

Be Healed by the God Who Cares

FINDING GREAT HOPE AND COMFORT
WHEN FACING SEVERE TRIALS

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ONE

Healing Defined

SPIRITUAL VERSUS PHYSICAL HEALING

The purpose of this booklet is to give hope to all those suffering from spiritual and/or physical illness. Many who read this booklet hold a deep desire to be healed. Yet there are different types of healing. Through Christ we can all receive spiritual healing. If we believe in Christ, He takes away the penalty of our sinful nature, and we undergo a spiritual rebirth. This metamorphosis of the spirit into a new nature is spiritual healing. It leads, as will be explained, to eternal life. It is a free gift from God to everyone who asks for it. All we need to do is humble ourselves and ask.

But, let's face it, many readers are primarily seeking physical healing. It is normal to long for physical healing, whether or not you believe in eternal life. So, why should you read this booklet, which is also about *spiritual* healing, if your main desire is physical healing?

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For one, it is generally recognized that spiritual health often affects physical health. We are whole human beings and what affects us spiritually and emotionally can have a very real effect on our physical bodies. If we are stressed, or harbor unforgiveness or malice toward ourselves or others, it may manifest itself in physical ways. Why not ensure your spiritual health in order to allow your body to work at an optimum level while fighting your physical illness?

Secondly, serious physical illness brings us face to face with death and what lies beyond. It requires that we come to terms with our body's weakness and our fleeting existence on this earth. Therefore, it prompts us to consider or reconsider the spiritual and the eternal. And, from an eternal perspective, spiritual healing trumps physical healing.

Nevertheless, the triune God, through his Spirit, can also heal us from physical illness. Christ, the Second Person in the triune Godhead, spent over forty percent of his earthly ministry healing the sick. We are told in the gospel of Mark that when the disciples preached the Word of God, signs and wonders, including healing, accompanied their preaching (Mark 16:20).

So, physical healing comes with the preaching of the Word. However, the Word is primarily preached for salvation, not for physical healing. The rest of this booklet provides some basic information from God's Word on healing.

THE SCRIPTURES – GOD’S WORD

The Word is the Bible, the Old and New Testaments. The Word of God, according to the apostle Paul in the New Testament, “is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit” (Hebrews 4:12). The Word is powerful, penetrating, and full of life.

This booklet uses The Old and New Testaments as its primary references. The Bible is a book of instruction, theology, prophecy, history, and poetry. The Bible consists of sixty-six books written by over forty authors from all walks of life (kings, philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen, scholars), over a period of 1,500 years, on three continents (Asia, Africa, and Europe), in three languages. Yet it contains one integrated message system, one high and consistent moral code, evidencing its divine authorship.

When have two philosophers agreed on anything? In the Bible forty authors of different backgrounds proclaim the same moral law. There is a unity in the message that binds the whole. “All scripture is God breathed” (2 Timothy 3:16).

Since healing often accompanies the teaching of the Word, by reading this booklet, which extensively quotes the Word, some may be drawn to God and experience physical healing. However, Jesus Christ offers everyone the ultimate healing, a resurrected body and eternal life.

God is sovereign and even though He loves us, He doesn’t heal all of us. If God doesn’t physically heal us, we may, understandably, feel upset or angry. Moreover, if we believe God is capable of healing us,

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but does not, it is tough to accept that He somehow *chose* not to heal us at that time. At this point, we have several choices. We can (1) choose to ignore Him/believe He doesn't exist; (2) choose to believe He is unloving and capricious; or (3) choose to believe that He is still a loving, omnipotent God, who happens to know more than we do and has a loving purpose in mind which we simply cannot see or comprehend.

After reading this booklet, you will learn more about God's nature and hopefully choose number three. His plans are greater than ours. We may not wholly understand them. He may allow some to go through a season of affliction, pain, and disease. Even as parents we know that authentic love must sometimes permit pain to occur. We should be comforted by knowing that whatever God decides, that decision will be absolutely just and loving. We will see that Love, Justice, and Goodness are attributes of God. Therefore, no matter what our circumstances, we can cling to him and have hope, because the God who created the universe cares for us. But, this requires much faith and meditation upon God's Word.

Jesus Christ consistently urges us to have faith. To bolster our faith, we will examine the Bible verses documenting Christ's claims about His deity. We will look at Christ's promises for those who believe in Him. We will look at the historical account of Christ's healing ministry.

We will also look at other evidence for the Christian faith, such as: the Moral Law attesting to the existence of God; the numerous Old Testament prophecies Christ fulfilled, attesting to the existence of a God outside space and time, guiding human

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history; and the proofs of the Resurrection, giving us hope of a life after death and confirmation of Christ's claims. For maximum benefit, be sure to read the Appendices when they are first referenced in the body of the booklet.

TWO

Knowledge That Heals

THE MORAL LAW

It is important to understand God's Moral Law because God places such high value on it. God is a righteous God, who wants us to conform to His righteous nature. God gave us the Moral Law (see "C.S. Lewis and the Moral Law" Appendix A) to lay out rules for interacting with one another and with Him.

The problem is none of us is capable of keeping God's laws. We all fall short before God's absolute standards (Romans 3:23). Hence, the real purpose of the Moral Law is to show us that it is impossible for any of us to keep it! We all sin, and this separates us from God. We ache to reunite and end this separation.

GOD'S PERSONALITY

Throughout the ages people have had a yearning for God. We don't normally yearn for what does not exist. We don't yearn for unicorns or Pegasus, the

winged horse. Where does the idea implanted in us of the existence of God come from? Where does the notion that God exists originate? It is God who placed in our hearts the desire to know him. Without this knowledge, we are like fish out of water.

It is very important to understand God's personality, so that we can understand His actions and why He offers us the opportunity of being spiritually and/or physically healed.

Plato, the greatest of Greek philosophers, four hundred years before Christ, in his *Republic* said, "The highest end of human knowledge is to know the Good" (*Republic* 505a). He described the "Good" as the supreme, eternal, unchangeable, and universal Form. Everything emanates from the Good, according to him. Plato, using God-given intuitive knowledge, considered the "Forms" as the building blocks of the universe.

The Forms, according to Plato, have an independent existence. For Plato, the intelligible Forms include Truth, Justice, Beauty, Nobility, and dozens of other concepts. The Form of "Truth," for example, represents Absolute Truth. It is the archetype or model for all truth. It embodies the very essence of Truth and all other truths are lesser reflections of it.

For example, Plato believed that somewhere is the ideal Form of a chair, a man, a woman, or a horse. All other chairs, men, women, and horses are inferior copies of their original Forms. For Plato, we obtain knowledge of the world by directing our intellect to the Forms, and the highest of the Forms, the Good, illumines our intellect and makes the other Forms intelligible.

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Thus reason or wisdom for man, for Plato, comes from seeing the world in the light of the Good. God proclaimed at creation, "It is good," but after the Fall, evil entered the creation, as will be shortly explained, leading Jesus to say "no one is good - except God alone" (Mark 10:18).

St. Augustine (354-430 AD), a profound Christian thinker, considered the principal Forms to be the eternal ideas in the mind of God. Since they exist in God's intellect, he explained, they share God's essential attributes and are eternal, necessary, and unchangeable. He maintained that God, through His grace, had given Plato an insight into His divine nature.

Love, truth, justice, beauty, goodness, virtue, righteousness, holiness, wisdom, joy, and life originate with God, according to Augustine. They are ideas in the mind of God and comprise His essence. Just like facets in a diamond, they are aspects of God's personality. God defines truth, because He is truth. He alone determines true reality. God sets the standard of holiness, because He is holy. God sets all moral absolutes, as they are perfected in Him. He embodies and defines them. Good is who God is.

When we search for ultimate truth, love, beauty, and justice, we are really seeking God, as He embodies these principles. If we want to have peace and joy, we must seek God.

Those who seek Him, find Him (Matthew 7:7). God blesses those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

Jesus, as God's incarnation, affirmed this when He said, "I am the truth and the life" (John 14:6). We have seen that God is Truth, and therefore God

cannot lie (Titus 1:2). Christ as the incarnation of God, shares God's attributes and does not lie. When He states He is "the life," we should fully realize that He is life itself.

Why is this information important? If we want life, we need to go to the fountain, the very essence of life, which is Christ, and He will splash us with life, bring spiritual regeneration and physical healing.

OUR REBELLION

If God is good, why is there disease and death in His creation? The Bible tells us why. God created Adam from the dust of the earth and breathed into him the breath of life. God put Adam in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and keep it. God commanded Adam to eat freely from any tree in the garden, except from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

He created Eve from Adam as a helper. The serpent made Eve doubt God's goodness, and persuaded her to eat of the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Eve gave some of the fruit to Adam and he ate.

God could have created Adam and Eve to obey Him as robots or automatons, but He chose to give them free will. He loved them so much that He gave them the opportunity to rebel against Him. Exercising their free will, they chose to eat of the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Because of their rebellion, the entire Creation became cursed by sickness and death. Adam and Eve, our ancestors, were not created to die, but disobedience of God's commandments (sin) brought the curse of death (Genesis 3:19, Romans 6:23). Disease

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accompanied and resulted in death. Disease and death have afflicted all generations since the rebellion of Adam and Eve. If you are personally dealing with disease now and even the possibility of death, realize that it is the human condition. It is a curse upon us all, which none can escape.

OUR SINFUL NATURE

It is important to know how our nature differs from God's, because until we understand the difference, we might think that we have standing before God, because of who we are or what we have done. We might feel God owes us a healing.

God is Holy. God is light, in Him there is no darkness (1 John 1:5). Sin is darkness. We have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Darkness resides in all of us. Through our own efforts and work we cannot make ourselves acceptable to God. Religions, chanting, yoga, meditation, alms to the poor, donations to charitable foundations, tithing will not cleanse our corrupted natures.

To use an imperfect illustration, if God's righteousness were the distance from the earth to the sun, ninety-three million miles (150 million kilometers), the holiest human being (the Patriarch Abraham, Moses, the Apostle John, the Prophet Daniel, Mother Theresa) has a righteousness of one eighth of an inch (0.3175 centimeters). In reality, God's holiness is infinite, and our holiness is nothing in comparison. As Paul said, all our righteousness adds up to a heap of filthy rags before God's glory (Isaiah 64:6).

We cannot bridge the gap between God's holiness and our sinful nature through good works.

Such an attempt would be similar to trying to cross the Pacific in a paper boat.

Despite this incredible chasm, God, because He is good, loves us. “God is love,” (1 John 4:8). Only God is holy and He alone is capable of taking the penalty for our sin. The Jews would sacrifice animals to atone for their sins. When John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him at the River Jordan, he said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). The perfect sacrifice had to be free of sin, and since only God is without sin, the perfect sacrifice had to be God Himself.

God incarnated Jesus as a man to die on a cross to take the penalty for our sin. His blood, shed on the cross, washes our sins away, if in faith we turn to Christ and believe in him.

By believing in Him, we gain eternal life, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16, NIV). Although we have no rights before God because of who we are or what we have done, He has given us the offer of eternal life through the sacrificial offering of His Son on the cross.

PROPHETIC PROOFS FOR GOD’S EXISTENCE

God, who is outside all physical dimensions, incarnated in time and space and took the physical form of Jesus Christ, fulfilling over three hundred Old Testament prophecies made hundreds of years prior to his birth. These prophecies attest to the existence of a God outside time and space, who, through His Spirit,

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revealed the future to His prophets. Sixty-one prophecies regarding Christ are very specific about this.

Christ urges us to have faith in him. This is hard to do without examining the evidence for belief. By examining some of these Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ, we see that God controls all human affairs. The prophets did not predict future events accidentally, nor was their fulfillment the product of random chance. As Einstein said, "God does not play dice with the universe." He weaves the fabric of time and space.

Let's look at just a few of these prophecies:

- The prophet Isaiah foretold of Christ's birth, "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14 NIV). Isaiah prophesied approximately seven hundred years prior to Christ's birth. Immanuel means "God with us." Mary, though a virgin, gave birth to Jesus. God weaves the fabric of the universe and can certainly have a virgin give birth. To say a virgin can't give birth or God can't have a Son is to limit the power of God. Who are we to limit God? God does as He pleases.
- The king and prophet David prophesied one thousand years prior to the birth of Jesus Christ that he would be betrayed by a friend, "Even my close friend, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me" (Psalms 41:9 NASB). Jesus was betrayed by Judas Iscariot, his friend (Matthew 10:4).
- The prophet Zechariah, around 500 BC,

prophesied that Jesus would be sold for thirty pieces of silver: "And I said to them, 'If it is good in your eyes, give me my wages, but if not, never mind!' So they weighed out thirty shekels of silver as my wages" (Zechariah 11:12). Judas betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver (Matthew 27:3).

- ✦ Zechariah prophesied that the money would be thrown into God's house: "Then the Lord said to me, 'Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which I was valued by them.' So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the Lord" (Zechariah 11:13).

When Judas saw that Jesus had been condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying he had sinned and betrayed innocent blood. The priests and elders told him this did not concern them. He was responsible. Judas threw the money into the sanctuary ("in the house of the Lord") and hanged himself (Matthew 27:3-5).

The chief priests concluded it was not lawful to return the money to the temple treasury as it was the price of blood. Therefore, with the money, they bought a potter's field in which to bury indigents. God had revealed this to Zechariah five hundred years earlier. Zechariah, however, was not fooled by the priests' legal machinations to avoid the stain of innocent blood (form over substance), but placed the potter right "in the house of the Lord."

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- ❖ Other incredible prophecies regarding Jesus Christ are that his hands and feet would be pierced (prophesized in Psalms 22:16 and fulfilled in Luke 23:33, John 20:25), and that He would be crucified with thieves (prophesized in Isaiah 53:12 and fulfilled in Matthew 27:38, Mark 15:27-28).

The **53rd Chapter of Isaiah** is a powerful, prophetic chapter regarding Jesus, the Messiah. Isaiah prophesied concerning Judah and Jerusalem, probably from 758 to 698 BC, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. He was married with two sons. According to rabbinical tradition Isaiah was sawn in half in the trunk of a carob tree when he was ninety years old, pursuant to the order of the idolatrous king Manasseh (Smith, William, L.L.D., *A Dictionary of The Bible*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville). Here is the 53rd Chapter of the Book of Isaiah:

WHO has believed our message?
And to whom has the arm
of the Lord been revealed?
For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot,
And like a root out of parched ground;
He *has no stately form or majesty*
That we should look upon Him,
Nor appearance that we
should be attracted to Him.

He was *despised and forsaken of men,*
A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;
And like one from whom men hide their face,
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

The Moral Law

Surely our griefs He Himself *bore*,
And our sorrows He *carried*;
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten of God, and afflicted.
But He was *pierced through*
for our transgressions,
He was *crushed for our iniquities*;
The chastening for our well-being *fell upon Him*,
And by His *scourging* we are healed.
All of us like sheep have gone astray,
Each of us has turned to his own way;
But the Lord has caused the *iniquity of us all*
To fall on Him.

He was oppressed and He was afflicted,
Yet He did not open His mouth;
Like a lamb that is led to *slaughter*,
And like a sheep that is *silent* before its shearers,
So He did not open His mouth.
By oppression and judgment He was taken away;
And as for His generation, who considered
That He was *cut off out of the land of the living*,
For the transgression of my people to whom the
stroke was due?
His grave was assigned *to be with wicked men*,
Yet with a rich man in His death;
Although He had done no violence,
Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.
But the Lord was pleased
To crush Him, putting Him to grief;
If He would render Himself as a *guilt offering*,
He will see His offspring,
He will prolong His days,
And the good pleasure of the Lord

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will prosper in His hand.
As a result of the anguish of His soul,
He will see it and be satisfied;
By His knowledge the Righteous One,
My Servant, will *justify the many*,
As *He will bear their iniquities*.

Therefore I will allot Him
a portion with the great,
And He will divide the booty with the strong;
Because He poured out Himself to death,
And *was numbered with the transgressors*;
Yet He Himself bore the sin of many,
And interceded for the transgressors (NASB,
emphasis added).

This incredible prophecy of Isaiah, written around 700 BC, rings with all the truths that the life of Jesus Christ embodied, including the themes of taking on the penalty for our sins, his innocence, his humble and unpretentious nature, his gentleness, his willingness to bear injustice, his crucifixion with two criminals on either side, and his burial in the tomb of a wealthy man, the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. Only a God who is omniscient and outside the time-dimension could have given Isaiah such information seven hundred years before.

David, born in Bethlehem in 1085 BC and King of Judah, wrote the following prophetic Psalm describing Jesus's torment prior and during his crucifixion (Psalm 22):

My God, my God, why have You *forsaken me*?
Far from my deliverance are
the words of my groaning.
O my God, I cry by day, but You do not answer;

And by night, but I have no rest.
Yet You are holy,
O You who are enthroned
upon the praises of Israel.
In You our fathers trusted;
They trusted and You delivered them.
To You they cried out and were delivered;
In You they trusted and were not disappointed.
But I am a *worm and not a man*,
A reproach of men and *despised by the people*.
All who see me *sneer at me*;
They separate with the lip,
they wag the head, saying,
“Commit yourself to the LORD;
let Him deliver him;
Let Him rescue him, because
He delights in him.”
...For there is none to help.
Many bulls have surrounded me;
Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me.
They open wide their mouth at me,
As a ravening and roaring lion.
I am poured out like water,
And all my bones are out of joint;
My heart is like wax;
It is melted within me.
My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
And my tongue cleaves to my jaws;
And You lay me in the dust of death.
For *dogs have surrounded me*.
A band of evildoers has encompassed me;
They *pierced my hands and my feet*.
I can *count all my bones*.

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They look, they stare at me;
They *divide my garments* among them,
And for my clothing *they cast lots* (Psalm 22:
1-8, 11-21 NASB, emphasis added).

The Roman soldiers pierced Jesus's hands and feet with spikes. Since the Sabbath was drawing near, the soldiers approached Jesus to break his leg bones, so he could no longer prop himself up on the cross to breathe, but he was already dead, and no bones had to be broken. The Roman soldiers took Jesus's outer garments and made four parts, a part to every soldier. His tunic, however, was seamless and they did not want to tear it, so they cast lots to decide who would get it (John 19:23, 24). These prophecies were made by David, *a thousand years* before Christ's birth.

Isaiah 53 mentions "pierced for our transgressions" and Psalm 22 mentions "pierced my hands and my feet." At the time of these prophecies, crucifixion was not a form of capital punishment in Israel. It was the Romans who introduced crucifixion when they occupied Palestine centuries later.

Looking at the fulfillment of these prophecies gives us faith. Not only are they evidence for the existence of God, but for the deity of Christ, as they all point to God's incarnation in time and space. The fulfillment of these prophecies demonstrates that the Word is not another account of fable or fantasy. It is evidence for the existence of a supernatural God, who deserves our faith. When we are told that healing comes from the teaching of the Word, we now have hope. The fulfilled prophecies point to a God who takes great interest in human events and who controls our destinies.

THE PROPHETIC ODDS

Some of us are mathematically inclined while others avoid numbers like the plague. God, as the author of history through his Holy Spirit, inspired his prophets to record events concerning Christ that were not realized for hundreds of years. Using statistical probability in *Science Speaks*, Peter Stoner calculates that the fulfillment of just eight prophecies is a statistical probability of 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000 or 1 in 10 to the 17th power (Stoner, Peter W., *Science Speaks*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1963, as quoted in McDowell, Josh, *Evidence That Demands A Verdict*. San Bernardino: Here's Life Publishers, Inc., 1979). To help us understand this staggering probability, he provides the example of taking 10 to the 17th power silver dollars and laying them across the face of Texas. The entire state would be covered with silver dollars to a depth of two feet.

Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote them in their own wisdom. (Stoner 167)

The chance of one man fulfilling 48 prophecies is 1 in 10 to the one hundred and fifty seventh power. Jesus uncannily fulfilled at least 48 prophecies. The odds of this happening are infinitesimal. There is no

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explanation but that an intelligent God inspired the writing of these prophecies and then fulfilled them in the incarnation of His Son, Jesus Christ.

For those who are not mathematically inclined, just know that there is no way the string of prophecies Christ fulfilled could have happened accidentally.

THREE

The Key to Healing

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

We will now zero in on how God revealed himself to men and women by coming to earth in the body of a humble man. Why do we need to do this? Because this humble man, Jesus Christ, is the key to eternal life and spiritual healing.

God is light, and in him there is no darkness (1John 1:5). God is clothed in light (Psalm 104:2), the light of his holiness. Light will not coexist with darkness. God's light was brought into the world when God incarnated as a man, "and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

John, the beloved apostle, wrote of Christ, "He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men" (John 1:2-4 NASB). Jesus confirmed this when he claimed, "I am the light of the world" (John 9:5).

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Jesus relentlessly upheld the claim that he was the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father. Jesus said, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9 NIV).

Jesus also said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I AM." Realizing His claim of pre-existence, a claim of Godhood, they picked stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid and went out of the temple (John 8:58-59).

On another occasion, Jesus was nearly stoned again, when He told the Jews He gave His sheep eternal life and they would never perish. He then said, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). His audience picked up stones. Jesus said He had shown them many great miracles from the Father; for which were they stoning him? They told Him they were not stoning Him for His miracles, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God" (John 10:33).

In John 5:19 we are told that His countrymen were trying to kill Him because not only was He breaking the Sabbath, but He was calling God His own father, making himself equal to God.

Jesus said, "If you had known Me, you would have known My father also; from now on you know Him and have seen Him" (John 14:7). He is saying that by knowing Him, we know the Father, and by seeing Him, we have seen the Father. He is saying He is one and the same as the Father. He further states that no one has ascended into heaven, but the Son of Man who descended from heaven, attesting to His origin in heaven as part of the Godhead (John 3:13).

By His actions as a man, Christ showed us the nature of God. Christ was loving, gentle, merciful,

compassionate, sensitive, humble, just, but exposed hypocrisy and confronted evil. He healed the crippled and the lepers, restored sight to the blind, fed the hungry, delivered the demon possessed, walked on water, stilled the storm, and broke the bonds of death by resurrecting the dead. Christ Himself resurrected (see “The Greatest Sign – The Resurrection” Appendix B).

LIFE AND HEALING COME THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

Regarding Jesus, the Gospel of John states, “All things came into being through Him” (John 1:3). “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4). Jesus said, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6 NIV).

Jesus told Martha, whose brother Lazarus had died, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies” (John 11:25 NIV). Jesus then went to the tomb of Lazarus, which was a cave imbedded in a hillside with a stone laying against it. John 11:39-45 (NKJV) recounts the story:

Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, “Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days.”

Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. Jesus lifted up His

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eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me."

Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" And Lazarus came out of the tomb, bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus told the people, "Loose him, and let him go."

If Jesus had not said "Lazarus, come out," addressing Lazarus by name, all the dead in the graveyard would have come out. Such is the power of God.

God permitted Lazarus to die, that His power might be manifested. God was then glorified when He brought Lazarus back from the grave. Sometimes God permits bad things to happen to us so that He might be glorified.

BELIEF IN CHRIST BRINGS ETERNAL LIFE

Jesus earlier said to Martha, "Whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world" (John 11:26-27).

We should note that Jesus told Martha to believe, and if she believed, she would see the glory of God. Believe what? Jesus tells us...We must believe that the Father sent the Son.

Jesus urges us to believe He is the Son of God: "Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of

the miracles themselves” (John 14:11 NIV). He tells us that His miracles attest that in the beginning, the Word, which was with God and was God (John 1:1), became flesh. He is the Word of God incarnated.

One of the major purposes of the miracles of Jesus is that they testify to His identity as the Second Member of the Trinity, the Son of God. His miracles of healing the sick, raising the dead, walking on water, stilling a storm, delivering the demonically possessed, all point to the power of God. No human being has ever exhibited such power.

Why does the Son of God desire us to believe in Him? Because He loves us, He wants us to draw close to him. He wants us to spend eternity with Him. Jesus said, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him” (Revelation 3:20).

OPENING THE GATE OF ETERNAL LIFE

It is not enough to intellectually agree that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, God in the flesh, and died for our sins. It is not enough to have some type of mystical or emotional experience. Warm, fuzzy, positive feelings about Christ will lead us nowhere. We receive Christ in faith, through an act of our will. The key to salvation, eternal life, having God’s Spirit, the Holy Spirit, indwell in us is to want to receive Christ and sincerely pray a prayer such as this one:

Jesus, I acknowledge I’m a sinner. Thank you for dying on the cross and washing away my sins. I ask you to be my Lord and Savior. Please come into my life and take charge. I turn my life over

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to you from this moment on. Thank you that your Holy Spirit is now dwelling in me. Thank you for taking the darkness away, and giving me your abundant Life. Give me the wisdom to know your will, and the strength to live according to your righteousness.

If you have prayed this prayer, the prophecy of Isaiah, “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light...a light has shined on those who dwelt in land of the shadow of death” (Isaiah 9:2), and the promise of Jesus that he came to give us abundant life (John 10:10) apply to you. You now have reason for hope.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well, “God is spirit; and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24 NIV).

C.S. Lewis expounds on the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit relationship in *Mere Christianity*:

The whole dance, or drama, or pattern of this three-Personal life is to be played out in each one of us: or (putting it the other way round) each one of us has got to enter the pattern, take his place in that dance. There is no other way to the happiness for which we were made. Good things as well as bad...are caught by a kind of infection. If you want to get warm you must stand near the fire: if you want to be wet you must get into the water. If you want joy, power, peace, eternal life, you must get close to, or even into, the thing that has them. They are not a sort of prize which

God could, if He chose, just hand out to anyone. They are a great fountain of energy and beauty spurting up at the very centre of reality. If you are close to it, the spray will wet you: if you are not, you will remain dry. Once a man is united to God, how could he not live forever? Once a man is separated from God, what can he do but wither and die?"(Lewis 137)

By believing and trusting in Jesus, we enter the dynamic, pulsating, eternal relationship between the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus said that it is to our advantage that He went away, for when He left He would send us the Holy Spirit (John 16:7). It is the Holy Spirit which convicts us of our sin (John 16:8), and which then leads us to salvation in Christ.

Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well, "whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life" (John 4:14 NASB).

Jesus said that only the Spirit gives eternal life. Human effort, trying through works to justify its righteousness to God, accomplishes nothing. He said the words He spoke are spirit and life (John 6:63).

So, how do you draw close to His Spirit and the Life He imparts? The answer is by drinking deep of the healing waters which Christ offers. It is the Holy Spirit which draws us to these waters. And it is God's grace which allows us to drink from them. God is the Source of Life. Christ is the key to access the waters of life.

BY HIS STRIPES, WE ARE HEALED

On the cross, Christ was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities, and by His stripes, we are healed (Isaiah 53:5). Christ died on the cross to take away the penalty of our sins that separate us from God. If we believe in Christ, when we stand at judgment before a holy God, He will not see our sins. Instead, He will see the redeeming blood of His Son atoning for and covering our sins, and we will not be judged. Through His shed blood, we are healed from sin, and draw near to God.

When John the Baptist first saw Jesus, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). Again, the next day, John was standing with two of his disciples as Jesus was walking by, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" (John 1:36), and John's two disciples followed Jesus. In the same manner, the blood of Jesus, for those who believe in Him, gives us hope, eternal life, and, at times, even physical healing.

FOUR

He Who Heals

GOD IS THE SOURCE OF HEALING

Many of us need to pray for God's spirit of discernment. We don't need to be anxiously searching for miracle workers to lay hands on us and pray for us. Some have received the gift of healing (1 Corinthians 12:9), but it is the Holy Spirit, God's Spirit, who heals. We only need to trust the Lord. True deliverance from disease will come from the Lord, not from practicing positive thinking, or reciting "feel good" affirmations. Human feelings can be deceptive. Faith in God through Jesus Christ will deliver us because it draws us to the Source of salvation and healing power. God promises, "I am the Lord your God. Open your mouth wide and I will fill it" (Psalm 81:10).

JESUS IS COMPASSIONATE

Christ is the express image of God (Hebrews 1:3). We understand God's personality by looking at Christ.

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Jesus is compassionate, just as the Father is compassionate. Jesus had compassion on a widow and raised her dead son back to life (Luke 7:12-15). Jesus had compassion on the two blind men sitting on the road to Jericho. He touched their eyes and they were able to see (Matthew 20:30-34). Jesus preached the good news of the kingdom and healed every disease and sickness. When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them (Matthew 9:35-36). They were healed. God does not heal us because we are righteous—there is nothing we can do to earn it. Healing, like salvation, is a free gift.

Jesus often paired the forgiveness of sin and the caution to stop sinning, with physical healing. After Jesus healed the man who had been sick thirty-eight years by the pool of Bethesda, Jesus warned him to go and sin no more, or something worse would strike him (John 5). When a paralytic was brought to Jesus lying on a bed, Jesus said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven you" (Matthew 9:2 NKJV). Jesus, then said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go home" (Matthew 9:6). The forgiving of sin, which only God can do, often accompanies physical healing.

FAITH IN CHRIST

Christ said He is the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Him (John 14:6). The faith that saves and heals is to trust the Person of Christ. By faith all things are possible. *The power is not in the amount of faith we have, but in the object of our faith, a Person, the Second Person of the triune Godhead.* It is the power in

Christ which throws mountains into the sea, heals leprosy, heart disease, diabetes, AIDS, and cancer. A little faith goes a long way when your God is the Almighty God.

Faith is a gift from God, given to us through grace, and there is nothing we can do to earn it (Ephesians 2:8). God is love (1 John 4:8), and His love for us is *infinite*. Faith, which is coming to Christ, is the result of God drawing us to Him (John 6:44). Faith comes from hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

Faith is made up of three elements, according to Charles Spurgeon, the British 19th century Baptist preacher: knowledge, belief, and trust. Faith starts with knowledge of divine truth. It goes on with belief in those things that are true, and with trust in that Truth.

When we read the Bible or hear it taught, the Holy Spirit reaches deep in our souls and convinces us of the truth of Christ's claims. We then come to believe in Him and are saved and in God's perfect will, healed of disease as well. Jesus tugs at our spirit with His words, "Come to Me, all you who labor and heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28 NKJV).

Jesus urges us to remain joined to Him, and He will remain with us. Just as a branch cannot produce fruit unless it stays joined to its trunk, we cannot produce fruit unless we remain joined to Christ, the source of life and healing (John 15:4).

By remaining joined to Christ and aligning our will with His, we can ask the Father for whatever we want in Christ's name, and our prayers will be answered (John 15:15-16).

FAITH AND HEALING

The following passages from Scripture detail examples of physical healing when people put their faith in Jesus:

- ✦ Jesus encountered a blind man on the road to Jericho. The blind man found out Jesus was coming and yelled, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Some people told him to be quiet. But he kept yelling, “Son of David have mercy on me!” Jesus heard him and asked he be brought over. Jesus said, “Receive your sight. Your faith has made you well” (Luke 18: 35-42). The object of faith for the blind man was Christ. The blind man believed that Jesus could heal him. His faith was objective and it was rewarded.
- ✦ A woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up from behind, and touched the cloak of Jesus. Jesus turned to her and said, “Take heart, daughter, your faith has healed you,” and the woman was healed (Matthew 9:22). The woman had faith in Jesus Christ. She knew that if she reached out to Jesus and touched His cloak, she would be healed. She believed Christ had the power to heal her. Her faith was rewarded.
- ✦ A Roman Centurion came to Jesus in Capernaum and told Jesus his young servant lay at home paralyzed and tormented. Jesus told the Centurion He would come and heal him. The Centurion answered he was not worthy that Jesus should come under his roof. He

asked Jesus to speak a word and the servant would be healed. When Jesus heard this, He marveled, and told his followers that in all of Israel, He had not found such faith. Jesus told the Centurion that because he believed, his request had come to pass. The servant was healed that same hour (Matthew 8:5-13).

Although Jesus isn't walking this earth anymore, we can still have faith in Him. Jesus instructs us to have faith in God (Mark 11:22). Having faith in God is equivalent to having faith in Jesus Christ who claimed, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). Christ is part of the triune Godhead.

WHAT IF YOU AREN'T HEALED?

Faith is a complicated thing. Though faith was a crucial part of physical healing in the above examples, do not berate yourself for "not having enough faith" if God chooses not to heal you at a specific time. Rather, immerse yourself in God's Word so that you will become knowledgeable of His truth and receive His peace—which surpasses all understanding. Aligning yourself more closely with His will, and His nature will eventually change your prayer life and the things you ask for as well (Mark 11:24). Some people of faith have shown such courage and maturity that they completely entrust both their physical and spiritual welfare to God—regardless of the outcome.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego faced impending death in a blazing furnace for not bowing down and worshiping Nebuchadnezzar as God. Their reply to him was, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to

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defend ourselves before you. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. But even if He doesn't, Your Majesty can be sure that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up" (Daniel 3:16-18). That's amazing faith.

If you read the story in Daniel's Chapter 3 you'll find out what happens. However, these fellows made that statement of faith before knowing the end of their story. Such faith is the type of faith we should have in Christ. Persist in prayer and never give up. Put your future in His hands. He is the Great Physician. Although He may not always physically heal us, He loves us and will take care of us. He will be with us through any trial and He will always provide spiritual healing for those who ask and ultimately eternal life.

OVERCOMING DEATH WITH CHRIST

Jesus conquered death through his resurrection—a historical fact. He promises those who believe and trust in him, "Because I live, you shall live also," (John 14:19). Because of his faith in Christ, the apostle Paul confidently exclaimed, "Oh Death, where is your victory? Oh Death, where is your sting?" (1 Corinthians 15:55).

Those in critical condition need not fear, as long as they believe in Christ, even if they face death (see "Death of the Body and Passing Into Eternal Life" Appendix C). David, king and psalmist, writes, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and

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Your staff, they comfort me” (Psalm 23:4 NKJV). Of God’s Spirit the Psalmist recites:

Where can I go from Your Spirit?
Or where can I flee from Your presence?
If I ascend into heaven, You are there;
If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.
If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there Your hand shall lead me,
And Your right hand shall hold me (Psalm 139:7-10 NKJV).

Jesus promises us, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you,” (Hebrews 13:5 NIV).

FIVE

Be Healed

ASK FOR HEALING

Many of us are reluctant to pray to God on personal matters. We think God is too busy to listen to us or that we might be somehow disturbing Him. However, we need to *ask* God to heal us. He encourages us to do just that (James 5:13). God heals today (see “Modern Day Healing” Appendix D).

It is Jesus, God Incarnate, who urges us to ask: “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent. If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!” (Matthew 7:7-11 NKJV).

Be Healed

"Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24 NKJV).

If you haven't already done so, ask for spiritual healing (salvation) first. Refer back to *Opening the Gate of Eternal Life*, and follow the prayer there, or just express it in your own words to God.

Then, if God leads you to pray for physical healing, pray something like the following:

Lord you are a Great and Holy God. Thank you for giving me eternal life through your Son, Jesus Christ. Thank you for your Holy Spirit who dwells in me.

Heavenly Father I thank you that your Word says, "Do not fear, I will help you" (Isaiah 41:13). "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7 NKJV).

Your Word says, "I am the Lord who heals you" (Exodus 15:26). Jesus, you also said that if we abide in you and your words abide in us, we can pray for whatever we desire in your will, and our prayers will be answered (John 15:7).

Lord, everything came into being through you. You created every cell in my body. Thank you for loving me so much that you died on a cross to take away the penalty of my sins and the curse of death. You are the Source of life and health.

Take away this_____ (specify illness or problem). Please heal me. In

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the name of Jesus Christ, I pray you restore me to complete health. Thank you. Amen.

TRUST THE LORD

God is sovereign. Some of us in faith may pray the above prayer and receive a definite assurance from the Holy Spirit we have been healed. We will know beyond a shadow of a doubt we have been healed. The healing may be complete, or it may be over a period of time. The Holy Spirit may impress on our spirit that the healing has been given, a free gift from God.

Healing is not just an impression in our spirit or a feeling we are healed. It is objective. When Jesus healed a leper, He instructed him to show himself to a priest, to confirm the healing (Mark 1:44). When it comes to verification that we have been healed, we should not play mind games, but deal in objective reality. Have a doctor confirm your healing.

Jonathan Edwards, the insightful American theologian and preacher (1703-1758), maintained that God recreates the universe instant by instant. God is very active in His creation. He continuously upholds it. If we are sick, even from the most dreaded diseases such as metastasized cancer, AIDS, or a heart which is about to fail, God is fully capable of replacing your diseased cells and organs with healthy, vibrant ones this very instant. But, regardless of whether God physically heals you at this time or not, it is important to continue to trust and rely upon Him.

God sometimes allows great trials so that we may draw close to him. He tests those He loves (Hebrews

12:6), so they will seek and trust him in their hour of need, and He will deliver them. When you turn to Him in need, He will answer your call. God rewards those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

Even the Apostle Paul wasn't healed when he beseeched God to physically heal him. He had been plagued by a "thorn in the flesh," which he called a "messenger from Satan," to keep him from becoming proud (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). Paul prayed to God three times that this affliction might leave him, but it didn't. The Lord said to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Accepting his affliction, Paul exclaimed, "I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:9-10 NIV).

Most importantly, God can bless you with eternal life, an eternity in His glorious presence, in a place where there is no sickness, death, or sorrow. Through His Son, you can live a more abundant life. As Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10 NKJV).

If we believe in God, we will prevail with God. Charles Spurgeon said that he had never been so happy in his life as when he had nothing to trust but God. During great storms in our lives, when we are sinking into a watery abyss and reach out for him, in love He throws us a lifeline.

THANK THE LORD

The Apostle Paul encourages us to “be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thesalonians 5:16-18 NIV). Paul rejoiced through many beatings, much suffering, and imprisonment. He wasn’t focused on his circumstances, but on God who is the fountain of joy.

Paul exhorts us to, “Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 5:19-20 NIV).

FOLLOW (OR KEEP SEEKING) THE LORD

We have explored the Word extensively. We have seen Christ’s claims regarding who He is and why it is important to believe in Him. We have examined the concepts of grace and faith. We have looked, in the text of this booklet and in the appendices, at the evidence for faith, including: the Moral Law, attesting to the existence of God; the numerous Old Testament prophecies Christ fulfilled, attesting to a Supernatural Intelligence outside space and time which directs human history; and the proofs of the Resurrection, giving us hope of a life beyond death and confirmation of Christ’s incredible claims.

By now, some of you may have drawn close to God and gained salvation. Many who have come to believe in Christ and prayed in faith may have been physically healed by the Holy Spirit. Perhaps some of you without any faith may also have been healed

through God's grace, causing you now to have faith. Find a church where you can fellowship with other believers, receive encouragement and continue to follow the Lord.

When we enter into an eternal relationship with the Source of Life, we will be splashed by God's living waters and can be healed. Healing is for a season, but then sooner or later we will all die.

Do not be disheartened if you haven't been healed. If you are overwhelmed or feel alienated from God, seek out a friend, counselor or pastor to work through this issue. God cares for you and loves you. In his sovereign will He has chosen not to heal you at this time. Rejoice that He has saved you, the ultimate healing. It is much more important to be saved than to be healed.

Most of all, remember God's pledge, "I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you" (Jeremiah 29:11-12 NIV).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

C.S. Lewis and The Moral Law

If there were a God who created human beings in His own image, as the Bible maintains, then his nature would be reflected in human nature. Engrained in all human beings is a desire to do what is right or, if our actions are evil, a desire to justify our actions in light of an absolute moral code.

Children, when caught misbehaving, will struggle to justify why they did what they knew they shouldn't. Even ruthless political leaders go to great lengths to justify their conduct in a cloak of decency. Dictators will destroy civil liberties for "the good of the people."

As C.S. Lewis aptly puts in *Mere Christianity*¹, "If there was a controlling power outside the universe, it would not show itself to us as one of the facts inside the universe—no more than the architect of a house could actually be a wall or staircase or fireplace in that house. The only way in which we could expect it to show itself would be inside ourselves

as an influence or a command trying to get us to behave a certain way. And that is just what we find inside ourselves. Surely this ought to arouse our suspicions” (Lewis 19).

Though there are differences between the moral ideas of one time or culture and those of another, points out Lewis, the differences are not really very great—not nearly so great as most people imagine—and you can recognize the same law running through them all.

Honesty is valued in the West and the East. “Progress means not just changing, but changing for the better. If no set of moral ideas were truer or better than any other, there would be no sense of preferring civilized morality to savage morality, or Christian morality to Nazi morality” (11).

The moment we say one set of moral ideas is better than another, we are measuring them both by a standard, saying that one of them conforms to the standard more closely than the other. The standard that measures two things is something different from either. As Lewis says, “You are, in fact, comparing them both with some Real Morality, admitting that there is such a thing as a real Right, independent of what people think, and that some people’s ideas get nearer to that real Right than others. If your moral ideas can be truer, and those of the Nazis less true, there must be something—some Real Morality—-for them to be true about” (11).

This Real Morality is an absolute standard imprinted in our minds by the controlling power, God, outside the universe. God is a great artist, as the universe is a very beautiful place, and intensely interested in right conduct—in fair play,

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unselfishness, courage, good faith, truthfulness and honesty.

Having established an absolute standard of morality, God abides by his strict and moral principles and as such, for those who rebel against Real Morality, becomes a Terrifying God. Having established the Law, God, being righteous and fair, will not break it.

“The Moral Law does not give us any grounds for thinking that God is ‘good’ in the sense of being indulgent, or soft, or sympathetic. There is nothing indulgent about the Moral Law. It is as hard as nails,” writes C.S. Lewis (23). Being intensely interested in right conduct, God will punish wrong conduct.

The Apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans clearly states, “He will punish sin wherever it is found. He will punish the heathen when they sin, even though they never had God’s written laws, for down in their hearts they know right from wrong. God’s laws are written within them; their own conscience accuses them, or sometimes excuses them” (Romans 2:12-14 Living Bible).

The Moral Law is written in our hearts. If we don’t believe in God because the universe seems cruel and unjust, where do we get this idea of *just* and *unjust*? “A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line” (Lewis 31). We wouldn’t call a room dark unless we knew what light was. In our hearts we all have inscribed the Moral Law, and by breaking its very strict principles, we incur the wrath of a Terrifying God.

Although fallen men and women may not know what is right and wrong, God’s laws are nevertheless written in their hearts. God has placed in men

Appendix A - C.S. Lewis and The Moral Law

and women *a priori* knowledge of his Moral Law. They may not know *absolutely* because they chose to sin and not know absolutely. Through intent and conduct they chose to see “through a glass darkly;” they have “fuzzed up” the clarity of God’s laws in their hearts. Different groupings of men and women around the world have drifted in various degrees from the Moral Law. The absolute Moral Law is available to every man and woman in the ultimate authority on God’s mind, the written Word, the Bible.

APPENDIX B

The Greatest Sign – The Resurrection

Jesus said, “No one can kill me without my consent—I lay down my life voluntarily. For I have the right and power to lay it down when I want to and also the right and power to take it again. For the Father has given me this right” (John 10:18 Living Bible).

Paul argues, “For if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ must still be dead. And if he is still dead, then all our preaching is useless and your trust in God is empty, worthless, hopeless; and we apostles are all liars because we have said that God raised Christ from the grave, and of course that isn’t true if the dead do not come back to life again. If they don’t then Christ is still dead, and you are very foolish to keep on trusting God to save you, and you are still under condemnation for your sins...in that case all Christians who have died are lost! If being a Christian is of value to us only now in this life, we are the most miserable of creatures” (1 Corinthians 15:13-19 Living Bible).

Appendix B - The Greatest Sign - The Resurrection

The historical reality of the resurrection is the most important pillar of Christianity. By being raised from the dead, Jesus was proved to be the mighty Son of God, with the holy nature of God himself (Romans 1:4).

R. M'Cheyne Edgar, in his work *The Gospel of a Risen Saviour*, says, "Here is a teacher of religion and He calmly professes to stake His entire claims upon His ability, after having been done to death, to rise again from the grave. We may safely assume that there never was, before or since, such a proposal made. To talk of this extraordinary test being invented by mystic students of the prophecies, and inserted in the way it has been into the gospel narratives, is to lay too great a burden on our credulity. He who was ready to stake everything on His ability to come back from the tomb stands before us as the most original of all teachers, one who shines in His own self-evidencing life!"

Jesus predicted His resurrection and emphasized that His rising from the dead would be the "sign" that would authenticate His claims of being the Messiah. The following verses document His claims to resurrection: Matthew 12:38-40, 16:21, 17:9, 17:22-23, 20:18-19, 26:32, 27:63, Mark 8:31, 9:10, 9:31, 10:32-34, 14:28, 58; Luke 9:22, John 2:18-22, 12:32-34.

Just to quote one of these cites, John 2:18-22 (New International Version): "The Jews demanded of him, 'What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?' Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.' The Jews replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in

three days.' But the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken."

Using the historical approach, we note the resurrection of Christ is an event that occurred in a definite time-space dimension. Wilbur Smith², noted scholar and teacher, observes the following:

The *meaning* of the resurrection is a theological matter, but the fact of the resurrection is a historical matter; the nature of the resurrection body of Jesus may be a mystery, but the fact that the body disappeared from the tomb is a matter to be decided upon by historical evidence. The place is of geographical definiteness, the man who owned the tomb was a man living in the first half of the first century; the tomb was made out of rock in a hillside near Jerusalem, and was not composed of some mythological gossamer, or cloud-dust, but is something which has geographical significance. The guards put before the tomb were not aerial beings from Mt. Olympus; the Sanhedrin was a body of men meeting frequently in Jerusalem. As a vast mass of literature tells us, this person, Jesus, was a living person, a man among men, whatever else He was, and the disciples who went out to preach the risen Lord were men among men, men who ate, drank, slept, suffered, worked, died. What is there 'doctrinal' about this? This is a historical problem. (Smith 386)

Let it simply be said that we know more about the details of the hours immediately before and the actual death of Jesus, in and near Jerusalem, than

we know about the death of any other one man in all the ancient world (386).

The resurrection of Christ enjoys a wealth of evidence, which includes:

1. The testimony of history

A Jewish historian by the name of Josephus wrote at the end of the first century AD, in his *Antiquities*: “Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him many Jews, and also many Greeks. This man was the Christ. And when Pilate had condemned him to the cross, upon his impeachment by the principal man among us, those who had loved from the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive on the third day, the divine prophets having spoken these and thousands of other wonderful things about him. And even now, the race of Christians, so named from him, has not died out” (3.3).

Josephus was a Jew trying to please the Romans. He would not have related this story if it were not true, as it was not pleasing to the Romans. It portrayed Pilate as condemning the “Christ.”

2. The testimony of the apostles

Simon Greenleaf, Professor of Law at Harvard University, wrote in *An Examination of the Testimony of the Four Evangelists by the Rules of Evidence Administered in the Courts of Justice*³:

The great truths which the apostles declared, were that Christ had risen from the dead, and

that only through repentance from sin, and faith in Him, could men hope for salvation. This doctrine they asserted with one voice, everywhere, not only under the greatest discouragements, but in the face of the most appalling errors that can be presented to the mind of man. Their master had recently perished as a malefactor, by the sentence of a public tribunal. His religion sought to overthrow the religions of the whole world. The laws of every country were against the teachings of His disciples. The interests and passions of all the rulers and great men in the world were against them. The fashion of the world was against them. Propagating this new faith, even in the most inoffensive and peaceful manner, they could expect nothing but contempt, opposition, revilings, bitter persecutions, stripes, imprisonments, torments and cruel deaths. Yet this faith they zealously did propagate; and all these miseries they endured undismayed, nay, rejoicing. As one after another was put to a miserable death, the survivors only prosecuted their work with increased vigor and resolution. The annals of military warfare afford scarcely an example of the like heroic constancy, patience, and unblenching courage. They had every possible motive to review carefully the grounds of their faith, and the evidences of the great facts and truths which they asserted; and these motives were pressed upon their attention with the most melancholy and terrific frequency. It was therefore impossible that they could

Appendix B - The Greatest Sign - The Resurrection

have persisted in affirming the truths they have narrated, had not Jesus actually risen from the dead, and had they not known this fact as certainly as they knew any other fact. (Greenleaf 28-30)

After the crucifixion the apostles went into hiding, afraid of the persecution of the authorities (certainly not possessing the courage to break into Jesus's tomb and "steal" His body as the chief priests bribed the guards to say), yet of the twelve apostles, many went on to die martyrs' deaths, preaching that Jesus is the Son of God who rose from the dead. Peter denied Jesus several times after Jesus had been arrested, but a short time after His crucifixion and burial, Peter was in Jerusalem preaching boldly under the threat of death that Jesus was the Son of God who had resurrected.

So fervent was Peter's faith, that when it came time for his own crucifixion, he asked to be crucified upside down, because he felt not worthy to die as Christ had. Thomas, who had put his fingers in Jesus's nail prints to believe, died a martyr's death when he was thrust through with a spear. James, Jesus's brother, who had been skeptical of His claims, died a martyr's death by stoning after Jesus appeared to him (1 Corinthians 15:7).

It is hard to die for a lie. In recent history we've seen some die for political causes they believe in, but none die for what they *don't* believe in. Something transformed these intimidated, cowering apostles into powerful spokesmen of their faith...Jesus had appeared to them.

In the Book of Acts we are told that Jesus had presented Himself alive to His apostles. “He also presented Himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3 NASB).

3. Jesus had in fact died on the cross

While hanging on the cross, relates the apostle John, “When Jesus...had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit. The Jews therefore, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for the Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. The soldiers came, and broke the legs of the first man and of the other man who was crucified with Him; but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs; but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water. He who has seen has borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe” (John 19:30-35 NASB).

The apostle Mark also gives a similar account: “Someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed, and gave Him a drink, saying, ‘Let us see whether Elijah will come to take Him down.’ And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed His last. And the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. When the centurion, who

was standing right in front of Him, saw the way He breathed His last, he said, 'Truly this man was the Son of God!'" (Mark 15:36-39 NASB).

"When evening had already come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, a man who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God; and he gathered up courage and went in before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate wondered if He was dead by this time, and summoning the centurion, he questioned him as to whether He was already dead. And ascertaining this from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph" (Mark 15:42-45 NASB). The centurion had knowledge that Jesus had died, otherwise he would not have confirmed the fact to Pilate, and Pilate would not have granted the body to Joseph of Arimathea for burial.

"Joseph bought a linen sheet, took Him down, wrapped Him in the linen sheet, and laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. And Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Jesus were looking on to see where He was laid" (Mark 15:46-47 NASB).

4. The Stone

Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Jesus, came to anoint Jesus on the first day of the week when the Sabbath was over. The women were concerned, and discussing who would roll away the stone from the entrance of the tomb so

they could anoint Jesus with the spices they had bought. When they arrived at the tomb, the stone “had been rolled away, although it was *extremely large*” (Mark 16:4 NASB). Matthew also describes the stone as “a *large* stone” (Matthew 27:60). It is generally believed the stone weighed about two tons. It was most likely rolled into place in a trench or groove that sloped down in front of the tomb opening.

5. The Seal

Of more importance than the size of the stone, aside from the fact that a large stone would have deterred potential robbers, was the seal which was set on the stone. The Pharisees went to Pilate and informed him that Jesus had said that after three days he would rise again. They requested that Pilate give orders that the grave be made secure until the third day, “otherwise His disciples may come and steal Him away and say to the people, ‘He has risen from the dead,’ and the last deception will be worse than the first. Pilate said to them, ‘You have a guard; go, make it as secure as you know how.’ And they went and made the grave secure, and along with the guard they set a seal on the stone” (Matthew 27:64-66).

A.T. Robertson in *Word Pictures in the New Testament*⁴ described the probable method used in sealing the stone: “...probably by a cord stretched across the stone and sealed at each end as in Dan. 6:17 (‘And a stone was brought and laid over the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the

signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing might be changed in regard to Daniel'). The sealing was done in the presence of the Roman guards, who were left in charge to protect this stamp of Roman authority and power. They did their best to prevent theft and the resurrection (Bruce), but they overreached themselves and provided additional witness to the fact of the empty tomb and the resurrection of Jesus (Plummer)" (239).

The seal could also have been a cord of two pieces of rawhide stretched diagonally to four clay packs with the seal in the center. Punishment for breaking the seal was execution, very often crucifixion upside down. It is highly unlikely the fearful apostles would have broken the seal of the Roman governor.

6. The Grave Clothes

When Simon Peter entered the tomb of Jesus, he saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the face cloth, which had covered the head of Jesus, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself (John 20:3-7).

John R.W. Stott⁵ comments, "It is not hard to imagine the sight which greeted the eyes of the apostles when they reached the tomb: the stone slab, the collapsed graveclothes, the shell of the head-cloth and the gap between the two. No wonder they 'saw and believed.' A glance at these graveclothes proved the reality, and indicated the nature, of the resurrection. They had been neither touched nor folded nor manipulated by any human being. They were like a discarded

chrysalis from which the butterfly has emerged” (Stott 53-54).

7. The Cover-Up

Pilate’s response to the Pharisees was “You have a guard,” which can be interpreted as *you may have a Roman guard, or you already have your own guards in the form of the temple police*. Prevalent authority concludes that a Roman guard was posted. Otherwise, why would the Pharisees go to Pilate to make the grave secure. They wouldn’t have needed Pilate’s authorization to post the temple guard, which they controlled.

When Jesus resurrected, in fear of Pilate’s wrath, the guards went to the chief priests and reported all that happened (Matthew 28:11). The chief priests gave the guards a large sum of money to misrepresent what had occurred: “You are to say, ‘His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.’ And if this should come to the governor’s ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble. They took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day” (Matthew 28:13-15 NASB).

Because of the strict discipline in the Roman military, a Roman guard would have reason to fear the consequences from an angry Pilate, who would have accused the guard of sleeping on duty while the body was being stolen. This was a capital offense, punishable by death. Evidently the chief priests had influence over Pilate and promised the fearful Roman guards protection if

they lied. The priests sweetened the pot by giving the guards a large sum of money. They would not have had to bribe their own temple guard. The bribe confirms Jesus's body was missing and had not been stolen.

Professor Albert Roper⁶ numbers the Roman guard from ten to thirty and the seal on the tomb as the Imperial Seal of Rome (whose violation would have carried the full retribution of the Roman Empire).

A Roman guard was a fighting machine usually of sixteen men, each trained to protect six square feet of ground. Judea was a treacherous part of the Roman Empire, rife with rebellion and religious zealots. After the apostle Paul was taken for his safety by the Romans to their barracks in Jerusalem, Paul's nephew informed the Roman commander of a planned ambush on Paul's life by forty individuals who had taken an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. The commander promptly commissioned two centurions to take Paul and proceed to Caesarea, a port city, in the middle of the night with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen (Acts 23). When it came to security, the Romans did not hesitate to use a large number of soldiers. The Roman guard at the tomb of Jesus was most likely a large one.

In combat a sixteen man guard could form a square, four men to each side. The soldiers were armed with a six foot pike consisting of a sharp iron head fixed to a wooden shaft, a three foot thrusting sword, a dagger, and a wooden

or wicker shield covered with leather and metal work. Roman soldiers wore a corset of leather with scales of bronze or iron and a helmet of iron. To give the impression of height, the soldiers affixed three upright feathers of about a foot and a half to their helmets. The wealthier soldiers wore a coat of mail, while the rest wore eight inch square plates of bronze to protect their chest and heart.

The soldiers slept in shifts, rotating every three hours. In a group of sixteen, ten men slept, while six stayed on guard, so that every soldier slept eight hours. If a Roman soldier fell asleep, the entire guard was executed. They were stripped of their clothes and burned in a fire started with their garments.

There wasn't much sleep that night. Matthew describes what happened while the guard was on duty, "...a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. And his appearance was like lightning, and his garment as white as snow; and the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men" (Matthew 28:2-4 NASB).

8. Suffering of Jesus

Some have said that Jesus did not die on the cross, but merely passed out. After He was placed in the tomb, He revived, got up, and left.

What this argument overlooks are the physical trials Jesus suffered prior to and during the crucifixion. Prior to being taken prisoner, Jesus

traveled on foot throughout Palestine, and, it is reasonable to assume, was in good physical health. Anticipating his ordeal on Thursday evening in Gethsemane, Jesus suffered great mental anguish, and, as described by Luke, a physician, sweated blood. Bloody sweat is a rare phenomenon but may occur in very intense emotional states and is the result of hemorrhaging into the sweat glands (JAMA⁷ March 21, 1986 - Vol 255, No. 11, p. 1455).

After Jesus was arrested in Gethsemane by the chief priests, officers of the temple, and elders, He was mocked, blindfolded, and beaten. He was asked, “‘Are You the Son of God, then?’” He answered, ‘Yes, I am,’” (Luke 22:70). They took Him to Pilate, where they accused Him of misleading the nation and forbidding the people to pay taxes to Caesar, saying He was Christ, a King.

Pilate found Jesus not guilty and, upon learning He was a Galilean, sent Him to Herod. Herod was glad to see Jesus, as he wanted to see Jesus perform a miracle. Herod questioned Jesus at great length, but Jesus did not answer. Jesus was then mocked, dressed in a gorgeous robe, and sent back to Pilate. Pilate informed the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, he found Jesus not guilty. He would punish and release him, but they cried out for the release of Barabbas instead and the crucifixion of Jesus. He granted their demand.

Flogging was a legal preliminary to every Roman execution. A short whip was used of several

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braided or single leather thongs in which were imbedded small iron balls or sharp pieces of sheep bone, to tear the flesh. The back, buttocks, and legs were flogged. Flogging was intended to weaken the victim to a state just short of collapse or death. The resulting bleeding set the stage for circulatory shock and determined how long the victim would survive on the cross. The Roman soldiers spat on Jesus and beat Him on the head, placing on Him a crown of thorns. So weakened was Jesus that the Roman soldiers had to press Simon, a Cyrenian, to carry the cross. Since an entire cross probably weighed over 300 lbs., only the patibulum or crossbar, weighing 75 to 125 lbs., was carried. It was placed across the nape of the victim's neck and balanced on both shoulders.

Romans preferred to nail their victim's hands to the crossbar. Remains found in an ossuary near Jerusalem of a crucified victim, dating from the time of Christ, reveal that tapered iron spikes 5 to 7 inches long and 3/8 inch wide were used. These spikes were driven through the wrists rather than the palms. The Romans also preferred to nail their victim's feet.

The weight of the body hanging from the cross fixed the intercostal muscles in an inhalation state and severely taxed exhalation. Thus, breathing was shallow and, in order to exhale, the victim had to push up on his feet by flexing his elbows and adducting his shoulders. Doing this placed the weight of the body on the tarsals, and was extremely painful. "Furthermore, flexation of

the elbows would cause rotation of the wrists about the iron nails and cause fiery pain along the damaged median nerves. Lifting of the body would also painfully scrape the scourged back against the rough wooden stipes. Muscle cramps and paresthesias of the outstretched and uplifted arms would add to the discomfort. As a result, each respiratory effort would become agonizing and tiring and lead eventually to asphyxia" (*JAMA*, March 21, 1986 - Volume 255, No.11, p.1461).

Survival on the cross ranged from three to four hours to three or four days, and was related to the severity of the scourging. When the scourging was relatively mild, Roman soldiers would expedite death by breaking the legs below the knees, thereby suffocating the victim. By custom, one of the Roman guards would also pierce the body with a spear or sword through the heart.

The gospel of John informs us that, "When Jesus...had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit" (John 19:30). So that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath, Pilate was asked that the legs of those crucified might be broken. "The soldiers therefore came, and broke the legs of the first man, and of the other man who was crucified with Him; but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs; but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water" (John 19:32-34 NASB), a sign of rapid decomposition.

To allege that Jesus "swooned" rather than died on

the cross and later revived in the coolness of the tomb, regained His strength after the extensive physical trauma He'd been through (including a spear thrust through his side), pushed aside a two ton stone, and spent the next forty days ministering to His followers across the Holy Land is ludicrous.

9. The Eyewitnesses

After the crucifixion, the apostles were discouraged and defeated. They did not understand the prophecies that Christ must rise from the dead (John 20:9). After the resurrection, Jesus appeared to them over a period of forty days. He presented Himself alive, "By many convincing proofs" (Acts 1:3). He appeared to them the first day of the week through closed doors and showed them his hands and his side (John 20:19-20).

A week later His disciples were in the house again with Thomas. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, see my hands. Reach out and touch my side. Stop doubting and believe."

Thomas, realizing that Jesus was of flesh and not an illusion or a ghost, exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!"

Jesus said, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and believed" (John 20:26-30).

Some days later, Peter and some of the apostles

went fishing (John 21). They had fished all night without catching anything. Early in the morning Jesus stood on the shore.

He called out to them, "Friends, have you caught any fish?" "No," they answered, not recognizing Him.

"Cast your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some," He said. When they did, they were unable to haul the net in, because of the large number of fish.

John, recognizing Jesus, exclaimed, "It is the Lord," Peter jumped into the water and swam the hundred yards to shore. The others followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish.

When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals near Jesus with fish on it, and some bread.

Jesus said, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught."

Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, one hundred and fifty three, but despite its weight, was not torn. "Come and have breakfast," Jesus said. None of them dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord.

For decades afterward, to the end of their lives, the apostles proclaimed Jesus rose from the dead, not intimidated by beatings, tribunals, and death. Only an actual resurrection could have ignited such fervor.

Many others witnessed the resurrected Christ. Mary Magdalene had been weeping at the tomb

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(John 20). She saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying. "Woman, why are you weeping?" they asked.

She answered, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him."

She turned around and saw Jesus standing there, yet she did not recognize Him and mistook Him for the gardener. Jesus asked, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?"

She replied, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away."

Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and exclaimed, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher).

Jesus asked Mary not to hold on to Him, as He had not yet ascended to the Father (John 20:17). He instructed her to go find His disciples and tell them He was ascending to the Father.

Paul informs us in his letter to the Corinthians, written in approximately 56 AD, that Jesus was seen by more than five hundred of His followers at one time (1 Corinthians 15:6). Paul mentions that most of these witnesses to Christ's resurrection were still alive. These individuals were around to refute the account of the resurrection had it been a lie, but none of them did. This attests to its truth. For an in depth analysis of this topic please read the "Historical Reliability of the Bible" under "Powerful Evidence ForThe Deity of Christ," Section 5 of Reap the Harvest's apologetic website www.earthharvest.org.

APPENDIX C

Death of the Body and Passing Into Eternal Life

“**F**or as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22 NASB). It is *only* in Christ that you can be made alive. Jesus said it was to our advantage that He went, because the Holy Spirit would not come to us unless He went. Jesus sends the Holy Spirit. “I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness, and judgment” (John 16:7-9 NASB). When we turn our lives over to Jesus Christ as our personal savior, the Holy Spirit indwells in us (John 14:17). It is the power of the Holy Spirit which heals the sick and raises men and women from the dead.

“Even though Christ lives within you, your body will die because of sin; but your spirit will live, for Christ has pardoned it. And if the Spirit of God, who raised up Jesus from the dead, lives in you, he will make your dying bodies live again after you die, by means of this same Holy Spirit living within you” (Romans 8:10-11 Living Bible).

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Paul tells us the type of body we will have is in our own garden, “When you put a seed into the ground, it doesn’t grow into a plant unless it ‘dies’ first. And when the green shoot comes up out of the seed, it is very different from the seed you first planted. For all you put into the ground is a dry little seed of wheat, or whatever it is you are planting, then God gives it a beautiful new body—just the kind he wants it to have; a different kind of plant grows from each kind of seed” (1 Corinthians 15 Living Bible). In effect a metamorphosis occurs. A new body “sprouts” out of the old one. The earthly body is shed and a vibrant new body replaces it. Paul describes the process in detail:

Just as there are different kinds of seeds and plants, so also there are different kinds of flesh. Humans, animals, fish, and birds are all different. The angels in heaven have bodies far different from ours, and the beauty and the glory of their bodies is different from the beauty and the glory of ours. The sun has one kind of glory while the moon and stars have another kind. And the stars differ from each other in their beauty and brightness.

In the same way, our earthly bodies which die and decay are different from the bodies we shall have when we come back to life again, for they will never die. The bodies we have now embarrass us for they become sick and die; but they will be full of glory when we come back to life again. Yes, they are weak, dying bodies now, but when we live again they will be full of strength. They are just human bodies at death, but when they come

back to life they will be superhuman bodies. For just as there are natural, human bodies, there are also supernatural, spiritual bodies.

The Scriptures tell us that the first man, Adam, was given a natural, human body but Christ is more than that, for he was life-giving Spirit. First, then, we have these human bodies and later on God gives us spiritual, heavenly bodies. Adam was made from the dust of the earth, but Christ came from heaven above. Every human being has a body just like Adam's, made of dust, but all who become Christ's will have the same kind of body as his—a body from heaven. Just as each of us now has a body like Adam's, so we shall some day have a body like Christ's (1 Corinthians 15:39-49 Living Bible).

Paul continues,

"I tell you this, my brothers: an earthly body made of flesh and blood cannot get into God's kingdom. These perishable bodies of ours are not the right kind to live forever" (1 Corinthians 15:50 Living Bible).

"For we know that when this tent we live in now is taken down—when we die and leave these bodies—we will have wonderful new bodies in heaven, homes that will be ours forevermore, made for us by God himself, and not by human hands. How weary we grow of our present bodies. That is why we look forward eagerly to the day when we shall have heavenly bodies which we shall put on like new clothes. We shall not be merely spirits without bodies. These earthly

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bodies make us groan and sigh, but we wouldn't like to think of dying and having no bodies at all. We want to slip into our new bodies so that these dying bodies will, as it were, be swallowed up by everlasting life. This is what God has prepared for us and, as a guarantee, he has given us his Holy Spirit" (2 Corinthians 5:1-5).

By looking at the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we can get some perspective on the kind of body we are promised. The resurrected body of Jesus transcended physical limitations and could pass through locked doors (John 20:19). At times Jesus was not recognizable (Luke 24:13-16; John 20:14, 15; John 21:4, 12; Mark 16:12), however He had the ability to make Himself known. Jesus was able to eat with His resurrected body. The apostle Thomas touched the hands of Jesus pierced by nails and His side into which a spear was thrust (John 20). Jesus was not a ghost or spirit. He possessed flesh and bones.

Jesus tells us there is no marriage in heaven, nor will those worthy of having resurrected from the dead, die again. As sons of the resurrection, they will be equal to the angels and be sons of God (Luke 20:34-36).

For a believer in Jesus Christ, death is a transition into a vibrant, joyful eternity in which he or she will pulsate with life. "Now we look forward with confidence to our heavenly bodies, realizing that every moment we spend in these earthly bodies is time spent away from our eternal home in heaven with Jesus" (2 Corinthians 5:6 Living Bible).

As a plunge into an unknown ocean of spectacular coral reefs and incredibly beautiful sea creatures,

so is the transition of the physical body to the eternal, superhuman body. Residing for eternity in the company of He who is the source of life will be the reward of all those who accept God's free gift, salvation through faith in the Son of God.

Death for those who are in Christ is not a time of mourning. We will all die sometime. Because of the sin of Adam, death is unfortunately inevitable. However, death for those who trust in Jesus Christ has lost its sting. "His weak, human body died on the cross, but now he lives by the mighty power of God" (2 Corinthians 13:4 Living Bible), and so will you in Him.

When a believer leaves his or her physical body at death, the spirit goes to the Lord. When Stephen was being stoned for boldly proclaiming the gospel, he called on the Lord and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" (Acts 7:59). Paul tells us that "to be absent from the body" is "to be present with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8).

The believer's spirit will remain with the Lord for a season. The believer will then receive his or her physical body when, "there will be a trumpet blast from the sky and all the Christians who have died will suddenly become alive; and then we who are still alive shall suddenly have new bodies too. For our earthly bodies, the ones we have now that can die, must be transformed into heavenly bodies that cannot perish but will live forever" (1 Corinthians 15:52-53 Living Bible).

"When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death is your

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victory? Where, O death is your sting?' The sting of death is sin...Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:54-57).

All who live should accept the promise of Jesus, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die" (John 11:25-26, NASB).

APPENDIX D

Modern-Day Healings

God healed the sick in Biblical times and He continues to heal today. Our God is not a small God. We shouldn't put Him in a box, limiting His powers with our personal misconceptions. If God created the universe *ex nihilo* (Latin for "out of nothing"), He can certainly heal the sick.

I recently returned from Fiji, having lectured on Christian apologetics. In Fiji I met a pastor who told me he had prayed for an old Hindu gentleman who was bedridden for six months with a painful abdominal condition. The old man, a Hindu, could barely talk. The pastor asked the old man if he could pray for him, and the old man agreed. The old man asked the pastor to reach under the bed where he lay, take out a Bible the old man stored there, but couldn't understand, and read any verse. The pastor chose John 3:16:

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in

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Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (NKJV).

“Do you believe this?” asked the pastor. The old man nodded his head. The pastor lay hands on the old man’s head and prayed. The pastor prayed a simple prayer, “Lord, this man is a Hindu man. He just gave his life to you. Heal this man.”

Afterwards, the old man told the pastor that he had felt power moving through his body during the prayer. Three days later the old man was walking, talking, and eating. Six weeks later the old man could walk two kilometers to town and could now read and understand the Bible. After six months the old man played a musical instrument and sang at church every Sunday. For ten years the old man preached the saving power of Christ, and his entire family was saved. After ten years the old man died.

A young boy and girl were afflicted with sores and boils on their legs from playing in the tombstones of a cemetery. A missionary came to their house one day and asked their father if he believed in Christ. He said he would, if his children were healed. The missionary prayed. The children were miraculously healed. The father believed and came to Christ. Most of the village followed. The young boy is now a pastor and told me his story.

A woman told me that both her son and daughter died of an undiagnosed illness. She also fell sick with the same illness and was dying when someone prayed for her. She turned to Christ and was completely healed. Her father rejoiced and gave a parcel of land to build a small church on in the sugar cane fields.

Appendix D - Modern-Day Healings

A middle-aged man informed me he had been an alcoholic. He was in a diabetic coma at the hospital on life support, when his mother, who was not a Christian, prayed to the God she did not know for her son's healing. That night he came out of the coma, completely healed. He has now accepted Christ and has forsaken alcohol.

Another man said he had served in a temple, taking care of the idols for the *puja*, a religious ceremony. He had developed cracks and sores in his hands and feet, which bled and wouldn't heal. A Christian neighbor told him about Christ and prayed for him. The cracks and sores healed. He turned to Christ and abandoned his idols.

A Fijian village chief and Christian pastor related to me healings he had been involved in. A carpenter, he later introduced me to, badly hurt his hip and was bed ridden. His son had to assist him in turning his leg in bed. He was prayed for. His condition greatly improved. Now he is able to move about using crutches. A woman suffered from acute gastritis (acid reflux) and could only consume watered down oatmeal. Doctors and drugs didn't help. Life turned into an ordeal of continuous suffering. She was too ill to work and lost her job. Then, she was prayed for and the Holy Spirit completely healed her.

I asked the village chief why there are so many more miraculous healings in rural Fiji than in the United States. He replied, "Here we don't have a lot of money. We can't afford expensive doctors. We can only look to God when we are sick. If he doesn't heal us, we may die. We have Jesus for healing. He is the only one who can help us."

Be Healed By the God Who Cares

Prior to visiting Fiji, I experienced abdominal pains. A CAT scan showed enlarged liver ducts. I also became very weak after eating bread, rice, and noodles, all whole grain, supposedly healthy. I did not know what to eat. I had been swimming half an hour daily. Now I could barely swim twenty minutes once a week. I was tested for celiac disease, which is an allergy to wheat products. The test showed I did not have celiac disease.

I prayed and in a dream I was instructed to eat steak for three days, which I did. I gained strength. Then in four snapshot visions over a couple of weeks I saw sweet potatoes, yellow corn, white corn tortillas, and a dish yellowed by eggs. I included these foods and eggs in my diet with no adverse reactions.

My trip to Fiji was coming up. As I didn't want to burden my hosts with a peculiar diet, I prayed for healing. My wife told me to have faith and eat everything offered, as God would heal me. I reasoned I represented God on this trip, and kings normally don't send out sick ambassadors. But I was also aware, as stated earlier in this booklet, that the Apostle Paul had been plagued by a "thorn in the flesh," which he called a "messenger from Satan," to keep him from becoming proud (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). Paul prayed to God three times that this affliction might leave him, but it hadn't.

The Lord said to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Accepting his affliction, Paul exclaimed, "I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in

persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:9-10 NIV).

If God hadn't healed Christianity's greatest evangelist, why would God heal me? Still I took my wife's assurances to heart. I ate everything served on the plane, including cookies and white potatoes. I waited to see if I would become weak from these foods, but nothing happened. During the entire trip, I ate everything, including bread, white rice, noodles, and pastries, with no adverse reaction.

When I returned from Fiji, I was given the results of a follow-up MRI scan, taken at the hospital the day prior to my departure. They were normal. The liver ducts were no longer swollen, but normal. God had healed me.

(Endnotes)

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