

The Lord Our Healer Jehovah-Rapha

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I. Background

Ex 15:22-26 Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. 23 When they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter; therefore it was named Marah. 24 So the people grumbled at Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" 25 Then he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree; and he threw it into the waters, and the waters became sweet. There He made for them a statute and regulation, and there He tested them. 26 And He said, "If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer."

A. Israel is on their journey from Egypt to Palestine

1. The journey

Ex 14 - Pharaoh, the army of Egypt, the chariots and horses are drowned in the sea.

Ex 15:1-21 - the celebration song of Moses; Miriam and the women dance and sing to the Lord

Ex 15:22-26 - 3 days later they are thirsty and grumble because they find bitter waters.

At Marah the Lord revealed Himself as "the LORD who heals you" (Jehovah-Rapha).

2. Each step is filled with spiritual lessons for believers of every age.

(1 Cor 10:1-10; Heb 8:5-6; 9:8-10, 23-28; 10:1-3; Col 2:16-17)

Marah (means bitter), speaks of the bitter experiences of life.

The tree suggests the cross of Calvary, which transmutes the bitter things of life into sweetness.

Elim, with its twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees, suggests the rest and refreshment which are ours, after we have been to the cross.

3. God announced to them His name "I am the LORD who heals you" - "Jehovah-Rapha"

This title, Jehovah-Rapha (is a name),

Jehovah here reveals His personal relationship as the Healer of His people.

Since the promise related to physical diseases, the healing must also be physical healing.

The tree healed the water; changing the bitter water into sweet, drinkable water.

The name "I Jehovah am your healer," is surprising; One might expect, "I am Jehovah who heals your water," but it was the people he came to heal.

4. The story of the bronze serpent Num 21:4-9

Then they set out from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the people became impatient because of the journey. 5 The people spoke against God and Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this miserable food." 6 The LORD sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. 7 So the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, because we have spoken against the LORD and you; intercede with the LORD, that He may remove the serpents from us." And Moses interceded for

the people. 8 Then the LORD said to Moses, " Make a fiery serpent , and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live." 9 And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent , he lived.

You would think that this is the place that we would have the name Jehovah-Rapha.

They grumble (again) and serpents bit and killed many of them.

God's formula to be healed.

look at a bronze serpent on a bronze pole
(bronze is a picture of judgment)
receive healing by looking at the very thing that bit you.

Forgiveness of sins and healing from sickness go together.

Ps 103:3 Who pardons all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases;

Isa 33:24 And no resident will say, "I am sick" ...there will be forgiven their iniquity.

Isa 53:5 He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities;
The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.

Jas 5:14-15 Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders ... will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

Mt 9:2-7 healing of the paralytic (Mk 2:1-12; Lk 5:18-26)

V. 6 "But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"--
then He said to the paralytic, "Get up, pick up your bed and go home."

Forgiveness, healing and eternal salvation come about through the same source.

Jn 3:14-16 Jesus took all judgment and gives us salvation.

14 "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; 15 so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. 16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

B. Definition of Jehovah Rapha

Jehovah = "I will be all that you need Me to be when you need Me to be it."

rapha = healer

(root = Rophi = heals; healing; restore; repair; make whole.)

Heals:

to mend (as a garment is mended);
to repair (as a building is constructed);
to cure (as a diseased person is restored to health)

Translated as:

"The LORD who heals you"

"The Lord our healer"

"the LORD is healing" (physical and spiritual);

"the LORD the Physician"

"I Am Jehovah, your Healer"

C. The promise of healing

Dt 7:15 "The LORD will remove from you all sickness; and He will not put on you any of the harmful diseases of Egypt which you have known, but He will lay them on all who hate you.

Dt 32:39 'See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded and it is I who heal, And there is no one who can deliver from My hand.

The promise is now stated in negative terms; I will put none of the diseases upon you which I put upon the Egyptians.

is literally "all the sickness which I put on the Egyptians I will not put upon you."

Diseases is a noun that comes from the verb meaning to become weak or ill.

Here it obviously refers to the plagues that Jehovah inflicted on the Egyptians, so it may be understood in the broader sense of "sufferings".

Therefore one may say "I will not make you suffer as I did the Egyptians."

Or "I will not hurt you by causing you to become sick as I did the Egyptians."

It is possible to put the final sentence at the beginning of the verse as follows:

Then he said, "I am Yahweh your God, and I heal your diseases. If you obey me by doing the things I consider to be right [or, good], and follow all my laws, I won't hurt you with the diseases that I caused the Egyptians to suffer."

It pledged to Israel that he would heal them of whatever diseases were already upon them.

He would be a God of health to them.

The healthy condition of body is one which not only throws off existing disease, but which fortifies the body against attacks of disease from without.

Natural healing, as we see in the New Testament, and especially in the miracles of Christ, is a symbol of spiritual healing, and also a pledge of it.

In the gospels, "to be saved," and "to be made whole," are represented by the same Greek word. We may state the relation thus:

(1) Natural healing is the symbol of spiritual healing.

(2) Spiritual healing, in turn, is a pledge of the ultimate removal of all natural evils (Rev. 21:4).

(3) Each separate experience of healing is a pledge of the whole. It is a fresh testimony to the truth that God is a healer (Ps. 103:1-4).

Every recovery from sickness is thus, in a way, the preaching of a gospel. It pledges a complete and perfect healing-entire deliverance from natural and spiritual evils.

II. Healing is in the atonement

A. Key Text:

Isa 53:3-6 He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. 4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed. 6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.

Isa 53:10-12 But the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; if He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. 11 As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; by His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, and He will divide the booty with the strong; because He poured out Himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors.

Mt 8:16-17 When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill. This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "HE HIMSELF TOOK OUR INFIRMITIES AND CARRIED AWAY OUR DISEASES."

B. Four key Hebrew words:

1. Sorrow (Hb. = mak'ob)

v. - 3 A man of sorrows

v. - 4 And our sorrows He carried

Def. = anguish or (figuratively) affliction: grief, pain, sorrow

2. Grief (Hb. = choliy)

v. - 3 A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;

v. - 4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore,

v. - 10 the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief;

Def. = malady, anxiety, calamity: disease, grief, (is) sick (-ness).

3. Carry (Hb. = nasa)

v. - 4 our sorrows He carried

v. - 11 He will bear their iniquities.

Def. = "to lift up, to carry;" "to bear away," "to convey;" "to remove to a distance"

4. Bear, bore (Hb. = cabal)

v. - 11 He will bear their iniquities.

v. - 12 He Himself bore the sin of many,

Def. = a primitive root; to carry (literally or figuratively), or (reflexively) be burdensome; specifically, to bear, be a burden, carry, strong to labor.

C. From the experts:

1. Delitzsch:

Regarding Isaiah 53:4 Delitzsch says, "Freely but faithfully that the gospel of Matthew translate this text, 'Himself took our infirmities and carried our sicknesses.' The help which Jesus rendered in all kinds of bodily sickness is taken in Matthew to be a fulfillment of what in Isaiah is prophesied of the Servant of Jehovah. The Hebrew verb of the text, when used of sin, signify to assume as a heavy burden and bear away the guilt of sin, as one's own; that is, to bear sin mediatorially in order to atone for it. But here, where not our sins, but our sicknesses and pains are the object, the mediatorial sense remains the same.

"It is not meant that the Servant of Jehovah merely entered into fellowship of our suffering, but that He took upon Himself the sufferings that we had to bear, and deserved to bear; and, therefore, He not only bore them away, but also in His own person endured them in order to discharge us from them. Now when one takes suffering upon himself which another had to bear,

and does this, not merely in fellowship with him, but in his stead, we call it Substitution."

2. McLaren:

Again listen to Alexander McLaren, that prince of commentators "It is to be kept in view, that the griefs, which the Servant (Christ) is here described as bearing, are literally sicknesses, and that similarly, the sorrows may be diseases. Matthew in his quotation of this verse (Mat 8:17) takes the words to refer to bodily ailments - and that interpretation is part of the whole truth, for Hebrew thought drew no such sharp line of distinction between diseases of the body and those of the soul, as we are accustomed to draw. All sickness was taken to be the consequence of sin."

3. McCrossan:

Trying to make Isa 53:4 and Mat 28:17 refer only to the people of Christ's own day and not for us is just as absurd and unscholarly as trying to persuade us that the book of James is not for this Church Age, but only for the twelve scattered tribes, or the Jews of the tribulation.

4. A. J. Gordon

"The yoke of His cross by which He lifted our iniquities, too hold also of our diseases; - He who entered into mysterious sympathy with our pain - which is the fruit of sin - also put Himself underneath our pain, which is the penalty of sin. In other words the passage seems to teach that Christ endured vicariously our diseases, as well as our iniquities." This agrees exactly with the conclusion of Delitzsch, the great Hebraist.

5. Andrew Murray

"it is not said only that the Lord's righteous Servant had borne our sin, but also that he has borne our sicknesses. Thus His bearing our sicknesses forms an integral part of the Redeemer's work, as well as bearing our sins. - The body and the soul have been created to serve together as a habitation of God: the sickly condition of the body is - as well as that of the soul - a consequence of sin, and that is what Jesus is comes to bear, to expiate and to conquer."

6. A. B. Simpson

"Therefore as he hath borne our sins, Jesus Christ has also borne away, and carried off our sicknesses; yea, and even our pains, so that abiding in Him, we may be fully delivered from both sicknesses and pain. Thus by His stripes we are healed. Blessed and glorious Burden-Bearer."

C. Jesus died for:

"our sicknesses;" "our pains;" "our transgressions;" "our iniquities;" "our peace;" "our healing;"
for "by His stripes we are healed."

D. Scriptures that prove that it is God's will for us to be healed

Isaiah 53:4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.

Matthew 8:17 This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "HE HIMSELF TOOK OUR INFIRMITIES AND CARRIED AWAY OUR DISEASES."

Galatians 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us--for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"

(see also Ex 15:26; 1 Pt 2:24; Ps 103:3; 107:20; Jas 5:14-16; Jn 10:10; 1 Jn 3:8; 3 Jn 2; Ac 10:38)

E. Healing is for all

I. Jesus healed everyone that came to Him.

Acts 10:38 "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

(Mat 4:23-25; 9:35; 10:1; 12:15; 14:14,34-36; Luke 6:17-19).

2. Jesus is still healing today

Heb 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

A very large part of the ministry of Jesus and His Apostles was given to physical healing.

The Church has been given "gifts of healings" (1 Cor. 12:9).

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