

# John 11:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

## Analysis

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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

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

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

## Study Questions

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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

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εἶπον	οὖν	οἱ	μαθηταὶ	αὐτοῦ,	Κύριε	εἰ	κεκοίμηται
<b>said</b>	<b>Then</b>	<sup>G3588</sup>	<b>disciples</b>	<b>his</b>	<b>Lord</b>	<b>if</b>	<b>he sleep</b>
G2036	G3767		G3101	G846	G2962	G1487	G2837

σωθήσεται

**he shall do well**  
G4982

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