

Dear Heavenly Father,

### *Praise*

You told Ebed-melech, “I will fulfill my words against this city for harm and not for good...but I will deliver you on that day...I will surely save you, and you shall not fall by the sword” (Jer 39:16–18). Even in the midst of the devastation of Jerusalem, you remembered the man who helped your prophet, Jeremiah. I praise you as the faithful God—the God who rescues those who trust in you. Praise the LORD!

### *Today in Your Word*

Today you told me what happened to Jeremiah during the third and final siege of Jerusalem. The siege provoked a return to covenant obedience. Zedekiah, the officials and the people made a covenant together, and they freed all their Hebrew slaves (cf. Exod 21:1–4). Sadly, their obedience didn’t last long. When Nebuchadnezzar left Jerusalem to deal with the threat from Pharaoh Hophra’s army, the king and the people went back on their word and forced the slaves to return to service. This shows me that repentance which is born in the heat of the moment fades quickly once the pressure is gone. If I really desire your blessing, I will confess and forsake my sin instead of trying to win your favor with acts of obedience. While Nebuchadnezzar was gone, Jeremiah tried to leave Jerusalem on business. When he tried to pass through the Gate of Benjamin, Irijah, the captain of the guard, accused him of defecting to the Babylonians. Jeremiah protested his innocence, but they beat him and threw him into a dungeon. This teaches me that I can be in the center of your will, doing your work, and yet be falsely accused and persecuted. Such is the life of those who stand firm in the midst of an wicked and perverse generation. Eventually, Zedekiah rescued him, but he wouldn’t listen to Jeremiah’s warnings. He was interested in what you had to say (“Is there a word from the LORD?”), but he wasn’t willing to humble himself to do your will. Jeremiah didn’t allow the threat of death to keep him from speaking the truth (Jer 38:1–3), and it wasn’t long before he was thrown into an empty well to die from hunger and exposure. Ebed-Melech rescued Jeremiah, and he remained in the court of the guardhouse until Jerusalem was captured. Once Jeremiah was out of the well, Zedekiah wanted to speak to him again. Yet he still wouldn’t listen! He was more afraid of his officials and the Jews who had gone over to the Babylonians than he was of you. We show who we fear the most by whom we choose to obey (Matt 10:28).

### *Reflection*

Zedekiah wanted your help when things got bad, but he refused to confess and forsake his sin. Is my life characterized by daily obedience, or am I living for sin and self, and then running to you for help when trouble comes?

### *Request*

Father, I don’t want to be like Zedekiah. Give me a desire to heed your warnings and a heart that clings to you in love. May I always “fear the LORD and serve him faithfully” (1 Sam 12:24)!

### *Thanksgiving*

Thank you for your protection! Jeremiah knew how it felt to be rejected and despised, but he also knew how it felt to be lifted from the pit by your mighty hand. “The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms” (Deut 33:27). Hallelujah!

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

*Suggested Hymn: “[He Will Care for Me](#)” – Charles W. Naylor.*

*Meditation Verse: Jeremiah 38:17.*