

Jeremiah 38:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But if the princes hear that I have talked with thee, and they come unto thee, and say unto thee, Declare unto us now what thou hast said unto the king, hide it not from us, and we will not put thee to death; also what the king said unto thee:

Analysis

But if the princes hear that I have talked with thee—Zedekiah's fear of discovery dominates his thinking. These princes (particularly those who had thrown Jeremiah in the cistern, 38:4-6) opposed any surrender message. Zedekiah's elaborate contingency planning (vv. 25-26) shows he spent more energy managing political optics than considering whether to obey God.

Declare unto us now what thou hast said unto the king—The verb nagad (נָגַד, "to declare/tell") echoes verse 15 where Jeremiah feared declaring God's message to Zedekiah. Now the concern is declaring the meeting's content to the princes.

We will not put thee to death—This promise from the princes mirrors Zedekiah's oath (v. 16), but both are hollow: these officials had already tried to kill Jeremiah once (38:4-6), and Zedekiah lacked the courage to protect him if they tried again.

Historical Context

Court intrigue in ancient monarchies often centered on access to the king. Officials who learned of secret royal consultations would demand to know what counsel was given, fearing they were being excluded from decision-making or that the king

might act on advice contrary to their faction's interests. Zedekiah's fear of his own officials reveals his weak grip on power.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What does Zedekiah's elaborate cover-up plan reveal about where he had already decided not to obey God?
2. How does political maneuvering replace spiritual obedience in both ancient and modern religious leadership?
3. Why craft careful lies to protect a meeting with God's prophet unless you've already rejected the message?

Interlinear Text

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 38:27 (Kingdom): Then came all the princes unto Jeremiah, and asked him: and he told them according to all these words that the king had commanded. So they left off speaking with him; for the matter was not perceived.

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