

# What The Bible Teaches

on

# **HEALTH** and **HEALING**

Emmanuel Oladipo



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# WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ON ...

## Introduction to the series

The Word of God is not always easy and straight forward. Even St Peter tells us that some of the writings of St Paul were hard to understand! (2 Peter 3:15-18). Working with its human writers, the Holy Spirit is the Author of the Bible, (2 Peter 1:21). We depend on Him to explain it to us. Even then, however, our human capacity is too limited to grasp fully all that He seeks to teach. This is why we must always be ready, particularly those of us who are leaders, to admit that we do not know it all. There is always room to learn from another child of God who helps to throw fresh light on Scripture, and this includes those passages with which we are very familiar.

This is true not only for us as individuals. It is also true for Churches and denominations. Just as no one person has a full understanding of everything in the word of God, there is no one Church or denomination which knows it all! Each one emphasises one aspect or other of Bible truth, unaware of any blind spots we may have. As the proverb puts it, “We see the back of other peoples’ heads. Others see ours.” That is why we have to learn from one another if we are to achieve a balanced understanding of God’s word.

This is only one of a series of studies on different topical subjects. The idea is to take a careful look at all the main Bible passages which deal with each particular theme, thus getting us closer to God’s full revelation on the subject. There is a brief comment on each passage, to bring out its clear and obvious meaning. Conscious of the diversity of understanding within the Church, the author gratefully acknowledges the Christian leaders and teachers from different backgrounds who kindly went through the manuscripts and gave him the benefit of their wisdom.

St Paul lays on us the charge to handle the word of God correctly, (2 Timothy 2:15). We trust that all readers will find that the approach here lives up to their highest expectations of due care and integrity.

These studies are offered to God's people in a spirit of humility. One drawback of a publication such as this is that it is one directional! It need not be so. Does a reader feel that a significant passage on any topic has been omitted? Or that a text is wrongly applied? Or that the comment offered is unjust? Please feel free to write back through the Publishers. All such comments will be carefully examined. If they are found to be valid, a revision will be made in subsequent editions.

We embark on these studies with the confidence that we are doing it in partnership with all Bible-believing Churches. Different Church leaders could have very good reasons for setting up policies that may be different from the conclusions at the end of our study. We have no doubt that they will be prepared to explain in full to any of their members who care to ask.

It is an exciting adventure to explore God's word in the power of His Holy Spirit. Thank you for joining on such a highly privileged journey!

Emmanuel Oladipo

January 2017

# WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ON HEALTH AND HEALING

## Introduction

We know that the promises of God never fail. He makes the promise to His people: :

*“You will be blessed more than any other people; none of your men or women will be childless, nor any of your livestock without young. The LORD will keep you free from every disease. He will not inflict on you the horrible diseases you knew in Egypt, but he will inflict them on all who hate you.” (Deuteronomy 7:14-15)*

The promise was originally made to the children of Israel, but as believers in Jesus Christ, we are spiritual descendants of Abraham, and we share fully in his blessing, (Galatians 3:6-8). Why then are faithful Christian couples sometimes childless? Is it perhaps because they have sinned? But they confess and are forgiven; and then they fast and pray, but the child still does not come.

Why do sincere Christians ever fall sick? Since our own sins have been washed by the blood of the Lamb, could it perhaps be the result of ancestral curses? If so, why is it that prayer for special deliverance do not guarantee to anyone to be always **“free from every disease”** as God has promised?

And when we do fall ill, we pray for healing. This we can do confidently on the authority of the word of God. We have been assured by the prophet Isaiah that Jesus Christ takes away our infirmities and our sorrows, and by His wounds we are healed, (Isaiah 53:4-5). And this same Jesus has given us authority over all unclean spirits and has promised that when we lay hands on the sick they will recover. The problem is that sometimes it works but sometimes it does not work – not even when we fast as well as pray and call on the elders to anoint with oil. Sometimes, again to no avail, we even dare to “command” Him (!) as it says in the King James Version of Isaiah 45:11:

*“Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me.”*

Can we always blame the people who are not healed for lack of faith? Or is it a failure of the faith of the people praying for the sick?

Some people are so desperate they will go to any prayer house to seek healing. Sometimes they are healed, but does that prove that it is of God?

There is something wrong somewhere, and it is not with God or His promises. It is most likely to do with our own misunderstanding of Him and of those promises. That is why we are taking a careful look at all the main verses that speak about health and healing in both the Old Testament and the New.

The format is a set of Questions and Answers. My prayer is that we shall all have our questions answered sufficiently to enable us to trust God fully for every aspect of our health and healing, and to avoid the frustration and disillusionment which results from a false understanding of God and His promises.

Emmanuel Oladipo, January 2017

# Health and Healing

## 1. What causes ill-health and what is the cure?

God declared that all He made at the time of creation was very good. Until Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, we have no reason to believe that they experienced any illness whatever.

### (a) Sin and Satan bring pain and death

#### (1) Genesis 3:16-17

It would seem that the first act of human rebellion was responsible for turning on the gene responsible for disease, decay and death in human lives and introducing “pain” to human language and experience.

#### (2) Numbers 11:4-6, 18-34

The children of Israel grumbled against Moses and craved the food they left behind in Egypt. God sent them meat in unimaginable quantities but afflicted them with a plague in which thousands died.

#### (3) Job 2:1-10

Satan afflicted Job with painful sores from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet. All his friends believed it was in punishment for sin, but Job knew this was not the case. Satan expected him to deny God as a result, but Job held firm to his faith, and God honoured him in the end.

#### (4) John 10:10

Satan is the thief who came to steal, to kill and to destroy. Jesus Christ came to bring life.

### (b) Punishment and healing

#### (1) Genesis 3:22-24

Man was driven out of the Garden so as not to touch the tree of life and so live for ever in a state of sin.

## **(2) Numbers 21:4-9**

Unfortunately, the children of Israel had to learn the same lesson the same hard way on more than one occasion. Again they grumbled against God because of food, and this time He sent poisonous snakes among them. When they pleaded for mercy, He asked Moses to make a bronze snake and lift it up in the camp. Anyone who looked at the snake was immediately cured of the snakes' poison. This prefigured the crucifixion. In the same way that those who looked upon that bronze snake were saved, everyone who looked on Christ by faith would be cured from the poison of sin, (John 3:14-16).

## **(3) 2 Samuel 24: 1-17**

God was displeased with the children of Israel and incited King David to take a census. He refused to heed the wise counsel of his military commander. At the end God gave him the choice of three disasters and he wisely chose to fall into the hands of God; and He graciously decided to exercise mercy in the midst of the ensuing plague.

## **(4) Revelation 22:1-3**

Significantly, the tree of life features in the New Jerusalem, where its leaves bring healing to the nations.



## **2. What does the Old Testament teach about illness and healing?**

### **(a) Before the Law**

#### **(1) Genesis 20:1-18**

The first reference to healing in the Bible was King Abimelech. This was when Abraham pretended that Sarah his wife was only his sister, thus endangering her honour in order not to endanger his own life. King Abimelech added her to his harem, but God protected her from being molested and also punished Abimelech by preventing all the women in his household from having children. We do not know for how long this lasted, but they were all healed when he realised his error and turned to God, and Abraham prayed for his family.

### **(b) According to the Law**

#### **(1) Exodus 15:26; Deuteronomy 7:12-15; 28:60**

On condition that Israel kept the laws of God, He promised to ensure that they would not be visited by any of the diseases with which He afflicted the nation of Egypt in judgement. He also declared Himself to be their Healer.

#### **(2) Numbers 12:1-15**

Aaron and Miriam had spoken against Moses because he married an African woman. Moses in his meekness did not defend himself but God decided to intervene on his behalf. He punished Miriam by afflicting her with leprosy. Moses prayed for his sister and she was healed, but she first had to spend seven days isolated outside the camp.

#### **(3) Deuteronomy 32:39**

God speaking through Moses declares Himself as the only one who can bring either wounds or healing to His people.

### **3. How did God heal in the Old Testament?**

#### **(1) Joshua 5:8**

This passage refers to natural healing, following the circumcision of all the soldiers of Israel after crossing the River Jordan under Joshua.

#### **(2) 1 Samuel 1:1-17**

Hannah prayed in simple faith out of a burdened heart, and the Lord answered by healing her of her barrenness.

#### **(3) 1 Samuel 6:1-3**

The Philistines had captured the Ark, the main symbol of God's presence with Israel, when they killed King Saul and his son Jonathan in battle. Whatever city housed the Ark, God demonstrated His authority over their gods by afflicting the people with diseases. They finally called their pagan diviners to seek for advice and were told that they had to make sacrifices to the God of Israel and return the Ark to the Jews. This they did, and they were healed.

#### **(4) 2 Kings 2:19-22**

The prophets living in Jericho appealed to the prophet Elisha for help. The water was bad and the land was unproductive. Elisha used a bowl of salt to bring healing to both the spring and the land.

#### **(5) 2 Kings 4: 8-17**

A woman from Shunem was very kind in providing transit accommodation to Elisha and his servant on their journeys. For her reward, the prophet prayed for her and she was healed of her barrenness.

#### **(6) 2 Kings 4:18-37**

This same child was taken suddenly ill and died. The prophet Elisha stretched himself on the dead child several times to warm up his body, and he was restored to life.

### **(7) 2 Kings 5:1-18**

This is the remarkable story of the healing of the Syrian army commander, Naaman, from leprosy by the Prophet Elisha. The King had to wash himself seven times in the River Jordan before he was cured of his leprosy.

### **(8) 2 Kings 20:1-7, [Isaiah 38:1-6]**

King Hezekiah was sick, and God sent the Prophet Isaiah to pronounce it as a terminal illness. When he pleaded with the Lord with bitter tears, the Lord healed him and added 15 years to his life. The boil which afflicted him was healed with normal medication in the form of a poultice of figs.

### **(9) Proverbs 12:18; 13:17; 15:4; 15:30; 16:24**

References to healing in the Book of Proverbs are to spiritual, emotional and communal rather than physical healing, even when it mentions “healing to the bones.”

## **4. What other lessons do we learn about healing in the Old Testament?**

God is the Healer and He protects those who belong to Him.

### **(a) Personal Healing**

#### **(1) 2 Chronicles 30:15-20**

Those who ate from the Passover sacrifice when they were ceremonially unclean were in danger of punishment from God as indicated in the Law of Moses. King Hezekiah prayed for his people to be spared on this occasion, and they were.

#### **(2) Job 5:17-18**

Eliphaz, one of the friends of Job, describes God as the One who afflicts and also heals.

#### **(3) Psalm 6:2 ; Psalm 30:2; Psalm 41:4; Psalm 103:3; Psalm 107:20; Psalm 147:3**

In all of these passages the Psalmist calls upon God as the Healer.

#### **(4) Psalm 91:1-16**

This Psalm contains many precious promises for protection from epidemics, accidents and natural disasters.

#### **(5) Proverbs 3:7-8; Proverbs 4:20-22**

The wise man describes the secret of health and healing: obedience to God and His word.

### **(b) National Healing**

God promises His healing not only for personal sickness. He also heals the ills that beset the entire nation.

#### **(1) Jeremiah 14:19 -22**

The prophet laments the state of the nation, and declares God as the only

One able to bring healing.

**(2) Jeremiah 30:12-22**

Jeremiah laments that the nation's wounds were incurable, but then brings the promise of God's pity and healing.

**(3) Jeremiah 33:1-9**

Again, national healing is promised if the people called to God when afflicted on account of their sins.

**(4) Hosea 14:1-6**

Israel's sins caused her downfall, but there is promise of national healing if the nation heeded God's word and turned to Him.

**(c) Conditions for healing**

**(1) 2 Chronicles 7:13-14**

This is the well-known promise that God made in answer to the prayers of King Solomon at the consecration of the temple. God would heal the land, but it depends on His people. They first have to humble themselves, seek His face, and turn from their wicked ways.

**(2) Isaiah 19:19-22**

God makes the same promise to Egypt as he made to Israel: having afflicted them when they sinned, he would hear their prayers for healing when they repented.

**(3) Isaiah 57:14-19**

These are again promises of healing when the people turn away from sin.

**(4) Isaiah 58:6-9**

Healing is one of the rewards of fasting and praying when done in a manner acceptable to God.

## 5. Whom did God not heal and why?

Naturally, those who failed to fulfil the conditions God laid down did not receive healing from Him. There were numerous examples in the Old Testament.

### **(1) 2 Chronicles 16:12-13**

King Asa's reign was among the longest in the history of Israel. For most of his 41 years on the throne, he was a godly king, but he did have some very serious lapses. When he was seriously ill he did not seek healing from God but only from physicians. It led to his death.

### **(2) Jeremiah 8:22; 46:11**

Balm from Gilead was famous for its healing properties, so much so that it was exported all over the Middle East. (See Genesis 37:25). For both Israel and Egypt, however, no amount of balm could relieve their ailment.

### **(3) Jeremiah 51:8-9; Nahum 3:18-19**

All effort to bring healing to Babylon was doomed to failure because its suffering is God's direct judgement. This was also true of Assyria.

### **(4) Lamentations 2:13-14**

Instead of exposing the sin of Jerusalem so that the people would repent, the prophets provided false and worthless visions. As a result, healing became impossible for them.

### **(5) Hosea 5: 13-15**

Ephraim and Judah diagnosed their disease correctly. Unfortunately, they turned to Assyria for healing and not to God.

### **(6) Hosea 6:1-3; 7:1-7**

Israel's claim on God's healing was mere wishful thinking, because they continued steadfastly in the way of sin.

## **6. What significant prophecies foretell future healing in the Old Testament?**

### **(1) Isaiah 53:1-5**

This is a prophetic description of what Jesus Christ did on our behalf on the Cross. He carried our sins and our sorrows, bringing healing to us by His suffering.

### **(2) Ezekiel 47:1-12**

The Prophet's vision of the River issuing from the sanctuary ends with the fruit trees that grow on both banks of the River whose leaves are for healing. This looks forward to the restoration of the Tree of Life in Revelation 22: 1-2.

### **(3) Malachi 4:2**

In the last chapter of the last book of the Old Testament we read of a day that was coming when the arrogant will be fuel for fire. For those who honour the name of the Lord, however, the sun of righteousness will arise, with healing in its wings. This is no doubt a foretelling of the final judgement and the reign of Christ.

## **7. What do we know about Jesus Christ's ministry of healing?**

### **(a) What types of diseases did Jesus heal?**

Jesus healed all types of diseases and even raised the dead.

#### **(1) Matthew 4:23-24; 8:15-16; 9:35-38; 15:29-31; 19:1-2; 21:14**

Jesus Christ healed those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralysed, and every manner of disease among the people in fulfilment of the prophecy in Isaiah 53:4. He also went through the villages, preaching and teaching in the synagogues, healing every disease out of his deep compassion for the people. When great crowds came bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute, and many others to Him, He healed them all.

#### **(2) Matthew 14:14**

When he heard news of the beheading of John the Baptist, Jesus Christ withdrew by boat to a private place, but the crowd followed on foot. Jesus had compassion on the crowd and healed their sick.

#### **(3) Mark 1:34**

Jesus healed many people who had various diseases and drove out demons.

#### **(4) Luke 4:40-41; 6:17-19; 9:10-11**

All who had various diseases were healed when they were brought to Jesus. When the crowd searched out Jesus Christ in Bethsaida to where He had withdrawn together with His disciples, He healed those who needed healing.

### **(b) What link did Jesus Christ make between sin and illness?**

Sickness began as a result of sin the Garden of Eden. Jesus made it clear that there is a link between sin and sickness but that it is not always the case that ill health resulted directly as a result of anybody's particular sin.



**(1) Matthew 9: 1-8, [Mark 2: 1-12; Luke 5:17-26]**

A paralytic man was brought before Jesus Christ and instead of healing him immediately He began by forgiving his sins. The teachers of the law objected to this, because only God can forgive sins. Jesus then demonstrated His authority for all to see by healing the man.

**(2) John 5:1-14**

To the man whom He healed at the Pool of Bethesda Jesus Christ gave the command to sin no more so that something worse would not befall him.

**(3) John 9:1-7**

Seeing a man who was born blind, the disciples wanted to know whether it was his own sins or his parents that resulted in the blindness. Jesus Christ answered that it was neither, but rather to enable God's work to be displayed in his life.

**(c) What link did Jesus Christ make between healing and faith?**

Jesus constantly referred to the connection between faith and healing. Sometimes it was the faith of the sick person, sometimes it was the faith of those caring for the victim, and sometimes it was the faith of the person doing the healing. Sometimes, however, faith was not mentioned at all.

**(1) Matthew 8:5-13, [Luke 7:1-10]**

Jesus praised the faith of the Roman military officer before pronouncing the word of healing for his servant.

**(2) Matthew 9:20-22, [Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43-48]**

Jesus healed the woman who touched the hem of his garment putting an end to 12 years of bleeding and misery. He commended her faith as being responsible for the healing she received.

**(3) Matthew 9: 27-31**

Before Jesus healed the two blind men who followed him crying loudly for

his help, He first asked if they believed He could heal them. He then told them it would be done according to their faith.

**(4) Matthew 15:21-28, [Mark 7:24-30]**

Jesus appreciated the faith of the Canaanite woman and so healed her demon-possessed child.

**(5) Matthew 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43**

The blind beggars were persistent in their plea for mercy until Jesus Christ acknowledged the faith which they had to be healed.

**(6) John 4: 46-54**

This royal official wanted his son healed, but Jesus rebuked him because he needed to see a miracle before believing. He healed the son, and then he and all the members of his household believed.

**(d) How did Jesus Christ heal the sick?**

Jesus Christ used a whole variety of methods

**(1) Matthew 8:3 [Mark 1:41; Luke 5:13]; Matthew 8:14-15 [Mark 1:30-31]; Matthew 9:27-30.**

He used the touch of His hand to heal lepers, Peter's mother-in-law, and two blind men.

**(2) Matthew 12: 9-14, [Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:11]**

He asked the man with the withered arm to stretch out his hand.

**(3) Matthew 9:20-22, [Mark 5:27; Luke 8:44-48]; Matthew 14:34-36, [Mark 6:56].**

The woman with an issue of blood and other sick people touched the edge of his garment.

**(4) Mark 8:22-26; John 9:1-7**

He used the saliva of His mouth

**(5) Matthew 17:14-18, [Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-43]; Mark 1:21-28, [Luke 4:33-37]**

He rebuked or commanded the demon which caused the illness.

**(6) Mark 5:41; Luke 7:14-15; John 11:43-44**

He commanded the dead to rise up.

### **(e) How did Jesus Christ publicise His healing miracles?**

Jesus Christ did not publicise His miracles. On the contrary, He often told people He healed not to tell anyone.

**(1) Matthew 8:2-4, [Mark 1: 40-45; Luke 5:12-16]**

When Jesus Christ healed a man suffering from leprosy, he instructed him not to tell anyone except the priests as the Law demanded. The man disobeyed, and the free publicity he offered did not help but rather hindered the work of Jesus!

**(2) Matthew 12:15-21**

He told people He healed not to tell who He was. We are told that this was in fulfilment of a prophecy from Isaiah.

**(3) Mark 7:31-37**

Jesus commanded those who told people who brought a deaf and dumb man to him not to tell anyone after he was healed. But the more He did so the more they kept talking about it.

**(4) Luke 8:40-42, 49-56**

Jesus ordered Jairus and his family not to tell anyone about their twelve-year old daughter whom He had raised from the dead.

### **(f) What were the effects of the healing miracles of Jesus Christ on the people?**

There were those for whom healing had a positive effect, but it had a negative effect on some others.

**(1) Matthew 8: 28-34, [Mark 5:1-15; Luke 8:27-35]**

Jesus sent a host of demons into pigs, having been forbidden by the Law of Moses. The man they previously tormented was liberated, dressed and in his right mind, but the people of Gadara did not rejoice with him. Instead, they pleaded with Jesus to depart from their territory.

**(2) Matthew 9: 32-34; 12:22-37**

Jesus healed a demon-possessed man who was also blind and mute. The crowd was amazed, but the Pharisees attribute the miracle to Beelzebub, the prince of demons. This provided opportunity for Jesus Christ to teach the lesson about how a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand and how blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is the one sin without forgiveness.

**(3) Matthew 12:9-21**

Jesus Christ healed a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath, causing the Pharisees to plot his death. He withdrew from that place but continued with his ministry of healing among the crowds that followed him, as prophesied in Isaiah 42:1-4.

**(4) Luke 13:10-17; 14:1-6**

Religious leaders objected to Jesus Christ performing miracles of healing on the Sabbath.

**(5) Luke 17: 11-19**

Of ten men healed of leprosy, only one bothered to come back to Jesus Christ to give thanks.

## **8. What role did healing play in the ministry of the Apostles of Jesus?**

Jesus Christ gave the power and authority to His followers to heal the sick and even to raise the dead. They did both.

### **(a) What power did Jesus Christ give His disciples for healing?**

#### **(1) Matthew 10:1-10, [Mark 6:7-13]; Luke 9:1-6; 10:1-20**

Jesus Christ sent out his disciples and gave them power to heal every disease and even to raise the dead.

#### **(2) Mark 16:15-20**

As part of the Great Commission when Jesus told His followers to take the Good News to the whole world, He said that they would lay hands on the sick in order to heal them.

### **(b) How did they use this power when the Master was still with them?**

#### **(1) Luke 10:16-17**

The disciples returned with joy from their practical assignment, with the testimony that even demons obeyed when commanded in the name of Jesus.

#### **(2) Matthew 17:14-21, [Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-43]**

When Jesus was away with Peter, James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration, a man brought his demon-possessed son to the other apostles, but in spite of their previous experience they could not heal him. Jesus Christ explained to them that it was because they had so little faith, even though faith as small as a mustard seed would be enough to shift mountains. A footnote adds that this kind required prayer and fasting.

## **(c) How did they use the power of healing after His death and resurrection?**

### **(1) Acts 3:1-10**

Peter healed a blind beggar at the Beautiful Gate entrance to the temple. He used the ensuing commotion as an opportunity to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

### **(2) Acts 5:15-16**

People brought the sick to the streets so that Peter's shadow might fall on them. They also brought their sick from towns and villages and all of them were healed.

### **(3) Acts 8:4-8**

Philip brought great joy to a city in Samaria when he proclaimed the gospel and they saw the miracles and healings that took place.

### **(4) Acts 9:32-35**

The healing of Aeneas who was paralysed and bedridden for eight years led to the conversion of all the people who lived in Lydda and Sharon.

### **(5) Acts 9:36-42**

In Joppa, when one of the disciples called Dorcas died, the believers sent to invite Peter to do something about it. Like his Master, he was able to command her back to life. Many turned to the Lord as a result.

### **(6) Acts 14:8-10**

Peter healed a lame man in the crowd when he was preaching in Derbe. The people mistook him and his companion, Barnabas, for gods and were going to sacrifice to them. When they objected to this and were instigated by Jewish enemies of the gospel, the people turned around and tried to sacrifice them!

### **(7) Acts 20: 7-12**

It was a crowded house meeting and some were perched in the upstairs window to hear the famous evangelist speak. It turned out to be a very long sermon. Paul went on and on until poor Eutychus could no longer keep his eyes or ears open. He dozed off and tumbled through the open window, falling three floors to his death. Paul brought him back to life and continued with his sermon!

### **(8) Acts 28:7-10**

As a prisoner on his way to Rome, Paul was shipwrecked at Malta. There he healed the father of a nobleman from fever and dysentery. Seeing this, other sick people on the Island came to Paul and were all cured.

## **(d) What did the Apostles teach about healing?**

### **(1) 1 Corinthians 12: 4-11; 29-30**

God gives to His people many different gifts for use in building up the Church. St Paul lists healing as one of them but he also makes clear that it is not all believers who have this gift.

### **(2) 1 Timothy 5:23**

Paul instructed Timothy to use a little wine as a remedy for his frequent stomach complaints.

### **(3) James 5:13-16**

James teaches Christian leaders to anoint the sick with oil in the name of the Lord and pray for them, with the assurance that the Lord would raise them up. He also teaches all believers to confess their sins to one another and to pray for healing for one another and that the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

### **(4) 1 Peter 2:20-25**

St Peter explains that Christians should be ready to suffer injustice with patience, following the example of our Lord. It is in Him we have died to

sins so as to live unto righteousness. Beatings can wound us in our bodies, but His wounds have healed us from sin.



## **9. Was everyone healed in the New Testament?**

### **(a) Did Jesus Christ heal all the sick people He encountered?**

#### **(1) Mark 6:1-6**

Jesus was astonished at the lack of faith of the people of His home town. It proved to be a hindrance to miracles. As a result, only a few sick people were healed there.

#### **(2) John 5:1-14**

Jesus passed by the pool of Bethesda where a great number of sick and disabled people were waiting and hoping for miraculous healing. He had the power to heal them all but singled out only one of them for healing.

### **(b) Were Jesus' disciples always healed?**

#### **(1) 2 Corinthians 12:7-9**

St Paul describes a "thorn in the flesh," sent by Satan to torment him. We do not know exactly what it was, but three times the Apostle made it a matter of serious prayer to no avail. The answer he got was that God's grace was sufficient for him.

#### **(2) 2 Timothy 4:20**

Trophimus was a fellow Evangelist working with Paul. They were on Gospel business together when he fell ill. He was not cured, and Paul had to leave him at Miletus.

### **(c) Why some are not healed?**

#### **(1) Matthew 13:14-15, [John 12:37-41; Acts 28:26-27]**

Jesus Christ quoted from the prophecy of Isaiah to explain that the people harden their hearts from turning to the Lord for healing.

**(2) Matthew 9:12, [Mark 2:17]**

Those who do not acknowledge their need of healing from Jesus cannot be healed.

## **9. Is all miraculous healing the work of God?**

We know that Satan sometimes pretends to be an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14), and that he has power to perform miracles, including miraculous healing.

### **(1) Acts 14:8-14**

When the crippled man was healed at Lystra, the people attributed the miracle to their pagan gods, because they believed the gods capable of performing miracles of healing.

### **(2) Revelation 13:1-4**

This is the story of the Beast in the Book of Revelations, which represents the Anti-Christ. We are told that it suffered a fatal wound, but the wound which should have killed it was healed.

# SUMMARY

## **(a) The source and the cure of ill health**

(1) Satan is the author of disease, sickness and pain, all of which became a part of the human condition since the fall of our first parents in the Garden of Eden.

(2) God brings healing, and He did so in many different ways in both the Old and the New Testaments.

## **(b) Health and Healing under the Law**

(1) Sickness and health had a direct cause and effect link under the Law. God promised not to afflict the children of Israel with plagues similar to what the people of Egypt experienced, on condition that they kept the Law. He promised to punish them when they sinned, however, and their afflictions sometimes included different types of plagues to the nation or diseases to individuals as in the case of Miriam or King Hezekiah.

(2) Whenever the people cried to the Lord in their distress, God normally healed them. There were exceptions, however, when the Lord withheld healing. This was either because they did not repent of sin or even when they did, as in the case of King David concerning his son, God allowed the punishment to run its course.

(3) One significant exception was Job whose illness was not as a result of sin, contrary to what everyone else believed.

(4) God's healing miracles were not confined to the children of Israel, because He is the God of all the earth. He healed the Syrian commander of his leprosy and raised the dead son of the woman of Shunem, and He cured the Philistines of their haemorrhoids when they turned to Him.

(5) The Old Testament looked forward to the coming of Jesus Christ by whose stripes all earthly ailments would be healed.

## **(c) The Ministry of Jesus**

In the New Testament, God continued to intervene miraculously in order to heal the sick. Jesus Christ modelled this in his teaching and practice.

- (1) Jesus Christ taught that although ill health is linked to sin, it is not always a direct link to the sin of the individual concerned or their parents.
- (2) He taught that there is always a link between faith and healing. This can be the faith of the people who need healing, as was the case for people in his home town. Or it could be the faith of the person doing the healing, as was the case when his disciples could not perform the healing when he was on the Mount of Transfiguration.
- (3) Even though he had unlimited power, He did not heal all the sick people He encountered in His ministry.
- (4) He was careful not to publicise healing or any other miracle, sometimes giving specific instructions to the people healed not to tell anybody.
- (5) He gave adequate training and the necessary power to His followers to carry on the work that He did, to the glory of the Father.

## **(d) The Ministry of the Disciples**

- (1) The Apostles followed their Master in carrying out numerous healings, including bringing back the dead to life.
- (2) Again like Jesus Christ, they used many different methods to perform the healing.
- (3) Paul recommended a typical, contemporary medical remedy when he admonished Timothy to use a little wine to improve his medical condition.
- (4) Sometimes, the desired healing did not happen, and this included Paul, when he prayed to be cured of his “thorn in the flesh.”
- (5) Miracles of healing sometimes resulted in people turning to Christ, but not always.

# 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.”*

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