

Isaiah 38:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaister upon the boil, and he shall recover.

Analysis

The medical instruction "For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaister upon the boil" shows God uses natural means alongside supernatural promises. The fig poultice was a recognized medicinal treatment. This demonstrates that trusting God doesn't exclude using medical wisdom—divine healing can work through natural remedies. The placement of this verse after Hezekiah's psalm shows the means didn't diminish God's credit for healing. Faith and medicine aren't contradictory but complementary.

Historical Context

Fig poultices were known treatments for skin conditions and boils in the ancient world. Archaeological evidence confirms ancient Near Eastern medical practices.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does God's use of natural means teach about the relationship between faith and medicine?

2. What does this passage teach about false dichotomies between trusting God and using medical treatment?
3. How should we view the role of doctors and medicine in light of God's sovereignty over healing?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	יְשַׁעְיָהוּ הוּא	יֵשָׁא וְ	דָּב לָת	תֵּאֲנֵי יָם	וַיִּמָּח וְ
had said	For Isaiah	Let them take	a lump	of figs	and lay it for a plaister
H559	H3470	H5375	H1690	H8384	H4799
עַל	הַשֶּׁחַ יֵן	וַיִּחַי:			
H5921	upon the boil	and he shall recover			
	H7822	H2421			

Additional Cross-References

Mark 7:33 (Parallel theme): And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue;

John 9:6 (Parallel theme): When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,