



Jeremiah 37-38

Tape #7300
Jeremiah 37-38
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We enter into what is generally called part three of the book of Jeremiah. And it's going to give us a very short synopsis really, of the reign of Zedekiah and the whole section of the next three chapters belong to the reign of Zedekiah and they go from the beginning of his reign, to the captivity, to his being taken captive to Babylon. So in three chapters you're going to be covering the reign of Zedekiah, and the end really of the nation of Judah, you come to what is generally classified in the scriptures, as the time of the Gentiles. When Zedekiah was taken captive, and carried away to Babylon, and Judah ceased to exist as a nation. Then from a scriptural standpoint, what has been known and called the times of the Gentiles.

The times of the Gentiles are still existing. We are still living in what the scripture terms as the times of the Gentiles. Jesus makes reference to that and His prophecies concerning His coming in Luke twenty one. He said, "Jerusalem will be trodden under the foot of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." So, that's where you get the term "times of the Gentiles". It comes from Jesus, and it actually began with Zedekiah being taken captive to Babylon, which we will get in chapter thirty nine.

So, we are living in the times of the Gentiles, however it is my strong conviction, that the times of the Gentiles have just about been completed. I think that we're about ready again to see God's intervention, to see the kingdom of God established, and the glorious promises of the kingdom age, that we are just about at the end of the times of the Gentiles. So, as we get into chapter thirty seven, Jeremiah tells us

King Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim (37:1),

Now you remember that Jehoiakim was an evil man. He had an evil reign. Wickedness flourished under his reign. He would not pay any attention to Jeremiah, he listened to the false prophets, and as a result of his wickedness, God said that his seed would not reign upon the throne. When he was taken as a captive to Babylon, where he died his son Jechoniah was made king. He only reigned for three months. He was deposed but in that three months, he did so much evil that God said that, "There shall never be any of the seed of Jechoniah reigning on the throne forever." An interesting prophecy in as much as Joseph, the husband of Mary was a descendant of Jechoniah. As you read in Matthew's genealogy of Joseph, he goes back through Jechoniah. Which means that if Jesus were the son of Joseph, He would be disqualified from reigning over the throne of Israel. He could not fulfill the prophecies of the descendant of David upon the throne, because the curse, really, that God put upon Jechoniah. So Mary also a descendant of David, however not through Jechoniah, but through, not, actually through Solomon, but through another son of David; Nathan, still qualifies as a descendant or a branch out of David that shall reign.

So Zedekiah is reigning now. The seed of Jehoiakim is cut off, it moves over to his brother Zedekiah, and he now reigns on the throne in Judah. He was made a king by Nebuchadnezzar, and he was really a vassal king. However, encouraged by the princes and rulers in the land, he was sort of, just a figure head. They encouraged him to rebel against Babylon and encouraging them that they could conquer the Babylonians should they return.

Now we read concerning Zedekiah, just a brief...

But neither he, nor his servants, nor the people of the land, did hearken unto the words of Jehovah, which he spake by the prophet Jeremiah. [Zedekiah became the king but the people were not really listening to the Lord.] And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, Pray now unto the Lord our God for us (37:2).

So he is now, Zedekiah liked Jeremiah. He wouldn't, he was interested in what Jeremiah had to say, and here we find him asking Jeremiah to pray for them. Later on he will come to Jeremiah in this chapter and in the next chapter secretly, and ask Jeremiah what the Lord is saying. But though he is interested, asking for prayer, he isn't strong enough to obey what the Lord has to say. He's weak and he is influenced by the other leaders in the land, and fearful of them, he bends to their wishes rather than to the word of the Lord. So, he

asked Jeremiah to pray.

Now Jeremiah came in and he went out among the people: for they had not yet put him into prison (37:4).

So at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, Jeremiah had liberty. He wasn't yet in prison. He was able to move freely among the people.

Then Pharaoh's army had come forth out of Egypt: and when the Chaldeans that besieged Jerusalem heard the tidings of them, they departed from Jerusalem (37:5).

Now, during the reign of Jehoiakim, Jeremiah was prophesying to them, that the Babylonian army was going to come and besiege the city and take it. And he was telling the people that they would be better off to surrender, at least they would spare the city and spare their lives. If they sought to resist, the city would be destroyed, they would be killed. Now the false prophets were saying, "The Babylonians will not besiege the city, they will not build a mound against us, they are not going to come here." And the false prophets were giving the people the hope that the Babylonians wouldn't even show up. And they were prophesying, "There won't be a spear cast into the city, there won't be any siege." And Jeremiah was saying, "There will be a siege." So, there was this conflict between the false prophets and Jeremiah the true prophet of God. The people naturally listened to the false prophets, because they were saying the things the people wanted to hear.

So, now at this point, the Babylonians have come. The city of Jerusalem is under siege. However, the king had sent to the Egyptians and asked for help. So the Egyptians sent their army out and they were moving across that side, across the Negev, coming towards Palestine. So, the Babylonians heard the Egyptians were coming, so they left the siege of Jerusalem to go fight against the Egyptians. Now the false prophets were prophesying that the Egyptians were going to destroy the Babylonians. That was the end of it. Jeremiah's saying, "Look you listened to them once. They've already come! They've been here. They are going to defeat the Egyptians, and they are coming back! They're gonna finish the job. God has ordained that they should bring His judgement against this city." So the people were all rejoicing, "Oh the Babylonians are gone! You know, happy days are here again!" Rather than really seeking the Lord, it was just party time again. "The recession's over! Let's go back to it you know, and, let's party!"

The Chaldeans that were besieging Jerusalem, when they heard the tidings that the Egyptians were coming, they departed from Jerusalem.

And then came the word of the Lord unto the prophet Jeremiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel; Thus shall ye say to the king of Judah, that sent you unto me to inquire of me; Behold, Pharaoh's army, which is come forth to help you, shall return to Egypt into their own land. And the Chaldeans shall come again, and fight against this city, and take it, and burn it with fire (37:6-8).

"So this is the message Jeremiah that you're to give to the king. The king sent and he wanted to get my word, this is the word", "Those Chaldeans that have gone forth, the Egyptians are going to retreat and go back to Egypt, and the Chaldeans are gonna come back here and finish the job. They are gonna take this city and burn it with fire."

For thus saith the Lord; Don't be deceived saying, The Chaldeans have surely departed from us: for they have not departed. [Don't be deceived in thinking it's over. They haven't departed.] For though you had smitten the whole army, Even if you had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans that fight against you, and there only remain but a few wounded men among them, yet they would rise up every man in his tent, and burn this city with fire (37:9-10).

I mean, he said, "Even if you had wiped them out and there were only a few wounded fellows, you know, that were pierced through with spears and all, those fellows would rise up and burn the city down. I mean you're gonna burn baby! And there's no escaping you know! They're gonna do it. The city is to be burned with fire!"

As I've mentioned before, you go to Jerusalem today, you take the path from the area of the dung gate in the old city, and go down the path towards the spring of Gihon, along the hillside there called Ofal, which was known as the city of David. The walls of Jerusalem, at that time extended on down around the spring of Gihon, you will see a layer about six inches of ash or charcoal, from the fire in which Jerusalem was burned

by the Chaldeans, the prophecy has come to pass. You can see the mute evidence. That layer of charcoal, in the Strata there, of the fire when the Babylonians burned the city of Jerusalem. Just as Jeremiah had said it would be.

Now it came to pass, that when the army of the Chaldeans was broken up from Jerusalem because of the fear of Pharaoh's army, Then Jeremiah went forth out of Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin, to separate himself from the midst of the people (37:12).

Jeremiah was probably heading back towards his home town of Anathoth. The Babylonians, the siege was lifted and the people were able to move in and out of the city, and so Jeremiah, "Ah they're not listening to me, I might as well go home." So he, the gate of Benjamin was the north gate of the city of Jerusalem, also known as the gate of Ephraim. So as Jeremiah was preparing to leave the city,

And when he was in the gate of Benjamin, a captain of the ward was there, whose name was Irijah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah; and he took Jeremiah the prophet, and he said, You are the deserting to the Babylonians, [or the] Chaldeans. And Jeremiah said, That's not true; I'm not falling away to the Chaldeans (37:13-14).

So a big argument ensued but the captain wouldn't listen to Jeremiah. He arrested him and he brought him to the princes, the rulers of the land. The princes were angry with Jeremiah. Now the reason why they thought he was deserting is that Jeremiah was encouraging desertion. He was saying, "If you want to spare your life, go out and surrender to the Babylonians. If you stay here you're just gonna be slain." And he was encouraging the people to go out and surrender. So when he started to leave, they thought, "Oh, he's gonna go out and surrender to the Babylonians." Thus they arrested him.

So they brought him to the princes and they were angry with him, and they smote him, and they put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe: for they had made that the prison (37:15).

Now, most of the houses in Jerusalem had their own cisterns. Especially the houses in the wealthier homes. Their own water reservoirs. They had ingenious ways of entrapping the rain. It would be like digging, if your house was built on a, and Jerusalem is sort of rock, so they would dig out the basement. It would be this deep pool, which would be their water reservoir, and then in your yard, you'd channel the rainfall so that would dump into the basement of your house, and that was your water supply. These cisterns. You can today, find these cisterns throughout Jerusalem. A friend of ours who built a house in the old city there in Jerusalem, is sort of an amateur archeologist and he, in building his house, built it on pillars, so that his basement, he went ahead and did his archeological studies, and he found down there the cistern and he found many different interesting artifacts, there in what was the basement of his house. It's just endemic to the houses, to have these cisterns. Now they served many times then as sort of dungeons. And the house of Jonathan they made into a dungeon. The cistern into a dungeon for the prisoners. Jeremiah was in prison there in the dungeon, and into the cabins. Jeremiah remained there for many days. So, imprisoned there because of the accusation that he was defecting to the Babylonians.

Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took him out: and the king asked him secretly in his house, and said, Is there any word from the Lord? [Now, Zedekiah was weak. He secretly desired to hear what God had to say. It did not follow that he would obey what God had to say. But at least he wanted to know what God had to say, but he was afraid for the others to know that he was seeking the wisdom of God from Jeremiah. Because the others wanted to listen to the false prophets. They didn't like what Jeremiah was saying.] So Jeremiah said, There is: ["And uh, king you really don't want to hear it.] for, he said, You will be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon. Moreover Jeremiah said unto king Zedekiah, What have I offended ["What have I done? What have I offended] against you, or against your servants, or against these people, that you have put me in prison? ["You know, what really have I done?"] Where are now those prophets that said the Babylonians wouldn't come against this city? ["Where are they? You know. "I got into trouble saying the Babylonians would come. 'No, no they're not.' And where are they now?"] Those that prophesied saying the king of Babylon will not come against you or against this land? Therefore hear now, I pray you, O Lord the king: let my prayer, or let my supplication I pray thee, be accepted before thee; that you cause me not to return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there. ["Please don't send me back to that dungeon! I'll die there!"] So Zedekiah the king commanded that they should put Jeremiah in the prison that was in the

court of the king's palace, and that they should give him daily a piece of bread out of the bakers' street, and that continued until all of the bread in the city was spent. And thus Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison (37:17-21).

So, the city is, you see how this verse takes us through the siege. The Babylonians have come back, the people are now running short of bread. Jeremiah is in prison now in the king's court, and given his daily ration of bread. Maybe that's where you get the old bread and water kind of rations for the prisoners. But he was there until they ran out of bread. The siege was beginning to really take hold, and they've begun to run out of bread.

Chapter 38

So then Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the son of Pashur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashur the son of Malchiah, heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken unto all the people. [They heard that Jeremiah had said this. Jeremiah had said to the people] Thus saith Jehovah, He that remains in this city will die by the sword, or by the famine, or by the pestilence: [Whenever you get those kind of conditions, where the city is cut off, the sanitation is bad, the water gets bad. There's a shortage of food, the people are beginning to suffer malnutrition. It always follows that disease begins to become rampant. The body is not capable of warding off the diseases and all and so pestilence always sets in. And so, "The people who are remaining in the city will be killed by the sword, or by the famine, or by the ensuing pestilence."] But, Jeremiah said, He that goes forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live (38:1-2).

So the way of escaping death is surrendering. Going out and surrendering. Now, we do know and we'll get it in about verse nineteen or so, where a lot of the people had already defected. They had heard Jeremiah and they had defected to the Chaldeans.

And thus saith the Lord, This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, and he shall take it (38:3).

A very definite, very certain, this city's going to be delivered, it's going to be captured, Babylon's king is gonna take it.

Therefore the princes said unto the king, We beg you, let this man be put to death: [They wanted to get rid of Jeremiah. They thought that they could, I don't know, some people think that maybe they can escape the judgement of God by destroying the prophet of God. "Maybe we can...", You can't alter what God has determined, and Jeremiah is only a messenger of God. Yet the people are angry with God's message and they want to take it out on the messenger. But really it's an anger with God. It's a rebellion in the heart of man against God. "Therefore, the princes said, we beg you, put him to death"], for he is demoralizing the people, he is weakening the hands of the men of war that are remaining in the city, in the hands of the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man is not seeking the welfare of the people, but their hurt (38:4).

So they're accusing him of treason. He's demoralizing the army. He's demoralizing the people and they are being weakened by the things that he is saying.

So they took Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Zedekiah. The king said, Behold, he's in your hands, for the king is not he that can do anything against you (38:5).

He admitted his weakness in the powerful rulers. "Who am I, you know, I can't fight you guys. Do what you want." Again, the weakness of Zedekiah.

So they took Jeremiah, and they cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that was in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon and there was no water there, but only mire [or mud]: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire (38:6).

Can you imagine? Here you are, serving God, doing your best to be a true servant and a prophet of God. And surely God would take care of you wouldn't he? I mean after all, you're serving the Lord, you're saying these things in the name of the Lord. "Lord why would you allow me to be in this muck down here in the bottom. Sinking in the mire in the bottom of a dungeon?"

Somehow, we have a false kind of a concept that if we are true in our service to God, everything is just

gonna come up roses. There will be no problems at all. Thus they endured, it says, as seeing the invisible. They saw what others didn't see. The glorious eternal kingdom of God, and that's where they had placed their value. So, Jeremiah is sinking in the mire there in the dungeon.

Now when Ebedmelech [Ebed is servant, Melech is king. So, the name literally means, "the servant of the king.] he was an Ethiopian, and he was one of the eunuchs which was in the king's house, and when he had heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon; as the king was sitting there in the gate of Benjamin; Ebedmelech came from the king's house, and he spoke to him, and he said, My Lord the king, thee men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon; and he is going to die there for hunger where he is: for there is no more bread in the city (38:7-9).

The siege is taking hold, they don't have any bread left. Jeremiah there in the dungeon will surely die.

So the king commanded Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, saying, Take thirty men with you, and take Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon, before he dies (38:10).

So, he commissioned Ebedmelech to go and rescue Jeremiah from this cruel thing.

So he took the men with him, and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and he took out the old torn clothes and the old rotten rags, and he let them down by ropes into the dungeon to Jeremiah. And he said to Jeremiah, Put these old torn clothes and these rotten rags under your arms and under the cords. So Jeremiah did so (38:12).

Now they were going to have to pull him out of this muck in the bottom of the dungeon, and pull him up with ropes, and it was probably quite deep. So, they said put the rags under your arms, and the ropes under those, so that we can lift you out and the ropes won't be cutting your arms as you're being pulled up. So it'd make sort of a cushion for the ropes as they were under his arms. So here they're pulling old Jeremiah up out of this dungeon. Can you get the picture, you know? Prophet of God and here he is getting pulled out of this dungeon, mud dripping off his feet and all as he's coming up.

So they drew up Jeremiah with the cords, and took him up out of the dungeon: and he was put back in the court of the prison. Then Zedekiah the king sent, and he took Jeremiah the prophet unto him into the thirty that is in the house of the Lord: [Now, the first entry was the public entry into the temple area. Where the public would enter into the house of the Lord. There was a second entry for the priests. They had their own private entry into the temple. Then the third entry, is thought by most commentators, the private entry for the king. A passage that went from the palace to the temple where the king could have his own entry into the temple. A place of privacy and secrecy. So the king took Jeremiah into this passage.] And the king said to Jeremiah, I'm gonna ask you something and I don't want you to hide anything from me. So Jeremiah said, Look if I declare it to you, then you'll want to put me to death? and if I give you counsel, you're not going to listen anyhow (38:13-14).

In other words, "Why should I answer. It's putting me in jeopardy. You might kill me for what I say, or and you're not going to listen anyhow, so why should I tell you anything? It's only going to make you mad, and you're not going to listen, so what's the use in telling you?"

So Zedekiah the king swore secretly to Jeremiah, saying, As the Lord liveth, [and that was an oath, a very common oath, "As the Lord liveth."] that made us this soul, I will not put you to death, neither will I give you into the hand of those men that are seeking your life (38:15).

In other words, the king is now promising that he would protect Jeremiah. "But I want to know what God has to say." You do really wonder why he would want to know what God had to say, if he wasn't going to obey it. There are people who are curious as to what God has to say. The king was curious. He wanted to know what the future held for him and all. He was curious of the future. There are a lot of people, in the bible, whose primary interest in the Bible is prophecy. They're interested in the future. They want to know what the bible has to say about the events that are taking place in the world today. They find that quite fascinating. And indeed it is!

But you know, the word of God is not of true value to you, unless you are keeping the word of God. As James said, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only." And over and over and over again Jesus was stressing the importance of doing His commandments. Not hearing them, but doing them. "He that hears my word, and does them, is like unto a man who built his house upon a rock. He who hears my word and does

not do them is like a man who built his house upon the sand.” And so the doing. “He that heareth my commandments, and doeth them, he it is that loveth me.” The importance of obeying the commandments. Doing the word of God, over against just hearing. Paul, in writing to the Romans, spoke of a major mistake that the Jews had made. They boasted in the fact that they had the law. God gave them the law. Paul said, “The fact that God gave you the law means nothing, if you don’t keep the law.” “You know you boast that you have the law. So what! Having the law doesn’t justify you at all! It’s keeping the law that is important.” And a lot of people sort of boast that we are Bible carrying Christians, you know. Well it’s more there’s more to it than just carrying the Bible. There’s more than just hearing the word of God. It’s more than just bible studies and storing up knowledge of the Bible in your mind! You’ve got to be doers of the word, not hearers only. So Jeremiah was complaining to Zedekiah. “You want to hear it, but you’re not gonna do it anyhow. You’re not going to hearken unto me.”

So Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, thus saith Jehovah the God of hosts, the God of Israel; if you will assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon’s princes, then your soul shall live, and this city will not be burned with fire; and you shall live, and your house (38:15).

You can spare yourself if you will just surrender. Just put up the white flag and surrender. The city will be spared, it won’t be burned, you and your house will be spared.

But if you will not go forth to the king of Babylon’s princes, then this city will be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they’re gonna burn it with fire, and you will not escape out of their hand (38:18).

Now in the next chapter we’re gonna read how that when the city finally fell, the king tried to escape by night. He went out this passage from Jerusalem and was trying to escape through the plains of Jericho. But how they pursued after him, and caught him and all. So the prophecy of Jeremiah was fulfilled. “You’re not going to escape.”

And Zedekiah the king said to Jeremiah, I am afraid of the Jews that have already defected to the Chaldeans, because they might deliver me into their hand, and they will mock me (38:19).

A pretty lame excuse for not obeying the Lord. “Well if I defect then the Jews that have already defected, they’ll put me with them and they’ll mock me. They’ll say, “Oh! The king, ha ha. What are you doing here?”. So that fear of being mocked was the thing that caused him to disobey the word of God. The bible says, “The fear of man brings a snare”, it’s a trap, “But whoso trusts in the Lord will be saved.” You know there are a lot of people today like king Zedekiah who are not obeying the commands of God, just because of the fear of what people will say, of the ridicule that they might endure. They secretly want to know what God has to say, and they don’t want others to know that they want to know. They try to hide their curiosity. They don’t want to be seen in church, they go listen to the radio, because they’re curious to know what God has to say. But they’re afraid that people are going to make fun of them and say, “You bought a what? A bible? You? Oh you’re a holy roller! Hallelujah! Ya know!” And people are afraid of people making fun of them and the king said, “I’m afraid, he’ll turn me over to those others that have already, and they’re gonna mock me! So I’m not going to obey God. I don’t want to be mocked!” Whew! But look at the consequences! “If you don’t do this you know, the city’s gonna be burned, your family’s gonna be wiped out, and you’re not going to escape.” So fear, “I’m afraid of the Jews”.

But Jeremiah said, They will not deliver you to the Jews. [You don’t have to be afraid of that.] Obey, I beg you, the voice of Jehovah, which I speak unto you: and it will be well, and you will live (38:20).

You know I think of how God pleads with men today. Just receive Jesus Christ, just believe and you’ll live! Just surrender your life to Him. Turn your life over. And here are people whose life, I’ve had people that I’ve had to go counsel who have tried to commit suicide. And they’re put in the hospital for seventy two hours, for examination, because they’ve attempted suicide. So I’ve gone over and talked with them, and I say, “Well you know, you really just need to surrender your life to Jesus”, “Oh no, no, no, no! I have nothing to live for”, I said “Good!! Find something to live for. Live for Jesus Christ! You know there is nothing in this world to live for. I can buy that one. But live for Jesus Christ if you have nothing to live for yourself, then live for Him! You’ve come to a great discovery when you’ve discovered there’s nothing to live for in this world, but I’ll tell you, there’s a lot to live for when you’ve commit your life to Jesus Christ.” But they don’t want to do that.

I had an uncle who, chain smoker, alcoholic, and he was dying of emphysema, and he lived in Santa Barbara and the last time I was there to visit him, he was coughing and you know, wheezing. He said, "When I get like this, I have to get in the car, and my chauffeur takes me out to Palm Springs, and that beautiful air, and I can breathe again." Very dramatic guy you know, and he would go through the routine and would tell me how he just couldn't get his breath at the time. I said, "You know Uncle, the Lord can heal you", and he panicked! He thought I was going to pray for him! He absolutely panicked! "I'm dying! I'm gonna die", "Well I'll pray for ya", "Oh oh oh, don't do that!". He was afraid the Lord might heal him, and if the Lord did that then he'd owe the Lord something. It's funny how people remain resistant right up to the end.

Here's Jeremiah begging Zedekiah, "Go ahead! You'll live! It's your only hope! You'll spare the city, you'll spare your own life, your family, you can live you know! You don't need to be destroyed, and for the city to be destroyed. Just go ahead and submit. I beg you! Hear the voice of Jehovah, that your soul may live!" How many times have I heard the evangelists, Billy Graham and all, begging, "Just give your life that you might live!", "Never".

But if you refuse to go forth, this is the word that Jehovah has showed you (38:21).

You're responsible. God has given you His word.

And, behold, [Here's what's gonna happen.] all of the women, that is your harem, that will be left in the king's house will be brought forth to the king of Babylon's princes, and those women shall say, Thy friends have set thee on and have prevailed against thee: and your feet are sunk in the mire, and they turn a way back. So they shall bring out all of your wives and your children to the Chaldeans: and thou shalt not escape out of their hand, but you will be taken by the hand of the king of Babylon: and you will cause this city to be burned with fire (38:22-23).

"This is the consequence of your disobedience." Destruction, always the consequence of disobedience.

then Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, Don't let any man know these words or you will die. If the princes hear that I have talked with you and they come to you, and they say to you, Declare unto us what the king said to you, don't hide it from us, and we will not put you to death; also what tell us what you said to the king, and what the king said to you: Then you shall say unto them, I presented my supplication to the king, that he would not cause me to return to Jonathan's house, to die there (38:24-26).

"I didn't want to go back to that dungeon in the mire."

So all of the princes came to Jeremiah, and they asked him: according to the words that the king had commanded. So they quit speaking with him; for the matter was not perceived (38:27).

They didn't catch on that the king was really seeking guidance and counsel.

So Jeremiah stayed in the court of the prison until the day that Jerusalem was taken: and he was there when Jerusalem was taken (38:28).

So, in the next chapter, we find Jerusalem taken by the Babylonians and the prophecies of Jeremiah fulfilled. The horrible consequences of disobeying the command of God. The very things that God had warned came to pass.

I think that we often make a mistake concerning God, in that we often blame God for the calamities that come to pass in our life. Whereas the calamities are often just the natural consequence of our disobedience. Now God knows what the consequence of our disobedience will be, so He can tell you in advance what will be the result of particular actions on your part. So, you go ahead and do those things that God said you shouldn't do, and the things that God said would happen, happen. Then you say, "I don't think God's fair doing this to me!" Wait a minute! Wait a minute! You did it to yourself! The fact that God knew what was going to happen, you know, you can't blame God for it happening! He was warning you, this was going to happen! This is the consequence of that sin. This is the thing that will take place. These are the inevitable consequences of this kind of a lifestyle. So if you go ahead and engage in those things, then you can't really say, "Well God is responsible for this happening to me!" No. You are responsible because you didn't listen to God. You see God is begging! "Save yourself! Go on out and defect to the Babylonians! You're house will be spared, your lives will be spared, and your children will be spared! The city will be spared! I beg you! Go ahead and surrender! If you don't, then the city's gonna be burned with fire, your lives are going to

be ravaged by the Babylonians, you're gonna be taken as a captive, your children are gonna be slain and that's what's gonna happen!" Now as Zedekiah is being taken captive to Babylon, he looks back and sees the smoke of the city, the thing is in rubble. How wrong it would be to say, "God isn't fair! Because look what God did to me. Look what God did to the city." No! You did it by your disobedience! God gave you a way out. You didn't take the way out. Thus if a person should have that tragic misfortune of ending in hell, it would be absolutely wrong to say, "God isn't fair to send me to this horrible place!" Wait a minute! He didn't send you there, He begged you to turn from your sin, to receive Jesus Christ, that you might escape that place. He did all that He could do, short of violating your free will, which He gave to you, to keep you from there. Thus God doesn't send men to hell. Men go there by their own willful choice. Choosing to disobey God and the word of God. They choose their own destiny, and God can't be blamed! It is wrong to try to blame God for such things. Let's pray.

Father, we thank You for Your love and for Your wisdom. Your love that draws us to Yourself, and points us to Your path. Your wisdom that can show us the consequences of taking the wrong path and the rewards of taking the right path. Lord we pray that tonight if there be those here that are on the wrong path, the path of destruction, destroying themselves, destroying their families, by the choices they're making. Lord we think of Zedekiah. He destroyed a city, he destroyed his family, his choices Lord were so far reaching. There are people here tonight whose choices are so far reaching. Help them Lord, to hear your voice, to surrender their lives to Jesus Christ, so that they might live and not die. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.