

Jeremiah 38:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took Jeremiah the prophet unto him into the third entry that is in the house of the LORD: and the king said unto Jeremiah, I will ask thee a thing; hide nothing from me.

Analysis

Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took Jeremiah the prophet unto him into the third entry that is in the house of the LORD—After allowing his princes to murder Jeremiah in the cistern, then permitting Ebed-melech's rescue, the vacillating king now summons the prophet secretly to seek God's counsel. The 'third entry' (הַמָּבוֹא הַשְּׁלִישִׁי, hamavo hashelishi) was likely a private entrance to the temple where the king could consult Jeremiah away from the princes' eyes.

I will ask thee a thing; hide nothing from me (אֲנִי שֹׁאֵל אֹתְךָ דָּבָר אֶל־תִּכְחַד מִמֶּנִּי) (דָּבָר)—Zedekiah demands complete honesty from the prophet he just nearly killed. The verb kachad (כָּחַד) means to hide, conceal, or withhold. The irony is profound: the king who concealed his consultations with Jeremiah, who hid his knowledge that Jeremiah spoke truth, who politically concealed his convictions—this man demands transparency from the prophet.

This encounter reveals the tragedy of Zedekiah's reign. He recognized Jeremiah as God's spokesman, consulted him repeatedly, yet never fully obeyed. He wanted divine guidance without divine surrender. This pattern afflicts many: seeking God's counsel while maintaining control, wanting His wisdom without His lordship. Jesus exposed this hypocrisy: 'Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?' (Luke 6:46). Asking 'What should I do?' while predetermining the answer is not seeking counsel but seeking validation.

Historical Context

This consultation occurred during the final stages of the siege, probably around June 587 BC. The temple still stood but would be destroyed weeks later. Zedekiah's secret meeting in the temple recalls his grandfather Josiah's reform when the discovered law scroll sparked national repentance (2 Kings 22-23). But unlike Josiah, Zedekiah lacked the courage to act on truth. His private consultations with Jeremiah show he knew the right course—submit to Babylon, spare the city—but feared his own princes more than God. This meeting led to Jeremiah's final warning (38:17-23): surrender and live, resist and watch the city burn. Zedekiah chose resistance, leading to catastrophe. Within weeks, he attempted to flee, was captured, watched his sons executed, then was blinded and taken to Babylon in chains (39:4-7).

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What does Zedekiah's secret consultation reveal about wanting God's counsel without His lordship?
2. How do we sometimes seek divine guidance while predetermining what answer we'll accept?
3. What is the difference between genuinely asking 'What should I do?' versus seeking validation for what we've already decided?

Interlinear Text

וְשַׁלְּחַ	הַמֶּלֶךְ	צִדְקִיָּהוּ	וַיִּקַּח	אֶת	יֵרֵמְיָהוּ	הַנָּבִיא
sent	and the king	Then Zedekiah	and took	H853	Jeremiah	the prophet
H7971	H4428	H6667	H3947		H3414	H5030
אֶל	אֶל	מְבוֹא	הַשְּׁלִישִׁי	אֲשֶׁר	בֵּית	יְת
H413	H413	entry	unto him into the third	H834	that is in the house	
		H3996	H7992		H1004	
יְהוָה	וַיֹּאמֶר	הַמֶּלֶךְ	אֶל	יֵרֵמְיָהוּ	שֵׁאֵל	אֶתְּךָ
of the LORD	said	and the king	H413	Jeremiah	I will ask	H853
H3068	H559	H4428		H3414	H7592	
דְּבַר:	אֶל	תַּכְּחֵד	מִמֶּנִּי	דְּבַר:		
thee a thing	H408	hide	H4480	thee a thing		
H1697		H3582		H1697		

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 37:17 (Kingdom): Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took him out: and the king asked him secretly in his house, and said, Is there any word from the LORD? And Jeremiah said, There is: for, said he, thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon.

1 Kings 22:16 (Kingdom): And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the LORD?

Jeremiah 42:20 (References Lord): For ye dissembled in your hearts, when ye sent me unto the LORD your God, saying, Pray for us unto the LORD our God; and according unto all that the LORD our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will do it.