

**JEREMIAH**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Jeremiah chapter 36 as we continue our study through the Word of God. We need to remember that God's Word is His guidebook for us and it also reveals God to us. Thus, the enemy tries to destroy it, water it down, change it; he will do anything he can to turn down the light of God's Word to sinful man. The puritan pastor, Thomas Watson wrote,

We may know the Scripture to be the Word of God by its miraculous preservation in all ages. The holy Scriptures are the richest jewel that Christ has left for us; and the church of God has so kept these public records of heaven, that they have not been lost. The Word of God has never wanted enemies to oppose, and, if possible, to extirpate it [root out or destroy completely] . . . but God has preserved this blessed Book inviolable [unbreakable] to this day. The devil and his agents have been blowing at Scripture light, but could never blow it out; a clear sign that it was lighted from heaven.

- Thomas Watson, A Body of Divinity, p. 27

This has been the case from the beginning when Satan twisted the Scriptures and deceived Eve and it continues on today. This evening we will also see someone try to extinguish the light of God's Word or burn it to pieces but God's Word will stand strong and the men who do these things are long gone or they will be long gone for those that do it today.

Keep in mind that in the book of Jeremiah we see some 250 references to the Word of God in phrases like, “*the word of the Lord*” or “*My word(s)*” and “*the Lord spoke.*” And because Jeremiah spoke forth the Words of God there were those who tried to put out that light as we will see this evening. With that as our background, let’s begin reading in Jeremiah chapter 36 beginning in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word!

### **JEREMIAH 36**

#### **VERSES 1-4**

1. The timeframe here is during the reign of Jehoiakim, the third to the last King in the Southern Kingdom of Judah and it was during the fourth year of his reign, which would put this around 605 B. C. when the message was given to Jeremiah and then it was read before the people in the ninth month of the fifth year or 604 B. C. And at this point, 605 B. C., the Babylonians, under the leadership of Nebuchadnezzar, defeated the Egyptians during the battle of Carchemish. That made the Babylonians a world power!
2. At this point Jeremiah has been speaking forth the Words of God for some 23 years. And God is telling him to write down all those things that He has spoken to him, make a scroll of these things or a book. So Jeremiah dictated all of God’s words to Baruch who wrote them down for him. Keep in mind that Baruch was a scribe, and as Jeremiah spoke Baruch wrote these words down.

3. If Jeremiah has been speaking forth the Words of God for some 23 years now and no one was listening, what is the point? God gives people a chance and many chances to hear His voice and turn to Him. Yes, the Lord knew their hearts and yet He continued to give the people an opportunity to repent of their sins. And that is what we will see as we read on, an opportunity for the people to hear the Words of the Lord and turn back to Him!

#### VERSES 5-9

1. At this point Jeremiah could not go into the Temple and we don't know for sure what the reason was. It may have been that he was barred from going to the Temple because of His words, that they contradicted the words of the false prophets. And, obviously, the people wanted to have their ears tickled, instead of hearing the truth, so they barred Jeremiah from the Temple area at this time, and thus, he sends Baruch to do the work.

2. This fast was probably the result of what the Babylonians did to the Philistines in 604 B. C., defeating Ashkelon. Now panic was growing as the people in Judah were wondering if they were next since they were already attacked once by the Babylonians in 606 B. C. when they took the cream of the crop, the best of the best back to Babylon with them and incorporated them into their culture. Daniel and his three friends were taken in this first invasion. So they were fasting and seeking God after the Babylonians defeated the Philistines in Ashkelon and God is going to speak to them as Baruch reads the Words of the Lord before them.

And it sounds good, it sounds like God has their attention and they are ready to turn back to God. But that is not the case. They were not repenting of their sin, they were not interested in turning back to God, they just wanted to be delivered from the hands of the Babylonians. This was just empty religious service before God; they did not want to change!

### VERSES 10-13

1. Now this is interesting to me. Baruch read from the book all the words of Jeremiah in the house of the LORD and yet, the princes didn't come, the religious leaders didn't come, just the common people.

I think that applies to us today. What do I mean by that? Think about this for a minute. You have been walking with the Lord for a while now, and you find yourself comfortable, you know the Scriptures; you really don't need to go to church and hear the Word of God. There is the danger and we are seeing that attitude growing today! Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

Initially prompted to discover how church plants in America were really doing, Olson, director of church planting for the Evangelical Covenant Church ([covchurch.org](http://covchurch.org)), began collecting data in the late '80s, gradually expanding his research to encompass overall attendance trends in the Church. In his study, he tracked the annual attendance of more than 200,000 individual Orthodox Christian churches (the accepted U.S. church universe is 330,000). To determine attendance at the remaining 100,000-plus Orthodox Christian churches, he used statistical models, which included multiplying a church's membership number by the denomination's membership-to-attendance ratio.

His findings reveal that the actual rate of church attendance from head counts is less than half of the 40% the pollsters report. Numbers from actual counts of people in Orthodox Christian churches (Catholic, mainline and evangelical) show that in 2004, 17.7% of the population attended a Christian church on any given weekend.

Another study published in 2005 in *The Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* by sociologists C. Kirk Hadaway and Penny Long Marler - known for their scholarly research on the Church - backs up his findings. Their report reveals that the actual number of people worshipping each week is closer to Olson's 17.7% figure - 52 million people instead of the pollster-reported 132 million (40%).

"We knew that over the past 30 to 40 years, denominations had increasingly reported a decline in their numbers," Marler says. "Even a still-growing denomination like the Southern Baptist Convention had reported slowed growth. Most of the mainline denominations were all reporting a net loss over the past 30 years. And at the same time, the Gallup polls had remained stable. It didn't make sense."

- <http://www.churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/139575-7-startling-facts-an-up-close-look-at-church-attendance-in-america.html>

And please understand we are not talking about the unsaved here, but those Christians, many who believe that they are solid Christians, mature Christians, see no need in going to church or they place church behind many other activities and these things get in their way of coming to church.

And I realize that this is not a safe thing to say but it is true. If you are avoiding church and there is no health reason or job reason, then you are wrong. I am not saying you can't go on vacation but for many, they are gone more than they come to church as we see here with these statistics.

Remember what Paul said in Hebrews 10:24-25, “**And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.**” You see, we are to gather together to worship the Lord, to study His Word and to fellowship. We are not to forsake these things. We are to encourage people in the work of God.

And here is the key for me. Paul says “**. . . and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.**” What is he talking about? Paul is speaking of the Day of the Lord, the return of Jesus Christ for His Bride, the Church. Why is that important? Because the days are going to get tougher and we need each other. This world is going to be more antagonistic towards Christianity and we need to stand strong together not apart! The religious leaders didn’t see it as being important in Jeremiah’s day and many Christians today don’t see this important and that is dangerous.

2. One more point here before we move on. Gemariah the scribe was a notary public and they have found his stamp that says, “***Gemariah the son of Shaphan***” on it. That just tells me that we have archaeological evidence to support the Scriptures, that they are true! These events did take place and the Scriptures are accurate, we can trust them from Genesis through Revelation!

#### VERSES 14-16

1. I want you to notice the progression of this man Michaiah. First of all we see in Jeremiah 36:11 that he “**. . . heard all the words of the LORD from the book.**” He listened to what was being said, what God was sharing. He was not bored, he did not fall asleep, but he heard all of these things!

He not only **HEARD** the Words of the Lord but he also **RECEIVED** them. Many people hear the Words of the Lord but they reject them, but not Michaiah.

And as we see here in Jeremiah 36:16 he **FEARED** the Words of the Lord! He realized that judgment was coming because they had sinned before the Lord! And when a person truly hears God's Word, receives God's Word and Fears God's Word, it leads to **REPENTANCE!**

And lastly, we see that he is **SHARING** God's Word and we see that in the last part of Jeremiah 36:16 as he says that, "**We will surely tell the king of all these words.**" When we come to know the Lord we will share Him with others, it is just the natural thing to do as we see here with Michaiah.

#### VERSES 17-19

1. Obviously this was a touchy subject and these leaders knew that the King, Jehoiakim would not look favorably to what was being said. So they tell Baruch and Jeremiah to "Find a place to hide and if the King receives these words well, then you can come out. But, if he is angry you better stay hiding because he will come after you and may put you to death!"

#### VERSES 20-25

1. We are told it was winter and thus, even in Jerusalem it can get cold, not like Wisconsin but it can even snow in the winter in Jerusalem. So the King has a fire burning to keep himself warm. And here they are, gathered around the King and Jehudi begins to read these words of Jeremiah, the Word of God.

As the King is listening Jehudi only gets a few columns into this scroll and Jehoiakim grabs it, cuts it up and throws it into the fire, destroying it. Now think about that for a minute. By cutting up God's Word, by throwing it into the fire, does that stop God's Word from coming to pass? Absolutely not and yet look at the arrogance this King has towards God's Word and in the end, Jehoiakim and all who refuse to listen will suffer the consequences!

2. Even today we do the same thing. There are people who feel that by ignoring the Word of God or by destroying it, that nullifies what God has said and thus, they are not accountable. Wrong! God and His Word will not be removed no matter how hard man may try. As Jesus said in Matthew 24:35, "**Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.**"

I like the way that J. I. Packer shows how foolish the Kings actions were as he wrote, "Jehoiakim burns God's Word, ignoring its warnings. That's like getting out of a car to destroy a 'Bridge Out' sign: done at one's own peril." And like I have said, man continues to do that today!

#### VERSES 26-31

1. God held Jehoiakim accountable for his actions, God judged Him. You see, Jehoiakim heard the Word of God and instead of heeding God's Word he ignored it and tried to destroy it and in the end he was judged for it.



One of the judgments was that his children will not sit on the throne of David. But, Jeconiah did, but only for 3 months and 10 days. The word “sit” speaks of “a lengthy residence, to dwell.” Thus, Jeconiah did not dwell on the throne of David and after he was removed, his uncle, the brother of Jehoiakim, Zedekiah sat on the throne, just as God said would happen.

Also, another judgment against this King is that he was captured and taken to Babylon where he died and his body would be treated disgracefully after his death. God and His Word are not mocked, what you sow you will reap and Jehoiakim found that out!

The bottom line is this; it is a warning for not heeding the Word of God, “The privilege of knowing God’s truth with certainty and precision carries with it the responsibility of obeying that truth with equal precision.” (J. I. Packer) May we heed the warning because God’s Word is everlasting whether we believe it or not!

### VERSE 32

1. This next scroll that was written upon was an expanded addition.
2. As we move into Jeremiah chapters 37-39 we are going to see a summary of the reign of Zedekiah, the last King in the Southern Kingdom of Judah before the Babylonian captivity. And Zedekiah reigned for 11 years but he was wicked and he was weak. Peer pressure caused him to act in a way contrary to what was right. Popular opinion forced him to do things that he should not have done. And understand this; it did not make him any less accountable for his actions before God. He had a choice to make and he made the wrong one!

3. What a warning to the church today that is compromising because of peer pressure, popular opinion and in the end the fear of man will bring them down. We need to fear God and do what He has told us to do in His World and not let the fear of man cause us to compromise our faith!

### **JEREMIAH 37**

#### **VERSES 1-5**

1. This took place during the reign of Zedekiah who was a vassal King for Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians. And things are not looking good for King Zedekiah and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. And even though the King and the people did not want to hear the words of Jeremiah, they ask him to pray to God for them, that God would deliver them from this enemy!

But things changed. Remember back in Jeremiah chapter 34, as the Babylonians surrounded the city, the walls of Jerusalem, Zedekiah seeks help and Jeremiah tells him to let their Jewish slaves go free. They were to release them in the seventh year of service according to the Law, but they were not doing that. So the King heeds the words of Jeremiah and tells them to let their slaves go free, and they do.

Also, at this time, in late spring or early summer of 588 B. C. the Egyptian army, led by Pharaoh Hophra came into southern Israel. When the Babylonians heard of this they broke off their attack against Jerusalem and went after the Egyptians. That is what took place; the attack is broken off, really on hold for a short time.

But now the people of Jerusalem thought they were delivered, they Egyptians had come to their aide, the crisis was over, so they took their slaves back and that was a big mistake. The Babylonians were coming back and God takes very seriously a covenant that is made with Him, the one in which they just broke!

But the false prophets, the ones who were speaking of peace and victory over the Babylonians were excited, they were right, or were they? Of course they were not right and the Southern Kingdom was going into captivity because of their wickedness.

#### VERSES 6-10

1. Zedekiah thought the Egyptians could help them but they would be defeated. Destruction was still before them and there was no escaping this judgment of God for them! What a lesson God is showing us here. You can try and fight against the will of God all you want, it may even look like you have the upper hand, but you will not be victorious! And God is telling the people of Judah, judgment is coming, He has decreed it! In fact, even if the Babylonian army was reduced to a few wounded men they would still be victorious over Judah because God has declared it!

#### VERSES 11-16

1. With the Babylonian siege on hold for a time, the people were free to move outside the walls of the city and that is what we see Jeremiah doing here. Now keep in mind this is not referring to the land purchase that Jeremiah made back in chapter 32, for at that time he was already in prison. But since the siege by Babylon was over for the moment, he was heading to Anathoth to do some personal business, but as we have seen, he doesn't get too far.

As he is out at the gate of Benjamin someone recognizes him, a captain of the guard and arrests him for treason. He thought Jeremiah was a defector! Why did they think that way? Remember that Jeremiah has been telling the people, telling the King to surrender to the Babylonians, don't fight against them. That is why the captain of the guard, Irijah, thinks he is defecting to the Babylonians and stops him.

And when the princes heard this they struck him and put him in prison, most likely a cistern as Robert Davidson explains,

Such cisterns were usually hewn out of limestone rock. Narrow at the top they opened out into a bottle-shaped cavity in which water was stored. They were rather like the bottle dungeons that you find in old castles, such as the castle at St. Andrews in Scotland; and they could serve the same purpose. There prisoners could be left to rot, to go mad or to die.

- Robert Davidson, Jeremiah Vol. 2, p. 122

And Jeremiah is placed in this prison for many days, not sure the exact amount of time, but a day would be too long in a place like this. Now look at what happens next.

#### VERSES 17-21

1. Zedekiah wants to hear what God is saying but he is so weak he sends for Jeremiah in secret. He was afraid to let others know what he was doing, listening to a true prophet of God, Jeremiah! And he wants to hear what God has to say and yet he doesn't.

You see, Jeremiah tells the King he is going to go into captivity. Not a very feel good, positive message. Well, I guess it was positive; he was positively going into captivity along with the rest of the nation!

2. Then Jeremiah questions why Zedekiah has him locked in prison, what he did to deserve this kind of punishment? And Jeremiah is trying to awaken Zedekiah from his spiritual sleep. The false prophets were speaking of peace and prosperity. But that hasn't happened; in fact most of the nation was already taken into captivity. On the other hand what has transpired is exactly what Jeremiah said, and yet he is locked in prison.

I don't know what it was like being locked up in that basement of Jonathan's house, but according to Jeremiah, it must have been really bad! In fact, it was the place where prisoners died!

3. Now why was Jeremiah placed in prison in the first place? For speaking the Word of God and it was not what the people wanted to hear. Francis Schaeffer gives us this insight into Jeremiah's situation. He wrote,

[Jeremiah] is not giving an optimistic answer; he isn't saying everything is going to turn out well. He isn't saying there is an easy solution; all we need is a little more technical advance to make the grade. He is cutting down their humanistic optimism, saying that they are under the judgment of God, and thereby weakening the people, undercutting their morale [self-esteem], "For this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt."

Of course it is not true. Jeremiah is wanting their real welfare. He is saying, "You must be healed of the real disease, which is your revolt against God, and not merely of some superficial, external wound." But that didn't please the dignitaries.

- Francis A. Schaeffer, *Death in the City*, pp. 66-67

And then he applies it to the days we are living in as he wrote why Jeremiah was placed in prison. It was, “as a result of his faithful preaching of God’s judgment to a ‘post-Christian’ world.” (Francis A. Schaeffer, *Death in the City*, pp. 67) That is where we are today and I think the Lord is warning us here as we are truly living in a post-Christian nation that the world and the church will come against those who are faithfully preaching and standing up for God’s Word or as Francis Schaeffer wrote, “if one really preaches the Word of God to a post-Christian world, he must understand that he is likely to end up like Jeremiah.” I think he is correct!

4. As Jeremiah asks the King to be released the King places Jeremiah in another prison, a better one you might say that did give him a little more walking room, and he says that Jeremiah will be fed until the bread of the city is gone. He will be cared for but the famine in the land is growing and Jeremiah will remain there until the Babylonians take the city!

### **JEREMIAH 38**

#### **VERSES 1-4**

1. I thought we just saw Jeremiah in the court of the prison, let go by King Zedekiah? First of all we saw back in Jeremiah chapter 37 some of the King’s men get so angry with Jeremiah that they put him in prison, a cistern to die.

Then at the end of Jeremiah chapter 37 we saw Jeremiah released into the court of the prison. But I don’t think Jeremiah stopped sharing the Word of God with the people. And as this band of four listened they got so tired of hearing these words about judgment that they petitioned the King to have him put to death! Look at what happens next.

VERSES 5-9

1. What is King Zedekiah doing here? He is trying to wash his hands from this mess. You see, Zedekiah understood that the words of Jeremiah were from the Lord but he was so weak he couldn't stand up for what was right. These people intimidated Zedekiah and he gave in to their peer pressure and he tells them that they can do whatever they want to Jeremiah.

Make no mistake, he too was responsible because he was the King and he could have done what was right but the fear of man caused him to surrender to their petition instead of the fear of God causing him to release Jeremiah!

2. And now Jeremiah is placed into this pit and it was a deep pit because he was lowered down by these ropes into this cistern. And as he gets to the bottom there was no water in it, only mud and it was moist, you could sink down into it. And Jeremiah may have sunk up to his waist in this mud. Now he is trapped in this dark, cold, death trap. He was placed there to die!

3. Why was he there? For preaching the Word of God, for obeying the Lord! That is a problem for many Christians today. You see, we tend to think that if we are walking in the Lord's will, doing those things He has called us to do, that life will be a breeze, God will protect us from difficult times.

But that is not true. God never promises to spare us from all adverse situations, what He does say is that He will be with us as we are going through them. Yes, people do suffer even when they are faithful! Remember what Paul told Timothy, **“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”** II Timothy 3:12. Not a “might” or “it is possible” but you ***WILL SUFFER PERSECUTION*** when you stand up for Jesus, when you live for Him!

4. Now we are introduced to this servant named Ebed-Melech and his name means, “Servant of the king.” He was an Ethiopian servant, no one cared for him and yet he was able to serve the King of kings and Lord of lords because you don’t have to be somebody to do that, God uses nobody’s to do great things. He uses people like you and me!

And this man sees Jeremiah in need of help and without regard for his own life; he is petitioning the King to release him. I like that, not looking out for his own interests but for the interests of others. That is a New Testament teaching lived in the life of this man!

#### VERSES 10-13

1. Here we see the King tell this servant to gather 30 men and pull Jeremiah out of this pit. Now I don’t know if Jeremiah was a big guy or not, 30 men seems like overkill but maybe some of them were to stand guard in case anyone tried to stop them from freeing Jeremiah. Also remember that he is stuck in the mud at the bottom of this cistern! So they may have needed all these men to pull him out of that mud!



And there must have been some heavy pulling that was needed because Jeremiah puts some rags under his arms to protect him from being cut by the ropes as they tried to dislodge him and pull him up of the mud in this cistern! And as he is released once again he is placed in the court of the prison once again!

#### VERSES 14-18

1. Again Zedekiah wants to hear from Jeremiah, he wants the whole truth that God has given to Jeremiah. Now the Temple area had three entrances, one for the people, one for the priests, and one for the King. This third entrance is where the King met Jeremiah.

And Jeremiah was wise, he recognized that if he spoke the truth of God Zedekiah would not like it, and he may even put him to death for it. But the King tells Jeremiah that he will spare his life no matter what he says, he will not turn him over to these men who want him dead!

2. And you have to love the heart of Jeremiah here. Jeremiah is begging for Zedekiah to surrender so that the city and its people will be spared. He wants the King to repent and return to the Lord so death won't come upon this nation.

3. When you read that you may be wondering, "Why does God even care for this King and these people?" Because God loves them just as He loves us and He is doing the same thing with us as He is doing here. You see, He is begging people to turn to Him.

You may have heard people say, “I don’t believe a God of love would send a person to hell!” You know what, they are right. God doesn’t send anyone to hell, you go there by choice. In fact it is not easy to get there, but if you try hard enough, if you reject all that God is showing you, you will make it. But that is not God’s desire.

In Ezekiel we read **“Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?” says the Lord GOD, ‘and not that he should turn from his ways and live? . . . ‘For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,’ says the Lord GOD. ‘Therefore turn and live!’”**

Ezekiel 18:23, 32. That is the heart of God, that all would turn to Him and receive His forgiveness! But it is a choice on the part of man!

#### VERSES 19-23

1. Here is the devastation that will come if you don’t listen to what the Lord has said and obey Him! But notice what Jeremiah 38:19 says, **“I am afraid . . .”** That is dangerous because he was more afraid of what man could do to him than what God would do.

We talked about this a little already tonight but it comes out of Proverbs 29:25 which says, **“The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.”** Zedekiah rejected the Lord because of what others might say, what others may do to him. He is afraid to obey God because of peer pressure. In fact, his own harem is going to mock him for not doing what was right. Zedekiah feared going into captivity and that is exactly where he is going to go and great destruction will come upon the people and the city of Jerusalem because they refused to surrender!

VERSES 24-28

1. The King tells Jeremiah not to let the princes know what they have discussed or it could cost him his life. And Jeremiah doesn't lie here when these princes question him. He did ask the King not to be put back into that dungeon. Thus, what he said was true but he didn't feel obligated to tell all he knew.

2. Now Jeremiah is going to remain in prison until the time the city of Jerusalem falls to the Babylonians. Again, a tough ministry but Jeremiah was faithful in all he did before the Lord. And God is asking us to be faithful with the things He has entrusted to us!

**JEREMIAH 39**VERSES 1-4

1. After some 2 years of coming against Judah and Jerusalem, the Babylonians broke down the walls of the city of Jerusalem. That was in July of 586 B. C. This was a very sad day in the nation's history.

2. According to Josephus regarding this invasion,

The battering ram took its last run at the walls. Darts from the enemy siege mounds arched into the midnight sky and struck their mark in flames. Famine had already claimed many lives inside the walls. Five Babylonian princes marched through the streets of Jerusalem, their faces illuminated by the flames of destruction.

- Flavius Josephus, as paraphrased in John Guest, Jeremiah, Lamentations, The Communicator's Commentary, Vol. 17, p. 277

3. As King Zedekiah sees all that has happened, he knows he is in trouble so he exists stage left! He is fleeing for his life. Remember, Jeremiah warned him that if he tried to fight against Babylon it would only bring about trouble. But if he surrendered to Babylon his life would be spared. He chose to fight and thus he is terrified of what is going to happen to him.

#### VERSES 5-8

1. As I have said, Jeremiah warned the King not to try to fight or to escape but to surrender. He tried to escape and he was caught in the area of the plains of Jericho and then he was brought to Riblah, which was located about 200 miles north of Jerusalem in the area of Syria. This city, Riblah, is still in existence today.

Now we aren't sure what Nebuchadnezzar was doing up in Riblah, but this is where Zedekiah was brought, along with his family as they were caught trying to escape from Jerusalem as the Babylonians broke through the walls of the city. And they did manage to make it as far as the plains of Jericho, but they could not outrun the Babylonian army.

2. To say that Nebuchadnezzar was not a nice guy is to put it mildly. He was a tyrant King, and if you fought against him you would pay dearly for your actions. We see that here with Zedekiah. Instead of being a puppet King for Babylon, he fought against him and that did not make the King of Babylon happy. He not only kills Zedekiah's sons before his eyes, but then he blinds Zedekiah so that the last thing he sees is the murder of his sons. And then he is carried away captive back to Babylon in bronze fetters or chains.

#### VERSES 9-10

1. This siege took place in 586 B. C. and this was the third and final assault by the Babylonians upon the Southern Kingdom of Judah. At this time they leveled the city and took the remaining people back to Babylon with them, except for the poor and the sick and the elderly. Why did they do that? Probably because they left a few soldiers behind and these people would provide food for them. But, because of their physical condition they would not be able to rise up and fight against the soldiers.

#### VERSES 11-14

1. Why the King of Babylon was so nice to Jeremiah we aren't sure. Obviously God put it upon his heart to respond in that manner because he was not nice to anyone! It may also be that the King had heard the words of Jeremiah, how he was encouraging the people to surrender and saw him not as a threat, but as a benefit to him. In either case, God was in control and He was taking care of Jeremiah!

VERSES 15-18

1. Prior to the release of Jeremiah from prison the Lord speaks to him and tells him to inform Ebed-Melech, the Ethiopian, that he is going to receive kindness from God for standing up for the things of God. Remember, when Jeremiah was placed in that cistern to die this man went before King Zedekiah and had him released from that place.

2. Also keep in mind that this siege by the Babylonians began a period of time for Israel that is called "*The times of the Gentiles.*" It is a time during which the Gentiles put the Jews under subjection, and it continues on today.

We read of this in Luke 21:24 where we are told, "**And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until *the times of the Gentiles* are fulfilled.**"

There it is, the times of the Gentiles and they will continue on until Jesus Christ comes and sets up His Kingdom. Yes they are in the land once again but don't forget the oppression they are facing as 100 million enemies surround them and want them dead. We see the nations of the world pressuring them to give Jerusalem to the Palestinians.

And it is only going to get worse as the Antichrist, a Gentile ruler, will murder over 10 million Jews during the Great Tribulation Period. But there is coming a day when righteousness will fill the land, peace will flow like a river, and the Jews will not be in subjection to anyone except their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and that will be a willful surrender to their King! We are waiting for that day to come!