

# Jeremiah 40:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And said unto him, Dost thou certainly know that Baalis the king of the Ammonites hath sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to slay thee? But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam believed them not.

## Analysis

---

Johanan's direct accusation—'Dost thou certainly know that Baalis the king of the Ammonites hath sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to slay thee?'—demonstrates both the specificity of his intelligence and the gravity of the threat. The phrase 'dost thou certainly know' emphasizes that this wasn't vague rumor but definite information Johanan wanted Gedaliah to acknowledge. The conspiracy involved foreign instigation: 'Baalis the king of the Ammonites hath sent Ishmael,' indicating this wasn't merely internal Jewish political rivalry but international intrigue aimed at destabilizing Babylon's governance in Judah. Ammon's motivation likely combined resentment of Babylonian hegemony with opportunistic desire to prevent Judean recovery that might threaten Ammonite interests. Ishmael's willingness to be 'sent' by a foreign king to murder a Jewish governor shows how deeply political ambition and nationalism had corrupted covenant faithfulness. The phrase 'to slay thee' (literally 'to strike your soul/life,' *l'hakotekha nefesh*) indicates not political neutralization but outright murder. Gedaliah's subsequent refusal to believe this warning (verse 16) reveals tragic naiveté—assuming everyone shared his good intentions and commitment to community welfare. This passage warns against both paranoid suspicion of everyone and foolish credulity that trusts without discernment. Wisdom requires believing truth even when it's uncomfortable and implicates people we prefer to trust.

## Historical Context

---

Baalis king of Ammon ruled the territory directly east of Judah, centered around modern Amman, Jordan. Ammon had a long history of both alliance and conflict with Israel and Judah (see Judges 11, 1 Samuel 11, 2 Samuel 10). During Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of the region, Ammon initially submitted to Babylon (Jeremiah 27:3) but maintained independence and likely harbored ambitions to expand influence. A stable, recovering Judah under competent leadership threatened Ammonite interests by potentially becoming a significant Babylonian client state. Baalis likely calculated that assassinating Gedaliah would create chaos in Judah, reduce Babylonian influence in the region, and perhaps allow Ammon to absorb territory or refugees. Ishmael son of Nethaniah's motivation for accepting Ammonite sponsorship combined personal ambition with royal blood (verse 1 notes he was 'of the seed royal'), suggesting he saw himself as a legitimate alternative to Gedaliah's appointed governance. From Ishmael's perspective, Gedaliah was a collaborator who legitimized foreign domination, while he represented authentic Jewish nationalism and royal authority. This tragic misunderstanding of God's purposes—viewing submission to Babylon as betrayal rather than faithful acceptance of divine discipline—exemplifies how political theology can become disastrously distorted.

## Related Passages

---

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

---

1. How does foreign instigation of internal conflict illustrate Satan's strategy of using external pressure to create division among God's people?
2. What warning does this conspiracy provide about how nationalism and political ambition can corrupt covenant faithfulness?
3. In what ways should church leaders balance trust in people with wise discernment of genuine threats to community welfare?

## Interlinear Text

---

וַיֹּאמֶר ו	אֶל יו	יָדַע	יָדַע	כִּי	בַּעַל יִסוֹן	מֶלֶךְ
And said	H413	know	know	H3588	that Baalis	the king
H559		H3045	H3045		H1185	H4428
בֶּן	עַם וִן	שָׁלַח	אֶת	יִשְׁמָעֵאל	בֶּן	
of the Ammonites	H5983	hath sent	H853	Ishmael	of the Ammonites	
H1121		H7971		H3458	H1121	
נִתְּנָה ה	לְהַכְתֹּב	נָ פֶשׁ	וְלֹא	הֶאֱמַן יוֹן	לָהּ מ	גִּדְלָהּ הוּא
of Nathaniah	to slay	H5315	H3808	believed	H0	thee But Gedaliah
H5418	H5221			H539		H1436
בֶּן	אַחִיקָם:					
of the Ammonites	of Ahikam					
H1121	H296					

## Additional Cross-References

---

**Jeremiah 41:10** (Kingdom): Then Ishmael carried away captive all the residue of the people that were in Mizpah, even the king's daughters, and all the people that remained in Mizpah, whom Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard had committed to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam: and Ishmael the son of Nethaniah carried them away captive, and departed to go over to the Ammonites.

**Jeremiah 25:21** (Parallel theme): Edom, and Moab, and the children of Ammon,