

John 11:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

Analysis

The disciples misunderstand Jesus' metaphor, taking 'sleep' literally. Their response reveals natural hope: if Lazarus sleeps, recovery is likely. The Greek 'sothesetai' (shall do well/recover) indicates physical healing. This misunderstanding serves pedagogical purpose, forcing Jesus to speak plainly. The disciples' literalism demonstrates humanity's tendency to interpret divine truth through naturalistic lenses, requiring spiritual illumination.

Historical Context

Ancient medicine recognized natural sleep as healing. The disciples' response reflects common medical understanding that fever-induced sleep often preceded recovery.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What spiritual truths do we miss by interpreting God's word too literally or naturally?

2. How does the disciples' misunderstanding demonstrate our need for the Spirit's illumination?
3. In what areas might we be misunderstanding Christ's teaching through naturalistic thinking?

Interlinear Text

εἰπον οὖν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ, Κύριε εἰ κεκοίμηται

said **Then** G3588 **disciples** **his** **Lord** **if** **he sleep**

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Then

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disciples

his

Lord

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he sleep

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σωθήσεται

he shall do well

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