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Jehovah-Rapha

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ARTICLE THIRTY-SEVEN: RAPHA, THE NINTH COMPOUND NAME OF JEHOVAH

“ . . . but to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings . . . ”
(Mal. 4:2).

By this new name, God introduced to Israel the terms of His heavenly “Medicare” health plan while they were on their way to Canaan. If only they had accepted this gracious policy. The Israelites were challenged to obey God, and God would instruct them in every area of life, including health and nutrition, in order to keep them from disease and illness.

“If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee” (Exod. 15:26).

God desires to heal many things:

A. He desires to heal nations:

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chron. 7:14).

“In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (Rev. 22:2).

B. He desires to heal backsliders—In Jeremiah 3:22 we are told, *“Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.”*

C. He desires to heal broken hearts—David says in Psalm 147:3, *“He healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds.”*

D. He desires to heal sinful souls—Note the words of David in Psalm 41:4: *“I said, Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.”*

So then, in light of all the above, the question is *not* whether God *often* heals in answer to our prayers, but rather does He *always* heal?

A. Some would respond, *yes!* In fact, this position holds it is *never* God’s will for a believer to *ever* suffer any health problem, from the common cold to terminal cancer. However, if someone does, it may be due to an unconfessed secret sin, or more likely, insufficient faith. And the correct response? *Name it* (your sin), and *claim it* (your healing)! Scripture passages given to support this view include:

1. Both Isaiah and Peter testify there is healing in the atonement (Isa. 53:5; 1 Peter 2:24).
2. No less than seven passages in Matthew’s account alone record Jesus healing the masses, and after the passage reads “he healed all,” or “everyone!” (Matt. 4:23, 24; 8:16; 9:35; 12:15; 14:14; 19:2; 21:14).

3. King David writes in similar fashion:

"Who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases" (Psa. 103:3).

B. Some would respond, *no!*

1. Not all suffering and health problems are due to personal sin. In fact God denounced Job's three friends who had falsely attributed his terrible sufferings to personal sin (Job 42:7).

2. In the New Testament, Jesus' disciples made the same terrible mistake:

"As he passed by, he saw a blind man from birth. And the disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him'" (Jn. 9:1-3).

3. In 2 Corinthians 12, we learn of Paul's mysterious *thorn in the flesh*. Whatever it was, he asked God on three separate occasions to remove it from him. Note the outcome:

"But he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:9, 10).

4. What was the nature of this ailment? Some hold that Paul hints of it in Galatians:

"You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first, though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus. What then has become of the blessing you felt? For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me. See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand" (Gal. 4:13-15; 6:11).

5. Based on these verses it has been generally concluded his suffering was due to a chronic eye disease. But whatever it was, the apostle could not heal himself.

6. Paul could not heal Timothy:

"No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments" (1 Tim. 5:23).

7. Paul could not heal a sick fellow co-laborer:

"Erastus remained at Corinth, and I left Trophimus, who was ill, at Miletus" (2 Tim. 4:20).

8. Physical suffering is often included in the divine master plan to accomplish the following desired goals:

Making us more mature:

"Sorrow is better than laughter, for by a sad countenance the heart is made better" (Eccles. 7:3).

"But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you" (1 Peter 5:10).

Silencing the devil:

“And the LORD said to Satan, ‘From where do you come?’ So Satan answered the LORD and said, ‘From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.’ Then the LORD said to Satan, ‘Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?’ So Satan answered the LORD and said, ‘Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!’” (Job 1:7-11).

“Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD. Then the LORD said to Satan, ‘Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause.’ So Satan answered the LORD and said, ‘Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!’ And the LORD said to Satan, ‘Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life.’ So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head” (Job 2:1, 3-7).

Purifying our lives:

“For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined” (Psa. 66:10).

Causing us to become more like Jesus:

“We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh” (2 Cor. 4:8-11).

Becoming an example to others:

“We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed. But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love” (2 Cor. 6:3-6).

Qualifying us as counselors:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ” (2 Cor. 1:3-5).

Bringing us closer to God:

“And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Cor. 12:7-10).

Providing for us a reward up there:

“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together” (Rom. 8:16, 17).

“If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us” (2 Tim. 2:12).

In regard to the *“with his stripes we are healed”* passage in Isa. 53:5, Matthew tells us this prophecy was fulfilled during Jesus’ healing ministry:

“That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: ‘He took our illnesses and bore our diseases’” (Matt. 8:16, 17).

- Great, grand, and glorious conclusion:

Whatever our position, we can all agree that Jehovah Rapha will always work out our physical difficulties in such a manner so as to bring *Him* that most amount of *glory*, and *us*, the most amount of *good!* Surely each of us can join David in his praise proclamation:

“Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it” (Psa. 139:6).