

In Matthew 8:16-17 we find Jesus at Peter's house in Capernaum, healing all who were ill, in order that Isaiah's words might be fulfilled, when he said "He Himself took up our diseases and carried our illnesses."

In Matthew 9:35 we see Jesus going about all the cities and villages of Galilee, healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

In Matthew 10:1 Jesus sent out His twelve disciples, and gave them authority to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness; and in verse 8 He told them to heal the sick and cleanse the lepers.

In Acts 5:16 we find people from the cities near Jerusalem bringing sick people to the apostles in Jerusalem, and they were all being healed.

Those who hold that it is not God's will for Christians to suffer claim that Christ's redemptive work purchased present physical healing for all believers, and that those believers who exercise faith in Christ's power and willingness to heal will be healed immediately.

"After all," they say, "would you as a human parent let your child suffer if you could relieve that suffering? Why, of course not! You could not be that cruel! You would do everything in your power to relieve that pain, that disease, that suffering. Well, do you think that God is less merciful than you? Why, of course not! So it is not God's will for you to suffer, but rather to be healed!"

These Scriptures that are quoted (especially Isaiah 53:4-5 and Matthew 8:16-17) provide a basis for the belief that Christ's atonement purchased deliverance from all physical suffering for all believers. And to this belief we would say, "Amen!" But the real question is whether or not they teach that this deliverance from all suffering is available now, during the present life.

To explore this question further, we must look at other Scriptures, those that teach that suffering is part of God's Plan for believers in this present existence.

## B. Scriptures that Teach that Present Suffering is Part of God's Plan

In II Corinthians 1:5 Paul speaks of the sufferings which are his in abundance because of his testimony to Christ.

In Colossians 1:24 Paul says that he rejoices in his sufferings for the sake of Christ and the Church.

In I Peter 4:13 Peter exhorts believers to rejoice that they suffer for the name of Christ.

In Philippians 1:29 Paul tells the believers that they have been granted the privilege, not only of believing on Christ, but also of suffering for His sake.