

A Study of JEREMIAH



Lesson Seven – Chapters 37-40

FALSE HOPE

Jeremiah 37:1-10

- In the days of the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem...
- King Zedekiah and the people rejected the word of God and yet requested Jeremiah to pray for them (v1-3)
 - God had already told them how to obtain salvation. They needed to do what He said and not beg for mercy while continuing their rebellion
- But they 'hedged their bet' by also appealing to Pharaoh for help (Ezek 17:15)
 - This was not a new problem (see 2Kings 18:20-21)
 - What had Egypt ever done to deserve such trust? Compare with what the Lord had already done for them
- The Egyptians came up against the Babylonians causing them to abandon the siege effort for about a year (v5)

FALSE HOPE

Jeremiah 37:1-10

- Some were inclined to a false hope that this meant that the Babylonian threat was gone forever (v9)
- But the Lord responded through Jeremiah, “For though you had defeated the whole army of the Chaldeans who fight against you, and there remained only wounded men among them, they would rise up, every man in his tent, and burn the city with fire” (v10)
 - God can work His purposes with much or little (e.g., Gideon’s 300 – Jud 7:1-7).
 - Any resistance to His will by rebellious men is futile

FALSE ARREST

Jeremiah 37:11-16



¹¹And it happened, when the army of the Chaldeans left the siege of Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh’s army,

¹²that Jeremiah went out of Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin to claim his property there among the people.

¹³And when he was in the Gate of Benjamin, a captain of the guard was there ... and he seized Jeremiah the prophet, saying, “You are defecting to the Chaldeans!”

¹⁴Then Jeremiah said, “It is false! I am not defecting to the Chaldeans.” But he did not listen to him. So Irijah seized Jeremiah and brought him to the princes.

¹⁵Therefore the princes were angry with Jeremiah, and they struck him and put him in prison...

¹⁶[So] Jeremiah entered the dungeon and the cells, and Jeremiah had remained there many days.”

A WORD FROM THE LORD

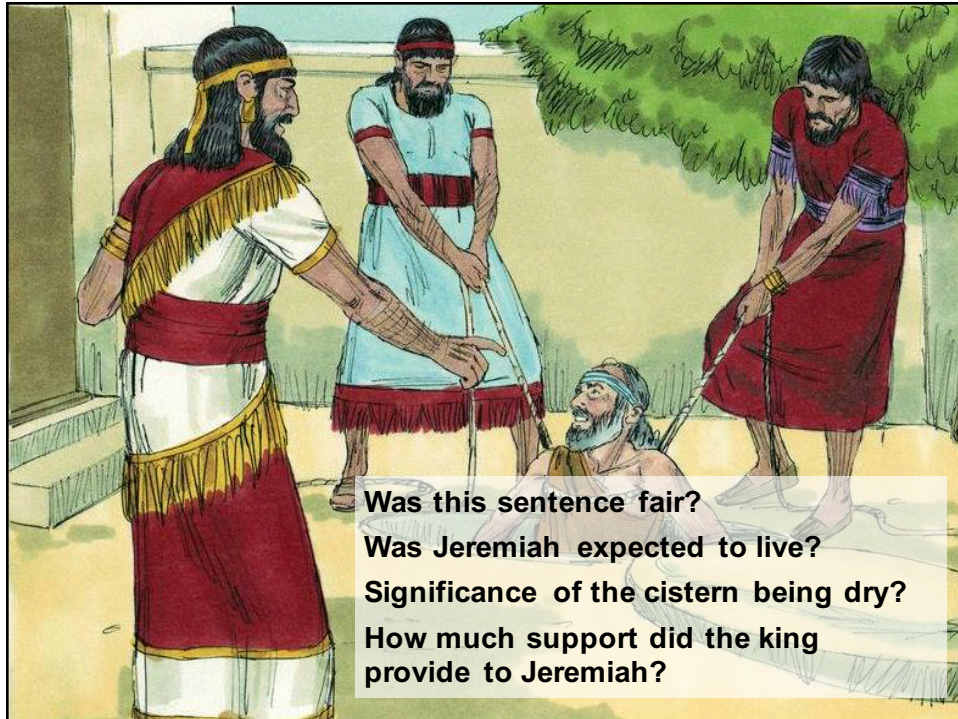
Jeremiah 37:17-21

- King Zedekiah was still looking for a word of encouragement from the Lord
- Called for Jeremiah again and asked “Is there any word from the Lord?” (v17)
 - Of course there was a word from the Lord! Commands that Zedekiah did not want to obey and prophecies that he rejected
 - He ‘asked’ like the rich young ruler did (Luke 18:18-23)
 - Do we ‘ask’ but really want God’s response only if it is agreeable to us?
- Surprisingly the king granted Jeremiah’s request for a prison change and also gave him food “until all bread in the city was gone” (v20-21, v9)

YET ANOTHER PRISON TRANSFER – TO A CISTERN

Jeremiah 38:1-6

- Apparently Jeremiah (like Paul) continued to prophesy from prison – with a message that enraged the leadership (v13)
 - Accused him of treason and hurting morale (v4)
 - “Let this man be put to death... for this man does not seek the welfare of this people, but their harm” (v4; John 11:48-50)
 - Evil people of every age have a similar assessment of those who preach the truth (e.g., 1Kings 18:17-18)
- “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” (v6; Psa 69:1-3)



Was this sentence fair?
 Was Jeremiah expected to live?
 Significance of the cistern being dry?
 How much support did the king provide to Jeremiah?

EBED-MELECH THE ETHIOPIAN

Jeremiah 38:7-13

Another example of godliness (like the Rachabites) in a godless city – and neither of them were Israelites (Matt 8:10)!

- Ebed-Melech was just a lowly servant but...
 - He knew the difference between right and wrong (v9)
 - And he was willing to speak up
 - In spite of great danger from the princes and others (Matt 10:28)
 - Because he put his trust in God (Jer 39:15-18)
 What, in practical terms, did 'trust in the Lord' mean in this case?
- As a result Jeremiah was rescued (v10-13)
- And Ebed-Melech was blessed by the Lord (Jer 39:16-18)

JEREMIAH'S THIRD MEETING WITH KING ZEDEKIAH

Jeremiah 38:14-28

- Zedekiah: 'What's going to happen? Don't hide the truth from me' (v14)
- Jeremiah: "If you surrender to Nebuchadnezzar, you live and the city will be saved, if not, you will be taken and the city burned (v17-23)
- Zedekiah: 'But I am afraid of the Jews who have defected to Babylon.' "They may abuse me" (v19)
 - Compare Zedekiah's 'trust in the Lord' to that of Ebed-Melech
- "Now Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison until the day that Jerusalem was taken. And he was there when Jerusalem was taken."

JUDGMENT TIME

Jeremiah 39:1-18

After 2-year
siege, city is
captured (v1-2)

The people
taken into exile
(v9)

Ebed-Melech is
rewarded
(v15-18)

King Zedekiah
is taken (v3-7)

Some poor
people left in
land (v10)

Jerusalem is
destroyed (v8)

Jeremiah is
released
(v11-14)

JEREMIAH RETURNS TO JUDAH

Jeremiah 40:1-6

- At Nebuchadnezzar's order, Jeremiah was rescued from prison and protected. For a while he dwelt in Judah with Gedaliah (39:14)
- At some point he was taken in chains to Ramah in Babylon (40:1)
- Note that at least some Babylonians knew why Judah fell (v2-3)
- Jeremiah was given his freedom and was given various options for his future (40:4-5; 15:20-21)
- He chose to go back and live with Gedaliah, the governor among the remnant in Judah (v6)

SERVE THE KING AND IT WILL BE WELL WITH YOU

Jeremiah 40:7-16

- When some Jewish soldiers and Jews who had escaped to other countries heard that the Babylonians left a remnant of the people in the land under the rule of Gedaliah, they returned to Jerusalem (v8, 11-12)
- Gedaliah told them, "Do not be afraid to serve the Chaldeans. Dwell in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you ... gather wine and summer fruit and oil, put them in your vessels, and dwell in your cities that you have taken" (v9-10).
- One who returned from Ammon was Ishmael. Gedaliah was warned that Ismael had been sent to kill him but he did not believe it (v13-16)