

**A Biblical Understanding of
Illness and Healing**

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1

**Some Challenging Questions
We Encounter**

- *How are Christian Medics different?*
- *The Prayer offered in Faith (James 5:15) failed?*
- *Is your role as a Medic contrary to God's plan for healing?*



2

Seek and Ye Shall Find

Please be like the Bereans

"Medics" is inclusive

Let us pray



3

God sculpts in illness and healing

All healing belongs to God
("natural", "medicinal,"
"miraculous")

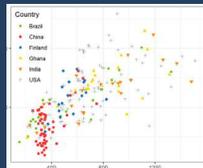


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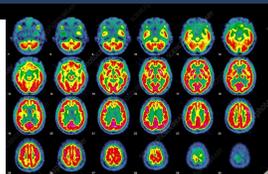
Two Problematic Concepts



5



Western Medical Worldview



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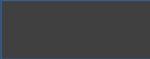
Health Prosperity Gospel



A black and white illustration showing a man lying in a hospital bed, looking weak. A devil with horns and wings is crouching by the bed, holding a bow and arrow, ready to strike. The scene is set against a cloudy background.

7

Categories of Healing

		
"Natural"	"Medicinal"	"Miraculous"

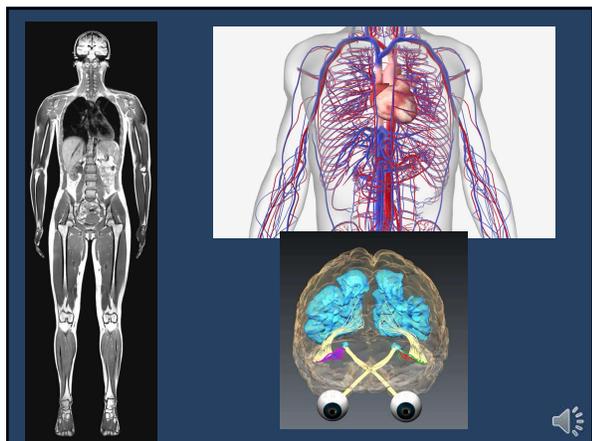
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"Natural" Healing – He Made Us

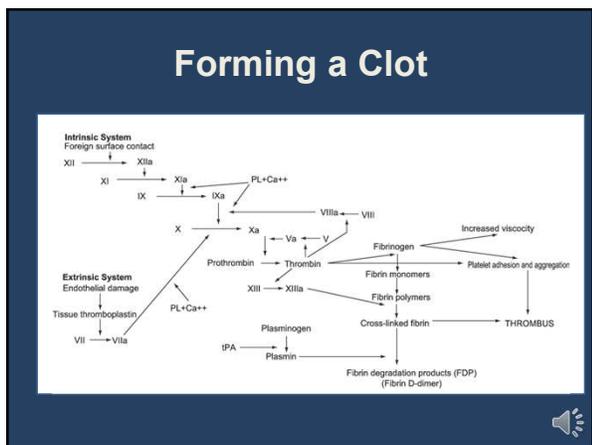


Jeremiah 1:5
"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,

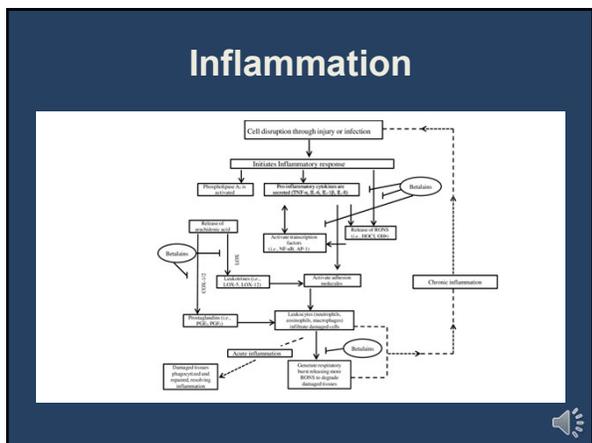
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10



11



12

Categories of Healing



“Natural”



“Medicinal”



“Miraculous”



13

Miraculous Healing



14

James 5:13-15

14 *Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord;*

15 *and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.*



15

Mark 16:15-18

15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; **they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.**"



16

1 Cor 12:27-31

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 28 And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, **also those having gifts of healing**, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? **30 Do all have gifts of healing?** Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But eagerly desire the greater gifts.



17

Categories of Healing



"Natural"

"Medicinal"

"Miraculous"



18

Are We Medics Conflicting with Faith?



19

Biblical References to Medical Care



20

Luke 10:33-35

*"But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, ³⁴ and came to him and **bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him.**"*



21

Isaiah 1:6
*From the sole of the foot even to the head There is nothing sound in it, Only bruises, welts and raw **wounds, Not pressed out or bandaged, Nor softened with oil.***



22

Luke 5:30-32
30 The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?"
31 And Jesus answered and said to them, "**It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick.**"
32 "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."



23

Col 4:14
14 Luke, the beloved physician, sends you his greetings, and also Demas.

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



24

Rev 3:18
I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.

Jer 8:22
*Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?
 Why then has not the health of the daughter of my people been restored?*



25

2 Chronicles 16:12-13
 In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa became diseased in his feet. His disease was severe, **yet even in his disease he did not seek the LORD, but the physicians.** So Asa slept with his fathers, having died in the forty-first year of his reign.



26

Observations Regarding Design and Medicinal Healing



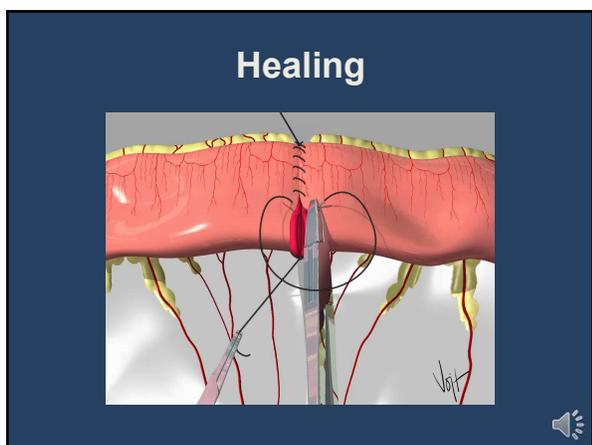
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29



30

DEAMuseum.org Ox.ac.uk Wikipedia

Plant-based Medicines: Morphine, penicillin, digoxin, cocaine, ephedra, caffeine, nicotine, reserpine, quinidine, quinine, vincamine, vincristine, senna, rhubarb, aloe...

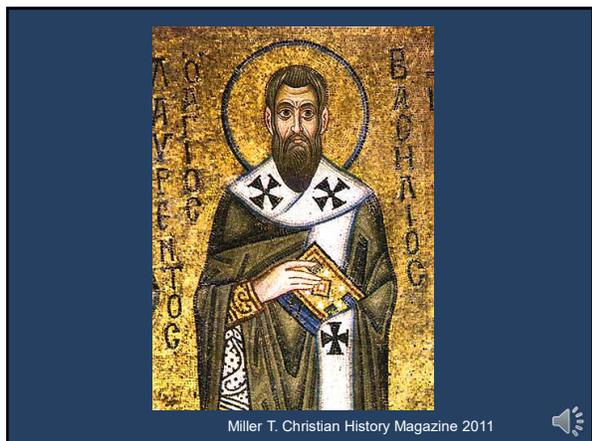
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God made us so we can be repaired and He made complex chemicals for us to use medicinally.

32

God gave us capacity for Medicine

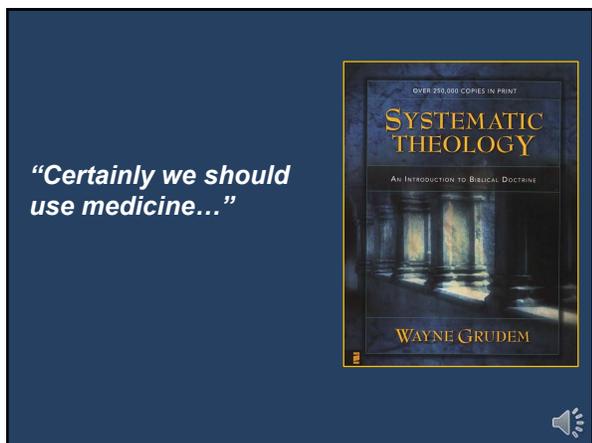
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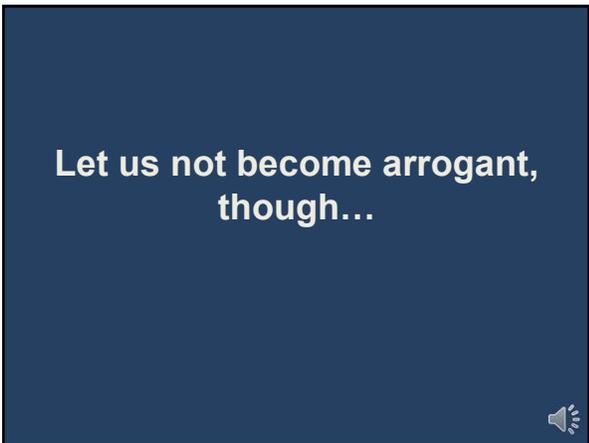
“The eternal mystery of the world is its comprehensibility...The fact that it is comprehensible is a miracle.”
- Albert Einstein
in *Franklin Institute Journal* March 1936
'Physics and Reality'

35

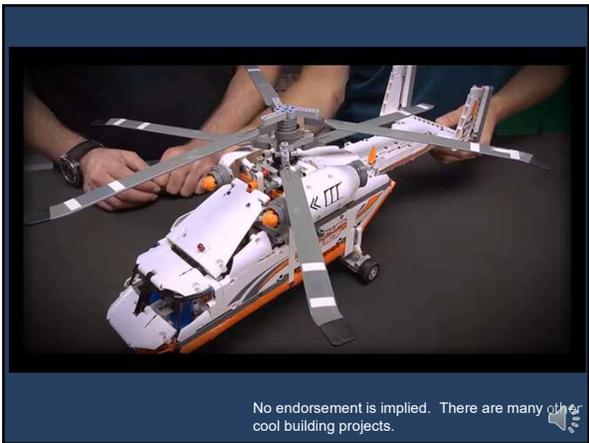


“Certainly we should use medicine...”

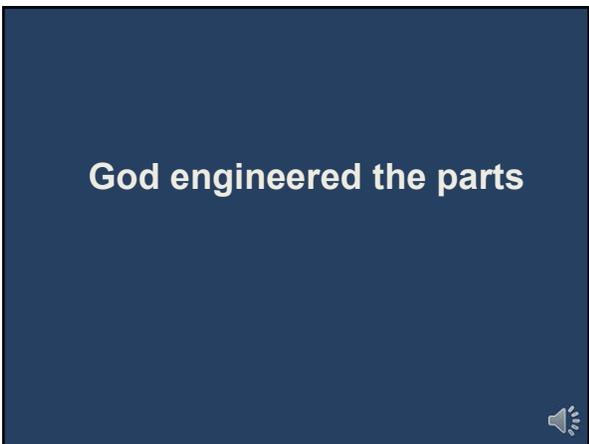
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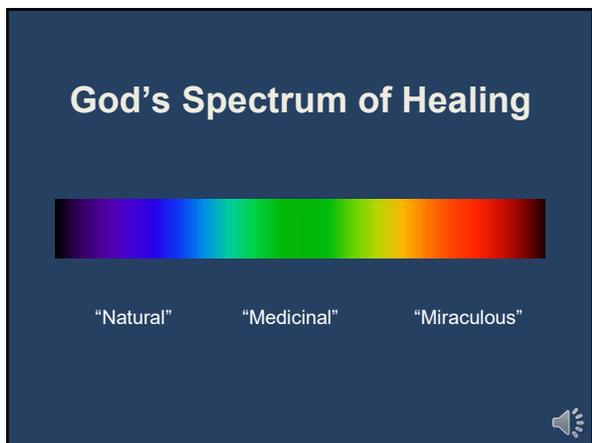
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40



41



42

Should we promise healing from God?

- *Shall we say, "God will heal you"?*
- *God may say...*
 - Thorn
- *Ultimately, heaven*
- *Let us not give false hope*
- *Let us instead give true hope.*



43



Netherlandish artist, 15-16th century.



44

A Biblical Understanding of Illness



45

But when the healing doesn't occur...

"Why is the devil winning?"



46

"Why is the devil winning?"

- *The Medical Prosperity Gospel*
- *Assumes that the devil causes all illnesses*
- *Assumes that God wants us all healthy*
- *A partial truth which is ultimately misleading*



47

God Uses Illness and Healing



J Kirk Richards 

48

Does God Cause Illness?

Deut 32:39: 'See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded and it is I who heal, And there is no one who can deliver from My hand.

Exod 4:11 The LORD said to him, *"Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes him mute or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?"*



49

Nebuchadnezzar's Madness

Daniel Chapter 4

³³ Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people and ate grass like the ox. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird.

³⁴ At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever.



50

Ex 9:7-17 The Plague of Boils

14 "For this time I will send all My plagues on you and your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is no one like Me in all the earth.

15 "For if by now I had put forth My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, you would then have been cut off from the earth.

16 "But, indeed, for this reason I have allowed you to remain, in order to show you My power and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth.



51

Ex 12:29-32

29 Now it came about at midnight that **the LORD struck all the firstborn** in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of cattle. Pharaoh arose in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians, and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was no home where there was not someone dead.



52

2 Sam 24:15

So **the LORD sent a pestilence** upon Israel from the morning until the appointed time, and seventy thousand men of the people from Dan to Beersheba died. When the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented from the calamity and said to the angel who destroyed the people, "It is enough! Now relax your hand!" And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.



53

2 Kings 15:5

The LORD struck the king, [Azariah] so that he was a **leper** to the day of his death.



54

Num 21:4-9 They traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea, to go around Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way;

5 they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the desert? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!"

6 Then **the LORD sent venomous snakes** among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died.



55

2 Kings 17:24-26

*The king of Assyria brought men ...and settled them in the cities of Samaria in place of the sons of Israel. So they possessed Samaria and lived in its cities. At the beginning of their living there, they did not fear the LORD; therefore **the LORD sent lions among them** which killed some of them.*



56

Acts 13:6-12 – the False Prophet Bar-Jesus

*But Saul, who was also known as Paul, A filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze on him, and said, "You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord? "Now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and not see the sun for a time." And immediately **a mist and a darkness fell upon him**, and he went about seeking those who would lead him by the hand. Then the proconsul believed when he saw what had happened, being amazed at the teaching of the Lord.*



57

Acts 5:5

And as he heard these words, **Ananias fell down and breathed his last**; and great fear came over all who heard of it.



58

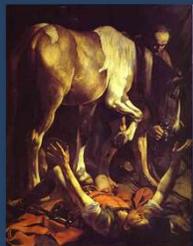
1 Cor 11

*29 For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. 30 **That is why many among you are weak and sick**, and a number of you have fallen asleep. 31 But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment. 32 Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world.*



59

Acts 9 – Paul’s Conversion



5 “Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked. **“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,”** he replied. 6 “Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

7 The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. 8 Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his **eyes he could see nothing**. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. 9 For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.



60

2 Cor 12:6-10 A Thorn in the Flesh

*7 Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, **there was given me a thorn in the flesh**, a messenger of Satan to torment me -- to keep me from exalting myself!*



61

Gen 3:14-27

14 The LORD God said to the serpent,

*"Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life; 15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; **He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.**"*

16 To the woman He said,

"I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you."



62

*17 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, "You shall not eat from it"; Cursed is the ground because of you; **In toil** you will eat of it All the days of your life. 18 "Both **thorns and thistles** it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; 19 By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."*



63

The Enemy IS Involved



64

Job 2:7

Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and **smote Job with sore boils** from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.



65

Luke 13 (The Woman Bent Double)

*10 On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, 11 and a woman was there who had been **crippled by a spirit** for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. 12 When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity." 13 Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God...*

*16 Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, **whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years**, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?"*



66

2 Cor 12:6-10 A Thorn in the Flesh

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67

Acts 10:38 (Peter speaking)

how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.



68

1 Cor 5

1 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate: A man is sleeping with his father's wife... 5 hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord.



69

Yes, the Enemy is often involved in illness



70

Why would God bring illness?



71

Is Earthly Health the Most Important Goal?



72

2 Cor 12:6-10 A Thorn in the Flesh

7 Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, **to keep me from exalting myself**, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me -- **to keep me from exalting myself!**



73

Purpose in Nebuchadnezzar's Madness

Daniel Chapter 4

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74

Ex 9:7-17 The Plague of Boils

14 "For this time **I will send all My plagues on you** and your servants and your people, **so that you may know that there is no one like Me in all the earth.**

15 "For if by now I had put forth My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, you would then have been cut off from the earth.

16 "But, indeed, for this reason I have allowed you to remain, **in order to show you My power and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth.**



75

Luke 5:17-26

21 The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?"

22 But Jesus, aware of their reasonings, answered and said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts?"

23 "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins have been forgiven you,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?"

24 "But, so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins," -- He said to the paralytic -- "I say to you, get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home."



76

John 9

Healing the Man Born Blind

As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him."



77

2 Kings 5:8

8 It happened when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent word to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Now let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel." 9 So Naaman came with his horses and his chariots and stood at the doorway of the house of Elisha.



78

1 Cor 11

29 For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. 30 **That is why many among you are weak and sick,** and a number of you have fallen asleep. 31 But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment. 32 Nevertheless, **when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world.**



79

What about the chronically miserable, and those born with awful illnesses?



80

Luke 16:18-25 The Rich Man and Lazarus

19 "Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day.

20 "And a **poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores,**

21 and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores.

22 "Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried.



81

23 *"In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom.*

24 *"And he cried out and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame."*

25 *"But Abraham said, "Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony."*



82

Isa 56:3-5

Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD say, "The LORD will surely separate me from His people." Nor let the eunuch say, "Behold, I am a dry tree."

4 *For thus says the LORD, "To the eunuchs who keep My sabbaths, And choose what pleases Me, And hold fast My covenant,*

5 *To them I will give in My house and within My walls a memorial, And a name better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name which will not be cut off.*



83

2 Corinthians 4:17-18

For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.



84

Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.

- C.S. Lewis *The Problem of Pain*



85

How can we say, "It could never be God's will for me to be sick?" If it was God's will to bruise His own Son (Isaiah 53:10), why shouldn't He bruise you?

- Oswald Chambers *My Utmost for His Highest*



86

"Health is set before us as if it were the great thing to be desired above all other things. Is it so? I would venture to say that the greatest blessing that God can give to any of us is health, *with the exception of sickness*. Sickness has frequently been of more use to the saints of God than health has. If some men, that I know of, could only be favoured with a month of rheumatism, it would, by God's grace, mellow them marvelously."

- Charles H. Spurgeon *The Minister in These Times* (*Italics in original*)



87

Sick people often grow closer to God

- *The doctor dying from melanoma*
- *The judge with ALS.*



88

Wisdom from Illness?



George Frederic Watts



89

Patients and their families may not be ready to consider that God brought their illness.

- *But you can ask questions that assume this truth.*
- *They are very likely to be ready to consider purpose*
- *What do you think God has for you in this illness? What are you to learn? To grow in your understanding of dependence upon Him? To be grateful for your life? To reconsider some choices you have been making? To change your priorities? To choose to serve Him?*



90

2 Cor 12 – Paul’s Reaction to God’s Refusal to Remove the Thorn

Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, **so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.** Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for **when I am weak, then I am strong.**



91

Don't be Job's Friends



William Blake



92



Pierre Puvis de Chavannes



93

Illness ALWAYS has meaning
Bringing us back to God



94

**Are We Medics “Enabling”
Lack of Faith in God?**



95

God’s Spectrum of Healing



“Natural” “Medicinal” “Miraculous”



96

Is the devil Winning?



97

What's the difference between us and secular NGO medics?



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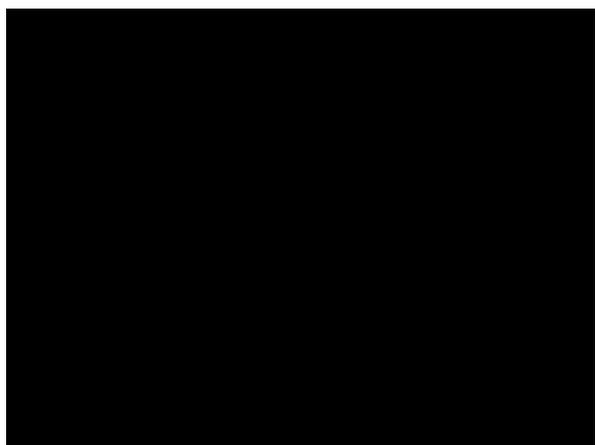
Questions and Comments



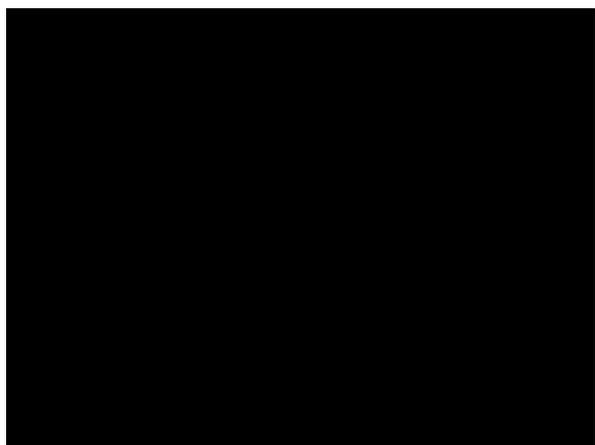
John Everett Millais



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101
