

Job 13:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But ye are forgers of lies, ye are all physicians of no value.

Analysis

'But ye are forgers of lies, ye are all physicians of no value.' Job's accusation escalates. 'Forgers' (טֹפְלִי, tofeley) means plasterers or whitewashers—they cover truth with 'lies' (שָׁקֶר, shaqer—falsehood, deception). They're 'physicians of no value' (רֹפְאֵי אֵלִיל, rofey elil—healers of worthlessness). The medical metaphor is devastating: doctors who misdiagnose and prescribe wrong treatment harm rather than heal. Ezekiel 13:10 uses similar imagery for false prophets whitewashing rotten walls. The friends' orthodox theology applied wrongly becomes destructive. This warns against theological malpractice—using truth to wound. The Reformed emphasis on applying Scripture correctly warns against this danger.

Historical Context

Ancient physicians had limited diagnostic tools and often prescribed useless or harmful treatments. Job's metaphor would resonate as a scathing indictment of the friends' harmful counsel disguised as wisdom.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How can we avoid becoming 'physicians of no value' who misdiagnose spiritual conditions?
2. What is the difference between speaking truth and wielding truth as a weapon?

Interlinear Text

ב	אֶתְּ	טִפְּלִי	שֶׁ	רִפְּאִי	אֶל־ל
But	H859	ye are forgers	of lies	ye are all physicians	of no value
H199		H2950	H8267	H7495	H457

כְּלִכְמִי:

H3605

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 119:69 (Parallel theme): The proud have forged a lie against me: but I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart.

Jeremiah 8:22 (Parallel theme): Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

Jeremiah 6:14 (Parallel theme): They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.

Job 16:2 (Parallel theme): I have heard many such things: miserable comforters are ye all.

Jeremiah 23:32 (Parallel theme): Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 46:11 (Parallel theme): Go up into Gilead, and take balm, O virgin, the daughter of Egypt: in vain shalt thou use many medicines; for thou shalt not be cured.

Jeremiah 30:13 (Parallel theme): There is none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up: thou hast no healing medicines.

Mark 2:17 (Parallel theme): When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Mark 5:26 (Parallel theme): And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,

Ezekiel 34:4 (Parallel theme): The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.