

Deuteronomy 24:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Take heed in the plague of leprosy, that thou observe diligently, and do according to all that the priests the Levites shall teach you: as I commanded them, so ye shall observe to do.

Analysis

Take heed in the plague of leprosy, that thou observe diligently, and do according to all that the priests the Levites shall teach you: as I commanded them, so ye shall observe to do. Leprosy required careful response following priestly instruction. This skin disease (likely various conditions, not just modern Hansen's disease) made people ceremonially unclean, requiring quarantine and priestly diagnosis.

The command observe diligently demands attention to detail. Careless handling of contagious disease could spread infection throughout the community. Proper protocol protected public health while maintaining ceremonial purity.

Submission to priestly instruction - do according to all that the priests...shall teach you - places medical and ceremonial authority with Levites. They had expertise to diagnose skin conditions and authority to determine ritual status.

This anticipates later instructions to remember Miriam (verse 9), who suffered leprosy as judgment for rebellion. Disease and rebellion connection demonstrates that physical affliction sometimes manifests spiritual disorder.

Historical Context

Leviticus 13-14 details elaborate procedures for diagnosing and cleansing leprosy. These provisions combined public health measures (quarantine) with ceremonial purification (sacrifices), addressing both physical and ritual dimensions.

Priestly role as medical diagnosticians reflects ancient overlap between religious and medical authority, with priests serving as health officials.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What does the connection between disease and ceremonial uncleanness teach about physical and spiritual holiness?
2. How does submission to priestly medical authority protect both health and ritual purity?
3. Why is diligence in observing disease protocols important for community welfare?
4. What does the overlap between medical and religious authority reveal about holistic view of health?
5. How should the church address both physical and spiritual dimensions of suffering?

Interlinear Text

תְּשַׁמֵּר	וְ	בְּגַע	תְּשַׁמֵּר	וְ	הַצָּרָעָת	תְּשַׁמֵּר	וְ	מְאֹד	לְעָשׂוֹת:	כָּל
Take heed	in the plague	of leprosy	Take heed	diligently				and do		H3605
H8104	H5061	H6883	H8104	H3966				H6213		
אֲשֶׁר	וְ	אַתָּךְ	מִ	יְוָרֵךְ	וְ	הַכְּבָדָה	יְמִינָה	וְ	פָּלָיִם	
H834	shall teach	H3384				according to all that the priests			the Levites	H3881
						H3548				
רְאֵשֶׁת	וְ	צִוְתִּי	וְ	תְּשַׁמֵּר	וְ	לְעָשׂוֹת:				
H834	you as I commanded	H6680		Take heed		and do				
				H8104		H6213				

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 14:2 (Parallel theme): This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought unto the priest:

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