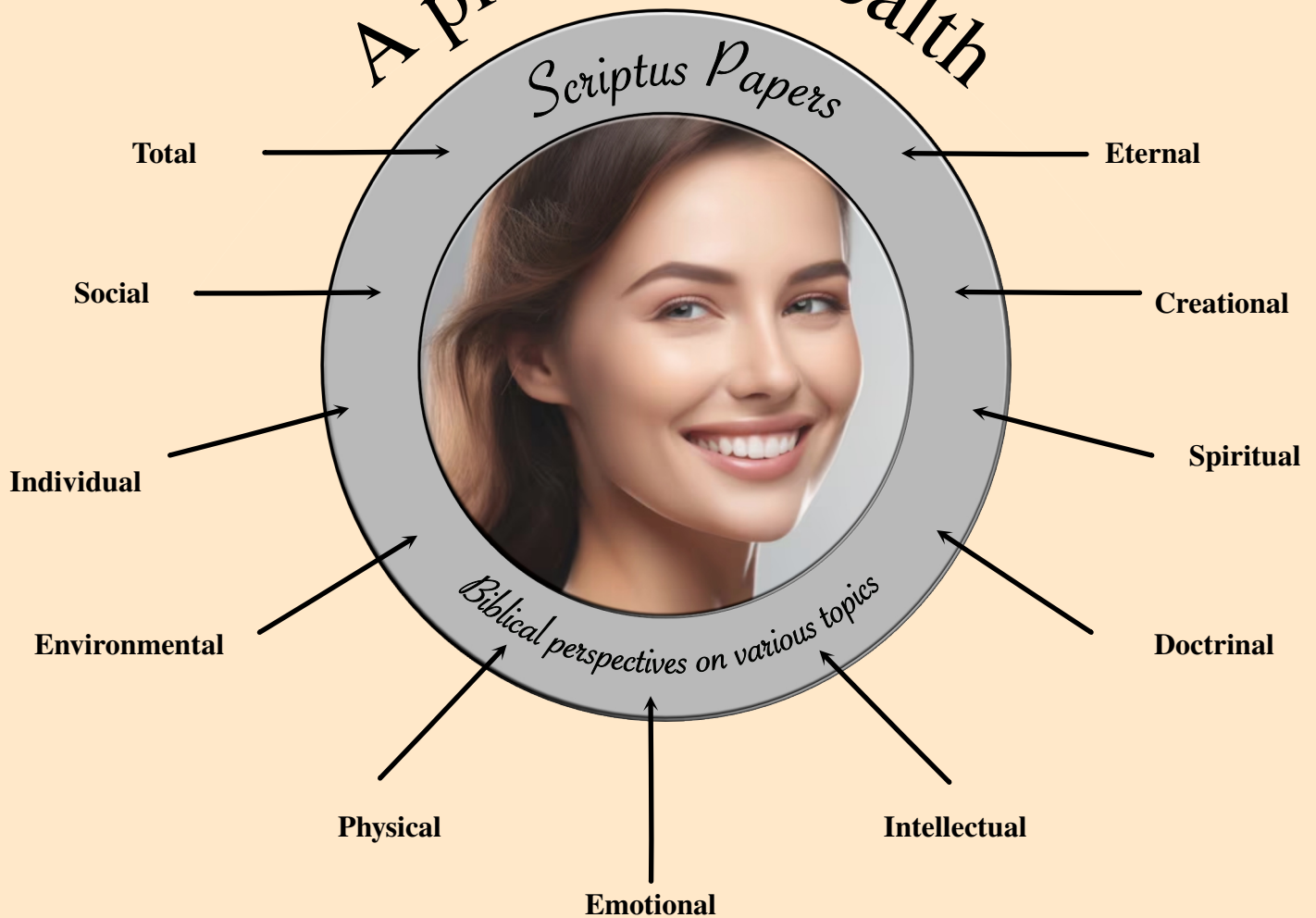




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A picture of health



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Don't get me wrong: science is GREAT! I love it. But without some version of the Divine attached to it, it corrodes all meaning from life (David Strom)

Introduction

Scriptus means ‘having been written’, and this first *Scriptus Paper* provides some biblical perspectives on what constitutes a picture of perfect health. You might describe the face on the front page as a picture of perfect health. But is that all there is to it? Certainly, the whole world is concerned about health because we are unhealthy. Do we fully understand it? It seems not.

[McKinsey](#)’s latest Future of Wellness research reports that wellness is a top or important priority in their everyday lives by 70-90% of people in the United States, the United Kingdom and China. Wellness embraces health, sleep, nutrition, fitness, appearance, and mindfulness. Globally, consumers spend \$1.8 trillion on health and wellness products.

According to the [Ipsos](#) Global Health Service Monitor across 31 countries, people put mental health as the top health concern facing their country. In Sweden and Chile, two-thirds feel that mental health is one of the biggest health problems facing their country. Canada, Spain and Australia make up the top five. Overall, men are significantly less concerned about mental health than women (38% vs. 50%).

The [AXA](#) Mind Health 2023 survey of 16,000, 18-75 years old, in 16 countries found that for every three people who feel they are flourishing, there are two who are languishing or struggling. Indeed, the proportion of people who are struggling with their mind health has returned to 2021 levels, at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. Younger people today seem disproportionately impacted by mind health issues than older generations. Likewise, the gap between women and men continues to widen.

Definitions of health

So, what is health? The wellness wheel shows that it has 10 dimensions. However, others say that it has anywhere from five to 10. These differences suggest a lack of consensus on a conceptual definition.

English

The English word “health” comes from the Old English word *hælan*, which is Proto-Indo-European in origin meaning entire, complete, healthy, sound, whole, unbroken, intact, or well ([Brüssow](#)).

The WHO

The World Health Organization’s (WHO) definition of health from 1947 is *a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity*. This definition implies that people with chronic illnesses or disabilities may be considered unhealthy, and complete wellbeing would be utopian and not feasible for them. This is no longer uniformly accepted ([van Druten et al](#)).



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Definitions of health continued

Many alternative concepts of health have been discussed in the decades since 1947 such as 'positive health', which focusses on someone's capability rather than incapability. However, the question remains whether a general health concept can guide all healthcare practices.

van Druten's analysis shows that the best fitting health concept depends on the context. Based on the variety of health concepts from different perspectives, 'health' can mean something different for every perspective, and even for every individual. The variety of concepts of health already suggests that no consensus has been made on one overall concept to replace the WHO definition. Thus, it seems impossible to choose or define one health concept appropriate for all contexts.

Given the lack of consensus about the concept of *health* in the secular world, I suggest that they aren't looking in the right place. Since the WHO definition does not have a 'spiritual' component, we should think outside the box and ask God what he says about it, how being "complete" or "in tact" or "whole" comes to be understood as being in good health or good condition. If they did, they would discover "*I, the Lord, am your Physician*" (Exodus 15:26).

So, in this *Scriptus Paper*, which is dedicated to *the Lord our Physician*, we'll go looking in the right place, the Bible. There, it becomes clear that biblical 'health' is depicted as both a 'state' and as a 'process'. The former is a perfect state on all dimensions, while the latter implies health deficiencies that must be corrected.

Dimensions of biblical health

God's health is:

1. Eternal

Shalom

Shalom is most commonly used to refer to a state of affairs, one of well-being, tranquility, prosperity, and security, circumstances unblemished by any sort of defect ([My Jewish Learning](#)). To these meanings [Abarim Publications](#) adds unbrokenness, harmony, and un-dividedness.

Shalom comes from the root *shin-lamed-mem*, which means "to be complete." Thus, in reference to the human body, or to the relationship between people or nations, we can see how being "complete" or "in tact" or "whole" comes to be understood as being in good health or good condition ([Cargill](#)).

As a result, the "completeness" or "intactness" of a person came to be understood as "peace," just as the intactness between two nations came to be understood as "peace" between the two. Over time, a simple blessing wishing someone peace became the customary greeting "shalom". So, because *shalom* signifies wholeness, completeness, perfection, payment, soundness, welfare, harmony, prosperity, and tranquility in the Hebrew language, *shalom* expresses the perfection in our holy God ([Bar](#)).

In the Hebraic way of thinking, wholeness is the joining together of opposites. That's why we say "shalom" when we greet friends and when we wish them farewell. In the most opposite of situations (coming and going) we use the same word, "shalom." There is a hidden connection to all our comings and goings; they are wondrously linked together. When I come from somewhere, I am going to someplace else. When I realise this, I feel "wholeness," and that is the source of peace – the knowledge that all my opposing energies are somehow linked and part of a single whole. *Shalom* brings the binary mind together, integrating the left brain modality of thinking (linear) and the right brain modality (intuitive). *Shalom* is the most radical union of opposites imaginable ([Zaslow](#)).

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1. Eternal continued

So, in what sense is health eternal? Take a look at these texts from the Hebrew Bible.

*Then Gideon perceived that it was the angel of the Lord; and Gideon said, "Help me, Lord GOD! For I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face." But the Lord said to him, "**Shalom** be to you; do not fear, you shall not die. Then Gideon built an altar there to the Lord, and called it, **The Lord is shalom** (Judges 6:22-24)*

God is essentially shalom, it's part of His eternal being. He is wholeness, completeness, perfection, payment, soundness, welfare, harmony, prosperity, tranquility, peace, safety, security, and health, all in One. Gideon is so afraid he thinks that he will die, but the Lord Who is *shalom*, imparts *shalom* to him.

*For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; government rests upon his shoulders; and He is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **Prince of shalom** (Isaiah 9:6).*

As the child born He is human, as the son given He is divine. 'Given' expresses His always being, His eternity. Further, 'wonderful' (pele') in Hebrew has the idea of the healing heart of God (Chaim Bentorah). Also, Mighty God (El Givor) is a military word, representing a mighty warrior, a hero in battle. A givor is one who lays down his life defending his country. An El Givor is a commander who obtained his leadership position by challenging the prior leader to a fight and winning. Jesus as El Givor is the commander who has defeated all other gods who have tried to control you. In Hebrew the Mighty God Jesus is a commander whose heart is filled with lovingkindness as He fights out battles.

One final thing here is that as the Prince of shalom He embodies *shalom*, safety, security, and good health, and eternally so (Chaim Bentorah).

Soteria

In the NT, the idea of 'health' is encapsulated in the word *soteria* that is connected to a cluster of words that revolves around wholeness and soundness. So, *soteria* means safety, deliverance, preservation, security, salvation, safety, and sufficiency. As such, it is similar to the Hebrew word (*shalom*), peace, from the verb (*shalem*), to be or make whole or complete ([Abarim Publications](#)).

*And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation (**soteria**) to all who obey him (Hebrews 5:9).* Here 'source' is 'cause'; that is, *soteria* is inherently His, which He can impart to others who obey Him.

*There is salvation (**soteria**) in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved (**soteria**) (Acts 4:12). Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the **salvation (soteria)** that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory (2 Timothy 2:10).*

'In' in both texts, such as 'in no one else' and 'in Christ Jesus' expresses a situation inside something, so here we find *soteria* within the reality of Christ. Also note the eternality of it in 2 Timothy 2:10.

2. Creational

The concept of human health is not our invention, but the product of God's essential character, because the word for "healthy" in Hebrew is *beri'ut*, from "bara" the root "to create" ([Jewish Virtual library](#)). That is, at creation, God created Adam and Eve totally whole, sound, and healthy because that is the nature of His person.

*I am the one who forms light and **creates (bara^o)** darkness; the one who makes peace (**shalom**) and **creates (bara^o)** calamity. I am the Lord, who accomplishes all these things (Isaiah 45:7).*

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3. Spiritual

Sin

*“I, the Lord, am your (**rapha**) Healer” (Exodus 15:26)*

The primary Hebrew Bible word for “heal” is *rapha*’ as in the text above, which occurs 69 times. The root idea of *rapha*’ is to mend by stitching, to restore proper, normal, perfect functioning. The Creator Who gave perfect health to the first human couple, is, following the entry of sin into the world, our physician Who performs the healing process when we have less than normal, healthy functioning ([Abarim Publications](#)).

The Exodus text above is a reference to the plagues that Yahweh has just put on the Egyptians. These will not come on God’s true people. At the start of Israel’s pilgrimage, the Lord reminds them that the promise is conditional—“*if you do not obey, then I will bring these diseases.*”

Those infirmities and sicknesses were water turning to blood, frogs, lice, flies, livestock pestilence, boils, hail, locusts, darkness and the killing of firstborn children. God lets Israel know here that He can control the elements of nature to bring about physical disease in response to spiritual unhealthiness in Israel.

Moreover, the last reference to *rapha*’ in the Hebrew Bible is found in 2 Chronicles 30:20. There, Hezekiah prayed for pardon for the Lord’s people who had set their heart to seek God, and the Lord healed (***rapha***) them. Further examples are God healing (***rapha***) the faithlessness of Judah (Jeremiah 3:22), and healing (***rapha***) the waywardness of Israel (Hosea 14:4). Clearly, these are cases of spiritual healing.

Similarly, the NT provides examples of spiritual healing. Here’s what the Lord Jesus said:

*“Those who are well (**hugiaino**, meaning to be whole, healthy or sound of body or mind) have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance” (Luke 5:31-32).* *Hugiainō*, is the root of our English word hygiene. This verb means “to be healthy, to be in good health.” His description of sin as a sickness is clear.

And Peter:

*He himself bore our sins in his body on the piece of wood, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been **healed** (**iaomai**) (1 Peter 2:24).*

Sin is a disease, and healing is found in Him Who bore our sins away. ‘Healed’ (***iaomai***) means to heal or repair and to supply something that should be there but isn’t. What Christ supplied that wasn’t there was “ceasing from sinning,” that is, the disease of sin was gone and the believers could live righteously ([Abarim Publications](#)).

What we term ‘the cross’, or sometimes translated ‘tree’ in Peter’s text is (*xulon*), which means a “piece of wood” and may denote anything from a tooth pick to the cross of Christ. It stems from a word meaning to scratch, scrape or form by whittling, shaving or grinding, which means that Peter refers to worked wood.

In the classics our word may describe any kind of worked wood, from merely chopped firewood to planks in a woodshop, boards and beams stacked at a ship yard, tables, benches, instruments of punishment and retention (gallows, stocks: Acts 16:24), or pegs, levers and spoons patiently whittled into shape. It may also denote a club or piece of wood used as a club.

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3. Spiritual continued

Demonism

*With respect to Jesus from Nazareth, that God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went around doing good and **healing** (**iaomai**) all who were **oppressed** (**katadunasteuo**), by the **devil** (**diabolos**, slanderous, backbiting one), because God was with him (Acts 10:38).*

We noted before that **iaomai** means to heal or repair and to supply something that should be there but isn't. The devil oppressed (**katadunasteuo**) people with his cruel, harsh, unfair tyrannical slanderous, backbiting rhetoric. What did this people need that they didn't have? Freedom, of course, and Jesus gave it.

*So a report about him spread throughout Syria. People brought to him all who suffered with various illnesses and afflictions, those who had seizures, paralytics, and those possessed by demons, and he **healed** (**therapeuo**) them (Matthew 4:24).*

The origin of the word 'demon' seems unclear. Some say it means "knowing ones" and others "controlling ones", that is, having the power to control the destiny and fortunes of individuals. Both of these characteristics are evident in various Scripture texts, and there is a continuum of influence from small to great. In contrast to **iaomai**, **therapeuo** that Matthew uses means to cure, to remove something that shouldn't be there, in this case, the malign controlling power of the demons ([Abarim Publications](#)).

Notice that God was with Jesus in His providing **iaomai**, or **therapeuo**, whether supplying what was missing in people's health, or removing what shouldn't be there to make them healthy. It was a work of God.

At this point, I want to delve into biblical demonism further, because the subject is so important.

Demons defined. Demons are spirits (Luke 10:17-20), and probably are not fallen angels as the Pharisees who should know, distinguished spirits from angels (Acts 23:9). Moreover, fallen angels are incarcerated (2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6).

A further feature which distinguishes them from angels is that demons can't live in a vacuum - they need embodiment or a house to live in. This could be a human being (Luke 11:24-26), or an animal (Matthew 8:28-34).

Demons are unclean spirits (**akathartos**), meaning unrefined, not internally purified, used in parallel with (**koinos**), common, vulgar, coarse, the common features of wild dogs (Matthew 10:1). Also, they are described as evil spirits (Luke 7:21), which describes an antagonistic quality that reduces and debases, or hinders and impedes someone, and this may cover anything from having to slave for money to suffering from reasonable or unreasonable fear, your or others' ignorance, your or others' addictions, weaknesses or any sort of impediment. In fact, anything that keeps you from going to where your Creator wants you to be ([Abarim Publications](#)). What terrible characters they are.

Demons and God. They bristle, and shudder in fear before God (James 2:19), and fell down before Christ in subjection, their wills bent to His, not because they wanted to do so, but because they were compelled (Mark 3:11). The Lord gave the authority to cast out demons to His apostles (Mark 3:15). Scripture is silent about whether He gave this power to non-Apostles. Given this silence, those living in the post-apostolic world should be reluctant to claim for themselves such powers of exorcism.

Demons and the Devil. The prince or ruler of demons is Beelzebul ("lord of flies", a Philistine god worshiped in the city of Ekron (2 Kings 1:2), whom the Lord equated with Satan (Mark 3:22).

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Demonism continued

Demons and the Christian. While the whole world lies in the power of the evil one (1John 5:19), those born of God have His protection, and the evil one does not attach to, or fasten himself to them (1John 5:18). Why is that? Because He Who is who is in them is greater than he who is in the world (1John 4:4). “He who is in them” refers to the Lord Himself (John 17:23), and the Spirit of God (Romans 8:9-11). Accordingly, it’s unthinkable that a Christian can be demon possessed. Demons would not want to reside with Christ or the Spirit of God, nor they with them (Luke 4:33ff).

Demons as “knowing ones”. Demons have superhuman knowledge of the identity of Christ, calling him “the Holy One of God” (Mark. 1:24, 34), and “Son of the most high God” (Mark 5:7). Further, they know of the doom that awaits them (Mark 1:24), and the time (Matthew 8:29). Also, their knowledge was revealed by the servant girl of Philippi who had a spirit of divination, and knew the identity of Paul and his companions (Acts 16:16).

Demons as “controlling ones”. The control of demons is referred to as being “demonised”, that is, to have a demon or demons that have taken up residence inside the body. Such influences may affect the body, or the personality.

Influences on the body. There are instances of demon control or influence resulting in chronic, that is prolonged or sustained physical sickness, disease, or disability of the human host, where the ability to control the body is lost. All of these cases were brought to the Lord - they did not or could not come to him of their own initiative. For example: a man had a demon that made him dumb (Matthew 9:32); a man had a demon that made him both dumb and blind (Matthew 12:22); a son had a demon that made him epileptic causing him to fall into fire and water (Matthew 17:14-21); a woman had a disabling spirit. She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself (Luke 13:11).

Influences on the personality. There are numerous instances where the demon replaces the human spirit overriding the will of the person. Further, there are no biblical cases where the presence of the demon is not readily apparent. For example, the man who lived among the tombs was not in his right mind (Matthew 8:28ff, Mark 5:2ff, Luke 8:27ff). The superhuman strength, his ferocity, his self mutilation, bizarre behaviour, and social isolation indicate the influence that the demons had on his personality. Also, the Lord cast demons out of a man in the synagogue (Mark 1:23ff, Luke 4:33ff), and out of many others (Mark 1:34, 3:11, Luke 4:40ff). In each case, the demons spoke, not the person.

Are demons responsible for all sickness? No. Sickness may be just the product of the Fall (Genesis 3:16-19, John 9:1-3), or caused by God (Exodus 9:1-12, Numbers 12:1-16, Numbers 21:5-9, 1 Kings 13:1-6, 2 Chronicles 26:16-22, Luke 1:18-22, Acts 9:8, 17-18, 13:10-12) Galatians 4:15, 1 Corinthians 12:7-10, or the result of sin (Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 11:28-32).

So it would be wrong to conclude that all illnesses, including mental, are caused by demons, and so a rush to draw conclusions about any person’s behaviour would be a mistake.

As for human behaviours such as sexual immorality, impurity, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these, are the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19ff). We do not find in the Scriptures the spirit or demon of alcoholism, or of bitterness, or of impatience, or of lust, or of rebellion or of division, or of any other corrupt human behaviour or bad attitudes.

Demons, however, have theological influence as we have already noticed. Their theology is deceitful and their teachings are followed by those who depart from the truth (1Timothy 4:1). Specifically, demons deny the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ (1 John 4:1-6). So, Christians are not to be gullible; expect demons to be behind false theological teachings.

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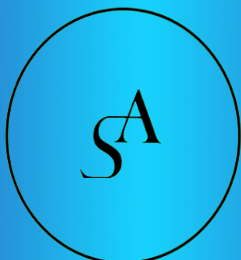
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Gifts of healings

1 Corinthians 12:9, 12:28 and 12:30. The noun (*iama*), meaning a healing, a repair, occurs only in plural, and only in the phrase "the gift of healings". Examples of such gifts of healing are recorded by Peter (Acts 3:1-10), and Paul (Acts 28:5), as they performed healing miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit.

4. Doctrinal

*Hold to the standard of sound (**hugiaino**) teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 1:13). For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound (**hugiaino**) doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires (2 Timothy 4:3).*

*He must have a firm grasp of the word that is trustworthy in accordance with the teaching, so that he may be able both to preach with sound (**hugiaino**) doctrine and to refute those who contradict it (Titus 1:9).*

*Tell the older men to be temperate, serious, prudent, and sound (**hugiaino**) in faith, in love, and in endurance (Titus 2:2). Spiritual health is manifest in godly qualities, even in older men who might not be physically healthy.*

*But as for you, teach what is consistent with sound (**hugiaino**) doctrine (Titus 2:1). Sound (**hugiaino**) speech that cannot be censured (Titus 2:8).*

All of these texts indicate that the words of the Lord Jesus Christ delivered to the apostolic class are divine health, and must be held and taught by church elders and Bible teachers.

5. Intellectual

In classifying the dimensions of health, I began with God, and worked out from Him, and the remaining dimensions are focused on mankind. Included under this heading of 'intellectual', is health associated with the cognitive abilities of a person such as understanding, creativity, curiosity, critical thinking, problem-solving, comprehension, and the capacity for learning and growth.

Here is the Lord:

*Make the hearts of these people calloused; make their ears deaf and their eyes blind. Otherwise they might see with their eyes and hear with their ears, their hearts might understand and they might repent and be healed (**rapha**) (Isaiah 6:10; see also John 12:40).*

Israel's minds, hearts, wills, intellects, and understanding needed to be healed. And Paul:

*Let all who are under the yoke of slavery regard their masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be blasphemed. Whoever teaches otherwise and does not agree with the sound (**hugiaino**) words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that is in accordance with godliness, is conceited, understanding nothing, and has a morbid craving for controversy and for disputes about words. From these come envy, dissension, slander, base suspicions, and wrangling among those who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain. (1 Timothy 6:3-5).*

The false teachers in this text do not agree with the healthy (**hugiaino**) words of Jesus Christ, have had their minds, their thoughts and understanding wholly corrupted (*diaphtheiro*), and, deprived (*aphistemi*) of the truth. This is not what the false teachers actively sought, because 'deprived' is passive. No, Jesus Christ visited them in judgment, causing these truth disagreeers to abandon and move away from His truth. When you abandon a position, you adopt another, and the Lord manipulated their intellectual reasonings so that they assumed that godliness is a way of making a profit. Sadly, it's a delusional idea, although customary in Paul's day and ours too.

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Emotional

*But as for you, you will go to your ancestors in peace (**shalom**) and be buried at a good old age (Genesis 15:15). ‘Therefore I will allow you to die and be buried in peace (**shalom**). You will not have to witness all the disaster I will bring on this place and its residents (2 Chronicles 34:28).*

These two texts, occur at the beginning and end of the Hebrew Bible forming a bracket, embracing and influencing all the other references in between. Both Abraham and king Josiah received the same message. Dying can be an emotional experience, but God gave both of these good men emotional encouragement that they will go to their ancestors in peace (*shalom*). They would avoid the experience of their posterity who would be enslaved and oppressed, and endure the curses of God for abandoning Him while worshipping other gods. But for both men, their spirits would be alive with God enjoying the wholeness, completeness, perfection, soundness of His presence having avoided the spiritual and mental trials future generations would experience.

*Surely, the **grief** that I experienced was for my **shalom**; but you have held back my life from the pit of destruction, for you have cast all my sins behind your back (Isaiah 38:17).*

King Hezekiah of Judah recorded the roller coaster ride of his sickness. For him it was a bitter emotional experience as he saw his life ending, bringing him endless tears. He was overcome with grief and bitterness of soul, but afterwards realised it was God’s path for him to emotional and spiritual healing.

Physical

There are many instances of God healing people physically.

Infertility. God **healed** (*rapha’*) Abimelech, as well as his wife and female slaves so that they were able to have children, for God had struck his household with infertility.

Diseases. David asked the Lord healing (*rapha’*) for he was sick, and weak, and his soul and bones were troubled (Psalm 6:2). In the NT, Jesus was confronted with a great crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. They had come to hear Him and to be **healed** (*iaomai*) of their diseases and were cured (*therapeuo*) And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from Him and He **healed** (*iaomai*) all of them (Luke 6:17-19).

Lame. When Christ entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, appealing to Him and saying, “Lord, my servant is lying at home paralysed (lame), in terrible distress.” And He said to him, “I will come and **cure** (*therapeuo*) him.” The centurion answered, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed (*iaomai*). And to the centurion Jesus said, “Go; let it be done for you according to your faith.” And the servant was **healed** (*iaomai*) in that hour (Matthew 8:5-13. see also John 5:13).

Blind. For this people’s heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes; so that they might not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn—and I would **heal** them (*iaomai*) (Matthew 8:13:15).

Blood flow. When the woman saw that she could not remain hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before him, she declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched Him, and how she had been immediately **healed** (*iaomai*) (Luke 8:47).

Ear. Jesus touched his ear and **healed** (*iaomai*) him (Luke 22:51).

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Environmental

*The Lord brought environmental catastrophe on Israel because of its sin - He shut up the heavens so that there was no rain, commanded the locust to devour the land, and sent a destructive pestilence. If, however, the nation would seek His face, and turn from their wicked ways, then He would forgive their sin and **heal (rapha²) their land** (2 Chronicles 7:13-14).*

Sin has environmental consequences, that needs to be healed.

*The men of Jericho said to Elisha, “Look, the city has a good location, as our master can see. But the water is bad and the land doesn’t produce crops.” Elisha said, “Get me a new jar and put some salt in it.” So they got it. He went out to the spring and threw the salt in. Then he said, “This is what the Lord has said, ‘I have **purified (rapha²)** this water. It will no longer cause death or fail to produce crops (2 Kings 2:20-22).*

*Then he brought me back to the entrance of the temple. I noticed that water was flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east. I noticed that the water was trickling out from the south side. I measured the water and it was a river I could not cross, for the water had risen; it was deep enough to swim in. He said to me, “These waters go out toward the eastern region and flow down into the rift valley; when they enter the Dead Sea, where the sea is stagnant, the waters become fresh (**rapha²)**). Every living creature that swarms where the river flows will live; there will be many fish, for these waters flow there. It will become fresh (**rapha²)**, and everything will live where the river flows. Fishermen will stand beside it; from En Gedi to En Eglaim they will spread nets. They will catch many kinds of fish, like the fish of the Great Sea (Ezekiel 47:1-8).*

Moreover, *rapha*’ could describe the restoring of normal functioning of material things such as a diseased house (Leviticus 14:48), and the reconstruction of an altar that had been thrown down (1 Kings 18:30).

Individual

We have seen that many of God’s healings were for individuals. But as the following texts reveal, He heals community and national groups too.

Social

This text concerned the whole community of Israel.

He said, “If you will listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in his sight, and give heed to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will not bring upon you any of the diseases that I brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the LORD who heals (**rapha²)** you” (Exodus 15:26).”

This text concerned the whole tribe of Judah and the city of Jerusalem.

“Go and tell these people: Listen continually, but don’t understand. Look continually, but don’t perceive. Make the hearts of these people calloused; make their ears deaf and their eyes blind. Otherwise they might see with their eyes and hear with their ears, their hearts might understand and they might repent and be healed (**rapha²)** (Isaiah 6:9-10).”

This text concerned Egypt.

The Lord will strike Egypt, striking and healing (**rapha²)**; they will return to the Lord, and he will listen to their supplications and heal (**rapha²)** them (Isaiah 19:22).

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Global

4 For thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city and the houses of the kings of Judah that were torn down to make a defense against the siege-ramps and before the sword.

5 The Chaldeans are coming in to fight and to fill them with the dead bodies of those whom I shall strike down in my anger and my wrath, for I have hidden my face from this city because of all their wickedness.

*6 I am going to bring it recovery and healing (**marpe**); I will heal (**rapha'**) them and reveal to them abundance of prosperity (**shalom**) and security.*

7 I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel, and rebuild them as they were at first.

8 I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me.

9 And this city shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and a glory before all the nations of the earth who shall hear of all the good that I do for them; they shall fear and tremble because of all the good and all the prosperity I provide for it (Jeremiah 33:4-9).

*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces **peace** (**shalom**), who brings good news, which announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns (Isaiah 52:7).*

What a turn around! All three healing words are used here in verse 6. From total destruction delivered by the Lord because of their wickedness through a process of healing to a final state of *shalom*, of total physical, spiritual, material, and national, recovery of health.

But more. Here is international recovery of health as told by two Jews, Paul and Barnabas. *I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation (soteria) to the ends of the earth (Acts 13:47).*

Conclusion

Health is a top or important priority in their everyday lives of people in many countries, and two-thirds feel that mental health is one of our biggest health problems.

The Creator Who gave perfect health to the first human couple, is, following the entry of sin into the world, our physician, because as a fallen world we often have less than normal, healthy functioning. Our Creator, our physician, performs the healing process by stitching us back together, and restores proper, normal, healthy functioning. Moreover, it's not just physical either. He is able to heal us spiritually, psychologically, and even heal our sick environment.

There should be little wonder why the secular world isn't solving our health crisis. Until health science injects God our Creator and Physician back into the physically and spiritually sick, it won't see any increase in our wellness statistics, or an emerging consensus defining 'health'.

But, I have little hope of this happening. However, I do have enormous hope of God injecting Himself into our world as He did at creation, and at the incarnation of Christ. I look forward to His new world of no tears, no death, no mourning, no crying or pain - perfect health in every way - because the old order has passed away (Revelation 21:4).

The present is waiting, yearning for God's new beginning, as John put it: *And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the **salvation** (**soteria**) and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come (Revelation 12:10)*

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