

The Attempt on Jeremiah's Life (589 BC)

Jeremiah 38

The Demand for Jeremiah's Punishment

1 Now Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the son of Pashhur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur the son of Malchijah heard the words that Jeremiah was speaking to all the people, saying,

2 "Thus says the LORD, 'He who stays in this city will die by the sword and by famine and by pestilence, but he who goes out to the Chaldeans will live and have his *own* life as booty and stay alive.'

3 Thus says the LORD, 'This city will certainly be given into the hand of the army of the king of Babylon and he will capture it.'"

4 Then the officials said to the king, "Now let this man be put to death, inasmuch as he is discouraging the men of war who are left in this city and all the people, by speaking such words to them; for this man is not seeking the well-being of this people but rather their harm."

5 So King Zedekiah said, "Behold, he is in your hands; for the king can *do* nothing against you."

6 Then they took Jeremiah and cast him into the cistern *of* Malchijah the king's son, which was in the court of the guardhouse; and they let Jeremiah down with ropes. Now in the cistern there was no water but only mud, and Jeremiah sank into the mud.

Jeremiah's Rescue by Ebed-Melech

7 But Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, a eunuch, while he was in the king's palace, heard that they had put Jeremiah into the cistern. Now the king was sitting in the Gate of Benjamin;

8 and Ebed-melech went out from the king's palace and spoke to the king, saying,

9 "My lord the king, these men have acted wickedly in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet whom they have cast into the cistern; and he will die right where he is because of the famine, for there is no more bread in the city."

10 Then the king commanded Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, saying, "Take thirty men from here under your authority and bring up Jeremiah the prophet from the cistern before he dies."

11 So Ebed-melech took the men under his authority and went into the king's palace to *a place* beneath the storeroom and took from there worn-out clothes and worn-out rags and let them down by ropes into the cistern to Jeremiah.

12 Then Ebed-melech the Ethiopian said to Jeremiah, "Now put these worn-out clothes and rags under your armpits under the ropes"; and Jeremiah did so.

13 So they pulled Jeremiah up with the ropes and lifted him out of the cistern, and Jeremiah stayed in the court of the guardhouse.

A Second Secret Meeting With Zedekiah

14 Then King Zedekiah sent and had Jeremiah the prophet brought to him at the third entrance that is in the house of the LORD; and the king said to Jeremiah, "I am going to ask you something; do not hide anything from me."

15 Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "If I tell you, will you not certainly put me to death? Besides, if I give you advice, you will not listen to me."

16 But King Zedekiah swore to Jeremiah in secret saying, "As the LORD lives, who made this life for us, surely I will not put you to death nor will I give you over to the hand of these men who are seeking your life."

17 Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "Thus says the LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel, 'If you will indeed go out to the officers of the king of Babylon, then you will live, this city will not be burned with fire, and you and your household will survive.'

18 But if you will not go out to the officers of the king of Babylon, then this city will be given over to the hand of the Chaldeans; and they will burn it with fire, and you yourself will not escape from their hand.'"

19 Then King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, “I dread the Jews who have gone over to the Chaldeans, for they may give me over into their hand and they will abuse me.”

20 But Jeremiah said, “They will not give you over. Please obey the LORD in what I am saying to you, that it may go well with you and you may live.

21 But if you keep refusing to go out, this is the word which the LORD has shown me:

22 ‘Then behold, all of the women who have been left in the palace of the king of Judah are going to be brought out to the officers of the king of Babylon; and those women will say,

“Your close friends
Have misled and overpowered you;
While your feet were sunk in the mire,
They turned back.”

23 They will also bring out all your wives and your sons to the Chaldeans, and you yourself will not escape from their hand, but will be seized by the hand of the king of Babylon, and this city will be burned with fire.’”

24 Then Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, “Let no man know about these words and you will not die.

25 But if the officials hear that I have talked with you and come to you and say to you, ‘Tell us now what you said to the king and what the king said to you; do not hide *it* from us and we will not put you to death,’

26 then you are to say to them, ‘I was presenting my petition before the king, not to make me return to the house of Jonathan to die there.’”

Jeremiah is Questioned by the Officials

27 Then all the officials came to Jeremiah and questioned him. So he reported to them in accordance with all these words which the king had commanded; and they ceased speaking with him, since the conversation had not been overheard.

28 So Jeremiah stayed in the court of the guardhouse until the day that Jerusalem was captured.

God’s Message to Jeremiah’s Rescuer, Ebed-Melech (589 BC)

Jeremiah 39:15–18

15 Now the word of the LORD had come to Jeremiah while he was confined in the court of the guardhouse, saying,

16 “Go and speak to Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, “Behold, I am about to bring My words on this city for disaster and not for prosperity; and they will take place before you on that day.

17 But I will deliver you on that day,” declares the LORD, “and you will not be given into the hand of the men whom you dread.

18 For I will certainly rescue you, and you will not fall by the sword; but you will have your *own* life as booty, because you have trusted in Me,” declares the LORD.’”

Ezekiel’s Prophecy to the Exiles—God’s Message to Egypt (January 17, 588 BC)

Ezekiel 29:1–16

The Crocodile of the Nile

1 In the tenth year, in the tenth *month*, on the twelfth of the month, the word of the LORD came to me saying,

2 “Son of man, set your face against Pharaoh king of Egypt and prophesy against him and against all Egypt.

3 Speak and say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD,

- “Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt,
The great monster that lies in the midst of his rivers,
That has said, ‘My Nile is mine, and I myself have made *it*.’
- 4 “I will put hooks in your jaws
And make the fish of your rivers cling to your scales.
And I will bring you up out of the midst of your rivers,
And all the fish of your rivers will cling to your scales.
- 5 “I will abandon you to the wilderness, you and all the fish of your rivers;
You will fall on the open field; you will not be brought together or gathered.
I have given you for food to the beasts of the earth and to the birds of the sky.
- 6 “Then all the inhabitants of Egypt will know that I am the LORD,
Because they have been *only* a staff *made* of reed to the house of Israel.
- 7 “When they took hold of you with the hand,
You broke and tore all their hands;
And when they leaned on you,
You broke and made all their loins quake.”

Judgment on Egypt

- 8 ‘Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I will bring upon you a sword and I will cut off from you man and beast.
- 9 The land of Egypt will become a desolation and waste. Then they will know that I am the LORD. Because you said, ‘The Nile is mine, and I have made *it*,’
- 10 therefore, behold, I am against you and against your rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt an utter waste and desolation, from Migdol to Syene and even to the border of Ethiopia.
- 11 A man’s foot will not pass through it, and the foot of a beast will not pass through it, and it will not be inhabited for forty years.
- 12 So I will make the land of Egypt a desolation in the midst of desolated lands. And her cities, in the midst of cities that are laid waste, will be desolate forty years; and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them among the lands.”

Future Restoration for Egypt

- 13 ‘For thus says the Lord GOD, “At the end of forty years I will gather the Egyptians from the peoples among whom they were scattered.
- 14 I will turn the fortunes of Egypt and make them return to the land of Pathros, to the land of their origin, and there they will be a lowly kingdom.
- 15 It will be the lowest of the kingdoms, and it will never again lift itself up above the nations. And I will make them so small that they will not rule over the nations.
- 16 And it will never again be the confidence of the house of Israel, bringing to mind the iniquity of their having turned to Egypt. Then they will know that I am the Lord GOD.””