

Jeremiah 42:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Jeremiah the prophet said unto them, I have heard you; behold, I will pray unto the LORD your God according to your words; and it shall come to pass, that whatsoever thing the LORD shall answer you, I will declare it unto you; I will keep nothing back from you.

Analysis

Jeremiah's response—"Then Jeremiah the prophet said unto them, I have heard you; behold, I will pray unto the LORD your God according to your words; and it shall come to pass, that whatsoever thing the LORD shall answer you, I will declare it unto you; I will keep nothing back from you"—demonstrates faithful prophetic ministry. The acknowledgment 'I have heard you' validates their request before establishing prophetic terms. His commitment to pray 'unto the LORD your God' notably uses 'your God' (matching their language from v.2) rather than 'my God,' subtly challenging their distancing language by throwing it back to them—God is their God whether they claim Him or not. The phrase 'according to your words' commits to seeking God's will on the matters they raised. Jeremiah's promise—"whatsoever thing the LORD shall answer you, I will declare it unto you"—establishes complete transparency: whatever God says, favorable or not, will be communicated. The emphatic conclusion 'I will keep nothing back from you' preemptively addresses any suspicion that Jeremiah might soften or alter God's message. This reflects authentic prophetic ministry: seeking God's word honestly, reporting it faithfully regardless of reception, holding nothing back despite potential cost. Jeremiah's integrity contrasts with false prophets who told people what they wanted to hear (Jeremiah 6:14, 8:11, 23:16-17).

Historical Context

Jeremiah's promise of complete transparency in communicating God's word stood in stark contrast to false prophetic practice. Throughout his 40+ year ministry, Jeremiah consistently delivered unwelcome messages that brought persecution, imprisonment, and attempts on his life (Jeremiah 20:1-2, 26:7-11, 37:11-38:6). His track record of speaking hard truths validated his credibility. The phrase 'I will keep nothing back' echoed prophetic commitment seen in figures like Samuel (1 Samuel 3:17-18), Nathan (2 Samuel 12:1-14), and Elijah (1 Kings 18:17-18, 21:17-24). Ancient Near Eastern court prophets often told rulers what they wanted to hear, making honest prophets like Micaiah (1 Kings 22:14-28) rare and often persecuted. Jeremiah's commitment to full disclosure regardless of consequences demonstrated covenant faithfulness. The ten-day waiting period (v.7) before God's answer came suggests either God testing the people's patience and sincerity or Jeremiah needing time to receive clear prophetic revelation. That the community waited ten days before receiving God's word contrasts with their immediate impulse to flee; genuine seeking of divine will requires patience, not hasty decision-making based on fear.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does Jeremiah's commitment to speak everything God reveals, regardless of palatability, model authentic ministry versus people-pleasing leadership?
2. What does the ten-day waiting period teach about patience in seeking God's will versus making hasty decisions based on circumstances?
3. In what ways are believers tempted to soften or selectively communicate God's word to avoid offense or rejection?

Interlinear Text

הָנָן	וְ	שְׁמָעָתִי	נָבִיא	יְרָמִיָּהוּ	אֶלְיָהוּ	מִתְּאַמֵּר	אָמַר	לִי	אֶתְּרָם	אֶתְּרָם	אֶתְּרָם
said	H413	Then Jeremiah	the prophet	unto them	I have heard				H2005		
H559		H3414	H5030		H8085						
you behold	I will pray	H413	the LORD	your God	according to your words	דָּבָר	דָּבָר	דָּבָר	H1697		
H6419		H3068	H430								
H1961	H3605	according to your words	H1697	H834	shall answer	the LORD	אֶתְּכֶם	יְהִי הָ	H853		
				H6030		H3068					
you I will declare	H0	H3808	back	H4480	according to your words	דָּבָר	דָּבָר	דָּבָר	H1697		
H5046		H4513		H4480							

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 40:10 (Parallel theme): I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.

Exodus 8:29 (References Lord): And Moses said, Behold, I go out from thee, and I will intreat the LORD that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, to morrow: but let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD.

1 Samuel 12:23 (Prayer): Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way:

Acts 20:20 (Parallel theme): And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house,

Jeremiah 23:28 (Word): The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD.

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