

Jeremiah Chapter 38

August 26, 2009 – Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

JEREMIAH GETS OUT OF PRISON

- I. **JEREMIAH'S REDUNDANT MESSAGE** 38:1-3
 - A. Jeremiah mentions Babylon 149 times in the 52 chapters of this book.
 - B. He has spoken to them often of the same warning, that Jerusalem and Judah will go into captivity to Babylon
 - C. Jeremiah mentions the Chaldeans 43 times in this book. This is also Babylon
 - D. That is 192 times that Jeremiah mentions either Babylon or the Chaldeans
 - E. They should get the message by now, but the people are determined to shun the message of Jeremiah.
 - F. The message is
 1. They who remain in the city of Jerusalem will die by sword, famine, or pestilence
 2. But they who go into Babylon will live as a prey to Babylon, 2
 3. The city of Jerusalem will be given to the king of Babylon

- II. **JEREMIAH'S REVENGED IMPRISONMENT** 31:4-6
 - A. The princes of Judah thought Jeremiah's message would weaken the morale of the army.
 - B. Out of revenge toward Jeremiah, the princes of Judah, with the king's permission, took Jeremiah prisoner with intention of putting him to death.
 - C. They put Jeremiah in the dungeon (cistern) down in the mire—no water, just mire (mud).
 - D. Jeremiah sunk into the mire.

- III. **JEREMIAH'S REASONED INTERCESSOR** 31:7-9
 - A. Ebed-melech literally means “servant of the king,” so this servant noticed what happened to Jeremiah,
 - B. He reasoned that the princes had done evil to Jeremiah.
 - C. Jeremiah was nearly starving in the court of the prison, because there was “no bread,” probably meaning little bread, in Jerusalem.
 - D. Now that Jeremiah is in the dungeon, he will not be provided food—he will be forgotten, and he will starve to death, 9

- IV. **ZEDEKIAH'S REQUESTED MESSAGE** 31:10-14
 - A. Ebed-melech took 30 men and raised Jeremiah out of the dungeon, 10-13
 - B. Then the king requested a message from Jeremiah, thinking perhaps that it may be different now that he has been in the dungeon, 14

- V. **JEREMIAH'S RENDERED ANSWER** 31:15-23
 - A. Zedekiah promised Jeremiah he would not put him to death, even if he gave the same answer as before, 15-16
 - B. Jeremiah renders the same answer as always, 17-18
 - C. Jeremiah begs Zedekiah to listen to his message so that he might live, 19-20
 - D. Jeremiah explains the fate of Zedekiah's family if he does obey God's message, 21

- E. The women will say that “thy friends have set thee on, and have prevailed against thee,” meaning the false prophets who preached peace when peace was not in God’s plan, 22
- F. The destruction of Jerusalem is here blamed on Zedekiah because of his sin and his refusal to hear the message of Jeremiah, 23

VI. ZEDEKIAH’S RICH BARGAIN 31:24-28

- A. Zedekiah bargained with Jeremiah and made a promise that he would not kill him if he told the truth, God’s message to Zedekiah.
- B. Now Zedekiah wants Jeremiah to promise that he will not tell anyone about the conversation between the two of them, 24
- C. Zedekiah gives an answer for Jeremiah to use when he faces those who would kill him, 25-26
- D. So Jeremiah stayed in the court of the prison until Jerusalem was taken by the Babylonians, 27-28

Lessons We Can Learn

1. God had a message for Judah, and God always has a message for his people.
2. God’s people have enemies, even among professors – to put God’s people to death. History bears this out.
3. There are always those who are our helpers – Ebed-melech – servants of the King.
4. God will judge everyone who does not listen to his message as he did Zedekiah.
5. Our sin affects our families as well as others.
6. Sometimes we need to be “wise as serpents, and harmless as doves” (Matt. 10:16), as Jeremiah and Zedekiah were in their rich bargain.
7. Some of God’s people will remain here when Jesus comes back to destroy this land at the rapture of the saints (1 Thess. 4:15-17), even as Jeremiah remained in Jerusalem until it was taken by the enemy.