

# Jeremiah 38:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But if thou refuse to go forth, this is the word that the LORD hath shewed me:

## Analysis

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**But if thou refuse to go forth**—The Hebrew ma'en (מֹעֵן, "to refuse") indicates willful rejection, not mere hesitation. God's ultimatum left no middle ground. Zedekiah's "refusal" would be active rebellion against divine command, not passive indecision.

**This is the word that the LORD hath shewed me**—The verb ra'ah (רָאָה, "to see/show") in the Hiphil stem indicates divine revelation. What follows (v. 22-23) is prophetic vision, not Jeremiah's speculation. God granted Jeremiah foresight into the specific humiliation awaiting Zedekiah: his own palace women would taunt him using a proverbial saying about feet stuck in mud. This divine preview gave Zedekiah one final chance to avoid the prophesied shame by surrendering.

## Historical Context

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Prophetic visions often included specific, verifiable details that would authenticate the prophet when fulfilled. The reference to palace women being taken to Babylonian princes (v. 22) anticipates the harem's capture, a standard feature of ancient Near Eastern conquest that symbolized the king's total humiliation.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. What does God's detailed preview of consequences reveal about His desire for Zedekiah to choose rightly?
2. How does specific prophetic detail serve to authenticate God's word and remove excuses for disobedience?
3. Why might even clear divine revelation fail to change a heart set on rebellion?

## Interlinear Text

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וְאֵת | מִתְּנִיחַת | לֹא תֵּלֶךְ | הַזְבָּחַת | אֲשֶׁר |  
H518      But if thou refuse      H3986      H859      to go forth      H2088      this is the word      H834

הָרָא | בְּיַהֲוָה:  
H7200      hath shewed      that the LORD      H3068

## Additional Cross-References

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**Ezekiel 2:7** (Word): And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious.