

## Handout: Jeremiah Lesson 18

Chapter 37 takes place in 588 BC when Pharaoh Hophra (ruled from 589 to 569) sent an Egyptian army to come to Zedekiah's aid against the Babylonians. Nebuchadnezzar temporarily lifted the first siege of Jerusalem to take his army to meet the advancing Egyptian threat. In this chapter, Zedekiah receives two short oracles confirming the return of the Babylonian army and the destruction of Jerusalem:

- Oracle #1: The Egyptians marching to Judah's aid will withdraw back to Egypt, and the Babylonians will return to attack and capture Jerusalem (verse 7).
- Oracle #2: The destruction of Jerusalem is inevitable (verses 9-10).

Chapter 38 has three oracles:

- Oracle #1: Yahweh's warning that those who stay in Jerusalem will die and His promise that those who surrender to the Babylonians will live (verse 2).
- Oracle #2: Yahweh's assurance that the Babylonians will capture Jerusalem (verse 3).
- Oracle #3: Yahweh's final oracle to King Zedekiah (verses 17-18).

The first two oracles are a summary of Yahweh's oracles to the people during the 35 years of Jeremiah's ministry.

In 38:17-18, Jeremiah repeats the oracles he gave in 38:2-3:

- If the king surrenders to the Babylonians, He will save his life and the city.
- If he does not, the city will be captured and burned and he will not escape.

The Babylonians conquered Jerusalem on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Ab in 587 BC after an 18 month siege. Nebuchadnezzar ordered his general to send men to find Jeremiah: *These dispatched men to take Jeremiah from the Court of the Guard and turned him over to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan for safe conduct home. So he remained among the people (39:14).* Gedaliah belonged to the influential Shaphan family of palace scribes with whom Jeremiah had a long-standing relationship. Members of the Shaphan family must have heeded Jeremiah's warning and left the city to surrender to the Babylonians. Support from the Shaphan family included:

- In 609 BC, Gedaliah's father, Ahikam son of Shaphan, was the royal scribe who saved Jeremiah's life when he was tried for treason (Jer 26:24).
- In 604 BC, Gemariah son of Shaphan gave Baruch a vantage point from which to read Jeremiah's scroll to the crowd in the Temple, and he urged King Jehoiakim not to burn Jeremiah's scroll (36:10, 25).
- In 604 BC, Micaiah son of Gemariah, son of Shaphan brought Baruch and the scroll to the assembly of royal scribes.
- In 597 BC, Elasah son of Shaphan carried Jeremiah's Letter of Consolation to the exiles in Babylon (28:3).

Jeremiah's last oracle in 39:16-18 is for Jeremiah's savior, the Gentile eunuch, Ebed-melech. His trust in Yahweh led to his salvation just as the same trust will lead to the salvation of every man and woman who puts their faith in Jesus Christ.

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