

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

וְכִי H3588	יִשְׁמְעוּ H8085	הַשָּׂרִים H8269	כִּי H3588	דִּבֶּר H1696	אֶתְּךָ H854	וּבָאוּ H935			
	hear	But if the princes	said		with thee and they come				
אֵלַי H413	וְאָמְרוּ H559	אֵלַי H413	הַגִּידָה H5046	נָא H4994	לָנוּ H0	מֵה H4100	דִּבֶּר H1696	אֶל H413	
	unto thee and say	unto thee	Declare				said		
הַמֶּלֶךְ: H4428	אֶל H408	תִּכְחֹד H3582	מִמֶּנּוּ H4480	וְלֹא H3808					
also what the king		hide							
נְמִיתֶךָ H4191			וְיָמָה H4100		דִּבֶּר H1696	אֵלַי H413			
it not from us and we will not put thee to death					said				
הַמֶּלֶךְ: H4428									
also what the king									

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.