

## YAHWEH RAPHA- THE LORD WHO HEALS

During the last few days, when waking from sleep, my mind has been drawn to a study our Tuesday morning group discussed a few weeks ago. In our desire for a deeper relationship with God we have been searching the ways God revealed Himself in Scripture through various names and descriptions. As we have been inundated with accounts of the ravages of disease globally there is consolation in knowing that our God, who speaks to us through suffering, is a God who heals.

We read the account of this revelation in Exodus 15: 22-27. At Marah, just seventy-hours after the parting of the Red Sea, the Israelites, forgetting God's goodness and deliverance from Egyptian slavery, grumbled at Moses and refused to believe that God could provide water to drink. Moses cried out to the LORD and obeyed his instruction to throw a tree into the bitter waters which immediately became sweet as God healed them.

The Hebrew word "RAPHA" translated healing here has many different meanings. Sometimes it is translated as "mend" as in mending by stitching a torn garment. On other occasions it conveys the idea of repairing or building back a broken object. Our LORD who heals is One who can restore torn and broken lives and make them whole again. He heals not only our physical but also our spiritual and emotional sicknesses. God does not change. He always was and will be the covenant Lord who enables us to live full and complete lives in physical, mental, emotional and spiritual harmony.

**Psalm 34:18 The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those crushed in spirit.** All depression, despair, hopelessness, sadness and fear melt away in the loving arms of our heavenly Father and our wonderful Lord, our healer, repairer and restorer.

Today we live in a broken world which the Lord seems to be drawing together in our global fight against the corona virus. This is the world which our Creator Elohim loved so much that He sent His only begotten Son to heal and redeem us through His finished work on the cross. Just as the bitter waters of Marah were sweetened by the tree so our Lord was nailed to a tree to take away the bitter waters of sin and restore to new life all those who come to Him.

As we look around us, we are constrained to pray for God's healing touch on our suffering world. How people need to know God loves them! Perhaps now is the time in our isolation that God is calling us to intercede for others. I was confirmed of this as I read today's devotion in 'My Daily Journey With Christ'. Based on **Ephesians 6:18 "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people."** and **1 Timothy 2:1 "I urge , then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people."** Charles Price encourages us to pray. I quote him: "We have confidence to appeal to God and approach Him with freedom because of what Christ has done. Out of a position of union with Christ, we can approach boldly and freely on behalf of the world. Our intercession calls us to appeal to God on behalf of our culture, leaders, authorities, people and other nations around us. As we lift up our petitions, prayers and intercession, it is always accompanied with thanksgiving. ....As we grow in our prayer and devotion to God, we will learn that the language of faith is not "please" but "thank you."