



Government Healthcare Takeover: The Wrong Prescription for America Daniel 1:3-17



I am going to take on a hot topic: The government takeover of healthcare. You might say, “Pastor isn’t ‘Healthcare’ a political issue?” My answer is yes, it is a political issue, but it has ethical and moral dimensions that compel me to share how biblical truth applies and how committed Christians should engage it. In 1750, Patriot Pastor Jonathan Mayhew quoted 2 Timothy 3:16: **“All Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”** Then he asked: “Why then should not those parts of Scripture which relate to civil government be examined and explained from the desk?” Or as we would say: “From the pulpit?” Good question. So turn with me to Daniel 1:3-17 as we talk about the proposed government takeover of healthcare, which I believe is “The Wrong Prescription for America.” Would you please stand in honor of the reading of God’s word? Read Daniel 1:3-17. Pray.

Here in Daniel chapter one, we find that when the nation of Judah was invaded and taken over by the Babylonians, young Daniel was taken captive. He was chosen to be a part of a select group of young men for comprehensive training and preparation to serve King Nebuchadnezzar. And we find in this passage how the Babylonian government “healthcare plan” mandated a diet that was contrary to Daniel’s religious convictions based on Scripture. And so Daniel was faced with a choice: violate his conscience or face the consequences. Well Daniel respectfully objected to the government ordered healthcare plan, risking his life, but he won the argument.

In America today, the President and Congress are devising plans for a government takeover of the health care system in this nation that will place Bible believing Christians into a similar situation as Daniel faced in his day. Now most all of us are concerned about healthcare, and if you aren’t now, you will be at some point soon in your life. So this is a big deal. Obviously, we want all Americans to be treated fairly and with compassion when it comes to healthcare. Are there problems with the current state of healthcare? Yes. Are there people who need coverage who cannot get coverage? Certainly. Does government have a role to play? No question.

However, the plans for reforming the healthcare system being rammed through Congress may create more problems than they solve, and the public is beginning to notice. All I have to say is two words to illustrate: “Town Hall.” In these town hall meetings, there is a level of passion being brought to this debate that I have not seen in years. And I don’t know about you, but it seems like the President and most of Congress are on one side and the majority of the American people are on the other. There seems to be precious little agreement regarding the proposed solutions to our national healthcare needs.

Chuck Colson, respected evangelical leader and founder of Prison Fellowship, had this to say recently about Health Care Reform:

Most Americans agree that we need healthcare reform. Adequate health care costs too much, and too many people – especially the working poor and unemployed – don't have access to the care they need. But in the frantic rush to pass health-care reform... Congress has cooked up a health-care reform package that should give every Christian grave concern.¹

As Bible-believing Christians, we should have grave concerns about current healthcare legislation making its way through Congress. In fact, I am going to give you three reasons that the proposed government takeover of our health care system is the wrong prescription for America, and then offer some practical action steps as to how we can engage the debate and impact the outcome. But before I give you those, let's just lay down some basic biblical principles that will help frame the subject today.

I. BASIC PRINCIPLES

A. God Cares About Our Laws and Public Policies: The prophet Isaiah sounded an alarm to God's people when he declared, **“Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees...”** (Isaiah 10:1). God cares about the kinds of laws and policies we enact as a nation. If those policies are unjust and oppressive, then we are headed for His judgment. In fact, according to the prophet Ezekiel, God uses laws and policies as His instruments of judgment when His people refuse to obey Him: **“Because they had not obeyed my laws but had rejected my decrees and desecrated my Sabbaths, and their eyes lusted after their fathers' idols. I also gave them over to statutes that were not good and laws they could not live by.”** (Ezekiel 20:24-25).

So to have a moral healthcare plan, there can be:

1. No taxpayer money will be used to pay for abortions.
2. No federal mandate requiring health plans to cover abortions.
3. No removal of conscience protection clauses for health care providers who refuse to participate in abortions.
4. No state laws governing abortion will be changed.
5. No government bureaucrat will be involved in end of life decisions.
6. No rationing of healthcare.

B. God Cares About Our Health: The Word of God has much to teach us regarding health. The English Standard Version of the Bible contains the words “heal, healed, healing, heals, health and healthy” a total of 169 times.

1. God wants us to live healthy lives so that we can serve Him effectively. **“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body”** (1 Cor. 6:19-20). We are encouraged to take care of our physical bodies so that we can maximize our service to the Lord. That involves making good choices regarding our health. But now the preacher has stopped preaching, and gone to meddling, so I will move on.

2. God warns us that sin destroys our health. “Because of your wrath there is no health in my body; my bones have no soundness because of my sin” (Psalm 38:3). We can rightly say from the Bible that sin is the greatest destroyer of human health and happiness. Think about all the sinful lifestyle choices people make and their consequences. No healthcare system will ever stop the health-destroying consequences of sin. We could see the healthcare needs of Americans dramatically reduced if we would fear God and turn from sin. Obedience to God is one health care prescription God says will work.

II. BAD PROPOSALS

We’ve laid down some basic principles. Now let’s focus on these bad proposals being rammed through Congress and talk about why the proposed government takeover of our health care system is the wrong prescription for America. Let me give you three critical reasons, and I will list them in the reverse order of their importance for Bible-believing Christians:

A. First, these Current Proposals Are Financially Irresponsible: *USA Today* recently ran the headlines regarding the proposed government takeover of healthcare, “Soaring deficit may defy forecasts.” The story opened with these sobering words: “Stagnant unemployment, shrinking tax revenue and a struggling economy threaten to quadruple the size of last year’s federal budget deficit, raising more questions about the timing of costly proposals to overhaul health care.”

The same report included these shocking statistics:

1. “The economy is set to shrink by 2.6% this year, more than twice what the White House predicted in February and May.”
2. Tax revenue is down by \$353 billion in just 10 months, the amount expected for the entire year.
3. “Unemployment, projected at 8.1% this year by the White House, was 9.4% in July.”
4. “Spending for jobless benefits, Medicaid and Medicare has soared as people have lost work and health insurance. Jobless benefits are costing more than twice what was spent last year.”
5. Deficits of \$1.8 trillion this year and \$1.3 trillion in 2010, as predicted by the White House, would add to the federal deficit. The current \$11.7 trillion debt already equals about \$38,500 for every U.S. resident.”²

Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH), a member of the Senate Budget Committee, has warned that having a deficit at “previously unthinkable levels...shows an incredible lack of fiscal responsibility.”³ The Congressional Budget Office says one of the current health care plans would increase the deficit by \$239 billion over 10 years.⁴ The Apostle Paul exhorts: **"Let no debt remain outstanding, except the debt to love one another..."** (Rom. 13:8). The first part of that verse literally means: “Don’t continue in debt.”

Continuing in debt and even increasing our debt with no plan to pay for it other than to punishing tax payers with higher rates or simply passing it on to our children is patently irresponsible and unwise. Thomas Jefferson wrote James Madison “that neither the representatives of a nation, nor the whole nation itself assembled, can validly engage debts beyond what they may pay in their own time.”⁵ Here’s the question: Can we really afford more deficit spending when we are already drowning in debt? To saddle our children and their children with more debt is wrong!

B. Second, these Proposals are Ethically Objectionable. Ethics in this sense describes the rules or standards governing the conduct of a person or the members of a profession. *Medical ethics* is a concern in two important areas: 1) rationing and 2) conscience protections for health care providers

1. Rationing of Health Care: A recent *Wall Street Journal* editorial on health care warned that the elderly are right to worry when the government rations medical care. It said, “...once health care is nationalized, or mostly nationalized, rationing care is inevitable, and those who have lived the longest will find their care the most restricted.”⁶ Family Research Council has produced proof that rationing is in the healthcare reform plans.⁷

Rationing of healthcare is ethically objectionable because it unjustly favors one over another and degrades human dignity. God clearly prohibits partiality or favoritism regarding any decisions made by public officials: **“And I charged your judges at that time: Hear the disputes between your brothers and judge fairly...Do not show partiality in judging...”** (Deuteronomy 1:16-17) If government takes over health care, the chronically sick, elderly, and poor will be treated unjustly because they will be denied the care they need.

In fact, you can count on this inevitable scenario: the government will need to reduce costs in order to cover a greater number of people and the result will be reductions in health care coverage and services. Don’t think so? Just ask our neighbors to the north in Canada, study the situation in Great Britain, etc. We literally have people coming to America to get treatments and surgeries that they cannot get in their own countries because of healthcare rationing under their own government controlled plans. Do we want to do that to Americans?

2. Conscience Protections for Health Care Workers: Conscience protections for health care workers means they may not be forced to participate in abortion procedures. Unfortunately, current versions of the healthcare bill have insufficient conscience protections for health care providers. In fact, the Obama administration is working to remove any existing conscience protections instituted under the Bush administration. What will be the impact upon the vast number of health care providers who object to killing the unborn under the new government plan? Many may feel compelled to leave their vocations rather than participate in such inhuman, compassionless acts. Healthcare service in America will certainly suffer if conscience protections are removed or are incomplete. The specter of abortion brings up the third reason...

C. Third, these Proposals are Morally Unacceptable. The other reasons that these plans are bad are important, but for me the most important is the fact that these plans are morally unacceptable. Why are they morally unacceptable? Because of their lack of respect for human life. Until explicit exclusions are passed by Congress, their plans currently permit abortion and hint at euthanasia.

1. Health Care policy must never include provisions for Euthanasia. Euthanasia is defined as the act or practice of ending the life of an individual suffering from a terminal illness or incurable condition. The initial health care proposal in the House of Representatives bill (HR 3200) included a so-called “end-of-life” counseling provision. Compassion and Choices, formerly known as the Hemlock Society, is the organization behind the language in Section 1233. They also played major roles in getting assisted suicide passed in Washington and Oregon states, and it was in Oregon that sick individuals were sent letters telling them basically “we won’t pay for your treatment, but we’d be happy to pay for your suicide.”⁸

So the health care bill language was written by a group that thinks counseling a patient to terminate his or her life is perfectly legitimate doctor’s advice? According to one co-author of the bill, the legislation allows doctors to refer patients to legal service organizations. In the states that offer physician-assisted suicide, doctors would be allowed to refer individuals and their families to doctors or organizations willing to provide this “service.” This so-called “end-of-life” counseling, which some are referring to as “death panels,” will be paid for by our tax dollars. Despite earlier attempts to correct this, the new bill (H.R. 3962) that passed contains no protections to ban federal promotion of assisted suicide (Section 240) or rationing. The Senate plan needs to address this problem. As it stands, these healthcare bills are morally unacceptable and must be resisted by all Christians.

2. Health Care policy must never include any provisions for Abortion or Abortion Providers. The new House 1,900 page bill (H.R. 3962), which replaced the earlier bill (HR 3200 and *only* 1,000 pages), guaranteed direct federal funding of elective abortion in the “public option” and subsidizes health plans that cover elective abortion. This is despite all of the votes in both the House and the Senate when an effort was made to specifically and explicitly exclude abortion and abortion providers and every time these efforts were defeated,⁹ until the Stupak, Pitts, et al Amendment passed. But leaders concede that when the Senate is finished passing their version, that abortion funding will be added back into the healthcare plan in conference committee.

The *Washington Examiner* reported: “Health care legislation before Congress would allow a new government-sponsored insurance plan to cover abortions, a decision that would affect millions of women and recast federal policy on the divisive issue.” So don’t let your Congressman or Senators sidestep this one. Abortion and abortion providers are covered in these plans.

God’s word is abundantly clear about the sanctity of human life. The Psalmist wrote: **For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I**

praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be” (Psalm 139:13-16 NIV).

These verses tell us that God forms that child in a mother's womb, and that child is the subject and object of God's love and concern. Look at the pronouns. This is not an "it," a "thing" that can be removed like a tumor and destroyed. This is a person made in the image of God. And the Bible doesn't distinguish between prenatal and postnatal life. Listen to Jeremiah 1:5. Jeremiah was a prophet and God told him: **"Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, before you were born I set you apart** (KJV - consecrated)." You don't consecrate a gall bladder to become a prophet, you consecrate a person.

In Luke's Gospel, we read that Mary, who was pregnant with Jesus, went to visit her relative Elizabeth, who was pregnant with John the Baptist. Listen to v 41: **"When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit."** I mean, you never heard an expectant mother say: "A fetus leaped inside me or a product of conception kicked me." No.

In fact, the Greek word *brephos* is used when it says that the baby leaped in her womb. That word can mean: "an unborn child, embryo, fetus, a new born child, an infant, a babe." It is the same term that is used to describe Jesus, the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger (Luke 2:12, 16). In other words, there is no distinction made in the Greek NT between an unborn baby and a new born child. No distinction. And Greek is an expressive and precise language—there are 4 words that are used to describe love! But when it comes to describing an unborn child or a newborn child—there is only one term used. An unborn child is therefore not an "it," an unborn child is a person.

But this is why all that matters for the here and now. Those who believe that women should have a right to kill and remove that unborn child by abortion are in charge of our government. And they are plotting to takeover the healthcare system so that they can include abortion in the coverage and make you pay for it.

What happens in an abortion? Some abortion doctors inject the womb with a saline solution that burns the baby alive. Other abortion doctors use a vacuum device that dismembers and sucks the unborn baby out of the womb. Others use forceps, which the baby fights to avoid, according to the sonograms. They rip off the limbs, crush the baby's head, pull the baby out of the womb, and throw the baby in the trash! Thank God Partial Birth Abortion has been stopped, but the other methods are no less inhumane and grisly. I mean, we would expect that in the death camps of Auschwitz, not the health clinics of America. And yet there will be even more abortions committed if our elected leaders vote for the current healthcare reform plans.

Hear me: Every Christian should oppose any healthcare plan that includes the killing of innocent, unborn children. We should oppose any plan that paves the way for these so called “death panels” for the elderly and the ill. The culture of death must be resisted at every point without compromise!

Again, here is a sampling of what the government’s takeover of the healthcare will do:

- Force every American, within five years, into a government supervised health plan that includes abortion coverage.
- Compel taxpayers to fund a huge abortion-industry bailout – something 71% of Americans oppose.
- Require some medical providers to violate their consciences and perform abortions – or risk losing their jobs.
- Insert government bureaucrats between caring doctors and needy patients and their families when it comes to making decisions about treatment.
- Result in the rationing of care, as we have seen in other nations with government run healthcare.
- Offer domestic partner benefits to homosexuals.
- Add more debt.

III. BATTLE PLANS

Well we have talked about some basic principles, and some bad proposals, but now it is time to talk battle plans. Because the current health care legislation is financially irresponsible, ethically objectionable, and morally unacceptable, I urge you to oppose it through prayer and personal action. Specifically, what can we, as God’s people, do about it? Here are some battle plans, five practical action steps you can take to make a difference in this intense, national debate:

1. Pray for national awareness: We need God’s help if we hope to make a difference. Fall on your knees and pray to Almighty God that He will change the hearts of these Congressmen and Senators regarding the financial, ethical, and moral problems with these healthcare proposals (Prov. 21:1). Pray that He would awaken the church in America and call us to action. Pray that He would have mercy on a nation whose leaders are bent on destroying human life and using our money to do it.

2. Spread the word to your friends: Visit www.FRC.org for helpful resources. Keep up with what is happening in our government by signing up for the Washington Update. The daily Update only takes a few minutes to read, but it has clear, concise analysis of the threats to human life, traditional marriage, religious freedom and other issues that Bible-believing Americans should be concerned about. Pass it on to your friends and help them understand what is at stake.

3. Contact your elected officials: Since the fight is in the Senate, urge your Senators to vote to exclude any attempt to fund abortions or abortion providers and ask them to include conscience protections for healthcare providers. Call the U.S. Capitol

switchboard at (202) 224-3121, ask for your elected officials, and let them know how you feel. Or visit www.FRC.org and click on Contact Officials, and send them an email.

4. Express your opinion: Respectfully let your elected leaders know how you feel about taxpayer funded abortion in current healthcare plans. Let them know what Thomas Jefferson said, that "...to compel a man to furnish funds for the propagation of ideas he disbelieves and abhors, is sinful and tyrannical...." Some may want to write a letter to the editor of our newspaper. Others may want to post a Facebook comment, or blog, or Twitter comment, or whatever about healthcare. Some samples can be found at www.FRC.org. As Christians, we must let our voices be heard! In fact, Psalm 107:2 says: **"Let the redeemed of the Lord say so!"** And like Daniel, let's be winsome in winning the argument.

So we need to take an active part in this national debate if for no other reason than to provide a voice for the unborn. Prov. 24:11-12 says: **"Rescue those being led away to death, hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say: "We knew nothing about this." Does not He who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not He who guards your life know it? Will He not repay each person according to what he has done?"** We need to stand up and speak out and take action. Why? Because abortion is wrong! It is pre-meditated murder! It violates the 6th Commandment in Exodus 20:13! And I want you to know that God hates it. Proverbs 6:16-17--**"There are six things that the Lord hates, seven are an abomination to Him: a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood."**

Don't miss that. God hates the shedding of innocent blood! And His ears are filled with the cries of the innocent being slain in this nation, and friend there will be a day of reckoning! But if we don't take action in opposing this healthcare takeover, with its inclusion of abortions and abortion providers, we are going to see even more innocent blood shed in America and judgment day for this nation will have come one step closer.

So for the sake of our children, our grandchildren, and future generations who will be saddled with the financial burden, and for sake of the medical professionals who will have their consciences violated or be forced to quit, and for the sake of the elderly and ill who will be denied care because of rationing, and for the sake of the innocent unborn children who will be murdered with our own tax dollars, I pray that you will fully engage this proposed government takeover of healthcare, which I believe is the wrong prescription for America.

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¹ <http://www.breakpoint.org/commentaries/12149-apply-heat>.

² http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2009-08-10-deficit_N.htm

³ Ibid.

⁴ <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0709/25104.html>.

⁵ Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 1789 as found in Lipscomb and Bergh, editors, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (Washington, D.C., 1903-04), 7:457.

⁶ <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203863204574344900152168372.html>.

⁷ See <http://downloads.frcaction.org/EF/EF09H01.pdf>.

⁸ <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,392962,00.html>.

⁹ See <http://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF09H12.pdf>.