

Daniel 5:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation.

Analysis

Daniel's response to offered rewards demonstrates integrity: 'Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation.' Daniel refuses bribes that might compromise message delivery. He'll serve truth regardless of personal benefit. The phrase 'yet I will' shows he'll provide interpretation not for reward but out of prophetic obligation. This establishes his credibility—he has no vested interest in pleasing the king. Contrast with pagan wise men who depended on royal favor; Daniel's security rests in God, freeing him to speak truth without fear or flattery.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern court prophets and advisors often shaped messages to please rulers and secure rewards. Daniel's refusal of gifts before speaking demonstrates independence from royal manipulation. The offered rewards—purple robe, gold chain, third ruler position (v. 16)—represented significant wealth and power. Daniel's disinterest in these shows he values truth above advancement. This pattern appears throughout Scripture: true prophets refuse bribes and speak unpopular truth (cf. Micaiah, 1 Kings 22; Jeremiah's many confrontations with kings).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does refusing rewards before delivering a message demonstrate integrity and establish credibility for speaking hard truth?
2. What does Daniel's financial independence from royal favor teach about the freedom that comes from finding security in God rather than human approval?

Interlinear Text

לְתִהְיָה מִתְנִיחָה לְמֶלֶךְ אֶלְעָגָה בְּאַדְלֵה
Then answered Daniel and said before the king Let thy gifts H0
H116 H6032 H1841 H560 H6925 H4430 H4978

פְּתַבָּא בְּכָמָה לְאַחֲרֵךְ וְנַכְּזַבְּתָה רְלֹאָה
be thy rewards to another to thyself and give yet the writing H3792
H1934 H5023 H321 H3052 H1297

אַהֲזַדְעָנָה וְפִשְׁבָּא לְמֶלֶךְ אֶלְעָגָה
I will read the king to him the interpretation and make known H3046
H7123 H4430 H6591

Additional Cross-References

2 Kings 5:16 (Parallel theme): But he said, As the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it; but he refused.

Genesis 14:23 (Parallel theme): That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich:

