

Jeremiah 1:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.

Analysis

God's reassurance 'Be not afraid of their faces' addresses the prophet's real concern—not lack of eloquence but fear of human opposition. The Hebrew phrase 'be not afraid' (al-tira, אַל-תִּירָא) is emphatic prohibition—a command, not suggestion. 'Their faces' (mippeneihem, מִפְּנֵיהֶם) refers to hostile expressions, threatening presence, or intimidating authority—the human opposition Jeremiah would face from kings, priests, princes, and people. The reason given for courage is foundational: 'for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.' The promise 'I am with thee' (itti anokhi, אֲנִי אֶתְךָ) echoes God's assurance to Moses (Exodus 3:12), Joshua (Joshua 1:5), and later to New Testament believers (Matthew 28:20). This divine presence isn't abstract comfort but active protection—'to deliver thee' (lehatsilekha, לְהַצִּילְךָ) promises rescue from danger. The phrase 'saith the LORD' (neum-YHWH, נְאֻם-יְהוָה) is the prophetic authentication formula—this isn't human optimism but divine oath. Jeremiah's subsequent ministry validated this promise: though he suffered persecution, imprisonment, and attempts on his life, he survived when many died, outlasting all his opponents and seeing prophecy fulfilled.

Historical Context

Jeremiah faced extraordinary opposition throughout his ministry—more than perhaps any other prophet. His own family plotted against him (Jeremiah 12:6), hometown attempted murder (Jeremiah 11:21), priests beat and imprisoned him (Jeremiah 20:1-2), false prophets opposed him publicly (Jeremiah 28), officials

threw him in a muddy cistern to die (Jeremiah 38:6), and the remnant ignored his counsel and dragged him to Egypt (Jeremiah 43). Yet he survived it all, protected by God's promise. Several times, officials or foreign powers specifically spared him (Babylonian command to treat him well, Jeremiah 39:11-12; Ebed-melech rescuing him, Jeremiah 38:7-13). This pattern of divine protection despite human hostility demonstrates God's faithfulness to His promise. The principle extends to all believers—God promises to never leave or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5) and to complete the work He begins (Philippians 1:6), though He doesn't promise absence of suffering (John 16:33).

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What 'faces'—human authorities, hostile groups, or intimidating circumstances—tempt you toward fear rather than faithful obedience to God's calling?
2. How does the promise of God's presence and deliverance enable courage to speak truth that provokes opposition rather than seeking approval?

Interlinear Text

אֵל	תִּירָא	מִפְנֵי	פָּנֵי	אֶתְכֶם	אֲנִי	לְהַצִּילָכֶם
H408	Be not afraid	of their faces	H3588	H854	H589	for I am with thee to deliver
	H3372	H6440				H5337
נֹאמַר	יְהוָה:					
thee saith	the LORD					
H5002	H3068					

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 1:5 (Parallel theme): There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Joshua 1:9 (References Lord): Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Isaiah 51:7 (Parallel theme): Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.

Deuteronomy 31:6 (References Lord): Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Acts 4:13 (Parallel theme): Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

Exodus 3:12 (Parallel theme): And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

Deuteronomy 31:8 (References Lord): And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.

Isaiah 43:2 (Parallel theme): When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

Acts 18:10 (Parallel theme): For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

Acts 26:17 (Parallel theme): Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

