Miracles, signs and wonders, and in particular healing were part of God’s design for the Church and for the ministry of believers to themselves and to unbelievers. But, much of “modern” teaching relegates healing and miracles following the preaching of the Word to the first-century church. The Word of God clearly teaches something different. Through patterns, examples, and even direct commands, God clearly tells us that it is His desire for us to be in health and for His Word to be confirmed when it is faithfully preached.

### The nature of God

| Exodus 15:26 | I am the LORD that healeth thee. |
| Malachi 3:6  | I am the LORD, I change not.     |

These two scriptures, although pulled out of context, demonstrate two very important truths: God is a healer and God does not change. Therefore, if God has healed in the past, then He will heal today.

### Healing of the Israelites

| Psalm 105:37 | He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes. |

When the Israelites left slavery in Egypt during the Exodus, the psalmist declares that there was not a feeble person among them. Do you understand the magnitude of that statement? Remember, they were slaves. Their diet was likely limited and less than healthy. They were subjected to intense labor. There were millions of them. Surely, there must have been numerous infirmities, injuries, sicknesses, and diseases among them. But, when they left Egypt, everyone was well.

Now, as stated earlier, God is a healer. He is the only source for the healing the Israelites received. By following His divine instruction and provision, His chosen people were healed. And, God never changes.

Before moving on, it is worthwhile to take a quick diversion. Why were all of the Israelites well when they left Egypt? The flesh of the Passover lamb. Passover is a symbol or type of the atonement. After partaking of the Passover lamb, not only were the Israelites protected from the death angel, they were all in health for their coming journey. This was a tremendous miracle.

Now, communion is the Christian observance of Passover based on the perfect sacrifice of Christ, our Passover Lamb. If Passover healed all that partook of it thousands of years ago, communion can heal all that partake of it today for not only does God never change, but we also live under a new and better covenant. This is not a stretch, for was not His body broken for us (I Corinthians 11:24)? Were we not healed by His stripes (Isaiah 53:4-5, I Peter 2:24, Matthew 8:16-17)? Is not the bread in communion a remembrance of these things? Remember them, observe them, take them to heart and be healed!
Had the Israelites obeyed God and entered the Promised Land after leaving Egypt, the heart and desire of God was to take sickness from the midst of them. Based on what happened in the Exodus, we know that He was capable and willing to fulfill this subsequent promise.

These examples show us that it was God’s desire for His children to be free from sickness and disease. Since God never changes, it is true today that God desires for His children to be free from sickness and disease. God wants you, one of His dear children, to be well today.

The latter days of the Old Covenant

Jesus, who knew more about the Old Covenant than anyone, states that the woman bound with an infirmity should not have to wait one more day to receive her healing since she is a daughter of Abraham. The implication is the Jews had a covenant right to healing in the Old Testament. Some 1,400 years after the Exodus, not only is it God’s heart to heal, He is still actually healing His children.

Even non-covenant people who demonstrated faith had a right to healing (the children’s bread). We could also cite the example of Naaman (II Kings 5:1-14) who was healed of leprosy at the direction of Elisha. God loves all of His children even if they are not currently in covenant with Him. While there is no question that He wants them to be in covenant, He still loves them and wants to provide for them. In fact, this is one of the ways He draws them to Himself. If He did this at one time, He will do it for you today.

Who was Jesus?

In Exodus, God plainly told Moses that His name is "I Am." In John 8:58, Jesus not only claims to have existed before Abraham, but He also invoked the name of God for Himself: I Am. Jesus was God manifest in the flesh. It
is another long, entire teaching to go through all of the reasons and truths behind the coming of Christ, but for our purposes it is sufficient to simply understand that Jesus was God the Son.

To further illustrate the point, we can examine the motivation Jesus gave for the things He did while on the earth.

John 6:38 - For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

John 5:19 - Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

This is probably the greatest point in this teaching. It should be taken with utmost seriousness. Jesus was God in the flesh. He came to do the Father's will, and the things Jesus did were the things that He saw the Father doing. Jesus gave us a perfect representation of God (Hebrews 1:3). He demonstrated a complete unveiling of God’s will. The gospels, the ministry of Jesus, show the will of God towards humanity.

God is the healer who never changes. Jesus was God, Jesus perfectly represented God, and Jesus only did the things He saw the Father doing. Therefore, we should expect to see healing in the ministry of Jesus.

Jesus healed the sick

Matthew 8:16 - When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick. (repeated in Mark 1:32-34 and Luke 4:40-41)

Matthew 4:24 - And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. (repeated in Mark 1:35)

Matthew 15:30b - ...and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all... (repeated in Mark 3:10-11)

Luke 6:19 - And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.

Matthew 9:31 - And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

Matthew 14:14 - And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick. (repeated in Luke 9:10-11 and John 6:1-2)

Matthew 14:36 - And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole. (repeated in Mark 6:53-56)

Matthew 15:30 - And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus’ feet; and he healed them: (repeated in Mark 7:32-37)

Matthew 19:2 - And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.

Matthew 21:14 - And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.
As discussed above, everything Jesus did was a reflection of God. Everything He did illustrated and fulfilled the will of God. In at least ten distinct instances across all four gospels (all cited above), Jesus healed all that were sick, diseased, or oppressed of the devil. How many times does God have to show and tell us? Is ten enough? Jesus healed them all, over and over again. Why? Because this is what He saw God doing. Because this is what God did when given the opportunity in the Old Testament. Because Jesus was God, and God is the healer who never changes.

So, we have a clear demonstration of God’s heart concerning healing. Through the life of Jesus, it is very clear that God hates sickness and that He is willing to do something about it. We have clearly answered the question concerning God’s heart and desire for us – He is willing to heal us all, and He is willing to heal you today.

**Jesus commissioned His disciples to heal the sick**

We will see later that we are disciples of Christ and that the nature of a disciple of Christ never changes; therefore, it is instructive to look at the original disciples. They were the examples that were chosen to demonstrate the pattern for us to follow. After Christ Himself, it is the ministry of the disciples and later apostles that are the model for us to follow. What did Jesus give them permission to do? What did He command them to do? What were His expectations for them? What did He give them to carry out their ministry? What actions and steps did they take in response to all of this?

Matthew 10:5-8 - *These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.*

Jesus specifically commissioned His twelve disciples to heal the sick, and there is no indication they were not successful. In Mark 9:18, we even see them acting along these lines with the expectation of success. But, you say, these were the twelve special, talented, loved, preferred, and specifically commissioned disciples. Weren’t they a special case?

Luke 10:1, 9, 17 - *After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come... And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you...* And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

By all accounts the expanded group of seventy disciples were also successful in healing the sick. They returned with joy, not questions. They saw success beyond healing to deliverance from demonic oppression, not failure. It was the desire of God to see people healed and not only by His hand or by the hands of his closest disciples.

John 14:17 - *Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

The disciples were able to heal the sick and work miracles because the Holy Spirit was with them. We know the Holy Spirit “dwelled with them” when Jesus was in their midst, but they had gone out on their own to do ministry for a time. Therefore, the Holy Spirit was with them apart from Jesus. He may not have been in them yet, but He was with them, given to them for their ministry.
It is also important to note that these commissions were never revoked. While it is significant that a specific revocation is never given, in a literal sense this is speaking from silence (which is usually a very touchy thing to do). But, we can have confidence that they were not revoked based on subsequent commissions. The commission to the twelve was repeated to the seventy. The commissions of the twelve and seventy were repeated to those who began the early church. From this, we can conclude that a revocation surely did not occur.

**The early church healed the sick**

Mark 16:17-18 - "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; "They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

The commission given prior to Jesus ascending into Heaven includes a directive to lay hands on the sick that they may recover. We can first infer that this was not just for the disciples since it says such signs "shall follow them that believe," meaning any and all that believe.

But, you say, we are still only talking about people specifically commissioned by the living, breathing, Christ. Perhaps all of this was possible because of His physical presence on the earth.

Acts 28:8-9 - "And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:

The recorded ministry of Paul shows a number of healings. But, he is not the only one through which God wrought signs and wonders.

Acts 8:6-7 - "And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. "For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsy, and that were lame, were healed.

Acts 9:17-18 - "And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. "And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

There is no evidence that Philip or Ananias were part of the seventy disciples in Luke. In all likelihood they were simply members of the early church. Therefore, it seems to have been commonplace in the early church for miracles and healing to occur. It was not limited to the apostles (formerly the 11 disciples). It extended into the ministries of Philip and Paul and even among other obscure characters such as Ananias.
This verse gives a simple definition of a disciple: a disciple is a believer who continues in the Word. This is an unchanging definition; it obviously applied in the time of Jesus (since He is the one that spoke the words above) and it applies today. Therefore, if we continue in the instructions of Christ, we are disciples. This is actually God’s design - He is not interested in converts (those who offer token acknowledgment and reception of salvation) but disciples (those who wholeheartedly follow Him and continue seeking Him and learning about God through the Word).

As we have seen, Jesus three times commanded His disciples to heal the sick (Matthew 10:8, Luke 10:9, and Mark 16:18). We are His disciples, too. The example He laid forth with the original sets of disciples was just that - our example. Therefore, all of the commands to heal the sick, but especially the last command in Mark 16:18, are for us to observe even today. Miracles, signs and wonders, and healing still happen today. God has never changed; He wants you to be provided for in your health today.

Jesus told the disciples to teach new disciples to observe all things He had commanded them. Again, referring back to the commissions given to the twelve and the seventy, one of His commands was to heal the sick. Since He also says He will be with us until the end of the world, there is a clear implication that this pattern is to continue until Christ returns. Therefore, miracles and healing did not cease with Jesus or the apostles. They will continue until the Second Coming.

Virtually all Christians accept that Jesus was not only speaking to the disciples in front of Him, but to all of us. The “new” commandment of Jesus was for us to love one another as He has loved us. But, how had Jesus loved when He was on the earth?

More than once we see Jesus healing the sick because He had compassion on them. Compassion is a byproduct of love. One way He loved people in His time was by healing them. He has commanded us to love as He has loved. Therefore, He has commanded us to heal them as He had healed them.
The Lord worked with them as they preached and confirmed their preaching with signs following. They were not to take Christ to the world in their own strength and power; they were not, and we are not, capable of this. Therefore, we should expect the Lord to work with us, as His disciples in this day and age, as we preach to confirm our preaching with signs following. Are we more capable, convincing, and persuasive than the original disciples? Does the mere presence of the Bible in our time impress those who have doubts and unbelief? While it may some people, in our time it is quite obvious the Bible holds little to no weight with hardly anyone in the developed world. We need the Lord to work miracles through us to confirm the Word as much as the original disciples.

**The mechanism of healing**

So, neither Jesus nor His immediate (first generation) disciples are present on the earth any longer. How is healing to happen if the “magic touch” and those He touched have left? A question of this nature reveals a deep misunderstanding.

Colossians 1:27 - To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

Both Jesus and His disciples performed the miracles they did because of Who lived on the inside of them – the Holy Spirit. There is no question that Jesus functioned in this more perfectly than anyone ever has or will. But, the point remains that He was fully human. He performed miracles by functioning in the gifts of the Spirit just as we must. The disciples performed miracles by functioning in the gifts of the Spirit just as we must. The mechanism by which God works in the world today is through Christ (the Holy Spirit) in you.

Hebrews 13:8 - Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

Jesus is present in the heart of every believer today. As we walk around and encounter different people and situations, God is there because we are there. He has never changed; we have seen this stated in the Old Testament concerning God the Father and now in the New Testament concerning God the Son. Therefore, Christ living in you desires to heal you and anyone you encounter who needs healing or deliverance. Not only is this His desire, He is present in you in the situation to make it happen. Miracles and healing still happen today because God still wants it to happen and He is present to provide the power and ability to make it happen.

God always uses people to accomplish His will. When Jesus was on the earth, Jesus was the primary person He used. Now that Jesus is no longer in a physical body, God uses His children, the “siblings” of Christ. The only way this is possible is because God is in His children to be present and do the work. His children are not sufficient in themselves to do miracles and healing (II Corinthians 3:4-6).

We carry the ministry of Christ today. We are His disciples today. We are the ones He must use to act in the world today. It is not our power or our doing that causes miracles and healing to happen, it is God. But, you will never make sense of this until you come to an understanding of Christ living in you and God working through you.
A final controversy

One of the most common teachings against miracles occurring today is based on I Corinthians 13:10.

I Corinthians 13:8-10 - 8Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. 9For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

The claim involves the Bible being the perfect thing that has come. Since it has come, the things "in part" have been done away with. Since speaking in tongues and prophesying are mentioned, these and many other things such as miracles, signs and wonders, and healing are discarded because they occurred with tongues in the book of Acts. The appearance of the Bible somehow eliminates the need for any types of miracles, healing, or confirmation of the very Word the Bible itself contains.

But, there is one problem. These verses not only say that tongues and prophesying will be done away with when that which is perfect comes, but also knowledge. Knowledge?! Has knowledge passed away? Indeed no! The exact opposite is occurring - knowledge is increasing exponentially in these last days just as prophesied in Daniel 12:4. Therefore, that which is perfect has not come, and so tongues and prophesying (and miracles and signs and wonders and healing) have not been done away with.

The perfect thing to come is Christ at the Second Coming. When He appears we will become as He is (I John 3:2) – healthy, complete, and perfect. Therefore, we will not need the gifts of the Spirit and miracles and healing. This is when all of these things shall be done away with. For now we need them, and God needs us to function in them to reach and help those who need it. We are His flesh now that Jesus is gone and not yet returned.

Conclusion

The book of Acts ends with Chapter 28. But, the book of Acts did not end; it just stopped. The story continues; the writer just stopped writing. We are today continuing to write the next chapter of Acts – Acts Chapter 29. Its contents should not be different than the previous twenty-eight chapters. Christ is living through those who believe in Him. He is touching the lives of others through people. Part of that interaction includes miracles, signs and wonders, and healing as the full gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ is preached and taught.

References

- All scripture quotations were taken from the King James Bible