

YAHWEH ROPHEE

THE GOD WHO HEALS US



“For I am the LORD-who-heals-you.” Exodus 15:26

Rophee means “heal,” “cure,” “restore,” or “make whole.” It occurs sixty-seven times in the Hebrew Scriptures. It often refers to physical healing, but it usually carries a larger meaning, one involving the entire person. Yahweh not only heals the body; he heals the mind and soul as well. He heals the whole person.

Rophee is sometimes used as verb where Yahweh heals water, land, nations, and even an altar. Yahweh heals the effects of sin and unfaithfulness in a world held captive under the reign of sin and death (see Romans 5:12-21).

As God in the flesh, Jesus healed others simply because He loved them and because He was good, although there were some He chose not to heal (Mark 1:32-38). These healings became the focal point of His ministry in many cases, but they were never meant to be. Instead, the Scriptures teach that Jesus’ miraculous works were ultimately intended to point to the in-breaking of God’s kingdom, demonstrating that He was King and Lord over all creation yet also willing to enter into our suffering (see Acts 2:22-24; Hebrews 2:15-18; 4:15; Philippians 1:29; 1 Peter 1:16-17; Luke 13:16).

Yes, he healed people simply because he loved them and was good, but there were some He chose not to heal (Mark 1:32-38). As word got out of the healings by Jesus and His disciples, many began coming to Him seeing Him as a genie in a bottle with the power to make their pain or suffering disappear. Unfortunately, these people missed the point. They wanted the healing more than the Healer. Sadly, some things never change.

Others throughout time have mistakenly focused their attention on the healer himself as a person instead of the healing power of Yahweh working through the hands of that person. The healing was never supposed to be about the healer. Like a doctor, he or she may be used by God to heal, but he or she is not the true healer or the source of the healing. Yahweh Rophee will always be the source of healing as the Supreme Healer. Only He deserves the glory.

Yahweh Rophee does not only heal through the work of human hands, however. In His divine wisdom, Yahweh provided his people with instructions that, if followed, could help avoid and heal sickness. Rather than relying upon man-made, superstitious ritual or magical brews and potions, the Israelites were to simply obey Yahweh’s commandments and follow His prescribed way of life as revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures. Some of these commandments contained instructions that foreshadowed modern medical science and could help prevent the spread of disease and even bring about healing through practice. For example, people were to wash their bodies and their clothes if they came into contact with a disease, a bodily discharge, or a corpse. Until they did so, they were to be

considered unclean and kept quarantined away from others. Additionally, the Israelites followed strict dietary laws that helped keep illness from spreading.

Now these practices may hardly sounds like “science” to us, but even as recently as 150 years ago, it was considered strange for a surgeon to have to wash his hands prior to operating on a patient. In fact, some scholars suggest that it was the Jews’ obedience to Yahweh’s dietary laws that enabled them to survive the various diseases that wiped out many ancient nations and people.

Sickness and the Reign of Sin and Death

Sickness is often linked to personal sin, but we know that sickness is instead a consequence of the reign of sin and death that has overtaken the world—the land of darkness. Jesus Himself made this clear in John 9 when he healed a man born blind. The disciples assumed that the man’s blindness must be due to either the blind man’s own sin or his parents’ sin. Jesus corrected this assumption, instead stating that the man’s blindness existed so God could be glorified through his healing, not because of any one person’s sin.

Jesus’ healing of the blind man puts Yahweh Rophee’s power over sickness on display and, in doing so, points to the ultimate healing that will take place in the new heavens and new earth, where there will be no more cancer, asthma, AIDS, strokes, depression, diabetes, flu, or common colds. We need to take hold of His power and promises and develop a vocabulary of faith in line with God’s Kingdom to use here on earth as we wait for our ultimate healing. We need to hold on to Yahweh Rophee, “the Lord who heals us.” And we need to keep calling upon Him for healing because healing flows from the cross of Christ the King.

Matthew seemed to believe this all to be true as he reached back to Isaiah’s prophecy of the Suffering Servant (53:4):

“When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. He drove out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick, so that what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: He Himself took our weaknesses and carried our diseases.” (Matthew 8:16-17)

The people Jesus healed found healing either because they found Jesus, the embodied Yahweh Rophee, or because He found them. The same is true for us today. We, too, can find healing, restoration, and wholeness from Yahweh through Jesus. But we must know that it will only come from Yahweh through Jesus - not through anyone or anything else.

We won’t find healing through alcohol or drugs, weekend parties, or money and success. A new job, new house, new wife, or new husband will not bring us healing. Your

current wife, husband, boyfriend or girlfriend also will not. Retail therapy will not. Sex will not. Harboring anger or resentment will not. Telling that person off will not. Children will not. A pastor will not. New friends, different friends or more friends will not. More social networks will not. Your political party will not.

Only Yahweh in Jesus Christ offers healing, restoration, and wholeness.

If it is the healing I want more than the Healer, I will find myself chasing healing. I will pursue many things that have the allure of healing but ultimately will fall short. If I pursue the Healer, however, healing will come to my heart and my soul.

No matter what has caused your hurt—sin, the death of a loved one, betrayal, physical sickness—healing, restoration, and wholeness for you heart, mind and soul are all offered to you because of Jesus: “By His wounds we are healed,” and He is Yahweh Rophee, the Lord Who Heals.

Low Expectations, Low Disappointments

Physical healing has been a complicated subject for Christians for years. Here is what I know: For many Christ-followers, the request for prayer is often pitched out as a last ditch effort when, instead, calling upon the name of Yahweh Rophee should be our first recourse. But what happens when our prayers for physical healing aren’t answered as we have asked? In these cases, we often find ourselves disappointed. I’ve been there. When Alison’s mother grew sick with cancer years ago, I prayed with all the faith I could muster. I quoted Scripture and declared healing over her. I believed it would happen as sure as I believed the sun would rise the next morning. But just eight months later, cancer took her life and she went to the Lord. Her healing did indeed come, just not in the way I wanted.

Since then I have been left with a choice – and as far as I see it, we are all left with a choice. When we are disappointed by healings that go unanswered, we often come back to God the next time around with low expectations because low expectations carry less risk of disappointment than high expectations. And since no one likes to be disappointed, we choose to sidestep the risk and keep our expectations low and pray only half-hearted prayers.

P.U.S.H.

I learned a cheesy little acronym from one of my mentors, Milton Jones, quite a few years ago. The acronym is P.U.S.H.: Pray Until Something Happens. It points us to Jesus’ story of the persistent widow who time and again came to the judge with her request, even at his dismay, only to eventually be granted her desire (Luke 18:1-8).

I've taken the position that until I, or you, are six feet underground, there is still hope. Therefore my choice, even in the face of past disappointments, is to P.U.S.H.—to pray until something happens, to seek a definitive word from the Lord, and to keep high expectations of a beautiful and good God who is Yahweh Rophee. I aim for deeper trust in the Lord that is Who He says He is, and I find comfort in knowing that because He is who He says He is, I will not always understand His ways and His will for my life.

But I also believe that because He is Who He says He is, God is able and is still Yahweh Rophee, our Lord Who Heals and who is good and who is able to work all things for our good and to the praise of His glory.

And I know that I know this: I may not understand what he has in store for my health physically, but I do know what he desires for my heart, mind, and soul. So I will pursue not merely healing, but also the Healer, and I will trust that healing, restoration and wholeness will come into my heart and my soul and restore my joy.

God is Still Yahweh Rophee

Remember again: No matter what has caused your hurt—sin, the death of a loved one, betrayal, physical sickness—healing, restoration, and wholeness for you heart, mind and soul are all offered to you because of Jesus: “By His wounds we are healed,” and He is Yahweh Rophee, the Lord Who Heals.

And the fruit of the Holy Spirit who lives as the presence of Yahweh Rophee within His people is still love, joy, and peace (Galatians 5:22-23). Wholeness. Restoration.

The early Church leader and biological brother of Jesus, James, once said:

Is anyone among you sick? He should call for the elders of the church, and they should pray over him after anointing him with olive oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. (James 5:15-16)

Anointing with oil was an ancient practice of Yahweh's people. Among other things, it was a mark of blessing and a mark of setting apart something or someone for holy purposes. Because it is an Eastern practice, it is strange for us Westerners. Yet it is mentioned here.

So let's do it. Let's call upon the elders and other spiritually mature, prayerful people among us and ask them to do as this Scripture says. We will pray to Yahweh Rophee for healing: for physical healing, for emotional healing, for relational healing, and for spiritual healing. We will upon Him for wholeness.

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