

“Real Divine Healing”
Isaiah 57:14-21

February 5, 2012

A. Introduction

1. Healing^A

2. Always the End is the Same

3. But the Healing in Isaiah 57 is Forever

B. God’s Graciousness 57:14-15

1. His Great Preparation (14)^B

2. His Great Condescension (15)^C

C. God’s Correction 57:16-17

1. It Is Gentle (16)^D

2. It Is Necessary (17)^E

D. God’s Restoration 57:18-19

1. Healing with Comfort (18)^F

2. Healing with Peace (19)^G

3. God is Jehovah-Rophe’^H

E. God’s Judgement 57:20-21

1. The State of the Wicked (20)

2. A Final Warning (21)^I

F. Conclusion

^A Matthew 4:23, Acts 10:38, 1 Kings 17:18ff, 2 Kings 4:32ff, Mark 5:35ff; John 11:17ff, Acts 9:36ff

^B 1 Corinthians 1:23, Romans 1:16

^C 1 Kings 8:27; 2 Chronicles 2:6, 6:18; Ephesians 2:1, 4-5

^D Genesis 6:3, Psalm 103:14, Proverbs 3:11-12, 1 John 5:3

^E John 16:8-11

^F 2 Corinthians 7:10, Romans 8:18, 2 Corinthians 1:3

^G Ephesians 2:11-18

^H Jeremiah 8:22

^I Compare Isaiah 48:22, 66:24

A. Introduction

1. Healing

a. every day, here and all around the world

- (A) thousands of lives are being saved in hospitals and clinics
- (B) and people are being healed of various diseases
- (C) through the efforts of doctors and nurses
- (D) and the work of researchers
- (E) and this includes most of us here this morning

b. the Bible records a great number of healing acts

- (A) Matthew 4:23 records for us that, ‘Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.’
- (B) Peter in telling the gospel to the Roman centurion, Cornelius, said, ‘You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.’ (Acts 10:38)
- (C) and not only did Jesus do works of healing, but so also did Peter himself, as in the case of the crippled man at the Beautiful Gate
- (D) indeed, the apostles and the 70 disciples and Paul all did so

c. In some cases, the ultimate act of healing took place

- (A) almost 3,000 years ago, Elijah raised the son of the Gentile widow of Zarephath from the dead—{2}.
- (B) Elisha did the same with the son of the Shunammite woman—{3}.
- (C) Jesus’ raised Jairus’ daughter and Lazarus from the dead—{4}.
- (D) Peter raised Tabitha, that is Dorcas, from the dead—{5}.

d. all these, whether if be indirectly through doctors and medicine, or it be directly through a miraculous work, are the healing work of God

2. Always the End is the Same

a. in 1944, Agatha Christie wrote and published a book

- (A) she was married to the archeologist Max Mallowan, and she went with him on his digs in the middle east
- (B) 'An archaeologist is the best husband a woman can have.' she once quipped, 'The older she gets the more interested he is in her.'^{6}.
- (C) at a suggestion of a colleague of Max, she wrote this murder mystery book set in the Egypt of 2000BC; it's title?
- (D) "Death Comes As the End"

b. and that is the morbid fact

- (A) because those mother's sons raised by Elijah and Elisha are dead
- (B) Jairus' daughter and Lazarus are dead
- (C) Dorcas is dead
- (D) all those so miraculously healed by Christ and apostles; dead
- (E) and the same end faces all those being saved from death today

c. all this healing is but temporary

3. But the Healing in Isaiah 57 is Forever

a. this healing is the consummation of the gospel message that Isaiah has been preaching in the previous 17 chapters

b. a message which is expressed with four themes, themes which are found in today's text; and we shall examine them in the order there

- (A) God's Graciousness
- (B) God's Correction
- (C) God's Restoration
- (D) God's Judgement

c. these words were addressed to God's nation, Israel

- (A) they have a special meaning for Israel in its deliverance from exile
- (B) but, as found in Isaiah 40-57, the salvation that God gives to the OT church, to His people within

the nation of Israel

- (C) is an example in miniature of the salvation that His is providing to the church of Jesus Christ, His people within all mankind.

B. God's Graciousness 57:14-15

1. His Great Preparation – verse 14 – **'And it will be said, "Build up, build up, prepare the way, Remove every obstacle out of the way of My people."**
 - a. who says this is not told; it is clearly not God Himself, whose words are clearly identified in the next verse
 - b. but it is one speaking at God's charge; perhaps a heavenly messenger as the angels in the book of Revelation
 - c. the word picture is one that Isaiah uses a number of times; the casting up of a highway, the levelling out of the thoroughfare so that God's people may return easily and without obstacle
 - d. every stumbling block is to be removed: what is this in spiritual terms?
 - e. **'but we preach Christ crucified, ' says Paul, 'to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness'** (1 Corinthians 1:23)
 - (A) that Messiah should die, is a stone of stumbling to the Jew
 - (B) that a man should be raised from that death, a foolish idea to man
 - f. but to those who believe, those for whom the Holy Spirit has removed these obstacles, **'it is the power of God to salvation:'** God prepared it so
2. His Great Condescension – verse 15 – **'For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place, And also with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite."**
 - a. this verse, like the incarnation, is beyond the power of the human mind to comprehend – what a contrast!
 - b. God, who is utterly majestic and exalted, will take His place in the life of a human being crushed by sin, weighed down by guilt!
 - c. God, whom **'heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain'**^{7}. will dwell within the smallness of

the human heart!

- d. God, who inhabits eternity, or, more literally, 'dweller ever', will take up residence, transforming our short lives to eternal!
- e. God, who dwells at a holy height, completely separated from the sin that infects His creation, graciously draws near to the sinner!
- f. for the one who repents, who sees his own sin to some degree as God sees it, and casts Himself on God's mercy, God revives; gives new life
- g. 'And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,' says Paul in Ephesians 2:1, 4-5, 'But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)'
- h. but repentance needs the hand of

C. God's Correction 57:16-17

- 1. It Is Gentle – verse 16 – 'For I will not contend forever, Nor will I always be angry; For the spirit would grow faint before Me, And the breath of those whom I have made.'
 - a. Scripture shows how aware God is of man's frailty
 - (A) Genesis 6:3a: 'Then the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; ..."'
 - (B) 'For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust.' (Psalms 103:14)
 - b. so, as this verse says, that Israel may be spared and that mankind may be spared, even in his correction He restrains His hand
 - (A) 'My son, do not reject the discipline of the Lord Or loathe His reproof, For whom the Lord loves He reproveth, Even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.' (Proverbs 3:11-12)
 - (B) as an example, the commandments were given so that man would see his own sin, and concerning these commandments John says, 'For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.' (1 John 5:3)
- 2. It is Necessary – verse 17 – 'Because of the iniquity of his unjust gain I was angry and struck him; I hid My face and was angry, And he went on turning away, in the way of his heart.'

- a. though these words were addressed to Israel, they apply, as Romans 1-3 show, to all mankind: Israel is a microcosm of humankind
- b. many times and in many ways God warned and corrected His people
- c. yet Israel, as has mankind, kept turning away, kept backsliding
- d. so the Spirit's work is still necessary, that man might turn to God; and to us and through us and the message of the gospel, the Spirit comes, said Jesus, to *'... convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.'* (John 16:8-11)
- e. those who listen and obey the Holy Spirit's voice will know ...

D. God's Restoration 57:18-19

- 1. Healing with Comfort – verse 18 – *'I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will lead him and restore comfort to him and to his mourners,'*
 - a. God's healing is not handed out indiscriminately
 - (A) it is for those who are in need, those with willful, backsliding ways who have turned away from God, and yet will return to him
 - (B) these are the mourners, those who are sorry for sin
 - (C) not sorry for being found out, but truly regretful
 - (D) *'For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.'* (2 Corinthians 7:10)
 - b. to such as come in this fashion, God will give comfort
 - (A) comfort that surpasses the pain of any discipline
 - (B) *'For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.'* (Romans 8:18)
 - (C) because this God is *'the God of all comfort'* (2 Corinthians 1:3)
- 2. Healing with Peace – verse 19 – *“Creating the praise of the lips. Peace, peace to him who is far and to him who is near,” Says the Lord, “and I will heal him.”*

- a. so those who know this healing, this comfort of salvation and the assurance thereof, are able to produce worthy fruit of the lips (that is the literal meaning of the Hebrew); to give praise to God
 - b. for why? His real divine healing brings peace
 - c. that word peace is much more than the absence of conflict – that is certainly part of it since the healing ends the hostilities between man and God – but it means a wholeness and health; the completeness that man has lacked ever since sin entered into the world
 - d. yes; this healing is for His OT people, the nation of Israel; but it is for His NT people that have grown out of that people
 - e. hear the word of God as written by Paul to the church at Ephesus: 'Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands — remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. And he came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.' (Ephesians 2:11-18)
 - f. the healing with peace is that which comes through faith in Christ
3. God is Jehovah-Rophe' – Yahweh the Healer – The Great Physician
- a. 'Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?' asks Jeremiah 8:22, 'Why then has not the health of the daughter of my people been restored?' – yes, answers the traditional spiritual hymn
 - b. 'There is a balm in Gilead To make the wounded whole; There is a balm in Gilead To heal the sin-sick soul.'
 - c. Jesus Christ is that balm: '... the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin' (1 John 1:7); that is the real divine healing man needs

E. God's Judgement 57:20-21

1. The State of the Wicked – verse 20 – ‘But the wicked are like the tossing sea, For it cannot be quiet, And its waters toss up refuse and mud.’

a. though the ocean may have at times a quiet bay or area here or there, as a whole it is always churning, disturbed, restless, without peace

b. the wicked, then, is ‘as the sea cannot rest in its tossed and stormy state, casting out slime and mud, so the natural state of the wicked is disturbance, leading to the uninterrupted production of unclean and ungodly thoughts, words, and works’^{8}.

2. A Final Warning – verse 21 – ‘“There is no peace,” says my God, “for the wicked.”’ – and with this dire warning, this subsection of Isaiah ends

F. Conclusion

1. may you know this day the healing comfort and peace that is to be found in Jesus Christ, and delivered from that terrible disturbance of sin.

1. © 2012 by Garth Hutchinson, Faith Fellowship Baptist Church of Aurora (Ontario): may be distributed or quoted freely, only let this be done to the glory “of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

Except as noted otherwise, quotations are from the New American Standard version, used by permission. Various other English versions of the Holy Bible may be used in this sermon.

Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in (*braces*). Version identifiers are:

AV Authorized (King James) Version

ERV The Revised Version of 1885

NAS New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)

NIV New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society

NKJV New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers

Some of my favourite commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

BM – Biblical Museum, Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870

EBC – The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, © 1986 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 49530, Michigan

Volume 6, Isaiah, by Geoffrey W. Grogan, Principal, Bible Training Institute, Glasgow, Scotland;

EJY – The Book of Isaiah by Edward J. Young; © 1965; Wm. B. Eerdmans

K&D – Commentary on the Old Testament, by Keil & Delitzsch; Volume 7, Isaiah, by Franz Delitzsch

Kerux – The sermon & illustration data base compiled by Rev. David Holwick at the web-site, www.holwick.com.

2. 1 Kings 17:18ff

3. 2 Kings 4:32ff

4. Mark 5:35ff; John 11:17ff

5. Acts 9:36ff

6. Source: <http://www.historicalnovels.info/Death-Comes-as-the-End.html>

7. 1 Kings 8:27, 2 Chronicles 2:6, 6:18

8. Modified from K&D, *in loc*.