

Isaiah 36:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then said Eliakim and Shebna and Joah unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and speak not to us in the Jews' language, in the ears of the people that are on the wall.

Analysis

The officials' request to speak in "Syrian" (Aramaic) rather than "Jews' language" (Hebrew) shows concern for public morale. They recognize Rabshakeh's speech is aimed at the people on the wall, not just the negotiating team. Aramaic was the diplomatic lingua franca, understood by educated officials but not common people. The request reveals wisdom in protecting the vulnerable from demoralizing propaganda. However, Rabshakeh will deliberately reject this request to maximize psychological impact.

Historical Context

Aramaic was the international language of diplomacy and trade in the ancient Near East. Most common people in Judah spoke only Hebrew.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How do we protect the spiritually vulnerable from demoralizing influences?
2. What responsibility do leaders have to shield their people from destructive messaging?
3. When is it appropriate to limit exposure to enemy propaganda?

Interlinear Text

Then said	Eliakim	and Shebna	and Joah	H413	unto Rabshakeh	Speak
H559	H471	H7644	H3098		H7262	H1696
אָמַר	אֵלִיָּקִים	וְשֵׁבְנָה	וְיְהֹוָה	אֶל	בְּרַשְׁתָּךְ	רֹאשֵׁךְ
H4994	H413	H5650	H762		H3588	
אַתָּה	אָמַרְתָּ	עֲבָדֶךָ	יְהֹוָה	אֶל	בְּרַשְׁתָּךְ	רֹאשֵׁךְ
	I pray thee unto thy servants	in the Syrian language				
	H5650		H762			
for we understand		H587	H408	Speak	H413	
H8085				H1696		
אֶל	יְהֹוָה	תְּדַבֵּר	אֶל	אֶל	שְׁמַע	יְמִינְךָ
not to us in the Jews' language		H241		בְּאָזְנֵי		בְּאָזְנֵי
H3066						
עַל	אֲשֶׁר	רֹאשֵׁךְ	בְּפָעַם			
the chōmāh:						
that are on the wall						
H2346						
וְיְהֹוָה	יְהֹוָה					
in the ears						
of the people						
H834						
H5921						

Additional Cross-References

Ezra 4:7 (Parallel theme): And in the days of Artaxerxes wrote Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their companions, unto Artaxerxes king of Persia; and the writing of the letter was written in the Syrian tongue, and interpreted in the Syrian tongue.

Daniel 2:4 (Parallel theme): Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org