

## Chapter 5

# Salvation: More Than You Realize

**T**he 1st Century Jewish concept of salvation, based on Scripture, was one of complete wholeness for the individual:

Our view of sickness is different from that of Jesus and his contemporaries. ... Today we distinguish between body and soul, the ancient Hebrews did not. Jesus and his hearers correlated salvation with the physical, as well as the spiritual. Saving the whole person constituted deliverance from the dominion of sin and Satan. ... In Scripture, the forgiveness of sin, eternal life, deliverance from spiritual bondage and healing are bound up into one comprehensive salvation.<sup>1</sup>

In Psalm 3:8, “salvation” in Hebrew is *yasha*, a primary root verb with the meaning of “free ... deliver(-er), help, preserve, rescue, ... save(-iour), get victory.” *Yeshuwah*, derived from *yasha*, lists health as a primary part of deliverance and is the all-encompassing Hebrew word for “salvation,” the quality belonging to the LORD of David’s Psalm 3:8:

## Jesus Heals Today

Salvation [Author's note: total deliverance] belongs to  
the LORD.

Your blessing is upon Your people.

God the Father's names in Hebrew include *Jehovah-rapha*, or "God the Healer" (Physician), and *Jehovah-shalom*, or "God our Peace and Good Health."

God Himself states in Exodus 15:26b that He heals: "For I am the LORD who heals you." Isaac Leeser, recognized Bible translator and scholar, translated this statement as "for I the Lord am thy physician."<sup>2</sup>

Jesus' redemptive work provided a new and better covenant (Hebrews 8:6–13). Verse 6 indicates that the new covenant was to be "established on better promises." The word *better* is the Greek *kreitton*, meaning "stronger."

When Jesus paid the penalty for all of mankind's sins, the price also paid for consequences of everyone's sins, including physical and mental illness. The old covenant revealed God the Father providing physical healing, subject to mankind obeying His laws. The new covenant focuses on God the Son who offers physical healing as a component of salvation.

The need for supernatural physical healing, as well as for spiritual salvation, originated with mankind's first sin—when Adam and Eve transferred the human race and this world from God's authority to Satan's. Sickness and death resulted from the first couple's sin of disobeying God.

Satan's rulership of the world, gained through his successful temptation of our first parents, was the basis for his temptation of Jesus. In Luke 4:5–6, he showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the earth. "And the devil said to Him, 'All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.'"

The word "delivered" is the Greek *paradidomi* with the basic meaning of "to surrender ... betray." Physical sickness, mental

## Salvation: More Than You Realize

illness, and other consequences of sin are results of Adam and Eve's yielding to Satan's arguments. The first couple delivered the world to Satan through betrayal of God. The devil was given the right to rule over earthly kingdoms. Jesus referred to Satan in John 12:31 as the "ruler of this world," and He said that this ruler "will be cast out." But in an ultimate sense, "The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness" (Psalm 24:1a).

Jesus was sent by His Father to pay the total penalty for sin and its consequences. His main purpose for coming to earth was to destroy the "works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). These "works" include sickness and disease.

### Physical Healing Included in Salvation

Physical healing is an important part of biblical Christianity.

Dr. C. I. Scofield, well-known theologian and editor of the Scofield Bible (SCO), included healing as an element of the Hebrew and Greek words for salvation.

The Heb. and Gr. words for salvation imply the ideas of *deliverance, safety, preservation, healing, and soundness*. Salvation is the great inclusive word of the Gospel, gathering into itself all the redemptive acts and processes. [emphasis by Dr. Scofield]<sup>3</sup>

Isaiah wrote of sickness and pain as being part of Jesus' redemptive work on the cross. A number of major Bible versions have reference notes indicating that the words "sorrows" and "grief(s)" in Isaiah 53:3 and 4—literally are "pains" and "sicknesses."

He is despised and rejected by men,  
A Man of sorrows [NKJV marginal note: Lit. *pains*] and  
acquainted with grief [NKJV marginal note: Lit.  
*sickness*].

And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him;  
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

## Jesus Heals Today

Surely He has borne our griefs [NKJV note: Lit. *sicknesses*]  
And carried our sorrows [NKJV marginal note: Lit. *pains*];  
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,  
Smitten by God, and afflicted.

Verse 5 elaborates on Jesus' work on the cross for us:

But He was wounded [NKJV marginal note: Or *pierced through*] for our transgressions,  
He was bruised [NKJV marginal note: *crushed*] for our iniquities;  
The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,  
And by His stripes [NKJV marginal note: Blows that cut in] we are healed.

Isaac Leaser translated these same verses 3–5 as follows (ILB):

He was despised and shunned by men;  
a man of pains, and acquainted with disease;  
and as one who hid his face from us was he despised,  
and we esteemed him not.  
But only our diseases did he bear himself,  
and our pains he carried:  
while we indeed esteemed him stricken,  
smitten of God, and afflicted.  
Yet he was wounded for our transgressions,  
he was bruised for our iniquities:  
the chastisement for our peace was upon him;  
and through his bruises was healing granted to us.

Leaser's translation of the first part of verse 10 is:

But the Lord was pleased to crush him through disease.<sup>4</sup>

Robert Young translated verses 3–5 and all of verse 10 as follows (YLT):

He is despised, and left of men,  
A man of pains, and acquainted with sickness,

## Salvation: More Than You Realize

And as one hiding the face from us,  
He is despised, and we esteemed him not.  
Surely our sicknesses he hath borne,  
And our pains—he hath carried them,  
And we—we have esteemed him plagued,  
Smitten of God, and afflicted.  
And he is pierced for our transgressions,  
Bruised for our iniquities,  
The chastisement of our peace is on him,  
And by his bruise there is healing to us ...  
And Jehovah hath delighted to bruise him.  
He hath made him sick,<sup>5</sup>

### *Two New Testament Writers' Interpretation of Isaiah 53*

The Bible states in Deuteronomy 19:15b that “by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.” The apostle Paul reiterated this principle in 2 Corinthians 13:1. Two of the many witnesses who established the matter of Jesus’ crucifixion and of His resurrection from the dead were Matthew and Peter. These two also knew Isaiah 53 in the original Hebrew.

In chapter 8, verses 16 and 17 of his gospel, Matthew narrates a scene from Jesus’ physical healing ministry. The apostle clearly confirmed Isaiah 53 to mean that Jesus took our physical illnesses upon Himself through His redemptive work:

When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

*“He Himself took our infirmities  
And bore our sicknesses.”*

## Jesus Heals Today

The primary Greek word translated “infirmities” is *astheneia*. This Greek word can be translated “infirmity,” “infirmities,” “weakness,” “sickness,” and “diseases.” It is used twenty-four times in the New Testament: eight times in the gospels and Acts, and sixteen times in the epistles. *Astheneia* is used both to convey physical sickness and to suggest weakness in a general sense. All eight instances of this word in the gospels and in Acts refer to physical sickness.

In the same Matthew reference is the Greek word *nosos* whose meanings include “disease” and “sickness,” as in “And bore our sicknesses.” *Nosos* is used twelve times in the New Testament, and this Greek word always refers to sickness and disease.

The apostle Peter in 1 Peter 2:24 wrote his interpretation of much of Isaiah 53:5:

who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree,  
that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes [NKJV marginal note: *wounds*]  
you were healed.

In this verse, Peter wrote the past tense of the Greek *iaomai* as “by whose stripes you were healed.” This basic Greek word means “heal, make whole.” In twenty-six of the twenty-eight times this word appears in the New Testament, the meaning is physical healing. The exceptions are Hebrews 12:13, a figurative use of physical healing, and Luke 4:18, describing emotional healing. The only other New Testament words for “healed” are *therapeia* and *sozo* or “saved,” both of which convey the meaning of physical healing.

1 Peter 2:24 shows that the apostle was convinced that Jesus’ beatings and wounds (Matthew 27:26–30) removed our physical sicknesses—retroactively, as indicated by the shift from Isaiah’s present tense “are healed” to Peter’s past tense “were healed.”

***“Save” or “Saved”—Includes Physical Healing***

Numerous cases of the 94 New Testament *sozo* references for “save” or “saved” have clearly physical contexts [“heal, preserve, save (self), do well, be (make) whole.”].

In each of the following verses, the New King James Version translation of *sozo* has been bolded for emphasis:

- Physical healing
  - ♦ Jesus’ response to the woman healed of the blood problem: “Your faith has made you **well**” (Matthew 9:22).
  - ♦ Jairus’ plea for Jesus to come to his home to heal his sick daughter: “Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be **healed**, and she will live” (Mark 5:23).
  - ♦ Jesus’ words to the blind man near Jericho: “Receive your sight; your faith has made you **well**” (Luke 18:42).
  - ♦ James’ instruction to the Church regarding physical healing: “And the prayer of faith will **save** the sick, and the Lord will raise him up” (James 5:15).
- Physical deliverance
  - ♦ Peter’s cry for physical deliverance from the high waves: “Lord, **save** me!” (Matthew 14:30).
  - ♦ Blasphemers taunting Jesus at His crucifixion: “**Save** Yourself, and come down from the cross!” (Mark 15:30).
  - ♦ Jesus’ response to the scribes and Pharisees’ denunciation for His Sabbath healing of the man with the withered hand: “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to **save** life or to destroy it?” (Luke 6:9).

“Save” often is used in the Bible as an all-inclusive word meaning spiritual, mental, and physical deliverance or healing. God’s will is for all mankind to be “saved”: “who desires all men to be saved

## Jesus Heals Today

and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). God desires all people to be healed.

### ***“Salvation”—Includes Physical Healing***

The principal Hebrew word meaning “salvation,” *yeshuwah*, includes health.

The Greek nouns *soteria*—meaning “deliver, health, salvation, save, saving.”—and *soterion* or “salvation” are derived from *soter*, meaning “deliverer, i.e. God or Christ:—saviour.” *Soter* comes from the previously discussed *sozo* (“save”), which includes healing and wholeness.

Acts 4:12 is an outstanding example of both of the above Greek words for “salvation” and “saved” used in a physical healing context. In chapter 3, Peter, accompanied by John and through God’s power, had participated in the miraculous healing of a lame beggar. In answer to the Council’s challenge of his and John’s authority to heal, Peter actually was stating, “Nor is there healing [*soteria*: “deliver, health, salvation, save,”] in any other, for there is no other name under Heaven given among men by which we must be healed [*sozo*].”

### ***Jesus’ Name—Includes Physical Healing***

The name *Jesus* (*Iesous*) is the Greek form of the Hebrew proper name Joshua, or Jehoshua (with several variations, including the Hebrew *Yehowshuwa*). *Joshua* is derived from a name for God, *Yehovah* or *Jehovah*, and *yasha*, meaning “defend, deliver (-er), help, preserve, rescue, be safe, bring (having) salvation, save (-iour), get victory.” *Yasha* is also the root of the noun *yeshuwah*, meaning “deliverance, health, help (-ing), salvation, save, saving (health), welfare.” Jesus’ name is linguistically related to health and specifically suggests God’s freedom and deliverance. When we use Jesus’ name, we are referring to God’s complete salvation.

## Salvation: More Than You Realize

And since the Hebrew concept of salvation is one of total deliverance, we also are referring to the spiritual, mental, and physical wholeness signified by His name.

### *Prototypes of Jesus' Work—Atonement for Sickness and Disease*

Old Testament Israelites were expecting the Messiah, the One whose restoration was to include the body.

An example was the bronze serpent mounted on a pole by Moses. The serpent was a type of Jesus and His saving, healing atonement on the cross. God told Moses that “everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.’ ... and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived” (Numbers 21:8–9).

Another illustration of the concept of atonement is found in Leviticus 14:18, where the priest made atonement for the cleansed leper. The priest took the place of God the Father and made atonement for sickness. In an infinite way, Jesus has made atonement for our sins and our sicknesses.

### **God's Willingness to Provide Healing for All**

Physical healing, an integral part of salvation, is for all. If it is not God's will to heal everyone, then it logically follows that the sovereign God wants some people to remain ill. If that were true, then our efforts to combat sickness would be in opposition to Him.

The New Testament records several instances where Jesus was willing to heal all. Matthew 8:16 states, “And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick.”

- “But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew. ... And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all” (Matthew 12:15).

## Jesus Heals Today

- “When the sun was setting, ... those who had any ... sick ... brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them” (Luke 4:40).
- “And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed them all” (Luke 6:19).

The following verses include the implied meaning of Jesus’ willingness to heal “all”:

- “And Jesus went about ... healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people” (Matthew 4:23).
- “Then Jesus ... touched him, saying, ‘I am willing; be cleansed’” (Matthew 8:3).
- “Then Jesus went about ... healing every sickness and every disease among the people” (Matthew 9:35).

Only once was Jesus’ ministry blocked. That was due to His hometown’s lack of faith. Mark 6:5–6 says, “Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief.”

## Today’s Physical Healing for Believers

First Thessalonians 5:9–10 states, “For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation [Author’s note: including physical healing] through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep [live or die], we should live together with Him.” Jesus is just as much in the healing business today as He was in the past, and He continues to be, because He is “the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

The context of Isaiah 53:10 is that God the Father allowed Jesus, God the Son, to be made sick on the cross. It therefore is not God’s will for believers to be sick and continue to carry

## Salvation: More Than You Realize

illnesses in their bodies when, two thousand years ago, His Son Jesus took upon Himself all of the sins and sicknesses of mankind.

Since health is a part of salvation, God's failure to provide physical healing would be a breach of His divine purpose. He sent His Son to totally deliver us from Satan's evil works. (See 1 John 3:8b.)

When did our salvation begin? The moment we personally committed our lives to Jesus as our Savior and Lord. When did we receive provision for complete regeneration—for forgiveness of sin and for healing? At the same moment.

It is God's desire that His children throughout the ages triumph on earth through Jesus, not live defeated lives by being sickly: "For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:17).

Second Corinthians 2:14 indicates that God is the one who leads us in victory, and in this life: "Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place."

God the Father's complete divine healing, supplied through Jesus His Son's redemption, applies to us during our lifetimes. We can appropriate it here on earth and we do not have to wait until we get to Heaven. The notion that our physical healing will come upon our death and subsequent arrival in Heaven—or when Jesus comes for us at the end of the age—is inconsistent with the entire process of God's provision of total salvation or deliverance. Why would salvation's physical and mental healing portion be reserved for us in Heaven where there is no illness because everything is perfect! Why would only forgiveness of sins be provided now on earth? That would be partial salvation, or salvation by degrees.

According to the Bible, total deliverance with physical healing is available now: "Behold, now is the day of salvation [*soteria*—"deliver, health, . . . saving."]" (2 Corinthians 6:2b) or "Now is the day of health."

## Jesus Heals Today

God's willingness to heal is not limited in scope to just some diseases!

Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
And forget not all His benefits:  
Who forgives all your iniquities,  
Who heals all your diseases.

—Psalm 103:2–3

Paul's prayer was that the Thessalonians might be purified and perfected in every area—spiritually, mentally, and physically. He wrote, "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Jesus is coming back for a triumphant bride, not a weak, sickly one. Paul's desire was that believers be preserved, or kept without flaw, for the bridegroom.

As believers, we have received forgiveness for our sins. The fact that God, in His written Word, has given us salvation through His Son, including deliverance from sin and provision for physical healing, does not mean that we will never sin and need God's forgiveness; nor does it mean that we will never get sick and need His healing. If we never got sick, there wouldn't be a need for God's divine healing.

### **Fulfillment of Life Span**

The availability of supernatural physical healing for us on earth does not mean that God's children will never die. His words in Exodus 23:25–26 refer to fulfillment of lifespan: "So you shall serve the LORD your God, and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you. . . . I will fulfill the number of your days."

God's written Word places a limit on human life. Ecclesiastes 3:2a states that He knows the extent of our lives: "A time to be born, and a time to die."

## Salvation: More Than You Realize

Job 14:5 confirms God-ordained life limits: “Since his [Author’s note: man’s] days *are* determined, the number of his months *is* with You; You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass.”

### Reaping the Consequences of One’s Own Decisions

#### *Premature Death*

God sometimes allows death to come early through a believer’s own unrepentant acts.

#### *Wickedness and Foolishness*

Do not be overly righteous,  
Nor be overly wise:  
Why should you destroy yourself?  
Do not be overly wicked,  
Nor be foolish:  
Why should you die before your time?

—Ecclesiastes 7:16–17

#### *Blasphemy or Lying Against the Holy Spirit*

“And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven.”

—Jesus, Luke 12:10

But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit ...?” Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things.

—Acts 5:3, 5

## Jesus Heals Today

### *Improper Physical Care*

Abuse of our bodies through sleep deprivation, addiction to drugs and alcohol, eating disorders, and other misuse may lead to physical harm. Suppression of the immune system allows opportunity for disease to enter our bodies and to gain ground, often leading to physical disabilities and premature death.

### *Long Life*

God sometimes allows long life, because a believer pays attention to His instructions, rests in Him, and obeys what He has said.

### *Paying Attention to God's Instructions*

Come, you children, listen to me;  
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.  
Who is the man who desires life,  
And loves many days, that he may see good?  
—Psalm 34:11–12

### *Resting in God*

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High  
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. ...  
“With long life I will satisfy him,  
And show him My salvation.”  
—Psalm 91:1, 16

### *Obedying God's Words*

“Honor your father and mother, that your days may  
be long upon the land which the LORD your God is  
giving you.”  
—Exodus 20:12; also see Deuteronomy 5:16  
and Ephesians 6:2–3

## Salvation: More Than You Realize

My son, do not forget my law,  
But let your heart keep my commands;  
For length of days and long life  
And peace they will add to you.

—Proverbs 3:1–2

Hear, my son, and receive my sayings,  
And the years of your life will be many.

—Proverbs 4:10

### *Prolonged Life*

God sometimes prolongs life because of a believer's actions, and at times He prolongs life because of His mercy.

### *Respect and Knowledge of the Lord*

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,  
And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.  
“For by me your days will be multiplied,  
And years of life will be added to you.”

—Proverbs 9:10–11

The fear of the LORD prolongs days,  
But the years of the wicked will be shortened.

—Proverbs 10:27

### *Obedience to God's Commands*

“That you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.”

—Moses, Deuteronomy 6:2

## Jesus Heals Today

“So if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.”

—1 Kings 3:14

### *Fairness in Business Dealings*

“You shall have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure, that your days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.”

—Moses, Deuteronomy 25:15

### *God’s Mercy*

Hezekiah was dying when Isaiah visited him with a personal, prophetic word that the Lord would heal him and extend his life for fifteen years: “I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you. ... And I will add to your days fifteen years” (2 Kings 20:5–6).

## **The Fallacy of Fatal Sickness Being Normal<sup>6</sup>**

After someone’s death, a common topic is the cause of death, with the assumption that a sickness was the cause. However, both the Bible and the character of God suggest that we can live healthy lives until it is time to leave this world. We do not need to die sick. We can be like the father of our friend Dave Duell. His father lived past 100 and, when ill, would say something like, “I’m sick, so it must not be my time to go.”

If God’s healing is offered for every illness, then we have the option of going to Heaven at a time of good health—like being asleep and waking up in the presence of the Lord. As an example of health and strength at the end of life, Deuteronomy 34:7 describes Moses before his death at age 120: “His eyes were not dim nor his

## Salvation: More Than You Realize

natural vigor diminished.” Caleb gives us a similar example. At 85, he said, “I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in” (Joshua 14:11).

There is no biblical basis for the notion that an individual must be weak and ill at the end of life. No Scripture teaches that God intends for physical death, i.e., separation of the human spirit and soul from the body, to be caused by physical sickness. Most biblical references to illness leading to death either explicitly or implicitly suggest that this is not the norm.

There is substantial biblical support for the ideal of long life and the conviction that sickness resulting in death is abnormal. The following nine Scripture passages are consistent with that conviction:

1. Exodus 23:25–26 directly links removal of sickness with fulfillment of life spans:

So you shall serve the LORD your God, and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you. No one shall suffer miscarriage or be barren in your land; I will fulfill the number of your days.

2. Second Chronicles 16:12–13 narrates the illness and death of Asa, Judah’s third ruler. He was a reform king who later in his life did not rely on God. The record notes that he did not seek the Lord in his disease:

And in the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa became diseased in his feet, and his malady was severe; yet in his disease he did not seek the LORD, but the physicians. So Asa rested with his fathers; he died in the forty-first year of his reign.

## Jesus Heals Today

3. Job 5:17–27 tells of “the man” who receives both the correction and the protection of God. Verse 26 predicts the circumstances of the end of his life:

You shall come to the grave at a full age,  
As a sheaf of grain ripens in its season.

The word picture of grain harvest suggests maturity, beauty, and the peak of fruitfulness—not decline of vigor or disease. The *New American Standard Bible*’s reference to “full vigor” is inconsistent with sickness:

You will come to the grave in full vigor,  
Like the stacking of grain in its season.

4. In contrast to an expectation of sickness ending long lives, Psalm 91:16 links long life and healing, since the Hebrew word translated “salvation” includes physical healing:

With long life I will I satisfy him,  
And show him My salvation.

5. Psalm 103:1–5:

Bless the LORD, O my soul;  
And all that is within me, bless His holy name!  
Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
And forget not all His benefits:  
Who forgives all your iniquities,  
Who heals all your diseases,  
Who redeems your life from destruction,  
Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender  
mercies,  
Who satisfies your mouth with good things,  
So that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.

One of God’s benefits is the healing of literally all our diseases. For those who commit to receive the promise

## Salvation: More Than You Realize

of healing of “all your diseases,” the unambiguous word *all* does not leave room for an uncured illness at the end of life. In other words, God’s healing power is capable of conquering a last illness that would otherwise prove fatal. Verses 3–5 include references to the Lord’s forgiveness, healing, and renewal of youth. The promised renewal of youth produces greater strength and better health to counter the weakness and sickness often associated with the last decades of life.

6. King Solomon, giving counsel to his son in Proverbs 3:1–2, associated keeping his commands, which became part of Scripture, with long life and peace, not struggling with degenerative illness:

My son, do not forget my law,  
But let your heart keep my commands;  
For length of days and long life  
And peace they will add to you.

7. In Proverbs 10:27, Solomon suggested that fear of the Lord protects from life-shortening threats.

The fear of the LORD prolongs days,  
But the years of the wicked will be shortened.

8. Paul, the apostle and writer of much of the New Testament, addressed destruction of the flesh (presumably death through sickness) as judgment for sin in 1 Corinthians 5:5. He wrote of

deliver(ing) such a one to Satan for the destruction  
of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of  
the Lord Jesus.

9. The apostle Paul also wrote of sickness leading to death as the result of judgment, in 1 Corinthians 11:29–30:

## Jesus Heals Today

For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.

### 70–80 Years Life Span Fallacy<sup>7</sup>

The fallacy of fatal sickness being normal is closely related to another false concept—that the normal human life span is around seventy or eighty years. One basis for this erroneous view is a misunderstanding of the words “seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years” in Psalm 90:10. These words often are used, sincerely although mistakenly, to refer to normal life spans. The Amplified Bible (TAB) footnote to this passage helps clarify the meaning from an historical context:

This Psalm is credited to Moses, who is interceding with God to remove the curse which made it necessary for every Israelite over twenty years of age (when they rebelled against God at Kadesh-barnea) to die before reaching the Promised Land (Num. 14:26–35). Moses says most of them are dying at *seventy years*. This number has often been mistaken as a set span of life for all mankind. It was not intended to refer to any one except those Israelites under the curse during that particular forty years. Seventy years never has been the average span of life for humanity. When Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes had reached 130 years (Gen. 47:9), he complained that he had not attained to the years of his immediate ancestors. In fact, Moses himself lived to be 120, Aaron 123, Miriam several years older, and Joshua 110; while in the Millennium a person dying at 100 will still be a child (Isaiah 65:20).

## Salvation: More Than You Realize

There are many biblical passages that can be used accurately for comfort at times of physical death of believers in Jesus. It is misleading for funeral speakers to use the words of Psalm 90:10 in this way. To do so is to distort their basic meaning, which, from the context of the previous verses of Psalm 90, involves iniquities and God's wrath.

God did cut short the lives of the younger adult Israelites. If their typical life span had been only seventy to eighty years, and if their lives had not been shortened, there would have been about sixty years of wilderness meandering rather than about forty. It would have taken sixty years for a twenty-year-old to reach the age of eighty. However, if we assume from Moses', Aaron's, and Miriam's years of life that a typical life span was about one hundred twenty years, then God's judgment was more dramatic. With that assumption, the natural course of lives would have taken about one hundred years before the Israelites could enter Canaan. It would have taken a hundred years for a twenty-year-old to reach the age of one hundred twenty. God's judgment to the older generations, therefore, was mercy to the youngest generation—reducing the time of their wilderness living.

This interpretation of the life span references of Psalm 90:10, as applying to God's judgment, is reinforced by a footnote to this verse in *The Companion Bible*. Here is part of that footnote:

**threescore years and ten.** This refers to the length of life in the wilderness in the time of Moses, which must have been shortened specially, so that the adults died off within the forty years. The "days" were, and could thus be, actually "numbered," as stated in v. 12; and in a way they could not have been since then.<sup>8</sup>

—TCB

This same reference Bible's "Notes on the Structure of the Fourth Book" of the Psalms includes the following:

## Jesus Heals Today

Psalms 90 and 91 are evidently one Psalm in two parts, written by Moses at the beginning of the thirty-eight years of penal wanderings in the wilderness (in 1490 B.C.), which are the subject of this Fourth Book.

Psalm 90 is suggested by, and occupied with, the sorrows of the vast multitude (associated with the 603,550 “men of war”) in the wilderness, numbered, and sentenced to death; all from 20 years old and upward (Num. 14:29). It is of these that verses 9 and 10 speak.

If a man was 20 when he was numbered (for the war) he died at or before 60.

[If a man was] 30 [when he was numbered (for the war) he died at or before] 70.

[If a man was] 40 [when he was numbered (for the war) he died at or before] 80.<sup>9</sup> (TCB)

So Psalm 90:10 refers to historical judgment on Israelites in the time of Moses, not to normal life span today. And the years of life of Moses, his brother Aaron, and his sister Miriam suggest a normal life span of around one hundred twenty years.

Another biblical evidence for one hundred twenty years as a norm for life span is Genesis 6:3: “And the LORD said, ‘My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.’” Those words were spoken shortly before the worldwide flood that was connected with Noah. Prior to the flood, life spans of over nine hundred years were usual. Noah himself lived nine hundred fifty years. Within a few generations after the flood, typical life spans had dropped to approximately one hundred twenty years, consistent with God’s edict. The edict was universal for mankind throughout the world, and there is no record of it being repealed or amended.

## Salvation: More Than You Realize

An alternate interpretation of Genesis 6:3 is that it refers to the length of time required for Noah to build the ark, but there are at least two substantial problems with that view:

1. It is inconsistent with the sequence of the text. A sequential reading of the Genesis narrative does not find any reference to the flood before Genesis 6:3. That verse precedes the commendation of Noah in Genesis 6:9 and God's speech to Noah in Genesis 6:13–21, which included His instructions for constructing the ark and His promise of the flood. So Genesis 6:3 lacks a flood frame of reference. If that verse had referred to a one hundred twenty year ark construction period, it seems logical that it would have been placed after introduction of the topics of the ark and the flood.
2. The alternate interpretation does not give the writer of Genesis credit for mathematical precision. Genesis 5:32 refers to Noah's age as five hundred years. That was prior to the flood, and at that point in the text, there had been no reference to the ark or the flood. The next two verses, Genesis 6:1–2, set the stage for God's "one hundred and twenty years" edict of verse 3. Genesis 7:11 informs us that the flood began in the "six hundredth year of Noah's life" or at age five hundred ninety-nine. Subtracting five hundred from five hundred ninety-nine results in a difference of ninety-nine years. If the ark-building had required one hundred twenty years, then Noah would have been only about four hundred seventy-nine years old (five hundred ninety-nine minus one hundred twenty) when the construction started, and God's edict would have been at about the same time or earlier. An approximately four hundred seventy-nine year-old or younger Noah being given ark-building instructions would be chronologically

## Jesus Heals Today

out of sequence with the previous reference to his age as five hundred years.

Misunderstanding the meaning of Psalm 90:10's "seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years" is one of the reasons that people in their sixties and older erroneously think they must be approaching the end of life. Such morbid thoughts can be self-fulfilling, influencing men and women not to apply principles of good health and God's supernatural healing. The life span fallacy can cause individuals literally to retire from life.