

What the Bible Has to Say About These 3 Common Views of Healing

In the 1980s, Asher Intrater and I studied the subject of healing with great intensity. We studied the most prominent teachers on what the Bible teaches about healing.

We ourselves saw some really amazing healings but also some very disappointing sicknesses that eventually ended in death.

Our close friend, Dr. Michael Brown, is perhaps one of the greatest experts on the subject of biblical healing. He received his Ph.D. from New York University for his thesis on healing in the Hebrew Bible. This was made into an important book titled *Israel's Divine Healer*.

Here are three very common views on healing:

1. While our ordinary immune system from God brings healing and is a gift from God, supernatural miraculous healing and creative miracles of restoration are very rare. We can and should always pray for such miracles, but in the normal course of the life of believers, diseases and terminal illnesses will take their normal course for both believers and non-believers. This is the human situation after the fall. This is the primary view of non-charismatics that includes many Israeli, Messianic Jewish leaders.

2. We are to pray for healing. If we pray for healing as a regular practice and submit to opportunities for praying for healing, we will see much more supernatural healing. However, we need to trust God and know that ultimately, healing is a matter of God's sovereignty. The best thing we can do to believe for healing is to walk in fellowship with God, avoid sin and live in trusting relationship while availing ourselves

of healing prayer. This is the Vineyard view taught by John Wimber.

3. Healing is always God's will. If we will give ourselves to God in the right way, meditate on the Scriptures on healing and confess them as God's certain promises, we should always be healed. God's promise of healing is absolute, so if a person does not receive supernatural healing, the failure to receive is the person's failure to build his faith to receive it. Faith for healing is something a person is responsible to acquire. This is the view of the Word of Faith movement teachers: the late Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, Andrew Womack and many others. For these brothers, if the promise is not absolute and obtainable, it undercuts the building faith to receive the healing.

Our view does not fully fit into any of these three. We can summarize our view by the following, according to Dr. Brown's book. Healing is the general will of God for His obedient people, but one cannot make this a universal law and conclude that it is God's absolute will to heal in every single case. We can know it is His general will to heal on the basis of the following:

1. The promises to Israel for physical health if they would live an obedient life. This includes deliverance from "the sicknesses of Egypt," miscarriages and the blessing of living a long life.

2. The inclusion of sicknesses as being healed in the atonement of Yeshua, as in the Isaiah 53: "he bore our sicknesses ... we are healed by His wounds" (Is. 53:4b, 5d, HCSB).

3. The healing ministry of Yeshua is a manifestation of the will of God for people.

4. The conclusive statement of Peter on the atonement, that "He Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree ... 'By

His wounds you were healed'" (1 Pet 2:24, MEV) refers to not only spiritual but physical healing.

5. In times of revival and heightened spiritual fervor and awareness, healing is much more frequent. Note, for example, Pensacola, the early Vineyard movement and the Bethel Church of Bill Johnson.

6. However, though healing is God's general will, we see in the death of Elisha and the sickness of some in the New Covenant Scriptures that healing is not an absolute promise for every case at all times.

7. The kind of faith that moves mountains is a "God kind of faith" that only God can ultimately grant. He indeed usually grants us the faith we need for what we are called to do, and this usually includes faith for healing.

So what do we learn from this? Stayed tuned for Part 2 of this series, coming soon. {eo}

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