

## By Whose Stripes

You know, I'm not really afraid of death—at least, not my own. Death, after all, is an unavoidable and integral part of life for us earthlings. I, for one, am glad that we come in disposable packages. I'd hate to be stuck for eternity, like Meryl Streep's character in "Death Becomes Her", never dying, but constantly growing more and more damaged and decrepit.

So death, itself, doesn't scare me.

But dying, on the other hand—now that I find intimidating.

Dying can be downright unpleasant! We're talking major discomfort here! Not only is there pain involved, but there's also all that uncertainty. We all know that we're ticking time bombs—but not a one of us has a handle on just how long the fuse is!

Yes, if you'd leave it up to me, I think I'd just skip the whole process altogether.

In fact, I think a lot of us might feel that way.

That's why the whole idea of supernatural healing pulls us so strongly.

Isaiah 53 is a powerful passage of scripture. Verse 6 fills my head with strains from Handel's *Messiah*. "All we like sheep have gone astray."

But there is that enigmatic line hidden at the end of verse 5: "But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: . . . *and with his stripes we are healed.*"

How could his stripes heal us? Does this mean that faith in the Messiah removes all earthly travail from our lives?

Does this mean that I don't really have to die?

If we read scripture through eyes of faith, we see instances when God postponed death. Hezekiah beseeched the Lord that he might live, and he was given 15 extra years. Mary and Martha wept for Lazarus, and Jesus, feeling their pain and sharing in their tears, raised his dear friend back to life.

But these were only temporary. They only postponed the inevitable. Physical death is in our DNA and is all part of the plan.

But the stripes He bore did do their miraculous work. Peter clarifies it: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." (I Pet. 2:24)

This healing was never meant to be temporary. This healing abolishes sin and death and grants life. This is the healing promised through the sacrifice of the ultimate Passover Lamb. Through this one sacrifice, death itself is destroyed and we inherit life everlasting. To life in Him! L'chaim!