

And the very same thing is true in the case of the peace of which the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, in reference to the Messiah, "There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace." (Isaiah 9:7) This establishment of peace is not accomplished all at once, but in stages. First there is the removal of the great barrier to peace – SIN – through the death of Christ. Then there is the establishment of peace in the hearts of all who trust in Christ and His atonement. Then there is the establishment of peace in the external world by Christ's powerful rule during His millennial kingdom. And finally there is the establishment of perfect, everlasting peace in the eternal state.

Again, it is not the weakness of the atonement that prevented peace from coming immediately to the earth; it simply was not God's will to do it that way!

In all of these examples, it can be seen that Christ's atonement purchased these benefits, and that all of them flow from the atonement, but that God did not intend that they should be applied immediately, but in phases or stages.

Those who claim that present healing for all believers has been purchased by Christ stress various things in their attempts to support their view.

Sometimes they stress the implications of God's love and mercy for present deliverance from the effects of sin. However, they are selective in their identification of the effects of sin from which we are presently delivered. For example, they claim that present deliverance from sickness is provided, but not from death. But if God's love and mercy implies deliverance from sickness, would it not also imply deliverance from death?

Sometimes they stress the greatness and power of Christ's atonement to bring present deliverance from the effects of sin. But we have seen that a number of the benefits of Christ's atoning work are given in stages, according to God's Plan, and that this implies nothing about the power of Christ's atoning work.

Sometimes they stress the will of God regarding present deliverance from the effects of sin. But instead of getting information as to the will of God from the revelation of God's Plan in the whole of Scripture, they take some Scriptures, interpret them according to their own preconceptions, impose upon God what they think He ought to do, and thus come to conclusions as to what He will and must do! Needless to say, this is a bad way of discovering what the will of God is!

Sometimes they stress the need for strong faith in Christ's power and His willingness to give present deliverance from the effects of sin. However, faith is always a response to a word from God. Faith does not create truth; it receives and rests upon it. And God's Word of truth does not tell us that present healing from all sickness and suffering is a benefit available to all believers. Therefore all the faith in the world will not bring