

## **THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JEREMIAH**

### **XV. Godly Jeremiah's Deliverance Amid Ungodly Jerusalem's Destruction (Jeremiah 39:1-14; 40:1-6)**

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. God called Jeremiah to prophesy in Judah during its apostasy until God's judgment fell on the nation.
- B. Jeremiah's ministry is then similar to what God's servants face in our era of spiritual decline. Such a calling can be marked by political opposition that seeks to cause God's servants to cease being able to do His work.
- C. Jeremiah 39:1-14 and 40:1-6 reports on godly Jeremiah's deliverance amid ungodly Jerusalem's destruction, passages that offer a lesson for our insight, application and edification (as follows):

#### **II. Godly Jeremiah's Deliverance Amid Ungodly Jerusalem's Destruction, Jeremiah 39:1-14; 40:1-6.**

- A. Ungodly Jerusalem finally fell to the Babylonians, leaving the city and its inhabitants in a state of destruction:
  - 1. After besieging Jerusalem for over a year-and-a-half, the Babylonian army breached the city wall, and all the princes of king Nebuchadnezzar came through the breach and sat in of authority in the city, Jer. 39:1-3.
  - 2. When Judah's king Zedekiah and his warriors saw it, they fled by night by way of the king's garden in the southern tip of the city and tried to climb over the Mount of Olives headed toward the Jordan in order to flee over to Rabbah in Ammon east of Judah for protection, Jer. 39:4; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1185.
  - 3. The Babylonian army pursued and caught Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho, Jeremiah 39:5a.
  - 4. They then took him up north to Riblah in the land of Hamath where Nebuchadnezzar passed judgment on him for not submitting to him. Nebuchadnezzar slew Zedekiah's sons and nobles before him, put out his eyes, bound him with chains, and carried him off to Babylon, Jeremiah 39:5b-7.
  - 5. The Babylonians then burned the king's palace, the city, and broke down the city walls before taking the remnant of the people captive to Babylon, Jer. 39:8-9. Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, left the poorest of the people in the land to work the vineyards and the fields, Jeremiah 39:10.
- B. In great contrast, the godly prophet Jeremiah experienced God's deliverance:
  - 1. Nebuchadnezzar had heard of Jeremiah and his message that Jerusalem and her king should surrender to him, so he had ordered Nebuzaradan, captain of the Babylonian guard, to take Jeremiah and look after him, doing him no harm, and even to do what Jeremiah directed Nebuzaradan to do (Jeremiah 39:11-12)!
  - 2. From Jeremiah 40:1-2 we learn that the process of Jeremiah's release involved the Babylonians first taking him out of the court of the prison in chains along with the other Hebrews to be screened at Rama 5 miles north of Jerusalem where Jeremiah was later released. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Jer. 40:1)
  - 3. Thus, Nebuzaradan with Babylon's other officials sent and took Jeremiah out of the court of the prison and committed him to Babylon's new puppet governor of Judah named Gedaliah, grandson of godly Shaphan who had helped Judah's past godly king Josiah, Jeremiah 39:13-14 with 2 Kings 22:1-20.
  - 4. Nebuzaradan took Jeremiah aside and told him that the tragedy that had befallen his nation had occurred as punishment for Judah's sins against God, Jer. 40:1-3. He then released Jeremiah and gave him the choice of coming back to Babylon with him where he would care for Jeremiah or of remaining in Judah, Jer. 40:4.
  - 5. Nebuzaradan then changed his mind, suggesting that Jeremiah go live under Babylon's new puppet governor Gedaliah and dwell there in support of his rule, or to go wherever he wanted to go, Jeremiah 40:5a,b. Nebuzaradan gave Jeremiah some money as a parting gift and released him, Jeremiah 40:5c.
  - 6. Jeremiah heeded Nebuzaradan and traveled 3 miles north from Rama where he had been released to live in Mizpah where Gedaliah's center of rule was then located, Jeremiah 40:6; Ibid., B. K. C., O. T., p. 1186.

***Lesson:*** *Where Judah's king Zedekiah, his soldiers and the inhabitants of Jerusalem disobeyed the Word of the Lord through God's prophet Jeremiah only to suffer harm, captivity, and the destruction of their homes, Jeremiah was released, honored, given some money and granted full freedom to go wherever he wanted to go. The divine judgment of Jerusalem for sin and the divine reward of Jeremiah for obedience were thus greatly contrasted.*

***Application:*** *(1) May we not disobey God and face discipline but obey Him to see Him bless us even in hard times. (2) The stunning insight of Babylon's pagan official in telling Jeremiah that Jerusalem's sin had led to its fall reveals God's huge sovereignty over all men, that we should then obey Him for blessing! (3) Jeremiah knew that God wanted Babylon then to rule over Judah's people (Jeremiah 29:4-7), so he heeded Nebuzaradan's suggestion to go and live under Gedaliah at Mizpah. We should thus always submit to God's will! (4) God arranged for the grandson of the good man Shaphan who helped godly Josiah to rule, so being upright bodes well for our children!*