

Jeremiah 26:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Jehoiakim the king sent men into Egypt, namely, Elnathan the son of Achbor, and certain men with him into Egypt.

Analysis

And Jehoiakim the king sent men into Egypt, namely, Elnathan the son of Achbor, and certain men with him into Egypt (וַיִּשְׁלַח הַמֶּלֶךְ יְהוֹאָקִים אַנְשִׁים מִצְרַיִם, vayyishlach hammelekh y'hoyaqim anashim mitsrayim)—the verb שָׁלַח (shalach, 'send') shows determined pursuit. Elnathan (אֶלְנָתָן, 'God has given') ironically serves ungodly purposes. He was influential official, possibly the same Elnathan mentioned in Jeremiah 36:12, 25 who tried unsuccessfully to prevent Jehoiakim from burning Jeremiah's scroll.

The extradition mission demonstrates Jehoiakim's paranoia and vindictiveness. He couldn't tolerate dissent even in exile, spending resources to hunt down a fled prophet. This reveals totalitarian impulse in corrupt leadership—not merely suppressing opposition but pursuing it across borders. The king's insecurity drives obsessive control. Herod later demonstrated similar paranoia, killing Bethlehem's infants to eliminate perceived threat (Matthew 2:16). Tyrants fear truth-tellers even at distance.

Historical Context

Extradition treaties existed between ancient Near Eastern kingdoms. Jehoiakim, installed by Egypt as vassal king (2 Kings 23:34), maintained Egyptian connections enabling this mission. Elnathan's willingness to participate shows how political and family loyalties override prophetic truth. The mission's success demonstrates Egypt's cooperation with Judean monarchy despite providing initial refuge.

2 Kings 22:14 (Parallel theme): So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her.

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