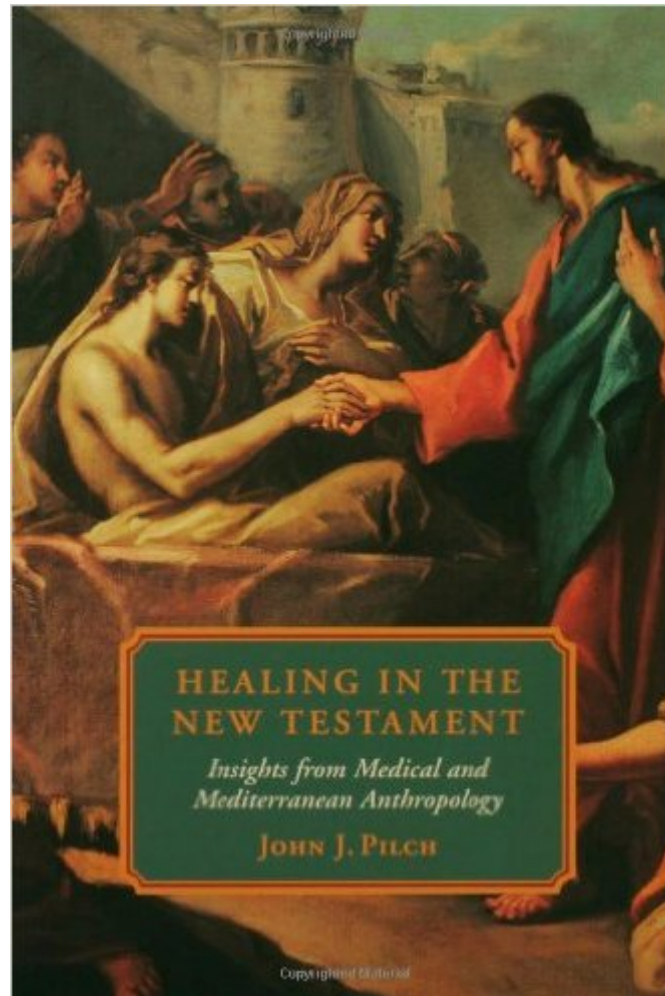


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Healing In The New Testament



Synopsis

How are we to read and understand stories of Jesus healing the lame, deaf, blind, and those with a variety of other maladies? Pilch takes us beyond the historical and literary questions to examine the social questions of how the earliest followers of Jesus and ancient Judeans understood healing, what roles healers played, and the different emphases on healing among the gospels. In his comparative analysis, the author draws on the anthropology of the Mediterranean as well as the models employed by medical anthropologists to understand peasant societies and their health-care systems. Utilizes social-science models Features a complementary web-site with additional resources

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

To Pilch and other who march with him in the little known but highly influential "Context Group", anthropology provides a set of incredibly powerful (and almost infallible) tools for simply and easily "unlocking" the mysteries of the New Testament world. The result is an overly confident series of textbook like simplifications and rules: "all illnesses are always and infallibly healed, since all human beings ultimately find some meaning in a life-situation, including disvalued states," Pilch proclaims (p. 93) If that kind of argument impresses you, then you've found your book. But actual anthropology is an empirical, not a deductive science, and Pilch seems to have missed that point altogether. Most of the theory here derives from the ground-breaking work of Arthur Kleinman (who is both an M.D. and a trained anthropologist) who began studying how different kinds of healers in Taiwan went

about their crafts, how they interacted with patients, and what the results were. Kleinman's work (Patients and Healers in the Contexts of Culture) is enormously insightful, and is worth reading in its original form. But Pilch seems to fail to understand that Dr. Kleinman actually went into the field to study these healers first hand, and to attempt to measure the efficacy of a variety of non-western healing techniques. In describing his own work, Kleinman at one point (unfortunately) says, that there is a "dichotomy" between medical curing (according to Western standards--measurable change in structure/function) and the more holistic intent of non-Western "healing." (This is an oversimplification).

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