

Healing

Articles from Nelson Bible Publishers

HEALING (1) — the process of applying preventive and remedial practices to maintain good health. In the ancient world health was a highly prized possession. The Hebrews tended to think of health primarily in terms of physical strength and well-being. The land of Palestine apparently provided a relatively healthy environment, as compared to Egypt and Mesopotamia—probably because of its location as well as the various laws and practices prescribed by the Law of Moses.

Regulation of Diet. Most of the laws about food consumption are included in the first five books of the Old Testament. The restrictions involving meats were based on two simple tests. Only animals with separated hooves and that chewed the cud were suitable for eating (Lev. 11:3). This meant that pigs and rabbits were unsuitable. Modern medicine has demonstrated that these animals are especially liable to infections with parasites; they are safe only if well-cooked. Thus, the prohibition of these animals for food among the Hebrew people was beneficial to their health.

Rituals. Several rituals were observed among the Hebrew people to maintain sanitary conditions, ceremonial cleanness and to promote good health. One of these involved bodily discharge. Although not all bodily discharges are infectious, many are. Since the Hebrew people lacked ways to determine which discharges were infectious, all were treated as potentially infectious. For example, sputum is mentioned as a possible cause of infection (Lev. 15:8)—a fact that was not positively validated until the 19th century.

Another good example of this principle is the instruction given about the disposal of human excrement. A place was set apart outside the camp for this purpose. The Hebrew people were required to carry a spade, dig a hole for the excrement, and cover it (DEU 23:12–13).

Hygiene. The Law of Moses required that the body and clothes be washed after contact with a diseased or dead person. The regulations about contact with dead bodies specified a period of uncleanness lasting seven days. During this time, the person

involved was isolated from other people and required to perform certain ACT, including bathing one's body and washing one's clothes (NUM 19:1–22).

Sexual Perversion. The strict laws about sexual morality among the Hebrew people also promoted the prevention of venereal disease. CIRCUMCISION was not only a religious rite, but also a hygienic measure that reduced infection and illness.

Medicine and Physicians. The first medicines probably were introduced to the Hebrews by the Egyptians while they were in bondage. In biblical times medicines were made from minerals, animal substances, herbs, wines, fruits, and other parts of plants. The Bible mentions numerous examples of these primitive medicines—notably the “balm of Gilead,” which was probably an aromatic substance taken from an evergreen tree.

Wine mixed with myrrh was used to relieve pain by dulling the senses. This remedy was offered to Jesus when He was on the cross, but He refused to drink it (MAR 15:23). Olive oil and herbs often were used to anoint the sick. The early Christians continued this practice, anointing the sick as they prayed for them (JAM 5:14).

The Bible refers to the work of physicians (GEN 50:2; 2CH 16:12; Jer. 8:22). In the New Testament, LUK is mentioned as the “beloved physician” (Col. 4:14).

Medical treatment in the biblical world often included the use of MAGIC, SORcery, AND DIVINATION. Such practices were prohibited by the Mosaic law; they were seen as inconsistent with the nature of the all-powerful God.

The Ministry of Jesus. The people of Old Testament times tended to think of sickness as punishment for sin. This concept is explored fully in the Book of JOB. But Jesus was firmly convinced that His Father's purpose for humankind was health, wholeness, and salvation. He did not teach that disease was a punishment sent by God. And while He was always concerned to heal the sick in body, He also paid close attention to the minds and the spirits of those who suffered.

Healing (2)—restoration of health

A. Resulting from:

Intercession NUM 12:10–15

1 Ronald F. Youngblood, general editor; F.F. Bruce and R.K. Harrison, consulting editors, *Nelson's new illustrated Bible dictionary: An authoritative one-volume reference work on the Bible with full color illustrations [computer file], electronic edition of the revised edition of Nelson's illustrated Bible dictionary, Logos Library System, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1995.*

2 Thomas Nelson, Inc., *Nelson's topical Bible index [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1995.*

Repentance 1KI 13:1–6
 Prayer JAM 5:14, 15
 Faith MAT 9:20–22;
 JOH 4:46–53
 God’s Word PSA 107:20

B. *Power of:*

Belongs to God GEN 20:17-18
 Possessed by Jesus MAT 4:24;
 MAT 8:16
 Given to apostles MAT 10:1–8
 Given as a gift 1CO 12:9
 Eternal in heaven REV 22:2

Diseases—*physical impairments of health*

A. *Kinds of:*

Atrophy JOB 16:8
 Blindness MAT 9:27
 Boil 2KI 20:7
 Boils EXO 9:10
 Consumption DEU 28:22
 Deafness MAR 7:32
 Dropsy LUK 14:2
 Dumbness MAT 9:32
 Dysentery 2CH 21:12–19
 Epilepsy MAT 4:24
 Fever MAT 8:14, 15
 Flow of blood MAT 9:20
 Inflammation DEU 28:22
 Insanity DAN 4:33
 Itch DEU 28:27
 Leprosy 2KI 5:1
 Paralysis MAT 4:24
 Plague 2SA 24:15–25
 Scab DEU 28:27
 Sores LUK 16:20
 Tumors ISA 5:6, 12
 Weakness PSA 102:23

B. *Causes of:*

Man’s original sin GEN 3:16–19
 Man’s actual sin 2KI 5:25–27;
 2CH 21:12–19
 Satan’s afflictions JOB 2:7; LUK 13:16
 God’s sovereign will JOH 9:1–3;
 2CO 12:7–10

C. *Cures of:*

From God 2CH 16:12;
 PSA 103:2, 3
 By Jesus MAT 4:23, 24
 By prayer ACT 28:8, 9;
 JAM 5:14-15
 By the use of means ISA 38:21;
 LUK 10:34

Sick, Sickness—*the state of being unwell*

A. *Caused by:*

Age GEN 48:1, 10
 Accident 2KI 1:2

Wine HOS 7:5
 Sins MIC 6:13
 Despondency PRO 13:12
 Prophetic visions DAN 8:27
 Love SON 2:5
 God’s judgment 2CH 21:14–19
 God’s sovereignty JOH 11:4

B. *Healing of, by:*

Figs 2KI 20:7
 Miracle 1KI 17:17–23
 Prayer JAM 5:14, 15
 God’s mercy PHI 2:25–30

HEALING (3)

Depending on physicians, 2CH 16:12.
 Healed of leprosy, LEV 14:1–57 (NKJV).
 The Great Healer, PSA 103:3.
 Healing blind, deaf, dumb, lame, ISA 35:5–6.
 No balm in Gilead, JER 8:22.
 Decisive healing, JER 17:14.
 Useless remedies, JER 46:11.
 Isaiah’s prophecy of healing, MAT 8:16–17;
 ISA 53:4.
 Relationship of illness to sin, MAT 9:1–7.
 Double healing, Matthew 9:18–25.
 Authority over illness, MAT 10:1; ACT 3:11–16.
 Arms, legs replaced, Matthew 15:31 (LB).
 Epilepsy caused by demon, Matthew 17:14–20.
 Healing increased popularity of Jesus MAR 3:7–10
 Faith lacked for healing, MAR 6:4–6.
 Fever rebuked, LUK 4:38–39.
 Healing power emerged from Jesus, LUK 6:19.
 Emphasizing healing above Healer, LUK 7:21–23.
 Illness caused by spirit, LUK 13:10–16.
 Long wait for healing, JOH 5:1–8.
 Purpose for sickness, JOH 11:4.
 Misunderstood healing of lame man ACT 14:8–18
 Miracles in Paul’s ministry, ACT 19:11–12.
 Church sleeper restored, ACT 20:9–10.
 Healing omitted among gifts, ROM 12:4–6
 (See ROM 15:17–19).
 Priority of healing ministry, 1CO 12:28–31.
 Prayer for healing, no answer, 2CO 12:7–10.
 Praying for sick, JAM 5:13–15.

HEALTH

Disease, sin, LEV 26:14–16.
 Lifelong virility, DEU 34:7.
 Evil spirits, poor health, ISA 16:16.
 Hearty, healthful greeting, ISA 25:6.
 Satan challenged God for Job’s health, JOB 2:3–6.

3 Ken Anderson; illustrated by JOH Hayes, *Where to find it in the Bible [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1996 by Ken Anderson.

mss. have the word, with sense (b), in LUK 4:18. Apart from this last, LUK, the physician, uses the word fifteen times.

3. **◈◈◈** (4982), “to save,” is translated by the verb “to heal” in the KJV of MAR 5:23 and LUK 8:36 (RV, “to make whole”; so KJV frequently); the idea is that of saving from disease and its effects.

4. **◈◈◈** (1295), “to save thoroughly” (**◈◈◈**, “through,” and No. 3), is translated “heal” in LUK 7:3, KJV (RV, “save”). See ESCAPE.

B. Nouns.

1. **◈◈◈** (2322), akin to A, No. 1, primarily denotes “care, attention,” LUK 12:42 (see HOUSEHOLD); then, “medical service, healing” (Eng., “therapy”), LUK 9:11; Rev. 22:2, of the effects of the leaves of the tree of life, perhaps here with the meaning “health.”¶

2. **◈◈◈** (2386), akin to A, No. 2, formerly signified “a means of healing”; in the NT, “a healing” (the result of the act), used in the plural, in 1 Cor. 12:9, 28, 30, RV, “healings”; of divinely imparted gifts in the churches in apostolic times.¶

3. **◈◈◈** (2392), akin to A, No. 2, stresses the process as reaching completion, LUK 13:32, “cures,” of the ACT of Christ in the days of His flesh; ACT 4:22, 30, “to heal,” lit. ‘unto healing.’¶

HEALTH (to be in)

◈◈◈ (5198) denotes “to be healthy, sound, in good health” (Eng., “hygiene”), rendered “mayest be in health,” in 3 JOH 2; rendered “safe and sound” in LUK 15:27. See SAFE, D, No. 2, SOUND, WHOLE, B, No. 1.

Note: In ACT 27:34, **◈◈◈**, “salvation, safety,” is translated “health” in the KJV; the RV, gives the right meaning, “safety.”

HANDS (6). Laying on of hands, HEB 6:2; in consecration, GEN 48:14; Ex. 29:10,15,19; Lev. 1:4; 3:2,8,13; 4:15,24,33; 16:21; in ordaining the Levites, NUM 8:10,11; Joshua, NUM 27:18-23; DEU 34:9; Timothy, 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6; in healing, MAR 6:5; 7:32; 16:18; LUK 4:40; ACT 28:8; in blessing children, MAT 19:13; MAR 10:16; in solemnizing testimony, Lev. 24:14. Lifted up in benediction, Lev. 9:22; LUK 24:50; in prayer, see **PRAYER**, ATTITUDES IN. Ceremonial washing of, MAT 15:2; MAR 7:2-5. See **CLEAN**; **WASHING**. Symbolical of righteousness, JOB 17:9. Washing of, a symbol of innocence, DEU 21:6; MAT 27:24. Claspings of, in token of contract, Ezra 10:19; PRO 6:1; 17:18; LAM 5:6; EZE 17:18; of friendship, 2KI 10:15; JOB 17:3. Right hand lifted up in swearing, GEN 14:22; Psa. 106:26; ISA 62:8;

symbol of power, ISA 23:11; 41:10; place of honor, Psa. 45:9; 80:17.

FIGURATIVE: MAT 5:30; 18:8; MAR 9:43. Anthropomorphic use of: unlimited power of the Lord, NUM 11:23; is mighty, JOS 4:24; was heavy, ISA 5:6; against the Philistines, ISA 7:13; on Elijah, 1 Kin. 18:46; not shortened, ISA 59:1; was with the early Christians, ACT 11:21. For extended anthropomorphisms consult concordances under the word “hand.”

LAYING ON OF HANDS. This “formed at an early period a part of the ceremony observed on the appointment and consecration of persons to high and holy undertakings”; (and in the Christian Church was especially used in setting apart men to the ministry and to other holy offices. It is a symbolical act expressing the imparting of spiritual authority and power.—ED.)

HANDS, LAYING ON OF (7) — the placing of hands upon a person by a body of believers in ceremonial fashion to symbolize that person’s authority or his appointment to a special task.

The practice of laying hands on someone or something occurs frequently in the Old Testament—particularly the laying of hands on the head of an animal intended for sacrifice. In the account of the ritual of the DAY OF ATONEMENT, the priest laid his hands on the SCAPEGOAT (Lev. 16:21). This symbolized the transferral of the sins and guilt of the people to the goat, which was taken away into the wilderness. The act of laying on of hands in the Old Testament was also associated with blessing (GEN 48:18), installation to office (DEU 34:9), and the setting apart of Levi (NUM 8:10). These passages seem to express the idea of transferral of authority and quality.

In the New Testament Jesus laid his hands on children (MAT 19:13, 15) and on the sick when he healed them (MAT 9:18). In the early church the laying on of hands was also associated with healing, the reception of the Holy Spirit (ACT 9:17), the setting apart of persons to particular offices and work in the church (ACT 6:6), the commissioning of Barnabas and Paul as missionaries (ACT 13:3), and the setting apart of

7 Ronald F. Youngblood, general editor; F.F. Bruce and R.K. Harrison, consulting editors, *Nelson’s new illustrated Bible dictionary: An authoritative one-volume reference work on the Bible with full color illustrations [computer file], electronic edition of the revised edition of Nelson’s illustrated Bible dictionary, Logos Library System, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1995.*

6 Swanson, JAM, Editor, *New Nave’s Topical Bible*, (Oak Harbor, Washington: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1994.

Timothy (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6). The ritual was accompanied by prayer (ACT 6:6).

The laying on of hands was not a magical or superstitious rite that gave a person special power. It expressed the idea of being set apart by God's people for a special task.