

Jeremiah 42:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For ye dissembled in your hearts, when ye sent me unto the LORD your God, saying, Pray for us unto the LORD our God; and according unto all that the LORD our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will do it.

Analysis

For ye dissembled in your hearts (כִּי הִתְעַתְתֶּם בְּנַפְשׁוֹתֵיכֶם)—the Hebrew hit'etem means 'you deceived yourselves,' from the root ta'ah (תָּעָה), to wander or err. Not merely lying to Jeremiah but self-deception—they believed their own false piety. **When ye sent me unto the LORD your God**—note the distance: 'your God,' not 'our God,' subtly distancing themselves from covenant accountability while using religious language.

Pray for us unto the LORD our God; and according unto all that the LORD our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will do it—quoting their earlier vow (v. 5-6) highlights the duplicity. They swore absolute obedience, even calling down covenant curses: 'The LORD be a true and faithful witness' (v. 5). Yet they had already decided to flee to Egypt (43:2-3), making their inquiry theatrical—seeking prophetic endorsement, not divine guidance. Their sin wasn't disobeying after honest inquiry but dishonest inquiry masking predetermined rebellion.

Historical Context

This confrontation occurred after Jerusalem's fall (586 BC) and Gedaliah's assassination (41:1-3), when the remnant feared Babylonian retaliation. They approached Jeremiah seeking God's will (42:1-3), waited ten days for His answer

(42:7), but rejected it when it contradicted their plan to flee to Egypt. This represents covenant community's final rebellion before Jeremiah's forced exile to Egypt.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. When have you sought God's will while already knowing what you wanted, making prayer a formality rather than genuine submission?
2. What's the difference between changing your mind after honest prayer and self-deception that pretends to seek God's guidance?
3. How does using religious language ('pray for us,' 'we will obey') mask rather than express genuine faith commitment?

Interlinear Text

כִּי הִתְעַתְּם בְּנַפְשׁוֹתֵיכֶם כִּי אֵת מִשְׁלַחַת מִשְׁלַחַת
H3588 For ye dissembled H8582 in your hearts H3588 H859 when ye sent H853

אֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יֹאמַר לְהִתְפַּלֵּל
H413 and according unto all that the LORD H3068 our God H430 saying H559 Pray H6419

אֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר אֱלֹהֵינוּ
H1157 H413 and according unto all that the LORD H3068 our God H430 H3605 H834

יֹאמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ כִּי הִגַּד לְנוּ
H559 H3068 our God H430 H3651 H0 so declare H5046

וְעָשִׂינוּ:
unto us and we will do
H6213