

2. Deliverance from physical sickness and suffering is a benefit of Christ's atonement.

The question is not whether it is the Plan of God to restore the bodies of all believers to perfect wholeness and soundness; the question is rather when He plans to do this. And the Scriptures tell us plainly that at the resurrection of believers this restoration will be ours, through Christ. In Christ all believers will be made alive to wholeness and soundness!

3. It is not God's will to deliver believers from all sickness and suffering during their present life on earth.

We have seen that some godly persons spoken of in the Bible became sick and suffered, and that God did not choose to heal them; others He did choose to heal. And we have seen that eventually the bodies of all believers die (unless Christ returns first). It is simply not God's will to keep on healing believers of every sickness so that they never die!

4. It is God's will both to deliver all believers from some sickness and suffering, and to deliver some believers from some sickness and suffering in this life.

On the one hand, we all know that God mercifully showers all believers with all kinds of benefits that they do not ask Him for. God alleviates a great deal of suffering for all believers out of His pure grace and mercy.

On the other hand, we all realize that there are many things we do not have simply because we do not ask for them, including deliverance from sickness and suffering, either for ourselves or for others; and that those believers who ask earnestly and persistently and believingly sometimes receive benefits that others of us only wish for and dream about! God graciously alleviates some of the suffering of some believers by means of believing prayer.

5. Even in cases of believing prayer for healing for ourselves or for others, the qualifier – "if the Lord wills" – must always be in the picture.

Thus even such a seemingly categorical promise as that found in James 5:14-15 must be balanced by the exhortation in James 4:15.

In James 5:14-15 the writer says: "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up."

In James 4:15 James has already said, "You ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live' . . ."