

## Jeremiah 37,38

7-23-98

### • **Intro:**

- 1.1. **Quote:** Someone asked an ex-paratrooper how many jumps he had made. He responded by saying, "None! I was pushed out 18 times!"
  - 1.1.1. That story describes some Christians & their initiative or lack thereof.
  - 1.1.2. For Jeremiah, he needed no one to push him...He was a jumper!
- 1.2. Our story takes place in downtown Jerusalem between the summer of **588bc**(when Babylon temporarily slackened their grip on Jerusalem to deal w/Egypt) & July of **587bc** (when the city was sacked).
- 1.3. The events of chapters 37-39 are arranged chronologically. They trace Jeremiah's life and ministry during the final siege and fall of Jerusalem.

### CHAPTER 37

#### 1. **ZEDEKIAH'S VAIN HOPE! (1-10)**

- 1.1. **Vs.2** – Zedekiah probably had a motto that ran *"There's no problem so big or complicated that it can't be run away from!"* (& so he'd try)
- 1.2. **Vs.2,3** – Gutsy for Zed to ask for prayer again! In ch.21 he asked for prayer against his enemy Babylon & God responded with(5) *"I myself will fight against you..."!*
  - 1.2.1. He completely ignores God's word, YET wants Jeremiah to **pray** for him? (no obedience...no use in praying)
  - 1.2.2. He wants Intercession but not the Instruction!
  - 1.2.3. He wants God to be his servant, but wont become Gods Servant!
  - 1.2.4. Don't expect God to change His mind on moral issues.
  - 1.2.5. **Q:** Do you ask God for help only in emergencies, or do you seek His direction each day?
    - 1.2.5.1. An old proverb says, "When you come to the end of your rope, tie a **prayer knot** and hang on." Though we can do this, the far greater is not waiting to get to the bottom of the rope!

- 1.2.6. The **story** is told of a small town in which there were no liquor stores. Eventually, however, a nightclub was built right on Main Street. Members of one of the churches in the area were so disturbed that they conducted several all night prayer meetings, and asked the Lord to burn down that den of iniquity. Lightning struck the tavern a short time later, and it was completely destroyed by fire. The owner, knowing how the church people had prayed, sued them for the damages. His attorney claimed that their prayers had caused the loss. The congregation, on the other hand, hired a lawyer and fought the charges. After much deliberation the judge declared, **"It's the opinion of the court that wherever the guilt may lie, the tavern keeper is the one who really believes in prayer while the church members do not!"**
- 1.2.7. **Example:** Boy upstairs (just pray for me...for what...[unbiblical]...no)
- 1.3. **Vs.5 - Archaeological evidence** shows that an army did in fact at that time, come up from the Nile under Pharaoh Apries, as **Herodotus, the Greek historian** also mentions.
- 1.3.1. Its destination, however, was not Jerusalem. Apries was making an attack by land and sea against the Phoenician ports. Evidence on fragments of Egyptian monuments of Pharaoh's presence in Tyre and Sidon at that time have been found.
- 1.4. **Vs.10** – Clear & uncompromising!
- 1.4.1. Beyond a shadow of a doubt...God's word was coming true, it wasn't changing!
- 1.4.2. No politics, no military influence, nor threats of imprisonment, not even the king, would influence Jeremiah's view.
- 1.4.3. His words weren't open to argument.
- 1.5. **The true Christian is one who is right-side-up in an upside-down world.**
- 1.6. **God can stand with us only as we stand firm.**

## 2. **JEREMIAH'S IMPRISONMENT! (11-15)**

- 2.1. **Vs.13** – Can't blame this guard – after all, he had been urging everyone to “desert to the enemy” in a sense!
- 2.1.1. And, some had (38:19)
- 2.1.2. It is pretty natural then that he is following his own advice & defecting.

- 2.2. **Vs.14-15** – He tries zealously to deny the charges.
  - 2.2.1. He's then handed over to the state officials (flog him & imprison him).
  - 2.2.2. He doesn't go to the state prison yet(21).

### 3. **SECRET INTERVIEW#1 (16-21)**

- 3.1. **Vs.16** - They take him to the dungeon cells or the cistern house.
  - 3.1.1. Hewn limestone, narrow at top, opened into a bottle shape cavity, even called bottle prisons in some countries(castles in Scotland).
  - 3.1.2. In a prison like this they were either left to rot, to go mad, or to die a slow death.
- 3.2. **Vs.17** – “took him out” – saved from this fate...maybe now he would havebroken his spirit? Any word jeremiah? Yes, the **same** word (4 short Hebrew words)!
  - 3.2.1. Jeremiah wasn't going to bribe his way out of prison w/a new word(eg. something king Zed wanted to hear)!
- 3.3. Zed brought him **secretly** so as not to cross the princes.
- 3.4. **Vs.18,19** – He protests to the king about his injustice.
  - 3.4.1. He contrasts his plight w/those “other prophets”(false).
  - 3.4.2. According to Deut.18:20 they ought to be put to death, but they walk free, & he is imprisoned.
- 3.5. **Vs.20** – Serious pleading!
- 3.6. **Vs.21** – **Bakers Street** – At the state prison he was at least guaranteed bread & a certain degree of freedom.
  - 3.6.1. This is an interesting glimpse into the ancient world. People who followed the same craft or trade where in the same quarter of town.
  - 3.6.2. This is preserved today in our street names like “Baker Street” or “Petticoat Lane”.
  - 3.6.3. **Haiti** – “Lapadoo lane”(we call it)brown sugar paste/mix with coffee.
  - 3.6.4. **Israel** – Herbs & spices in the Arab Market.

## CHAPTER 38

### 1. **DUNGEON DUTY! (1-6)**

- 1.1. Here we go again.
- 1.2. **Vs.5 – Q:** This Reminds us of what leader in the N.T. (Pilate washing his hands).

### 2. **A FRIEND LOVES AT ALL TIMES! (7-13)**

- 2.1. **Ebed-Melech** – Philanthropist or God Lover?
  - 2.1.1. His name means “servant/slave of the king”
  - 2.1.2. **Read** background on this mans clan – [Lockyer pg.94 “All Men of Bible]
  - 2.1.3. **“Can a Ethiopian change his skin?” No, but he can change his heart!**
    - 2.1.3.1. Some translations, **“the Cushite”** most likely refers to the region of Nubia & northern Sudan. (This sounds like Wes’ friend in Sudan...Michael)
  - 2.1.4. Ebed seem to be one of those guys who love to make life a lil easier for you! Thoughtful, practical.
    - 2.1.4.1. **Example:** He even cared for Jeremiah’s armpits! He didn’t bring just a rope, but rags & old clothes to pad his pits! That’s love!
    - 2.1.4.2. He was superior to his surroundings! **Read** – Lockyer list.
      - 2.1.4.2.1. **See** 39:16-18
- 2.2. **Expect to be cared for by God!** – Jeremiah didn’t have an **easy** life, but God cared for him.
  - 2.2.1. We can only appreciate the miracle of a sunrise if we have waited in the darkness.
- 2.3. **Vs.10** – Took a small rescue party!
- 2.4. **Vs.13** – Mission accomplished!
  - 2.4.1. David couldn’t have described this better than in **Ps.40:2** “He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock, And established my steps.” And in **Ps. 18:16,35b** “He sent from above, He took me; He drew me out of many waters”... & “Your gentleness has made me great.”

### 3. **SECRET INTERVIEW #2 (14-28)**

- 3.1. Zedekiah most likely trying to change the mind of God rather than his own.
- 3.2. **Vs.17** – Mercy offered even in this late hour, still under the original terms yet still offered to those who'll surrender.
  - 3.2.1. (20)say **Yes** & be free; or (21-23)give a cowards **No** & be helpless, w/no kind Ebed-melech to haul you up from your pit(22b)!
  - 3.2.2. Next chapter will reveal the horror of his decision for he & his family.
- 3.3. *Let's look at he character of both men.*
- 3.4. **Zedekiah**
  - 3.4.1. Maybe James(1:8) was describing Zed when he said, “a doubleminded man was unstable in all his ways!”
  - 3.4.2. (14)Insecurity all through(3<sup>rd</sup> entrance, don't tell). A man riddled with fears. Never able to make his own firm decisions.
  - 3.4.3. (19)Still unwilling to surrender to Babylonians...why? Afraid of Jews! (they'll hold **him** responsible for drawing out the agony of their people.)
  - 3.4.4. (24)This whole interview is “off the record”...even threat of death.
  - 3.4.5. Zedekiah vacillated until Jerusalem burned!
- 3.5. **Jeremiah**
  - 3.5.1. He is on edge.
  - 3.5.2. (15) Before he speaks he wants reassured what he says won't be used against him.
    - 3.5.2.1. **2 Concerns:** [1] He doesn't sign his own death warrant  
[2] He doesn't want to be ignored again.
  - 3.5.3. (16)With safety guaranteed he speaks.

- 3.6. **Vs.28** – Strangely & providentially he survived, living on daily prison rations.
- 3.7. “Sometimes God judges a sinful nation by sending them weak leaders who are hesitant & vacillating & whose leadership(or lack of it) plunges the nation only deeper into trouble.” (www)
  - 3.7.1. **John F. Kennedy** said, “we, the people, are the boss, & we get the kind of political leadership, be it good or bad, that we demand & deserve.” {congrats Judah}