

Jeremiah 38:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But Jeremiah said, They shall not deliver thee. Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the LORD, which I speak unto thee: so it shall be well unto thee, and thy soul shall live.

Analysis

Jeremiah privately counsels Zedekiah to obey God's word for his own welfare and life. The condition is clear: obedience brings preservation, disobedience brings destruction. Zedekiah's problem wasn't lack of information but lack of faith to act on revealed truth. Many know God's will but fear consequences of obedience more than consequences of disobedience.

Historical Context

This is Jeremiah's final counsel to Zedekiah. The king's refusal to heed it sealed his fate - he was captured, witnessed his sons' execution, then was blinded and exiled.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What truths from God's word do you struggle to act on due to fear?
2. How does Zedekiah's fate warn against knowing God's will but failing to obey?

Interlinear Text

נֶאֱמַר	שָׁמַע	יִתְּנוּ	לֹא	יִרְמְיָהוּ	וַיֹּאמֶר
thee Obey	They shall not deliver	But Jeremiah	said		
H4994	H8085	H5414	H3808	H3414	H559
אֶל יְהוָה	דִּבֵּר	אֲנִי	לֵאמֹר	יְהוָה	בִּקֵּשׁ וְלֹא
which I speak	of the LORD	I beseech thee the voice			
H413	H1696	H589	H834	H3068	H6963
נַפְשְׁךָ:	וְתַחַי	לְךָ	וְיִטֵּב		
unto thee and thy soul	shall live	unto thee so it shall be well			
H5315	H2421	H0	H3190		

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 4:27 (Parallel theme): Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

Isaiah 55:3 (Parallel theme): Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

Jeremiah 26:13 (References Lord): Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.

2 Chronicles 20:20 (References Lord): And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.

Acts 26:29 (Parallel theme): And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.

