

Intro

- I. The Scriptures record many occurrences of healing.
 - A. The Gospels present about thirty-six accounts of Jesus healing people.
 - B. Several accounts involve crowds (cf. Mt. 4:24).
 - C. Acts contains nearly a dozen such accounts.
 - D. The letters to the churches seldom mention healing.

II. Health and Disease prior to the Law

- A. Death is the penalty for disobeying God (sin) (Gen. 2:17; 3:17-19).
- B. Genesis records a few instances of illness or other physical problems (Gen. 12:17; 20:17-18; 25:21-23; 29:31-32).
- C. Job's illness prior to the law (Job 2:5, 7). Satan struck him with "sore boils." [NASB]

III. Health and Disease under the Law

- A. God promised Israel that they would not suffer the diseases of Egypt (Ex. 15:26).
- B. God promised to put those diseases on their enemies (Deut. 7:11, 15).
- C. God promised to bring these diseases upon Israel if they disobeyed (Dt. 28:58-61; 29:22).
- D. God brought those diseases on Israel. Many were diseased when Jesus came, and so He healed many, indicating they disobeyed (cp. Mt. 4:23; 8:16-17).

IV. Healing was proof of Jesus' anointed status

- A. "By His severe beating we are healed" (Isa. 53:5b).
 1. Matthew states that Jesus fulfilled Isaiah 53:5 by healing people (Mt. 8:17).
 - a) Jesus healed to prove He could forgive sins (Matt. 9:2-6).
 - b) Jesus could do nothing, if He weren't from God (Jh. 9:34).
 - c) Jesus healed as proof He is Israel's King and could offer His kingdom (Mt. 4:23; 8:16-17; 9:35; 15:30-31).
 - d) Jesus instructed His disciples to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, and cast out demons while presenting the kingdom (Mt. 10:7-8; Lk. 10:17, 9).
 - e) Jesus cited healing as proof He was Messiah (Mt. 11:1-5).
 2. Peter applied Isaiah 53:5 to Christ bearing our sins on the cross (1 Pet. 2:24).
- B. Jesus performed works the Father prepared for Him to do (Jh. 4:34; 5:36; 9:4).
 1. People should not believe in Him if He didn't do these works (10:37).
 2. A man was born blind that He might do a work (9:3).
 3. He healed to glorify God (Jh. 11:4).

- C. Jesus Didn't Heal Everyone. He healed one man out of the many at the pool (Jh. 5:2-3, 5).
- D. Jesus healed to contrast His divine compassion to man's lack of care (Mt. 12:9-14; 14:14; Mk. 3:1-6).
 - 1. The rulers were more concerned about rules than suffering (Lk. 14:1-6; 13:10-16).
 - 2. The rulers lacked fruit (Lk. 13:6-7).
 - 3. The rulers would not touch a leper to heal if they could, Jesus did (Mt. 8:1-4).

V. Scriptures Present Healing as Real Healing

- A. Jesus healed in plainly visible acts (Mt. 8:1-3; 9:2-8; 12:9-13; Jh. 9:8-9).
- B. The apostles healed in plainly visible acts (Acts 3:7-10; 4:21-22).

VI. Lack of Faith in the Face of Insurmountable Evidence

- A. The leadership was more concerned with their position (Jh. 11:47-48).
- B. They worried because many believed in Him (12:10-11).
- C. They refused to believe though they observed real healing (Jh. 5:5-9).
- D. Even the man who had been lame did not believe (5:10-14).
- E. Only one of two demoniacs wished to come with Jesus (Mt. 8:28; Mk. 5:10-13; Lk. 8:27).
- F. Only one of ten lepers returned to thank Jesus (Lk. 17:12-18).
- G. Only one of the two blind men glorified God (Mt. 20:29-34; Mk. 10:46-52; Lk. 18:35-43).

VII. Israel Suffered Consequences for Unbelief.

- A. Jesus promised their situation would be worse after He left (Mt. 12:44-45).
- B. Israel's judgement would be more severe for rejecting His miracles (Mt. 11:21-24).
- C. Israel would walk but not know where they were going (Jh. 12:35-36; Mt. 12:24).

VIII. God has a purpose for healing after Jesus' departure.

- A. Jesus commissioned His disciples to take the gospel into the world (Mk. 16:15-16).
- B. Jesus promised signs to authenticate their preaching activity (Mk. 16:15-16).
 - 1. The signs include casting out demons, speaking in tongues, picking up venomous serpents, drinking deadly poison without harm, and healing people (16:17-18).
- C. Jesus promised them power with the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).
 - 1. A sign primarily spoke to unbelievers (1 Cor. 14:22).
 - 2. Speaking in other languages was a sign to Jews (cp Acts 2:4-11; 10:46).
 - 3. Healing was one sign the disciples performed (Mk. 16:17-18).

- D. God bore witness to their word with signs, wonders and diverse miracles (Heb. 2:3-4). The verb “confirmed” emphasizes an act which the writer of Hebrews (Paul) saw as completed¹ therefore, it was largely in the past.
- E. Certain Gifts Would Cease
 - 1. Prophecies, and knowledge are rendered idle, and tongues cease (1 Cor. 13:8).
 - a) The Greek verb-*katargeō* is passive and means “rendered idle.”
 - b) The verb *pauō* is middle and means “cease.”
 - 2. Once the completed form prophecy and knowledge were revealed (in Scripture) the partial gifts became unnecessary.
 - 3. The signs gifts would also cease, and that included healing.

IX. Many New Testament Believers Were Not Healed.

- A. New Testament believers enter the kingdom of God through much adversity (Acts 14:22).
 - 1. Paul was dragged outside, stoned, and left for dead (Acts 14:19-20).
 - 2. Paul was left in a horrible condition due to the stoning (Gal. 4:13-15).
 - 3. Paul and Silas were severely beaten (Acts 16:16-23). They needed their wounds washed, meaning God did not heal them (16:33).
 - 4. Paul bore the marks of the Lord Jesus in his body (Gal. 6:17).
 - 5. Paul bore a thorn in his flesh which the Lord would not heal (2 Cor. 12:8-9).
- B. Timothy was to drink wine for his stomach and frequent illnesses (1 Tim. 5:23).
- C. Trophimus was left sick in Miletus (2 Tim. 4:20).
- D. Epaphroditus was sick in Rome and Paul did not heal him, God had mercy (Php. 2:27-30).

X. Sickness and Death Can Serve God’s Purpose in Judgment.

- A. Miriam developed leprous skin for opposing Moses (Nu. 12:1-2, 6-10).
- B. Uzziah developed leprosy for performing the priests’ ministry (2 Chr. 26:16, 19-21).
- C. God may shorten a person’s days as a form of discipline.
 - 1. Hezekiah was given fifteen more years when he prayed to the Lord (2 Ki. 20:1-6).
 - a) His shorter life may have been a result of being proud (2 Chr. 32:23-24).
 - 2. Asa was struck with a disease in his feet but did not pray to the Lord (1 Ki. 15:23; 2 Chr. 16:12).
 - a) He dies at about 60 (a guess).
 - 3. Neither circumvented God’s planned days, but potentially shortened his days by disobedience to God.

¹ The verb form is aorist indicative which often but not necessarily communicates a past tense.

- D. Ananias and Saphira died for lying to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-11).
- E. An unrepentant, immoral brother may have had his flesh destroyed so his body would be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 5:4-5).
- F. Many believers were weak, sick and quite a few died for an improper attitude toward each other at the Lord's table (1 Cor. 11:27-30).
- G. James addressed three types of illness in James five.
 - 1. Some suffered some unspecified evil, (harsh treatment by the rich?) (5:13).
 - a) They should worship (pray, communicate God's character).
 - 2. Some were physically sick (5:14).
 - a) They have no promise of being healed.
 - b) The elders are to smear oil on him (presumably women would do this for the women) and worship over him (5:14).
 - (1) This was medicinal.
 - (2) They needed to hear others worship (focus on God's character).
 - 3. Some suffered mental illness or emotional weariness (5:15).
 - a) *Kamnō* is mental exhaustion, those who cannot keep it together.
 - b) They need to make a **vow** not a prayer [*euché* not *proseuché*]. We don't vow.
 - c) This believer may have been guilty of many things James warned against: faith with favoritism, lack of care for other believers, ridicule of other believers, selfish pursuits rather than caring love for other believers, making plans without knowing God's will.

XI. Sickness can serve a purpose in God's plan for believers

- A. God has planned the days of every person.
 - 1. God has cut man's days in stone, even the number of his months and none can pass that limit (Job 14:5).
 - 2. God has written all our days in His book before one day existed (Ps. 139:16).
 - 3. Jesus told Peter how he would die (Jh. 21:18, 19), and he remembers this (2 Pet. 1:14).
 - 4. Christ has changed/released us from being manipulated by Satan through the fear of death (Heb. 2:14-15).
 - a) We should no longer live in fear of death.
 - b) We should not allow Satan to manipulate us by fear of death.
 - c) We should not fear because we know Christ does not abandon us (Heb. 13:5-6).
 - 5. Paul said that death is better than life because we are with Christ (Php. 1:21-23). He was not advocating suicide but putting death and life in perspective.
- B. God formed every part of David (Ps. 139:13-16a).

1. The LORD made all of man whether mute, deaf, seeing, or blind (Ex. 4:11).
2. The blind man was born that way that Jesus might do a work (Jh. 9:3-4).
- C. Today, God's work is not always to heal people, but to show his power despite limitations, like Paul learning that God's grace is enough. God's power which raised Jesus from the grave and raised Him far above all the created spirit beings, that power now works in us (Eph. 1:19-21). God makes His power plainly visible today despite our physical shortcomings, despite illness, despite problems.
 1. We accept good and should accept evil from God (Job 2:10).
 - a) The word "accept" [*qābal*²] pictures something set in front of an individual which we are to choose to take.
 - b) Job did not suffer due to personal unrighteousness.
 - c) Job was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning from evil (Job 1:1).
 - d) Job's friends suggested he was guilty of evil (4:7-9; 8:3-6).
 - e) Job's friend were sorry comforters (16:1-2).
 - f) We should be cautious of assuming all suffering is due to personal sin.
 2. Christ (in His humanity) matured through suffering (Heb. 2:10; 5:8-9).
 3. God matures us through suffering (Rom. 5:3-5; Jas. 1:2-4). In James, "perfect work" may be bettered expressed as "maturing work."

D. Peter and Paul

1. Peter rejoiced at the beginning and end of life that he was counted worthy to be dishonored for the name of Christ (cf. Acts 5:41; 1 Pet. 4:13-14).
2. Paul knew at the outset that he would suffer for Christ's sake (Acts 9:16).
 - a) Paul went to Rome in chains, for persisting on going to Jerusalem (Acts 20:23).
 - b) Paul commended himself as God's servant [*diakonos*] with his many difficult experiences (2 Cor. 6:4).
 - c) Paul listed his harsh treatment by others (2 Cor. 11:23-27).
 - d) Paul rejoiced that he was allowed to make up for the suffering in the body of Christ (Col. 1:24). He suffered more and others suffered less.
 - e) Paul wanted to be conformed to Christ's sufferings (Php. 3:10). This was not His suffering on the cross, but His suffering with all believers **NOW!**
3. Neither man taught others that our lives as believers are immune to suffering.
4. They healed people, and raised others from the dead, but didn't indicate that this was to be normal course of Christian experience (cp Acts 19:12; 28:8).

² The Hebrew קָבַל means "to seize" in the Qal form which does not occur in the Old Testament. The Piel is "to take, receive or accept." The Hiphil expresses that which "meets another" and so "stood opposite." The unused Qal and the Hiphil, which does occur, illustrate that in the Piel it has the idea of that which is before one so that he can take it or should accept it. So, Job meant God places suffering before us and we accept it.

5. They taught us about a proper attitude in the midst of suffering.
 - a) We should assume we will suffer with Christ (Rom. 8:17).
 - b) We should assume we will suffer and groan in this body (Rom. 8:18, 23).
 - c) We have been **graciously given** to suffer for Him (Php. 1:29).

E. Healing in the Future

1. Christ will transform our humble bodies to be like His body of glory (Php. 3:21).
2. The tree of life will provide healing for the nations (Rev. 22:2).

XII. So, How Should We Respond?

- A. Should we ask, “God, fix it.” or “Please, make it go away.”?
- B. Should we pray, “God, be glorified.”? (cp. Job 1:20-21).
- C. God gave a gift of mercy to ease suffering (Rm. 12:8).
 1. This would be unnecessary if God wanted us to all be healthy.
 2. If some minister mercy, we all take our turn suffering as objects of mercy.
- D. We are to suffer and weep with those who suffer and weep (1 Cor. 12:26; Rom. 12:15).
- E. We suffer and groan in this present body for our bodies are not yet fully redeemed. This focuses us on our hope in future glory (Rm. 8:18, 23).
- F. We await our Lord’s appearing when He will change our body of **humility** (Php. 3:21).
- G. Christians should learn that God has not promised us prosperity in the world but adversity (Jh. 16:33).
- H. Christians should learn that we enter the future form of the kingdom through **suffering** (Acts 14:22; 1 Thess. 3:3).
- I. Christians should not think it is strange when we are persecuted or suffer (1 Pet. 4:12-16).
- J. Christians should be taught that we can shine like little lights in the midst of a crooked and perverted race (mankind generally) despite suffering (Php. 2:15).

XIII. Conclusion