

Isaiah 57:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners.

Analysis

The verse begins with divine knowledge: "I have seen his ways." God's omniscience penetrates all pretense—He fully knows the extent of sin and rebellion. Yet astonishingly, this leads not to final judgment but to grace: "and will heal him." The Hebrew *rapa* (heal) is comprehensive, encompassing physical, emotional, and spiritual restoration (Exodus 15:26, Psalm 103:3, Jeremiah 3:22). "I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners" promises divine guidance and consolation. The "mourners" (*avelim*) are those who repent and grieve over sin (Isaiah 61:2-3, Matthew 5:4). This is pure sovereign grace—God does the healing, leading, and comforting despite persistent rebellion. Reformed theology sees this as unconditional election and irresistible grace: God chooses to save not because of foreseen faith or repentance but despite foreseen rebellion. He Himself produces the repentance and faith necessary for salvation (Acts 5:31, 2 Timothy 2:25, Philippians 1:29).

Historical Context

This prophesies the restoration from Babylonian exile, when God graciously brought His people back despite their sins. However, the ultimate fulfillment is in Christ's ministry to heal spiritual brokenness (Luke 4:18, Matthew 11:28-30) and the new covenant's promise of heart transformation (Jeremiah 31:33, Ezekiel 36:26-27). The post-exilic community did return and rebuild, though they continued to need God's grace as they awaited Messiah.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does God's determination to heal despite our rebellion demonstrate His sovereign grace?
2. What does spiritual healing involve, and how is it accomplished through Christ?
3. Who are the 'mourners' that receive comfort, and how does godly sorrow lead to restoration?

Interlinear Text

נָחַם יְמִינָה אֲשֶׁר־יְמִינָה אֶת־אֶתְנָה וְאֶת־אֶתְנָה וְאֶת־אֶתְנָה
his ways I have seen and will heal him I will lead him also and restore comforts
H1870 H7200 H7495 H5148 H7999 H5150

לְאַבְלָתִים
unto him and to his mourners
H0 H57

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 33:6 (Parallel theme): Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth.

Revelation 7:17 (Parallel theme): For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Jeremiah 3:22 (Parallel theme): Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God.

Jeremiah 31:3 (Parallel theme): The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

Isaiah 30:26 (Parallel theme): Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.

Isaiah 49:10 (Parallel theme): They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.

Psalms 23:2 (Parallel theme): He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

Jeremiah 13:17 (Parallel theme): But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD'S flock is carried away captive.