” (Isaiah 53:10).

The Hebrew reads, “*Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him, He hath made him sick.*” The Word of God declares that God made Jesus sick with *our sicknesses!* Jesus was willing to be made sick and to suffer the stroke of His Father, to be beaten and scourged, to have His back flayed open, even as the OT high priests flayed open the sacrificial lamb, that we might enjoy the benefits of this new and better covenant: healing and divine health!

Jesus did not have to endure the cruel beating at that whipping post to pay for our sins. These were to be paid for on the cross when they pierced His hands and His feet and His side. He endured this horrific beating willingly for no other reason than to pay for our sicknesses and to bear them in His own body. In the Messianic prophecy of Isaiah 50:6, he recorded: “*I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.*”

Another Messianic reference declared: “*The plowers plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows*” (Ps. 129:3).

It was those 39 furrows that paid for our healing! The blood that flowed from those stripes is the healing virtue that Isaiah spoke of and Peter confirmed. And so it pleased (or satisfied the will of) the LORD to bruise Him—that we might not have to carry sickness and disease!

On the eve of His sufferings, Jesus ate the pre-Passover meal with His disciples. He lifted the bread, blessed it and said, “...*This is my body which is broken for you:*” (1 Cor. 11:24).

Isaiah had prophesied the horrific condition of Messiah’s chastisement, saying, “*As many as were astonished (“to grow numb, to stun”) at thee;*” WHY? “...*His vis-*

age (countenance) was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men” (Isa. 52:14).

When Jesus broke that bread with His disciples that night, He knew what lie ahead, the sufferings He faced!

Shortly thereafter He agonized in prayer in Gethsemane, praying three times to His Father, “*Let this cup pass from me.*” The cup of sufferings began there with His denial of His own will, and it proceeded to Pilate’s whipping post, and then to Calvary. The third time, Jesus prayed, “*Thy will be done!*”

History relates that most men died under the Roman scourging. It was so brutal and cruel that few survived. Each time that powerful Roman soldier would rear back and zing those thirteen whips through the air, they would land with a heavy thud in the back of Jesus, piercing the flesh, ripping it open until the bones were exposed. This he repeated thirteen times until there were 39 bloody *rivers of healing* flowing forth!

Then upon those open, bleeding wounds, they thrust the weight of a rugged, rough, wooden cross and led Him up the rocky path to Calvary. So profuse was Jesus’ blood loss and dehydration from His beating, that He fell beneath its load. Jesus was not a weakling by any means. He would have been born with a perfect human body, and He had labored for almost 30 years as a carpenter using handmade tools and “muscle strength.” Furthermore, Jesus walked miles each day traveling the rugged Judean hills in His intinerant ministry. He would have been in prime physical condition. But so brutal was His beating that it hastened His death on the cross.

As the eve of Passover drew night, the Jews wanted Jesus and the two thieves crucified with Jesus, taken down from the cross before sunset. Pilate thus instructed the soldiers to break their legs so as to hasten death. (This is because as one hung on a cross, he would need to push up with his feet in order to expand his chest to breathe. With his legs broken, he would not be able to do so, and would quickly die of asphyxiation.)

John’s Gospel records that they broke the legs of the two thieves, but when they came to Jesus, He was already dead, so they did not break His legs (Jn. 19:32-33). This, of course, was significant regarding the fulfillment of the law of the Passover lamb and the Messianic prophecy that “*a bone of him shall not be broken*” (Jn. 19:36, Ps. 34:20, Num. 9:12).

More than this, however, is the story of His previous suffering at that whipping post where He bore in His own body the stripes of our sicknesses and disease. It was these afflictions that intensified His agony and hastened His death.

If you are a child of God, then you *do not have to take sickness off of the devil!* If you do, then you have caused Jesus to suffer so terribly *in vain!* You need to visualize His broken, crushed, mutilated body as Isaiah did, and declare, “*By His stripes I am healed!*” The NT writer, Peter, looked back at the finished work of Christ’s sufferings and death and declared: “*Who his own self bare in his own body our sins on the tree, that we, being dead to sin should live unto righteousness by whose stripes ye were healed*” (1 Peter 2:24).

**Don’t Miss Part Two of
this message next month!**