

Psalms 103:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

Analysis

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases. This verse begins the catalog of God's benefits with the two most fundamental human needs: forgiveness and healing. The Hebrew *hasoleiach* (הִסְלִיחַ, "who forgiveth") uses a participle indicating continuous, characteristic action—God is the forgiver by nature. *Avonayiki* (עֲוֹנוֹתֶיךָ, "your iniquities") refers to moral perversity, twisted rebellion against God's ways. The word "all" (*kol*) emphasizes complete forgiveness—no sin is too great, numerous, or shameful.

The parallel phrase "who healeth all thy diseases" uses *harofei* (הִרְפָּא, "who healeth"), again a continuous participle. *Tachaluayiki* (תַּחֲלִיאוּךָ, "your diseases") can refer to physical sickness but also spiritual/moral sickness. The parallelism suggests sin and disease are connected—not that every disease results from specific sins, but that both are consequences of living in a fallen world, and both require divine intervention.

The order is significant: forgiveness precedes healing. This reflects biblical priority—spiritual restoration is foundational to wholeness. Jesus demonstrated this in Mark 2:5-12, forgiving sins before healing paralysis. The comprehensiveness ("all") points toward complete redemption in Christ, who bore our sins and diseases (Isaiah 53:4-5, Matthew 8:17, 1 Peter 2:24), offering both spiritual and ultimate physical restoration through resurrection.

Historical Context

In ancient Israel, disease and sin were often viewed as interconnected (though not simplistically causative—see Job). The Levitical system addressed both through sacrifices for atonement and purification rituals for diseases. Priests served as both spiritual and health authorities, diagnosing skin diseases (Leviticus 13-14) and prescribing offerings for healing.

David himself experienced God's forgiveness after his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah (2 Samuel 11-12, Psalm 51). He also knew physical consequences of sin—the death of his son. Yet he experienced God's restorative mercy through Solomon's birth and his kingdom's continuation. His testimony of forgiveness wasn't academic but deeply personal.

The ancient Near Eastern gods were often viewed as sources of disease or required magical incantations for healing. In contrast, Yahweh is presented as the healer (Exodus 15:26, "I am the LORD who heals you") who forgives freely based on covenant relationship, not manipulation. This would have been revolutionary—a God who deals comprehensively with both moral guilt and physical suffering, offering restoration rather than mere appeasement.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does understanding the comprehensive nature of God's forgiveness ("all" iniquities) affect my willingness to confess specific sins?
2. In what ways have I experienced the connection between spiritual health and physical/emotional well-being?
3. Why is the order significant—forgiveness before healing—in my own journey toward wholeness?

4. How does Jesus' work on the cross provide both spiritual forgiveness and the promise of ultimate physical healing in resurrection?
5. What diseases (physical, emotional, relational) do I need to bring to God the healer in faith?

Interlinear Text

הַסֵּלֵךְ	לְכָל	עֲוֹנֵי כִי	הֶרַפֵּי אֶ	לְכָל	תַּחֲלִיאוֹתַי:
Who forgiveth	H3605	all thine iniquities	who healeth	H3605	all thy diseases
H5545		H5771	H7495		H8463

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 15:26 (Parallel theme): And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee.

Isaiah 53:5 (Parallel theme): But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Psalms 30:2 (Parallel theme): O LORD my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.

Jeremiah 17:14 (Parallel theme): Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise.

Psalms 147:3 (Parallel theme): He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.

James 5:15 (Parallel theme): And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

Isaiah 43:25 (Parallel theme): I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

Mark 2:5 (Parallel theme): When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

Psalms 130:8 (Parallel theme): And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

Numbers 12:13 (Parallel theme): And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee.

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