



Research article



**HEALING AND COVENANT IN EXODUS 15:26 AND ITS RELEVANCE TO CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

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**ABSTRACT**

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The chapter examines the biblical idea found in Exodus 15:26 that links healing and covenant, which has significant ramifications for modern Christian health and wellness. It examines the theological ramifications of the covenant in Exodus 15:26, assesses how they influence contemporary Christian perspectives on health and wellness and makes helpful suggestions for incorporating biblical covenant ideas into medical procedures. The study uses a qualitative methodology that combines a survey of recent Christian health and wellness literature with an exegetical exegesis of Exodus 15:26. The approach entails a thorough textual exegesis to dissect the covenantal conditions and promises mentioned in the passage, as well as a comparative examination of how these promises are represented in contemporary Christian wellness and health practices. According to the study, Exodus 15:26 presents divine healing as a promise and a need to uphold covenantal loyalty. There is a gap between biblical teachings and practical health methods in contemporary Christian health and wellness practices because these activities frequently ignore this covenantal component. Christian health programs should incorporate the covenantal aspects of Exodus 15:26, on covenant faithfulness as the foundation for health and wellness, integrate spiritual practices with physical health strategies, and covenantal principles to increase the relevance of biblical teachings in modern health and wellness practices.

**Introduction**

The concept of divine healing in the Old Testament is an aspect of biblical theology that shows the intimate relationship between God and His people. In the context of the Israelites, healing is not merely a physical restoration but their covenantal relationship with Yahweh. Divine healing in the OT is portrayed as a manifestation of God's covenantal promises and His commitment to the well-being of His people. Healing is a physical restoration, a sign of God's favour, and relational integrity with His people. The OT presents several instances where God intervenes to heal individuals through His power, compassion, and faithfulness. For the Israelites, healing was connected to the covenant between them and their God. This covenant, initiated at Sinai and through various laws and promises, established the terms of their relationship with God. Healing, therefore, was not just a divine act of mercy but also a fulfilment of covenantal promises contingent upon obedience and faithfulness.

The principles derived from OT healing narratives, particularly those in Exodus 15:26, enrich contemporary approaches to health and wellness through spiritual obedience, faith, and divine provision. The relevance of divine healing extends beyond individual health concerns to encompass broader aspects of wellness, including emotional and spiritual well-being. The covenantal context in which healing occurs invites Christians to consider how their faith practices align with biblical teachings and how they might reflect God's provision and care. This paper examines the connection between divine healing and covenant faithfulness, as revealed in Exodus 15:26, focusing on the role of obedience and adherence to God's commands as prerequisites for experiencing divine healing. The study extends exegetical findings to contemporary Christian health and wellness with recommendations for integrating divine healing and covenant faithfulness principles into current practices. The exegetical method involves a detailed analysis of the Hebrew text, contextual examination and historical-critical approaches. The exegesis is applied to contemporary Christian contexts on how divine healing and covenant faithfulness inform modern practices related to health and wellness.

**Historical and Literary Context of Exodus 15:26**

The Book of Exodus is the second book of the OT after the Book of Genesis. It forms a crucial part of the Pentateuch traditionally attributed to Moses. "Moses had nearly thirty-nine



years to write Exodus. When he did so during that period between the Israelites' departure from Sinai and his death and exactly how many days or weeks he spent doing so is impossible to reconstruct."<sup>1</sup> Stuart believes Exodus is believed to have been written for the second post-exodus generation, who grew up in the wilderness during the days described in the book of Numbers. The book reminds them of their origins and God's covenant with their parents. If these conjectures are correct, Exodus would have been produced around the end of the forty years after the Israelites left Egypt and before they entered Canaan, when Moses was nearing the end of his life.

The book describes events that took place over about eighty-one years, from Moses' birth to the completion of the Tabernacle. It also provides a background of the Israelites' sojourn in Egypt and how they settled in Egypt over four centuries before Moses' birth. The book also describes the phenomenon of the glory cloud of God moving spatially relative to the Tabernacle to lead the Israelites through the wilderness, which could have taken only a few weeks or months to establish.<sup>2</sup> Exodus covers a significant period in Israel's history, the Israelites' transition from slavery in Egypt to their journey towards the Promised Land. According to Victor P. Hamilton,

Before the book of Exodus begins to narrate an exodus ("a way out") of Hebrews from Egypt, it first describes an *eisodus* ("a way into") of a Hebrew family into Egypt. There cannot be, and need not be, an exodus unless there has been an *eisodus*. One need not ever have to get "out" of debt unless first of all one has gotten "into" debt. In a nutshell, the book of Exodus is about how the Lord God turns an *eisodus* into an exodus and why he does so, about how the Lord God changes a "going down" into a "coming up."<sup>3</sup>

The book begins with the Israelites in bondage in Egypt, where they suffer under harsh conditions imposed by a new Pharaoh who fears their growing numbers. It introduces Moses, a central figure raised as an Egyptian prince who later becomes the chosen leader to deliver the Israelites from oppression. Moses' encounter with God at the burning bush marks the

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<sup>1</sup> Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus Vol.2: The New American Bible Commentary* (Nashville, Tennessee: B & H Publishing Group, 2006), Kindle Edition 28.

<sup>2</sup> Stuart, *Exodus Vol.2*, KE 28.

<sup>3</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Publishing Group, 2011), Kindle Edition 27.



beginning of his mission to free his people, and the narrative unfolds with dramatic events, with the ten plagues inflicted upon Egypt, the Passover, and the Israelites' miraculous crossing of the Red Sea. Also, the Book of Exodus portrays the dramatic deliverance of the Israelites from slavery, God's power and commitment to redeem His people. It includes giving the Law at Mount Sinai, where God establishes His covenant with Israel. It shows God's presence among His people through the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. The Tabernacle construction is a portable sanctuary for God's dwelling among the Israelites and His ongoing guidance and relationship with them.

Exodus 15:26 is situated within a period in the history of the Israelites following their dramatic escape from Egypt. It comes after one of the most significant events in Israelite history—the crossing of the Red Sea. This miraculous event marks the climax of the Israelites' liberation from Egyptian bondage, their transition from slavery to freedom. According to the narrative, the Israelites began their journey through the wilderness after the Red Sea miracle, a period of divine guidance and testing. The wilderness experience was crucial for the Israelites as it represented a transition from their former life in Egypt to their new identity as a covenant people under God's direct provision.<sup>4</sup> This journey was marked by various trials and episodes that tested their faith and obedience. It is embedded within the broader context of the Song of Moses and Miriam, recorded in Exodus 15:1-21. This song is a celebratory hymn that recounts the victory over the Egyptians and praises God for His deliverance. It is a significant moment of worship and thanksgiving, expressing the Israelites' awe and gratitude for their miraculous escape. The song is about God's power, His role as a warrior who defeats enemies, and His guidance of the Israelites through the wilderness. The song shows the transformative nature of the Exodus experience and sets the stage for the subsequent covenantal relationship between God and Israel. God declares that His role as the healer of His people is a promise that complements the themes of divine deliverance and protection celebrated in the song. This promise is directly linked to the Israelites' covenantal obligations that their health and well-being are intertwined with their faithfulness to God's commands.

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<sup>4</sup> Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary*, Kindle Edition 323.



This placement of Exodus 15:26 is significant because it follows a central act of divine deliverance and celebrates the transition from slavery to freedom. The immediate context is the importance of understanding God's role in the Israelites' journey and the new relationship they are to have with Him. The literary placement is on the connection between divine deliverance and divine provision. After experiencing the dramatic rescue from Egypt, the Israelites are introduced to the concept of divine healing and health as part of their new life under God's covenant. This transition from deliverance to care shows the comprehensive nature of God's commitment to His people. The passage is also embedded within the broader narrative structure of Exodus, moving from deliverance (Exodus 1-15) to instruction and covenant (Exodus 16-24) and then to the construction of the tabernacle and worship practices (Exodus 25-40). The narrative provides a theological bridge between the Israelites' immediate experience of deliverance and their relationship with God. It introduces the theme of divine healing as a component of their covenantal life, setting the stage for the detailed legal and moral instructions that follow. The literary context also includes the recurring theme of testing and trust.

### **Exegetical Analysis of Exodus 15:26**

This analysis discusses the historical and theological context of the passage, the meaning of vital Hebrew terms, and the implications of God's role as a healer. It also has relevance for contemporary Christian thought on obedience, divine healing, and God's covenant relationship with His people.

### **Text and Translation**

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים שְׁמַע וְתִשְׁמַע לְקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְהִישָׁר בְּעֵינָיו תַּעֲשֶׂה וְהִצַּלְתָּ לְמִצְוֹתָיו וְשָׁמַרְתָּ כְּלֵי־חֻקָּיו כְּלֵי־מִצְוֹתָיו  
אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַתִּי בְּמִצְרַיִם לֹא־אֲשִׁים עָלֶיךָ כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה רֹפֵאֲךָ: ס

Translation: "He said, 'If you listen carefully to 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.'"



## Textual Analysis

### Detailed analysis of וַיֹּאמֶר “And He said.”

The Hebrew phrase וַיֹּאמֶר “And He said,” is a critical introduction to divine declarations and promises in the biblical text. The root of וַיֹּאמֶר is אָמַר, which means “to say” or “to speak.” This root is frequently used in various contexts to denote speech or communication. The prefix וַ is a conjunction known as the waw conversive or waw consecutive. It shifts the verb tense from perfect to imperfect as a narrative sequence. In this case, וַיֹּאמֶר is in the waw-consecutive imperfect form, which indicates that this statement is part of a narrative or sequence of events.

The imperfect aspect of וַיֹּאמֶר denotes an ongoing or iterative action, but in the narrative, it functions to introduce actions or statements that follow a preceding event. The subject and speaker in verse 26 first seem to be Moses. The alternating pattern in verse 25 is maintained when Moses is the subject of discussion. However, the verse then resumes in the first person. Is the Lord speaking, or is it Moses? Several analysts have observed that Moses frequently talks in the first person as if the Lord is speaking. Brevard S. Childs argues, for example, that in Deuteronomy 7:1-4, where Moses is speaking but speaks at the beginning of v. 4 as though he were the Lord, he also cites vv. 11:13, 17:3, 28:20 and 29:5. This is one characteristic of this text that many modern commentators use to argue that vv. 25b-26.<sup>5</sup> But even the Lord speaks occasionally, speaking of Himself in the third person before moving to the first person (Exodus 23:25, for instance), even though there are commentators on both sides of this dispute.

Cassuto<sup>6</sup> and Coats<sup>7</sup> assume that Moses is the speaker in v. 26, while Childs<sup>8</sup> and others take the Lord to be speaking. Coats argues that v. 26 conforms to the Deuteronomistic pattern since Moses is the speaker, and the pattern is that of a community leader “announcing conditions to the congregation, with the consequences for obedience or disobedience set in a first-person address from God.” One can find it easier to interpret verse 26’s subject/speaker as the Lord (in keeping with Exodus 23:25). Propp makes the point that, as far as the meaning

<sup>5</sup>Brevard S. Childs, *Exodus: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1974), 266-7.

<sup>6</sup>M.D. Cassuto, *Perush al Sefer Shemot* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1954), 127

<sup>7</sup>George W. Coats, *Exodus 1-18, Vol. IIA of the series The Forms of Old Testament Literature*, Rolf P. Knierim and Gene M. Tucker, eds. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 123-5.

<sup>8</sup>Childs, *Exodus: A Commentary*, 266-7.



of the section goes, it probably doesn't matter whether we understand the Lord to be speaking or Moses to be speaking prophetically in the Lord's name. In either case, the message comes from the Lord.<sup>9</sup> Here, it introduces God's declaration in response to the Israelites' situation after the Red Sea crossing. The phrase is translated as "And He said" or "He said" as a direct quotation of God's words. This usage establishes the authority and immediacy of the divine message being communicated. This phrase is commonly used to introduce significant divine communications, commandments, or promises. It signifies that what follows is a direct statement from God.

Human agents do not mediate communication but is a direct utterance from God. The direct nature of the communication shows that the message is a divine revelation, and direct statements from God are considered authoritative and binding as God's will and purpose for His people. In the context of Exodus 15:26, וַיֹּאמֶר introduces a promise related to the covenant. It reveals God's role as the covenantal partner communicating His terms and conditions. It reaffirms the relationship between God and the Israelites and His authority and communicates the conditions under which His promises will be fulfilled. The direct statement introduces a conditional promise—God will grant them health and protection if the Israelites obey. This conditional nature is vital to covenantal promises and the reciprocity between divine blessings and human obedience.<sup>10</sup> The promise of healing and protection provided through this direct communication reassures the Israelites of God's care and commitment. It establishes a clear link between their adherence to divine commands and their well-being.

### Detailed Analysis of אַם-שָׁמוּעַ תִּשְׁמַע "If you listen carefully"

The phrase אַם-שָׁמוּעַ תִּשְׁמַע "If you listen carefully," is central to understanding the conditional promise made by God to the Israelites. It uses the verb שָׁמַע, which means "to hear" or "to listen," translated as obedience or obey. It is a common and essential verb that occurs about 1150 times in the Old Testament,<sup>11</sup> and its repetition in אַם-שָׁמוּעַ indicates a level of attentiveness and obedience. The root שָׁמַע signifies the act of hearing or listening. According to David T. Adamo,

<sup>9</sup>William H.C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18, Anchor Bible Vol. 2* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 577.

<sup>10</sup>B. T. German, "Moses at Marah," *VT* 63 (2013):47–58.

<sup>11</sup>Renn, E.S. Renn, *Expository Dictionary of Bible words* (Peabody, MA.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005), 682.



The literal and predominant meaning is ‘to hear’ or ‘to listen’. This word שמע has many nuances. One is to be obedient, mentioned in about 80 contexts and referring to both human and divine planes. Children have to obey their parents and humankind has to obey God. It is also used in a negative sense in the case of human beings refusing to obey God, with punishment as a result (Gen. 27:8,13; Exod. 23:21; Jr 3:13).<sup>12</sup>

It encompasses both the physical act of hearing and the conceptual act of heeding or paying attention to what is heard. It implies a more profound, active engagement with the message, understanding and responding to what is heard. The phrase תשמע is the imperfect form of שמע, indicating an ongoing or repeated action. The repetition of the root verb in אשמע תשמע suggests the need for consistent and attentive listening. The word אם introduces the phrase as a conditional clause, setting the stage for the promise. The condition is that the Israelites must actively listen and respond to God’s voice. The use of שמע in both its forms stresses that the requirement is not merely to hear sounds but to engage with and respond to God’s instructions actively. This implies an expectation of obedience and commitment. It suggests that listening to God involves more than passive hearing. It requires a deliberate, attentive approach to understanding and following divine commands. The concept of listening here encompasses both cognitive and volitional aspects.

In the covenantal context, אשמע תשמע shows the reciprocal nature of the relationship between God and His people. The promise of divine healing is contingent upon the Israelites’ active obedience to God’s voice.<sup>13</sup> It integrates hearing, understanding, and action, indicating that authentic listening involves a comprehensive response to God’s word. For the Israelites, אשמע תשמע involves both spiritual attentiveness and practical adherence to the laws and commands given by God. It sets up the expectation that the Israelites’ response to God’s voice will determine their experience of divine blessings or judgments. Philip Graham Ryken believes that “God gave his people these commands to see what their works would reveal about their relationship with him. Obedience was the test of their faith. But whether they

<sup>12</sup> D.T. Adamo, “‘I Am the LORD your Healer’ Exodus 15:26 (דאפרהויהינא): Healing in the Old Testament and the African (Yoruba) context”, *In die Skriflig* 55, 1 (2021): 7. a2689. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v55i1.2689>

<sup>13</sup> Philip Graham Ryken, *Exodus: Saved for God’s Glory* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2005), 420.





obeyed or not, there would be consequences. This is the way a covenant always works. It contains promises and warnings, with blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience.”<sup>14</sup> This means covenant faithfulness is demonstrated through active and attentive listening, which translates into righteous living. It shows that heavenly promises are not unconditional but are based on fulfilling specific requirements by the people. It suggests that genuine faith involves a comprehensive approach to hearing, understanding, and living according to divine principles.

### Detailed Analysis of לְקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ “to the voice of the LORD your God”

The phrase לְקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ “to the voice of the LORD your God” reveals the importance of heeding God’s instructions and guidance. The word קוֹל means “voice” or “sound.” It refers to auditory signals or verbal communication. The term is frequently used to denote the voice of God and the importance of divine revelation and instruction. It signifies that God’s communication is heard and carries authoritative and actionable guidance. The preposition לְ means “to” or “toward,” indicating direction or focus. In this phrase, it directs attention to the voice of God, implying that listening and responding are necessary. The לְקוֹל words show that the Israelites are expected to orient their attention and obedience toward God’s voice. It signifies an active and deliberate effort to hear and follow divine guidance.

The phrase יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ means "the LORD your God." The word יְהוָה (YHWH) is the personal name of God, translated as “LORD” in the English Bible. It represents God’s covenantal relationship with His people. אֱלֹהֶיךָ means “your God,” indicating a personal and relational dimension. This means the instructions come from a deity personally invested in the relationship with the Israelites. The use of the divine name combined with the personal possessive form on the covenantal aspect of the relationship. It reveals that the guidance and instructions are not from a distant or impersonal deity but from a God intimately involved with His people. It implies that God’s communication is crucial for understanding His will and fulfilling the covenant. To “listen to the voice of the LORD” suggests an active engagement with God’s will. It means not just hearing words but being responsive and obedient to the divine commands and directions. In this context, obeying the voice of the LORD is a condition for receiving the promise of healing and adherence to the commands is

<sup>14</sup> Ryken, *Exodus: Saved for God’s Glory*, 420.



essential for maintaining their relationship with God and receiving His promises. Exodus consists of three episodes where the Israelites grumble about their new situation, focusing on the lack of food or water (15:23–24; 16:2–30; 17:1–7). These episodes reveal their unwillingness to trust and obey YHWH. The author suggests that YHWH brought the Israelites into the wilderness to educate them about obeying him, a theme that reappears frequently in the rest of Exodus.<sup>15</sup>

The word *לִקְוֹל* not only refers to hearing words but also to understanding and aligning with divine will. It signifies that God’s voice conveys verbal instructions and a more profound sense of His purpose and intentions. Also, it implies that listening to God’s voice involves a comprehensive obedience that includes understanding, internalising, and acting upon God’s guidance. It introduces a crucial condition for the divine promise, expecting the Israelites to respond appropriately to God’s voice. It also reveals that the covenant involves a two-way interaction where God’s instructions are central to the relationship.<sup>16</sup> The use of *לִקְוֹל* shows the transition from the events of deliverance to the new covenantal expectations. It the shift from liberation to the continuing responsibility of living according to divine guidance.

#### **Detailed analysis of *וְהִיֶּשֶׁר בְּעֵינָיו* “and do what is right in His eyes.”**

The phrase *וְהִיֶּשֶׁר בְּעֵינָיו* “and do what is right in His eyes” reveals the moral and ethical behaviour requirement in alignment with divine standards. The word *יֶשֶׁר* translates to “straight,” “upright,” or “just.” It denotes a quality of moral and ethical correctness. *יֶשֶׁר* is used to describe actions, behaviour, or paths that are considered righteous and in alignment with God’s standards. The term frequently denotes righteousness, justice, and a standard of behaviour that conforms to divine expectations and principles. The preposition *בְּ* means “in” or “according to,” while *עֵינָיו* means “His eyes,” which metaphorically represents God’s perspective or evaluation. *וְהִיֶּשֶׁר בְּעֵינָיו* signifies that actions should be evaluated according to God’s perspective. It means that what is considered “right” is not determined by human standards but by divine criteria; God’s standards define righteousness. It implies that moral behaviour must align with divine expectations rather than human interpretations. It indicates that

<sup>15</sup> T. Desmond Alexander, *Exodus: Apollos Old Testament Commentary 2* (London: InterVarsity Press, 2017), Kindle Edition 387.

<sup>16</sup> Howard Clark Kee, “Medicine and Healing”, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, IV, (New York, 1992), 659.



adhering to what is “right in His eyes” is a condition for receiving God’s blessings. Living “rightly” according to God’s perspective is essential to the covenantal relationship. *בְּעֵינָיו* signifies that the ultimate evaluation of actions comes from God. It calls for alignment with divine will and understanding that human perspectives are secondary to divine judgment. It implies that true righteousness is not subjective but grounded in God’s unchanging moral standards. It sets a standard for how the Israelites are expected to behave in response to God’s deliverance. Covenant is about observance and living just and uprightly according to God’s standards. The phrase guides the Israelites in living according to God’s will. It sets a benchmark for behaviour essential for maintaining the covenant relationship.

### **Detailed Analysis of *וְהִקְשַׁבְתָּ לְמִצְוֹתָיו* "and give ear to His commandments"**

The phrase *וְהִקְשַׁבְתָּ לְמִצְוֹתָיו* “and give ear to His commandments” reveals the critical element in understanding the conditions attached to God’s promise of healing. The word *הִקְשַׁבְתָּ* translates to “give ear,” “heed,” or “listen attentively.” It implies more than just hearing; it involves a deliberate and active effort to pay attention and respond to what is heard. This term comes from the root *קָשַׁב*, which means “to listen” or “to give an ear.” The root conveys the idea of focused attention and responsiveness. It denotes an engagement with divine instructions or significant communications. The term *מִצְוֹתָיו* means “His commandments” or “His laws.” It comes from the root *וָצַו*, meaning “to command” or “to instruct.” The term *מִצְוֹתָיו* refers to the commandments or directives given by God. The suffix *-יו* indicates possession, translating to “His” commandments. This personalises the commandments as belonging to God, their divine origin and authority. Giving an ear to God’s commandments involves both hearing and responding as a commitment to understanding divine instructions and applying them in daily life. Listening attentively to God’s commandments is a manifestation of covenantal obedience, as is the reciprocal nature of the covenant, where divine blessings are contingent upon adherence to God’s laws. Gerhard Hasel argues that “obedience to the Lord” protects God’s covenant people from sickness.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, listening to God’s commandments is a

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<sup>17</sup> Gerhard F. Hasel, "Health and Healing in the Old Testament," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 21, (1983): 197.



condition for receiving the promise of healing.<sup>18</sup> Also, it implies that spiritual attentiveness to God's commandments is connected to holistic well-being.

### Detailed Analysis of ושמרת כל־חקיו "and keep all His decrees"

The phrase ושמרת כל־חקיו "and keep all His decrees" indicates the expectations set forth by God for the Israelites and the conditions for receiving His promise of healing. The verb שמרת translates to "keep," "guard," or "observe," conveys the idea of maintaining or protecting something carefully. It implies passive acknowledgement and active observance and protection of God's laws. This term is derived from the root שָׁמַר, which means "to keep" or "to guard." שָׁמַר is frequently used to observe commandments, guarding one's conduct, and keeping sacred duties. The word חֻקָּיו refers to "decrees," "statutes," or "laws." It denotes divine commands that are considered binding and non-negotiable. חֻקָּיו comes from the root חָקַק, which means "to engrave" or "to inscribe," suggesting permanence and authority. The suffix -יו signifies possession, translating to "His decrees." This personalises the statutes as belonging to God, their divine origin and their authoritative nature.

The term שמרת indicates that keeping God's decrees involves an active role. It is not merely about following rules but actively guarding and preserving the integrity of divine laws. The phrase כל־חקיו ("all His decrees") that adherence must be total and complete. It suggests that every aspect of God's laws is to be observed, with a thorough commitment to living according to divine statutes. חֻקָּיו shows the authoritative nature of divine commandments. These are not arbitrary rules but binding decrees that must be observed as part of the covenantal relationship. The decrees encompass moral and ritual aspects of the law and the holistic nature of covenantal obedience, including ethical behaviour and ceremonial practices. Keeping God's decrees is presented as a condition for receiving His promise of healing as a covenantal principle where divine blessings are linked to faithful adherence to God's laws. Observing God's decrees contributes to holistic well-being with the idea that living according to divine statutes leads to spiritual and physical blessings.

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<sup>18</sup> R.E.O. White, "Heal, Health," *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids 1996), 328. See also Howard Clark Kee, "Medicine and Healing," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, IV (New York 1992), 659.



### Detailed Analysis of כָּל־הַמַּחֲלָה "all the diseases"

The phrase כָּל־הַמַּחֲלָה “all the diseases” indicates the scope of God’s promise regarding healing and the conditional nature of divine intervention based on obedience. The word מַחֲלָה translates to “disease,” “sickness,” or “illness” denotes any form of physical ailment or affliction. The Hebrew Bible uses the term to describe various health issues, from minor illnesses to severe diseases.<sup>19</sup> This term is derived from the root מחל, which means “to be sick” or “to be ill.” The use of מַחֲלָה in the OT shows the seriousness and the wide-ranging nature of physical suffering. The word כָּל means “all” or “every,” indicating totality and inclusiveness. הַמַּחֲלָה specifies “the disease” or “the sickness,” with הַ being the definite article “the.” The inclusion of כָּל suggests that the promise encompasses every possible form of disease, indicating that no illness is excluded from the potential for healing under God’s promise.<sup>20</sup>

The phrase כָּל־הַמַּחֲלָה means that God’s promise of healing covers all forms of disease and sickness. It indicates that divine healing is not limited to specific ailments but is intended to address the full spectrum of physical suffering. By promising to remove “all diseases,” the text implies a holistic approach to healing, suggesting that divine intervention addresses specific and general health issues. This reveals the breadth of God’s power and the completeness of His care. Adherence to God’s laws leads to avoiding the suffering caused by diseases. It suggests that living according to divine commandments has protective benefits against physical ailments. The reference to “all diseases” places suffering within the structure of the covenantal relationship. It implies that suffering is not outside of God’s control but is addressed through the covenant obedience to divine laws and the belief in God’s sovereignty over health and illness. It affirms that God has the authority and power to heal every form of sickness; therefore, God is the ultimate healer.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Joel B. Green, “Healing,” *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible D-H*, 2 (Nashville 2007), 757-758.

<sup>20</sup> John J. Pilch, “Healing. Old Testament,” *The Collegeville Pastoral Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Bangalore 2005), 416.

<sup>21</sup> Pilch, “Healing. Old Testament,” 414.



### Detailed Analysis of אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַתִּי בְּמִצְרַיִם "which I brought upon Egypt"

The phrase אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַתִּי בְּמִצְרַיִם “which I brought upon Egypt” shows the nature of divine action and judgment in the context of the covenantal promise of healing. The verb שָׁמַתִּי translates to “to place,” “to put,” or “to set.” It conveys the idea of actively causing or bringing about a situation. It indicates a deliberate and purposeful action on God’s part. שָׁמַתִּי comes from the root שָׁמַת, which generally means to put something in a particular place. It refers to placing things or actions, including divine judgments or blessings. The verb’s use here shows God’s active role in the events described. The phrase אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַתִּי means “which I brought” or “that I placed.” אֲשֶׁר is a relative pronoun meaning “which” or “that,” and שָׁמַתִּי is the first-person singular perfect form of the verb שָׁמַת indicating the action completed by God. This phrase specifies the action taken by God about Egypt, implying that the afflictions or diseases mentioned were a direct result of divine judgment. According to John Calvin, sickness came because of human sinfulness, not God’s will, saying specifically, “sickness was inflicted as punishment for sin.”<sup>22</sup> The Phrase בְּמִצְרַיִם means “in Egypt.” The preposition בְּ indicates location or context, and מִצְרַיִם refers to Egypt. It situates the action of bringing afflictions within the context of Egypt. Egypt here refers to the land where the Israelites were oppressed and where the plagues were inflicted. This phrase anchors the promise of healing in the historical context of the Israelites’ deliverance from Egypt. The use of שָׁמַתִּי indicates God as sovereign over events and capable of enacting judgment as part of His divine plan.<sup>23</sup> The afflictions were not random but were purposefully placed by God as a form of judgment against Egypt.

The promise contrasts the afflictions brought upon Egypt with the promise of healing for the Israelites. It implies that while Egypt experienced divine judgment through these diseases, Israel, by adhering to God’s commandments, would be spared from such afflictions. The distinction between Egypt and Israel is the protective aspect of the covenant. This is tied to the covenantal relationship that faithfulness to God’s commandments protects from the judgments experienced by others. This shows the dual aspects of divine justice and mercy. While God’s judgment is evident in the afflictions brought upon Egypt, His mercy is in the

<sup>22</sup> Pavel Hejzlar, “John Calvin and the cessation of miraculous healing.” *Communio Viatorum* 49, (2007): 72.

<sup>23</sup> Green, “Healing,” 757.



promise of healing for the Israelites, contingent upon their obedience. The infliction of diseases upon Egypt had a redemptive purpose by demonstrating God's power and justice while setting the stage for the covenantal relationship with Israel. It means the idea that divine actions are both corrective and redemptive. This reassures the Israelites of their new status under the covenant and the divine favour they will receive.<sup>24</sup> The mention of Egypt's afflictions as a moral and instructional device contrasts Egypt's past suffering with the future blessings promised to the Israelites.

### Detailed analysis of לֹא-אֶשְׁאֵם עָלֶיךָ “I will not bring upon you.”

The phrase לֹא-אֶשְׁאֵם עָלֶיךָ (“I will not bring upon you”) is a critical component of the promise made by God to the Israelites. It conveys God's intention to protect the Israelites from the afflictions that He had previously inflicted on Egypt. The verb אֶשְׁאֵם translates as “to put,” “to place,” or “to bring upon” indicates an action of causing or inflicting something. It refers to God's bringing or placing diseases upon someone or a group. אֶשְׁאֵם comes from the root אָשַׁם, meaning “to put” or “to place.” The verb describes placing or setting something, including divine judgments or blessings. Its usage shows a deliberate act of God to either bring about or withhold certain conditions. לֹא means “not” or “no.” It is a negation that reverses the action of the verb it precedes. In this case, it negates the action of bringing diseases. Using לֹא indicates a promise of exemption or protection from certain conditions. It signifies that God will actively prevent or withhold the afflictions previously experienced by Egypt from affecting the Israelites. עָלֶיךָ translates to “upon you” or “on you.” It is the preposition עַל, meaning “upon”, combined with the pronoun כָּ, meaning “you” (second-person singular, masculine), which indicates the recipient of the action, specifying that the divine promise concerns the Israelites and that the protection or exemption applies specifically to them.<sup>25</sup>

The phrase לֹא-אֶשְׁאֵם עָלֶיךָ signifies an active role of God in preventing the occurrence of diseases among the Israelites, and a proactive divine intervention designed to shield the Israelites from suffering that was previously inflicted on their oppressors. It assures the Israelites that their adherence to God's commandments will result in divine favour and protection from the afflictions experienced by Egypt. The promise to withhold diseases is

<sup>24</sup> R.E.O. White, “Heal, Health,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids 1996), 328.

<sup>25</sup> Pilch, “Healing. Old Testament,” 414-415.



conditional upon the Israelites' obedience to God's commandments. It implies a moral responsibility on the part of the Israelites to adhere to God's commandments. The protection from diseases is tied to their conduct and obedience and the ethical dimensions of the covenant. The promise of not bringing diseases upon the Israelites is divine mercy and compassion. God's actions are not solely punitive but also restorative and protective for those who align with His will. It reassures the Israelites of their new status and the benefits of their covenantal relationship with God. The promise functions both as instruction and as part of the covenantal agreement.

### Detailed Analysis of **כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה רֹפְאֶךָ: "for I am the LORD, who heals you"**

The phrase **כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה רֹפְאֶךָ** "for I am the LORD, who heals you" encapsulates a declaration of God's identity and role about the well-being of His people. The conjunction **כִּי** translates to "for" or "because" introduces a reason or explanation for the preceding statement. It links the promise of protection from disease to the nature of God as the healer. **כִּי** indicates that the assurance of divine healing is grounded in God's identity and nature. It means that the promise of health and protection is based on who God is. **אֲנִי** means "I am," and **יְהוָה** (Yahweh) is the personal name of God, rendered as "LORD". This combination affirms God's self-revelation and His unique identity as the covenantal God of Israel. **יְהוָה** (Yahweh) is the tetragrammaton, representing God's eternal and unchanging nature. Freedman defines YHWH as "He causes to be, he brings into existence; he brings to pass, he creates."<sup>26</sup> It signifies His sovereignty, faithfulness, and covenantal relationship with His people. By declaring "I am Yahweh," God affirms His commitment to His promises and His role as the one who governs and cares for His people. Freedman points out that God would use this name to clear up misconceptions about Himself. When God wanted to reveal an aspect of His nature, He would attach YHWH to an attribute of His desire.<sup>27</sup> The phrase **רֹפְאֶךָ** translates to "your healer." The root of this term is **רָפַא** meaning "to heal" or "to make whole." The suffix **ךָ** is a second-person singular pronoun meaning "your." **רֹפְאֶךָ** conveys a comprehensive notion of healing that includes physical health, spiritual restoration, and well-being. It reveals God's role not just as a healer in a medical sense but as the one who restores and renews His people.

<sup>26</sup> David Noel Freedman, "Name of the God of Moses," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 79, no. 2, (1960): 151-152.

<sup>27</sup>Freedman, "Name of the God of Moses," 152.





The title רפֿאָר means that God is the ultimate source of healing and restoration. Hasel writes that the term used in Exodus 15:26, *raphe*, is translated as “healer”, “doctor”, and “physician”.<sup>28</sup> This healing is not limited to physical ailments but also encompasses spiritual and emotional well-being. It is a holistic view of health that integrates body, mind, and spirit. Hasel further explains that In the OT, healing takes many forms, including mental, emotional, spiritual, and even physical. “When a person exhibits that state of body and mind in which all the functions are being discharged harmoniously, that person may be considered healthy.”<sup>29</sup> It assures the Israelites that their covenant with Yahweh underpins their health and well-being. This assurance builds trust and reliance on God’s provision and care. It signifies that God’s character is consistent and reliable, and His very nature guarantees His promises of protection and healing. The phrase affirms God’s sovereignty over all aspects of life, including health. It acknowledges that divine healing comes from God’s authority and is a manifestation of His control over the natural and spiritual realms.

### **Relevance to Contemporary Christian Health and Wellness**

#### ***Divine Healing as a Covenant Promise***

Divine healing is a covenant that outlines the relationship between divine healing and the covenantal obligations of the Israelites. According to Hasel, bodily healing is a core Christian belief grounded in the Bible. He draws attention to the OT’s repeated motif that the LORD provides health and healing. Hasel delivers several Old Testament examples of God’s healing to illustrate God’s healing aspect. Abraham prays for Abimelech and his household, and they are cured. (Gen. 20:17). Through prayer, the LORD answers the psalmist’s requests and “healed them” (Ps. 107:20) or “healed me” (Ps. 30:2). The Psalmist concludes by saying that God “binds up their wounds, and heals all your diseases” (Ps. 147:3) and “heals the brokenhearted.”<sup>30</sup> This covenantal relationship is characterised by mutual obligations, with God’s blessings contingent upon the people’s obedience. The covenant is rooted in the historical context of Israel’s deliverance from Egypt, where expectations of obedience follow God’s acts of deliverance. The covenant entails specific obligations for the Israelites, who commit to listening to God’s voice and adhering to His commandments, entering into a

<sup>28</sup>Hasel, "Health and Healing in the Old Testament," 200.

<sup>29</sup>Hasel, "Health and Healing in the Old Testament," 191

<sup>30</sup>Hasel, "Health and Healing in the Old Testament," 191



relationship where they are expected to live according to divine laws. In return, they receive assurances of protection and healing. Blessings and curses are associated with the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of God's people.

Exodus 15:26 raises the question of the origin and cause of sickness. Aaron Jonathan Chalmers challenges the notion of God as a just healer, citing biblical references to His striking and healing actions. Chalmers lists three scriptures as proofs: "I have wounded, and it is I who heal" (Deut. 32:39), "For He inflicts pain, and gives relief; He wounds and His hands also heal" (Job 5:18) and "The LORD will strike Egypt, striking but healing; so, they will return to the LORD, and He will respond to them and will heal them" (Isa. 19:22) This "formula" exists in over ten other places in the Bible.<sup>31</sup> The promise of healing is part of a larger reward and punishment system of covenantal behaviour. The covenant promises blessings as rewards for obedience and divine favour, linked to the people's alignment with God's will. The promise of not bringing diseases upon the Israelites is a tangible manifestation of this principle.

The covenantal theology of the Old Testament reveals that a set of expectations and rewards governs God's relationship with His people. Divine healing as covenant fulfilment illustrates how divine intervention and protection are integrally connected to the covenant's stipulations. God's role as a healer is a manifestation of His covenantal faithfulness and a reward for the people's obedience. The concept of divine healing as a covenant promise invites Christians to see how covenantal principles apply to faith practices. Therefore, believers must align their lives with spiritual and moral principles to seek divine favour and protection. A holistic health approach inspired by the holistic view of health in Exodus 15:26 inspires approaches that integrate physical, spiritual, and moral dimensions of well-being, suggesting that maintaining a faithful relationship with God positively affects overall health and life satisfaction.

### ***Healing as a Distinctive Marker***

The promise of divine healing in Exodus 15:26 is crucial to the Israelites' unique identity as God's chosen people. This promise sets Israel apart from other nations, particularly Egypt,

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<sup>31</sup> Aaron Jonathan Chalmers. "A Critical Analysis of the Formula "Yahweh Strikes and Heals," *Vetus Testamentum* 61, no. 1, (2011): 16-17.



which had experienced various afflictions. The distinction made by this promise is the protective and favouring aspects of the covenant on the special relationship between God and His people. The historical context of the afflictions in Egypt is significant, as it is the broader spiritual and moral failings of Egyptian society, characterised by idolatry and oppression. By contrasting the afflictions of Egypt with the promise of protection for Israel, God reveals His role as a protector and healer for those in covenant with Him. Larry Hart writes, “Yahweh-Rapha, ‘the LORD who heals’ (Ex. 15:26), was given by the Lord himself as a promise that if Israel would heed his law, then he would prevent any of the diseases of Egypt from coming upon them.”<sup>32</sup> The covenantal protection offered by God is portrayed as a protective aspect of the covenant, guaranteeing physical well-being and the Israelites’ sense of security and divine favour.

The assurance that Israel would not suffer the same diseases as Egypt is also a sign of divine favour, manifested in several ways: of divine care, symbol of covenant faithfulness, and moral and spiritual implications. The distinction between Israel and Egypt is understood as a symbol of holiness, as the nation is set apart by divine healing and is called to live according to God’s laws. In a broader theological context, the distinction between Israel and other nations prefigures the New Covenant, where spiritual healing and wholeness are extended to all believers through Christ. Dake says, “No man can expect to be immune to sickness unless he meets the conditions, but every man can expect such blessing when he meets them.”<sup>33</sup> The idea is that living according to divine principles results in distinctive blessings and protection; therefore, contemporary Christians live out their faith in ways that reveal their unique identity as God’s people, trusting in His provision and care. OT provides a comprehensive perspective on recovery. The Hebrew word “shalom” contains the fundamental idea. This means “wholeness” or “complete” in translation. When Jacob said to Joseph, “Go now and see about the welfare [shalom] of your brothers,” he used this term. (Gen. 37:14). He was inquiring about the “state of health,” as Hasel notes. When discussing healing from an OT viewpoint, it sometimes seems forgotten that God does not divide people into categories. He regards people as whole beings because he believes that they are. It is not

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<sup>32</sup>Larry Hart, *Truth Aflame* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), Kindle location 1567-12720.

<sup>33</sup>Finnis Jennings Dake, *Dake's Annotated Reference Bible* (Lawersville, GA: Dake Bible Sales, 1963), Notes on Exodus 15:26 (c).



as though God will “heal” one facet of a person while abandoning the other to suffer. Old Testament healing of humans is a restoration of relationship with God, themselves, other human relationships, and the environment. It is holistic.<sup>34</sup>

### ***The Role of Obedience***

The role of obedience in the covenant relationship between God and the Israelites reveals that divine healing and other blessings are not automatic but are contingent upon the Israelites’ adherence to God’s commandments. The principle of obedience as a prerequisite for receiving divine favour is a recurrent theme in the Scriptures as a broader biblical understanding of the relationship between human behaviour and heavenly blessings. The condition is articulated through the phrase, “If you listen carefully to the LORD your God and do what is right in His eyes.” This illustrates a reciprocal relationship between God and His people, contingent upon the Israelites’ willingness to follow His laws. The use of “listen carefully” (שָׁמַרְתָּ אֶת־מִצְוֹתַי) suggests an active engagement with God’s commandments. It implies that mere hearing is insufficient and requires attentive and intentional obedience. This principle is evident in various OT passages. For example, in Deuteronomy 28:1-14, blessings are promised to those who obey God’s commandments, while disobedience results in curses. Disobedience is a sin, and Dake writes that if man had not sinned, sickness would not exist. The connection between following divine laws and receiving blessings is further exemplified in the narrative of King Josiah, whose adherence to God’s laws led to national prosperity and protection (2 Kings 22-23). The New Testament also talks about the role of obedience in experiencing God’s favour. In John 14:15, Jesus states, “If you love me, keep my commands.” This reveals the continuity of the principle that love and obedience are central to experiencing divine blessings and maintaining a relationship with God.

The call to obey God’s commandments encompasses both moral and spiritual dimensions. It involves living according to divine principles in behaviour, worship, and personal integrity. Therefore, believers are to strive for obedience in various aspects of life, including moral conduct, spiritual practices, and personal integrity, since God’s favour and protection are linked to faithful adherence to His commandments. They are encouraged to view their overall well-being as intertwined with their relationship with God and the

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<sup>34</sup>Hasel, "Health and Healing in the Old Testament," 197.



integration of health's spiritual, emotional, and physical aspects. Because living out the principles of the covenant involves more than just following rules; it includes cultivating a genuine relationship with God. This relationship is characterised by love, faithfulness, and a commitment to live according to divine teachings. Obedience in this context should not be interpreted in a legalistic manner, where adherence to rules becomes an end in itself rather than a reflection of a genuine relationship with God. It is essential to balance the concept of obedience with the understanding of grace, recognising that divine favour also expresses God's unconditional love. The principle that obedience leads to blessings does not negate the reality of suffering and challenges in the lives of faithful individuals. It is crucial to understand that divine healing is part of a broader theological context where suffering is acknowledged and addressed in various ways, including through spiritual growth and reliance on God's promises.

### *Understanding God*

God's self-revelation as רִפְאוֹתֶיךָ “your healer” reveals His character and role in the lives of His people. It reveals God's ability to heal physically and His broader role in providing comprehensive care and well-being in both physical and spiritual dimensions, as well as understanding God as the healer, which has significant theological implications for believers' perception of His nature and relationship with them. The designation רִפְאוֹתֶיךָ is a holistic understanding of healing. At its most immediate level, the term conveys God's ability to heal physical ailments.

The promise to prevent the diseases that plagued Egypt implies that God actively ensures his people's physical health and well-being. God's concern for life is tangible in everyday aspects to safeguard His people are spiritually and physically protected and cared for. Beyond physical healing, the concept of God as רִפְאוֹתֶיךָ encompasses spiritual restoration. In the broader biblical context, healing includes spiritual renewal and forgiveness. This understanding is evident in passages like Psalm 103:3, where David praises God for forgiving sins and healing diseases as a connection between physical and spiritual well-being. The promise thus points to God's role in restoring the whole person—body, mind, and spirit. God's role as healer is part of His more significant function as protector and provider. This assures that God's protective care extends to all aspects of life, including health. This comprehensive provision



indicates that God's involvement in the lives of His people is all-encompassing in terms of their immediate needs and well-being. The promise of healing shows God's immanence—His active participation in the lives of His people. Unlike a distant deity, God is depicted as intimately engaged in the health and well-being of His people.

Opoku Onyinah points out that Yahweh-Rapha in Exodus 15:26 is a “powerful deity” Who heals those who keep His covenant.<sup>35</sup>This immanence is crucial to His character's personal and caring nature. God is a healer to those who follow His commandments, and this is not arbitrary but is rooted in His commitment to the covenant relationship. This faithfulness is central to understanding God's nature, as it is in His reliability and constancy in providing for His people. This also ties into the broader theme of redemption. In the biblical sense, healing is linked to redemption and salvation. God addresses physical health and signalling His broader redemptive work in restoring and reconciling His people to Himself. The holistic nature of God's healing believers views well-being as an integrated concept that includes physical health, spiritual vitality, and emotional wholeness. Adamo further asserts that,

Hebrew tradition resembles that of the African tradition. What is worth noting, is that, unlike the Eurocentric concept of healing, the Hebrew and African concepts of healing denote completeness. Healing encompasses the spiritual, physical, economic and all that life entails, that is, the total well-being of an individual and a society. Like the Hebrew concept of healing, African Christianity has both the social, spiritual, physical and economic dimensions.<sup>36</sup>

This integrated approach is the idea that divine care addresses all aspects of life and that believers seek healing and wholeness in every dimension. Understanding God as a healer is the call to trust in His provision and care. Believers are to confidently approach God, believing His healing extends to their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. This trust is rooted in recognising God's comprehensive care and faithful commitment to His covenant promises. Believers must live by God's commandments, recognising that their actions and

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<sup>35</sup> Opoku Onyinah, "God's Grace, Healing and Suffering," *International Review of Mission* 95, no. 377, (2006): 119.

<sup>36</sup> Adamo, “I Am the LORD your Healer” Exodus 15:26 (אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ): Healing in the Old Testament and the African (Yoruba) context’, 8.



attitudes impact their well-being. Believers may struggle with reconciling the promise of healing with their personal experiences of suffering and illness.<sup>37</sup> It is essential to approach this tension with an understanding that divine healing is part of a broader theological context that includes themes of grief, redemption, and trust in God's wisdom. The promise of healing does not guarantee physical health or immediate relief from suffering. A balanced theological perspective recognises that while God's healing encompasses physical and spiritual dimensions, it does not always align with individual expectations or timing.<sup>38</sup>

### ***The Need for Jesus Christ***

God's intention is always to bless rather than to condemn his people. He didn't put his people to the test in the hopes that they wouldn't pass but instead that they would learn to follow. "God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning," Moses later told them (Exod. 20:20). Regretfully, the Israelites failed this test during their desert wanderings and Marah.<sup>39</sup> They did not trust or obey when thirsty; instead, they murmured and moaned. Believers frequently make the same mistakes. The trial of their faith is what they require for supply. But instead of waiting calmly and confidently for God when the moment of trial arrives, they become agitated and fearful. Because of this, they are in such urgent need of Jesus, who passed the test. Jesus needed to obey every commandment in the Bible to redeem them.<sup>40</sup> Theologians know this as "the active obedience of Christ," essential to their complete salvation. Jesus was put to the test of obedience like never before when God took him into the desert to face the devil's temptations: "After fasting for forty days and forty nights, he was hungry." "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread," the tempter said as he approached him (Matt. 4:2, 3). The temptation was to not rely on his Father to supply and to seek his nourishment in his manner. However, Jesus was successful in passing the exam. "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from God's mouth," he remarked, citing scripture (v. 4). Jesus trusted his Father to provide for him instead of griping about what God had not done.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Pilch, "Healing. New Testament," 420.

<sup>38</sup> Jose Maniparampil, *Synoptic Gospels* (Bangalore, 2004), 422.

<sup>39</sup> Ryken, *Exodus: Saved for God's Glory*, 421.

<sup>40</sup> Ryken, *Exodus: Saved for God's Glory*, 421.

<sup>41</sup> Ryken, *Exodus: Saved for God's Glory*, 421.



Those who learn to follow and have faith will be incredibly blessed. God promised that if his people followed his order at Marah, he would cure their illnesses and spare them from the plagues. Another of God's heavenly names was revealed here. The Israelites already recognised him as the everlasting and self-existent God, the Great I Am. They had also learned to trust him as the provider, the saviour, and the one who listens. God now showed himself as the God of healing, יהוה רפאָאָה. In the Old Testament, רפאָאָה denotes bodily and spiritual well-being and soundness. "To restore, heal, cure... not only in the physical sense but also in the moral and spiritual sense" is what it implies.<sup>42</sup> God proved his ability to heal Marah by mending the bitter waters. However, the goal was to instil the Israelites' faith in him for all forms of healing. God's capacity for healing is inextricably linked to who he is. He is the God who cures all illnesses and pardons transgressions (Ps. 103:3).

Another indication that Jesus is the Savior is his ability to heal. Jesus was well-known for his miraculous healing. He travelled around "preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people" (Matt. 4:23). Every person Jesus cured was a material blessing. However, this revealed a more profound truth, which is that Jesus is the cure-all for all the illnesses plaguing sin-sick souls. He is the salvation's physician.<sup>43</sup> Believers are to go to Jesus for whatever healing they require, whether it is emotional healing from the wounds they sustain from others, spiritual healing from sin, or bodily healing from illness and handicap. Although some of their illnesses won't be cured until the resurrection, all of them will be since Jesus has promised to do so.

## Conclusion

The passage reveals the relationship between divine healing and covenant faithfulness. It establishes a direct link between divine healing and adherence to God's commandments, covenantal faithfulness, holistic healing, and divine protection and provision. The passage is about the covenantal nature of the relationship between God and His people, where obedience is a prerequisite for receiving God's favour. The principles derived from Exodus 15:26 offer valuable lessons for contemporary Christian faith and practice. They include the integration of faith and health, ethical and spiritual commitment and trust in divine provision. Modern

<sup>42</sup> Ryken, *Exodus: Saved for God's Glory*, 421.

<sup>43</sup> Ryken, *Exodus: Saved for God's Glory*, 421.





Christians should view health as an extension of their spiritual life, aligning their lives with God's commandments and making ethical choices. Trust in divine provision encourages believers to trust in God's provision and care, complementing faith in God's overarching role in ensuring well-being. However, the promise of healing in Exodus 15:26 presents challenges in which believers must overcome the tension between the promise of healing and the reality of suffering. It is crucial to approach this promise with an understanding encompassing both physical and spiritual dimensions of healing. Oblivion linked to blessings should not lead to legalistic interpretations but should be understood within a relational covenant characterised by grace and faith.

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