

What The Bible Teaches on **HEALTH and HEALING**

Emmanuel Oladipo

Conclusion



Conclusion

(a) General

Adam and Eve were hale and hearty in the Garden of Eden until they sinned, following which sickness and death entered into the world.

From the time Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden until now, God has been working to restore mankind to health in body, mind and spirit. He is the One who keeps our body in health and restores it when diseased. He creates natural processes, and He works through medicinal means to bring this about, but He also intervenes miraculously in answer to prayer. This He did again and again in both the Old Testament and the New.

The Bible makes it clear in many instances that miracles in general are not necessarily always from God. For example, the enchanters of Egypt copied the early miraculous signs given by Moses, (Exodus 7:10-12; 20-22), and Simon the Sorcerer dazzled the people of Samaria with his magic arts until he encountered Philip, (Acts of Apostles 8: 9-25). Jesus Christ said that some would perform miracles in His name without really belonging to Him, (Matthew 7:21-23). Miracles of healing are no different in this respect. Some healing ministries, therefore, could expose people to demonic influences. We therefore need to heed the warning from the Beloved Disciple to test the spirits to see whether they are from God, (1 John 4:1-3).

(b) The Old Testament

In the history of the nation of Israel, the link between obedience to God's Law and good health was firmly established. Just as He promised through His prophets, they were rewarded with good health when they kept His Law; and when they disobeyed they were often punished with plagues in their communities or sickness as individuals.

In the Old Testament, God answered the prayers of the prophets on behalf of His people, performing miracles of healing in response. He healed their bodies, their spirits and their minds, both communally and individually. Examples include when He healed the nation and when He healed Miriam in answer to the prayers of Moses; and when He raised the son of the woman of Shunem from the dead in answer to the prayers of Elisha. He also answered the earnest prayers of ordinary people such as Hannah, healing her of her barrenness.

Sometimes, however, He refused to answer prayers for healing. This was usually because of sin, or when the sickness was part of His judgement on sin.

Regarding the passage in Isaiah 45:11, there is no example in the Bible of anyone being foolish enough to "command" God! It is important to note that newer translations defer from the King James Version of the Bible in this passage. The problem is to do with punctuation marks. The original Hebrew text contains no punctuation marks whatsoever. Translators have to introduce punctuation marks to help us make sense of the original. In this verse, the KJV uses a full stop. Instead

of encouraging us to “command” God, however, newer versions use a question mark:

“This is what the LORD says— the Holy One of Israel, and its Maker: Concerning things to come, do you question me about my children, or give me orders about the work of my hands?”

(c) The New Testament

Sickness and death saddened the heart of Jesus. His work of compassion included healing all types of diseases and also raising the dead on more than one occasion. In His teaching and by His example, He did not accept sickness as inevitable but fought it and trained His disciples to do the same.

The general link between sin and sickness remains valid, and Jesus pointed out that to continue in sin could mean to attract a worse disease than what He had cured. He made it clear, however, that ill health is not always a direct result of sin. Much emphasis is placed on the link between faith and healing. The disciples followed in His steps, encouraging us to pray for one another and teaching Church leaders to anoint the sick with oil for healing.

One aspect of healing introduced in the New Testament is the casting out of demons, which featured in the ministry of Jesus and of His disciples, and which is therefore a valid ministry for today.

On no occasion did Jesus or any of His disciples ever publicise healing or any of the miracles God performed through them. Anyone who engages in such publicity, therefore, has no biblical model to follow.

For reasons we do not understand, Jesus Christ did not heal all the sick people He encountered. If some people are not healed today, it is possible that it is because they do not have the faith to be healed. It is also possible that the failure comes from the person praying for them to be healed. And it is possible that it is not the Lord’s will to

heal them. When they have done all that can be humanly expected of them, it is wrong to blame them for not having the faith to be healed.

On the authority of the word of God, we should fight ill health of all descriptions in ourselves and in others through natural processes, by the use of medical procedures, and through the prayer of faith. All these we can do with the confidence that God desires us to be in health, even as St John prays for his friend in the second verse of 3 John:

“Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.”