

Jeremiah 38:1-28 **Jeremiah imprisoned – Zedekiah's Question – Jeremiah's Response – Jeremiah remained in Prison**

Jeremiah in the Dungeon

1 Now Shephatiah the son of Mattan, Gedaliah the son of Pashhur, Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur the son of Malchiah heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken to all the people, saying,

2 "Thus says the Lord: 'He who remains in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence; but he who goes over to the Chaldeans shall live; his life shall be as a prize to him, and he shall live.'

3 Thus says the Lord: 'This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it.'

4 Therefore the princes said to the king, "Please, let this man be put to death, for thus he weakens the hands of the men of war who remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, by speaking such words to them. For this man does not seek the welfare of this people, but their harm."

5 Then Zedekiah the king said, "Look, he is in your hand. For the king can do nothing against you."

6 So they took Jeremiah and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the king's son, which was in the court of the prison, and they let Jeremiah down with ropes. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire. So Jeremiah sank in the mire.

7 Now Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs, who was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon. When the king was sitting at the Gate of Benjamin,

8 Ebed-Melech went out of the king's house and spoke to the king, saying:

9 "My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon, and he is likely to die from hunger in the place where he is. For there is no more bread in the city."

10 Then the king commanded Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, saying, "Take from here thirty men with you, and lift Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon before he dies."

11 So Ebed-Melech took the men with him and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took from there old clothes and old rags, and let them down by ropes into the dungeon to Jeremiah.

12 Then Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian said to Jeremiah, "Please put these old clothes and rags under your armpits, under the ropes." And Jeremiah did so.

13 So they pulled Jeremiah up with ropes and lifted him out of the dungeon. And Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

Zedekiah's Fears and Jeremiah's Advice

14 Then Zedekiah the king sent and had Jeremiah the prophet brought to him at the third entrance of the house of the Lord. And the king said to Jeremiah, "I will ask you something. Hide nothing from me."

15 Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "If I declare it to you, will you not surely put me to death? And if I give you advice, you will not listen to me."

16 So Zedekiah the king swore secretly to Jeremiah, saying, "As the Lord lives, who made our very souls, I will not put you to death, nor will I give you into the hand of these men who seek your life."

17 Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "Thus says the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: 'If you surely surrender to the king of Babylon's princes, then your soul shall live; this city shall not be burned with fire, and you and your house shall live.

18 But if you do not surrender to the king of Babylon's princes, then this city shall be given into the hand of the Chaldeans; they shall burn it with fire, and you shall not escape from their hand.'"

19 And Zedekiah the king said to Jeremiah, "I am afraid of the Jews who have defected to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hand, and they abuse me."

20 But Jeremiah said, "They shall not deliver you. Please, obey the voice of the Lord which I speak to you. So it shall be well with you, and your soul shall live.

21 But if you refuse to surrender, this is the word that the Lord has shown me:

22 'Now behold, all the women who are left in the king of Judah's house shall be surrendered to the king of Babylon's princes, and those women shall say:

"Your close friends have set upon you And prevailed against you; Your feet have sunk in the mire, And they have turned away again."

23 'So they shall surrender all your wives and children to the Chaldeans. You shall not escape from their hand, but shall be taken by the hand of the king of Babylon. And you shall cause this city to be burned with fire.'"

24 Then Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, "Let no one know of these words, and you shall not die.

25 But if the princes hear that I have talked with you, and they come to you and say to you, 'Declare to us now what you have said to the king, and also what the king said to you; do not hide it from us, and we will not put you to death,'

26 then you shall say to them, 'I presented my request before the king, that he would not make me return to Jonathan's house to die there.'"

27 Then all the princes came to Jeremiah and asked him. And he told them according to all these words that the king had commanded. So they stopped speaking with him, for the conversation had not been heard.

28 Now Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison until the day that Jerusalem was taken. And he was there when Jerusalem was taken.

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Facts Revealed:

- ✧ Yahweh declared the destruction of Jerusalem is certain because the nation had defiled the land by their persistent sin even though they had been warned by the prophets sent to them calling for repentance so they could be forgiven and receive divine protection.
- ✧ Even after they saw the northern kingdom of Israel fall to the Assyrians because of their continual sins, Judah did not take warning but stubbornly followed the sins that had been the cause of the destruction of Israel.
- ✧ Now the time of grace has ended and Yahweh has brought Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon as His servant to punish the people of Judah for their persistent sins.
- ✧ With the Babylonians besieging the city Yahweh still offered them protection if they would repent but they refused to repent and continued their rebellion against the laws of Yahweh and rejected the warnings of the prophets.
- ✧ From the time the Babylonian army had come against Jerusalem, at the word of Yahweh, Jeremiah had been giving the people advise to go over to the Chaldeans so they may live,

because those who remained in the city will be destroyed by sword, pestilence, and famine and the city would be destroyed and burned with fire.

- ✧ The captivity in Babylon will last seventy years so the people needed to go on with their lives in the land of the enemies so they might survive and return to the Promised Land.
- ✧ The princes viewed Jeremiah's advise as treasonous so they wanted to kill him.
- ✧ Zedekiah felt he could do nothing against them so they lowered Jeremiah into the mire at the bottom of the dungeon at the house of Jonathan the scribe. [Jeremiah 37:15, 38:5-6, 26]
- ✧ Ebed-Melech an Ethiopian eunuch went to king asking for Jeremiah to be taken out of the dungeon before he died.
- ✧ Zedekiah sent thirty men with Ebed-Melech and rescued Jeremiah from the dungeon and left him a prisoner in the court of the prison. [Jeremiah 38:7-13]

Zedekiah's Fears and Jeremiah's Advice [Jeremiah 38:14-28]

- ✧ Zedekiah sent and had Jeremiah brought to him to ask in secret if there was a word for him promising to protect Jeremiah from those who sought his life. [Jeremiah 38:14-16]
- ✧ Jeremiah's advise to Zedekiah was to surrender to the king of Babylon and live. To remain in the city would bring disaster on the people and destruction of the city. [Jeremiah 38:17-18]
- ✧ Zedekiah expressed his fear of abuse at the hand of the hands of those who were already in Babylonian captivity. [Jeremiah 38:19]
- ✧ Jeremiah assured Zedekiah that he would not be given into the hands of the Jews and advised him to surrender to the Babylonians. If Zedekiah does not surrender to the Babylonians, all the women in his house, his wives and children, will be given to the Babylonian princes and will taunt him with ridicule and Zedekiah will not escape, and the city will be burned with fire. [Jeremiah 38:20-23]
- ✧ Zedekiah then advised Jeremiah what to say if questioned about their meeting. [Jeremiah 38:24-26]
- ✧ The princes did ask and Jeremiah responded with the words Zedekiah had given him. [Jeremiah 38:28]
- ✧ Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison until the day the Babylonians took the city of Jerusalem. [Jeremiah 38:28]