

Jeremiah 29:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

By the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, (whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent unto Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon) saying,

Analysis

By the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah—Jeremiah sent this explosive letter via diplomatic courier, not random messengers. Shaphan's family had protected Jeremiah (26:24) and championed Josiah's reforms; Hilkiah discovered the lost Torah scroll (2 Kings 22:8). These names signal credibility and covenant faithfulness.

Whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent unto Babylon—The irony is profound: Zedekiah's own ambassadors, sent to reassure Nebuchadnezzar of loyalty, unknowingly carry a letter telling exiles to settle permanently and pray for Babylon's welfare (vv. 5-7). The Hebrew שָׁלַח (shalach, sent) appears twice—Zedekiah sent envoys, but Jeremiah sent God's true word. One mission served political expediency; the other, divine purpose.

Historical Context

Zedekiah (597-586 BC) was Nebuchadnezzar's puppet king, constantly pressured to rebel by pro-Egyptian factions and false prophets. These diplomatic missions attempted to maintain the fragile vassal relationship. Shaphan and Hilkiah's sons served in Zedekiah's administration despite its compromises, showing godly men can serve flawed systems.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How can believers faithfully serve in secular or compromised institutions without endorsing their errors?
2. What does it mean that God's word travels through 'official channels' to subvert official lies?
3. Why does God choose credible messengers? How does character validate message?

Interlinear Text

בְּיָד	אֶלְעָשָׂה ה	בֶּן	שָׁפָן	וְגִמְרִיָּה	בֶּן	חִלְקִיָּה
By the hand	of Elasah	the son	of Shaphan	and Gemariah	the son	of Hilkiah
H3027	H501	H1121	H8227	H1587	H1121	H2518
אֶשְׁלַח	צִדְקִיָּה	מֶלֶךְ	יְהוּדָה	אֶל	נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר	
H834	sent	whom Zedekiah	king	of Judah	H413	to Nebuchadnezzar
	H7971	H6667	H4428	H3063		H5019
מֶלֶךְ	בָּבֶלְיָה	בָּבֶלְיָה	לֵאמֹר:			
king	of Babylon	of Babylon	saying			
H4428	H894	H894	H559			