

## Lesson 1

# HEALING – IN THE OLD TESTAMENT



## Introduction

In the Bible we read amazing stories of people who were healed – in both the Old Testament and the New. For example in the Old Testament there is the story of Naaman, who came to Elisha the prophet, and was healed of leprosy. Then when Jesus came to earth, he healed everyone who came to him – the blind, the deaf and the crippled. The disciples also saw wonderful healings take place – like the lame man at the Temple Gate. We believe these things happened then, but do they still happen today?

First of all, we are going to see what God revealed about himself.

## 1. GOD'S NAME: 'I am the Lord who heals'

**Exodus 15:26**      *He said, "If you listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you."*

God revealed to his people, the Children of Israel that he would heal them if they followed his word. He said, "I am the Lord, who heals you." This is one of the names that God gave for himself. When God revealed himself to Moses he called himself 'Jehovah' – which means, 'I will be all that I will be'. God uses this same name, 'Jehovah' when he speak to all the people, and adds to that name, 'the one who heals.'

Another example is when he spoke to Abraham on the mountain when he was about to sacrifice Isaac. God provided a ram to be a sacrifice, and he called himself 'Jehovah – the one who provides.'

These are not just names – but this is WHO God is and WHAT he is like – it is his very nature. He is the giver of life and the one who brings healing. In fact we are told that when the Children of Israel went through the wilderness on their way to the promised land that not one of them was sick. Let's look at another verse.

**Psalms 103:2-5**      *'Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits – who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases.'*

This Psalm is listing the benefits of being in a covenant relationship with God. What are the benefits?

- he forgives all your sin
- he heals all your diseases
- he redeems your life
- he crowns you with love and compassion
- he satisfies your desires with good things

This covenant was made with the Children of Israel in the time of Moses, but in this Psalm King David explains what these blessings are. Do you believe that God forgives all your sin? Yes we do. But notice that the Word of God also says, 'He heals all your diseases'. There is no sin too big for God to forgive, nor is there any sickness too difficult for God to heal.

## 2. GOD'S PROMISE: 'by his wounds we are healed'

Although God made this covenant with Israel, he promised that he was going to make a new covenant with man. This covenant would be superior to the old covenant. We know that these prophecies were fulfilled by the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Isaiah 53:4-5** *'Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced (wounded) for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds (stripes) we are healed.'*

This is a prophecy saying that Jesus would carry our infirmities, our sorrows and our transgressions. We believe and understand that Jesus died so we could be forgiven of our sin, but it is also saying that God was making provision for us so that we could be healed of our sicknesses. This is how the first apostles understood Isaiah's prophecy.

**Matthew 8:17** *'This was to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases."'*

Matthew quotes this immediately after telling how Jesus healed many people – in fact in v16 it says Jesus healed all the sick who came to him! The word 'diseases' that is used by Matthew is the usual word that was used for physical sicknesses. Jesus came to heal us spiritually, and he also has made provision through his death for our physical healing.

Let's look at another prophecy, possibly one of the last written in Old Testament times.

**Malachi 4:2** *'But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall.'*

Again this was a prophecy fulfilled by Jesus Christ. John the Baptist's father, Zechariah, prophesied when his son was born. He said that John would be the one who would prepare the way for the Lord. Then he quote from Malachi 4:2 about that one who was coming.

**Luke 1:78** *'because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven.'*

Malachi says there will be healing in his 'wings'. This is a picture of a bird with wings spread out to cover and protect its' young. When we come to Jesus we are under his covering and protection, and there is healing in that place! There is another picture here. The word used in Malachi for wings in the Hebrew language (kanaph) also means border or hem of a garment. Remember the story of the woman who touched Jesus' hem and she was healed of an issue of blood? She was touching the part of Jesus' garment known as the 'wings', the fringe or tassels that were sewn on the four corners of his garment.

## Conclusion

We have seen that the very nature of God is to heal. One of the names he revealed to his people was 'The Lord, who heals'. God never changes – he is still the God who heals. When we accept Jesus as our Saviour, we enter into a covenant relationship with the Living God. This covenant was made possible by the shed blood of Jesus. The blessings or benefits of that covenant are that we are forgiven of our sin, we have peace with God and have eternal life. However another benefit that we may not have realised before, is that Jesus died so we could be healed.